

**‘The Wonderful World of Ohio’:
Paternalism and the unifying Logic of Dependency
in American Political Development**

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Politics

July 2020

99,750 words

Abstract

This thesis examines the evolution of conservative ideas about U.S. welfare reform, demonstrating the primacy of the *new paternalism* in a case study of Ohio.

I argue that the *new paternalism* is primarily a mechanism of welfare state *retrenchment* because it rests on the logic of dependency. Although its assumptions – explicit through the writings of Lawrence Mead – distinguish the new paternalism from retrenchment through spending cuts and program elimination, it is nonetheless a distinct ideational *strand* of the same political order, a core but neglected element of conservatism’s maintenance of power at the local level. This conceptual shift challenges the conventional wisdom that paternalism is radically different from the abolitionism advocated by Charles Murray, and the claim that it is the product of political compromise between big-government liberals and small-government conservatives.

My empirical evidence comes from archival research from 1961 to 2007 and in-depth interviews conducted in 2018 about welfare policymaking in Ohio, particularly the development and functions of work requirements since the early 1960s. Through discourse analysis and analytic history of this case study, I examine each of paternalism’s assumptions over time, investigate how they gain strength, the extent to which they are contested, and how they collaborate with welfare abolition efforts to reduce access to the safety-net. My findings illustrate how conservative ideas have adapted to advance retrenchment efforts.

Acknowledgements

Personal

First and foremost, I am grateful to Desmond King for his supervision throughout this process. Without his discerning guidance, this project would not have taken shape. His scholarly and race-conscious insight was invaluable in making it a better thesis. I am proud to have worked under the supervision of someone who believes in the need for justice-oriented social policy in the U.S.

I am indebted to those friends and colleagues who read drafts and provided valuable feedback, especially Abdul Rad, Amy Wakeland, Nina Yancy, and Joe Barrett, who encouraged me to focus on the power underlying the conservative narrative of welfare.

I deeply appreciate those who supported my fieldwork in Ohio, especially my interview participants who lent their time and insights. My special thanks go to Jack Frech, who also proofread my work for historical accuracy and introduced me to the archival material used in this thesis. On the note of the archives, thanks go to both the local journalists who wrote the first drafts of history and those who kept and organized the archives.

I am grateful to those from the Department of Social Policy and Intervention, who supported me through the MPhil, especially Fran Bennett, Mary Daly, and my supervisor, Brian Nolan. To Helen Baxendale, Zeenia Framroze, Josh Simpson, and Claire Wright: thank you for your friendship.

To my students from the 2018 Critical Thinking major, I owe a debt of thanks for helping me think through strategies to parse the assumptions of the conventional wisdom.

I am deeply grateful to Tom Kellenberg, Terry Babcock-Lumish, Andy Rich, and Megan Wheeler, for their longtime friendship and encouragement. I owe much to my friends and former colleagues from ASPE, especially John Tambornino, Kelly Kinnison, and Alana Landey, who sparked the interest in community action and affirmed my interest in public service.

I will forever be grateful to those from Notre Dame who embodied learning as service to justice, and who recommended and supported me, including David Cortright, Miguel Franco, Rev. John Jenkins, George Lopez, Maria McKenna, Candida Moss, Dan Myers, Paul Ocobock, Dianne Pinderhughes, Ava Preacher, Steve Reifenberg, Jeff Thibert, and many, many others.

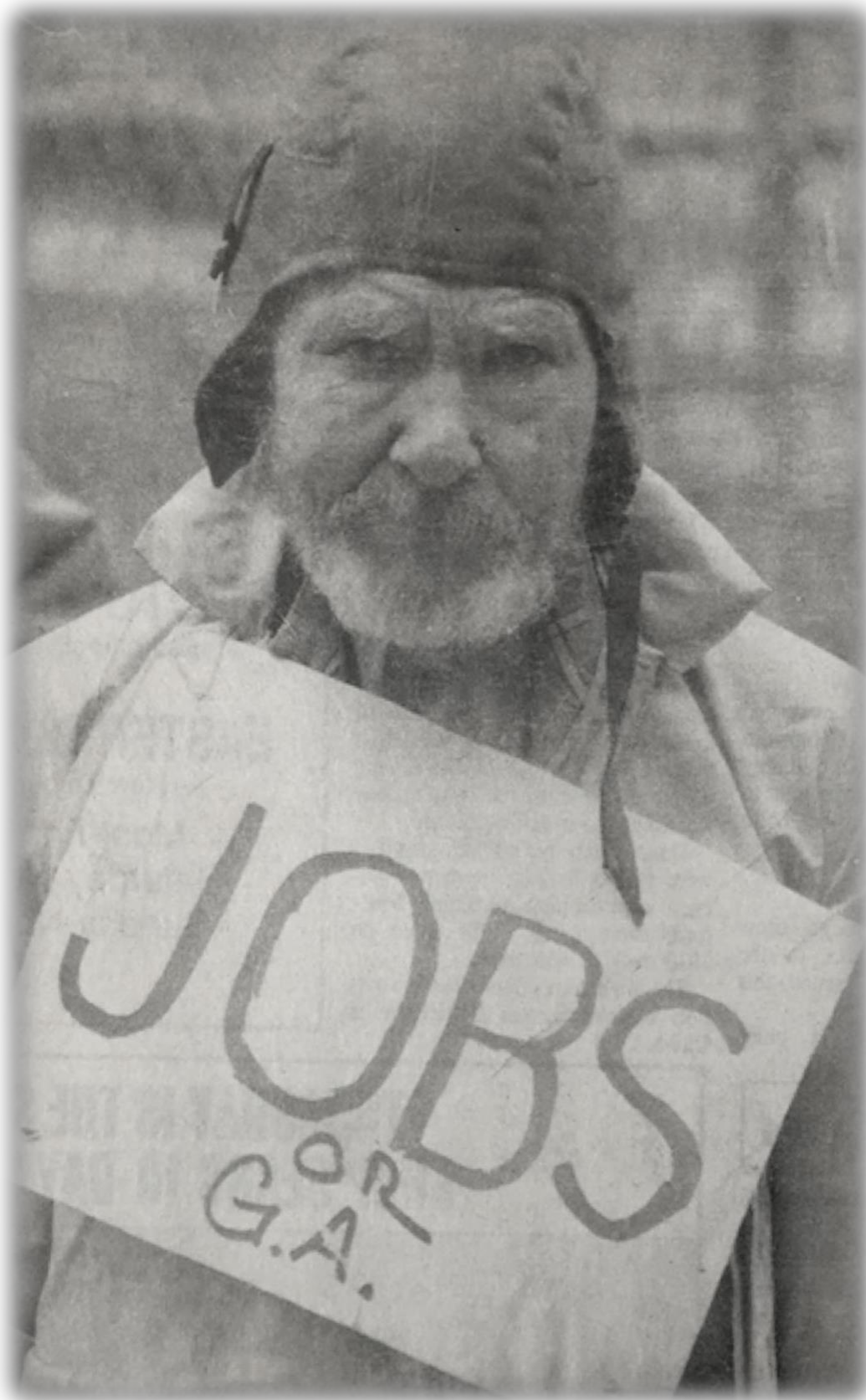
I am so deeply appreciative to Alice Geist, Sai Gourisanker, Tanyah Hameed Khan, Jordan Konell, Ben Mappin-Kasirer, Mayanka Mukherji, David Moore and Erin Cameron, Romina Mariano, Kate Nussenbaum, Tariq Parker, Laura Roberts, Jay Ruckelshaus, Aven Satre Meloy, Ben Sprung-Keyser, Emily Witt, and many, many others for making Oxford home.

Thanks also go to my wonderful friends who kept me grounded in two continents, especially Natalia Cuevas, Nancy Joyce, Lauren Morisseau, Mike Nichols, and Max Stearns.

Finally, I am grateful to Chiara McDermott, for her loving and steadfast support even when I had doubts about the project; and to my parents – Peter and Nena – two Ohio public servants and teachers who are my constant source of inspiration.

Institutional

I am grateful to the Rhodes Trust for the opportunity to pursue my MPhil and DPhil at Oxford, and especially to Mary Eaton, Bob and Dawn Wyllie, and Rodolfo Lara, for creating such a welcoming environment. I am indebted to the Truman Foundation, a program for public service, for the community it provides and the financial support to finish my studies at Oxford. Finally, I owe thanks to the Rothermere American Institute, the Kemper Family through their support for the Nicolas Ollivant Travel Award, the Grant Family for their support through the Murray Speight Grant, and St. John's College. These groups provided important funding for my fieldwork, without which this DPhil would not have been possible.



Title: “The Wonderful World of Ohio” comes from a 1960s promotional campaign by the Rhodes Administration to increase business and tourism. One editorial at the time wrote, “thousands of people on welfare rolls in this state must be bewildered every time they hear rosy talk about the Wonderful World of Ohio. The world of Ohio they know is bleak, sometimes desperate.”¹ During the March for Adequate Welfare from Cleveland to Columbus, protestors held signs with the phrase.²

Cover photo: SIGN OF THE TIMES – Herman Asthall wears a sign asking for jobs or welfare funds during a rally at the Statehouse in Columbus Wednesday. About 400 people from across Ohio gathered to protest cuts in the General Assistance program that took effect Wednesday.³

¹ “Whose Wonderful World?,” *Cleveland Press*, 18 March 1966. Page B8. (Edit.)

² “Rhodes to Weigh March’s Demands,” *Plain Dealer* 1 July 1966.

³ “Governor airs tearful defense of welfare cuts,” *Athens Messenger*, 2 April 1992.

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List of Abbreviations

ABAWD	Able-bodied adult without dependents	IMPACT	Columbus Community Action
ADC	Aid to Dependent Children	JFS	Department of Job and Family Services (Ohio)
ADCU	Aid to Dependent Children of the Unemployed	JOBS	Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training program
AEI	American Enterprise Institute	JVCA	Jackson-Vinton Community Action
AFDC	Aid to Families with Dependent Children	LASC	Legal Aid Society of Columbus
APD	American Political Development literature	LEAP	Learning Earning and Parenting
ASPE	Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, US DHHS	NWRO	National Welfare Rights Organization
CAA	Community action agency	OACAA	Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies
CAP	Community Action Program	OBRA	Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (1981)
CCMEP	Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program	ODSA	Ohio Development Services Agency
CDF	Children's Defense Fund	OEO	Office of Economic Opportunity
CEOGC	Council for Economic Opportunities in Greater Cleveland	OJFSDA	Ohio Job and Family Services Directors Association
CSBG	Community Services Block Grant	OSCAW	Ohio Steering Committee on Adequate Welfare
CWEP	Community Work Experience Program	OWF	Ohio Works First
DFA	Disability Financial Assistance	PPC	Parent Policy Council
DHS	Department of Human Services (Ohio)	PRC	Prevention Retention Contingency Program
EITC	Earned Income Tax Credit	PRWORA	Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act (1996)
EOA	Economic Opportunity Act (1964)	SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, food stamps
FPL	Federal poverty level	TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
FSA	Family Support Act (1988)	US DHHS	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
GA/GR	General assistance/relief	WIN	Work Incentives program
GCWRO	Greater Cleveland Welfare Rights Organization	WIOA	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
GOP	Republican Party		
HAPCAP	Hocking Athens Perry Community Action Program		
HEW	U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare		

Introduction.

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On the First of August 1996, the U.S. Senate voted to approve the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act (PRWORA) out of joint conference committee, sending the bill to President Clinton's desk for his signature. Its goal: "*end the dependency* of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work and marriage."¹ Clinton arguably won his re-election two months later by following through on his bold, but substantively ill-defined pledge to "end welfare as we know it." But it was not simply a political strategy, it signified an ideational shift on the Left.²

In what became the victory of "the new paternalism" as the dominant framework for social policy – strict conditions for receiving benefits, limited eligibility, sanctions for violating conditions, and a continued reorientation of policy goals towards employment – Democrats seemingly established themselves as "more republican than [the] G.O.P. on requiring work."³ Republicans emphasized the threat of time limits and other restrictions, while Democrats embraced work requirements "as an alternative to [these] more drastic [actions]."⁴ Republican governors overall wanted fewer restrictions from the federal government, and started to fear that a strict work requirement and an end to the cash assistance entitlement might lead to the creation of other entitlements such as childcare or guaranteed jobs.⁵ Democrats saw work requirements as an opportunity to advocate for labor market changes.

That day, in August, Clinton promised to sign the legislation to "transform a broken system that traps too many people in a cycle of dependence to one that emphasizes work and independence,

¹ 42 U.S. Code § 601. *Block Grants to States for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families*, <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/42/601>. Emphasis added.

² Jamie Peck, "Workfare: a geopolitical etymology," *Environment and Planning* 16 (1998): 133-161, argues that Clinton helped to make key conservative elements mainstream, including the language of work, responsibility, and opportunity, p. 156.

³ Robert Pear, "Democrats Forge New Welfare Role: Party is More Republican than G.O.P. on Requiring Work," *New York Times*, 7 March 1995.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ A mandatory program "sets up a clear demand for resources: mandatory programs almost inevitably force the provision of jobs and services, including child care," p. 287. Mary Jo Bane, "Welfare Reform and Mandatory versus Voluntary Work," *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 8, no. 2 (1989): 285-289. See also Peck, "Workfare," 148. Lawrence Mead insisted that "some governors can be trusted, but in the bulk of the cases, large affluent urban states have liberal attitudes toward welfare and are unwilling to enforce work unless required by Washington," p. A14. Judith Havemann, "Prominent Conservative Faults GOP Welfare Plan," *Washington Post*, 19 February 1995.

[and] give people on welfare a chance to draw a paycheck, not a welfare check.”⁶ He concluded that despite faults in the legislation – namely, cuts in nutritional assistance for working families with children and the provision excluding legal immigrants from benefits – the signing of PRWORA was “an historic opportunity to make welfare what it was meant to be: a second chance, not a way of life.”⁷

The welfare reform process had captured the nation’s attention in a way that federal domestic policy rarely does. Prior to 1996, Clinton’s Department of Health and Human Services (US DHHS) had granted forty-one states waivers for sixty-nine different experiments in the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program, all with the desire to end ‘welfare dependency,’ which was seen as being caused by the progressive political victories in Roosevelt’s New Deal and Johnson’s Great Society. In the press conference prior to signing the legislation, Clinton was asked whether it gave him pause that he would be dismantling a program put in place by Democrats sixty-years prior. His response did not discuss the nature of poverty or the economy as a whole, but rather the poverty population itself: “when welfare was created, the typical welfare recipient was a miner’s widow with no education, small children” with no expectation of a job if the husband died, and fewer out of wedlock pregnancies. He continued, “So, I’ve always thought that the Democratic Party should be on the side of creating opportunity and promoting empowerment and responsibility for people. And a system that was in place sixty years ago, that worked for the poverty population then, is not the one we need now.”⁸ Concern over who the poverty population is, what their behaviors entail, and how to change them – as opposed to what the population is materially lacking – has always been a focus of welfare policymaking in the United States.

⁶ “Text of President Clinton’s Announcement on Welfare Legislation,” *New York Times*, 1 August 1996, <https://www.nytimes.com/1996/08/01/us/text-of-president-clinton-s-announcement-on-welfare-legislation.html>.

⁷ Ibid. The pledge that welfare would be a second chance rests on the assumption that a first chance was squandered by an individual’s choice. It also carries the connotation that there are no third chances. According to Wes Moore, *The Other Wes Moore* (New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2010), “It’s hard sometimes to distinguish between second chances and last chances,” p. 67.

⁸ “Text of President Clinton’s Announcement on Welfare Legislation.” This is gendered and post-racial language, where the white widow is the quintessential, state-sponsored, welfare dependent.

I.1 Ohio's Rainy Days

The view from Ohio was different. In February 1995, *The Middletown Journal* ran a front-page feature on the *premises* underlying the welfare reform activity: “The welfare reform debate in Washington and Columbus is a political response to a public concern that welfare programs are too expensive and too lenient. But data from the Ohio Department of Human Services show that the stereotypical picture of irresponsible, lazy teen-age mothers with broods of children bears little resemblance to Ohio’s overall welfare population.”⁹ Echoing what Matthew Desmond would articulate in *Evicted*, that what is unique to poor people is poverty,¹⁰ one writer noted, “People on public assistance in many ways are not different from the rest of us in the world except that they’re poor.”¹¹ One recipient said of the welfare reform debates in congress, “I think they’re trying to make a simple issue out of something that’s very complicated.”¹² The same recipient expressed hope for the day she would leave welfare: “I can’t wait for the day when I can burn everything they’ve sent me... and say, “Thank you God, I’m free.””¹³ The most common response of those in anti-poverty work interviewed for this thesis, when asked what causes poverty, was “it’s complicated,” usually preceded by a sigh.

As the federal debates raged on, Ohio was approved for an AFDC waiver to funnel tax dollars as wage supplements to private companies that trained welfare recipients. The money was taken from what recipients would have otherwise received in cash benefits and food stamps,¹⁴ with the assumption that employers would pay full wages after the second year. Pushing back on the paternalism inherent

⁹ Virginia Barazia, “Welfare families not always as they seem,” *Middletown Journal*, 26 February 1995.

¹⁰ Matthew Desmond, *Evicted* (New York: Broadway Books, 2016).

¹¹ Barazia, “Focus on Welfare Reform.”

¹² Bob Irvin and Mary Lolli, “Recipients say programs help get their lives together,” *Middletown Journal*, 26 February 1995.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Benjamin Marrison, “Ohio gets green light for welfare experiments,” *Plain Dealer*, 8 March 1995. See also Virginia Barazia, “Ohio Welfare reform gets nod,” *Lancaster Eagle-Gazette*, 8 March 1995.

in the work-requirement program, one advocate argued, “It’s discrimination, absolutely. Why have laws that are tougher on welfare recipients than everybody else?”¹⁵

At the same time, the Ohio Senate abolished the General Assistance program (GA). The aim of abolition was to limit and “redirect assistance” from single able-bodied adults to the disabled, sick, or young parents – focusing on the ‘deserving poor’ and ‘truly needy.’ At the time of its abolition, GA served 120,000 Ohioans. It was intended as a commitment from the state to fill the gaps in federal welfare and medical benefits.¹⁶ However, none of the projected \$200 million in savings went to medical assistance, food stamps, or job training – things considered to be pre-requisite supports to work. Longtime advocate and former Athens County Job and Family Services (JFS) director, Jack Frech,¹⁷ claimed, “it would be more honest for the governor and General Assembly simply to say they don’t care about this population and have no intentions of making an effort to meet their basic needs.... I would note that in the course of this budget we have built Ohio’s ‘rainy-day’ fund up to more than \$1 billion. For these people, it is already a very rainy day.”¹⁸

In anticipation of federal welfare reform’s passage, Governor Voinovich signed new legislation in June 1996, with the goal of “no more handouts without responsibilities, and no more opportunities without obligations.”¹⁹ Voinovich’s state director of the Department of Human Services (DHS), Arnold Tompkins, struck a familiar chord to an audience at Ohio University: “In order for welfare recipients to take personal responsibility, they need to be given the tools to become self-sufficient.”²⁰

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Alison Grant, “Now no General Assistance,” *Plain Dealer*, 11 April 1995.

¹⁷ Frech came to Athens County as a student at Ohio University, graduating in 1972. He became a case worker at the Athens County human services department in 1974, before a brief stint as deputy director of the Tri-County Community Action Agency. State Rep. Michael Fox (R-Hamilton) once said that Frech was the most creative and knowledgeable welfare director in the state. “He is respected, knowledgeable, articulate and hard working. If we could clone him, the system would be a better deal for those on welfare, the bureaucracy and the taxpayer.” Article title missing, Newspaper title missing, date missing.

¹⁸ Jack Frech, “State reneges on its promise to the poor,” *Columbus Dispatch*, 19 August 1995. (Edit.).

¹⁹ “Opponents say welfare changes don’t help people out of poverty,” *Athens Messenger*, 2 July 1996.

²⁰ Alisa Hauser, “State welfare chief hits Athens to talk up proposal for reforming system,” *Athens NEWS*, 6 May 1996. See also Wendy Wenerstrom, “Tompkins stresses visualization as key to progressive human services changes,” *Athens Messenger*, 6 May 1996.

These statements echoed one of the fundamental premises of the new paternalism: work as the primary obligation of full-standing citizens.

The legislation (which included a three year limit) required welfare recipients to sign a contract with their case workers promising to work themselves off of welfare.²¹ Termed a “self-sufficiency contract,” it outlined the agency’s commitment of benefits, the recipient requirements, and the sanctions for not living up to the contract. However, it did not include “any specific sanctions against DHS if it fails to meet *its* end of the bargain,” because sanctions for counties are based on aggregate goals, and failure to meet them means reduced state funding rather than restored funding for recipients.²² Representative Joan Lawrence (R-Galena) who had championed the bill said, “Nobody wants people to suffer, but we do want people to be responsible.”²³

When Clinton finally “ended welfare,” Ohio introduced Ohio Works First (OWF).²⁴ OWF was considered by social service agency officials to be a fundamental shift in the welfare system. Joel Potts, from DHS, echoed Clinton’s focus on the poverty population, noting that the old system of benefits was “focused on following a set of procedures to determine eligibility, and eligibility determined benefits. The system...does not meet the needs of today’s society.”²⁵ Instead of using a single model in all eighty-eight counties, counties would be empowered (devolved to) to develop models that would meet individual needs.²⁶ It had also redefined the federal government’s responsibility, leaving it to the states to provide the commensurate investments in healthcare, childcare, education, and job availability, and the states leaving it to the counties in order “to tailor benefit programs to meet local needs.”²⁷

²¹ “Opponents say welfare changes don’t help people out of poverty.”

²² “County begins ‘contracting’ with its welfare recipients,” *Athens NEWS*, 25 September 1997.

²³ “Ohio has head start in re-inventing welfare,” *Athens Messenger*, 23 December 1996.

²⁴ “Hoping Ohio Works for us,” *Post*, 26 January 1998. (Edit.)

²⁵ Teresa Smith, “Big changes in store for Ohio welfare system,” *Athens Messenger*, January 1997.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ “Ohio has head start in re-inventing welfare.”

The system reflected “the era of ‘mutual obligations’ and ‘the new paternalism,’ of increasing alarm over the persistence of welfare dependency, of new attempts to change the behavior of the poor with carrots and with sticks.”²⁸ States were incentivized to increase conditions and lessen the number of people receiving benefits, regardless of need – despite the claims by Clinton and Ohio officials that the new system met the needs of the new poverty population. States tended to increase work requirements and apply sanctions for noncompliance – in some cases for the whole family. Joe Soss, et al. find that “the states that acted quickly to impose tough welfare policies were those in which conservative governments held sway and in which Black families made up a higher proportion of clients. Thus, in the new era of welfare reform the terms of relief for poor families continue to be shaped by race, ideology, and control of representative institutions.”²⁹

Clinton had hoped – as had Ohio officials – that if the public saw the poor working for their benefits, they would support an expanded safety-net of in-kind benefits. However, according to Frech, “the conservatives have won the day... and we’re still not happy about it. We still don’t give [poor people] credit even when they go out and work [off their benefits].”³⁰ Knowing the history of welfare reform efforts in Ohio, Frech lamented: “Every attempt at welfare reform has been heralded as the final solution to our constant turmoil about the welfare system.”³¹ Even though the 1988 Family Support Act (FSA) federally imposed work requirements, “somehow that was not enough to satisfy the public’s concern.”³² He argued that all of the debates revolve around the primary question: under what circumstances and through what mechanisms are we as a society willing to share with those who do not have enough?

²⁸ Robin Toner, “Politics of Welfare: Focusing on the Problem,” *New York Times*, 5 July 1992.

²⁹ Joe Soss, et al., “Setting the Terms of Relief,” *American Journal of Political Science* 4, no. 2 (2001): 378-395. 389.

³⁰ On the Media, “The Poverty Tour,” *WNYC Studios*, 28 September 2016, <https://www.wnyc.org/story/poverty-tour?tab=transcript>.

³¹ Jack Frech, “County welfare head: State reform mix of good, bad,” *Athens NEWS*, 5 May 1997. (Edit.)

³² Ibid.

The historic consistency of these debates has continued into the new century, and the impacts have been stark. By the early 2000s in Ohio, most cases were child-only. In 1964, 1.7-percent of Ohioans (167,955) received cash assistance benefits. At its highest point in 1992, 6.8-percent (733,849) received benefits.³³ By March 2003, seven years after welfare reform took place, there were only 1.7-percent (188,108) on welfare – a decline of two-thirds from 1996.³⁴ Given the conservative success of welfare reform in reducing caseloads, by the 2010s, the new paternalism was being strengthened in and expanded to in-kind benefits considered work supports – food assistance and health insurance. A 2018 report from the Ohio-based Center for Community Solutions found that the declining caseloads are due to recipients meeting the time limit or failing to meet the work requirements.³⁵

³³ Catherine Candisky and Alan Johnson, “Getting off welfare no guarantee of success,” *Columbus Dispatch*, 11 June 2004.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Tara Britton and Brie Lusheck, “Majority of Ohioans living in deep poverty don’t receive cash assistance,” *Center for Community Solutions*, October 2018. 8-9.

I.2 The Puzzle of Paternalism in American Political Development

Debates at the federal level about poverty and welfare revolve around, what I term, the *logic of dependency*, i.e. the need to end perceived dependence (a characteristic of the ‘poverty population’) on government programs developed as a safety net.³⁶ This logic has typically been considered a hallmark of conservative efforts to retrench the welfare state through spending and program cuts, if not complete abolition.³⁷ However, through PRWORA, the logic of dependency led to another solution in the form of bureaucratic conditions³⁸ on the receipt of aid and sanctions for violating them: the *new paternalism*. Chief among these conditions were work requirements, once applied solely to cash aid, and now applied to health coverage and food assistance.³⁹

The new paternalism has been the dominant framework for anti-poverty policy for nearly three decades, understood as a big-government supervisory program for the poor so that they can “live constructively.”⁴⁰ However, its impact on American political development is not properly understood because (1) its premises have not been examined within the retrenchment literature and (2) its relationship to small-government efforts to retrench the safety-net is underdeveloped. As the 1990s in Ohio illustrate, there is an intimate relationship between the retrenchment mechanism of spending cuts and paternalism. However, as we will see, the premises of the new paternalism were present decades prior, strengthened and contested at various times. The assumptions – (1) The

³⁶ According to Alice O'Connor, *Poverty Knowledge* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2001), “Approaching the poverty problem within the narrow conceptual frame of individual failings rather than structural inequality, of cultural and skill ‘deficits’ rather than the unequal distribution of power and wealth, the social scientific architects of President Clinton’s original, comparatively less punitive welfare reform proposal made ‘*dependency*’ their principal target and then stood by helpless as congressional conservatives *took their logic to its radical extreme*,” p. 4. Emphasis added.

³⁷ As Mimi Abramovitz, “Political Ideology and Social Welfare,” in *Encyclopedia of Social Work* (New York: Oxford UP, 2016), argues, “to dismantle to welfare state, social conservatism calls for tax cuts, privatization, devolution, and program cutbacks.”

³⁸ States are required to track work data for both federal and state programs, “core” and “non-core” work activities, the amount families bank against their time-limit, etc. For a discussion on the “politics of burden,” see Pamela Herd and Donald Moynihan, “The crux of Republican policy: Make public services harder to use,” *Washington Post*, 28 January 2019.

³⁹ While Medicaid and SNAP work requirements do not identically parallel those of TANF because they are applied to particular population subsets, i.e. those covered by expansion and single-member households, respectively, the sorting mechanism element of work requirements still holds.

⁴⁰ Lawrence Mead, ed., *The New Paternalism* (Washington, DC: Brookings, 1997).

competence of those in poverty cannot be assumed; (2) Work is the greatest obligation of citizens; (3) Poverty is an apolitical problem, and paternalism an administrative solution; and, (4) Paternalist interventions are and must be postracial/colorblind – were latent and emergent throughout the 1960s, became prevalent and contested by the Left in the 1980s, established dominance in the 1990s, and continue to expand in the new century.

1.2.i Conventional Wisdom: Paternalism is considered quite different from the conservatism associated with retrenchment

One of the new paternalism's major proponents is Lawrence Mead.⁴¹ Mead's paternalism is commonly characterized in the literature as distinct from long-held conservative arguments for welfare abolition or the retrenchment of the welfare state as advocated by Charles Murray. As Alan Deacon observes, "there could scarcely be a greater contrast than that between the 'new paternalism' of Mead, and the libertarianism of Murray."⁴² At the time of welfare reform, Murray claimed that Mead's ideas were a form of "conservative social engineering that is about as frightening an assertion of 'we know better' as anything that liberals say."⁴³ Edward Crane III, then president of the libertarian Cato Institute, argued that the new paternalism was "part of the philosophical breakdown of the Right and the Republicans more particularly."⁴⁴

Mead aims throughout his canon to distance his prescriptions from Murray's welfare abolition.⁴⁵ Mead claims that while his new paternalism is supported by anti-government rhetoric, his

⁴¹ Throughout the 1990s, Mead's efforts were cited by prominent authors such as Daniel Moynihan and George Will, and in news coverage of welfare experiments across the country. See Daniel Moynihan, "When Principle is at Issue," *Washington Post*, 4 August 1996, C7; George Will, "A Moral Environment for the Poor," *Washington Post*, 30 May 1991, A19; Judith Havemann, "Michigan's All-Out Welfare Test Case," *Washington Post*, 12 November 1996, A1.

⁴² Alan Deacon, "Introduction. The Realities of Welfare Reform," in Douglas Besharov, et al., *Ending Dependency* (London: Institute of Economic Affairs, 2001): 1-7. 4.

⁴³ Paul Starobin, "The Daddy State," *Government Executive*, 31 March 1998, <https://www.govexec.com/federal-news/1998/03/the-daddy-state/2356/print/>.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ There *are* legitimate differences between the two, shown in Chapter 1.

program is in fact a case of state building.⁴⁶ Mead praises Murray as a “true philosopher” of the welfare state for identifying the personality and psychology of the poor as the central concern for social policy;⁴⁷ however, he also sets up himself as a neutral third-party⁴⁸ moderating between the Harringtons⁴⁹ of the Left and the Gilders⁵⁰ and Murrays of the Right. News reports during welfare reform argued that paternalist efforts “occupy the most-desired ground in American politics: the middle.”⁵¹ The fact that the Clinton Democrats believed in the promise of work requirements and committed to them as a governing logic of welfare policy further distanced the perception of the new paternalism from the radicalism of welfare abolition.

This distinction is also made by other scholars, oftentimes by contrasting their logistics: “Murray emphasizes reducing access to welfare; whereas Mead emphasizes intensifying its paternalistic aspects. Murray wants welfare recipients to go cold-turkey; Mead wants to guide them toward personal responsibility by upholding obligations in exchange for the right to benefits.”⁵² Murray focuses on the size of the welfare state, while Mead focuses on its permissiveness.⁵³ Both, however, focus on human behavior, albeit simplistic notions, as the core target for welfare policy. For Murray, the poor are rational actors responding to perverse incentives in the welfare system. For Mead, the poor lack the competence necessary to better themselves and their families.

⁴⁶ Lawrence Mead, “Welfare Policy: The Administrative Frontier,” *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 15, no. 4 (1996): 587-600.

⁴⁷ Lawrence Mead, *The New Politics of Poverty* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 1992), 239.

⁴⁸ Lawrence Mead, *Beyond Entitlement* (New York: Free Press, 1986), 4-5. For a more recent example of this positioning, see Lawrence Mead, “Welfare Reform: Recent Policy and Politics,” *Review of Policy Research* 19, no. 1 (2002): 204-237.

⁴⁹ Michael Harrington, *The Other America* (New York: Macmillan, 1962).

⁵⁰ George Gilder, *Wealth and Poverty* (New York: Basic Books, 1981). While he is not mentioned much in this thesis, Gilder’s views on welfare programs (universal and means-tested) and work requirement programs align with Murray’s. He argues: “All means-tested programs (designed exclusively for the poor) promote the value of being ‘poor’... and thus perpetuate poverty. To the degree that the moral hazards exceed the welfare effects, all these programs should be modified, usually by reducing the benefits,” p. 111.

⁵¹ Starobin, “The Daddy State.”

⁵² Sanford Schram, “Review: *The New Paternalism*,” *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, no. 4 (1999): 667-672. 668.

⁵³ Mead, *Beyond Entitlement*, 181.

In other literature about welfare policy and “the war on the poor,” Mead is either viewed as distinct from Murray because of the above differences, or is hardly mentioned, overshadowed by the infamous legacy of Murray. Desmond King argues that *Murray*’s critique of the welfare system since the 1960s became the central line of argumentation in the welfare reform program of 1988 and 1996, for which work requirements were fundamental.⁵⁴ According to King, welfare reform in 1996 combined the deterrent nature of previous anti-poverty policy, i.e. the attempt to limit an individual’s entry onto welfare, and the contractual nature of the new paternalism, i.e. the attempt to enforce recipient obligations.⁵⁵ Most writings on welfare reform focus on the welfare abolition/deterrent stance of Murray. The perceived distance between Murray and Mead and the overwhelming attention given to Murray in discussions of conservative approaches to welfare – despite Mead’s real influence on policy development – has given short shrift to analyses of the new paternalism as a development of American social policy, its relationship with retrenchment efforts, and, therefore, to analyses of it as a development within conservatism.

I.2.ii Claim: Paternalism and welfare abolition are two ideational strands of the same conservative order seeking *retrenchment*

Is the new paternalism, then, really in “the middle” of American politics? Does it signify a “breakdown of the Right”? And, how is it related to welfare abolition?

In *The Undeserving Poor*, Michael Katz gives Mead special status in the development of conservatism. He discusses Mead as an extension of Gilder and Murray, but gives him more founding credit than most scholars:

⁵⁴ Desmond King, *In the Name of Liberalism* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999), 280.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 259.

The Reagan administration could not persuade Congress to dismantle the welfare state. Sophisticated conservatives in the 1980s still accepted the inevitability of big government in modern America. Their problem was to make it work for their ends and to set it on a plausible theoretical and moral base. This was the task begun by Lawrence Mead as he helped launch a new stage in the conservative ascendance.⁵⁶

However, most retrenchment literature does not take the development of paternalism into account as *modus operandi* of conservative policymaking, with the same *end* of retrenchment. Literature which does take paternalism into account, such as *Disciplining the Poor*,⁵⁷ comes from the perspective of welfare as social control and a mechanism of governance, arguing that its primary function is imposing discipline and controlling marginalized populations. So, neither the social control literature nor the retrenchment literature considers ‘paternalism’ itself as a *mechanism* of retrenchment, thereby missing one of its profound effects on the safety-net. While paternalism certainly contributes to an agenda of social control (especially as it relates to the reproductive rights of welfare mothers), the underlying logic, I argue, is one aimed at dismantling the welfare state by increasing unmet need.⁵⁸ To make this case, paternalism requires its own scholarly treatment within the ideational and political developments in the U.S.

In 1995, Mead made paternalism’s *retrenchment* agenda clear. His *Washington Post* article, “Growing a Smaller Welfare State: Wisconsin’s Reforms Show that to Cut the Rolls, You Need More Bureaucrats,” *admits* (1) that money can be saved by spending less on recipients and more on government itself; and, (2) despite Wisconsin’s success in this regard, “important questions remain

⁵⁶ Michael Katz, *The Undeserving Poor*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford UP, 2013), 180.

⁵⁷ Joe Soss, et al., *Disciplining the Poor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011). Another recent work from the social control perspective is Melinda Cooper, *Family Values* (New York: Zone Books, 2017). Cooper argues that big government conservatism makes sense only as a function of social control: “The effect of Clinton’s welfare reform of 1996 was to requisition a once redistributive welfare program and repurpose it as an immense federal apparatus for enforcing ‘private’ responsibilities of family and work. What we are witnessing here is not the outright dismantling of the welfare state envisaged by libertarian conservatives such as Charles Murray... but rather its reinvigoration as an instrument for imposing work and family obligations on the welfare poor,” p. 70-71.

⁵⁸ In this way, I challenge both conservatives who argue that the new paternalism is effectively distinct from welfare abolitionism, and social control theorists on the Left who argue that it primarily functions through social control.

unanswered: What happens to the people who were formerly on the welfare rolls? Are they better or worse-off than before?”⁵⁹

We see here two claims central to this thesis. First, the interest of conservatives is on shrinking the welfare state, not the size of government – a redeployment of government power and resources for a traditionally conservative end of eliminating the welfare state. Second, the logic of dependency results in efforts toward retrenchment, and paternalism acts as one mechanism because its aim is to remove people from the rolls, regardless of material improvement or employment.⁶⁰ To advance these claims, I develop two concepts which illustrate the functions of the new paternalism.

Retrenchment Function: Sorting Mechanism

The *sorting mechanism* function is the means by which new paternalist policies, most notably work requirements and their commensurate sanctions, contribute to welfare state retrenchment.⁶¹ Jacob Hacker considers their dynamic an “everyday” form of retrenchment.⁶² What occurs is a cycle in which work requirements are used to ‘sort’ the perceived deserving from the undeserving poor, “to smoke out people,”⁶³ or to assess “just how voluntary their poverty may be.”⁶⁴ The undeserving poor – perceived able-bodied adults without dependents – are removed from assistance altogether and the deserving poor are pushed into low-wage jobs. This sorting shrinks the welfare rolls, justifying

⁵⁹ Lawrence Mead, “Growing a Smaller Welfare State,” *Washington Post*, 3 December 1995, C4.

⁶⁰ A few years after reform, Mead, “A Smaller, Less Mean Welfare System,” *Washington Post*, 30 September 1999, wanted to have it both ways, arguing that efforts must “keep expecting work of the employable,” and at the same time “reach out to families that perhaps left welfare too soon, or never went on it. That effort includes following up on those sanctioned – denied aid – for failure to satisfy work requirements, a common way to leave welfare today.” He claims, “The point of welfare reform was never to drive everyone off the rolls. It was to ensure that recipients did something to help themselves in return for aid,” p. A23. However, it is clearly a cost he accepts.

⁶¹ There is no doubt a “social control function” of paternalism, old and new. However, the “sorting mechanism function” is a conceptually and empirically underdeveloped mechanism.

⁶² Jacob Hacker, “Privatizing Risk without Privatizing the Welfare State,” *The American Political Science Review* 98, no. 2 (2004): 243-260. 246.

⁶³ Douglas Besharov from AEI argues that work requirements “smoke out people” who are collecting a welfare check and working off the books. Havemann, “Michigan’s All-Out Welfare Test Case,” A1.

⁶⁴ James Wilson, “Paternalism, Democracy, and Bureaucracy,” in Mead, ed., *The New Paternalism*: 330-344, 343.

spending cuts. However, as time passes, policymakers once again perceive the program as serving both populations, and so the retrenchment cycle repeats. At the end of this process, the welfare state has failed to meet the population's needs (what Hacker calls "the declining scope of risk protection" of the welfare state),⁶⁵ reducing its legitimacy, and contributing to its decline.

Paternalism, then, acts as a *sorting mechanism*, which shrinks the size of the welfare recipient population, and encourages further spending cuts to reduce the size of the welfare state. While Mead is at times adamant in the need to build the welfare state's disciplinary authority, his writings cannot be divorced from their empirical implications. The sorting mechanism is one such implication, drawn out by two major developments in his assumptions: the rejection of the competence assumption of *all* poor individuals (which ties the deservingness distinction to work effort), and the emphasis on work for work's sake (which removes the need for work to provide material benefit).

Maintenance of Power Function: Adaptive Mechanism

Within American political development, institutions have particular survival strategies that eliminate, mitigate, or pre-emptively deny challenges. Ideational developments are central to these strategies. Ideas, just like institutions, are "versatile multitaskers."⁶⁶ In order for conservatism to maintain its socioeconomic power by retrenching the welfare state, it has had to adapt to changing sociopolitical contexts (e.g. women appealing to breadwinner employment and the ending of "good" state-sponsored dependency, African Americans gaining political and economic rights). The sorting mechanism contributes to an agenda of retrenchment. Through the combination of this function and the accompanying discursive shifts (e.g. in-kind work supports such as healthcare and food assistance being framed as *conditional upon work* because of the expanded notion of *entitlement dependency*),

⁶⁵ Hacker, "Privatizing Risk without Privatizing the Welfare State," 243.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 246.

paternalism fulfills its secondary function as a mechanism by which conservatism *adapts* its approach to the welfare state. This mechanism is drawn out by the political appeal of the new paternalism's assumptions, especially its big government emphasis on technical administration.

More recent research makes the broad case that conservatives “redeploy” big government in ways that serves conservative ends. Jacobs, et al. find that conservatives utilize small government rhetoric to redirect the resources of the federal government through devolution.⁶⁷ Corey Robin argues that conservatism is about the maintenance of power, and a strong state – the big government that conservatives impugn – can be fundamental to that task.⁶⁸

•

Historically, and in practice, conservatism's ideations in service of retrenchment are expressed through two different strands: (1) spending cuts and program elimination [welfare abolition], and (2) work requirements [paternalism]. Oftentimes, the two work in tandem: “Cutbacks in social programs, increasing restrictions, and heightened paternalism over time all combine to limit these programs to people with the most personal problems.... Yet they are not representative of the poverty population as a whole.”⁶⁹ According to Barbara Cruikshank, welfare abolition “(aiming to set us free from governance to take responsibility for ourselves) and paternalism (to unleash state power to impose morality, work and particular sexual behaviors on the poor) are not counter-movements.”⁷⁰ Instead, during the 1996 reforms, Republicans reconciled these two strands,⁷¹ and they were developed into a shared project of retrenchment,⁷² with the assumptions of the new paternalism having strengthened relative to those of abolition.⁷³

⁶⁷ Nicholas Jacobs, Desmond King, and Sidney Milkis, “Building a Conservative State,” *Perspectives on Politics* 17, no. 2 (2019): 453-469.

⁶⁸ Corey Robin, *The Reactionary Mind*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford UP, 2018).

⁶⁹ Schram, “Review: The New Paternalism,” 671.

⁷⁰ Barbara Cruikshank, “Review: *Disciplining the Poor*,” *Contemporary Political Theory* 13, no. 1 (2014): e1-e3.

⁷¹ R. Kent Weaver, *Ending Welfare As We Know It* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2000).

⁷² Soss, et al., *Disciplining the Poor*, emphasize that it is a “shared *disciplinary* project,” p. 7. Emphasis added.

⁷³ Weaver, *Ending Welfare As We Know It*.

Despite their theoretical and ideational differences, this shared project allows welfare abolition efforts and paternalism to lead to similar practical outcomes of retrenchment: decreased welfare rolls, stagnant poverty rates, prioritization of the market, and a safety net continually squeezed by conditionality, serving fewer and fewer in need. Mead argues that the new paternalism has not been entirely successful because work requirements have been loosely enforced and too many exemptions have been granted (*not* that funding has been cut). The good news for Mead is that policies driven by paternalist assumptions are still on the rise for benefits like Medicaid and food stamps (SNAP). In fact, today's conservatives such as Arthur Brooks, former president of the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), view paternalism as a way to "declare peace on the safety net,"⁷⁴ distance themselves from the perceived radicalism of Murray,⁷⁵ and still advocate for the cuts, restrictions, and work requirements that encompass the welfare reform proposals of yesterday.

This thesis is an investigation into the premises of the new paternalism, and their application at the local level, in light of Lawrence Mead's influential policy advocacy and writings. Through this investigation, we examine how the conservative vision of welfare – between abolition and paternalism – is maintained.

⁷⁴ James Pethokoukis, "Time for the American right to declare peace on the US welfare state," *AEIdeas*, 30 October 2013, <http://www.aei.org/publication/time-for-the-american-right-to-declare-peace-on-the-us-welfare-state/>.

⁷⁵ Mead is viewed as much more reasonable than Murray, distinguishing "himself from hard-line conservatives by arguing that the problem was not government provision, but the permissiveness of Great Society programs in failing to enforce social obligations on the poor." Mead cleverly speaks in terms of reform rather than abolition, but, as shown in this thesis, some of his discourse can be quite extreme. O'Connor, *Poverty Knowledge*, 252.

I.3 Parsing Paternalism's First Principles: Subnational Discourse Analysis

One long-time Ohio welfare official recalled that the 1990s were an era of bipartisan compromise: “We had every Republican, every Democrat on this thing. They all supported where we wanted to go. And everybody didn’t necessarily agree with the whole, but they saw it as a package [not simply about] time limits, [or] sanctions, [or] work requirements.... We made sure the safety-net was there. We assured the hardcore conservatives that we were not going to tolerate fraud.” The federal story that is told is similarly one of a compromise between big government liberals and small government conservatives. Still today, writers argue, “The central debate in American politics [is] what is the proper role of government in society and who should pay for it?”⁷⁶ However, as I argue above, the new paternalism is an adaptive mechanism of conservatism’s retrenchment efforts, not a product of compromise. It is necessary, then, in anti-poverty policymaking to re-examine the assumptions of paternalism influencing these policy debates.

I do this by asking, (RQ 1) What kind of policy solution is paternalism?, (RQ 2) In what way does paternalism retrench?, and (RQ 3) To what extent does paternalism contribute to conservative ideational development aimed at retrenchment? To answer these research questions, I employ case study methodology, discourse analysis, and analytic history.

Most literature on welfare policymaking focuses on the national – federal debates over the War on Poverty, FSA, and PRWORA.⁷⁷ Much less attention is given to the states. According to Margaret Weir, a subnational approach “directs attention to the way institutional diversity at different levels of government shapes public capacities and the political will to address major social challenges, emphasizing in particular how such institutional differences influence the subsequent development of

⁷⁶ Jeff Stonecash, “The Two Key Factors Behind our Polarized Politics,” *Washington Post*, 24 January 2014, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2014/01/24/the-two-key-factors-behind-our-polarized-politics/>. Cited in Katherine Cramer, *The Politics of Resentment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 2.

⁷⁷ See, e.g. Peck, “*Workfare*”; Joshua Guetzkow, “Beyond Deservingness,” *ANNALS AAPSS* 629 (2010): 173-197.

the winners and losers of earlier political battles.”⁷⁸ According to Frank Fischer, “By revealing the taken-for-granted assumptions that underlie citizens’ everyday understandings and behaviours in problematic social situations, the analyst can help citizens to reflect on the conflicting frames inherent in policy controversies, permitting them a better comprehension of the relationships among hidden premises and conclusions.”⁷⁹ Therefore, a subnational examination, which utilizes discourse analysis and analytic history to identify how assumptions are expressed by local elite and non-elite actors over time, is apt to examine the *consistency* of and *contestations* against the assumptions of paternalism, and, therefore, to better understand *how* paternalism acts as an adaptive mechanism of retrenchment.

Ohio is a critical and illustrative case study on the trajectory of paternalism for a number of reasons. First, its economic background reflects national trends. Ohio’s economic sector has deep agrarian roots, industrial decline that mirrors the rust of neighboring Michigan, a coal industry that extracted wealth from its Southeastern region, and a history of redlining in the urban cores. Second, Ohio’s conservative politics – and connections to national think tanks – provide a fertile ground to examine the development of conservative approaches to the welfare state. Third, the presence of persistent poverty in predominantly White counties of Appalachia and of concentrated poverty in predominantly Black areas of the urban cores provides an important racial backdrop for understanding the emergence of colorblind policy.⁸⁰ Fourth, its contemporary welfare policy suite reflects nationwide developments, such as the implementation of work requirements on Medicaid expansion recipients.

The Ohio case study illustrates that the strands of welfare abolition and paternalism which make up the conservative agenda against the welfare state have long lineages. By examining original

⁷⁸ Margaret Weir, “States, Race, and the Decline of New Deal Liberalism,” *Studies in American Political Development* 19 (2005): 157-172. 172.

⁷⁹ Frank Fischer, *Reframing Public Policy* (Oxford: OUP, 2003), 68.

⁸⁰ Throughout my interviews, there was a consistent tension between welfare policy for rural counties, in which the poor are predominantly White, persistently poor through decades of industrial decline and natural resource exploitation, and for cities in which the poor are disproportionately Black, concentratedly so through centuries of redlining and economic discrimination.

archival material and contemporary in-depth interviews from Ohio, we will see that paternalism is not a compromise between small government conservatives and big government liberals. Paternalism's four assumptions have been circulating through welfare debates long before it was the dominant federal paradigm – creating logics of feedback that set the groundwork for future retrenchment. At times, various assumptions have reinforced spending cut efforts – such as the elimination of general assistance and the addition of work requirements in the 1990s – and at times various assumptions have been contested – such as opposition to work requirements in the early 1980s. However, both paternalism and welfare abolition have been fundamental strands of conservative development, unified in their emergence from the logic of dependency.

I.3.i Contributions of the Thesis

This case study of Ohio illuminates historic and contemporary conservative policy adaptations toward the welfare state. By conducting a critical examination of the elite-discourses at the heart of the new paternalism, and then investigating these discourses at the local level, we can see how the ideational *strands* of welfare abolition and paternalism develop and contribute to a single political *order* that crowds out structural accounts of poverty and privileges retrenchment of the welfare state. This case study contributes *empirical uniqueness* to various literatures: critiques of paternalism; American Political Development (APD) analyses on the conservative redeployment of state power and the development of colorblind policymaking; and the ideational elements – motives and mechanisms – of welfare state retrenchment.

I develop a number of concepts in this thesis, outlined as follows: I argue that the new paternalism is an *adaptive mechanism* of retrenchment, derived from the same *logic of dependency* as welfare abolition, allowing for the *maintenance of conservative power*. I illustrate how work requirements function as a *sorting mechanism* to continually sort the deserving from the undeserving, shrink the recipient pool,

prime programs for spending cuts, and reduce access to the welfare state. I also illuminate the *discursive* adaptations which reinforce these mechanisms: the shift in *policy goals* from *self-sufficiency* to *wellbeing*; the shift in the *assumptions* of *intervening logics* that attempt to shape policy (e.g. rejection of competence assumption, work not needing to provide material benefit); and the shift from viewing safety-net policies as *pre-requisites to work* to *conditional on work* through the *expanded notion of entitlement dependency*. I also integrate racial order analysis – with room for other identity cleavages – into my study. I develop these conceptual claims through original empirical subnational analysis of work requirements in Ohio, utilizing archival material and semi-structured interviews. By conducting discourse analysis and analytic history, I emphasize the power that ideas have in shaping institutional logics.

In this way, the thesis attempts to contribute to the scholarly agenda for poverty knowledge urged by Alice O'Connor. She argues that the *conceptual* basis of the study of poverty must shift to place “history, politics, public and private institutions, ideology [under] direct, and critical, scrutiny,”⁸¹ while the *empirical* basis for such studies must shift away from the poor themselves, to the policy, political, economic, institutional, and historical conditions “that shape the distribution of power.”⁸²

⁸¹ O'Connor, *Poverty Knowledge*, 292-293.

⁸² Ibid., 22.

I.4 Our Roadmap through Paternalism

Part I of this thesis provides the conceptual groundwork for this study, by (1) schematizing paternalism as one mechanism of retrenchment, (2) identifying subnational discourse analysis as a fundamental lens for examining the ideational elements of welfare state retrenchment, and (3) establishing the links between my conceptual claim, federal discourse, and the empirical case of Ohio.

Chapter 1 outlines paternalism's place within particular ideational and institutional orders of APD. Most literature on ideational orders and welfare only focuses on the retrenchment of government involvement in welfare as the primary strand, leading to spending and program cuts. By thoroughly examining paternalism's assumptions as articulated and advocated by Lawrence Mead, I show that both paternalism and welfare abolition are distinct ideational strands, with different functional views toward the role of government, in the same ideational order of 'welfare as self-sufficiency,' and supported by the strength of the colorblind alliance and racial order. This provides a conceptual foundation for the examination of paternalism.

Chapter 2 places the interpretive research design within literature on welfare state retrenchment, in order to establish that examining the assumptions (ideational elements) of paternalism as a significant policy development is essential to better measuring the extent of welfare state retrenchment. I argue that subnational case studies and historical and contemporary discourse analysis are best suited to identify how the assumptions of paternalism have developed outside the federal sphere, and their influence on local poverty politics.

Chapter 3 takes a step back from the development of the strand of paternalism, in order to examine the logic of dependency from which it is derived. This chapter outlines the discursive elements relevant to this intervening logic: the redefinition of the poverty problem to one of dependency, the emergence of paradigmatic solutions such as paternalism and welfare abolition, and

the articulation of policy goals as ways to adapt the discourse without changing the underlying logic. I argue that *self-sufficiency* is one such goal.

Chapter 3 provides a hybrid steppingstone between the conceptual development in Part I and the empirical analysis in Part II. The purpose of this is two-fold. First, by examining a specific *institution* (community action agencies), as opposed to programs or time periods (as is done in Part II), it is easier to outline particular concepts (e.g. the logic of dependency, rhetorical policy goals, adaptive discourses) and analytic methods (e.g. examining shifts in discourses, policy assumptions, and sociopolitical context) that are relevant for the analysis in Part II. Second, by illuminating an *historical snapshot* (i.e. the 1960s) as the starting point for an examination of the new paternalism, it is easier to identify the continuing tensions between liberatory and reactionary forces (and their intervening logics) throughout Part II.

Part II examines the discursive grooves of work and welfare in Ohio. Utilizing contemporary interviews and original archival material, I argue that work requirements (as an element of the new paternalism) represent a consistent policy development from the logic of dependency, and act as a sorting mechanism, working alongside spending and eligibility cuts to programs. I focus on distinct time periods and gubernatorial administrations. Throughout these periods, we see the expression of paternalism's assumptions; however, that expression is strengthened and contested at various points. Much of the contestation is over the value of work and the perceived competence of the poor.

Chapter 4 examines paternalism's latency as an ideational strand and emergence through the first mandatory work requirements for GA (1963-1971). Chapter 5 examines paternalism's prevalence and contestations to it by the Left over work requirements and benefit levels (1983-1991). Chapter 6 examines paternalism's dominance as a framework for public policy (1991-1998). Chapter 7 examines paternalism's expansion to in-kind benefits once considered pre-requisites to work (2002-2019).

The thesis concludes by bringing together the themes of Parts I and II, focusing on the ideational strategies that paternalism provides for the adaptation of conservatism in the U.S. I briefly argue that the contemporary focus on *wellbeing* by proponents of conservatism reflects a continued adaptation from the logic of dependency, a novel contemporary analysis. I conclude that dependency logic has contributed to the power that the assumptions of the new paternalism carry in policymaking, and that, in order to move beyond dependency as the problem and paternalism as the solution, the Left must counter paternalism on its first principles.

Part I

Paternalism and American Political Development

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Chapter 1.

Paternalism and American Political Development

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1.1 The New Paternalism and the Problem of Poverty

The politics of poverty in the United States revolve around two fundamental questions: what causes it and who are the poor? Discourse analysis of the Great Society (1964-1968) and neoliberal reforms (1981-1996) finds that “the very different policy responses in each period correspond to the way policymakers framed the causes of poverty and the capacities and motivations of the poor.”¹ Table 1.1 illustrates a typology of problem formation from the poverty literature.² The answers to these two questions shape the premises of social policy, because “practice and law must assume *something*. Are children to be held responsible for their parents?... Should effort be rewarded? Must men be motivated to work by the threat of poverty?”³

The dominant theory has long underscored the role of the individual in causing his or her own poverty (Quadrant 1). This paradigm was institutionalized in the U.S. by bringing from England the mentality of the Elizabethan Poor Laws, but getting rid, nominally, of the class hierarchies associated with the feudal system.⁴ In America, success and failure was borne of the individual. However, throughout the nation’s history, particular aspects of poverty and demographics of the poor have become the focus of policymakers as a public problem. The Civil War resulted in a pension plan for veterans and survivors of the fallen soldiers.⁵ Reconstruction, albeit briefly, brought about the Freedman’s Bureau for the welfare and fair contracts of recently freed slaves.⁶ The Great Depression caused abject deprivation, working-class solidarity, and a hatred for “economic royalists,” resulting in

¹ Guetzkow, “Beyond Deservingness,” 175.

² As with all typologies, these quadrants err on oversimplification, both of nuances within quadrants and slippage between them. However, the aim here is to illuminate the primary differences based on the two questions about poverty.

³ Nathan Glazer, “Paradoxes of American Poverty,” *Public Interest* 1 (1965): 71-81. 79.

⁴ Nancy Fraser and Linda Gordon, “A Genealogy of Dependency,” *Signs* 19, no. 2 (1994): 309-336.

⁵ Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1995). Skocpol is mostly talking about White soldiers; however, she notes, “Remarkably unlike most U.S. institutions of its day, the Pension Bureau was not formally racist. Yet both its universalistic procedures and its informal presumptions could create difficulties for former slaves,” p. 138.

⁶ W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880* (New York: The Free Press, 1998); Eric Foner, *Reconstruction* (New York: Harper Collins, 1988).

Table 1.1: Typology of problem formation from the poverty literature

Diagnostic Framing

What causes poverty?
What kind of problem is poverty?

Constitutive Framing Who are the poor? What competence do they have?		
	Competence assumption not met	Competence assumption met
Individual	(1) Moralism for the Deviant Narrative: Poverty is the result of individual choices – often immoral, fraudulent, or ignorant. Those in poverty are deviant at worst and lazy at best. Emblematic Literature: George Gilder, <i>Wealth and Poverty</i> Ideal Type Policy: Coercive. Punitive policy focused on moral development, preventing out of wedlock births. Scale of intervention: Private sector, charity.	(2) Neoliberalism for the rational actors Narrative: Individuals in communities lack human capital. The poor are rational actors, but held back from full participation in the market because they interact with the perverse incentives of the welfare system. Emblematic Literature: Charles Murray, <i>Losing Ground</i> Ideal Type Policy: Incentive. Positive welfare-to-work incentives, such as the earned income disregard or EITC. Federal program abolition. Scale of intervention: Devolution to state and local governments. Local business development.
	Structural	(3) Helpless Structuralism for the Defeated Narrative: Poverty is due to economic disadvantage and cultural deprivation, creating a cycle of dependency. Poverty is concentrated in areas with little job opportunity and a breakdown in community life. The poor are blameless for their predicament, but also helpless. Not much should be expected of them. Emblematic Literature: Daniel Moynihan, <i>The Negro Family: The Case for National Action</i> Ideal Type Policy: Job retraining and preparation. Removing people from place or culture, through place-based initiatives. Efforts focused on creating individual opportunity, especially for children, and strengthening the GDP. Scale of intervention: Federal government mandates.

significant safety net programs, such as old-age insurance, but to the exclusion of African Americans.⁷

Throughout these eras, welfare policy developments corresponded with changing conceptions of ‘dependency’ and the gendered expectations of care and formal employment. Prior to the 1960s, there was general support for the state-sponsored dependency of mothers in safety-net programs like Aid to Dependent Children (ADC). However, there remained conflict (a) over who was worthy of state-sponsored dependency (i.e. eligibility changed from predominantly white widows and children, to never married mothers, to single African American mothers), and (b) between maternalists who fought for redistributive and political rights based on the need for care work and the old paternalist moral reformers who supported restrictive eligibility rules. By the late 1950s, “even the Northern states, which previously had been more generous, reinforced old laws or invented new ones to limit ADC payments to deserving mothers.”⁸ These rules included “man in the house” and “suitable home” rules which gave the state (and caseworkers as arms of the state) the ability to deny benefits based on “improper” sexual relationships or unmarried status, enforced through home-visits.⁹

The 1960s saw successful legal challenges to the ‘old paternalism’ (e.g. *King v. Smith* challenged the “man in the house” rule), expressions of civic and political competence which advocated for the expansion of welfare rights and the guarantee of jobs and adequate incomes, progress on civil rights for African Americans, and the passage of major anti-poverty legislation. However, during the 1960s, the dominant government theory was a helpless structuralism¹⁰ (Quadrant 3), one that focused on cultural deficiencies among the poor as well as their economic deprivation. It argued that there were

⁷ James Patterson, *The New Deal and States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1969).

⁸ Cooper, *Family Values*, 35-36.

⁹ For discussion, see Nancy Fraser, “Women, Welfare, and the Politics of Need Interpretation,” *Hypatia* 2, no. 1 (1987): 103-121; Barbara Nelson, “The Origins of the Two-Channel Welfare State,” in Gordon, ed., *Women, the State, and Welfare*, 123-151.

¹⁰ Guetzkow, “Beyond Deservingness,” finds within congressional hearings at the time, “[The poor] were economically disadvantaged and culturally deprived – stigmatized, but as objects of pity rather than scorn.... Helplessness is the flip side of faultlessness,” p. 182.

structural causes to poverty, but that the poor themselves were not capable of resisting these forces.¹¹ While there were moments of initiatives focused on community action (Quadrant 4), most efforts were focused on creating opportunity and long-term economic growth.¹² Since the War on Poverty, a conservative shift, emphasizing human capital development,¹³ arguing that the welfare system itself is the main barrier to prosperous employment for Americans (Quadrant 2), and excluding immigrant reciprocity, has been front and center in policy discourse.

The *logic of dependency*, articulated in this thesis as the basis for the conservative backlash against the safety-net, took hold in the 1960s, when state-sponsored dependency began to lose its consensus, and “all dependency [became] suspect.”¹⁴ Independence would become expected of everyone, women and men, regardless of race, but without the commensurate guarantees outside the market that formal employment could be a path out of poverty. This led to the most significant policy paradigm shift since the 1960s: The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act (PRWORA, or ‘welfare reform’).¹⁵ This most recent shift in a political theory of poverty has developed from critiques of ‘welfare,’ a term used derogatorily by opponents of the rights-based expressions of competence and political claims of the 1960s, which had challenged the ‘old paternalism’ of previous eras.

Welfare, broadly, defines federal and state benefit programs aimed at low-income recipients, and specifically, focuses on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).¹⁶ PRWORA changed

¹¹ Jason DeParle, *American Dream* (New York: Penguin, 2004). “The silence about self-defeating behavior, combined with the rejection of entry-level jobs, left the liberals with an increasingly cramped message: Don’t expect too much from people in the ghettos. In particular, don’t expect them to work – at least not in the kind of jobs most could actually get,” p. 96.

¹² Katz, *The Undeserving Poor*.

¹³ Ibid., illustrates the poor are considered “rational actors – potential consumers, savers, and entrepreneurs,” p. 275.

¹⁴ Fraser and Gordon, “A Genealogy of Dependency,” 324.

¹⁵ O’Connor, *Poverty Knowledge*.

¹⁶ Ann Orloff, “Farewell to Maternalism?,” *Institute for Policy Research*, no. 05-10 (2005): 1-58, describes TANF as the “farewell” to the maternalist policy heritage of ADC. The safety-net in the US is thought to be made up of TANF, SNAP, child health insurance, child support enforcement, childcare subsidies, early childhood education through Head Start, Unemployment Insurance, work assistance, child disability assistance through Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and tax credits. There is a growing literature on the “submerged welfare state” of public subsidies through tax credits (EITC), retirement savings, and home mortgage deduction. For reading on the submerged welfare state, see Christopher Howard, *The Hidden Welfare State* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1997); Suzanne Mettler, *The Submerged State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

cash assistance from an entitlement, a mandatory expenditure to anyone meeting the eligibility criteria, to a block grant giving states great flexibility in the conditions and sanctions applied to benefits.¹⁷ One such condition was the requirement that recipients work in approved activities.¹⁸ The shift removed the ‘rights’ aspect of cash assistance and replaced it with its corresponding ‘obligation.’ The racially discriminatory, punitive, and market-oriented nature of the new program has led some scholars to call the shift, “neoliberal paternalism.”¹⁹

Lawrence Mead, an NYU professor of politics, is credited with providing the intellectual foundation for mandating work requirements.²⁰ According to Sanford Schram, “Mead has been a major academic influence on welfare reform in recent years. He, more than anyone else, has pushed for a more paternalistic approach. [PRWORA] reforms welfare more in a Meadian than in a Murraysque way.”²¹ For Mead, welfare reform was “a triumph for democracy.”²² However, the paternalism proposed by Mead as a response to dependency confounds the typical typology of poverty problem formation. It argues that even if it is not an individual’s fault for the circumstances by which he is born or becomes poor, it is his fault if he chooses to remain poor – a rejection of the assumption of competence for all, men and women, in poverty (Quadrant 1). It argues that the scale of the intervention, then, must be at the level of the federal government mandating work (Quadrant 3). By

¹⁷ States were expected to be less generous in their spending given the requirement for a balanced budget. For a comparative account of state-level TANF reforms, see Alexander Coccia, “‘Creeping Stringency’ – Understanding Trends in TANF Stringency between 1996-2014,” *Department of Social Policy and Intervention* (2017).

¹⁸ Since then, the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 (DRA) removed previously approved work activities, such as education. It also reset the caseload reduction credit threshold and increased penalty enforcement for failing to meet mandatory work requirement numbers. Ohio was hit hard on both accounts. Joel Potts, “History of Ohio’s Welfare Reform Program,” *Ohio Jobs and Family Services Directors Association*, 9 January 2015.

¹⁹ Soss, et al., *Disciplining the Poor*.

²⁰ In 1991, Mead was called the “intellectual father of the behavior-modification model.” Paul Taylor, “Welfare Reformers Seek to Modify Budgets and Behavior,” *Washington Post*, 16 December 1991, A1. In 1996, his publications were listed, along with Murray’s, as having helped shape the “intellectual and political debate” of the last thirty years. Douglas Besharov, “At Issue: Shaping the Debate on Welfare,” *Washington Post*, 11 August 1996, 5. In 2018, Mead was claimed to have “supplied much of the intellectual groundwork” for welfare reform. Elizabeth Bruenig, “If the poor must work to earn every dollar, shouldn’t the rich?,” *Washington Post*, 6 January 2018.

²¹ Schram, “Review: *The New Paternalism*,” 668.

²² Linda Williams, *The Constraint of Race* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State UP, 2003), 65.

mandating work but not guaranteeing it, it emphasizes the market as the end of policy and the faults of the welfare system (Quadrant 2). Furthermore, because it does not fit completely in either quadrants 1 or 2, paternalism seems at first glance outside the traditional frames of conservatism and retrenchment efforts.

Mead's canon includes *Beyond Entitlement: The Social Obligations of Citizenship* (1986), *The New Politics of Poverty: The Nonworking Poor in America* (1992), *The New Paternalism: Supervisory Approaches to Poverty* (1997) for which he is editor and contributor, *Welfare Reform and Political Theory* (2005)²³ for which he is co-editor, and *Burdens of Freedom: Cultural Difference and American Power* (2019).²⁴ He has published numerous articles and compilations of his arguments with critiques from contributing academics and practitioners. He has and continues to testify before Congress during debates on TANF reauthorization and work requirements. Mead identifies as conservative, and most of his political critiques are about the Left. As is the case with most who write about poverty, the politics and policies are hardly ever decoupled. Nor should they be – however, their linkages make it difficult to identify normative and empirical assumptions present in the surrounding discourse; and to identify how these assumptions shape local and federal policies.

This chapter proceeds by identifying those assumptions, presenting criticisms of them, and considering them, as constitutive of the new paternalism, within the APD literature on institutional and ideational orders. It concludes by arguing that paternalism is a mechanism of retrenchment, a separate strand in the same ideational order as welfare abolition, and supported by the same colorblind ideational and institutional alliance.

²³ Lawrence Mead and Christopher Beem, eds., *Welfare Reform and Political Theory* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2005).

²⁴ Lawrence Mead, *Burdens of Freedom* (New York: Encounter Books, 2019).

1.1.i New Paternalism's Prophet: Lawrence Mead

In 2013, nearly twenty-years since PRWORA, Lawrence Mead testified before the U.S. House Subcommittee on Human Resources. The topic: “Making Welfare Work.” It was the first session of the 113th Congress, in which the Republicans maintained control despite an electoral victory for the incumbent President Obama. Mead presented the case for continued paternalism in the face of a fundamental problem: “As a society, we are not working as hard as we used to, and the problem is worst among lower-income Americans.”²⁵ Despite the claimed successes of welfare reform in the 1990s, which “integrated [low-income Americans, read: Black Americans] into mainstream American life as never before,” there was still much work to do: increase work tests for the major income programs (cash, food, and public housing assistance); include poor men in the “help and hassle” of paternalism; and restrict programs like disability that allow able-bodied workers to divert from the labor force. The good news for these proposed changes, he argued, is that “raising work levels on welfare is primarily an *administrative* problem.”²⁶ And yet, the claimed effects are profoundly moral: “Freedom is more than an abstraction. It is a way of life. It requires discipline. Those who would be free must shoulder the burdens of freedom.”²⁷

For thirty-years, Mead has decried the problem of *welfare dependency*. “Dependency throws serious doubt on the nation’s progress against poverty and disadvantage. Poverty did not really disappear; it was overwhelmed by cash.... Policymakers have not really solved poverty, only exchanged it for the problem of large-scale dependency.”²⁸ Yet, he has not advocated for the welfare abolition strand of retrenchment in the vein of conservatives such as Charles Murray. Instead, in

²⁵ Lawrence Mead, “Making Welfare Work,” U.S. House of Representatives, 113th Congress, 1st session (18 June 2013), 1. His measurement is the employment-population ratio for individuals between the ages of 15 and 64 (OECD stats). This is hardly an accurate measurement of work effort.

²⁶ Ibid., 6.

²⁷ Ibid., 10.

²⁸ Mead, *Beyond Entitlement*, 40.

order to rein in the permissiveness of the welfare state, which has failed to integrate the poor,²⁹ the state apparatus must instill discipline in recipients, requiring work as the main obligation. The new paternalism acts as a social contract, requiring welfare recipients to meet certain obligations in exchange for welfare, which was previously an unconditional right as an entitlement. There are many programs that serve low-income communities, and paternalism is not applied to cash assistance alone. Its premises have been used at the state and federal levels to reform other benefits, including SNAP and Medicaid. And it has been applied to teen pregnancy prevention, child support enforcement, homelessness, drug treatment, education, and mental health services.³⁰

The New Paternalism (1997) is the response to Mead's own quest set forth in *Beyond Entitlement* (1986), while *The New Politics of Poverty* (1992) is an interlude which elaborates on dependency politics and critiques the politics of the Left. It is incumbent to ask what exactly has sparked the thirty-year mission. What precisely is it about poverty that most offends? The new paternalists claim that poverty is the issue, yet focus on dependency; that voluntary idleness is the greatest cause, yet admit that this is a small part of the poverty population;³¹ that the poor must meet social obligations especially work in order to be considered full members of society yet the idle wealthy are exempt from such requirements because they are self-reliant.³² They acknowledge the existence of the working poor yet claim that discipline to keep the job is more important than adequate wages. They argue that even dependency is not the true offense.

²⁹ Mead, *The New Politics of Poverty*.

³⁰ These programs have different purposes because they serve different populations with different needs; therefore, blanket paternalism is not an effective solution.

³¹ "I do not claim that nonworkers are a majority of the poor. Rather, I say that working-age individuals are a majority of the poor and that *whether* they work is strategic for the whole poverty problem," p. 153. Lawrence Mead, "Guarantee Work Rather Than Aid," in Mary Jo Bane and Lawrence Mead, *Lifting Up the Poor* (Washington, DC: Brookings, 2003), 153-172.

³² "The thinking is not entirely consistent, but it is realistic," p. 192. Lawrence Mead, "Welfare Reform and Citizenship," in Mead and Beem, eds., *Welfare Reform and Political Theory*, 172-199. Mead argues against work requirements for the idle rich on the principle that neither public support nor political will exists for them. See also Gilbert Steiner, "Review: *Beyond Entitlement*," *American Political Science Review* 80, no. 3 (1986): 1028-1029.

Over the years, Mead has become less circumspect about what really offends, writing: “The point [of paternalism] is to stop people who could work from exploiting the system.”³³ His evidence is an infamous hypothetical given by Murray in *Losing Ground*, which made the case for complete abolition of the safety-net: Harold and Phyllis, an unwed couple with a child, are incentivized to marry and work if welfare is denied them. But with welfare, Phyllis will pretend to be single and go on aid, so that neither parent has to work.³⁴ What offends most, according to Mead, “is not dependency as such, but rather the casual way that some poor appear to abuse the safety net. By denying aid to the employable, then, welfare reform enforces not so much work as morality.”³⁵ It is the fear of *chiselers*, *cheats*, *malingers*, *welfare queens*, and *food stamp surfers* that truly offends.

It is here that Murray and Mead show their similarities. Mead merges with Murray in his conclusions regarding American cultural superiority, while Murray’s emphasis is on superiority derived from genetic differences.³⁶ Murray has posited that arguing one reason poverty exists is because a lot of poor people are born lazy, “merely implies that when we know the complete genetic story, it will turn out that the population below the poverty line in the United States has a configuration of the relevant genetic makeup that is significantly different from the configuration of the population above the poverty line.”³⁷ Murray believes in market competence – that the poor are economically-maximizing rational actors – but that belief is inconsistent with his beliefs in class-based genetic inferiority. His ‘genetic’ opinion more closely resembles the lack of competence assumed by Mead.

In *Burdens of Freedom*, Mead argues that theorizing cultural difference between Western and non-Western peoples (read: White and not) as an indicator of poverty’s cause “improves on structural accounts of poverty or inequality by pointing to differences in ways of life... Culture depends on

³³ Mead, “Welfare Reform and Citizenship,” 174.

³⁴ Charles Murray, *Losing Ground* (New York: Basic Books, 1984), 156-62.

³⁵ Mead, “Welfare Reform and Citizenship,” 174.

³⁶ Charles Murray, *Human Diversity* (New York: Twelve, 2020).

³⁷ Charles Murray, “Deeper Into the Brain,” *National Review*, 24 January 2000.

socialization: people display the attitudes in which they are raised.”³⁸ Mead claims that poor attitudes cause many to opt “out of work and family” which “[weakens] the great engine of individual effort that generates American wealth and power.”³⁹ He attempts to link these arguments about American primacy to his proposed solution of paternalism, which promotes “the assertive and responsible style that is... needed for American leadership.”⁴⁰ What Murray concludes via ‘genetics,’ Mead concludes via ‘culture’ – the poor are inferior.

Mead’s effort is therefore fundamentally a moral one, steeped in a lineage of 19th Century reformers “in service of a moral ideal”⁴¹ attempting “to regulate behavior and use government”⁴² for their ends. The new paternalism is just as radical as welfare abolition in its view toward the poor. Mead’s true concern is the soul of the country, assuming that trust is built on mutual work ethic.⁴³ It is an ahistorical and astructural account of poverty, but a powerful one nonetheless. Its radicalism did not emerge from thin air: new paternalism’s power rests on four assumptions that have been circulating through welfare debates since before the 1960s – gaining strength and being challenged in various historical moments.

³⁸ Mead, *Burdens of Freedom*, 7.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 199.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 200.

⁴¹ Joel Schwartz, “PRWORA and the Promotion of Virtue,” in Mead and Beem, eds., *Welfare Reform and Political Theory*: 223-248, 224. Mead vehemently denies that paternalists are *solely* moralists. Rather, “They are reacting to a policy history in which voluntary employment programs... – training, work incentives, public jobs – have not raised work levels among the poor, while workfare shows a potential to do so,” p. 403-404. Lawrence Mead, “Should Workfare be Mandatory?,” *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 9, no. 3 (1990): 400-404.

⁴² Katz, *The Undeserving Poor*, 184.

⁴³ Mead, “Welfare Reform and Citizenship,” 178-179.

1.1.ii The Assumptions of the New Paternalism

“Every society is really governed by hidden laws, by unspoken but profound assumptions on the part of the people, and ours is no exception.” – James Baldwin⁴⁴

Most scholars agree, “The new paternalism is not all that different from the old paternalism,”⁴⁵ just new articulations of old assumptions. Both the old and new assume that poverty can be addressed by forcing the poor to change their behavior and overlook “the way that the economy continues to systematically neglect certain communities, groups, and neighborhoods.”⁴⁶ The primary differences between the old and new are the latter’s advocacy for federal government intervention and design, its focus on programs originating in the public sector, and its emphasis on obligations grounded in understandings of citizenship. Whereas the emblematic welfare policy of the old paternalism would be rules governing reproduction and gender norms, such as the “man in the house” rule, the emblematic policy of the new paternalism is work requirements. The new paternalism is responding to a policy history and shaped by an economic context in which dependency is viewed entirely as psychosocial, not state-approved, in which market participation is the primary goal of welfare reforms, and in which more African Americans are gaining access to safety-net programs. The primary function of the old paternalism was social control; *the primary function of the new paternalism is retrenchment.*

The new paternalism contains four assumptions: (1) rejection of the assumption of competence in traditional social policies; (2) work as the primary obligation for full recognition in society; (3) paternalism as a question of administration, not politics; and, (4) paternalism as postracial social policy.

⁴⁴ James Baldwin, “The Discovery of What it Means to be an American,” in *Nobody Knows My Name* (New York: Dell, 1961), 11.

⁴⁵ Schram, “Review: *The New Paternalism*,” 668.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 668. While I distinguish here between the old and new paternalism, my reference to paternalism throughout the rest of the thesis designates the new paternalism, unless otherwise specified.

Mead argues that the assumption of competence (i.e. that individuals in society have the capacity to engage as full members of society in pursuit of individual and societal ideals) that political theorists from Rousseau to Rawls make about citizens in societies cannot be granted to individuals in poverty, because they violate the work ethic and societal norms that grant full status.⁴⁷ He bases this premise on the false empirical claim that the fundamental issue of the poverty problem is not a lack of either resources or well-paying jobs, but rather, the decision of the non-working poor not to work. He admits, “to reflect on the morality or competence of fellow citizens in a democracy is inherently invidious,”⁴⁸ but the risk of invidiousness does not stop him from such questioning.

Mead puts the identity of those in poverty at the forefront of the poverty question. While he claims that this focus does not blame past poverty on those who are “dutiful but defeated,” the poor are responsible for their own functioning regardless. Throughout his writings, he has developed the argument as such: people in poverty have functioning problems, these problems and behavior are not becoming of decent citizens, and, so, the poor are incompetent and fundamentally different from their fellow citizens to whom competence can be imputed.

Incompetence is illustrated in a number of ways, according to paternalists. First, through social phenomena attributed to culture and environment, such as hopelessness, single parenthood, absent fathers, crime, incarceration, drug addiction, and black-market activity.⁴⁹ Second, through individual psychosocial behavior, such as poor decision making, “unconscious irrational motivation, conditioned behavior, self-punitive expression of anger, bad genes, poor self-esteem and self-efficacy, maladaptive ego mechanisms of defense, and undersocialization.”⁵⁰

⁴⁷ “We need a new political language in which competence is the subject instead of the assumption,” p. 239. Mead, *The New Politics of Poverty*.

⁴⁸ Lawrence Mead, “Poverty and Political Theory,” Annual Meeting of APSA (1996), 9.

⁴⁹ It is important to note the incomparability of these categories. E.g. addicts need a different set of social policies than people who are experiencing poverty.

⁵⁰ George Vaillant, “Poverty and Paternalism,” in Mead, ed., *The New Paternalism*, 279-304. 283.

Work is the primary obligation for full recognition in society

The single greatest signifier of incompetence, however, is the phenomenon of voluntary non-work.⁵¹ Mead describes it as the “reluctance of poor adults to take and hold the low-skilled jobs they can already get.”⁵² At the same time, he argues, clients view work enforcement favorably, whereas voluntary work programs and work-incentives have largely failed them: “for most welfare adults, nonwork is felt as a dilemma, not a choice. They want to work, yet most do not.... Their problem is not to learn the value of a job but to align their lifestyle with work. This the program assists and requires them to do, and for that they are grateful.”⁵³ They are grateful because work is assumed to be both the greatest source of individual meaning⁵⁴ and the imperative for proper contribution to society which facilitates mutual trust between people regardless of race or income.⁵⁵

Work, according to Mead, only counts as formal employment, accountable to wider society. During his advocacy for AFDC to be replaced with workfare, Mead claimed, “This would require the core of poor America, for the first time in a generation, to seek survival through the workplace rather than outside it.”⁵⁶ Neither care work nor work in hidden economies provide the work ethic that would be a prerequisite for full standing.⁵⁷

The neglect of care work illustrates the gendered aspects to such welfare reforms.⁵⁸ As women, especially women of color, moved into the political sphere in the 1960s, they advocated for the

⁵¹ In later writings, Mead emphasizes that “non-marriage” is also an illustration of the lack of competence; however, his early writings emphasize non-work. In fact, Mead expressed skepticism that welfare reform would help marriage or child-bearing outcomes. Paul Taylor, “Carrots and Sticks of Welfare Reform,” *Washington Post*, 4 February 1992, A13.

⁵² Lawrence Mead, “Raising Work Levels Among the Poor,” Working Paper, 14.

⁵³ Lawrence Mead, “Welfare Employment,” in Mead, ed., *The New Paternalism*, 39-88. 65.

⁵⁴ Elizabeth Ben-Ishai, “The New Paternalism,” *Political Research Quarterly* 65, no. 1 (2012): 151-165. 160.

⁵⁵ In *Burdens of Freedom*, Mead ties work-ethic to cultural superiority. Here, it is worth noting that Jason Turner, the architect of Wisconsin’s strict welfare reform efforts, used the phrase “work will set you free” in order to promote the workfare reforms, not realizing that those were the words written above the gates to Auschwitz. DeParle, *American Dream*, 162.

⁵⁶ Mead, *The New Politics of Poverty*, 255.

⁵⁷ Dee Cook, “From welfare to work and back again,” in Mead, *From Welfare to Work*, 99-112.

⁵⁸ Mimi Abramovitz, “Learning from the History of Poor and Working-Class Women’s Activism,” *ANNALS AAPSS* 577 (2001):118-130. See also Randy Albelda, “Fallacies of Welfare-to-work policies,” *ANNALS AAPSS* 577 (2001): 66-78; Jane Lewis, “Gender and welfare state change,” *European Societies* 4, no. 4 (2002): 331-357.

expansion of maternalist programs such as ADC as well as for women's employment in traditional breadwinners' roles and economic independence. However, by displacing "the explicitly gender-differentiated maternalist logic of politically recognizing, and financially supporting mothers' caregiving [with] ostensibly gender-neutral notions of recognizing and supporting only economically 'active' adults,"⁵⁹ 'dependency' of any kind became suspect and viewed within the moral/psychological register, and, therefore, associated with a complete rejection of the competence assumption.

In fact, the premise itself is based on the language of citizenship fundamental to the claims of the 1960s: with rights come commensurate obligations. Mead's goal is to "create for recipients *inside* the welfare state the same balance of support and expectation that other Americans face *outside* it."⁶⁰ Like Murray, Mead is neither interested in equal outcome or status; nor does he question the factors outside the individual that cause people to be on the inside of the welfare state in the first place.⁶¹ Instead, 'citizenship' is less competitive than status, and so, should be the groundwork of social policy – the provision of equal rights as long as everyone meets the common obligations, from which welfare recipients are excluded (including work, speaking English, literacy, paying taxes, following the law).⁶²

Initially, Mead claimed that only cash assistance should be subject to work requirements, because "Government still treats [other benefits such as SNAP and Medicaid] as an ultimate safety net unrelated to conduct. This is acceptable, in part, because in-kind aid is less subject to abuse than cash assistance."⁶³ However, in 2013, Mead testified in favor of expanding work requirements to these programs.⁶⁴ Clinton and others had believed that the addition of work requirements to cash assistance would substantively differentiate it from in-kind benefits, and, therefore, spare them from the same scrutiny of conditionality. However, recent efforts are not an aberration from Mead's logic, but a

⁵⁹ Orloff, "Farewell to Maternalism?," 2.

⁶⁰ Mead, *Beyond Entitlement*, 4.

⁶¹ Also, like Murray, his definition of the welfare state does not include universal programs like Social Security.

⁶² Mead, *Beyond Entitlement*.

⁶³ Mead, "Welfare Reform and Citizenship," 182.

⁶⁴ Mead, "Making Welfare Work."

natural extension of it. The expanded notion of *entitlement dependency* is used to ensure that *no* dependency, not even on in-kind benefits which *had* evaded such scrutiny, is state-sponsored.

Fundamental to Mead's assertion of work as the primary mutual obligation is the role of *public opinion*, both in terms of support for welfare policies and acceptance of recipients into society. Work-centered welfare schemes are politically attractive because "regardless of how they are explained,... they seem to engage all sides of the public's mind [and political culture]: its egalitarian desire to help those in need, its hierarchical desire to enforce a central societal norm, and its individualist desire to foster independence and self-reliance."⁶⁵ During the welfare reform era, Mead, and others including Clinton, repeatedly claimed that requiring work in exchange for benefits would change public opinion in favor of the programs and, by extension, recipients. Mead's texts are peppered with this fundamental hope, sometimes to the point of utopian visions mixed with political strategy: "If work is enforced, the recipients become more deserving, and generosity is more popular. With more disadvantaged people in jobs, most of them low-paid, support for unionism and protective labour market reforms would grow."⁶⁶ Because citizens view welfare dependency as a passive mode of existence, strong work enforcement "would remove the albatross [of passive dependency] that has doomed all liberal proposals for major new social benefits for a generation."⁶⁷

At the same time, it is important to note that material benefit to those in poverty is not Mead's concern. He writes, "the public wants to see welfare parents working and their children in school even if there are no economic improvements – even if enforcing these behaviors costs more than just paying out aid."⁶⁸ Mead relies on public opinion – "paternalism appears to be the social policy that most Americans prefer"⁶⁹ – to bolster what he otherwise claims is an empirical argument about the

⁶⁵ Steven Teles, *Whose Welfare? AFDC and Elite Politics* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1996), 55.

⁶⁶ Lawrence Mead, *From Welfare to Work: Lessons from America* (London: Institute of Economic Affairs, 1997), 129-130.

⁶⁷ Mead, *The New Politics of Poverty*, 254.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 57-63. Gilder, *Wealth and Poverty*, shared this sentiment: "It is the willingness of man to give – or to work – without a specific reward that allows liberty," p. 23.

⁶⁹ Lawrence Mead, "The Rise of Paternalism," in Mead, ed., *The New Paternalism*, 1-38. 13.

efficacy of work requirements. This is because public opinion and public demands are a “visceral force” in which “people regard the nonworking poor, not just as free riders, but as parasites, even betrayers of their society.”⁷⁰ Despite this damning characterization, Mead *somehow* still believes that “determined work programs alter that image,”⁷¹ and that simply through meeting common obligations such as work, “the rich man who puts in long hours in an office on Wall Street is seen as morally equivalent to the welfare recipient on workfare who is made to sweep the street outside”⁷² The solution to poverty, then, comes after the creation of trusted and respected citizens.

Paternalism is an administrative solution to the apolitical problem of dependency

Despite its consequences for citizenship, despite its clear normative framing and implications, despite his writings brimming with the notion of “moral reciprocity,” and despite acknowledgement that questions of what is acceptable to society are political questions,⁷³ Mead emphasizes that the new paternalism’s goal of raising work levels “is primarily an *administrative* problem.”⁷⁴ Its primary purpose is to impose behavioral standards, which must be enforced through new indicators of performance, supervisory tactics, and *expanded active bureaucracy*. Discipline in the administration of programs is necessary to make sure that recipients do what is expected.

⁷⁰ Mead, “Welfare Reform and Citizenship,” 187.

⁷¹ Mead, “Welfare Employment,” 60.

⁷² Mead, *Beyond Entitlement*, 237-240. Margaret Weir’s criticism of Mead is damning: “While Mead’s sense that the poor need respect as well as material security is commendable, his claim that enforcing low wage work will earn them this respect is more than a little disingenuous. In fact, Mead’s approach to policy seems more calculated to appeal to the offended sensibilities of those who feel that the poor are getting something for nothing than designed to offer the poor real opportunities for self-support and the respect that comes with it.... In this light, Mead’s proposals amount to little more than a cynical acceptance of second-class citizenship for the poor,” p. 496. Weir “Review: *Beyond Entitlement*,” *American Journal of Sociology* 93, no. 2 (1987): 495-497.

⁷³ As Anne Schneider and Helen Ingram, “Behavioral Assumptions of Policy Tools,” *Journal of Politics* 52, no. 2 (1990): 510–529, argue, “public policy almost always attempts to get people to do things they otherwise would not have done,” p. 510. Mead, *The New Paternalism*, 190, states that the question of whether care work should be considered ‘work’ is a political question, not one relevant to the administration of work requirements.

⁷⁴ Mead, “Making Welfare Work,” 10. “The potential for paternalism rests on the progress of public administration,” p. 20. Mead, “The Rise of Paternalism.”

Mead promotes this idea by putting it in stark contrast with Murray's *incentive*-focused public programs aimed at budgeting and cost-savings. This follows from Mead's initial assumption about competence. Welfare reform, he writes, is an "administrative frontier," because "implementation... is a better measure of success than monetary gains for the clients or the government budget."⁷⁵

By emphasizing the role of public administration in the new paternalism, Mead obfuscates its political and normative implications through "the technocratic language of the policy-evaluation field."⁷⁶ Paternalism, then, is perceived as a value-neutral program, its politics remaining outside its administration.⁷⁷ While Mead acknowledges that the questions underlying paternalism, e.g. limitations in application to programs and people, are political in nature, his clear insistence on separating politics from administration shows his willingness to use both the lack of political action among low-income individuals and the very real personal problems of some on public assistance as justification for the lack of competence that requires paternalism.⁷⁸ Ultimately, the development of paternalism as a program of public administration moves its premises further below paperwork and performance indicators, tucked in bureaucratic mazes, away from the politics from which it originated.⁷⁹ This obfuscation lends itself to the replication and expansion of these efforts.

Paternalism is postracial social policy

The prior three assumptions are explicated by Mead as facets of the new paternalism. The least examined assumption is his claim that the new paternalism is "*postracial social policy*."⁸⁰ Whereas

⁷⁵ Mead, "Welfare Policy: The Administrative Frontier," 598.

⁷⁶ Peck, "*Workfare*," 157.

⁷⁷ Mead, "The Rise of Paternalism," 21. This appeal to bureaucratic management was also a hallmark of the state-level Progressive reformers and New Dealers. Weir, "States, Race, and the Decline of New Deal Liberalism."

⁷⁸ Schram, "Review: *The New Paternalism*," labels this a "self-fulfilling prophecy": "Limit social assistance to those who have so many personal problems that they have to rely on assistance.... It might then seem plausible to think that fighting poverty is largely a question of the administration of programs [and] imposition of behavioral standards," p. 672.

⁷⁹ See Andrea Louise Campbell, *Trapped in America's Safety Net* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), for a discussion on how means tested programs trap people with low benefits, high benefit cliffs, and draconian restrictions and sanctions.

⁸⁰ Mead, "The Rise of Paternalism," 22.

the ‘old paternalism’ (“extreme versions associated with American slavery and European colonialism”⁸¹) is an explicitly racist endeavor, the new paternalism, Mead argues, is postracial in its appeal to citizenship – expecting equal rights and equal obligations and emphatic on reconstructing citizens rather than fixating on past barriers.⁸² This aspect is sparsely examined in the literature on the new paternalism, despite being fundamental in its effect.⁸³ Beyond Soss, et al. and their analysis of racial inequities across sanctioning regimes, most critiques of Mead accept the postracial assumption and conduct postracial analysis, or at least mention it only briefly.

Prior to welfare reform in the 1990s, Mead explicitly and frequently makes clear that the poverty population he is concerned with is non-White.⁸⁴ However, *The New Paternalism*, as a justification for the monumental welfare reform that had just occurred, is noticeably race-neutral in its language, no longer explicitly stating that the poor are equated with African Americans. The legislation itself and the public debates around it had been deeply coded with racist language, and “undergirding [these] messages were works of conservative authors, many of whom now take credit for welfare reform and who openly implicated blacks.”⁸⁵ Dee Cook notes that Mead references the ‘ghetto’ and ‘inner city,’ in a way that makes it clear his focus is Black Americans.⁸⁶

In *The Constraint of Race*, Linda Williams notes that Mead singled out poor Black women as being unwilling to work because of a “selfish resistance to menial jobs.”⁸⁷ She also highlights Mead’s role in creating the racial subtext for PRWORA: “In 1995, Republicans set about fashioning a plan (... a lot like the old paternalism advocated as far back as Reconstruction) to restructure the welfare

⁸¹ Soss, et al., *Disciplining the Poor*, 25.

⁸² Ibid., 26.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ “Racial politics... is today dominated by the ‘undeserving’—criminals, school dropouts, the homeless, and welfare recipients who do not work.” Lawrence Mead, “Race and Urban Politics,” *First Things*, February 1991, 5-6, <https://www.firstthings.com/article/1991/02/race-and-urban-politics>.

⁸⁵ Williams, *The Constraint of Race*, 250.

⁸⁶ Cook, “From welfare to work and back again.”

⁸⁷ Mead, *The New Politics of Poverty*, 114.

state that actually codified Mead's and other Republican academic spokespersons' views into law."⁸⁸ However, Mead quickly noted that public support for welfare reform had little to do with race.⁸⁹ Ultimately, Mead's premises *became* postracial in their later justifications, mirroring and actively contributing to the shift toward colorblind policymaking in American political development (see Section 1.4).

Mead *is* aware of the insult of paternalism's connotation, acknowledging that "the offense [of treating adults like children who cannot pursue their self-interest] is especially egregious in the case of black Americans. The insult is limited in that enforcement is confined to a small number of responsibilities, such as working and obeying the law, that are incumbent on all citizens."⁹⁰ Despite its clear connection to the racism of old paternalism, Mead argues that the new paternalism is limited only to those things expected of all citizens, treating people equally regardless of race. And yet, *even acknowledging this*, Mead ties the alleged lack of functioning in today's Black community to the old paternalism: "Today's poor blacks function poorly because their parents did and their parents did, a pattern that ultimately goes back [to slavery].... Group memories of slavery and Jim Crow inculcate hopelessness more powerfully than any bias blacks are likely to meet at present."⁹¹

Given that the Civil Rights Movement and the War on Poverty were intimately connected, it was necessary for Mead to untwine the two in order to critique the permissiveness of the Great Society programs. Citing the Moynihan report, he writes, "black society was more coherent before civil rights than after"⁹².... Racism per se was certainly harmful to blacks.... But at least racism did not exempt

⁸⁸ Williams, *The Constraint of Race*, 251.

⁸⁹ Soss, et al., *Disciplining the Poor*, 65.

⁹⁰ Mead, "The Rise of Paternalism," 26. For an excellent discussion of insult, offense, and paternalism, see Nicolas Cornell, "A Third Theory of Paternalism," *Michigan Law Review* 113, no. 8 (2015): 1295-1336.

⁹¹ Mead, *The New Politics of Poverty*, 114.

⁹² There is great criticism of welfare policy's impact on the Black community and family life. E.g. the "man in the house" rule meant fathers could not be in the home if the family wanted to receive benefits. See Lucy Williams, *Decades of Distortion* (Somerville, MA: Political Research Associates, 1997), 2. But Mead's criticism is not with the incentivized separation of families, but with the receipt of benefits in a way that cheats the system.

blacks from normal social demands as recent federal policy has done. Permissive programs have replaced the racist regime with one that is, in its own way, equally destructive.”⁹³ The rhetorical strategy is insidious: By the federal government advocating for race-conscious policies, Black Americans have been exempt from equal citizenship for which the Civil Rights Movement so powerfully fought. In order, then, to fulfill the goals of the movement, Black Americans must temporarily be treated as incapable of deciding for themselves and their community what is best.⁹⁴

1.1.iii Primary Criticisms of the New Paternalism

Of particular benefit to a systematic review of the elite discourses of paternalism and to understand the place of paternalism in American political development is Mead’s engagement in scholarly dialogue, often inviting criticism of his work and providing responses. In secondary literature, Mead is often cited but rarely featured. However, his edited works provide important criticisms. These include *From Welfare to Work: Lessons from America* (1997), *Lifting up the Poor: A Dialogue on Religion, Poverty, and Welfare Reform* (2003),⁹⁵ and *Welfare Reform and Political Theory* (2005).

Within political theory, paternalism is justified “by reasons referring exclusively to the welfare, good, happiness, needs, interests or values of the person being coerced.”⁹⁶ The conventional critiques of paternalism⁹⁷ within political theory are outside the scope of this thesis; however, one broad point is of note: paternalism expresses and reinforces power disparities among individual members of a community.⁹⁸ With respect to its application in welfare policy, this is justified, according to its adherents, because paternalism is a sorting mechanism to properly identify the deserving poor from

⁹³ Mead, *Beyond Entitlement*, 67.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Mary Jo Bane and Lawrence Mead, *Lifting Up the Poor* (Washington, DC: Brookings, 2003).

⁹⁶ Gerald Dworkin, “Paternalism,” in Richard Wasserstrom, ed., *Morality and the law*, (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1971), 107-126. 108.

⁹⁷ See, e.g., John Stuart Mill and Elizabeth Rapaport, *On Liberty* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1978).

⁹⁸ Marion Smiley, “Paternalism and Democracy,” *Journal of Value Inquiry* 23 (2004): 299-318. 309.

the undeserving poor.⁹⁹ According to James Wilson, “The work and behavior we demand of those who seek our help is one rough way of measuring just how voluntary their poverty may be.”¹⁰⁰ By this logic, the dependent poor can become deserving by working, but they still might be poor. In subsequent writings, Mead delves into greater explication of deservingness.¹⁰¹ With respect to theory, most criticisms surround the limited, economic notions of citizenship, and distinctions between types of reciprocity.¹⁰² These critiques are important and will be mentioned throughout the thesis, but are beyond the scope of this literature review.

There are both empirical and normative criticisms to Mead’s new paternalism – about the evidence used to marshal his claims and about the values prioritized in the claims themselves.¹⁰³

The first empirical critique is Mead’s “simplistic and distorted” view of the relationship between poverty (and welfare reciprocity) and work.¹⁰⁴ Ethnographic research illustrates that “the thought that work and welfare [are] contrasting ways of life – a central premise of the public debate – [is]... nonsensical.”¹⁰⁵ Both contribute to strategies to survive.¹⁰⁶ William Julius Wilson discusses mental adaptations, but not genetic or cultural variance.¹⁰⁷ Additionally, Mead’s concern that idleness, or refusal to work, is the main cause of poverty neglects his own acknowledgment of the fact that

⁹⁹ Michael Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse* (New York: Basic Books, 1986), identifies this dynamic: “a war on the able-bodied poor: an attempt to define, locate, and purge them from the rolls of relief,” p. 18.

¹⁰⁰ Wilson, “Paternalism, Democracy, and Bureaucracy,” 343.

¹⁰¹ Mead, “Welfare Reform and Citizenship,” 178-179.

¹⁰² See, e.g., Peter Dwyer, *Welfare Rights and Responsibilities* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2000); Nancy Fraser and Linda Gordon, “Contract versus Charity,” *Socialist Review* 22, no. 3 (1992): 45-67; Robert Goodin, “Structures of Mutual Obligation,” *Journal of Social Policy* 31, no. 4 (2002): 579-596; Desmond King and Jeremy Waldron, “Citizenship, Social Citizenship and the Defence of Welfare Rights,” *British Journal of Political Science* 18, no. 4 (1988): 415-444; Robert Lieberman, *Shaping Race Policy* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2005); Thomas Humphrey Marshall, *Class, Citizenship, and Social Development* (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1964); Kevin Olson, *Reflexive Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006); Margaret Somers, *Genealogies of Citizenship* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2008); Stuart White, “What do we owe to each other?” *OXPOL*, 11 October 2012.

¹⁰³ “Our disagreements here may be an example of... our tendency to err on different sides in conditions of uncertainty.... My approach runs the risk of wasting taxpayers’ money on programs that are not needed or do not work; Larry’s approach runs the risk of denying productive opportunities to people who need and would take advantage of them,” p.113. Mary Jo Bane, “A Reply to Mead,” in Bane and Mead, *Lifting Up the Poor*, 107-119.

¹⁰⁴ Cook, “From welfare to work and back again.”

¹⁰⁵ DeParle, *American Dream*, 73. See also David Shipler, *The Working Poor* (New York: Vintage Books, 2004); Kathryn Edin and H. Luke Shaefer, *\$2.00 a Day* (New York: First Mariner Books, 2016).

¹⁰⁶ Linda Shaw, et al., “Sanctions as Everyday Resistance to Welfare Reform,” *Social Justice* 35, no. 4 (2008): 83-98.

¹⁰⁷ William Julius Wilson, *The Truly Disadvantaged*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

many poor are working, “but that this work is often in the hidden economy – that they are employed illegally, ‘on the side’, while claiming benefits.”¹⁰⁸ Carole Pateman criticizes his definition of nonwork: “To put single mothers into the category of nonworkers is possible only because ‘work’ has become identified with employment.”¹⁰⁹ Logically, we see that the true problem is “*not* one of idleness and low work levels at all: the problem is that the poor are making the rational economic calculation that the wages paid in the kinds of jobs on offer to them are insufficient to maintain themselves and their families.”¹¹⁰ Other research indicates that recipients who are subject to time limits effectively space out their benefit claims in order to maximize their incomes over the years the time limit covers.¹¹¹ This evidence counters Mead’s claim that the poor are incapable of making decisions to support themselves and their families.¹¹²

The second set of criticisms are from libertarian writers, who argue that, whether the paternalism is soft (e.g. behavioral ‘nudges’) or hard (e.g. work requirements), it is a slippery slope to circumventing individual liberty. Fundamental to this liberty is the freedom to fail, because “the more we protect individuals from making decisions (good or bad), the less willing they will be to invest in decision making capacities.”¹¹³ This argument is essential for understanding the Murray-esque critiques of the welfare state – that it hampers the innate capacity of individuals to be economically maximizing actors. Like Murray, libertarians emphasize “private options and opportunities for self-correction” that are not coercive.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁸ Cook, “From welfare to work and back again,” 110.

¹⁰⁹ Carole Pateman, “Another Way Forward: Welfare, Social Reproduction, and a Basic Income,” in Mead and Beem, eds., *Welfare Reform and Political Theory*, 34-64. 42.

¹¹⁰ Cook, “From welfare to work and back again,” 110.

¹¹¹ Hamish Low, et al., “Marriages, Labor Supply and the Dynamics of the Social Safety Net,” *NBER Working Paper*, no. 24356, 24 September 2018.

¹¹² Eithne McLaughlin, “Workfare – a Pull, a Push or a Shove,” in Mead, *From Welfare to Work*, 79-96. 87.

¹¹³ Jonathan Klick, “The Dangers of Letting Someone Else Decide,” in Cato Institute, *Slippery Slopes and the New Paternalism*, 9 April 2010, <https://www.cato-unbound.org/issues/april-2010/slippery-slopes-new-paternalism>.

¹¹⁴ Glen Whitman, “The Rise of the New Paternalism,” in *Ibid.*, 5 April 2010, <https://www.cato-unbound.org/issues/april-2010/slippery-slopes-new-paternalism>.

A third critique of the new paternalism, which will be expanded upon in this thesis, is its individualistic focus. According to Schram: “The premise that informs [the new Paternalism] begs a basic question...: What if poverty is not largely an issue of personal barriers? If this is so, then no amount of paternalistic social programming will be able to force the poor to change their way out of poverty.”¹¹⁵ We can test paternalism from this behavioral logic. If paternalism were a success, work rates would be going up and material deprivation would be going down. However, the empirical evidence provides a different story: cash welfare rolls have fallen sharply,¹¹⁶ states have reaped huge financial windfalls from TANF,¹¹⁷ work levels are lower for those sanctioned by work requirement violations,¹¹⁸ for those working earnings remain low,¹¹⁹ financial incentive programs are shown to be more effective than mandatory employment programs,¹²⁰ and myriad hardships remain for those kicked off of benefits.¹²¹ Mead, however, has claimed welfare reform was a success, with its only challenges being to increase wages for working mothers and reach absent fathers.¹²²

Even on his hope that welfare reform would sway public opinion, Mead was proven wrong: “Work-centered reform did not reduce the association of public aid with dependency or the association of poverty with lack of effort. In the wake of welfare reform, Americans did not become more willing to spend on the poor, on blacks, or on welfare.”¹²³ According to Greg Shaw’s analysis

¹¹⁵ Schram, “Review: *The New Paternalism*,” 668.

¹¹⁶ Ladonna Pavetti, “TANF Studies Show Work Requirement Proposals for Other Programs Would Harm Millions, Do Little to Increase Work,” *Center for Budget and Policy Priorities*, 13 November 2018, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/family-income-support/tanf-studies-show-work-requirement-proposals-for-other-programs-would>.

¹¹⁷ Wendy Cole, “Rich Ohio but Poor Ohioans,” *Time Magazine*, 22 January 2006.

¹¹⁸ Bong Joo Lee, et al., “Are Welfare Sanctions Working as Intended?,” *Social Service Review* (2004): 371- 402.

¹¹⁹ Gayle Hamilton and Charles Michalopoulos, “Job Search or Basic Education Participation First: Which Improves Welfare Recipients’ Earnings More in the Long Term?,” *MDRC*, October 2016.

¹²⁰ Rebecca Blank, “Evaluating Welfare Reform in the United States,” *Journal of Economic Literature* 40, no. 4 (2002): 1105-1166. 1150.

¹²¹ Lee, et al., “Are Welfare Sanctions Working as Intended?”; Jean Oggins and Amy Fleming, “Welfare Reform Sanctions and Financial Strain in a Food-Pantry Sample,” *Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare* 28, no. 2 (2001): 101-123; Nancy Reichman, et al., “TANF Sanctioning and Hardship,” *Social Services Review* 79, no. 2 (2005): 215-236; Melissa Ford Shah, et al., “Predicting Homelessness among Low-Income Parents on TANF,” *Washington State Department of Social and Health Services*, August 2015.

¹²² Lawrence Mead, “A Summary of Welfare Reform,” in Mead and Beem, eds., *Welfare Reform and Political Theory*, 1-33. 20-23.

¹²³ Soss, et al., *Disciplining the Poor*, 286.

of the General Social Survey (Figure 1.1), support for both ‘welfare’ and ‘assistance to the poor’ returned approximately to their pre-PRWORA levels. With respect to his hope that mutual trust could be restored and mutual acceptance granted to recipients, research shows that supervisory experiences with welfare undermine social trust, political participation, and faith in government;¹²⁴ and that experiences with TANF programs specifically have substantial negative effects on rates of civic and political engagement among the recipients.¹²⁵

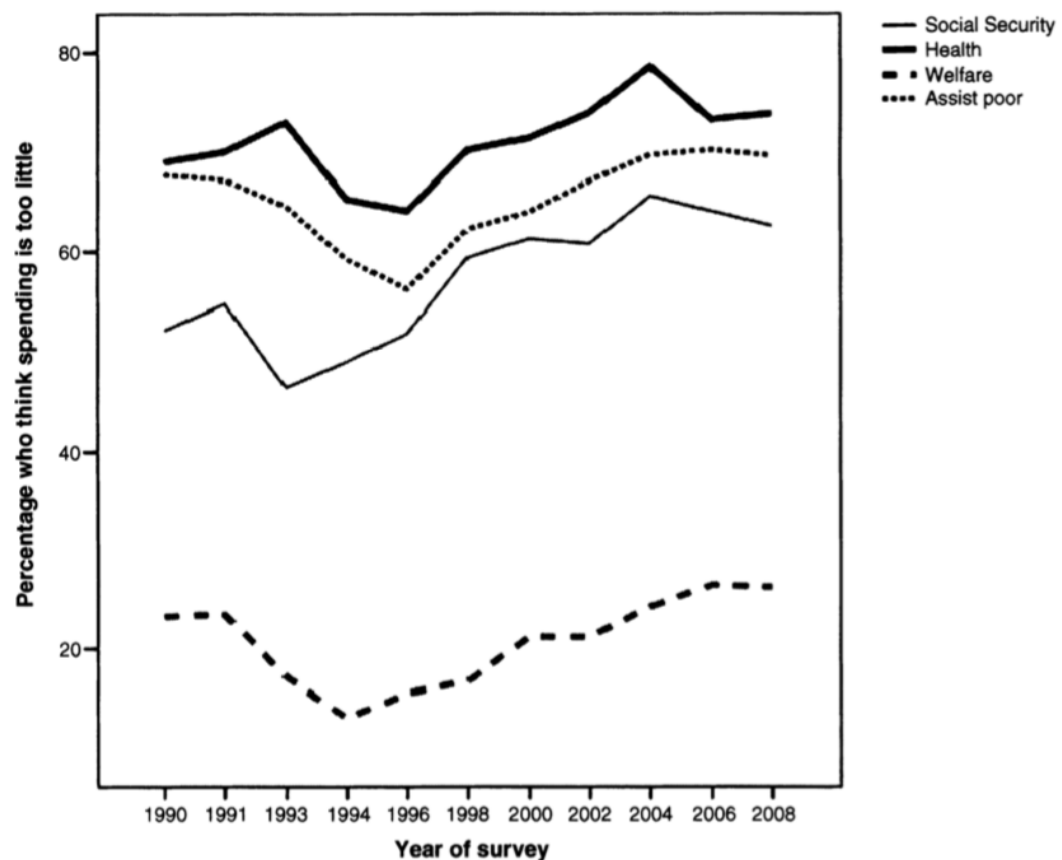


Figure 1.1: Support for Increased Spending in Four Areas¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Jennifer Lawless and Richard Fox, “Political Participation of the Urban Poor,” *Social Problems* 48 (2001): 362-385; Staffan Kumlin, *The Personal and the Political* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

¹²⁵ Sarah Bruch, et al., “From Policy to Polity,” *American Sociological Review* 75, no. 2 (2010): 205-226.

¹²⁶ National Opinion Resource Center (University of Chicago), General Social Survey. In Greg Shaw, “Changes in Public Opinion and the American Welfare State,” *Political Science Quarterly* 124, no. 4 (2009-10): 627-653. 633. ‘Welfare’ and ‘assistance to the poor’ technically comprise the same programs, but are perceived differently.

Given the scant evidence of paternalism's actual success through work rates, poverty numbers, or public generosity towards welfare (posited outcomes by its proponents), it is necessary to ask why the new paternalism prevails as the dominant framework for social policy. To better understand this, I analyze the new paternalism within an understanding of American political development.

1.2 Institutional and Ideational Order and Tension in American Political Development

American Political Development literature (APD) seeks to understand, categorize, and analyze patterned observations of political change, through institutional and ideational orders encapsulating either the organized actors and their institutions or the contestations of ideological currents, respectively. These observed orders usually fall into distinct time periods with distinct underlying ideological tenets. However, ideas and institutions are inseparable: “traditions of ideas and ideologies are always carried by particular organizations or sets of organizations within the coalition that constitutes a political order.”¹²⁷ Therefore, “ideas can produce political change only when particular, identifiable political institutions, groups, and actors advance them.”¹²⁸ John Kenneth Galbraith called the conglomeration of hegemonic ideas and institutions the “conventional wisdom.”¹²⁹

More recent literature emphasizes the tensions between orders – not in the sense that one will supersede while the other becomes extinct – but rather that at every level – from individual decisions to federal policy discourses – the tension between orders is ever-present. The notion that one ideological or institutional order wins out over another falls into the trap of applying “winners-take-all” theory to analyses of social and political phenomena, and often ignores both the salience and power of ideas outside of the conventional wisdom or outside the level of analysis (e.g. if federal level analysis ignores local conditions). Political theorists such as Corey Robin commonly argue that conventional wisdoms are strongest when they hone their arguments against a strong opposition.¹³⁰ The converse is also true. For example, the retreat of the New Deal-consensus progressive reformers from the state level (despite being the federal conventional wisdom) “provided multiple arenas in which the foes of liberalism could consolidate their power, refine their appeals, and develop their

¹²⁷ Rogers Smith, “Which comes first, the ideas or the institutions?,” in Ian Shapiro, et al., eds., *Rethinking Political Institutions* (New York: NYUP, 2006), 91-113. 109.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Affluent Society* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1958).

¹³⁰ Robin, *The Reactionary Mind*.

evolving justifications for restricting the scope of federal activism.”¹³¹ The new orders, then, are compromises between hegemonic and non-hegemonic orders, with “new policies, institutional arrangements, or ideological paradigms” layered with elements of old orders.¹³² What must be studied, then, is the relationship between orders (e.g. conservatism and progressivism) and *between elements within orders* (what I call, ‘strands’).

The phenomenon of poverty lends itself to multiple institutional and ideational orders – “a dizzying labyrinth of public, private, quasi-public, local, state, federal, non-profit and for-profit, charitable and philanthropic practices”¹³³ and ideological discourses. Matthew Desmond emphasizes the importance of viewing poverty as a relationship, rather than a stable order. He writes that poverty is not a given, nor is poverty a thing: “it is a relation. And it is not just a relation between past and present, nor only between ‘macro structures’ and ‘micro settings’; it is a relation between winners and losers, extractors and extracted, discipliners and disciplined – all bound together in real time.”¹³⁴ Fundamental to understanding poverty as a relationship is understanding the role of social power in institutional and ideational development.¹³⁵

Ideas may be complex, but the implicit assumptions of these ideas and their implementation maintain a particular institutional order. Given that institutions convey social power and the power of agenda setting and norm enforcement, institutions that interact with those in poverty severely shape the reality of poverty itself. Ideational orders impact the perception and treatment of those who are in poverty. This thesis shows that while debates are complex and the navigation between policies and policy language evoke an intricacy to them, the debates can reinforce a single goal.¹³⁶ In the case of

¹³¹ Weir, “States, Race, and the Decline of New Deal Liberalism,” 172.

¹³² Robert Lieberman, “Ideas, Institutions, and Political Order,” *American Political Science Review* 96, no. 4 (2003): 697-712. 702.

¹³³ Cruikshank, “Review: *Disciplining the Poor*,” e1.

¹³⁴ Matthew Desmond, “Relational Ethnography,” *Theory and Society* 43, no. 5 (2014): 547-579. 568.

¹³⁵ Claus Offe, “Political Institutions and Social Power,” in Shapiro, et al., eds., *Rethinking Political Institutions*, 9-31. 21.

¹³⁶ For the relationship between ideas and public policy, see Daniel Béland, et al., “Ideas, Political Power and Public Policy,” *Journal of European Public Policy* 23, no. 3 (2016): 315-317; John Campbell, “Institutional analysis and the role of ideas in

debates between welfare abolition and paternalism, the single goal is the maintenance of conservative socioeconomic power by dismantling – if not the existence of, at least the use of – the welfare state.

Of the literature emphasizing the tensions between and within ideational and institutional orders, two fundamental for this study are the work on welfare and American political traditions by Hugh Heclo¹³⁷ and the work on racial orders by Desmond King and Rogers Smith.¹³⁸ I use these to better conceptualize the relationship between paternalism and welfare abolition.

political economy,” *Theory and Society* 27, no. 3 (1998): 377-409; John Campbell, “Ideas, Politics, and Public Policy,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 28 (2002): 21-38; Peter Hall, “Policy Paradigms, Social Learning, and the State,” *Comparative Politics* 25, no. 3 (1993): 275-296; John Skrentny, “Policy-elite perceptions and social movement success,” *American Journal of Sociology* 111, no. 6 (2006): 1762-1815; Deborah Stone, *Policy Paradox*, 2nd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2002).

¹³⁷ Hugh Heclo, “General Welfare and Two American Political Traditions,” *Political Science Quarterly* 101, no. 2 (1986): 179-196.

¹³⁸ Desmond King and Rogers Smith, “Racial Orders in American Political Development,” *American Political Science Review* 99, no. 1 (2005): 75-92; Desmond King and Rogers Smith, “‘Without Regard to Race’: Critical Ideational Development in Modern American Politics,” *Journal of Politics* 76, no. 4 (2014): 958-971.

1.3 Paternalism and Welfare Abolition in American Welfare Orders

The U.S. welfare system is a “highly-developed” system full of “self-loathing.”¹³⁹ It is a system in which Americans criticize government, bureaucracy, and handouts to the undeserving while nonetheless demanding public services and protections against the insecurities of economic markets.¹⁴⁰ This paradox exists, Heclo argues, because of two competing ideational orders: ‘welfare as self-sufficiency’ and ‘welfare as mutual dependence.’¹⁴¹ ‘Welfare as self-sufficiency’ emphasizes the individual in his pursuit of wellbeing: enjoying the fruits of his labor, unencumbered by others. ‘Welfare as mutual dependence’ emphasizes the in-group nature of this pursuit. The U.S. welfare state is a result of the constant tension between these two orders.

Heclo identifies three features of the American polity that contribute to this unresolved tension: dynamic (re)interpretation of in- and out-group membership (deserving and undeserving poor); fixation on metaphorical starting lines for in- and out-group competition (opportunity and justice); and collective distrust of arbitrary government in a society that prizes the individual.¹⁴²

First, there are people (“a constantly replenished pool of persons”¹⁴³) who are deemed qualitatively different in terms of *behavior* than the rest of the population – in their actions, in their capacity to respond to incentives, and in their ability to meet common obligations of citizenships. Katz argues that this collaboration and contestation between the state and the public to distinguish between the deserving and undeserving poor is fundamental to the enduring confrontation with poverty.¹⁴⁴ Robin theorizes that such *identity cleavages* are horizontal, an “unrelenting anxiety over borders” and membership at the center and exclusion at the margins, rather than “concern [for] the

¹³⁹ Heclo, “General Welfare and Two American Political Traditions,” 182.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Heclo refers to “traditions.” I specify these as orders.

¹⁴² Ibid., 191

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Katz, *The Undeserving Poor*.

distribution of power and resources.”¹⁴⁵ Membership in these groups changes over time in public perception.¹⁴⁶ This movement is only somewhat fluid and relies on a number of factors, especially racial identity, perceived morality, and the assumption of competence.¹⁴⁷

Second, the concentration on equal opportunity “as an individual- and group-oriented goal allows society to focus more on fairly drawing the starting line”¹⁴⁸ than on arguing about the fairness of the results. This is seen most readily in legal debates over entitlements, and whether there are negative and/or positive rights granted to U.S. citizens. While legal entitlements, or enumerated and litigated rights, have not meant the achievement of equal opportunity, the decline in entitlements through welfare reform has further decimated a safety-net meant to provide a basis of economic security.¹⁴⁹ Monica Bell writes, “For low-income people of color living in high-poverty contexts, rights have never been trumps... but [rights] nonetheless envision marginalized people as powerful political constituencies, not mere supplicants before the state.”¹⁵⁰ The debates over equal opportunity, equal treatment, and equal outcome distinguish between preventing the worst and installing the highest good.¹⁵¹ Scholars such as Bell and Robin make the case that policy and political agendas must be made by consideration of the latter, rather than fear of the former.

Third, “in a rich nation shaped by rebellion against arbitrary government, the values of personal fulfillment could realistically be associated with restrained and decentralized government,” what Hecla calls “an elegant blend of love for the political regime and distrust of government authority.”¹⁵² Robin argues that there is not consistent backlash against the federal government, but rather only calls for federalism, states’ rights, flexibility, and choice when it serves the interest of the

¹⁴⁵ Corey Robin, *Fear: The History of a Political Idea* (New York: Oxford UP, 2004), 139.

¹⁴⁶ See, e.g. Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

¹⁴⁷ Jennifer Sherman, *Those Who Work, Those Who Don't* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2009).

¹⁴⁸ Hecla, “General Welfare and Two American Political Traditions,” 191.

¹⁴⁹ Monica Bell, “Safety, Friendship, and Dreams,” *Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review* 54 (2019): 703-739. 704.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 739.

¹⁵¹ Robin, *Fear*.

¹⁵² Hecla, “General Welfare and Two American Political Traditions,” 191.

political regime in power.¹⁵³ More recent work argues similarly that conservatives no longer seek retrenchment of federal power, but rather aim to redeploy its resources to further their own agenda.¹⁵⁴

Below, I expand on these foundational features to the ideational friction – *the role of the government* and *the identity cleavages* (e.g. *racial orders*) – in order to clarify the assumptions underlying paternalism, its relationship to welfare abolition, and its place in American political development.

1.3.i Government Enforcement of Ideational Strands

Each of Heclo's ideational orders has a corresponding view towards government action. Within the self-sufficiency order, "government is a largely negative mechanism to protect equally, despite the unequal resources and capacities of each person to go his own way." Within the mutual dependence' order, "government is a positive force expressing and linked organically to our self-identity."¹⁵⁵ This aligns closely with the conceptions – as Lawrence Mead argues – of the typical Right-Left debates over the size of government.

Mead contends that his product – new paternalism – comes from the fact that these great ideological and institutional debates are largely over. Instead, political discourse has moved to the personality of the poor. Paternalism, then, as a policy response to poverty is post-ideational, outside the realm of politics, and simply an administrative solution. Mead writes,

Paternalism is distinct from the social policy traditionally favored by either the left or the right in America. It is a conservative policy in that it focuses on changing how the poor live rather than on improving their benefits or opportunities. It seeks order rather than justice, and social critics might call it blaming the victim. But paternalism is also a liberal policy because it is pro-government. Far from reducing the welfare state, as conservatives usually ask, paternalism expands it.... Paternalism does not primarily mean a change in the scale of government, a traditional bone of partisan contention.

¹⁵³ Robin, *The Reactionary Mind*.

¹⁵⁴ Jacobs, et al., "Building a Conservative State."

¹⁵⁵ Heclo, "General Welfare and Two American Political Traditions," 186.

Instead, it means a change in the character of government so that benefits are linked to functioning.¹⁵⁶

Heclo writes, “If, as some social critics contend, we are becoming more individually self-centered [by focusing on the personality of the poor], it is perhaps also true that we are becoming more collectively self-conscious.”¹⁵⁷ This duality – individual self-centered fixation on the poor and the collectively self-conscious fixation on the role of government in addressing poverty – allows us to revise and expand Heclo’s narrow view of government’s role within the ideational orders. The following section lays the groundwork for the claim that big government led welfare state retrenchment is possible.

The strong state: Government for and against the people

Mead purportedly agrees with Heclo’s assessment that a positive vision of government appeals to group-identity. He writes, “If there is any element of the American population that lacks a fear of centralized power, it is poor people and minorities, especially blacks, reflecting the fact that Washington has been their patron ever since the Civil War.”¹⁵⁸ It is a patronizing and ahistorical statement in and of itself, ignoring the damage done by the federal government, the stigma within communities about welfare beneficiary, and the rise of the carceral state and federal crime laws.

In many periods of American history, the government has been a powerful force for *both* liberation *and* oppression. The federal government that developed the New Deal as a program of economic security did so to the exclusion of many Black Americans in order to appease Southern states.¹⁵⁹ The federal government that pushed integration contributed to red-lining and housing

¹⁵⁶ Mead, “The Rise of Paternalism,” 11. Indeed, Mead tries to clarify that his intention is not government expansion, but development in the “character” of the state. The reality is the opposite – the bureaucratic element of the government expands, while the welfare state, i.e. as accessed by the poor, is retrenched.

¹⁵⁷ Heclo, “General Welfare and Two American Political Traditions,” 195.

¹⁵⁸ Mead, *The New Politics of Poverty*, 217.

¹⁵⁹ Jill Quadagno, *The Color of Welfare* (New York: Oxford UP, 1994).

discrimination, and, therefore, wealth gaps.¹⁶⁰ The federal government that opened up its ranks of employment to African Americans nonetheless maintained its segregation.¹⁶¹ The federal government that expanded the social safety-net oversaw the increase in policing and incarceration.¹⁶² Mechanisms of federal action (such as coercion, standard setting, state-led reforms, and fiscal intervention), which King argues are used inconsistently and at fluctuating levels to build material racial equality, are those same mechanisms by which the federal government has oppressed.¹⁶³

The same dynamic is true for the relationship between the federal and state governments. Robin argues that while some states may resist the tendencies of an over-reaching federal government, many become collaborators (willing or not) towards federal ends.¹⁶⁴ After welfare reform, for example, some states resisted the general direction towards stringency by creating state-funded, non-time-limited GA. However, even the most lenient states were limited in their choice architecture explicitly by federal regulation and implicitly by the prevailing desire to combat waste, fraud, and abuse.¹⁶⁵

However, as is clear from the case of welfare reform, devolution is not the existence of a weak federal government. Rather, it is the decision of the federal government to cede regulatory and administrative authority to the state. Jacobs, et al. note that devolution has been used “to camouflage the deployment of national administrative power.”¹⁶⁶ In fact, conservative authors acknowledge that “a hard-headed paternalism is not in principle at odds with devolution.”¹⁶⁷ There is an analytic distinction between the weak and the strong state – the former being administratively weak, and the

¹⁶⁰ Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2017); Mehrsa Baradaran, *The Color of Money* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2017).

¹⁶¹ Desmond King, “The Racial Bureaucracy,” *Governance* 12, no. 4 (1999): 345-377; Desmond King, *Separate and Unequal* (New York: Oxford UP, 1995).

¹⁶² Soss, et al., *Disciplining the Poor*; Loic Wacquant, *Punishing the Poor* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2009); Bruce Western, *Punishment and Inequality in America* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2006).

¹⁶³ Desmond King, “Forceful federalism against American Racial Inequality,” *Government and Opposition* 52, no. 2 (2017): 356-382.

¹⁶⁴ Robin, *Fear*.

¹⁶⁵ Coccia, “Creeping Stringency.”

¹⁶⁶ Jacobs, et al., “Building a Conservative State,” 461.

¹⁶⁷ Starobin, “The Daddy State.”

latter being weak by choice. For example, on the non-enforcement of anti-lynching legislation, Daniel Kato finds that federal inaction was a political choice, rather than one based on “jurisprudential restrictions in a federalist system,” as political officials claimed. He illustrates the conceptual pivot: “collapsing the political into the legal provided a way for the federal government to evade responsibility without actually abdicating its authority.”¹⁶⁸

The ability for a government to disengage from direct action shows that it is able to favor a particular institutional and ideational arrangement through action or inaction. Recent research makes the case that “since the late 1960s, conservative administrations have sought to redeploy rather than dismantle or roll back state power.”¹⁶⁹ This redeployment allows the government to spend and direct state activity in a way that reflects its ideology. Therefore, given the capacity of the federal government, even retrenchment through welfare abolition is an active choice by government to retreat from the public sphere’s commitment to a social safety net. Both paternalism and welfare abolition are active elements of a strong state.

By clarifying the role that government plays in the lives of those who are most marginalized, we can better make the case that government is a powerful force for *both* the aid and detriment of *each* of Heclo’s two ideational orders, rather than simply to the aid of ‘welfare as mutual dependence’ and the detriment of ‘welfare as self-sufficiency.’ This is a novel account to understanding the relationship between conservative calls for the elimination of the welfare state (retrenchment writ large) and the conservative case for big government seen through the development of the new paternalism (the focus of this thesis). Thus, the resulting welfare state is a product of friction (or collaboration) between institutional arrangements and coalitions *within* particular ideational orders.

¹⁶⁸ Daniel Kato, “Strengthening the Weak State,” *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race* 9, no. 2 (2012): 457-480. 462.

¹⁶⁹ Jacobs, et al., “Building a Conservative State,” 453.

Clarifying the ideational and institutional relationships between paternalism and welfare abolition

It is often thought that welfare abolition and paternalism are distinct ideational orders with different agendas regarding welfare in the U.S. As we saw in the Introduction, Mead himself makes this case. According to Alan Deacon, “although they both focus on welfare dependency, their analyses and policy prescriptions are grounded in different views of human nature, and of the role that public policy can play in changing the behaviour and character of the poor.”¹⁷⁰ Mead trumpets the difference between his proposal and Murray’s: “knowing they will have to work, some who would be eligible for welfare because their income is low enough decline to seek it. *But demanding good behavior while on the rolls is still distinct from blocking access to welfare.*”¹⁷¹ However, we can question the validity of this notion by seeing that they are in fact more intimately related.

The first reason is empirical. Paternalism has been the central mechanism for cash assistance for over twenty years, and the evidence regarding work and poverty rates does not favor the approach (Section 1.1.iii). Prized as a way to move people from welfare to work, studies show the ineffectiveness of work requirements.¹⁷² Findings show that paternalist programs contribute “to a regime that prioritizes blocking needy mothers from entering the program, imposing financial sanctions upon existing recipients, pushing already working poor mothers into humiliating workfare positions, and trimming the rolls through diversions and expulsions.”¹⁷³ In practice, paternalism leads to the same outcomes that retrenchment efforts of spending cuts or welfare abolition achieves in theory: the effectual decimation of the welfare state. The empirical evidence will be examined further in Part II.

The second reason is conceptual in an assessment of their respective views on human nature. Despite very different assessments of the competence, capacity, and motivation of individuals in

¹⁷⁰ Deacon, “Introduction. The Realities of Welfare Reform,” 4.

¹⁷¹ Mead, “The Rise of Paternalism,” 8. Emphasis added.

¹⁷² Karin Martinson, et al., “Implementation and Relative Impacts of Two Job Search Assistance Programs in New York City,” *Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation Report* 46 (2019).

¹⁷³ Anna Marie Smith, *Welfare Reform and Sexual Regulation* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2007), 55.

poverty, “both views on human nature... are quite simplistic and falsely deterministic of policy directions.”¹⁷⁴ Welfare abolition assumes people only act in their economic self-interest. Paternalism assumes that people in poverty are “dutiful but defeated” and will only take advantage of improvement opportunities if “forced to do so.”¹⁷⁵ In the former iteration, the government should abandon the poor to the market, in the latter, the government should exercise powerful supervisory authority over the poor to enter the market.¹⁷⁶ Neither case is complex; and neither case views the solution to poverty as anything beyond individual fixes.

In this way, Murray and Mead’s policies have quite a bit in common – Mead’s are just more expensive and reflect the change in efforts by conservatives to redeploy federal power rather than retrench. Work requirements, for example, have become elements of redeployment, either by removing people from certain benefits (a goal of welfare abolition) or moving people into publicly subsidized private employment (a goal of maintaining the distribution of power granted by the market). As a result, the outcome of dependency politics is a policy focus on eliminating the welfare state. Either through the direct abolition of the welfare state or the regulatory and supervisory squeezing of the new paternalism, the result is the same: programs created as a safety-net serve fewer and fewer people; leaving more and more to the whims of the market; and subsuming an understanding of political, civil or social rights to a narrow conception of economic liberty.¹⁷⁷

How, then, can we conceptually make sense of these similarities despite very different assessments of the role of government and whether resources should be retrenched or redeployed, the typical differentiation between conservative and liberal positions?

¹⁷⁴ Deacon, “Introduction,” 5.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ While the new paternalism itself emerges from the public sector, it is centered on private sector work as the ends of welfare reform, and ‘market competency’ as the goal of the behavioral change regime.

¹⁷⁷ Corey Robin, “Reclaiming the Politics of Freedom,” *The Nation*, 25 April 2011, <https://www.thenation.com/article/reclaiming-politics-freedom/>.

Using Hecló's typology of American Welfare Orders, I argue that welfare abolition and paternalism are in fact different *strands* of the same ideational *order* of 'welfare as self-sufficiency.' Precisely, welfare abolition and paternalism are ideational strands with different functional institutional views of government involvement within the single ideational order of 'welfare as self-sufficiency.' I define a strand as a "contributory mechanism to an ideational order, with features (such as institutional arrangements) and assumptions that distinguish it from other strands." While one strand may be a 'critical juncture' from another, it nonetheless reinforces the logic of the broader ideational order.

Through the interaction between these two institutional and ideational strands within the same American Welfare Order, conservative adaptation has been effective for two reasons. First, it relies on the common conception that institutional deployment of resources (as opposed to welfare abolition) is solely within the liberal purview, thereby making paternalism seem to fit within the realm of liberal policy. Second, by oscillating between these two ideational strands,¹⁷⁸ conservatives rhetorically capture the simplistic conceptions of human nature and competence: incentive-responding and dutiful-but-defeated. Conservatives, then, direct the hegemonic discourse. This leaves the Left, most commonly within the 'mutual dependence' order, with little space in the political arena available to claim – often an appeal to structure without an appeal to competence (see Table 1.1, quadrant 3).

While this is a cautionary tale for the Left, there may be optimism in a caveat to Mead's claim that dependency politics has defeated traditional debates over values and institutions. If dependency politics *is* a feature of the 'welfare as self-sufficiency' ideational order, then it is only part of a broader solution set and a new underlying logic and politics could emerge.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁸ King, *In the Name of Liberalism*, argues, "There may be conflict between welfare policy experts but *only the punitive side of this debate*—influential equally with Republican and Democrat presidencies—has shaped legislation since the 1980s," p. 285. Emphasis added.

¹⁷⁹ There are likely multiple strands of 'welfare as mutual dependence'; however, those are beyond the scope of this thesis. These strands may focus on the need for massive federal investments to decommodify common goods lost to the private sector, while investing in communities.

1.4 Identity Cleavages: Racial Orders

The institutional coalitions and ideational strands of the American Welfare Orders exist within and reinforce cleavages around identity. Gender is certainly a fundamental cleavage – seen through Mead’s shift in focus from single-mothers to non-working men.¹⁸⁰ According to Ann Orloff, “All modern systems of social provision and regulation were built upon a gendered division of labor in which women were mothers, wives, caregivers, and domestic workers – even if they also worked for pay – while men supported families economically, almost always through paid labor.”¹⁸¹ Dara Strolovich argues that policies “either reinforce or challenge white heteropatriarchy.”¹⁸²

As we saw in Chapter 1.1, the new paternalism was, in part, a policy response to the maternalist claims of the early twentieth century and to the equality claims for economic independence of the 1960s. These reformers sought political rights through recognition and financing of “women’s right to care.” Welfare programs, most notably ADC, “carried the logic of maternalist provision into the contemporary era.”¹⁸³ As we will see in Chapter 3, continued entrance into the political sphere by welfare rights claimants, which challenged both the restrictive rules of the old paternalism and the protectionist maternalist policies, made welfare a prime target for the new paternalism. We will see this cleavage present in paternalist efforts since the 1960s, focused on controlling the reproductive rights of welfare clients and reinforcing gendered roles, while still incentivizing, if not mandating, entrance into the low-wage private market.

Another identity cleavage that scholars argue has a significant influence on welfare politics and policy is race. In their work on racial orders, King and Smith make the case that race must be explicit

¹⁸⁰ For work on the gendered aspects of welfare reform efforts, see Abramovitz, “Learning from the History of Poor and Working-Class Women’s Activism”; Mimi Abramovitz, *Regulating the lives of women* (Boston: South End Press, 1996); Mimi Abramovitz, “Welfare reform in the United States: Race, class, and gender matters,” *Critical Social Policy* 26, no. 2 (2006): 336–364; Linda Gordon, “Who Deserves Help? Who Must Provide?,” *ANNALS AAPSS* 577 (2001): 12–25; Lewis, “Gender and welfare state change”.

¹⁸¹ Orloff, “Farewell to Maternalism?,” 8.

¹⁸² Dara Strolovich, “#MeToo as Policy Feedback,” Paper presented at Oxford University, 14 June 2019.

¹⁸³ Orloff, “Farewell to Maternalism?,” 32–33.

in assessments of ideational orders, because even “many putatively nonracial issues, such as... the revival of federalism, and disputes over... social assistance policies, all continue to be shaped by race-related struggles.”¹⁸⁴ According to King and Smith, social policies are the product of friction between two racial orders: ‘White supremacist’ and ‘egalitarian transformative.’ “Racial institutional orders” is a framework to understand how these orders adapt over time.¹⁸⁵

Proponents of paternalism argue that despite being characterological, paternalism is a colorblind, or *postracial*, social policy. Mead acknowledges the history of racial discrimination in the U.S. However, he believes that paternalism is a critical juncture from this history: “Understandably, federal policy toward [racial minorities] has emphasized the dismantling of barriers.... The application of paternalism to the non-white poor, therefore, can seem like a reversal, and for blacks even a return to slavery or Jim Crow. For some, that is reason enough to reject it. But paternalism is really a *postracial social policy*.”¹⁸⁶ This is because, according to Mead, race-conscious theories of poverty are less plausible: “the traditional liberal view that discrimination by whites explains black inequality is rebuked by the persistence of serious black poverty in a society without formal discrimination.”¹⁸⁷ Fundamentally, Mead argues that social policy is postracial because its role is not to eradicate bias but rather “alter the patterns of life that prevent the poor of all races from improving themselves.”¹⁸⁸ Mead’s rationale can be seen as a consistent part of Hecló’s typologies – a focus on the starting line of equal opportunity and an emphasis on individual improvement.

Despite Mead’s insistence, social policy in the U.S. has developed – however and whenever – as part of one racial order or another.¹⁸⁹ Williams argues that the history of American social policy is

¹⁸⁴ King and Smith, “Racial Orders in American Political Development,” 89.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Mead, “The Rise of Paternalism,” 22.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 23.

¹⁸⁹ Cybelle Fox, *Three Worlds of Relief* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2012); Quadagno, *The Color of Welfare*; Williams, *The Constraint of Race*.

the history of “proportional and differential inclusion, not total exclusion of any racial group” and that such social policy has two roles: “improving the conditions of people of color on one hand and reproducing white skin privilege on the other.”¹⁹⁰ Social policy is and always has been a racial endeavor in the U.S., whether in conception, implementation, perception, or effect.¹⁹¹

Each of these orders are the product of internal tension as well. For example, “throughout history, many who have rejected all versions of white supremacy still have differed on whether priority should be given to seeking economic equity, equal political status, or cultural recognition [and, therefore], over whether their ultimate goal should be full integration or some form of more egalitarian racial pluralism.”¹⁹² Within the egalitarian transformative order, civil rights groups have understood social welfare and civil rights as a “dual agenda,” sometimes viewed as complementary and sometimes as hierarchical. According to Hamilton and Hamilton, “It was the civil rights groups that warned of a growing dependent class, not the conservative right. It was the civil rights groups that decades before called for real race-neutral social welfare policies.” But, as the two-tier social welfare system developed and more people became ostracized to the fringe of the lower tier, the goals of the civil rights groups as they related to social welfare agendas developed and adapted as well.¹⁹³ While internal tensions are fundamental to the development of ideational and institutional orders, development also occurs in response to exogenous forces, including the developments of the other order.

¹⁹⁰ Williams, *The Constraint of Race*, 375.

¹⁹¹ See, e.g., Martin Gilens, *Why Americans Hate Welfare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); Donna Cooper Hamilton and Charles Hamilton, *The Dual Agenda* (New York: Columbia UP, 1997); King, *Separate and Unequal*; Soss, et al., *Disciplining the Poor*; Deborah Ward, *The White Welfare State* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2005). This is not to say, by any means, that the analytic categories of race and class (as it relates to poverty) are the same. As David Roediger, *Wages of Whiteness*, 3rd ed. (New York: Verso, 2007), argues, “To set race within social formations is absolutely necessary, but to reduce race to class is damaging,” p. 8.

¹⁹² Soss, et al., *Disciplining the Poor*, 76.

¹⁹³ Donna Cooper Hamilton and Charles Hamilton, “The Dual Agenda of African American Organizations since the New Deal,” *Political Science Quarterly* 107, no. 3 (1992): 435-452. 452. See also Michael Dawson, *Behind the Mule* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1994). Dawson utilizes the notion of ‘linked fate’ between one’s own fate and the fate of one’s race to discuss Black political decision making when it comes to social and economic issues.

1.4.i Ideational Developments in the Racial Orders

The most recent development in how racial orders are manifest is in debates over race-conscious and colorblind policy approaches.¹⁹⁴ Mead, as we saw, does not discuss race as explicitly in his later work; instead, he uses euphemistic phrases such as “inner city,” “underclass,” or “lower class,” to designate the locale and constitutive population of the problem he attempts to address: voluntary unemployment among able-bodied Black men and women.¹⁹⁵ To lend credence to his colorblind approach, he stipulates that he does not use these phrases “pejoratively, but simply to designate this group.”¹⁹⁶ However, his use further entrenches the racial connotations associated with such terms.

Mead’s phrasing is also symbolic of a greater shift amongst racial orders: ‘postracial’ is a “rhetorical allegiance to egalitarian ideals” in a way that reinterprets “civil rights slogans... to justify resistance to changes in unequal racial statuses.”¹⁹⁷ These reinterpretations are effective, however, at gaining support from those who “honestly reject white supremacy... feeling that principles of equal justice and practical realities limit the ways in which governments can legitimately and effectively pursue a more racially egalitarian society.”¹⁹⁸ Likewise, claims that social policy is postracial are appealing in their rejection of proposals that would require non-paternalistic federal intervention – such as massive wealth redistribution to address the racial wealth gap.

This is a ‘critical juncture’ in ideational development in the sense that it is “a politically orchestrated enduring shift in how policy issues are predominantly conceived that advantages one political coalition over its rival.”¹⁹⁹ The emphasis on “politically orchestrated” is significant, because

¹⁹⁴ See, e.g., Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, *Racism without Racists*, 5th ed. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017). This is not simply a U.S. development. For U.K. comparisons, see, e.g., Erik Bleich, *Race Politics in Britain and France* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003); Gary Craig, “‘Cunning, Unprincipled, Loathsome’: the Racist Tail Wags the Welfare Dog,” *Journal of Social Policy* 36, no. 4 (2007): 605-623; Gary Craig, “Invisibilizing ‘race’ in public policy,” *Critical Social Policy* 33, no. 4 (2013): 712-720.

¹⁹⁵ Mead makes the direct connections in “The Logic of Workfare: The Underclass and Work Policy,” *ANNALS AAPSS* 501 (1989): 156-169.

¹⁹⁶ Mead, *Beyond Entitlement*, 22.

¹⁹⁷ King and Smith, “Racial Orders in American Political Development,” 83.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁹ King and Smith, “Without Regard to Race,” 958.

each order relies on a set of institutional actors and ideational coalitions. The repurposing of particular policies, the “reformulation of coordinative and communicative discourses,” and the (re)deployment of cultural images can be quite purposeful in their utility for particular actors and coalitions.²⁰⁰

As an example of political orchestration, during the debates surrounding PRWORA, Republican Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich broke with the traditional conservative lines of the poverty debate and argued that individuals were not to blame (at least at the outset) for their poverty. Rather, the welfare system itself perpetuates poverty by incentivizing sloth, sapping dignity, and tapering benefits in a way that disincentivizes work.²⁰¹ This change in argument was a *tactical* decision (reformulating the coordinative and communicative discourses), which resulted in maintaining the hegemony of the underlying narrative that reliably led to cutting funding for programs that serve the poor, increasing work requirements (repurposing policy), and devolving authority to the states and local governments after criticizing federal programs (appeal to cultural images of state sovereignty).²⁰² Jason DeParle, who interviewed Gingrich, noted the change in tactics, to which “Gingrich responded with the smile of a man well-pleased with his cleverness. ‘Congratulations!’ he said. ‘You cracked the code!’ The rhetoric did more than soften the message. It created a logic for deeper cuts: *The less we spend, the more we care!*”²⁰³

President Clinton accepted this logic, because he had “a vision of how welfare had poisoned the politics of poverty and race. Welfare cast poor people as shirkers. It discredited government. It aggravated the worst racial stereotypes. It left Democrats looking like the party of giveaways.... He clearly saw the two causes – ending welfare and reviving liberalism – as efforts that were linked.”²⁰⁴ Clinton did not anticipate that the politics of welfare (or, redistribution generally) are constantly

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ DeParle, *American Dream*, 131-134; Katz, *The Undeserving Poor*, 156.

²⁰² For a comprehensive account of Gingrich’s messaging strategy, see Peck, “*Workfare*.”

²⁰³ DeParle, *American Dream*, 131-132.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 150.

revolving on the axis of race,²⁰⁵ as contemporary welfare politics make clear and important sociological research on the rise of the Tea Party²⁰⁶ and political polarization²⁰⁷ illuminates. The next section illustrates that both Mead and Murray advocate for colorblind approaches to the politics of welfare.

1.4.ii Murray, Mead, and the Colorblind Alliance

The analysis by King and Smith helps develop our understanding of the similarities and differences between paternalism and welfare abolition as stakes on a conservative spectrum. Not only are they ideational strands within the same order of ‘welfare as self-sufficiency’ (differing in their role for government), they also rely on the support of the same ideational coalition of actors and institutions: the colorblind alliance.

According to King and Smith, “Color-blind proponents advance one simple message: there should be no racial classifications in public laws.”²⁰⁸ One of these proponents is Charles Murray. Throughout his career, Murray has maintained views on the genetic inferiority of women, non-White persons, and the poor.²⁰⁹ Murray argued that race-conscious programs such as affirmative action, and redistributive measures generally, are counterproductive in their consequences,²¹⁰ by fostering intergenerational dependence and a culture surrounding it.²¹¹ Despite Mead’s consistent efforts to set his paternalism apart from Murray’s abolition, we can *also* see how intimately they are related because of Mead’s views on race and his similar advocacy for colorblind social policy.

While Murray advocates for a colorblind approach as a foundation for equal opportunity, Mead advocates for a colorblind approach as a foundation of *equal obligations*. He argues, “Today, the

²⁰⁵ Mark Brewer and Jeffrey Stonecash, *Polarization and the Politics of Personal Responsibility* (New York: Oxford UP, 2015).

²⁰⁶ Arlie Russell Hochschild, *Strangers in their Own Land* (New York: New Press, 2016).

²⁰⁷ Cramer, *The Politics of Resentment*.

²⁰⁸ King and Smith, “Without Regard to Race,” 966.

²⁰⁹ Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray, *The Bell Curve* (New York: Free Press, 1994), 341.

²¹⁰ Murray, *Losing Ground*, 91-96. Quoted in King and Smith, “Without Regard to Race,” 963.

²¹¹ King, *In the Name of Liberalism*, 280.

poor, dependent, and *nonwhite* must demand equal obligations from government the way they once demanded equal rights. Equality demands that they take back the duties to work, get through school, contribute to families... that programs have assumed on their behalf. For, given the evenhanded nature of citizenship, only those who bear obligations can truly appropriate their rights.”²¹² Mead believes that a racially focused appeal to rights – federal protections resulting from “the evils of slavery, racism, and unregulated capitalism”²¹³ – must be met with a colorblind, civic appeal to obligations. Since, “the functioning problems characteristic of the ghetto – crime, nonwork, family breakup – threaten fulfillment of the common obligations,”²¹⁴ federally enforced obligations must be the focus of any program meant to support the poor. Mead makes the case, then, that the sides of this scale – e.g. slavery and nonwork – are of equal weight in their threats to society, that they are not linked because oppression is no longer a barrier to societal involvement,²¹⁵ and that the only true barrier to a social policy of obligation within Black communities is the outsized influence of Black activists and cowardice of Black leaders themselves.²¹⁶

Part of Mead’s appeal has a long lineage in cultural assessments of poverty (i.e. the projection of an individual failing onto a community), and cultural assessments of poverty have long been associated with racial connotations.²¹⁷ According to Williams, “with biological arguments on the ropes as explanation of white skin privilege, many whites readily embraced the notion that there are cultural characteristics that separate the ‘white race’ from the black one.”²¹⁸ Mead fervently denies that he is

²¹² Mead, *Beyond Entitlement*, 257. Emphasis added.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 256.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*

²¹⁶ Mead, *The New Politics of Poverty*. “Although the poverty problem seems independent of race, racial politics remains the greatest obstacle to resolving it,” p. 259.

²¹⁷ The infamous Moynihan Report also imputed similar failings to African Americans, described as a “tangle of pathology.” Daniel Moynihan, *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action* (Washington, D.C.: Office of Policy Planning and Research, U.S. Department of Labor, 1965). For a rigorous dive into the Report, see James Patterson, *Freedom is not Enough* (New York: Basic Books, 2010).

²¹⁸ Williams, *The Constraint of Race*, 185.

referring to racial differences when he speaks of cultural differences, but argues that fear of being labelled racist has stopped many from utilizing cultural explanations for poverty.²¹⁹ He then argues how cultural differences contribute to the causes of poverty in the U.S. He writes,

The explanation for minority poverty is not so much cultural change as long-standing cultural difference. The great fact about both blacks and Hispanics is that – unlike most other Americans – *they did not come here from Europe*. Thus, they came here *not as individualists but with the more cautious and collectivist mind-set of the non-Western world*. This heritage best explains the two great impediments to minorities’ progress in America – a relatively passive response to opportunity [nonwork] and an inability to maintain order in their own families and neighborhoods [nonmarriage].²²⁰

For Mead, paternalism is the only solution to these two ‘cultural’ impediments. By shifting the question away from individual blame to individual capacity, and by shifting the racial, biological arguments onto culture rather than the individual, conservatives were able to unite around a ‘colorblind alliance’ that emphasized personal responsibility, “self-reliance, hard work, law-abidingness, sexual morality,... and personal merit.”²²¹

Race-conscious policies on the other hand have been associated by conservative public intellectuals “with social disarray, welfare dependency, and drug addiction, sexual licentiousness,... and criminality.”²²² These discourses have a strong effect on “partisan racial polarization”²²³ and questions surrounding White liberal support for race-conscious measures.²²⁴ Navigating this discursive terrain, race-conscious policy advocates have to decide how explicitly to appeal to race in their advocacy. Some, like those from United Way of Greater Cleveland and the Center for American

²¹⁹ Recent efforts have been made to bring culture back into the fold of poverty studies. See Mario Luis Small, et al., “Reconsidering Culture and Poverty,” *ANNALS AAPSS* 629 (2010): 6-27.

²²⁰ Mead, *Burdens of Freedom*, 214.

²²¹ Joseph Lowndes, *From New Deal to New Right* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 2008), 161.

²²² *Ibid.*, 141.

²²³ Geoffrey Layman and Thomas Carsey, “Party Polarization and Conflict Extension in the American Electorate,” *American Journal of Political Science* 46, no. 4 (2002): 786-802. 790, 794.

²²⁴ Paul Sniderman and Thomas Piazza, *The Scar of Race* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1993), 22-23, 130-135.

Progress, argue that racism is “deeply intertwined” with conditions that lead to poverty²²⁵ and that everyone – even those arguing it does not – knows that race matters,²²⁶ so it should be made explicit.

Others view it as “fundamental... but don’t lead with it,”²²⁷ opting instead for efforts to “reduce material racial inequalities, increasingly through facially race-neutral means chosen on race-conscious grounds.”²²⁸ But, the message for liberals is inherently more complicated than the simple narrative put forth by the colorblind alliance: “African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, multiracial Americans, and white liberals who favor race-conscious policies often clash over” the structure and eligibility of such programs.²²⁹ These challenges contribute to horizontal identity cleavages which impede coalition building efforts.²³⁰

The influence of identity cleavages on paternalism’s ideational strand

The colorblind alliance very clearly encapsulates the new paternalism of Lawrence Mead as a development of the racial orders. In fact, by changing language throughout his corpus and his ideas influencing policy language, Mead is helping to reconfigure racial orders. The conservative movement toward colorblind policies and its accompanying discourse and institutional mobilization did not emerge from thin air, however. By the 1980s, “long standing white racist sentiments, notions of

²²⁵ Courtney Astolfi, “United Way of Greater Cleveland CEO says racism must be addressed in fight against poverty,” *cleveland.com*, 21 September 2018, https://www.cleveland.com/metro/2018/09/united_way_of_greater_cleveland_14.html; for further efforts, see Robert Higgs, “Racism a public health crisis? Cleveland City Council weighs declaration to tackle impacts on society,” *cleveland.com*, 3 March 2020, <https://www.cleveland.com/cityhall/2020/03/racism-a-public-health-crisis-cleveland-city-council-weighs-such-a-declaration-to-tackle-impacts-on-society.html>.

²²⁶ Interview with Center for American Progress.

²²⁷ Interview with United Way of Greater Columbus.

²²⁸ King and Smith, “Without Regard to Race,” 969.

²²⁹ Ibid., 966. See also Paula McClain and Stewart Joseph, Jr., *Can We All Get Along?* 4th ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2006), 181-218.

²³⁰ Williams, *The Constraint of Race*, argues that there must be a race-explicit campaign that does not alienate Whites even when bringing up White privilege. ‘Poverty’ may be a good lens in this regard because at its heart is exploitation – over centuries, confined to geographic regions because of resources, or due to active ideology. The proportional and differential exclusion facilitated by paternalism as a sorting mechanism impedes such multi-racial, class-based solidarity.

individual liberties as old as the republic, and arguments about race, dependency and the role of government around since the Freedman's Bureau" facilitated this movement and mobilization.²³¹

While conservative, colorblind institutions "at least seem to serve many members' economic interests, their coalitional nature means that their unifying aim must be *power for many purposes*, not just profits."²³² As we saw with our amendment of the American Welfare Orders, racial orders are also affected by the coalitional power of the state, and its decision whether or not to enforce rights or obligations. Regarding extrajudicial lynching, Kato writes, "it was the political strength of proponents of racial violence, not the administrative or legal weakness of the state, that was most centrally responsible for the active withdrawal of the state from its essential role as rights-enforcer."²³³ Given the state's role as an enforcer of rights and/or obligations, we are able to amend our assessment (in Subsection 1.3.i) of the 'welfare as self-sufficiency' order to more completely account for racial orders (and, by extension, other identity cleavages) and their interaction with American Welfare Orders.

Table 1.2 illustrates the conceptual foundation for an analysis of paternalism within APD. The case study of Ohio identifies the distinctiveness of, historical consistencies of, and collaboration between these two ideational strands and institutional coalitions.

²³¹ Ibid., 184-185. Barbara Fields, "Ideology and Race in American History," in J. Morgan Kousser and James McPherson, eds., *Region, Race, and Reconstruction* (New York/Oxford: Oxford UP, 1982): 143-177, provides an important (compatible) clarification. She writes, "Complaints about undependable work habits echo and re-echo in the sources concerning the freedmen – and, for that matter, the antebellum free blacks. But they have also appeared again and again, in every part of the world, whenever an employer class in process of formation has tried to induce men and women unbroken to market discipline to work in exchange for a wage," p. 165.

²³² King and Smith, "Racial Orders in American Political Development," 75. Emphasis added.

²³³ Kato, "Strengthening the Weak State," 472.

Table 1.2: Paternalism’s place in the ‘welfare as self-sufficiency’ American Welfare Order, with constitutive institutional coalitions and ideational strands

Elements in each strand of the American Welfare Order	‘Welfare as self-sufficiency’	
Institutional Coalition	Redeployment of significant federal resources	<i>Retrenchment of government involvement</i>
Ideational Strand	Paternalism	<i>Welfare Abolition</i>
Function	Sorting mechanism	<i>Cutting mechanism</i>
Contributing Identity Cleavage [#]		
Racial Order and coalition	Colorblind	<i>Colorblind</i>
	Necessary for equal obligations	<i>Necessary for equal opportunity</i>
Gender Order and coalition	Heteropatriarchal	<i>Heteropatriarchal</i>
	Reliance on federal government for norm enforcement	<i>Reliance on private sector and family for norm enforcement</i>

- A number of other cleavages could be identified and added to this schematic. *Italicized* column identifies where the existing literature most heavily focuses.

1.5 Empirical Analysis in American Political Development

Conceptually, paternalism is a mechanism of retrenchment. Paternalism's assumptions maintain its distinctiveness (rejection of competence, administrative solutions) and similarities (primacy of work, colorblind policy) to welfare abolition, despite the obvious differences in their prescriptions for the role of government. Both of these ideational strands rely on the strength of the colorblind alliance and are components of the same ideational order of 'welfare as self-sufficiency.' Robin argues that conservatism is fundamentally a reactionary ideology, one opposed to movements that seek to restructure who has power in society. Conservatism as a reactionary force has often mimicked the language and institutions of whatever revolution it is opposing. Paternalism is emblematic of the efforts among conservatives to redeploy federal and state power, in order to retrench the welfare state.²³⁴ After all, institutions, such as the welfare state, "are made in the image of the powerful."²³⁵ The assumptions of the new paternalism discussed above are fundamental to this opposition/redeployment, and contribute to the effectual retrenchment of the safety net.

The most important implication of this research is a rigorous examination of the assumptions of the dominant anti-poverty paradigm shaping debates today. As Sheri Berman writes, "Political scientists must be able to explain . . . *why some of the innumerable ideas in circulation achieve prominence in the political realm at particular moments and others not.* Since no intellectual vacuum ever exists, what is really at issue here is ideational change, how individuals, groups, or societies exchange old ideas for new ones."²³⁶ Through understanding political development and institutional (non)change, we can better understand "which ideas win (or, in fact, which ideas are in the arena to begin with), why, and with what consequences for whom."²³⁷ The consequences for paternalism are certainly sweeping.

²³⁴ Jacobs, at al., "Building a Conservative State"; Robin, *The Reactionary Mind*.

²³⁵ Deepa Narayan and Patti Petesch, "Agency, Opportunity Structure, and Poverty Escapes," in Deepa Narayan and Patti Petesch, eds., *Moving out of Poverty* 1 (2007): 1-44. 34.

²³⁶ Sheri Berman, "Ideas, Norms, and Culture in Political Analysis," *Comparative Politics* 33 (2001): 231-250. 233. Emphasis added.

²³⁷ Lieberman, "Ideas, Institutions, and Political Order," 700.

The empirical chapters will examine the assumptions of the new paternalism and the conceptual claim that it is a mechanism of retrenchment, through a case study of welfare policymaking in Ohio. I marshal historic and contemporary materials to examine the relative weight of each of paternalism's assumptions over time – the extent to which some are more prominent than others, especially in relation to their counterpart assumptions of welfare abolition. The empirical chapters that follow provide the 'raw material' of the friction between and within the American Welfare Orders. While this thesis prioritizes ideational orders, it does so by examining the institutions and policies through which these ideas are expressed, the people who express them and their role in these institutions, and the time in which they are expressed.

Chapter 2.

Research Design

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2.1 Introduction

“Objective conditions are seldom so compelling and so unambiguous that they set the policy agenda.”
– Giandomenico Majone¹

A political “agenda is established out of the history, traditions, attitudes, and beliefs of a people encapsulated and codified in the terms of its political discourse.” – Michael Howlett and M Ramesh²

A research design concerns the logic of the problem we are seeking to address³ and a “general approach to studying a research topic” or question.⁴ In his seminal work, *The Undeserving Poor*, Michael Katz asks, “What kind of a problem is poverty?” His answer – developed through analytic history – is that poverty is conceived as six distinct problems: of individuals, resources, place, power, political economy, and markets. The new paternalism views poverty as a problem of individuals stuck in the behavioral morass of the ghetto and voluntarily failing to take part in the market. The new paternalism is a policy agenda divorced from objective conditions and a political agenda born of strategic efforts on the Right and ceded ground on the Left. Given these conceptions of the poverty problem, this thesis asks (RQ1): “What kind of *solution* is paternalism?”

My claim is both conceptual and empirical. Conceptually, paternalism, although its assumptions distinguish it from classic retrenchment through spending cuts and programmatic changes, nonetheless acts as a mechanism of retrenchment on the welfare state because it derives from the same logic of dependency. It is a distinct strand of the ideational order of ‘welfare as self-sufficiency,’ with a different functional view of government but a similar institutional and actor coalition that emphasizes colorblind policymaking. Examining paternalism’s first assumptions is fundamental to understanding what kind of solution paternalism is conceptually. The above was explored in Chapter 1.

¹ Giandomenico Majone, *Evidence, Argument, & Persuasion in the Policy Process* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1989), 24.

² Michael Howlett and M Ramesh, *Studying Public Policy*, 1st ed. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995), 110.

³ Robert Yin, *Case Study Research*, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2009).

⁴ David Silverman, *Doing Qualitative Research*, 4th ed. (London: Sage, 2013), 112.

Table 2.1: Summary table of research questions

Research Question	Purpose	Chapters devoted
RQ1 – What kind of policy solution is paternalism?	To establish conceptual footing by examining the new paternalism through APD and welfare state retrenchment literatures; To examine its relationship with other well-documented mechanisms of retrenchment.	1, 2
RQ2 – In what way does paternalism retrench?	To understand paternalism’s function as a sorting mechanism; To examine through empirical evidence how its assumptions develop in historic and contemporary policy discourse to support this function.	3, 4, 5, 6, 7
RQ3 – To what extent does paternalism contribute to conservative ideational development?	To understand paternalism as an adaptive mechanism of retrenchment, a conservative agenda; To understand the role that institutions and ideas play in this adaptation.	3, Conclusion

However, these assumptions are untested,⁵ in the sense that they are not thoroughly observed or probed as to how they discursively shape anti-poverty programs *on the ground* and how they contribute to conservative development. Alice O’Connor argues that a renewed poverty research agenda must illuminate and open up to debate the inherently political and ideological assumptions in anti-poverty policies.⁶ Given the primary research question, a descriptive research design is well-suited to “challenge accepted assumptions about the way things are.”⁷

Chapters 3 through 7 will establish what paternalism looks like *empirically*, by illustrating how paternalism as a mechanism of retrenchment shapes the assumptions underlying policy design⁸ and development in Ohio (in a way distinct from the design of pure spending cuts). I seek to understand *how* paternalism retrenches (RQ2) and *to what extent* paternalism maintains conservative power (RQ3).

⁵ Amy Edmondson and Stacy McManus, “Methodological Fit in Management Field Research, *Academy of Management Review* 32, no. 4 (2007): 1155-1179. 1160.

⁶ O’Connor, *Poverty Knowledge*, 22.

⁷ David de Vaus, *Research Design in Social Research* (London: Sage, 2001), 2.

⁸ While implementation and service delivery are just as important as design, this thesis is evaluating the formational discourses and assumptions, not the programs themselves. Instead, I rely on secondary sources evaluating work requirement programs. For welfare evaluation, see Blank, “Evaluating Welfare Reform in the United States.”

This chapter proceeds as follows. First, after providing clarifications to bound the study and a discussion of falsifiability, I identify where in welfare state retrenchment literature this study occupies, and discuss the most thorough ideational and institutional analysis to date of paternalism as a development within welfare policy. By placing the descriptive research design within retrenchment literature, I establish that examining the assumptions (ideational elements) of paternalism is essential to better measuring the ‘motives’ and ‘mechanisms’ of welfare state retrenchment. As a result, paternalism’s retrenchment efforts can be seen as a politically orchestrated ideational adaptation “adopted by welfare state opponents in the face of popular and change-resistant policies” to force the welfare state to “cover a declining portion of the salient risks faced by citizens.”⁹

Second, I connect the elite-level ideational concepts established in Chapter 1 to the subnational examination. I argue that descriptive subnational case studies are best suited to identify how the assumptions of paternalism have developed outside the federal sphere, and their discursive influence on local poverty politics. I then explain the justifications for Ohio’s status as a critical case study.

Third, I discuss the procedural elements of the data collection – interviews and archival material – and interpretive analysis – discourse analysis and analytic history. Finally, I provide the methodological limitations presented by this research design.

2.1.i Bounding the Study and Falsifiability

Such a study must be bound with some foundational clarifications. First, the new paternalism, while the dominant paradigm for social policy at least since PRWORA, is not the only paradigm, nor is it the only strong paradigm. It is clear among politicians from Paul Ryan to Donald Trump that retrenchment through spending cuts is still a very relevant approach. Since, there exists no situation

⁹ Hacker, “Privatizing Risk without Privatizing the Welfare State,” 243, 244, respectively.

in which the U.S. welfare state has been abolished or in which it has become a pure paternalist state, much of what this thesis describes and analyzes is an *interaction between the two in specific welfare programs*.¹⁰

Second, claims about retrenchment and the welfare state often remain at the level of international comparison.¹¹ International and national level examinations are illuminating, but their macro-level of analysis makes it difficult to show the complexity with which ideologies become mechanisms for their own furthering (e.g. through internal political and ideational developments), and how those mechanisms affect the experiences of people whom social policy is meant to serve. Not only should such discussions of welfare state retrenchment focus on the change in individual tangible benefits for citizens¹² (micro), they should also focus on the permeation of ideological commitments into *local* social policy arenas and the influence that those commitments have in shaping the relation between citizens, the market, and the state (meso). Therefore, while the context of federal discourses will be given throughout the thesis, the empirical chapters encompass a *subnational* examination.

Third, it is necessary to address strategies for falsifying my claims that the new paternalism is a mechanism of retrenchment through its “sorting mechanism” and “adaptive mechanism” functions.

Falsification of the former would require analysis of the empirical cases I marshal to illustrate the sorting effect of paternalist programs. While Mead admits the sorting mechanism function, he does not admit the retrenchment effect. However, Mead claims that the sorting mechanism provides greater work effort for those receiving benefits and more public support for the programs on which

¹⁰ That said, paternalism itself is not a compromise position (i.e. the pragmatic result of compromise between multiple ideologically opposed positions) because it is not an APD order subject to friction. Rather, it is a strand *within* an order, which helps that order adapt. In addition, this thesis assumes in good faith that the ideas of the new paternalism, as articulated by Mead, are genuine ideological positions. While Mead claims that the new paternalism is a sort of compromise between big government liberals and moralistic conservatives, the mere strategic framing of it as a compromise indicates that it is an ideological position and reflective of an ideological shift on the Left and a strategic shift on the Right.

¹¹ Peter Starke, “The Politics of Welfare State Retrenchment: A Literature Review,” *Social Policy and Administration* 40, no. 1 (2006): 104-120.

¹² Herbert Kitschelt, “Partisan Competition and Welfare State Retrenchment,” in Paul Pierson, ed., *The New Politics of the Welfare State* (New York: Oxford UP, 2001), 265-302. “The best way to measure social policy retrenchment would be at the micro-level of individual entitlements, identifying changes in the average citizen’s tangible benefits from time t_1 before the policy change to time t_2 after the policy change,” p. 299.

work requirements are applied like GA. In a Meadian world, we would see consistently increasing public support for safety-net programs, even those considered ‘welfare,’ and we would see consistent outcomes regarding employment, even low-wage employment. However, the conditions (e.g. job guarantees, skills trainings, higher wages, childcare and health care provision, resolution of benefit cliff issues) do not exist – nor does Mead think they need to – for paternalism to have the employment impact and strengthened welfare state that he claims to want. Mead argues that the employment effects have not been met because work requirements have been applied too loosely.

One could test my claim by (a) arguing that the eventual elimination of a program like GA is not causally related to the efforts overtime to introduce work requirements as a way to continually sort people off of the welfare rolls and (b) showing a U.S. state in which strong work requirements were met with genuine work support investments in order to increase employment rates, reduce dependency through increased earnings and decreased poverty rates, and that these measurements were sustained long after the reforms had been made. Some on the Right, including Mead, argue that Wisconsin’s story fits this narrative.

Falsification of the latter would require analysis of the *motive* behind the need for a sorting mechanism, and, therefore, of the textual evidence I use to illustrate the inconsistencies and political orchestration of conservative writers. Mead claims that the sorting mechanism is needed because the public supports a distinction of deservingness, and movement into low wage work best addresses dependency and poverty. In a Meadian world of work enforcement, conservative power would actually decrease: We would see “recipients become more deserving, and generosity... more popular. With more disadvantaged people in jobs, most of them low-paid, support for unionism and protective labour market reforms would grow. As a conservative, these are costs I accept. The left should be the most, not the least, in favour of work enforcement.”¹³

¹³ Mead, *From Welfare to Work*, 129-130.

Of course, I take Mead at his words, which allows for an examination of how they change and create ambiguities which lay bare the political orchestration at the heart of the new paternalism. One could rebut this claim by showing that (a) the foundational assumptions of the new paternalist ideology (and other foundational logics, e.g. of CAAs) I examine are not exhaustive in their argumentative structures, perhaps missing sub-premises and significant clarifications, or (b) the discursive shifts regarding justifications for work requirements are missing exculpatory nuance.

2.2 Identifying the Research Questions: Welfare State Retrenchment Literature

The welfare state developed to “protect citizens against the vagaries of the market” through universal insurance, programs for citizens to develop their capabilities,¹⁴ social services, and other income-maintenance programs.¹⁵ Welfare states maintain enduring popularity because of loss-aversion, concentrated political support for universal programs, and the ‘stickiness’ of programs (i.e. the number of veto points and path dependent processes).¹⁶ Despite these factors, “since the 1980s it has become harder to assemble political coalitions *supporting further expansions* of the welfare state.”¹⁷

This is because, according to Paul Pierson, welfare states are “under siege”¹⁸ in an era of “permanent austerity.”¹⁹ This defensive position is due to political and economic challenges that are both exogenous – globalization pressures on wages and economic growth – and endogenous – growing mandatory spending, shifts from manufacturing to service employment, household structure transformation, and population ageing.²⁰ Nonetheless, “welfare states are not being dismantled.”²¹ Instead, scholars argue the politics surrounding social policy “centre on the renegotiation, restructuring, and modernization of the terms of the post-war social contract rather than on its dismantling.”²²

The question for a study on the relationship between paternalism and distinct well-documented mechanisms of retrenchment is the extent to which endogenous ideological assaults on the welfare state are the result of these various cross-pressures, or a consistent political agenda.

¹⁴ See Amartya Sen, *Commodities and Capabilities* (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1985); Martha Nussbaum, *Creating Capabilities* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2011).

¹⁵ Kitschelt, “Partisan Competition and Welfare State Retrenchment,” 265.

¹⁶ Paul Pierson, “Coping with Permanent Austerity,” in Pierson, ed., *The New Politics of the Welfare State*, 410-456. 410.

¹⁷ Kitschelt, “Partisan Competition and Welfare State Retrenchment,” 265. Emphasis added.

¹⁸ Paul Pierson, “Post-Industrial Pressures on the Mature Welfare States,” in Pierson, ed., *The New Politics of the Welfare State*, 80-104. 80.

¹⁹ Pierson, “Coping with Permanent Austerity,” 456.

²⁰ Pierson, “Post-Industrial Pressures on the Mature Welfare States,” 82.

²¹ Pierson, “Coping with Permanent Austerity,” 456. By this Pierson means the “core structures of most welfare states are not in jeopardy,” even though current reform agendas make improving functionality of those structures difficult.

²² Ibid., 410.

However, most literature focuses on the institutional bounds of welfare state activity, not the ends of particular intervening logics or ideational approaches to welfare state change.

2.2.i Conceptualizing Institutional Welfare State Change

The predominant challenge in studying welfare state change is conceptual ambiguity.²³ Partly, this is due to the macro-institutional level at which these conceptualizations take place. Since Pierson's seminal *Dismantling the Welfare State? Reagan, Thatcher and the Politics of Retrenchment*,²⁴ there have been concerted attempts to define and measure retrenchment in the new age of permanent austerity.

While, welfare abolition through spending cuts or program elimination clearly exemplifies retrenchment, scholars understand that levels of spending “are epiphenomenal to the theoretical substance of welfare states,” and pure analysis on spending both “contradicts the sociological notion that power, democracy, or welfare are relational and structured phenomena... [and assumes] that all spending counts equally.”²⁵ Therefore, the literature focuses on different institutional trajectories of welfare state movement in the context of the market.

By focusing on *institutional bounds* of welfare state activity, the literature distinguishes between retrenchment as cutbacks in social expenditures and retrenchment as institutional changes such as increased means-testing, eligibility restrictions, and devolution to the private sector.²⁶ Both retrenchment as cutbacks and institutional changes are understood as being associated with decreases in the size of government involvement, in the numbers of people served, and numbers of people doing the serving. Welfare state expansion, by contrast, is typically associated with the growth of

²³ Christoffer Green-Pedersen, “The Dependent Variable Problem within the Study of Welfare State Retrenchment,” *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice* 1 (2004): 3-14.

²⁴ Paul Pierson, *Dismantling the Welfare State?* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994).

²⁵ Gøsta Esping-Andersen, *Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), 19.

²⁶ Green-Pedersen, “The Dependent Variable Problem.”

government services, extension and permeation of government programs, and increase in the bureaucratic backbone of these services.

Scholars generally agree that, although states undergo changes along “diverging trajectories,”²⁷ they can be labeled “retrenchment,” “restructuring,” “redesign,” or “renegotiation.” Pierson argues for delineating these broad umbrella terms across three dimensions: *re-commodification*, *cost-containment*, and *recalibration*.

By protecting citizens against the vagaries of the market, the welfare state “decommodifies.”²⁸ Most analyses of welfare-state change emphasize the goal of *re-commodification*, which involves restricting “the alternatives to participation in the labour market, either by tightening eligibility or cutting benefits.”²⁹ Welfare abolition and work-*incentive* programs are illustrative of this effort. Pierson cites “the abolition of AFDC in the United States”³⁰ as a prime example. However, there is a difference between recommodification-focused reforms such as EITC and strict conditionality-focused reforms such as TANF, a distinction lost in macroanalysis.³¹

While welfare state expansion is about strengthening institutional aspects of service delivery which increases spending, politicians are centrally concerned with deficits, in an attempt to alleviate the real or perceived budgetary strains of governmental commitments. *Cost-containment* is so often part and parcel of other efforts. For example, Paul Ryan’s efforts as Speaker of the House were explicitly two-fold: gain a multi-trillion-dollar tax cut for top earners and then reduce that deficit by cutting

²⁷ Kitschelt, “Partisan Competition and Welfare State Retrenchment,” 265.

²⁸ Esping-Andersen, *Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, defines decommodification as occurring “when a service is rendered as a matter of right, and when a person can maintain a livelihood without reliance on the market,” p. 21-22.

²⁹ Pierson, “Coping with Permanent Austerity,” 422.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ E.g. Ibid. found, by 1996 “the federal government was spending twice as much per year on the rapidly-expanding EITC as it spent on AFDC.” The question for analysts is whether these changes are simply “cosmetic embellishments to harsh exercises in retrenchment,” p. 436.

spending on social programs.³² Cost-containment is accurately seen as a guardrail for welfare state politics from members of both dominant U.S. political parties.

Recalibration has two subcategories: rationalization and updating. Rationalization involves “the modification of programmes in line with new ideas about how to achieve *established* goals,” while updating involves adapting to new social demands, needs, and norms.³³ Recalibration most closely reflects the first- and second-ordered changes outlined by Peter Hall in his work on policy paradigms.³⁴

In what way, then, does paternalism – an ostensibly behavioral, conditionality-focused effort – retrench? Pierson writes that retrenchment is “a distinctive and difficult political enterprise. It is in no sense a simple mirror image of welfare state expansion.”³⁵ He emphasizes examining long- and short-term spending cuts, program structure, and systemic and programmatic retrenchment. However, paternalism as *some sort of change* – especially ideationally – is not featured as a mechanism of retrenchment in these analyses. In fact, Pierson writes that under Reagan “heightened use of means testing and *stricter requirements* increased problems of bureaucracy, work disincentives, and dependency that conservatives had promised to eradicate,”³⁶ and, therefore, did not contribute to retrenchment.

Institutionally, the new paternalism does not at first glance fit comfortably in the programmatic change category. In fact, by Pierson’s definition, paternalism’s *stated core efforts and intentions* – build the administrative capacity of the welfare state (institutional) and strengthen “popular attachments to public social provision” by requiring work (ideational and institutional) – go against the tenets of systemic retrenchment.³⁷

³² Julian Zelizer, “Blowing up the deficit is part of the plan,” *Atlantic*, 19 December 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/12/blowing-up-the-deficit-is-part-of-the-plan/548720/>.

³³ Pierson, “Coping with Permanent Austerity,” 425. Emphasis added.

³⁴ Hall, “Policy Paradigms, Social Learning, and the State,” discusses first-, second-, and third-order changes as changes of settings, instruments, and goals/paradigms, respectively.

³⁵ Pierson, *Dismantling the Welfare State?*, 1.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 102. Emphasis added.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 16.

Ideationally, paternalism's *assumption* – the rejection of competence – also runs counter to the ideational elements underlying typical retrenchment efforts, which assume (a) market competence of the populace, because the market itself is seen to be more efficient and effective in distributing resources,³⁸ and (b) a static perception of those served by welfare programs, ignoring a fundamental driver of ideological assaults on the welfare state.³⁹ Within paternalism, the able-bodied receiving income-maintenance are not just missing proper incentives, they are incompetent; and, therefore, a continuous sorting mechanism is needed to distinguish between the deserving and undeserving.

Pierson's three dimensions of analysis tend not to recognize any sort of ideational shift in the assumptions of intervening logics, nor do they articulate a different explicit relationship between the individual, the state, and the market. Paternalism is an intervening logic of retrenchment by taking considerations of welfare state change down to the individual level (i.e. noting that the removal from welfare rolls, without necessarily achieving the self-sufficiency aims of the welfare state or secondary behavioral aims of paternalists, is the explicit goal). However, this shift is more fundamental than simple institutional changes of re-commodification or eligibility restricting, which reduce the administrative capacity of the state.

As we can see, just as paternalism confounded the typology of poverty problem formation, paternalism challenges typical *institutional* macro-analysis of welfare state retrenchment, because (1) it emphasizes building the administrative capacity of the welfare state, (2) it ostensibly seeks public support for programs by requiring work, and (3) it rejects the assumption of competence in citizens underlying typical recommodification efforts.

³⁸ Nicholas Barr, *Economics of the Welfare State*, 5th ed. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012).

³⁹ Evelyn Huber and John Stephens, "Welfare State and Production Regimes in the Era of Retrenchment," in Pierson, ed., *The New Politics of the Welfare State*, 107-145. Pierson, *Dismantling the Welfare State?*, claims that under Reagan, "there was not a radical restructuring of income-support policies... because most... policies for the able-bodied poor already operated within a residualist framework," p. 100.

2.2.ii Conceptualizing Ideational and Institutional U.S. Welfare State Change

Welfare state typologies consider the U.S. a monolithic liberal welfare state – characterized by moderate political support for it; moderate pressures to adjust programs; a reform agenda focused on re-commodification and cost-containment; conflict between neoliberal retrenchment (e.g. welfare abolition) and compensated commodification (e.g. work-incentives like EITC) as the ends; and concentration of political authority in two political parties. Liberal welfare states are viewed “primarily as an analytical or normative foil for the ‘real’ welfare states of Continental Europe and Scandinavia.” The U.S. is viewed as exemplar and its 1990s welfare reform viewed as paradigmatic.⁴⁰ Hacker notes that the U.S. is considered “the quintessential example of welfare state stability in the face of fiscal and political challenge.”⁴¹

Undoubtedly, the U.S. is the “least generous welfare state of any advanced industrial democracy.”⁴² However, because of its foil-status, studies downplay the interaction between political and welfare state developments *within* the single case, and, therefore, the real extent of “ideologically driven cuts.”⁴³ Certainly, the typology is helpful to understand the baseline: meager benefits, prominent means-testing, and spending cuts exacted on programs with weak political constituencies; whereas the universalism of social democratic states exists in only one of the two tiers.⁴⁴ However,

⁴⁰ Pierson, “Coping with Permanent Austerity,” 435. However, Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse*, refers to the U.S. as the “semi-welfare state,” p. x.

⁴¹ Hacker, “Privatizing Risk without Privatizing the Welfare State,” 243.

⁴² Huber and Stephens, “Welfare State and Production Regimes in the Era of Retrenchment,” 126.

⁴³ See, e.g. *Ibid.*, 125.

⁴⁴ See Jill Quadagno, “Theories of the Welfare State” *Annual Review of Sociology* 13 (1987): 109-128. Robert Ball, “Social Insurance and the Right to Assistance,” *Social Service Review* 21, no. 3 (1947): 331-344, distinguishes between social insurance – universal, more popular, and politically stable – and public assistance. Undoubtedly, the welfare state, itself, according to Esping-Andersen, *Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, “is not just a mechanism that intervenes in, and possibly corrects, the structure of inequality; it is, in its own right, a system of stratification. It is an active force in the ordering of social relations,” p. 23. E.g. Joe Soss, *Unwanted Claims* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), discusses the consequences for citizenship of being served by Social Security rather than AFDC/TANF. Theda Skocpol, “Targeting within Universalism,” in Christopher Jencks and Paul Peterson, ed., *The Urban Underclass* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1991), 411-346, utilizes the notion of “targeting within universalism” to integrate the two tiers. Additionally, Ajay Chaudry, et al., “Poverty in the United States,” *ASPE*, March 2016, find that social insurance reduces poverty more than most means-tested programs.

such analysis does not provide sufficient typological rigor to an analysis of the development of paternalism in programs that serve the poor in liberal welfare states. Despite the residualist baseline, the internal development of the last three decades has been (in addition to all of the above) focused on the “hassle” and behavioral expectations of welfare recipients, in large part because of a shifting conception of the competence of the poor.

Hacker argues that there are ideational and institutional retrenchment strategies in the U.S. that retrenchment literature sparsely covers. In addition to ‘formal revision’ of welfare policy (e.g. welfare abolition), three other strategies are used by welfare state opponents to *reduce the number of people with access*. ‘Drift’ reflects the “changes in operation or effect of policies that occur without significant change in those policies’ structure”⁴⁵ (e.g. eligibility restrictions, punitive sanctions). ‘Conversion’ is the shift that occurs when “existing institutions are redirected to new purposes, driving changes in the role they perform and/or the functions they serve”⁴⁶ (e.g. Section 1115 waivers for Medicaid expansion work requirements). ‘Layering’ is the addition of new institutions rather than the dismantling or conversion of the old, in order to work around vested interests⁴⁷ (e.g. privatization efforts). Hacker concludes that “efforts to update [the welfare state] to changing social risks have failed (*drift*), their ground-level operation has shifted in directions at odds with their initial goals (*conversion*), and new policies that subvert or threaten them have been put in place (*layering*).”⁴⁸ The findings in Chapters 3 through 7 are consistent with Hacker’s assessment of everyday retrenchment.

⁴⁵ Hacker, “Privatizing Risk without Privatizing the Welfare State,” 246.

⁴⁶ Kathleen Thelen, “How Institutions Evolve,” in James Mahoney and Deitrich Rueschemeyer, eds., *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003), 208-240. 226.

⁴⁷ Eric Schickler, *Disjointed Pluralism* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2001), 13.

⁴⁸ Hacker, “Privatizing Risk without Privatizing the Welfare State,” 256. For further discussion (a) in the US see Jacob Hacker and Paul Pierson, *Winner-Take-All Politics* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2010), and (b) comparatively see Jane Gingrich, “Still Not Dismantling?,” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 48, no. 2 (2015): 279-283.

2.2.iii Neoliberal Paternalism

Many assessments of welfare state development in the U.S. emphasize its “‘market-conforming’ (i.e. work and efficiency oriented)”⁴⁹ efforts around re-commodification, rather than the conversion to new goals or the drifting from needs, as Hacker argued.⁵⁰ Along this trend, much writing has been done under the umbrella of neoliberalism.⁵¹ However, this analysis typically neglects aspects of the welfare state ostensibly oriented toward changing behavior rather than social protection and provision.⁵² Mead advocates for a new ideational pressure on welfare states (‘dependency politics’) focused on their *character*, which does away with the typical politics around expansion or retrenchment.

But is paternalism in the U.S., as Mead argues, a new approach to the welfare state altogether, in an attempt to make it effective in its work? Is paternalism, as libertarian opponents would claim, part of a path dependent process stuck between the neoliberal pressures to cut and the pressures to meet social obligations? Or, is paternalism simply an adaptation by opponents of the welfare state to approach retrenchment in a new way?

The most systematic critique of the new paternalism and attempt to answer the above questions, in the context of these neoliberal changes, is *Disciplining the Poor: Neoliberal Paternalism and the Persistent Power of Race* by Joe Soss, Richard Fording, and Sanford Schram.⁵³ The authors bring a multi-disciplinary,⁵⁴ multi-methods approach to bear to argue that within welfare policy, the “paternalist turn toward direction and supervision has intersected with the neoliberal shift toward decentralized, privatized, and performance-driven strategies” of welfare and poverty governance.⁵⁵ They focus on administration

⁴⁹ Duane Swank, “Political Institutions and Welfare State Restructuring,” in Pierson, ed., *The New Politics of the Welfare State*, 197-237. 197.

⁵⁰ Pierson, “Coping with Permanent Austerity,” 427; Hacker, “Privatizing Risk without Privatizing the Welfare State.”

⁵¹ See, e.g. Wendy Brown, *In the Ruins of Neoliberalism* (New York: Columbia UP, 2019); Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos* (New York: Zone Books, 2015).

⁵² A notable exception being, Cooper, *Family Values*.

⁵³ Soss, et al., *Disciplining the Poor*.

⁵⁴ Hana Brown, “Book Review: *Disciplining the Poor*,” *Social Forces* 93, no. 3 (2012): 1-2.

⁵⁵ Soss, et al., *Disciplining the Poor*, 262.

and governance as their predominant issues, because, while poverty may be subject to public discourse, “the poor exist perennially as subjects who must be governed.”⁵⁶ They argue that the “most basic purpose of poverty governance is not to end poverty; it is to secure, in politically viable ways, the cooperation and contributions of weakly integrated populations.”⁵⁷ Their study attempts to place the contemporary system that they identify as “a blend of old practices and new political rationalities” into “a long history of efforts to regulate and reform low-income populations.”⁵⁸ They argue that neoliberal paternalism has become the “bipartisan national consensus.”⁵⁹

Soss, et al. examine neoliberal paternalism through a case study of the Florida Welfare Transition program to describe how “neoliberal paternalism, political conservatism, and race schemas shape *delivery* of TANF at the local level.”⁶⁰ Their quantitative analysis finds that, after PRWORA, sanctioning rates were a function of racial composition on welfare and government ideology; work requirement implementation was a function of social control indicators; and time limits and family caps are a function of the percentage of Black recipients.⁶¹ Their interviews with case-workers show how “perceptions of race shape street-level decisions about how to provide help, when to be lenient, and when to stop giving second chances.”⁶²

As a theoretical framework, “neoliberal paternalism” – developing on varieties of capitalism⁶³ and variegated capitalism⁶⁴ – describes the dispersed and varied movement of welfare policy in the U.S. as

⁵⁶ Ibid. 1.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 3.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 126.

⁶⁰ Scott Allard, “Review: *Disciplining the Poor*,” *Political Science Quarterly* 127, no. 4 (2012-2013): 703-704. 703. Emphasis added.

⁶¹ Soss, et al., “Setting the Terms of Relief,” 390. On work requirements, they find, “states with larger increases in incarceration from 1990 to 1996 were significantly more likely to adopt strict work requirements, as were states with tighter labor markets,” p. 386. This makes work requirements a “less ambiguous dimension of welfare reform,” p. 389. While they focus on the implementation of work requirements for those still with access to the welfare state, my analysis focuses on the discursive impacts of work requirements for the welfare system as a whole, over time, as a sorting mechanism.

⁶² Allard, “Review,” 703.

⁶³ Peter Hall and David William Soskice, eds., *Varieties of Capitalism* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001).

⁶⁴ Jamie Peck and Nik Theodore, “Variegated Capitalism,” *Progress in Human Geography* 31, no. 6 (2007): 731-772.

one that follows the *unifying logic* of neoliberal paternalism. Market logic is brought into the welfare space, and, therefore, into debates on citizenship and dignity. But, the first- and second-order devolution contributing to the neoliberal shift make it distinct from efforts of welfare abolition. Therefore, “neoliberal paternalism is not about weakening the state [in exchange for control of the market]; it is about strengthening the state as a disciplinary authority.”⁶⁵

Disciplining the Poor has carved an enormous space in contemporary poverty research, especially in examining how purportedly race-neutral policies can lead to differential impacts based on race. Theirs is predominantly an evaluative study of service delivery, rigorously examining the implementation and impacts of punitive policies. Their developments – both theoretical and empirical – provide a well-lit path for this thesis and future research into welfare state development. Specifically,

- (1) The singular focus on TANF and the fact that the main changes to other programs (e.g. SNAP, Medicaid) have been to paternalistic aspects rather than market aspects⁶⁶ provide an avenue to clarify how the paternalist part of the shift applies to other programs and fits into a greater picture of welfare policymaking agendas;
- (2) The case study of Florida with broader implications for theoretical developments of poverty governance provides an avenue to add qualitative strength to the field through subnational analysis of Ohio;
- (3) The emphasis on the racial organization of markets and their findings on racial differentiation in terms of stringent state policy adoption and sanctioning rates afford an avenue to provide conceptual and empirical context by analyzing the first principles of the new paternalism, focusing on its racist origins and postracial appeal; and,

⁶⁵ Soss, et al., *Disciplining the Poor*, 42.

⁶⁶ Allard, “Review,” 703-704.

- (4) The focus on strengthening the state's disciplinary authority recognizes a fundamental shift that welfare state literature neither analyzes nor distinguishes from recommodification efforts. This is a more accurate analysis than strict "market conforming" studies. This thesis situates this fundamental shift *toward* state power (and its corresponding assumptions) in both APD and retrenchment literature.

This thesis also differs in its (compatible) conceptual claim. As made clear in *Disciplining the Poor*, paradigmatic changes in the conceptions of programs have significant effects on the people interacting with those programs. There is an expansion and clarification of social control analysis that has been prominent in research on poverty.⁶⁷ However, the social control literature does not consider paternalism as a mechanism of *retrenchment*. While paternalism certainly contributes to an agenda of social control, the underlying logic, I argue, is one aimed at dismantling the welfare state.⁶⁸ Through paternalism the state is strengthened, not just as a disciplinary authority, but primarily as a perch from which to redeploy resources to the conservative end of retrenchment. Therefore, *underlying* "the unifying logic of neoliberal paternalism" is *the unifying logic of dependency*.

The Ohio case study illustrates that the strands which emerge from this unifying logic have long lineages, and paternalism is neither a more effective approach to the welfare state, nor a path-dependent political compromise on government's size between conservatives and liberals, nor a strict policy agenda of social control. Actively responding to a progressive history in which the welfare state was expanded – not just breathing new life into "the old aspiration to make poor people into better citizens"⁶⁹ – conservatism has cared little for the size of government involvement. Analyzing

⁶⁷ See also Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punishment* (New York: Vintage, 1997); Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, *Regulating the Poor* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1971); Wacquant, *Punishing the Poor*.

⁶⁸ The essence of social control is that welfare programs "secure the cooperation of weakly integrated populations." However, other ethnographic research, such as *American Dream*, indicates that if welfare is not available, or the costs of cooperation are too high, the poor may refuse to engage. This dynamic is a success to contemporary paternalist reformers who want to get people off of the rolls, sorting the deserving from the undeserving, regardless of material outcome.

⁶⁹ Soss, et al., *Disciplining the Poor*, 5.

paternalism as a distinct ideational strand of conservatism requires placing it within the broader contours of American political development, and then testing these assumptions by seeing how and when they emerge, gain strength, and undergo contest at the local level.

2.3 Descriptive Design and Methodology: The Local Lens

Chapter 1 outlined the assumptions of the new paternalism and situated them conceptually in the literature on ideational and institutional orders of APD. The previous section situated them within the welfare state retrenchment literature and distinguished them from the literature on social control. Since policy actors define the problems they aim to address based on their assumptions, the next step in our analysis is to examine how old and new ideas “are blended with these presuppositions to facilitate policy change in different policy-making contexts.”⁷⁰ This section outlines the descriptive research design for this task and the remaining empirical chapters.

2.3.i Descriptive Design

People make sense of the world and their place in it through description and storytelling. Policymaking – including welfare state development and retrenchment – takes place “in the context of ongoing stories about social and political phenomena.”⁷¹ According to Frank Fischer in *Reframing Public Policy*, “politics in a democratic society... is a struggle for power played out in significant part through arguments about the ‘best story.’”⁷² The best story often articulates an account of a problem:⁷³ its characters (constitutive framing)⁷⁴ and its cause(s) (diagnostic framing).⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Campbell, “Ideas, Politics, and Public Policy,” 32. See, e.g. Vivien Schmidt, “Discourse and the legitimation of economic and social policy change in Europe,” in Steven Weber, ed., *Globalization and the European Political Economy* (New York: Columbia UP, 2001), 229-272.

⁷¹ Fischer, *Reframing Public Policy*, ix-x.

⁷² *Ibid.*, x.

⁷³ There is a rich literature on problem definition. See Robert Benford and David Snow, “Framing Processes and Social Movements,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (2000): 611-639; Paul Burstein and Marie Bircher, “Problem definition and public policy,” *Social Forces* 76 (1997): 135-168; Roger Cobb and David Rochefort, eds., *The Politics of Problem Definition* (Lawrence: UP of Kansas, 1994); Joseph Gusfield, *The Culture of Public Problems* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); Stone, *Policy Paradox*.

⁷⁴ Defined as “the cultural characterizations or popular images [nature, motivation, capacity] of the persons or groups whose behavior and well-being are affected by public policy,” p. 334. Anne Schneider and Helen Ingram, “Social Construction of Target Populations,” *American Political Science Review* 87, no. 2 (1993): 334-347. See also Schneider and Ingram, “Behavioral Assumptions of Policy Tools”; Anne Schneider and Helen Ingram, *Deserving and Entitled* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005); Skrentny, “Policy-elite perceptions and social movement success.”

⁷⁵ Guetzkow, “Beyond Deservingness,” 175.

As we saw in Chapter 1, the problem of poverty is often articulated through assessments of who the poor are, and whether it is an individual or structural problem. In the case of recent poverty debates, the dominant stories have focused on ‘helpless structuralism for the defeated’ and ‘neoliberalism for the rational actors’ (see Table 1.1). Schneider and Ingram reason that constitutive framing is chronologically prior to diagnostic framing, but that there is a feedback loop.⁷⁶ Given that constructions correspond to existing power relations within society, reflecting ideas about responsibility and blame,⁷⁷ Schneider and Ingram present a seminal typology (Figure 2.1) of the distribution of policy benefits and burdens based on the political power of the population in question.

The policy choices that are made, the resources devoted to them, the design of policy tools, and the discourses accompanying and justifying these choices, then, are developed from assumptions about the people and the problem.⁷⁸ Mead contends that not only *do* these characterizations determine the types of policies created, they *should*. Under Mead’s “dependency politics”⁷⁹ and resulting new paternalism, those who experience poverty are considered ‘dependents’ making the choice of ‘deviancy’ instead of ‘advantage’ by not working in available low-paying jobs. By illuminating the assumptions underlying these constructions,⁸⁰ we can better understand the logic at work in the policy conclusions.⁸¹ *Description*, then, allows for detailed examination of the assumptions underlying Mead’s stories of poverty reflected in historic and contemporary discourse. Within policy analysis, “assumption analysis” is fundamental to determining the likely impacts on broader policy goals.

⁷⁶ Schneider and Ingram, “Social Construction of Target Populations.”

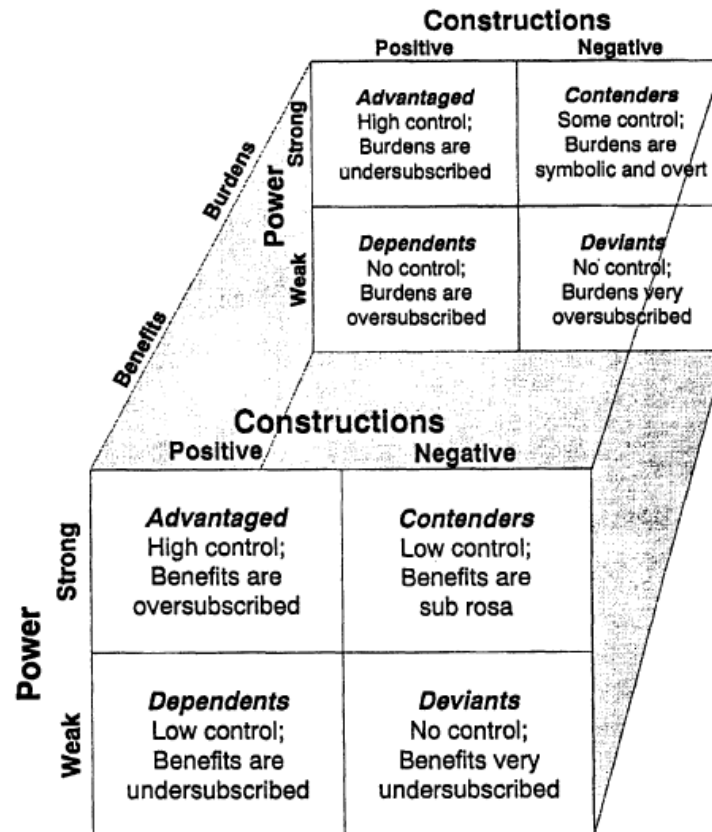
⁷⁷ See Stone, *Policy Paradox*. See also Paul Pierson, ed., *The New Politics of the Welfare State* (New York: Oxford UP, 2001), for the foundational argument regarding blame avoidance strategies.

⁷⁸ For further reading on agenda setting, see John Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1984); Deborah Stone, “Causal stories and the formation of policy agendas,” *Political Science Quarterly* 104, no. 2 (1989): 281-300.

⁷⁹ Mead, *The New Politics of Poverty*.

⁸⁰ Schneider and Ingram, “Social Construction of Target Populations,” 345.

⁸¹ Fischer, *Reframing Public Policy*, 68.



Note: Benefits are shown on the front part of the box to each type of target; burdens are shown at the back of the box.

Figure 2.1: Variations in how policy treats target populations:
Allocations of benefits and burdens⁸²

Thick description

This thesis utilizes ‘thick description’⁸³ to provide a more holistic view of paternalism, how it is understood and reinforced. Thick description encompasses both the physical objects, events, behaviors, and language studied (descriptive), and the meanings in the language used (interpretive), i.e. examining the assumptions and patterns underlying that language.⁸⁴ Thick description parses a specific

⁸² Schneider and Ingram, “Social Construction of Target Populations,” 337.

⁸³ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

⁸⁴ Joseph Maxwell, “Understanding and Validity in Qualitative Research,” *Harvard Educational Review* 62, no. 3 (1992): 279-300. 288.

phenomenon by giving its context, outlining the meanings and intentions in the phenomenon, chronicling the evolution of the phenomenon, and describing it as part of a textual narrative open for interpretation by its readers. In poverty literature, ethnographies have been most equipped at providing description.⁸⁵ Such descriptions have given context for the political decisions surrounding poverty's existence and maintenance in the U.S., and their impact on those in poverty.

Besides ethnographies, however, the study of poverty has been subject to such narrow methodological approaches that the topic itself has been depoliticized⁸⁶ – removing it from “the domain of the public sphere, where citizens can openly discuss political agreements needed to resolve problems.”⁸⁷ Much social science research focuses on hypothesis testing models of inquiry analyzing the predictive relationship between poverty rates and individual characteristics, including racial demographics, family size and structure, gender, geographic location, education, health, mobility, voting turnout, and redistributive preferences. While these studies are invaluable, their application has tended to treat poverty solely as an issue of individual deprivation. Making the individual the unit of analysis for research and policy questions acts as “a powerful reassurance that poverty occurs outside or in spite of core American values and practices... rather than as an integral or necessary condition of the affluent society.”⁸⁸

Many qualitative analysts⁸⁹ argue that studying poverty requires very little focus on the poor. Rather, O'Connor argues that there must be a conceptual shift in analysis towards the systems and

⁸⁵ See, e.g. DeParle, *American Dream*; Desmond, *Evicted*; Edin and Shaefer, *\$2.00 a Day*; Mary Pattillo, *Black on the Block* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Shieler, *The Working Poor*.

⁸⁶ On depoliticization, see John Harriss, “Bringing politics back into poverty analysis,” *Chronic Poverty Research Centre* 77 (2007), http://www.chronicpoverty.org/uploads/publication_files/WP77_Harriss.pdf; Maia Green and David Hulme, “From correlates and characteristics to causes,” *World Development* 33, no. 6 (2005): 867-879. For a discussion on the scientization of policy analysis, see O'Connor, *Poverty Knowledge*.

⁸⁷ Fischer, *Reframing Public Policy*, 36. See, e.g. Jay Ruckelshaus on disability depoliticization: “The Non-Politics of Disability,” *New York Times*, 18 January 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/18/opinion/denouncing-trump-wont-help-disability-rights.html>.

⁸⁸ O'Connor, *Poverty Knowledge*, 15. See also Galbraith, *The Affluent Society*.

⁸⁹ See Desmond, *Evicted*; Bent Flyvbjerg, *Making Social Science Matter* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001); O'Connor, *Poverty Knowledge*; Emery Roe, “Development narratives, or making the best of blueprint development,” *World Development* 19, no. 4 (1991): 287-300; Sanford Schram, “Inverting political economy,” *Rethinking Marxism* 8, no.1 (1995): 78-99.

structures in which poverty is embedded,⁹⁰ critically parsing – through historical analysis – the role of politics, identity cleavages, institutions, and ideology in the creation and maintenance of poverty.⁹¹ This conceptual shift requires a broader *empirical* understanding of “political, economic, institutional and historical conditions” and “policy decisions that shape the distribution of power.”⁹²

My descriptive research treats poverty as a phenomenon that the welfare state was created to protect against, and, therefore, the questions of poverty directly relate to the battles over it. Peter Starke acknowledges the “need for good *descriptions* and good measurements of the real extent of retrenchment.”⁹³ Paternalism as a phenomenon has not been properly analyzed, neither from its first assumptions nor from its ideational and strategic place in American political development. Given that paternalism re-imagines the relationship between citizens (i.e. those who are wealthy have competence that cannot be imputed to those who are poor), and between the state and the market (i.e. the strong state as a provider for the market, rather than a weak state subservient to the market), it would be most effective to answer the research questions through descriptive analysis of paternalism’s impact on the discourses shaping the welfare state programs that were built to serve those in poverty. This requires a subnational examination.

2.3.ii Case Study Methodology

A “case study” is “an in-depth study of a single unit (a relatively bounded phenomenon) where the scholar’s aim is to elucidate features of a larger class of similar phenomena.”⁹⁴ As the study of welfare state retrenchment has developed, scholars have argued for well-selected case studies in order

⁹⁰ O’Connor, *Poverty Knowledge*, 22.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 292-293.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 22.

⁹³ Starke, “The Politics of Welfare State Retrenchment,” 116. Emphasis added.

⁹⁴ John Gerring, “What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good For?” *American Political Science Review* 98, no. 2 (2004): 341-354. 341.

to describe “the motives for retrenchment and the causal mechanisms of retrenchment politics.”⁹⁵ Seeking to describe both of these features, the case study in this thesis is the combination of (1) an idiographic case study, i.e. a theory-guided description of a single case, and (2) a plausibility probe, i.e. an “illustrative” study of a particular phenomenon in order to test the application of a concept, but not test hypotheses.⁹⁶ This case study methodology has a number of advantages for a study on the assumptions underlying a paradigmatic shift in anti-poverty policy.⁹⁷

First, case study research allows for the observation and examination of complex dynamics present in a single setting and over time.⁹⁸ An in-depth, over-time view helps to identify the long-term shifts and processes that are overlooked in episodic or event history analysis.⁹⁹ Because poverty is a relationship constituting many actors and institutions, an appreciation for complexity in those interactions is essential, even if the conclusions drawn are an attempt at parsimony.

Second, case-studies are well-suited for studying ideas and their role in public policy. It is difficult, beyond public opinion research, to identify how ideas shape and respond to policy without examining the consistencies and adaptations of ideas, like paternalism’s assumptions, in a single case. The pitfall in research on the role of ideas in shaping public policy is its perceived distance from

⁹⁵ Starke, “The Politics of Welfare State Retrenchment,” 116. See also John Gerring, “Is There a (Viable) Crucial-Case Method?,” *Comparative Political Studies* 40, no. 3 (2007): 231–253. 231. Other scholars have articulated the importance of case studies in testing *causal* theories: David Collier, et al., “Claiming too much,” in Henry Brady and David Collier, eds., *Rethinking Social Inquiry* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), 85–102; Gary Goertz and James Mahoney, *A Tale of Two Cultures* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2012); Yin, *Case Study Research*. However, because I am not testing theories, but rather developing a concept, the case is not “crucial” or “deviant.” Harry Eckstein, “Case study and theory in political science,” in Roger Gomm, et al., eds., *Case study method* (London: Sage, 2009): 118–164.

⁹⁶ Jack Levy, “Case Studies,” *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 25, no. 1 (2008): 1–18. 3. A plausibility probe is useful to “refine the operationalization... of key variables.” The subset of “illustrative cases” gives the reader “a ‘feel’ for a theoretical argument by providing a concrete example of its application,” p. 6.

⁹⁷ Eckstein, “Case study and theory in political science.”

⁹⁸ Kathleen Eisenhardt, “Building Theories from Case Study Research,” *Academy of Management Review* 14, no. 4 (1989): 532–550. 534.

⁹⁹ For event history analysis, see Walter Korpi and Joakim Palme, “New Politics and Class Politics in the Context of Austerity and Globalization,” *American Political Science Review* 97, no. 3 (2003): 425–446. For the note on long-term shifts and processes, see Hacker, “Privatizing Risk without Privatizing the Welfare State”; Charles Tilly, “Mechanisms in Political Processes,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 4 (2001): 21–41.

examining the role of interests.¹⁰⁰ In this conceptual thesis, I examine the interaction between the two.¹⁰¹ Undoubtedly, paternalism as an idea influences public policy to reshape and reflect society's understanding of the relationships between people and the state – this is elaborated upon through the empirical research. However, by examining paternalism *additionally* in the context of literature on institutional and ideational orders, I examine it as an adaptation of conservatism which reflects the interests of those who seek to maintain the distribution of power in the U.S.

The argument is not that paternalism is a powerful ideology, although I argue that it is a distinct ideational strand, but rather that it is powerful *because* it is tied to a political interest: the decimation of the welfare state. The interaction between ideas and interests expressed through institutions encompasses what Starke calls the motives and means of the actors interested in retrenchment. He writes, “what, then, is the underlying motivation for cutbacks? This part of the puzzle is still little understood.”¹⁰² The means of retrenchment likewise, “have a rather ambiguous status for the explanation of retrenchment.” In order to address this ambiguity, Starke argues that “the search for mechanisms is perhaps one of the most promising areas of further research in the field.”¹⁰³ The argument that paternalism is an adaptive mechanism in service of the conservative agenda of retrenchment is one contribution of this thesis and case selection.

Third, case studies allow for both conceptual and empirical uniqueness.¹⁰⁴ As articulated above, this study contains both a conceptual and an empirical component, both of which contribute

¹⁰⁰ Gordon Schloming, *Power and Principle in International Affairs* (London: Thomson Learning, 1991).

¹⁰¹ Campbell, “Ideas, Politics, and Public Policy,” 33. See also John Hall, “Ideas and the social sciences,” in Judith Goldstein and Robert Keohane, eds., *Ideas and Foreign Policy* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1993), 31-54; Hall, “Policy Paradigms, Social Learning, and the State”; Thomas Risse, et al., *The Power of Human Rights* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999); Mark Suchman, “On Beyond Interest,” *Wisconsin Law Review* 3 (1997): 475-501.

¹⁰² Starke, “The Politics of Welfare State Retrenchment,” 114.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 115.

¹⁰⁴ Ingo Rohlfing, “Comparative Hypothesis Testing Via Process Tracing,” *Sociological Methods & Research* 43, no. 4 (2014): 606–642.

to the literature.¹⁰⁵ Such studies can identify previously unidentified or underdeveloped mechanisms (e.g. paternalism as an avenue for retrenchment)¹⁰⁶ or provide nuance to existing theory (e.g. paternalism as a maintenance of conservative socioeconomic power).¹⁰⁷

Fourth, singular, as opposed to comparative, case studies provide an opportunity to combine various literatures in a comprehensible way. This study focuses on the development of *ideas* and their *institutional configurations and alliances* within a welfare state. This requires the overlap of a number of different literatures, which are examined and incorporated throughout this thesis: (1) paternalism, (2) welfare state retrenchment, (3) ideational and institutional orders of APD, (4) poverty, and (5) conservatism.

Finally, case studies allow for sub-categorical analysis within a single case. That is, the single case (e.g. Ohio) can be studied in relation to the federal policy which influences it and the county/local level policy which derives from it. Many scholars also argue that “subnational experiences of welfare reform left a strong imprint on national debates,”¹⁰⁸ reflecting “layered political development.”¹⁰⁹ Subnational examinations bring to the forefront ideational and institutional strands that may be invisible to federal analysis.

Case studies can be selected on the basis of the information that is likely to be garnered from them. Ohio was selected as a critical case. A critical case (or, ‘most likely’) is one in which information gained can be useful in conducting logical deductions, not in the hard sense of a generalizable or representative principle, but toward an understanding that may be consistent across different units of analysis. For example, Ohio may be illustrative of a particular phenomenon, and allow for the

¹⁰⁵ Ira William Zartman, “Comparative Case Studies,” *International Negotiation* 10, no. 1 (2005): 3–16, argues that case studies operate at the “crossroads of theory and reality,” p. 3.

¹⁰⁶ Timothy McKeown, “Case Studies and the Limits of the Quantitative Worldview,” in Brady and Collier, eds., *Rethinking Social Inquiry*, 139–167.

¹⁰⁷ Maggi Savin-Baden and Claire Major, *Qualitative Research* (London: Routledge, 2013).

¹⁰⁸ Peck, “*Workfare*,” 151. For a federal discursive study, see also Guetzkow, “Beyond Deservingness.”

¹⁰⁹ Karen Orren and Stephen Skowronek, “Beyond the Iconography of Order,” in Larry Dodd and Calvin Jillson, eds., *The Dynamics of American Politics* (Boulder: Westview, 1994), 311–330.

measurement or refining of key variables under question.¹¹⁰ However, when combined with studies of other comparable states, like Wisconsin, generalizable patterns may emerge.¹¹¹ Through its criticality, information gained can be useful in establishing a broad metaphor for the phenomenon or process being examined.

2.3.iii Case Study Selection: As Goes Ohio, So Goes the Nation

Most non-comparative literature on welfare policymaking focuses on the federal debates over the Progressive Era, New Deal, War on Poverty, FSA, and PRWORA. Much less attention is given to the states, and even less given to counties. As we saw in Chapter 1.3 with the relationship between a strong federal state and first- and second-order devolution, elite ideational developments certainly influence local frameworks for action. However, elite developments are also *influenced by* subnational ideational developments. A subnational examination is important to better see the *local design* of policies of retrenchment such as paternalism and, as Weir contends, to understand the winners and losers they create, in order to better theorize their influence at the federal level.¹¹²

Our window to paternalism and retrenchment is the state of Ohio.¹¹³ As a critical case, Ohio offers a vividly common and detailed account of the welfare policy arena. Ohio is neither laggard nor pioneer in welfare state development in the U.S. Rather, Ohio is seen as a reflection of the nation's sentiments. 'As goes Ohio, so goes the nation,' is used most readily in presidential races, in which no Republican has won without winning Ohio. Certainly, as a swing state which went for both Obama

¹¹⁰ Levy, "Case Studies," 6.

¹¹¹ John Gerring, "How Good Is Good Enough?," *Political Research Quarterly* 64, no. 3 (2011): 625–636; Gerring, "What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good For?"; John Gerring and Rose McDermott, "An Experimental Template for Case Study Research," *American Journal of Political Science* 51, no. 3 (2007): 688–701.

¹¹² Weir, "States, Race, and the Decline of New Deal Liberalism," 172.

¹¹³ This phrasing is borrowed from Cramer, *The Politics of Resentment*. Like her, "I grew up here, I love this state, and I care deeply about it," p. 11.

and Trump, Ohio's politics provides fertile ground for a study on welfare.¹¹⁴ For example, in 2010, Republican Governor John Kasich expanded Medicaid to individuals at 138-percent of the federal poverty level, adding nearly 1.2 million Ohioans. He did so through a technical maneuver with the Controlling Board,¹¹⁵ and over the strong objections of the supermajority Republican legislature. However, under Republican Governor Mike DeWine, Ohio was approved by the Trump Administration to impose work requirements on the Medicaid expansion population.¹¹⁶

The saying could also be a reflection of the state's diverse economic tapestry. Ohio's economic sector has deep agrarian roots, industrial decline that mirrors the rust of neighboring Michigan, a coal industry that extracted wealth from its Southeastern region, and a history of redlining in the urban cores of Columbus, Cleveland, and Cincinnati. According to news coverage of the state, Ohio has the "three main flavors of poverty in a single container. Appalachia, for white, Cleveland for Black and manufacturing dead zones, like Youngstown, for the rust-colored variety."¹¹⁷

Ohio is often overshadowed by Wisconsin in accounts of welfare reform, closely following their lead in implementing time limits and full family sanctions.¹¹⁸ However, since PRWORA, Ohio has become a model for reform efforts and remains influential in the anti-poverty space.¹¹⁹ In Ohio, the dominant discourses in poverty politics resonate deeply, persistent poverty and racial and economic segregation challenge these discourses, and conservative politics constrain these discourses.¹²⁰ Ohio is an important critical case for four reasons:

¹¹⁴ For a comprehensive history of Ohio's 1990s reform efforts, see Miriam Wilson and Charles Adams, Jr., "Welfare Reform: Ohio's Response," *Ohio State Law Journal* 60, no. 4 (1999): 1357-1394.

¹¹⁵ The Controlling Board is a seven-person board consisting of ex-officio and appointed persons as "a mechanism for handling necessary adjustments to the state budget." "Controlling Board," <https://www.ecb.ohio.gov>.

¹¹⁶ Ohio Department of Medicaid, "Notice of Ohio's 1115 Waiver Demonstration Application," 16 February 2018; Conor Morris, "New Medicaid Work Requirement Raises Local Concerns," *Athens NEWS*, 20 March 2019, https://www.athensnews.com/news/local/new-medicaid-work-requirement-raises-local-concerns/article_d6622aa2-4b37-11e9-9566-a742e48e3ccd.html.

¹¹⁷ On the Media, "The Poverty Tour."

¹¹⁸ Numerous works have detailed these welfare experiments in Wisconsin. See Cramer, *The Politics of Resentment*; DeParle, *American Dream*.

¹¹⁹ Interview with Phil Cole.

¹²⁰ Conversation with Meara Sharma, producer "The Poverty Tour," 24 April 2018.

(1) *Ohio's economic background reflects national trends.*

Ohio saw an enormous decrease in the number of people in poverty after the War on Poverty efforts (from 15.9-percent in 1959 to 10.0 in 1969, respectively), but the state has been hit hard by the recent recession. In 2007, the individual poverty rate jumped above the national rate (13.1-percent and 13.0, respectively) for the first time in over fifty years. Since 2009, the unemployment rate has dropped from 10.3-percent to 4.9, while the poverty rate has remained steady between 14-percent and 15 (approximately 1,732,839 individuals).¹²¹ Some counties such as Athens, Franklin, and Cuyahoga, are well above that. While much of the poverty is concentrated in rural areas, with persistent poverty (i.e. over 20-percent poverty for 30 years or more) in Vinton County and Athens County, seven of the ten largest cities in Ohio have seen consistent rises in poverty since 1999.¹²² Additionally, Columbus, the state's capital, is the second-most economically segregated American city.¹²³

Some of these numbers can be explained by the fact that work being counted against unemployment is typically low-wage work. A report by Policy Matters Ohio, a non-profit research institute, found that seven out of the ten “most common jobs are in occupations that have an annual median wage less than 130-percent of the poverty level for a family of three.”¹²⁴ In part, the emerging growth of the service sector does not provide the same types of benefits that were once offered in the manufacturing sector.

¹²¹ Ohio Development Services Agency, “The Ohio Poverty Report,” *U.S. Census Bureau*, February 2019, <https://www.development.ohio.gov/files/research/p7005.pdf>.

¹²² Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies, “State of Poverty in Ohio,” 14 June 2019, http://oacaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/2019-StateOfPoverty_spread_low.pdf.

¹²³ Editorial Board, “Columbus must finally break the shackles of poverty,” *Columbus Dispatch*, 22 April 2018.

¹²⁴ Hannah Halbert, “Ohio blue collar jobs report: May 2017,” *Policy Matters Ohio*, 17 May 2017, <https://www.policymattersohio.org/research-policy/fair-economy/work-wages/ohio-blue-collar-jobs-report-may-2017>. Ohio annual wages were consistently lower than the national averages, according to Occupational Employment Statistics from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, <https://www.bls.gov/oes/>.

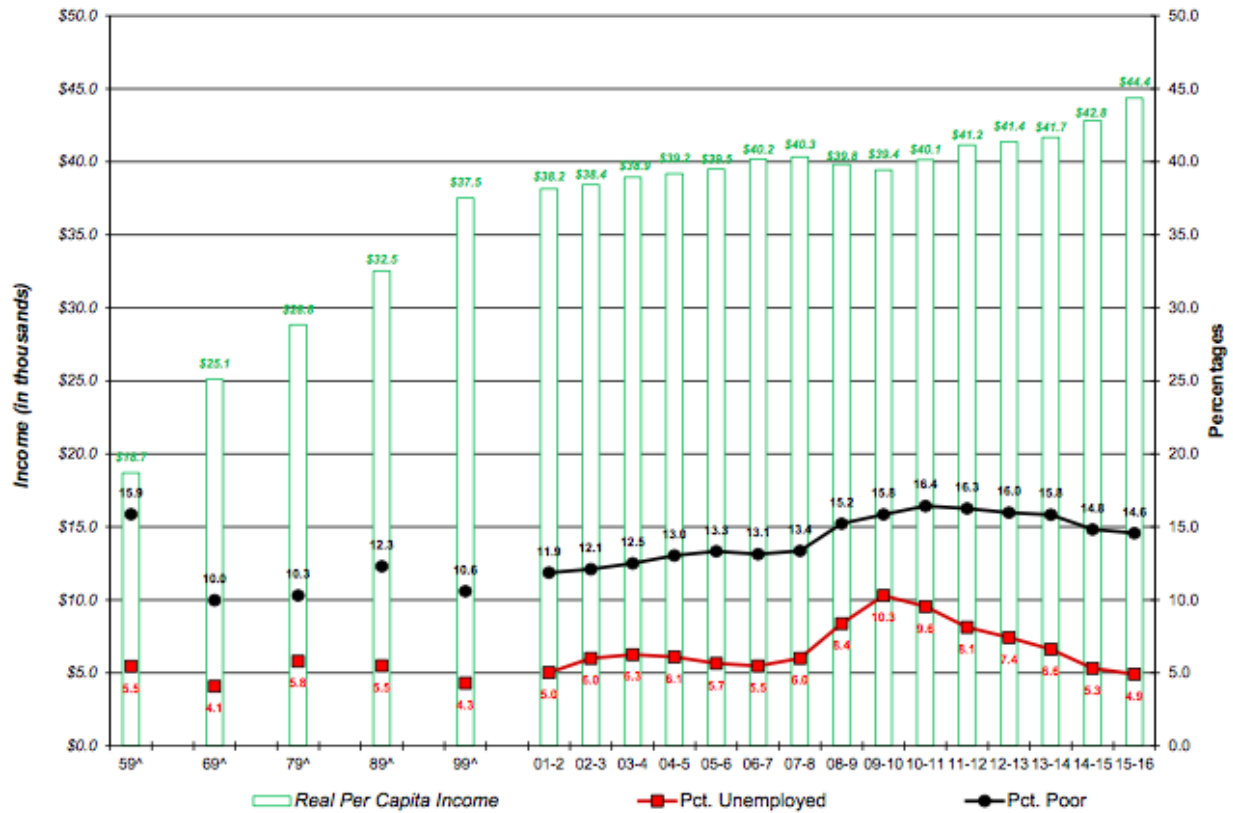


Figure 2.2: Ohio's poverty rate, unemployment rate and real per capita income, 1959-2016¹²⁵

Notes: ^poverty rate from decennial census; income standardized on 2016; hyphenated year figures are averages

According to Ohio Development Services Agency (ODSA), alongside steady poverty rates and decreasing unemployment rates (Figure 2.2), 8.1-percent (about 238,900) of all families in Ohio received some form of public cash assistance such as OWF at some time in 2016-2017. Cash assistance has been marginally more effective over time in boosting individuals out of poverty; however, for the vast majority it is either “insufficient for relieving poverty or... not critical for staying out of poverty.”¹²⁶ Historically, general assistance program usage (before it was eliminated in 1995) tracked unemployment numbers,¹²⁷ while AFDC/TANF usage has not.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ Ohio Development Services Agency, “The Ohio Poverty Report,” *U.S. Census Bureau*, February 2018.

¹²⁶ About 238,900 families received cash assistance in 2016-2017, but only 30,500 were moved above the FPL. In 2008-2009, it was 24,800 out of 223,000. In 1999, it was 19,500 out of 197,000. Ohio Development Services Agency, “The Ohio Poverty Report,” 2019. 33.

¹²⁷ David Larkin, “State’s Welfare Bill Rises Despite Drop in Recipients,” *Columbus Dispatch*, 17 July 1966.

¹²⁸ Candisky and Johnson, “Getting off welfare no guarantee of success.”

Table 2.2: Percent of Ohioans (individuals) receiving ADC/AFDC/TANF, 1964-2002¹²⁹

1964	1.7	1974	4.6	1984	6.3	1994	6.1
1966	1.8	1976	5.5	1986	6.3	1996	4.9
1968	2.2	1978	4.6	1988	5.9	1998	3.0
1970	2.8	1980	4.9	1990	5.8	2000	2.1
1972	4.4	1982	5.4	1992	6.8	2002	1.7

(2) *Ohio's conservative politics provide a fertile ground to examine the development of and delineations within conservatism as it approaches the welfare state.*

Ohio is an intimate launching pad for conservative politicians with relationships to conservative think-tank and nonprofits such as Heritage Foundation (Buckeye Institute is affiliated) and American Legislative Exchange Council (of which John Kasich was an original member). In the 1990s, Ohio's welfare department was run by a George Bush US DHHS appointee. Additionally, Ohio's Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program (CCMEP) has been used as a model for federal reauthorizations of safety net programs during Paul Ryan's tenure as Speaker of the House. Ohio is undoubtedly a conservative state, with a Republican supermajority in the state assembly; however, it is heavily gerrymandered and has consistently elected the progressive Democrat Sherrod Brown to the U.S. Senate. It is also perceived to have two Republican parties – the institutional, small business, small government conservatives and the Tea Party conservatives.¹³⁰ According to reports since the election of Donald Trump in 2016, Ohio is “one shade short of a red state.”¹³¹

¹²⁹ Recreated from Ibid.

¹³⁰ Interview with Catholic Conference.

¹³¹ Charlie Mahtesian, “How Trump Rewired the Electoral Map,” *Politico Magazine*, 7 February 2020. <https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2020/02/07/election-2020-new-electoral-map-110496>.

- (3) *The presence of persistent poverty in predominantly White counties of Appalachia and of concentrated poverty in predominantly Black areas of the urban cores provides an important racial backdrop for understanding the emergence of colorblind policy.*

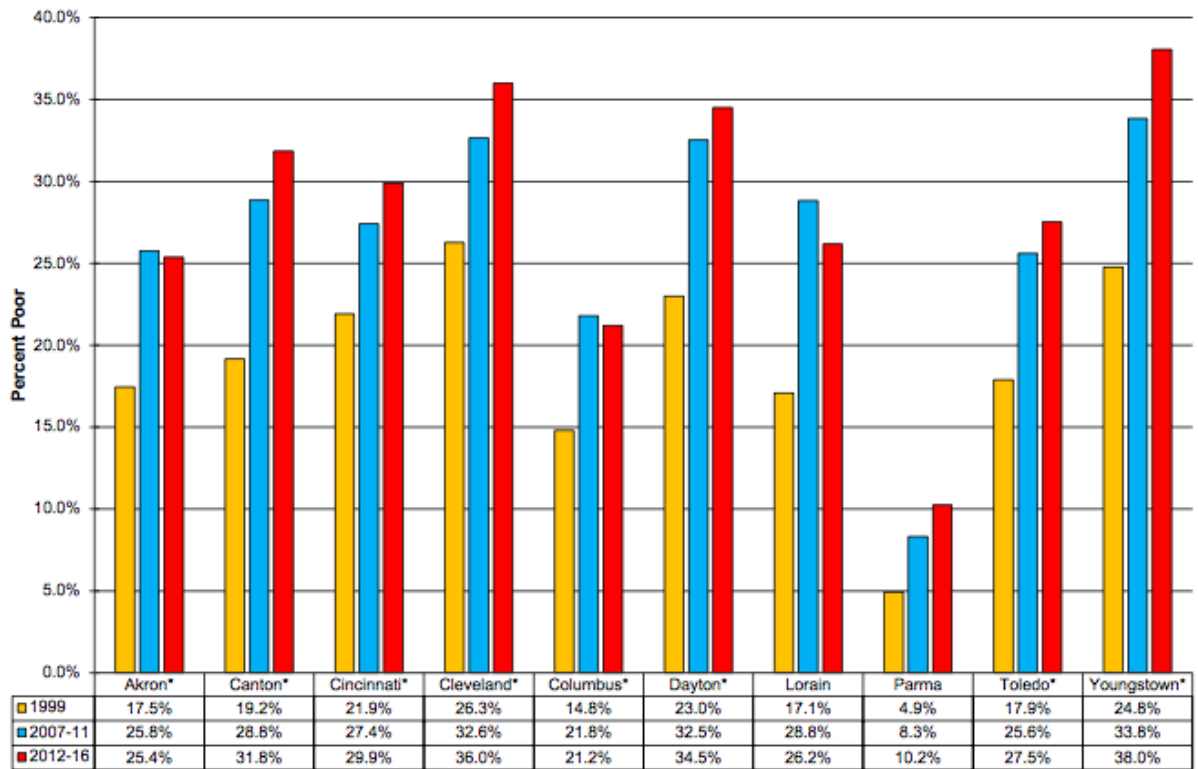
Born in Lorain, Ohio, author Toni Morrison once said, “Ohio is a curious juxtaposition of what was ideal in this country and what was base.”¹³² She was referring to the role that Ohio played on the Underground Railroad, with the Ohio River symbolizing freedom. She explained, “The northern part of the state had underground railroad stations and a history of black people escaping into Canada, but the southern part of the state is as much Kentucky as there is, complete with cross burnings.”¹³³ Ultimately, “Ohio offered the possibility of a good life, the possibility of freedom, even though there were some terrible obstacles. Ohio also offers an escape from stereotyped black settings. It is neither plantation nor ghetto.”¹³⁴ As many scholars have made clear,¹³⁵ the study of poverty cannot be separated from the study of racism and race-related struggles in America, and since “neither plantation nor ghetto,” Ohio provides an important lens into the intersections and distinctiveness of the two. The geographic delineations to which Morrison referred (northern cities [Figure 2.3] and southern counties [Figure 2.4]) are an important lens into colorblind policymaking (as seen in contemporary SNAP work requirement exemptions).

¹³² Danille Taylor-Guthrie, ed., *Conversations with Toni Morrison* (Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 1994), 158.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ See Chapter 1.1.ii and 1.4.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

1999

2007-11

2012-16

Note: * - A metropolitan area central city.

Figure 2.3: Changing poverty rates in Ohio's ten largest cities – 1999, 2007-2011, 2012-2016¹³⁶

¹³⁶ Ohio Development Services Agency, "The Ohio Poverty Report," 2018. 18.

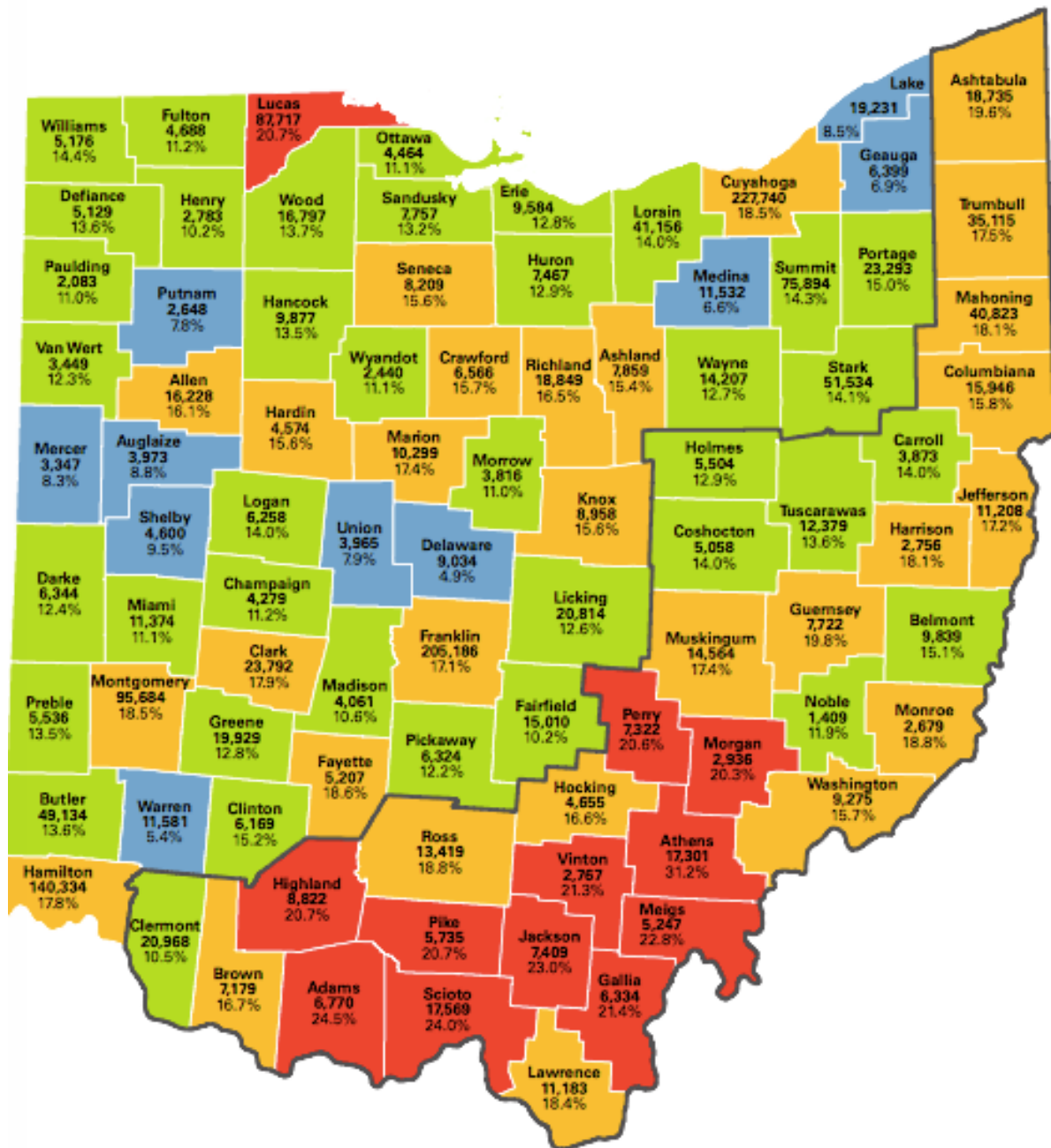


Figure 2.4: Poverty rates in Ohio by county, 2012-2016 ACS¹³⁷

¹³⁷ Ibid., 14.

(4) *Ohio's contemporary welfare policy suite reflects nationwide developments.*

Including the work requirement changes to Medicaid mentioned above, Ohio has put forward proposals to exempt high unemployment counties from work requirements on SNAP, prompting lawsuits from civil rights groups arguing that such an exemption is racially discriminatory by using county and not zip-code level determinations. Originally, 26 of the 88 counties were exempt; 97-percent of families in those exempt counties were White. In total, 5-percent of the state's African American population and 15-percent of the White population were included in exempt counties.¹³⁸ At the same time, Republicans have led state efforts to tighten exemption loopholes across the board. The Medicaid and SNAP work requirement efforts are being conducted in others states as well.

In urban areas, CCMEP has targeted youth while ignoring the barriers to work that they face. In rural areas, policy concerns surround STEP Up to Quality, a childcare program that reduced funding for poor rural counties because of a lack of qualified providers. Additionally, Ohio's Southeastern Appalachian region has been devastated by the Opioid epidemic. The region regularly gains national attention,¹³⁹ most recently because of J.D. Vance's *Hillbilly Elegy*, a memoir about this environment.¹⁴⁰ Such coverage has an enormous role in shaping the discourse surrounding poverty in places like rural Ohio.

¹³⁸ Adam White, "Who receives food assistance in Ohio?," *Center for Community Solutions*, 8 October 2018, <https://www.communitysolutions.com/research/receives-food-assistance-ohio-implications-work-requirements-snap-enrollment-across-racial-ethnic-geographic-divisions/>.

¹³⁹ Alison Stine, "The Last Days of the Appalachian Poverty Tour," *Topic Magazine* 25 (July 2019), <https://www.topic.com/the-last-days-of-the-appalachian-poverty-tour>. Previous coverage includes: 1991 ABC World News with Peter Jennings, "Children in Poverty"; 2010 Dateline "Friend and Neighbors" with Ann Curry; 2015 NPR On the Media with Brooke Gladstone; and recent coverage about food deserts. Cindy Boren, "Heisman Winner Joe Burrow spoke 'from the heart' about hunger in his hometown," *Washington Post*, 18 December 2019, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/2019/12/17/joe-burrow-heisman-speech-athens-food-pantry/>.

¹⁴⁰ J.D. Vance, *Hillbilly Elegy* (New York: HarperCollins, 2016). Vance's work has been criticized heavily for sharing a false narrative about the Appalachian region and people. See Anthony Harkins and Meredith McCarroll, *Appalachian Reckoning* (Morgantown, WV: West Virginia UP, 2019); Sarah Jones, "J.D. Vance, the False Prophet of Blue America," *New Republic*, 17 November 2016, <https://newrepublic.com/article/138717/jd-vance-false-prophet-blue-america>.

2.4 Data Collection and Analysis: Historic and Contemporary Discourse

As discussed above, the descriptive design utilizes qualitative case-study methodology. This section focuses on the approach to interpretive analysis and the two primary data collection methods to facilitate this analysis. Both archival materials and semi-structured interviews provide an understanding of the sequence of events as well as the interpretation and meaning provided by those interviewed either historically or contemporarily. These sources of data provide the “vehicles of discourse”¹⁴¹ – idioms, vocabularies, frameworks and narratives¹⁴² – analyzed throughout this thesis. According to Vivien Schmidt, “discourse, understood as whatever policy actors say to one another and to the public more generally in their efforts to construct and legitimate their policy programs, is the *missing element* in the explanation of policy change in the welfare state.”¹⁴³

In order to ensure a methodologically and interpretively strong thesis, a few clarifications on addressing threats to validity are necessary.¹⁴⁴ First, for descriptive validity, the events reconstructed draw from multiple sources: historic and contemporary primary sources, and secondary sources. The sequence of events in each chapter has been clarified through this triangulation.¹⁴⁵ Second, for interpretive validity, the analysis draws heavily on quotations. While this may seem cumbersome in certain areas, it provides validity that the interpretation of events is fair. Additionally, in most interpretive moments, differing interpretations are provided. Third, for conceptual validity, Chapter 1 spent significant space establishing the importance of the concepts employed and the relationships between them. The empirical chapters will devote significant space establishing the legitimacy of applying these concepts to the evidence provided.

¹⁴¹ Vivien Schmidt, “Does Discourse Matter in the Politics of Welfare State Adjustment?” *Comparative Political Studies* 35, no. 2 (2002): 168-193, 170.

¹⁴² Fischer, *Reframing Public Policy*, 80.

¹⁴³ Schmidt, “Does Discourse Matter in the Politics of Welfare State Adjustment?” 169. Emphasis added.

¹⁴⁴ Maxwell, “Understanding and Validity in Qualitative Research,” 288-291, 296.

¹⁴⁵ Triangulation is a process by which the same phenomenon is assessed with different methods or data sources to determine whether convergence across methods exists. For a thoughtful discussion, see Todd Jick, “Mixing Qualitative and Quantitative Methods,” *Administrative Science Quarterly* 24, no. 4 (1979): 602-611.

2.4.i Interpretive Policy Analysis

The ideational element in welfare state retrenchment is a “small but growing literature.” However, it suffers from conceptual ambiguity around which ideas are most relevant to questions of retrenchment.¹⁴⁶ The most effective method of analysis to bring clarity to this ambiguity is one that can identify, organize, and articulate ideational complexity and nuance. The promise of interpretive policy analysis is that, “Human complexities require methodological perceptions and tools of an equal degree of complexity in order to more fully appreciate and grasp that very human condition.”¹⁴⁷ The decision to reside in complexity has profound policy implications.¹⁴⁸

As a conceptually-guided study of policy, Chapter 1 identified “the grounds for contentions that arise from the theoretical assumptions” underlying anti-poverty policy.¹⁴⁹ Methodologists¹⁵⁰ highlight the need for social learning as a way to understand these complex dynamics that “hard theory” often simplifies. Social learning involves coming to understand complex human and institutional processes and phenomena through providing context-dependent knowledge.¹⁵¹ These processes and phenomena may come in the form of discourses that “policymakers and their critics use to articulate and make sense of such complexity and uncertainty.”¹⁵²

¹⁴⁶ Starke, “The Politics of Welfare State Retrenchment,” 111. See also Daniel Béland, “Ideas and Social Policy,” *Social Policy and Administration* 39, no. 1 (2005): 1-18.

¹⁴⁷ Dvora Yanow, “Interpretation in Policy Analysis,” *Critical Policy Analysis* 1, no. 1 (2007): 110-122. 118. The four steps of interpretive policy analysis are to identify: the artifacts of meaning (such as language); the communities of meaning and interpretation relevant to the policy area; the relevant discourses and their meanings being communicated through the artifacts; and the points of conflict and “conceptual sources... that reflect different interpretations by different communities,” p. 22. Dvora Yanow, *Conducting Interpretive Policy Analysis* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2000).

¹⁴⁸ Which elements of complex human nature are used to design policy? Mead and Murray have their answers – and neither are nuanced policies – while, theorists on the Left tend to falter.

¹⁴⁹ Fischer, *Reframing Public Policy*, 14.

¹⁵⁰ Yanow, “Interpretation in Policy Analysis”; Bent Flyvbjerg, “Five Misunderstandings about Case-Study Research,” *Qualitative Inquiry* 12, no. 2 (2006): 219-245.

¹⁵¹ Charles Ragin and Howard Becker, eds., *What is a Case?* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992).

¹⁵² Fischer, *Reframing Public Policy*, 172. Public discourses are limited by prior assumptions, myopic tendencies, conventional wisdoms, time constraints, desire for simplicity, and *media filtering*. For example, since the 1970s, Black people were overrepresented in media coverage on poverty and underrepresented in stories about sympathetic subgroups or at times of heightened sympathy for the poor. Martin Gilens, “How the Poor Became Black,” in Schram, et al., eds., *Race and the Politics of Welfare Reform* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 101-130. 126.

To organize this complexity and conduct the empirical analysis, I started with thematic analysis. Thematic analysis helps to identify and analyze patterns within data. Such analysis is an iterative process between empirical data – two archives and one trove of interview transcripts – and the secondary literature, with new themes emerging and other themes subsumed to larger ones. The initial thematic coding was grounded, meaning that themes emerged from the data itself. The second round utilized the four assumptions of the new paternalism as the themes. This type of analysis reports the “experiences, meanings and the reality of participants” and examines “the ways in which events, realities, meanings, experiences and so on are the effects of a range of discourses operating within society.”¹⁵³ Thematic analysis is fundamental to conducting *discourse analysis*¹⁵⁴ and *analytic history* that is “explicitly structured and focused by theoretical concepts.”¹⁵⁵

Discourse analysis

Given that “political action is constituted by discourses, from hegemonic discourses embedded in the existing institutions... to the oppositional efforts of other groups attempting to create new discourses,”¹⁵⁶ this thesis aims to make sense of paternalism as a mechanism of retrenchment by bringing historic and contemporary discourses into conversation through a case study of welfare and anti-poverty policymaking in Ohio. Discourse analysis “is heavily focused on illuminating mechanisms in policy practice, rather than on trying to generate general laws,” and is often centered in the “social relationality of power” relevant to descriptive research designs.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, “Using thematic analysis in psychology,” *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3, no. 2 (2006): 77-101. 81.

¹⁵⁴ Maarten Hajer, “Discourse Coalitions and the Institutionalization of Practice,” in Frank Fischer and John Forester, eds., *The Argumentative Turn in Policy Analysis and Planning* (Durham: Duke UP, 1993), 43-76.

¹⁵⁵ As opposed to “sequence of event” histories. Levy, “Case Studies,” 4.

¹⁵⁶ Fischer, *Reframing Public Policy*, 45.

¹⁵⁷ Maarten Hajer and David Laws, “Ordering Through Discourse,” in Michael Moran, et al., eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Public Policy* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2006), 251-268. 262.

Discourse analysis is an approach within interpretive policy analysis¹⁵⁸ to studying poverty that assumes that how people talk about poverty and their own assumptions both reflect and shape the social and political reality.¹⁵⁹ In this way, discourse is both ‘ideational’ and ‘interactive.’¹⁶⁰ Ideationally, it “supplies policy with substantive arguments, both empirical and normative,” which reflect its logic and premises.¹⁶¹ Interactively, discourse can be both ‘coordinative’ between internal and external coalition actors and institutions and ‘communicative’ with the broader political system.¹⁶² Discourse carries with it a “world making”¹⁶³ or “capacity-giving”¹⁶⁴ power. That is, discourse determines both the rules by which policy action occurs and the possible scope of action. It can set the agenda, define the terms of debate, normatively classify debate participants, and shape peoples’ scope of ambition.¹⁶⁵

In the U.S., discourses around poverty and paternalism are embedded in institutions and their practices that reproduce power relationships. This thesis assumes that the welfare state is justified to “guarantee that the basic necessities of food, clothing and shelter are met.” However, others view it differently, as “a means to control the labor market by ensuring a cheap labor supply,” or “a tool for massive behavior modification of the poor by rewarding positive behavior such as the willingness to accept work or education.” According to Frech, “the federal and state welfare system is as convoluted as the reasons for poverty and is complicated by the inability of those who operate the system to agree on its purpose.” Success is impossible, he writes, when success is not defined.¹⁶⁶ Efforts are made, by proponents and opponents of the welfare state, to define success, even if in broad terms.

¹⁵⁸ Process Tracing is not used in this thesis because I am not reconstructing a causal process. David Collier, “Understanding Process Tracing,” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 44, no. 4 (2011): 823-830.

¹⁵⁹ Fischer, *Reframing Public Policy*, viii.

¹⁶⁰ Schmidt, “Does Discourse Matter in the Politics of Welfare State Adjustment?”

¹⁶¹ Fischer, *Reframing Public Policy*, 31.

¹⁶² Schmidt, “Does Discourse Matter in the Politics of Welfare State Adjustment?”

¹⁶³ Nelson Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1978).

¹⁶⁴ Karen Litfin, *Ozone Discourses* (New York: Columbia UP, 1994).

¹⁶⁵ Stone, *Policy Paradox*.

¹⁶⁶ Jack Frech, “‘We can well afford to do better’ for needy,” *Athens Messenger*, 29 January 1989. (Edit.)

Citing Murray and Mead, Peter Edelman, who resigned from US DHHS in protest of PRWORA, writes, “right-wing politicians and ideologues had begun a concerted effort as far back as 1967 to change the discourse and the agenda from talking about a war on poverty to conducting a war on welfare.”¹⁶⁷ O’Connor agrees, writing, “poverty knowledge has proved unable to provide an analysis or, equally important, a convincing narrative to counter the powerful, albeit simplistic story of welfare state failure and moral decline – a narrative that, with the help of well-organized conservative analysts, has come to inform policy discourse to a degree hardly imaginable twenty years ago.”¹⁶⁸ Paternalism and the dependency logic from which it emerges are our concern because they represent a ‘hegemonic discourse,’¹⁶⁹ through which they are situated as the “center of interpretive processes.”¹⁷⁰ The logic of dependency as a hegemonic discourse defines success, sets the agenda, constrains analysis of alternative logics, and attempts to justify itself through its hegemony.

Analytic history

The interpretive policy analysis conducted in this thesis also relies on analytic history and descriptive inference,¹⁷¹ in order to use what we do know about paternalism and welfare abolition (namely, how they operate in a state like Ohio) to ascertain what we do not know or wish to clarify (namely, the relationship between the two). Careful description allows us to distinguish “the systematic component from the nonsystematic component of the phenomena we study,” i.e. the consistencies, adaptations, and deviations from the underlying logic of dependency.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁷ Peter Edelman, “Changing the Subject,” *Northwestern Journal of Law & Social Policy* 4, no. 1 (2009): 14-29. 15.

¹⁶⁸ O’Connor, *Poverty Knowledge*, 5.

¹⁶⁹ Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (New York: International Publishers, 1971); Norman Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992).

¹⁷⁰ Fabrizio Battistelli and Giuseppe Ricotta, “Management Rhetoric and Citizen Participation in Three Italian Cities,” *Administration and Society* 36, no. 6 (2005): 661-687. 672-673.

¹⁷¹ Gary King, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1994), 46.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 56.

Paternalism is an *historical development* in the sense that its policy premises either garner strength or are contested at various times and in various ways, and so research must be historical in its summary and analysis. The aim of this historical analysis is to allow the overarching frameworks and terms of debates about poverty, welfare, and policy change to emerge. The analytic history focuses on ‘work requirements’ as a specific policy focus, first, because they are emblematic of the new paternalism, and, second, because of their importance in a study on ideational change. The historical shift towards the dominance of work requirements “must in part be understood as a discursive project,”¹⁷³ because their assumptions quite easily remain hidden in public discourse. The shift must also be viewed at the subnational level because work requirements have “a geography as well as a history,” due to the “renewed ideological faith in ‘local solutions.’”¹⁷⁴

The introductions of Chapter 3 and Part II contain specific methodological justifications for their respective strategies of analytic history. Chapter 3 utilizes the institutional lens of community action agencies and their historical context to analyze the discursive shifts that occur at the elite level, and how those elite discourses affect local frameworks for action. Meanwhile, the analysis in Part II outlines the historical arcs and “well-worn grooves”¹⁷⁵ of political discourse in Ohio between 1961 and the early 2000s, by diving into local news coverage at the times in question. The longer view of these snapshots emphasizes the consistencies and adaptations of ongoing debates, intervening logics, and welfare-related activity at the state-level. Fundamental to an understanding of contemporary debates (gained through semi-structured interviews) over poverty and welfare programs is an historical perspective (gained through interviews and archival materials).

¹⁷³ Peck, “*Workfare*,” 137.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Katz, *The Undeserving Poor*, 216.

2.4.ii Semi-structured Interviews

To determine the categories of interviewees, I focused on the institutional actors that most comprehensively make up the anti-poverty space at the state level. From reading a wide range of Ohio publications, I determined the categories as: community action agencies, advocacy groups, think tanks, food security groups, organizing groups, and philanthropic organizations.¹⁷⁶

My initial outreach for interviews was purposive sampling¹⁷⁷ based on these institutional categories, and I reached out to people who were known to be experienced actors in the anti-poverty space in Ohio. These initial interviewees were representatives from community action agencies (Phil Cole), Jobs and Family Services departments (Jack Frech), and food security advocacy groups (Lisa Hamler-Fugitt).¹⁷⁸ I then utilized snowball sampling and further research to identify future interviewees. Snowball sampling is an ‘informal’ (i.e. not statistical) method to reach a target population. It is advantageous for explorative, qualitative, and descriptive research.¹⁷⁹

As a technique, one-on-one, semi-structured interviews provide a number of benefits.¹⁸⁰ First, the use of an interview guide allows for an element of generalizability and initial thematic coding, by allowing me to ask the same questions of all interviewees. (An interview-protocol template is provided in Appendix A.2). Ultimately, I was trying to understand how different people and organizations involved in anti-poverty work in Ohio conceive of the causes of poverty and the competence of those experiencing poverty. I wanted to understand how individuals from these organizations, who have a stake in the communities they serve, make sense of poverty as a problem and their proposed solutions

¹⁷⁶ Politicians were excluded because of the likelihood that they had public statements available, and they were not close to those in poverty.

¹⁷⁷ Michael Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, 2nd ed. (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1990).

¹⁷⁸ These would be considered “knowledgeable informants,” p. 65. Herbert Rubin and Irene Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2012). Initially, I was also interested in focusing on persistent poverty regions, and so I included Rep. James Clyburn, who wrote the 10-20-30 amendment, in my initial list, and conducted the interview in Washington, DC.

¹⁷⁹ Alice Bloch, “Doing social surveys,” in Clive Seale, ed., *Researching Society and Culture* (London: Sage, 2004), 163-178. 176-177.

¹⁸⁰ David Richards, “Elite Interviewing: Approaches and Pitfalls,” *Politics* 16, no. 3 (1996): 1999-2004.

to it.¹⁸¹ Conversational, semi-structured, or in-depth interviews allow researchers to “understand how individuals frame [historical and contemporary] policy issues and where these frames come from.”¹⁸²

By understanding the frames, we can identify the prevalence of paternalism’s assumptions.

Second, it allows for adaptations so as to engage in topics that the interviewee brings up and ask follow-up questions. Given that interviewees represented different institutions, some questions could be adapted to the specificities of their organization. Since the initial fieldwork (August through October 2018), I conducted select follow-up interviews either by email or in person (April 2019).

Finally, a semi-structured design acknowledges that analysis is ongoing. The active nature of the research design allowed me to utilize information gleaned from interviews to ask more in-depth questions, follow new areas of concern, identify interviewees, and test some of the themes that had already emerged from prior interviews (e.g. the prominence of self-sufficiency) or from my initial assumptions (e.g. the emergence of wellbeing as a policy goal). For example, after the initial exploratory interviews, I identified, “To what extent does the current debate over Medicaid work requirements in Ohio follow the ‘well-worn grooves’ of poverty debates over the last half century?” as a question relevant to the research. This, then, began to focus the empirical component of the research onto work requirements.

As we can see, “interview interactions are inherently spaces in which both speakers are constantly ‘doing analysis’ – both speakers are engaged (and collaborating in) ‘making meaning’ and ‘producing knowledge.’”¹⁸³ Oftentimes, by volunteering my preliminary analysis from reading the literature, I was able to elicit valuable frameworks and understandings from the interviewees. These interviews were part of an iterative process for developing thematic areas of analysis and taking

¹⁸¹ Campbell, “Ideas, Politics, and Public Policy.” E.g. Colin Hay, “Narrating Crisis,” *Sociology* 30, no. 2 (1996): 253-277.

¹⁸² Yanow, “Interpretation in Policy Analysis,” 113.

¹⁸³ Tim Rapley, “Interviews,” in Seale, et al., eds., *Qualitative Research Practice*, 15-33. 27. In conducting the interviews, I roughly followed the “interviewing as mundane interaction” framework, pp. 25-26.

advantage of “serendipitous findings.”¹⁸⁴ For example, the focus on self-sufficiency in Chapter 3 emerged from the interviews with CAA representatives, all of whom used the phrase frequently.

There are a few ethical considerations for the interviews themselves.¹⁸⁵ Informed consent (i.e. honest presentation of information and gaining consent) and confidentiality are the guiding principles behind qualitative field research. Each interviewee was given information about the topic and interview format, the general questions that would be asked, and then oral consent was obtained prior to recording the interviews. All but one (on-background) gave consent to be recorded, and one noted that she would be happy to be recorded but would be less forthcoming. While their consent to record encompassed their consent to be quoted, throughout the thesis, I have nonetheless anonymized most interview quotations, designating the speaker by their organization, with the exception of the initial interviewees listed above who provided explicit permission to be quoted. This project was approved by the Departmental Research Ethics Committee, and the participant information sheet is provided in Appendix A.1. The list of interviewees is provided in Table 2.3.

Another important consideration for ‘elite’ level interviews is that elite “actors may go to great lengths to obscure their actions and motivations when these are politically sensitive, biasing available evidence.”¹⁸⁶ This occurred with some interviewees; however, this is nonetheless an important part of the discourse, because the decision to obscure reflects particular norms about appropriate discourse. To address this, however, I utilized other available evidence and relevant literature to triangulate information and present the interpretive analysis fairly by relying on full quotations. Also, the length of the interviews themselves allowed for a particular “warming up” after which the respondents likely became more comfortable and began to answer at-length.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁴ Eisenhardt, “Building Theories from Case Study Research,” 536.

¹⁸⁵ Matthew Miles and A. Michael Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1994).

¹⁸⁶ Bennett, “Process Tracing and Causal Inference,” 188.

¹⁸⁷ Rapley, “Interviews,” emphasizes that “rapport” should be developed in interviews, p. 19.

Table 2.3: Interviewees by institutional category and organization

Institutional Category	Organization Name	Location
Community Action Agencies or coalitions	Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies (OACAA)	Columbus
	Jackson-Vinton Community Action (JVCA)	Wellston
	IMPACT Community Action Agency (IMPACT)	Columbus
	Hocking-Athens-Perry Community Action Program (HAPCAP)	Logan
	Council for Economic Opportunities in Greater Cleveland (CEOGC)	Cleveland
	Ohio Urban Resources Systems	Columbus
Think tanks and research groups	Policy Matters Ohio	Cleveland
	Buckeye Institute	Columbus
	Groundwork Ohio	Dayton*
	Center for Community Solutions	Columbus
	Center for American Progress	Washington
Organizing groups	Organize! Ohio	Cleveland
	Ohio Poor People's Campaign	Columbus*
	Mid-Ohio Workers Association	Columbus
Advocacy groups	Legal Aid Society of Columbus (LASC)	Columbus
	Ohio Job and Family Services Directors Association (OJFSDA)	Columbus
	Ohio Assoc. of Community Development Corporations	Columbus
	Children's Defense Fund (CDF) Ohio Chapter	Columbus
	Catholic Conference of Ohio	Columbus
	U.S. House of Representatives	Washington
	Mayors Partnership for Progress	Athens
	Bridges Out of Poverty	Columbus
	National Association of Social Workers Ohio Chapter	Akron*
Food security	Ohio Association of Food Banks	Columbus
	Nelsonville Food Cupboard	Nelsonville*
Philanthropic	United Way of Central Ohio	Columbus

* interview by phone

The primary drawback to semi-structured interviews is the time-consuming nature of conducting and transcribing them. For rough transcriptions, I utilized Sonix, an AI transcription service with data encryption. Once I downloaded the transcriptions (done in minutes), I deleted the interviews from the platform. I then went through the rough transcriptions to smooth them out and pull quotations for thematic analysis.

2.4.iii Archival Research

In an attempt to better understand the history of welfare-policymaking in Ohio, I searched the secondary literature, coming up short. After asking Jack Frech whether he knew of such a history, he directed me to an archive of news clippings kept by Athens County welfare directors since 1961. There are approximately twenty binders organized chronologically. The news clippings are from local papers across the state as well as national publications focused on welfare policy. Most articles cluster from Athens, Cuyahoga, Franklin, and Hamilton counties. However, in the last ten years most of the coverage was reserved for Athens County.¹⁸⁸ Due to time and space constraints, I limited my research to distinct time periods of state and federal welfare activity: before, during, and immediately after the War on Poverty (1961-1967); the early 1970s; the Reagan Era (1983-1989); the elimination of GA (1992); PRWORA and the waiver activity before it (1995-1998); and the aftermath of the end of welfare (2004-2007). To the best of my knowledge, this thesis is the first to utilize this material.

Table 2.4: Archives consulted

Database name	Citation Notes	Location
Athens County Jobs and Family Services welfare news clippings, 1961-2014	Editorials are noted with (Edit.) after the citation. News articles are cited as normal. All materials were taken from binders labelled to encompass their respective years. <i>Accessed 10 April and 19 September 2019</i>	Athens, Ohio
The Greater Cleveland Welfare Rights Organization Records, 1963-1995, and undated	All documents from this archive are listed in the References with the folder number in which they are located. <i>Accessed 8 September 2018</i>	Case Western University, Cleveland, Ohio

The second archive – The Greater Cleveland Welfare Rights Organization (GCWRO) – was accessed through Case Western Reserve University, and provided a small, but important insight into welfare rights advocacy organizations of the 1960s and 1970s and their responses to pressures faced

¹⁸⁸ This does make it difficult – because of population demographics – to comprehensively understand colorblind policymaking in later years. However, I triangulate this theme with non-archival news sources.

from oppositional groups. I was initially interested in this archive because of the GCWROs central role in the March for Adequate Welfare and the formation of the National Welfare Rights Organization (NWRO).

Archival sources are useful for a number of reasons: (1) adding detail and context to historical events covered broadly in secondary material, (2) triangulating between the archives and other data sources, and (3) tracing “the genealogy of ideas.”¹⁸⁹ Newspapers can be used as a “surrogate for interviews – providing contemporaneous accounts of key actors and their view along with more general sentiment at the time.”¹⁹⁰ Local coverage, even of federal-level policymaking, and opinion-editorials allow both ‘elite’ and ‘non-elite’ actors and discourses to drive analysis.¹⁹¹ Those featured in the local editorials generally fall into the categories of ‘pro-reformers’ and ‘anti-reformers’ based on whatever the dominating policy issue was at the time. The quotations used in this thesis are representative of the discourses throughout the archives.¹⁹² These archives ultimately allow for thick historical description – of problem definitions and policy changes – in our study of paternalism’s influence in anti-poverty policy relative to that of welfare abolition efforts.¹⁹³

The primary weaknesses of utilizing newspapers and archival materials is that newspapers themselves limit the voices included in the historical narrative; there could have been editorial or reporting bias and inaccurate reporting; and stories are usually reconstructed rather than eye-witness accounts.¹⁹⁴ Triangulation was used as best as possible to protect against these threats to validity.

¹⁸⁹ Ben Gidley, “Doing historical and archival research,” in Seale, ed., *Researching Society and Culture*, 249-264. 252-253.

¹⁹⁰ Yanow, “Interpretation in Policy Analysis,” 114.

¹⁹¹ Gidley, “Doing historical and archival research,” emphasizes that archival materials provide access to marginalized voices, p. 253.

¹⁹² Lindsay Prior, *Using Documents in Social Research* (London: Sage, 2003).

¹⁹³ Campbell, “Ideas, Politics, and Public Policy,” 32.

¹⁹⁴ Michael Salevouris and Conal Furay, *The Methods and Skills of History*, 4th ed. (Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons, 2015), 23.

2.5 Limitations of the Thesis

The Introduction discussed the contributions of this thesis. However, this thesis has a number of limitations in terms of the scope of (1) material consulted, (2) material included in conceptual contributions, (3) methodological validity, and (4) arguments made.

First, in order to manage the vast interstitial literatures, the inclusion criteria were whether and how they aid in understanding the assumptions of the new paternalism. I also focused on literature that effectively integrated welfare state development and APD. However, this means that literature in the poverty and broader APD and retrenchment spaces is perhaps too cursory in its coverage.

Second, while this thesis especially focuses on racial orders and their impact on U.S. social policy, my analysis is limited in developing further on identity cleavages due to space constraints. As a result, its racial analysis does not break out of the problematic “binary vision of American race relations”;¹⁹⁵ it does not thoroughly analyze the “gendered orders”¹⁹⁶ shaping welfare debates; it does not capture the eligibility restrictions based on immigration, or tribal or territorial membership;¹⁹⁷ and, it does not conduct analysis on disability, in which the safety-net is premised on the belief that disabled persons cannot earn, but also have the right to work.¹⁹⁸ Given that the practices of colorblind policymaking have parallels in these other identity cleavages (especially with respect to who is excluded de facto and de jure from access to the welfare state), the use of racial orders is nonetheless beneficial.

Third, the interpretive nature of the analysis carries methodological limitations. While community action agencies provide an important lens in Chapter 3 for how *intervening logics* affect policy and practice, they are limited in their scope of applicability for anti-poverty institutions broadly and across time. There are issues of selection bias in the usage of historic material and semi-structured

¹⁹⁵ Fox, *Three Worlds of Relief*, 13.

¹⁹⁶ Strolovich, “#MeToo as Policy Feedback.”

¹⁹⁷ Rodney Hero and Robert Preuhs, “Immigration and the Evolving American Welfare State,” *American Journal of Political Science* 51, no. 3 (2007): 498-517.

¹⁹⁸ Jennifer Erkulwater, *Disability Rights and the American Social Safety Net* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2006).

interviews, which risk providing analytical bias. While this is unavoidable with historical materials, semi-structured interviews were conducted with representatives of ideologically diverse institutions, and those closest to the practical issues surrounding poverty. Within historical materials, alternative explanations to paternalism's development would revolve around the notion that retrenchment solely comprises cost-containment and re-commodification measures.

Fourth, the arguments made in this thesis are grounded in the conceptual development in Chapters 1 and 2, and in the empirical cases in Chapters 3 through 7. While they are presented as generalizable conclusions about the development and adaptations of conservatism, they are developed *from* the case study of Ohio, and so, are somewhat limited in their applicability. However, secondary literature is used to develop the conceptual claim, in the context of the information gleaned from Ohio. Section 2.1 discusses the possibilities for falsification.

Chapter 3.

The Logic of Dependency and its Adaptations: Local Discourses of *Self-sufficiency*

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3.1 Introduction

The main target of the “bipartisan national consensus”¹ in the 1990s was not ending poverty but ending welfare dependency. The triumph of the ‘welfare as self-sufficiency’ order relied on the bipartisan nature of the effort. According to DeParle, “The welfare revolution grew from the fear that the poor were mired in a culture of *entitlement* – stuck in a swamp of excessive demands, legal prerogative, social due.”² Ending dependency, then, required moving “beyond entitlement” in both discourse (doing away with the rights-based language of the 1960s)³ and policy (eliminating the entitlement to cash assistance).⁴

‘Dependency’ was not a new concern in American discourse; however, since the 1980s, it had become the dominant language used to describe the social reality of the poverty population, and became the explicit paradigm of anti-poverty policy.⁵ Nancy Fraser and Linda Gordon provide a powerful “genealogy of dependency,” parsing its ideological adaptation in American consciousness and its appeal to different “registers” which interpret its meaning distinctly: economic, sociolegal, political, and moral/psychological. They argue that because the U.S. is both decentralized and rejecting of European style hierarchical social traditions, it “proved fertile soil for the moral/psychological discourse of dependency.”⁶

However, ‘dependency’ has always been shaped by socio-political circumstances, shifting from “a socially approved majority condition” to “a group-based status deemed proper for some classes of persons but not others,” and then to “designate (except in the case of children) an anomalous, highly

¹ Soss, et al., *Disciplining the Poor*, 126.

² DeParle, *American Dream*, 330.

³ AFDC was considered a “property right,” allowing legal aid lawyers to more easily litigate. Welfare reform de-toothed this rights-based language. Juliet Brodie, et al., *Poverty Law, Policy, and Practice* (New York: Wolters Kluwer Law and Business, 2014), 604.

⁴ Peter Edelman, “The Worst thing President Clinton has Done,” *Atlantic Monthly* 282 (1997): 43-58, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1997/03/the-worst-thing-bill-clintonhas-done/376797/>.

⁵ Fraser and Gordon, “A Genealogy of Dependency.” See also Guetzkow, “Beyond Deservingness.”

⁶ *Ibid.*, 320.

stigmatized status of deviant and incompetent individuals.”⁷ As individual political rights formalized, however, even the ascription to group status has been “absorbed into personality,” i.e. ‘dependency’ is perceived as an inherent condition rather than a socio-politically constructed status. ‘Welfare dependency’ represents the political culmination of these shifts. Through welfare reform, ‘dependency’ gained its own politics and its logic was a directing force in framing political efforts.

When the problem is framed as dependency, a corresponding logic leads to a policy solution, such as the elimination of the cash assistance entitlement. These policy solutions are created through a process of social learning, i.e. the “deliberate attempt to adjust the goals or techniques of policy in response to past experience and new information.”⁸ The logic of dependency divides into two strands.⁹ The first argues that “poor, dependent people have something more than lack of money wrong with them. The flaws can be located in biology, psychology, upbringing, neighborhood influence; they can be cast as cause or as effect of poverty, or even as both simultaneously.” Mead is a proponent of this strand. Murray is a proponent of the second: “a ‘rational man’ facing choices in which welfare and work are both options,” and the welfare system provides hurtful incentives.¹⁰

We saw in Chapter 1 that paternalism and welfare abolition are the respective policy solutions to these strands of the logic of dependency. However, before we dive into how these strands are manifest in Ohio, we must take a step back to understand how the logic of dependency itself operates as an *intervening logic*, especially the discursive elements relevant to it: the *redefinition* of the poverty problem to one of dependency, the emergence of *paradigmatic solutions* such as paternalism and welfare abolition, and the articulation of *policy goals* as ways to adapt the discourse without changing the underlying logic. These elements are illustrated in Figure 3.1.

⁷ Ibid., 331. For discussion on the moral foundations for antipoverty efforts and the relationship between conceptions of dependency and family policy, see Cooper, *Family Values*.

⁸ Hall, “Policy Paradigms, Social Learning, and the State,” 278.

⁹ Fraser and Gordon, “A Genealogy of Dependency,” 328.

¹⁰ Ibid.

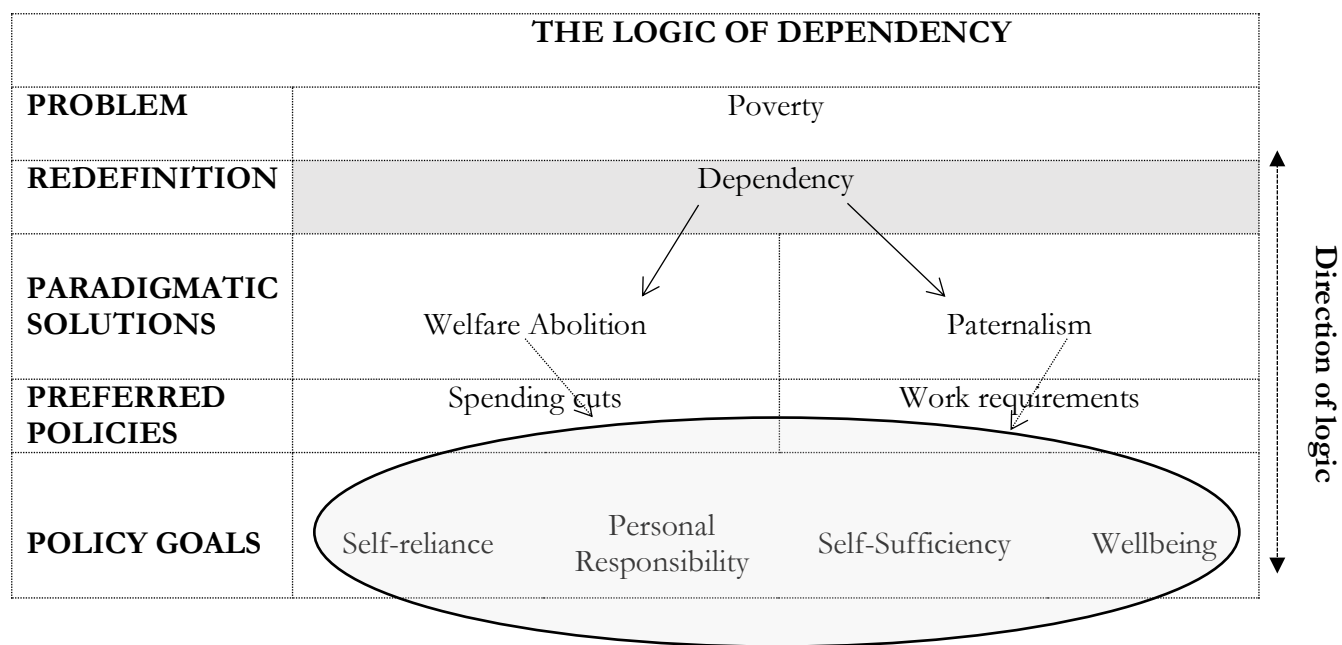


Figure 3.1: Schematic of the Logic of Dependency

While much has been written about ‘dependency’ as the problem, much less attention has been given to the positive formulation of policy goals derived from this problem definition. That is, while ‘ending dependency’ might be the desired outcome, it is positively reframed as something different, obscuring the underlying logic. According to Peter Hall, “policymakers customarily work within a framework of ideas and standards that specify” both the nature of the problems and the goals of policy to address it.¹¹ This framework, or logic, “is embedded in the very terminology through which policymakers communicate about their work.”¹² For example, welfare reform in 1996 reframed ‘ending dependency’ to ‘personal responsibility.’¹³ It is important, then, to parse the rhetorical policy goals – often “taken for granted and unamenable to scrutiny”¹⁴ – for their underlying logic, because there are “limits of any response that presupposes rather than challenges the definition of the problem that is implicit in that expression.”¹⁵

¹¹ Hall, “Policy Paradigms, Social Learning, and the State,” 279.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Guetzkow, “Beyond Deservingness,” 191.

¹⁴ Hall, “Policy Paradigms, Social Learning, and the State,” 279.

¹⁵ Fraser and Gordon, “A Genealogy of Dependency,” 332.

This chapter examines the seldom studied policy goal of *self-sufficiency*. Self-sufficiency was mentioned by nearly everyone interviewed for this thesis. It appears in conversation and policy documents as a self-explanatory goal, with which no one can justifiably disagree. However, the fact that it is taken for granted often obscures its underlying logic. This chapter argues that *self-sufficiency* is the most recent adaptation of the policy goals that develop from a logic of dependency, lending itself to either welfare abolition or paternalism as its policy solution.

Given that our interest is the articulation of policy goals, we can analyze a specific *institution* through which such goals are articulated as a mission. Strategically, this allows us to more easily identify particular concepts (e.g. the logic of dependency, rhetorical policy goals, adaptive discourses) and analytic methods (e.g. examining shifts in discourses, policy assumptions, and sociopolitical context) that are relevant to our examination of the new paternalism's sorting and adaptive mechanisms. For the reasons articulated below, I focus through the lens of community action agencies (CAAs), their services, and their missions.

3.1.i Ideational Development through Community Action Agencies

Stipulated in the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 (EOA), the Community Action Program (CAP) received half of the EOA funding, approximately \$2.64 billion (in real 1968 dollars) between 1965 and 1968. These resources directly funded local initiatives of over 1,000 CAAs in nearly two-third of the nation's counties, bypassing state or local governments. This funding "represented a tremendous increase in funding available for local antipoverty programs," which more than doubled public welfare spending in 791 funded counties and provided funds in 83 counties that previously had none.¹⁶ Although Governors could veto project approvals, those vetoes often were overridden by

¹⁶ Martha Bailey and Nicolas Duquette, "How Johnson Fought the War on Poverty," *Journal of Economic History* 74, no. 2 (2014): 351-388. 358. See also Sar Levitan, *The Great Society's Poor Law* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1969).

Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) Director Sargent Shriver. In 1967, amendments were passed that required CAAs to be designated by the state (Green) and to create a tri-partite board structure (Quie). In 1981, the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) rescinded the EOA and its amendments, and the Reagan Administration eliminated the agency that had succeeded the OEO.¹⁷ Since their inception, CAAs have been subject to criticism from the political Left and political Right, funding cuts, and restrictions placed on their services and advocacy.¹⁸

Yet, they continue to fill gaps in service provision nationwide.¹⁹ In rural areas, where resources are sparse, having services coordinated under one roof can be fundamental to integrating parts of the safety net.²⁰ CAAs are also viewed more kindly than the government Job and Family Services (JFS) office. JFS is typically viewed as the government hammer that provides the sanctions, even though CAAs are sometimes mistaken as government organizations.²¹ However, both play a crucial role in implementing anti-poverty policy and, therefore, shaping its impact. For urban areas, it is often said that they are “program rich and system poor” with substantial resources but little coordination and collaboration.²² Nonetheless, it is easier for urban CAAs to partner with local businesses due to proximity and volume. CAAs’ “roots in their communities and access to vulnerable populations” are key to getting people signed up for multiple programs for which they are eligible, including health

¹⁷ G. David Garson, “Economic Opportunity Act of 1964,” *Prentice Hall*, http://wps.prenhall.com/wps/media/objects/751/769950/Documents_Library/ea1964.htm.

¹⁸ Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies, “History of Community Action,” 2019, <https://oacaa.org/history-of-community-action/>.

¹⁹ The services mentioned by CAA representatives interviewed included food banks; weatherization assistance; energy audits; energy assistance; Head Start; emergency medical transportation; subsidized employment; summer feeding sites; grant writing expertise and capacity; housing construction affordability subsidy; Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); maternal home visiting (MIECHV); furniture and utilities assistance; bereavement assistance; financial literacy; re-entry programs; youth programs; career pathway programs; and vocational programs. For the urban CAAs (IMPACT and CEOGC), a high volume of recipients utilize utility and energy assistance. For CEOGC, 75-percent of funding comes from Head Start.

²⁰ Alana Landey and Alexander Coccia, “Community Action Agency Activities in Affordable Care Act Outreach and Enrollment,” *US DHHS* (Washington, DC: ASPE, 2015), <https://aspe.hhs.gov/basic-report/community-action-agency-activities-affordable-care-act-outreach-and-enrollment-insights-case-studies>.

²¹ Interview with HAPCAP CAA; Interview with Jackson-Vinton CA.

²² Interview with IMPACT CAA.

insurance through Medicaid expansion.²³ Due to their community roots, they may be “the only [anti-poverty organizations] where poor people have any voice,” said one community organizer. Given the plethora of services and diversity of communities served, “if you’ve seen one community action agency, you’ve seen one community action agency.”²⁴

CAAs are an effective lens to examine the emergence of *self-sufficiency* as an explicit policy goal as well as the relationship between this goal and paternalism’s assumptions for three reasons. First, they were developed from a logic distinct to that of dependency in which poverty was understood as a problem of power and resources (among other competing definitions)²⁵ and they were founded during a time of American political development in which resources for self-sufficiency were provided and understood as broader investments in communities. CAA funding was directed in a way that matched President Johnson’s rhetoric on fighting both persistent and deep poverty and racial discrimination.²⁶ However, through financial and legislative constraints and changing federal realities, they now operate focused on poverty maintenance and crisis management. Therefore, CAAs are an effective lens to examine how *intervening logics* impact foundational policy logics and practice.

Second, they were founded through a policy paradigm and supported and challenged by political movements that prized civic and political competence among the poor.²⁷ As a result, assumptions about the competence of individuals in poverty were at the forefront of policy debates. The requirement of ‘maximum feasible participation’ of the poor and members of the community in which the CAA operated sparked significant backlash from local governments because it contested power and resources and sparked challenges from critics on the Left for its perceived “perfunctory

²³ Landey and Coccia, “Community Action Agency Activities in Affordable Care Act Outreach and Enrollment.”

²⁴ Interview with HAPCAP CAA.

²⁵ Katz, *The Undeserving Poor*, 74-75.

²⁶ Bailey and Duquette, “How Johnson Fought the War on Poverty.”

²⁷ These political movements encompassed the appeal by women to breadwinner employment and the political and economic rights gained by African Americans. In backlash, the notion of “good” state-sponsored dependency diminished.

forms of participation.”²⁸ Therefore, CAAs are an effective lens to examine the continuing tensions between liberatory and reactionary forces in American political development.

Third, given the service provision nature of CAA activity and the repeated interaction with clients, CAAs provide an important lens toward case-management as a process of aiding, managing, and governing the poor. While CAAs may view case-management as sustained intervention, state and county JFS offices conduct case-management as part of the new paternalism with strict conditions, sanctions, and emphasis on employment as the ends. Given their originating logic and mission, CAAs are uncomfortably situated within a space that abides by the new paternalism, focusing on both behavioral change of those in poverty and reducing exogenous barriers to moving out of poverty. Therefore, CAA and JFS case-management is an effective lens to examine the impact of paternalism’s logic on those interacting with the safety-net.

This chapter proceeds as follows. First, it provides context for the originating logic of community action agencies, both their development from a logic that defines poverty as a problem of power and resources and their assumption of competence of the poor. Given that institutions respond to and shape political and social phenomena, this section highlights expressions of and challenges to civic and political competence by people who are in poverty through a brief examination of the March for Adequate Welfare in Ohio. Given the importance of the competence assumption (its rejection) to the new paternalism, I discuss the shift in understandings of competence to give context to the corresponding narrowing of the definition of *self-sufficiency*: from civic and political competence to market competency to a rejection of competence.

Second, the chapter examines the discursive shift in legal language from the EOA to CSBG to illustrate how *self-sufficiency* emerged as the policy goal. This mission shift is not necessarily unique to CAAs. In his review of *Disciplining the Poor*, Scott Allard notes that this logic is “woven through

²⁸ Alyosha Goldstein, *Poverty in Common* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2012), 126.

many well-meaning and successful social service programs [which] often focus on behavioral change and barriers to self-sufficiency with intent to increase labor market participation.”²⁹ This shift illustrates ‘conversion,’ the redirection of CAAs to new purposes, reflected in their roles and functions.³⁰ Ultimately, I examine *self-sufficiency* as it is conceived of in contemporary discourse within Ohio’s CAAs, as well as promising attempts to broaden its definition beyond the dependency logic.

Third, the chapter examines the case-management system (CCMEP) in Ohio to illustrate how this narrow conception of *self-sufficiency* is institutionalized and the challenges to a program fundamental to the new paternalism. I conclude by clarifying how the logic of dependency develops and how it is reflected in policy goals such as *self-sufficiency*.

²⁹ Allard, “Review,” 704.

³⁰ Thelen, “How Institutions Evolve,” 226.

3.2 Community Action Agencies and the Competence Assumption

CAAs were conceived, in part, from the logic of community development programs after WWII³¹ and the belief “that indigenous leadership and resources could be discovered and developed in each community, and that such leaders would be able to articulate the needs, desires, and aspirations of the community.”³² The EOA established CAAs as private and public non-profit community organizations aimed at mobilizing urban and rural resources, providing services and assistance to eliminate poverty and its causes, and doing so with the “maximum feasible participation of residents of the areas and members of the groups served.”³³

The phrase ‘maximum feasible participation’ signified a trust in the civic capacity of people in poverty, i.e. it accepted the assumption of competence that paternalism rejects. This was considered an innovation in public programs. Adam Walinsky describes the CAAs as “one of the few real innovations in the structure of American government since the formation of the [Tennessee Valley Authority].”³⁴ Nathan Glazer referred to CAAs as “the art of using government funds for... controlled revolution.”³⁵ Even Daniel Patrick Moynihan, who would lambast the administration of CAP, acknowledged that CAAs were “‘the most notable effort to date to mount a systemic social response’ to the problem of national integration of ethnic minorities who do not participate satisfactorily in the process of government: ‘it must stand,’ he [said], ‘as a perceptive and timely initiative.’”³⁶ Ultimately, federal funds were spent in a manner consistent with President Johnson’s

³¹ Sar Levitan, “The Community Action Program,” *ANNALS AAPSS* 385 (1969): 63-75.

³² Lillian Rubin, “Maximum Feasible Participation,” *ANNALS AAPSS* 385 (1969): 14-29. 17.

³³ U.S. Congress, “Economic Opportunity Act of 1964,” Public Law 88-452: 202.a.1-4, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-78/pdf/STATUTE-78-Pg508.pdf>.

³⁴ Adam Walinsky, “Book Review: *Maximum Feasible Misunderstanding*,” *New York Times*, 2 February 1969, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1969/02/02/90047064.html?pageNumber=94>.

³⁵ Glazer, “Paradoxes of American Poverty,” 80.

³⁶ Quoted in Walinsky, “Book Review.”

rhetoric on fighting persistent poverty and racial discrimination, with more funding going to both poorer areas and areas with a greater share of non-White residents.³⁷

Given that community action rested on an understanding of poverty as a problem of power and resources,³⁸ there was significant backlash. According to Quadagno, “As community action became an agent of equal political opportunity, mayors and city commissions found their authority usurped by upstart civil rights groups with massive federal resources. Not surprisingly, they rebelled against a program that empowered the poor at the expense of those who, after all, formed the backbone of the Democratic Party.”³⁹ Some of these resistance efforts set the stage for the Nixon campaigns against welfare and the use of racist dog whistles in his politics.⁴⁰ According to Rubin, “The issue... was clear – power. With billions of dollars to be spent, [CAAs posed] a serious threat to both the political establishment and the welfare bureaucracy.”⁴¹

Despite this originating logic, which had an influence on language and funding, CAAs were not consistently confrontational in practice. In fact, they were often criticized from Left for their “perfunctory forms of participation.”⁴² Margaret Weir writes that citizen participation in CAP and other War on Poverty efforts was primarily symbolic, with community board election turnouts incredibly low, and legitimate questions about whether community members were really involved in program prioritization.⁴³ Professional organizers such as Saul Alinsky found CAAs to be superficial and often times quite corrupt, calling them, “political pornography.”⁴⁴ Mead argues that CAAs were

³⁷ Bailey and Duquette, “How Johnson Fought the War on Poverty,” 351.

³⁸ Katz, *The Undeserving Poor*, 163.

³⁹ Quadagno, *The Color of Welfare*, 33.

⁴⁰ Interview with Jack Frech.

⁴¹ Rubin, “Maximum Feasible Participation,” 25.

⁴² Goldstein, *Poverty in Common*, 126. For a typology of “participation,” see Sherry Arnstein, “A ladder of citizen participation,” *Journal of the American Planning Association* 35, no. 4 (1969): 216-224: (1) citizen power, (2) tokenism, (3) non-participation.

⁴³ Margaret Weir, “Politics, Money, and Power in Community Development,” in Ronald Ferguson and William Dickens, eds., *Urban Problems and Community Development* (Washington, DC: Brookings, 1999): 139-192.

⁴⁴ “Alinsky Attacks War on Poverty, Claims Poor Must Have Power,” *Harvard Crimson*, 8 February 1967, <https://www.thecrimson.com/article/1967/2/8/alinsky-attacks-war-on-poverty-claims/>.

“entirely the creation of elites” and “had no true political base among the poor themselves.”⁴⁵ Nonetheless, the proliferation of language that prized the involvement and participation of the poor in programmatic decision-making was an important development for two reasons: (1) it acknowledged a civic competence for those in poverty, and (2) it inherently supported a communal response to poverty, even if individuals face their own barriers.

Of course, “the gap between theory and implementation is power” and political will.⁴⁶ Because of this gap,⁴⁷ CAAs embody a number of paradoxes. While most historic research covers the political activism of a few select CAAs and their backlash (which was intimately tied to fear of race riots), most CAAs acted as service providers for federal, state, and local programs by linking services together and cooperating with local institutions.⁴⁸ While CAAs were developed through a political and social structural lens regarding the problem of poverty, the economic analysis surrounding them was narrow, focused on GDP growth as the main driver of material advancement.⁴⁹ This has forced even one long time CAA official to remark, “the War on Poverty was not really a war... it was a series of individual battles. Because everyone’s battle is different.” While resources were spent in areas with higher proportion of non-White people in poverty and CAAs provided the platform for a generation of African American leaders⁵⁰ (e.g. Assistant Democratic Leader James Clyburn worked at a CAP agency early in his career), CAP’s energies were preemptively curtailed from within the organization out of fear of being associated with promoting race rioting and ‘social disfunction’ emphasized by the Right. While, the ‘maximum feasible participation’ requirement was innovative in its respect for the

⁴⁵ Mead, *The New Politics of Poverty*, 223.

⁴⁶ Katz, *The Undeserving Poor*, 273. This sentiment was also expressed by Rep. James Clyburn.

⁴⁷ A gap created certainly of their own failings and mismanagement, as well as from constant opposition to their mission.

⁴⁸ I am grateful to Joe Barrett for pointing this out. See Ryan LaRochelle, “Reassessing the History of the Community Action Program,” *Journal of Policy History* 31, no. 1 (2019): 126-164. As we will see, the institutions CAAs interact with might have different foundational logics.

⁴⁹ Margaret Weir, “The Federal Government and Unemployment,” in Weir, et al., eds., *The Politics of Social Policy in the United States* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1988), 149-190. 186.

⁵⁰ Quadagno, *The Color of Welfare*, 58.

competence of the poor, it was also viewed as an embodiment of the politics of respect and civility which weakened the Left to compromise on more radical shifts in the economy (e.g. a basic income).

3.2.i The March for Adequate Welfare: Political Competence Expressed and Challenged

Part of the challenge to CAAs' conception of civic competence and participation came from the political Left. Rather than viewing participation as an adequate expression of competency, "Welfare rights activists... challenged the combined lineage of the maternalist framework of economic assistance, which privileged whites, and the class hierarchies that expected deference and docility on the part of aid recipients."⁵¹ While CAA efforts were certainly aided by the zeitgeist of political movements that prized civic and political competence among the poor and which focused on legal rights and entitlements, they were also *challenged by* them for a broader conception of *political competence*.⁵²

Ohio was home to one such effort. The March for Adequate Welfare from Cleveland to Columbus captured the attention of Ohioans in 1966. Spurred by the national movement for a guaranteed income and the recent attention of Piven and Cloward's argument for exploding the welfare rolls,⁵³ the March focused on increasing the monthly GR and ADC allowances, and changing ADC standards to allow clients to earn additional income without it being deducted from benefits.⁵⁴

Approximately forty "Walkers for Decent Welfare" arrived in Columbus on June 30th, after eleven days and 155 miles.⁵⁵ Nearly 1,000 people joined the last three miles of the march on a 90-degree Fahrenheit day.⁵⁶ Marchers had signs saying, "One-half income means one-half life," "We

⁵¹ Goldstein, *Poverty in Common*, 130. According to Orloff, "Farewell to Maternalism?," "maternalist reformers' claims on the state were for a kind of 'equality of difference,' and constituted a challenge to patriarchal ideologies and practices that linked women's 'difference' to their inequality and their exclusion from politics," p. 9.

⁵² They are challenged, not directly, but through the whole notion of the WOP efforts signified by the CAAs.

⁵³ Richard Cloward and Frances Fox Piven, "The Weight of the Poor," *Nation*, 2 May 1966.

⁵⁴ Sanford Levenson, "30 Welfare Marchers Reach Medina on Blistered Feet," *Akron Beacon Journal*, 22 June 1966.

⁵⁵ "Rhodes to Weigh March's Demands."

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

work if we can,” and “Wonderful world of Ohio.”⁵⁷ Some marchers sang out, “Up and down Ohio’s roads, up and down we go. All we get’s the run-around – the State gets all the dough.”⁵⁸ The marchers held a rally at the Ohio statehouse with a prominent speaker lineup.⁵⁹ Tapping into the Cold War zeitgeist, Dick Gregory joked that “if Russia decided to wipe out poverty and bigotry in six years, America would do it in six months,” emphasizing a lack of political will, rather than resources.⁶⁰

However, the marchers were met by disapproving onlookers.⁶¹ One woman advertised her Columbus maid service agency job openings, and one man said, “These people aren’t so bad off. Look how fat they are.”⁶² A newspaper editorial acknowledged that “the idea of people on relief demanding more money is hard to take.”⁶³ A comic printed in the *Toledo Times* painted a telling picture, in which marchers trample a man reading a paper with myriad “help wanted” advertisements. The presumption, of course, being that relievers who could march could easily work, an assumption of voluntary non-work fundamental to the new paternalism. When challenged on this notion, a leader of the March, Harry Derricott said, “I’m working, I care enough about people to see that they get at least a few of the things I have.” He continued, “The idea is that we’re asking for a hundred percent for those who can’t work. For those who can, the most important thing is that they get a job.”⁶⁴

Ohio Governor Jim Rhodes had cleared his schedule and cancelled a trip in order to meet the marchers.⁶⁵ The meeting comprised planned remarks from the Governor and a number of the organizers from the Ohio Steering Committee for Adequate Welfare. Their specific request was for

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Levenson, “30 Welfare Marchers Reach Medina on Blistered Feet.”

⁵⁹ This lineup included seven welfare recipients, U.S. Representative and future Governor John Gilligan (D-Cincinnati), State representative and future Cleveland Mayor Carl Stokes, Ohio AFL CIO president and Democratic State Senator Frank King, comedian Dick Gregory, and George Wiley, the founder of the Poverty Rights Action Center.

⁶⁰ “Rhodes to Weigh March’s Demands.”

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² James Johnson, “Rhodes Clears Schedule to Greet Marchers,” *Cleveland Press*, 29 June 1966.

⁶³ “Welfare Walk Hit Sour Note,” *Canton Repository*, 3 July 1966. (Edit.)

⁶⁴ Levenson, “30 Welfare Marchers Reach Medina on Blistered Feet.”

⁶⁵ Johnson, “Rhodes Clears Schedule to Greet Marchers.”



Figure 3.2: “A funny thing happened on my way to work”⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Recorded in the archive as from the *Toledo Times*, 28 June 1966.

Rhodes to call a special session of the legislature in order to use the \$25-28 million projected budget surplus to raise monthly payments. One organizer cited a statement by the state finance director that the surplus was being saved for a rainy day. “The rainy day is here and has been here for some time,” Mrs. Gaston said, “so far as welfare families are concerned. This surplus has been taken out of the children’s hides.”⁶⁷ However, the outcome was not what the marchers wanted: Rhodes promised to “give serious consideration to all the requests here”⁶⁸ rather than take immediate action.⁶⁹



Figure 3.3: Welfare marchers meet with Gov. Rhodes⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Press State Service, “Welfare Marchers Won’t Seek Guaranteed Minimum Income,” *Cleveland Press*, 7 June 1966.

⁶⁸ “Rhodes to Weigh March’s Demands.”

⁶⁹ Post Ohio Bureau, “Rhodes Fails to Satisfy Marchers,” *Cincinnati Post and Times-Star*, 30 June 1966.

⁷⁰ *Citizen-Journal*, 30 June 1966.

The Ohio March played a fundamental role in the creation of the nationally coordinated movement. At the end of the day of rallies and meetings, some of the organizers, including George Wiley, stayed “for a meeting from 5 to 9 p.m. at the YMCA to discuss forming a nationwide poverty organization.”⁷¹ That nationwide organization ultimately became the National Welfare Rights Organization (NWRO), born out of a coordinating group of the local welfare organizations that had planned rallies that summer.⁷² The local welfare rights organizing took advantage of the civic action spirit of the 1960s and the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom of 1963. Dr. King’s Poor People’s Campaign in 1968 involved the NWRO in organizing, fundraising, and recruitment.

The March also put the identity of the ‘welfare recipient’ at the forefront, and with it came the flow of prejudices about recipients held in mainstream consciousness and discourse, including perceptions of competence and dependency. The tension between the challenges for low-income people to organize and the perceptions of what low-income people *should be doing* was evident in the criticisms of the welfare marchers. Of the ‘obligations’ that low-income people have to their communities, civic and political engagement was viewed as well below work. However, the dilemma was evident: If people who are poor spend time in the political sphere, they are deemed not poor enough to be of concern because they have time to engage. If people who are poor focus solely on their own basic needs, then political leaders can claim that they are not vocal with their demands or assume there will not be backlash politically if policies either actively hurt or do not benefit them (See Schneider and Ingram, Chapter 2.3).

The March and other welfare rights movements expanded the notion of competence and participation that had directed CAAs.⁷³ However, there *are* distinct challenges “getting people involved

⁷¹ “Welfare Marchers Plan State House Rally,” *Citizen-Journal*, 30 June 1966.

⁷² Melissa Gilbert, “From the Walk for Adequate Welfare to the March for our Lives,” *Urban Geography* 22, no. 5 (2001): 440-456. 443.

⁷³ By 1971, the GCWRO, “Plan of Action,” found, “Experiences in welfare rights are enabling welfare recipients to become articulate participants in other phases of community development,” e.g. “serving on advisory panels, citizen participation groups, and community boards.”

when they're just trying to make it day to day"⁷⁴ – a fact known to Mead, but interpreted as a lack of competence, rather than material constraints. Frech, who worked at a CAA prior to becoming the welfare director in Athens County, thought that President Johnson understood political power and “he understood the concept of having a seat at the table.” But the goal of ‘maximum feasible participation’ did not take into account the pure desperation people were facing. It would be unrealistic “to expect that these folks were going to go from destitution to being these eloquent spokesperson for public policy.” Frech, more so than others interviewed, argues that it is unreasonable to ask those who are poor to focus on anything other than meeting their own basic needs: “It’s Maslow’s law!”

Rather than organizing and political activity, some scholars focus on individual agency as an expression of civic competence, in resistance to oppressive constraints of poverty and paternalism. According to Katz, “Ethnographies, for the most part, celebrate agency by showing the resilience, capability, and intelligence of their subjects who find the interstices in the seemingly monolithic situations that entrap them.”⁷⁵ Some of the focus on civic competence emphasizes small acts of resistance, or “pre-political events.”⁷⁶ For example, mothers receiving TANF through the CalWORKS program made a calculated decision based on their needs, income flow, and survival chances in the low-wage market not to comply with increased monitoring requirements, resulting in sanctioned benefits.⁷⁷ Such rationale – which Mead calls a lack of competence in which sanctioning would act as an appropriate sorting mechanism of the deserving and undeserving – in fact illustrates incredible civic and market competence.

⁷⁴ Interview with Organize! Ohio, “it is difficult to energize ‘people who... have been kicked down for so long, [and] working with them to believe that they can really make change’; Interview with Mid-Ohio Workers Association.

⁷⁵ Katz, *The Undeserving Poor*, 273.

⁷⁶ Vaclav Havel, “The Power of the Powerless,” *International Journal of Politics* (1978).

⁷⁷ Shaw, et al, “Sanctions as Everyday Resistance to Welfare Reform.”

3.2.ii “We’re Mandated”: Maximum Feasible Participation Today

When asked about the maximum feasible participation requirement today, the CAA representatives made it clear that the phrase is viewed as a mandate (“Yeah, we’re mandated”⁷⁸) – i.e. the rule for the structure of the tri-partite board developed from the Quie amendment⁷⁹ and not a direction of the spirit of the law. The mandate is that one-third of the board be from the community in which the CAA operates. In today’s statute, the requirement allows for the poor ‘or their representatives’ – a phrase that allows organizational interests to take the spots.

It is nonetheless a potentially empowering experience for those who are on the boards. CAA representatives whom I interviewed discussed the confidence that individuals are able to build by being on the board or in the Parent Policy Council (PPC) of Head Start in their communities.⁸⁰ Part of the experience is for low-income people to “understand the freedom, that they have a freedom to fail, to ask questions because they’ve never been... in that situation where you’re on a board making real decisions, for real institutions, that affect real people;” and “be on it and run an organization and learn that they can challenge an institution” by saying, “Wait a minute, that’s not right, that’s not going to work for my child, or that’s not going to work for my neighborhood.”⁸¹

Besides the boards, participant engagement is still an element of CAAs. The Council for Economic Opportunities in Greater Cleveland has PPCs. Hocking Athens Perry County community action (HAPCAP) has been attempting to build a youth center by utilizing “some kind of youth board where they tell us what they want, what would they need to see somewhere to make them feel comfortable, what would get them there.”⁸² IMPACT community action in Columbus has an advocates program as a way to teach civic engagement. However, there is a gap in influence when it

⁷⁸ Interview with Jackson-Vinton CA.

⁷⁹ Interview with HAPAP.

⁸⁰ Interview with Jackson-Vinton CA.

⁸¹ Interview with Phil Cole.

⁸² Interview with HAPCAP.

comes to broader policymaking: “Are the voices of the low-income people that we serve, are they heard at a state level in shaping policy? Not nearly to the degree that they need to be. And I think we need to do a better job of partnering and empowering and making sure those voices are heard.”⁸³

On a collective scale, however, for CAAs today, expanding the notion of empowerment to include civic and political competence is difficult, since programs are so focused on survival. For example, despite having interactions with over 20,000 people in Cleveland, there are not enough touch points with people beyond their need for services. However, a new iteration of community action could focus on making the most out of those touch points.⁸⁴ Is it possible for an iteration of community action to take on the original intent of maximum feasible participation while providing services? “Yes... but... it will have to take on a current name and application,” Rep. Clyburn said.

3.2.iii Tracing the Shift in the Competence Assumption

As discussed above, CAP was conceived within an ideational strand that focused on the importance of participation of the poor. The poor were not conceived of as either rational maximizers or dutiful-but-defeated, but as civically indispensable. While political pressures from the Left urged the expansion of this conception, political pressures from the Right successfully narrowed it.

In conceiving of the CAAs, proponents were concerned about the demand that “the individual adjust to community institutions rather than trying to change those institutions to meet the needs of the poor,” the former system referred to as “referral from nowhere to nowhere.”⁸⁵ Rubin argues that,

⁸³ Interview with IMPACT.

⁸⁴ Interview with CEOGC.

⁸⁵ Quoted in Rubin, “Maximum Feasible Participation,” 28.

While these considerations were not explicitly articulated in relation to a changed view of the poor and their capabilities, they did call the whole welfare system into question, and offered a program of community action as a substitute or a supplement. This suggests that these men [who wrote the EOA] believed that, given the tools and the chance, poor people would use them well – a judgment about the capabilities of the poor which, it turns out, seems to be well ahead of its time.⁸⁶

‘Ahead of its time’ might have been an optimistic assessment, however. The notion that the poor are capable of decision-making, civic participation, and utilizing resources was narrowed, years after the War on Poverty, by conservatives from Charles Murray to Newt Gingrich, who argued that the poor were economically maximizing actors, responding to the perverse incentives of the welfare system.⁸⁷ Given that the power struggles over CAA resources show that *civic and political competence* was viewed as a greater threat to the established order than *market competence*, the competence assumption was narrowed to focus on market incentives in an effort to cut safety-net programs (welfare abolition). Left to their own devices, these proponents argued, the poor would make decisions as rational (i.e. economically-maximizing) actors. This illustrated a strengthening of the logic of dependency, by granting a premise about the competence of the poor – applied to both women entering the workforce and men – but narrowing its scope.

Mead’s paternalism accepts the logic of dependency but rejects this assumption in market competence. Mead argues that the failure of CAAs to do more than service provision *proves* that the competence assumption is not met for people in poverty – either civically or with respect to the market.⁸⁸ Paternalism dismisses market competence, making it a goal rather than an assumption, arguing that the poor are dutiful – possessive of the proper norms and motivations – but defeated.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 28.

⁸⁷ This is, of course, inconsistent with Murray’s beliefs in genetic inferiority. Mead, likewise, is sometimes inconsistent in his writing, leading to ambiguity. Rather than being a source of confusion, however, the very presence of these ambiguities lays bare, for both Murray and Mead, the underlying agenda of retrenchment, i.e. the “strategic spot” from which the ambiguities arise. See Kenneth Burke, *A Grammar of Motives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), xviii.

⁸⁸ Mead, *Beyond Entitlement*, 62. Mead argues that community action decreased the stigma of receiving benefits and so promoted entitlements without obligations. CAAs pressured “regular government agencies to increase services to the poor” and yet these “programs failed... because they largely ignored behavioral problems among the poor,” p. 49.

Instead, “the hope is to instill enough competence in the recipients so they can leave aid and participate in the natural reciprocity of the labor market.”⁸⁹ This leaves some to argue that the “new paternalism does not actually do away with the ideal of rationality as a prerequisite for autonomy; rather, it instead challenges the extension of the ideal to all individuals.”⁹⁰ Self-sufficiency in the market, detached from rights outside the market, then, is the goal of both welfare abolitionists and paternalists alike.

⁸⁹ Mead, “Welfare Reform and Citizenship,” 175.

⁹⁰ Ben-Ishai, “The New Paternalism,” 162.

3.3 The Discursive Shift in Public Law: From EOA to CSBG

Clause Offe contends that institutions like CAAs have “an implicit theory about themselves, an ‘animating idea’ that provides reasons for their support and defense.” These missions are “premises of action” and provide actors with an existing set of “social facts,” such as assumptions about the scope and causes of poverty. The erosion of these animating ideas also plays a large part in the conversion of institutions.⁹¹

The EOA placed the burden of eliminating poverty on the nation as a whole, emphasizing that, “the United States can achieve its full economic and social potential as a nation only if every individual has the opportunity to contribute to the full extent of his capabilities and to participate in the workings of our society.”⁹² Individual competence and participation in society were fundamental to the activist politics surrounding the passage of the Civil Rights acts and the EOA, but were not divorced from a structural assessment of the barriers people face to that participation. CAP was created by the EOA with an animating idea broader than individual aid: to provide “services, assistance, and other activities of sufficient scope and size to give promise of progress toward *elimination of poverty* or a cause or causes of poverty through developing employment opportunities, improving human performance, motivation, and productivity, or bettering the conditions under which people *live, learn, and work*.”⁹³

A few things are noteworthy from this mission which set it apart from the new paternalism’s underlying logic. First, CAP had a dual focus on both the individual and their living conditions. Second, the ambition established is the elimination of poverty. Third, work, while enumerated, is not the sole civic obligation discussed. Three are highlighted to encapsulate the civic experience: live, learn, and work.

⁹¹ Offe, “Political Institutions and Social Power,” 21.

⁹² U.S. Congress, “Economic Opportunity Act of 1964,” 202.a.1-4.

⁹³ Ibid., 202.a.2. Emphasis added.

Community action has gone through significant funding, programmatic, and participatory shifts since the days of Sargent Shriver: “Programs tend to be more federal and state than locally initiated, there is less citizen participation and activism, many different groups are served, the agencies provide universal and means-tested programs, and income as well as in-kind services are provided.”⁹⁴ Nonetheless, “CAAs have survived primarily because their continued strategies of advocacy and service for the poor have made them important and dependable in the communities in which they operate.”⁹⁵ Therefore, in examining changes to CAAs while acknowledging their resilience, studies must better examine how ‘animating ideas’ influence institutional change.

The ideational change that occurred under less scrutiny in scholarship – almost seemingly naturally – was the emergence of *self-sufficiency* as the chief ‘animating idea’ of the CAP agencies, rather than a focus on both the individual’s circumstances and “the conditions under which people live, learn, and work.” Now, almost uniformly, CAAs discuss their goal as promoting *self-sufficiency*. While the EOA speaks more broadly of empowered and economically strong communities, neither the EOA nor its 1967 amendments utilize *self-sufficiency*. How did this change come about?

In 1981, CSBG, authorized under the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 (OBRA), rescinded the EOA and its amendments. CAAs are now funded in large part through CSBG funds, provided to the states as block grants with minimal federal oversight. The federal government can, however, require that certain thresholds of spending and welfare usage rates are met, but states have great flexibility in deciding where that money goes.⁹⁶ The language of CSBG states that the money must go to organizations whose mission are “*the reduction of poverty*, the revitalization of low-income

⁹⁴ Marcia Bok, “The Current Status of Community Action Agencies in Connecticut,” *Social Service Review* 62, no. 3 (1988): 396-410. 407.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Interview with Phil Cole.

communities, and the empowerment of low-income families and individuals in rural and urban areas to become fully *self-sufficient*.”⁹⁷

CSBG and OBRA were an opening effort by Reagan to cut aid “where real need cannot be demonstrated,”⁹⁸ focusing on a distinction between the deserving (the truly needy) and the undeserving (those voluntarily not working). According to O’Connor, “Reagan’s ASPE set the tone with a research agenda that made welfare ‘dependency’ – and its prevention – the administration’s official, overriding concern.”⁹⁹ The “spider’s web of dependency”¹⁰⁰ was the animating focus for the Administration, including a 1986 report to the President from the Council of Economic Advisors titled, *Up From Dependency: A New National Public Assistance Strategy*.¹⁰¹ Discourse analysis of congressional hearings¹⁰² shows the prevalence of the behavioral account of poverty during OBRA, FSA, and PRWORA: generous “social spending slowed economic growth and fostered welfare dependency,” which was manifest in the breakdown of ‘family values’ through fraud and abuse, and out-of-wedlock births. As a result, OBRA relied on the logic of dependency to severely restrict eligibility for anti-poverty programs such as AFDC and give states more flexibility in administering the Community Work Experience program and other workfare demonstrations.¹⁰³

For President Reagan, *self-sufficiency* was best achieved through retrenchment. Budget cuts (CSBG consolidated seventy-seven anti-poverty grants into nine block grants at about 25-percent less

⁹⁷ 42 U.S. Code § 9901. *Community Services Block Grant Program*. 106 Sec. 1. As amended by the Coats Human Services Reauthorization Act of 1998. Emphases added.

⁹⁸ Spencer Rich, “‘Safety Net’ Strands Thinner Under Reagan,” *Washington Post*, 27 November 1988, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1988/11/27/safety-net-strands-thinner-under-reagan/74e881aa-072a-4e41-96a2-0e2f3744689c/>.

⁹⁹ O’Connor, *Poverty Knowledge*, 251.

¹⁰⁰ Robert Pear, “Reagan Seeks Welfare Plan To Free Poor From Government Dependency,” *New York Times*, 5 February 1986, <https://www.nytimes.com/1986/02/05/us/reagan-seeks-welfare-plan-to-free-poor-from-government-dependency.html>.

¹⁰¹ Domestic Policy Council, *Up From Dependency*, 3rd volume (Washington, DC: University of Michigan Library, 1986). See Desmond King, *Actively Seeking Work?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

¹⁰² Guetzkow, “Beyond Deservingness,” 185.

¹⁰³ According to King, *Actively Seeking Work*, “an important source of ideas for work-welfare came from state programs established after 1981,” p. 168. As Part II will show, in Ohio these ideas were emergent prior to 1981.

than the original programs)¹⁰⁴ went hand-in-hand with a promotion of work effort. These workfare activities were intimately tied to the effort to cut spending, limit eligibility, and promote self-sufficiency through the marketplace. However, a GAO study of the 1981 changes indicates that people were not pushed into work, they were simply pushed off the rolls and their incomes decreased,¹⁰⁵ illustrating how spending cuts and paternalism work in combination toward the decimation of the safety-net.

Although an incredibly significant change in ‘animating idea,’ the discursive shift brought by CSBG, as an interlocutor between the original intent of the EOA and the current manifestation of the CAA funding, is often elided. For example, ODSA writes, “In 1964 the Economic Opportunity Act incorporated Community Action Agencies, locally controlled private nonprofit organizations whose purpose is to reduce poverty and to help low-income people become self-sufficient.”¹⁰⁶ A 1988 study of CAAs reports the same: “CAAs are unique in their continued commitment to the original mission of the EOA-to help the poor achieve empowerment and self-sufficiency.”¹⁰⁷ On the other hand, the Community Action Partnership, the lobbying organization for the CAA network, which does not receive CSBG funds, holds closer to the original intent of the EOA. The Partnership does not include self-sufficiency in its mission. Instead, it focuses on creating “opportunities for all people to thrive,” building “strong, resilient communities,” and ensuring “a more equitable society” “to ensure that the causes and conditions of poverty are effectively addressed.”¹⁰⁸

The dominant funding stream dictated the move away from the broad intent of the law that founded the institution of community action. Additionally, the ambition in addressing poverty shifted significantly within the CSBG language from its elimination to its reduction. This lessened ambition

¹⁰⁴ Kenneth Finegold, et al., “Block Grants,” *Urban Institute* (2004), <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/57626/310991-Block-Grants.PDF>.

¹⁰⁵ Rich, “‘Safety Net’ Strands Thinner Under Reagan.”

¹⁰⁶ Ohio Development Services Agency, “Community Action Agencies,” https://development.ohio.gov/cs/cs_caa.htm.

¹⁰⁷ Bok, “The Current Status of Community Action Agencies in Connecticut,” 407.

¹⁰⁸ Community Action Partnership, “Mission and Promise,” <https://communityactionpartnership.com/mission-and-promise/>.

was reflected explicitly among the interviewees, with statements like “the poor are always with us,” “we are not going to eradicate poverty no matter what we do,” and “we’re not going to eliminate poverty, but we can make it better for people.”¹⁰⁹

Without fail, the community action representatives with whom I spoke defined their missions in the language of self-sufficiency, but each provided a unique embrace, skepticism, or desire to broaden the mission. A representative from IMPACT rattled off the mission statement as if he said it in his sleep: “to reduce poverty by providing hope-inspiring help and real opportunities for self-sufficiency.” When he elaborated on this mission, his focus was the phrase “hope-inspiring help.” “We were very intentional in choosing that verbiage,” he said, “because oftentimes people who come through our door, their spirit has been broken just through the travails of daily life living in poverty and the stress that comes with that, so many are in crisis mode or survival when they come to us. And so our first goal is just to stabilize families in crisis.” While there is aspiration to move beyond poverty-maintenance,¹¹⁰ the reality is that resources must be used for meeting families and individuals in crisis.

A representative from CEOGC argued that the notion that these programs have a goal of self-sufficiency is highly suspect: “all we do is measure touch points and people seen, not what happened. What are the outcome measurements?” Program requirements support this claim: states get more money in TANF matching funds based on the work participation rates (not outcome rates about job retention, pay, benefits, poverty rates) and the number of people on the rolls (not outcome rates about poverty). The talk of getting people into work and self-sufficiency through the CAA programs is misguided, because “the worth of the work” is not measured and the outcome measurements are not correct. According to the representative, there is still a large gap between theory and implementation.

¹⁰⁹ Albeit, not among CAAs. Interviews with United Way of Central Ohio; Buckeye Institute; OJFSDA.

¹¹⁰ Phil Cole said that teaching the history of community action is important so that people understand “you’re not here to do poverty maintenance, like a food pantry.... You’re here to say, ‘we’re going to make your position better.’”

3.3.i Attempts to Broaden *Self-sufficiency*

We see through the development of the CAA funding and contemporary interviews how the narrow outcome of *self-sufficiency* can emerge from the logic of dependency. In Ohio, there are attempts to broaden these public understandings of *self-sufficiency*.

Table 3.1: Self-sufficiency Standard as percentage of the federal poverty level, 2015¹¹¹

County	One adult	One adult, one school-age child	One adult, one preschooler, one school-age child	Two adults, one preschooler, one school-age child
Athens	\$19,837 – 169%	\$29,842 – 187%	\$43,085 – 214%	\$49,877 – 206%
Cuyahoga	\$20,043 – 170	\$32,661 – 205	\$48,576 – 242	\$55,912 – 231
Franklin	\$20,896 – 178	\$36,667 – 230	\$53,726 – 267	\$61,057 – 252
Hamilton	\$19,406 – 165	\$33,699 – 212	\$51,416 – 256	\$58,953 – 243
Vinton	\$18,182 – 154	\$24,885 – 156	\$32,698 – 163	\$40,498 – 167
Federal Poverty Level	\$11,770	\$15,930	\$20,090	\$24,250

First, there is a focus on defining *self-sufficiency* as a measurement, in addition to a concept, in order to indicate the actual amount of annual income necessary to meet basic needs. According to Lisa Hamler-Fugitt from the Ohio Foodbanks, “the problem with defining poverty is that it doesn’t truly reflect what is necessary... to meet one’s basic needs of self-sufficiency.” People ranging from former welfare administrators to community organizers to CAA officials utilize the University of Washington Self Sufficiency Calculator as a teaching tool to demonstrate the amount that is actually required to be self-sufficient. The estimates include housing, childcare, food, transportation, health care, miscellaneous essentials, taxes and tax credits, and emergency savings. It is also used as a policy tool. In fact, in 2008, Governor Strickland (Democrat) created the Ohio Anti-Poverty Taskforce, which recommended creating job opportunities with wages pegged to the Self-Sufficiency Standard

¹¹¹ Rounded to nearest dollar. Recreated from Diana Pearce, “The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Ohio 2015,” University of Washington School of Social Work, December 2015, <http://selfsufficiencystandard.org/sites/default/files/selfsuff/docs/OH2015.pdf>. The poverty guidelines updated periodically in the *Federal Register* by the US DHHS under the authority of 42 U.S.C. 9902(2).

rather than the federal poverty line.¹¹² Phil Cole argued that, “when we talk about self-sufficiency, we need to know exactly what we’re talking about,” and that the self-sufficiency standard should be used when creating economic development programs in different counties (Figure 3.4), and as guidelines for business development and government assistance programs.¹¹³

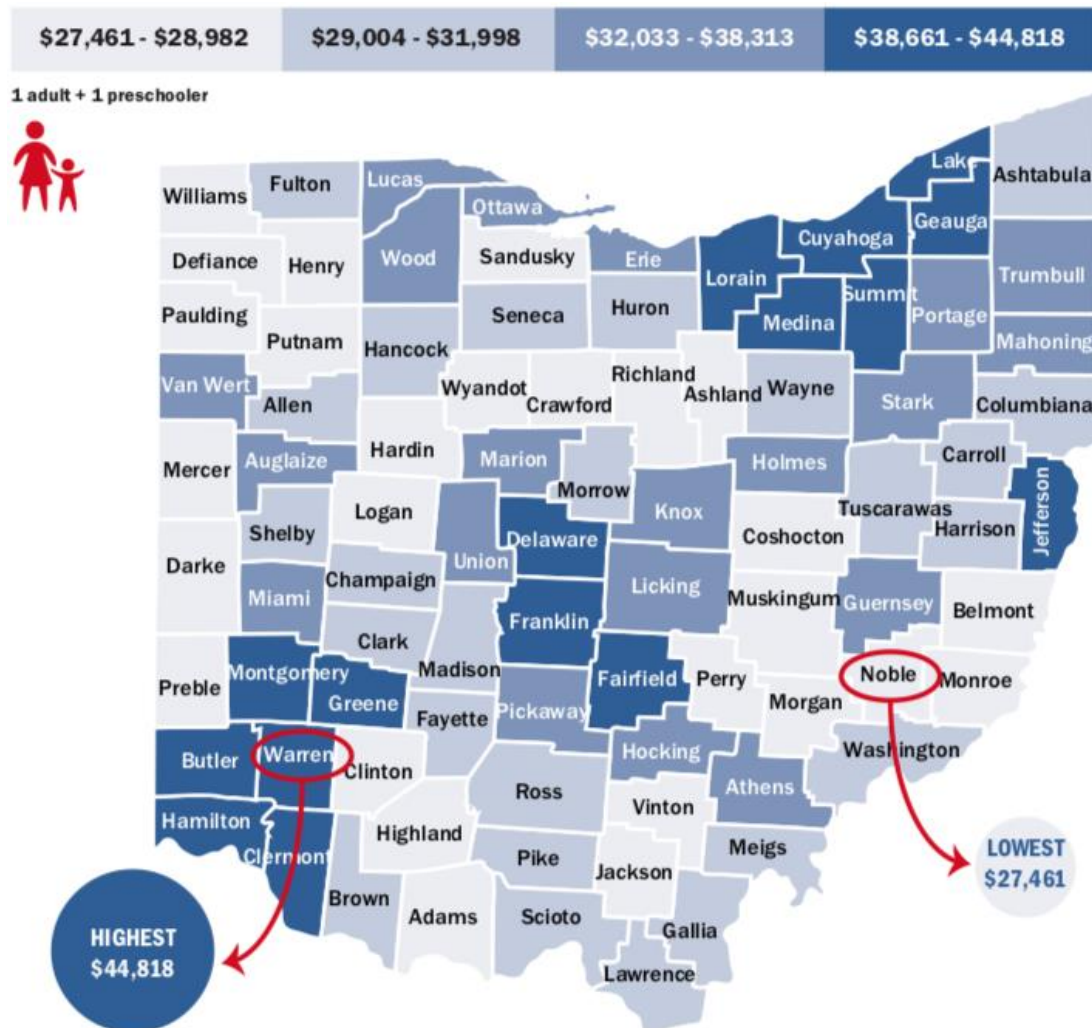


Figure 3.4: Map of counties by level of Annual Self-Sufficiency Wage, 2015¹¹⁴

¹¹² The Ohio Anti-Poverty Taskforce, “Strategic Recommendations for Expanding Opportunity and Reducing Poverty in Ohio.”

¹¹³ Catherine Candisky, “Self-sufficiency proves a stretch,” *Columbus Dispatch*, 31 July 2008.

¹¹⁴ Pearce, “The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Ohio 2015.”

Second, there are attempts to expand the concept from its inherent human capital focus to include social capital. According to Hamler-Fugitt, business incentives have been the linchpin of Ohio policy, “instead of saying, ‘what’s the metrics on the jobs that we want to create: are they family supporting jobs that are full-time, benefit-providing, healthcare, opportunity to save towards retirement?’” Scholars agree: “we need a notion of autonomy [or, self-sufficiency] that takes into account affective needs and relational ties, one that makes room for a wider range of values while also providing the tools for the development of capacities related to autonomy.”¹¹⁵ Another representative from the Ohio Foodbanks noted that the state is not investing in social capital, but is nonetheless relying on community kinship ties and networks of employment to address poverty. However, even “asset-based community development” is often viewed outside the purview of the government, and solely for local and faith-based organizations.¹¹⁶

Third, there are attempts to replace *self-sufficiency* altogether.¹¹⁷ One CAA representative focused on *partnership* – the notion that “we’re in this together.” Like Desmond, he was emphasizing the relational aspects of poverty, in order to move away from the hierarchical perception of dependency. Many scholars similarly attempt to reframe what is considered dependence as interdependence, or as Heclo would describe it, ‘mutual dependence,’ which values help as much as self-sufficiency. Deborah Stone writes, “Help degrades only in a culture that refuses to see anything between prosperity and an able body but an unwilling mind. Help destroys recipients’ freedom and dignity only in a culture that makes self-reliance the apotheosis of virtue.”¹¹⁸ Ultimately, this is because self-sufficiency is built on an impossible premise of complete self-reliance (or market reliance as a lone

¹¹⁵ Ben-Ishai, “The New Paternalism,” 163.

¹¹⁶ John Thornton, Jr., “Why ‘Compassionate Conservatism’ Failed,” *Sojourners*, 1 July 2019, <https://sojo.net/articles/why-compassionate-conservatism-failed>. Faith based organizational charity has a similar view toward the poor as paternalism, one that maintains the balance of power. Neither paternalism nor maternalism lend themselves toward economic justice.

¹¹⁷ See, e.g., Robert Hawkins, “From Self-Sufficiency to Personal and Family Sustainability,” *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare* 32, no. 4 (2005): 77-92.

¹¹⁸ Deborah Stone, *The Samaritan’s Dilemma* (New York: Nation Books, 2008), 61.

rational actor) and is intimately related to feelings of belonging (which will be discussed in Conclusion C.1), in large part because of the fear associated with a status of dependency.¹¹⁹

All three attempts to broaden the notion of self-sufficiency reject the assumption of incompetence in the new paternalism. Instead, they start from the premise that “social life... is a web of mutual aid and forbearance, a dense network of interdependence of reciprocity, which includes rights and duties which have no strict correlation with each other.”¹²⁰ These attempts require expanding decision-making beyond the limited frameworks of “rational self-maximizer” and “dutiful but defeated.” Feminist scholars, for example, argue for a more complex view of self, “arguing against rationality alone as a marker of autonomous agency.”¹²¹ By rejecting paternalism’s assumptions, they also challenge the dynamic of power maintenance that underlies paternalism’s efforts.

¹¹⁹ For fear and loss-aversion, see Cramer, *The Politics of Resentment*; Hochschild, *Strangers in their Own Land*. For fear and moral judgments, see Sherman, *Those Who Work, Those Who Don't*; Michèle Lamont, *The Dignity of Working Men* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2000).

¹²⁰ Pateman, “Another Way Forward,” 55.

¹²¹ Ben-Ishai, “The New Paternalism,” 163; Julie White, *Democracy, Justice, and the Welfare State* (University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 2000), 136.

3.4 Self-sufficiency and the New Paternalism: Case Management

Paternalism “perpetuates (or at least expresses) relationships of domination and inequality among individual members of a community,”¹²² and nowhere is this clearer than in the context of welfare case-management.¹²³ Given their originating logic of poverty as a problem of power and resources, CAAs are situated uncomfortably within the anti-poverty space, oftentimes responding to and interacting with federal changes in funding (as we saw) and procedure that go against their ‘animating idea.’ One such procedure is the case-management model. From the service-provision perspective of *CAAs*, case-management can effectively be tied to sustained interventions. Previously, JFS case-managers checked eligibility but had no incentive to remove people from benefits. However, as many scholars have shown, the new case-management is a procedure focused on managing and governing the poor *who remain on* the safety-net, without providing adequate personalized attention.¹²⁴

The case-manager model is fundamental to Mead’s new paternalism and the institutionalized focus on self-sufficiency. It emphasizes the administrative aspects of the problem of poverty; it relies on an individualized and behavioral assessment of those in poverty; it is ostensibly colorblind but has been shown to have disparate impacts based on race; and it focuses on the meeting of recipient obligations. Mead writes, “Case managers help overcome obstacles such as a breakdown of services or a family crisis, but they also levy expectations, pointing to consequences if the expectations are not met.... At its best, like good parenting, case management combines help and hassle.”¹²⁵

As case-management models have grown in anti-poverty work they have reinforced the individualized nature of CAA work and their focus on self-sufficiency. This is not to say that a case-

¹²² Smiley, “Paternalism and Democracy,” 309.

¹²³ Michael Lipsky, *Street-Level Bureaucracy* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1980).

¹²⁴ Soss et al., *Disciplining the Poor*. DeParle, *American Dream*, argues that “Personalized attention, if it ever existed, was chased from the system two generations ago. Welfare-rights groups called it paternalistic and discriminatory.... And budget offices deemed it frightfully expensive.... By the late 1960s, the average caseworker was the equivalent of a postal clerk, a low-paid, rules-oriented cog,” p. 254.

¹²⁵ Mead, “Welfare Employment,” 62.

management model is ineffective, or undesirable. At its best, and in practice for CAAs which have multiple touchpoints with recipients and do not have to implement the sanctioning regimes that JFS offices do, case management is a *mechanism* of sustained intervention for the individual and their family. In fact, paternalism's cross-appeal is evident in its attraction to those wanting to do whatever possible to help a client.¹²⁶ A representative from HAPCAP described this as "handholding":

The programs that I found to be successful at really getting people toward self-sufficiency are those that are over time, they're not just a one off. It's like handholding. It's not, "hey, call so and so and they'll help you out with your counseling." It's like, call *with* them saying, "hey, here's how you get an appointment, it's not so scary." Maybe drive them to their first appointment, whatever it is, it's really that kind of person-centered, individualized case management with again funding flexibility to meet peoples' needs.

The representative identifies a number of elements that are not fundamental to the new paternalism but are to helping someone out of poverty: the voluntary nature of the program, length of intervention, aim to address barriers beyond just the end goal of work, and increased and flexible funding.

The challenge arises when case-management is done under the *contractual* and punitive assumptions of the new paternalism.¹²⁷ However, one welfare reform veteran believes that this is the necessary second step of welfare reform. He argues, "I think what we really need is programs that give us the flexibility to help people deal with whatever their issues are," but "we're not doing people any favors." A representative from Organize! Ohio agrees that there are "a whole host of people that if you dealt with their individual circumstances that they could get out of poverty," but case-management is not "the way we deal with this in a systemic basis." Fundamental to this debate is whether people are in poverty because of their behavior or because of other circumstances.

¹²⁶ This definition is closer to the religious notion of "accompaniment," as opposed to the manager/client relationship within the new paternalism.

¹²⁷ Elliot Libeow, *Tell Them Who I Am* (New York: Penguin, 1995), writes, "One important source of abuse [in systems that poor people engage with] lies much deeper, in a widespread theory about human behavior that gets expressed in various forms: as public policy, as a theoretical statement about rehabilitation, or simply as 'common sense.' Whatever the form, it boils down to something like this: We mustn't make things too easy for them (...the dependent poor generally). That just encourages their dependency.... Thus, the fear of 'making things too easy' gives respectability to meanness in public policy and legitimizes harshness on the front lines," p. 141-143.

The welfare reform veteran errs on the side of behavior: “we can triple the amount of cash assistance we give families, they are going to be probably more dependent than ever before and they’d still be living below the poverty line.” Instead, he says, people either have to work or get married, and the government should only be in the business of promoting work. A CAA representative, on the other hand, advocates a broader view:

I used to use this cliché or parable about if you give a person fish they eat for the day. If you teach them to fish they’ll eat for a lifetime. But I say I challenge that assumption because you’re not going to eat for a lifetime if there’s no pond, rivers, or sea by which to cast your rod and catch that fish. So, yes, we need to give people fish through our emergency services and stabilize families in crisis. We need to teach people to fish through our empowerment services, workforce development, and financial literacy training. But then we need to also make sure that there are places to fish and that’s where economic development and public policy reform come in and where we need to be greater advocates for systemic change.

IMPACT’s caseworkers are even called “self-sufficiency coordinators,” who work with individuals, create individual development plans “to look holistically” to assess the barriers and “begin to knock those barriers down so that people can achieve true self-sufficiency.” The orientation of case-management, then, depends on the underlying assumptions of both individuals and institutions (e.g. CAA or JFS) about the causes of poverty. If one believes, like the welfare veteran, that behavior or culture is the cause, then case-management takes a more punitive direction. If one believes, like Frech, that poverty will not be addressed by changing poor peoples’ behaviors and “there is only one category of poverty – people who don’t have enough money,”¹²⁸ then it takes a more lenient direction.¹²⁹

¹²⁸ Jack Frech, Email to Alexander Coccia, 4 September 2019.

¹²⁹ E.g. Caseworkers can give 20-percent of county recipients exemptions on certain program requirements. When Frech was JFS director, he was giving 16-percent that exemption. The JFS office now gives exemptions to 0.3-percent. According to Frech, “what it reflects is the mentality of the program.”

3.4.i Case Management in Ohio

The relevant programs for this case study are Ohio Works First (OWF) and the Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program (CCMEP) for young adults (ages 16-24) who are work eligible. CCMEP was established in 2016, and combined funding from the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and TANF.¹³⁰ A case manager and their client create an “individual opportunity plan” that outlines “a comprehensive assessment of employment and training needs, as well as a basic skills assessment,” the goals and steps the individual will take to “achieve economic self-sufficiency,” and the services that JFS will provide including employment and training services.¹³¹ JFS argues that “CCMEP’s success is based on the customer’s active participation in the program, as well as regular, meaningful engagement by case managers.” Participants are required to work on the activities in their plans for a minimum of twenty hours per week. CCMEP case managers are required to engage with participants at least every thirty days.¹³²

CCMEP, however, takes place under the umbrella of OWF, Ohio’s financial assistance portion of TANF, which has a lifetime limit of 36 months, work requirements, and a requirement to sign a “self-sufficiency contract.” According to JFS: “Failure to sign the self-sufficiency contract without good cause can result in denial or termination of benefits, which would affect the entire family. The contract explains the participant’s rights and responsibilities and what the county department... will do to help the participant become self-sufficient.”¹³³ The contractual nature of this approach is emblematic of the new paternalism, facilitating the sorting mechanism of work requirements. The contract-model is not new, but with the 1996 reforms, “what is particularly novel... with its lifetime

¹³⁰ Brie Lusheck, “Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program,” *Center for Community Solutions*, 2016, <https://www.communitysolutions.com/research/comprehensive-case-management-employment-program-ohio-moving-forward/>.

¹³¹ Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services, “Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program,” <http://jfs.ohio.gov/owd/CCMEP/CCMEP-Fact-Sheet.stm>.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services, “Cash assistance,” <https://ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/site/residents/resources/cash-assistance>.

limit, is the blunt abrogation of this contract: after [three] years, you are on your own, the contractual obligation of government exhausted.”¹³⁴

Those interviewed for this thesis identified significant barriers to the success of the CCMEP program, and, by extension, paternalist efforts. First, its focus on employment misses the broader supportive services needed. According to the welfare reform veteran, “there are lots of reasons for being poor and the lack of a job is just one of them. The CCMEP program forces everybody into the same funnel” of needing employment as the main barrier. According to a social worker who has experience with CCMEP, “the best-antidote-to-poverty-is-a-job mentality [of CCMEP does] not anticipate the amount of supportive services that these kids, these young people would need. And the amount of barriers that they would have.”¹³⁵ Instead, she argues that real job training requires more resources and sustained interventions than the state provides.¹³⁶ As with all work requirements, individuals face significant barriers in meeting them when they are homeless or lack transportation options. The youth population targeted by CCMEP struggle to attend even the initial assessment. After the assessment, if individuals “do not provide a good cause for failing to comply with minimum hours per week for their employment plan, they may be sanctioned and removed from cash assistance and the program.”¹³⁷ Despite the stated intention of CCMEP to focus on the holistic nature of assistance, there is a limit to the state’s commitment.

Second, while a streamlined, in-house, and coordinated approach was the selling point feature of the CCMEP program,¹³⁸ the new paternalism’s emphasis on government capacity is strong armed by devolutionary efforts. Devolution has allowed counties to dice up the programs that it provides

¹³⁴ King, *In the Name of Liberalism*, 286.

¹³⁵ Interview with National Association of Social Workers, Ohio Chapter.

¹³⁶ Deborah Johnson, ed. “Helping the hard-to-employ transition to employment,” Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 41, July 2019, <https://www.irp.wisc.edu/resource/helping-the-hard-to-employ-transition-to-employment>, argues for personal attention from caseworkers, robust supports, and employment incentives.

¹³⁷ Lusheck, “Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program.”

¹³⁸ Ibid.

and give the responsibilities to different contractors, and “we’re right back to where we were before, where people were still jumping all over the place.”¹³⁹ Third, because the plans themselves are individualized, *self-sufficiency* as defined by the contract does not have a state-approved income,¹⁴⁰ reflecting the new paternalism’s claim that work effort is more important than financial outcome.

Despite these drawbacks, paternalist, contractual approaches are favored at the federal level, featured in Paul Ryan’s multiple proposals as Chairman of House Budget and Speaker of the House.¹⁴¹ Cheryl Vincent who worked for US DHHS and then Ohio JFS was hired by the House Ways and Means Committee to do a welfare reform program with TANF reauthorization.¹⁴² In fact, Ohio’s CCMEP is being used as the model: “The federal welfare reform that [Former] Speaker Ryan and the others are pushing, it reads almost exactly like Ohio’s CCMEP program.”¹⁴³

¹³⁹ Interview with National Association of Social Workers, Ohio Chapter.

¹⁴⁰ Interview with IMPACT CAA.

¹⁴¹ Paul Ryan, “The Path to Prosperity,” House Budget Committee, 20 March 2012.

¹⁴² Vincent was hired under the Trump Administration as the Director of Legislative and Budget, Administration of Children and Families, US DHHS.

¹⁴³ Interview with OJFSDA.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter took a step back from an examination of retrenchment mechanisms to clarify the discourses that drive and emerge from the logic of dependency. For every logic, there are paradigmatic solutions that emerge from it. “The convenient reverse logic of our time,” according to John Kenneth Galbraith, is that preferred solutions often seek out their own logic of the problem.¹⁴⁴ Illustratively, when asked how difficult it is to shift the conversation in Ohio from focusing on poor children to broader structural and economic issues, one think tank representative replied: “I think it depends on what you’re proffering up as the solution.” For every policy goal (such as *self-sufficiency*), there is an underlying logic, and that logic can encompass a number of other policy goals (such as *personal responsibility*, *self-reliance*). Though policy goals may change, preferred solutions do not necessarily.

Self-sufficiency as a policy goal is essential to understanding the *assumptions* and *adaptations* of the new paternalism. *Self-sufficiency* as it is currently used is a positive framing of a negative *intervening logic* within welfare provision – the logic of dependency. As a goal of welfare policy, it is an adaptation of that logic, so that the logic survives. However, the mere ubiquity with which it is used obscures the underlying logic, and therefore, the logic of the preferred policies.

This chapter focused on two ideational developments within welfare policymaking in Ohio: the competence assumption and the ‘animating idea’ of CAAs. The logic of dependency is powerful as a moral and administrative logic because it creates space for two contradictory but existing conceptions of human nature: economically maximizing and dutiful-but-defeated. The former contains market competence, the latter does not. We see that CAAs and the welfare rights movement presented two counter conceptions of human competence through program participation and civic

¹⁴⁴ John Kenneth Galbraith, “A View from the Stands,” 1986. Quoted in Mark Rank, “Toward a New Understanding of American Poverty,” *Poverty, Justice, and Community Lawyering* 20 (2006): 17-51. 17.

and political action, such as in the March for Adequate Welfare. However, these conceptions of competence shifted to reflect the dependency logic.

The logic of dependency is also a powerful frame because it presents welfare as a problem in and of itself, rather than poverty. It contains a very particular conception of what causes poverty. We see that CAAs were developed with a distinct animating idea – the notion of community empowerment through power and resources and the ambition to eliminate poverty. However, we observed a shift in their stated policy goal through the change of funding sources from EOA to CSBG. After OBRA, “a new consensus emerged” around work-centered initiatives, with conservatives arguing for requiring it, and liberals arguing for supporting it. Discourse analysis of congressional hearings on OBRA confirms that “‘Self-sufficiency’ was the touchstone of this consensus.”¹⁴⁵

We then see that *self-sufficiency* as a goal is institutionalized as the logic of dependency intervenes through recent developments of the case-management system. This system embodies the fundamental assumptions of the new paternalism – administrative solutions to poverty, behavioral assessments of those in poverty, ostensible colorblindness, and a focus on meeting recipient obligations for fear of violating the “self-sufficiency contract” and losing supportive benefits – creating the conditions under which the sorting mechanism most effectively operates.

I argue that *self-sufficiency* as a concept used today in public policy is narrow because it derives itself from the logic of dependency. This logic ties the ‘bare necessities’ – income, food, housing, etc. – to work as a primary obligation, ignoring the community sufficiency that must be available for individuals to “live, learn, and work.” While we see that there are attempts to broaden the notion of self-sufficiency, there is danger in maintaining the underlying logic. While *self-sufficiency* can be an admirable goal, we can be skeptical when it is used to justify major reforms in welfare programs that emerge from the same logic as previous efforts of retrenchment.

¹⁴⁵ Guetzkow, “Beyond Deservingness,” 190.

Part II

The Well-Worn Grooves of Work and Welfare in Ohio

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Introduction to Part II.

The Perpetual Promise of Work Requirements

At the end of William Julius Wilson’s seminal *The Truly Disadvantaged* is a prescient retort to Mead’s advocacy for workfare. At the time, Mead’s writings had already been considered by policy analysts as worthy of serious debate,¹ and his focus on “reciprocal obligation” would end up having a “demonstrable impact on public debate and social policy.”² Recognizing Mead’s approach as a likely effective set of arguments, Wilson argued, “the combining of liberal [targeted employment] and conservative approaches [ending welfare dependency and strengthening work ethic] does not, of course, change the fact that the new-style workfare programs hardly represent a fundamental shift from the traditional approaches to poverty in America.”³

When asked whether the debates over poverty had changed during his thirty-year tenure as director of OACAA, Phil Cole exclaimed, “Not really because the problems don’t change!” Many of the other interviewees have been active since the mid-1980s and confirmed Cole’s frustration. Jack Frech told me that even though the choruses of policy debate are the same – whether or not we address poverty by focusing on behavior – how the state treats poor people has only gotten worse, with no new solutions being proposed. Regarding work requirements, for example, Frech emphasized the mistake academics and policy analysts make when claiming any novel perspectives on them as the solution: “The idea that a work requirement will make [welfare] have public support is ridiculous. It has always had a work requirement.”⁴

¹ Laurence Lynn, Jr., “Book Reviews: *Beyond Entitlement*,” *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 6, no. 3 (1987): 451-495. 456.

² Laurence Lynn, Jr., “Rejoinder to Mead,” *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 9, no 3 (1990): 405-408. 406.

³ Wilson, *The Truly Disadvantaged*, 162.

⁴ Follow up interview with Jack Frech, 10 April 2019.

The promise of work requirements has always been, in part, *perception based*.⁵ If people see the poor working for their benefits, then the public will more likely support these benefits. President Clinton made the case (or presented the hope) that requiring recipients to work would do away with the ugly classist and racist stereotypes that are generally hurled at them. Dick Morris, Clinton's advisor, conducted a survey in which the first group was asked about anti-poverty program spending and the second group "was asked about the same programs but told to assume that 'the president has signed a bill requiring welfare recipients to work and setting time limits.'" Under that assumption, support for new spending rose ten to fifteen points.⁶ David Ellwood, Clinton's ASPE, hailed the 91-percent public support for the elements of the Clinton proposal, which included schooling, childcare, government provided jobs, but also work requirements. Despite the public support, this welfare reform package was never passed, and the conditionality that made it through was stringent – time limits, family caps, work requirements, and potential full-family sanctions for violating them.⁷

However, reading the history of welfare before the 1996 reforms illustrates how unlikely it is for the public to support welfare simply because of strict work requirements. As the author E.J. Dionne once said to Arthur Brooks: "When welfare reform was passed back in the '90s, there were a lot of people who said, 'okay, we're not going to hear about welfare cheats anymore because all these people are going to have to work.'" And yet we get the same thing back again. *It's as if the work requirement was never put in the welfare bill.*"⁸ The case study of Ohio makes this point clearly: each iteration of work requirements since the early 1960s proves this promise false. Appeals to work, work ethic,

⁵ Public perception is no doubt influenced by perceptions of morality, dependence, competence, gender roles, and racial stratification, as we saw in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2.3.

⁶ DeParle, *American Dream*, 115.

⁷ David Ellwood, "Welfare Reform as I Knew It," *American Prospect* (May-June 1996), <https://prospect.org/article/welfare-reform-i-knew-it-when-bad-things-happen-good-policies>. Ellwood later argued that he never intended the work requirement to be cruel, but for the proper investments to be made in training, education, and child-care. In his view, potentially effective paternalism was undone by spending cuts.

⁸ Barack Obama, Robert Putnam, E.J. Dionne, and Arthur Brooks, "Conversation on Poverty at Georgetown University," 12 May 2015, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2015/05/12/remarks-president-conversation-poverty-georgetown-university>. Emphasis added.

and work effort are an enduring component of the broader discourses of whether or not an individual is deserving of aid – appearing in complaints of the perceived “idleness” of recently freed slaves⁹ and in contemporary stereotypes of the chiseler, welfare queen, and beach-bum.¹⁰

And yet, according to Michael Sosin, “the lesson of the Poor Law of 1601, the Poor Law Reform of 1834, indoor relief, the very early Charity Organization Societies, the WIN amendments of 1971 . . . , and work requirements in General Assistance programs around the nation” is that “enforcing rigid mandates [including work requirements] in welfare programs generally goes hand in hand with low participation rates in welfare programs and *high levels of unmet need*.”¹¹ As we saw in Chapter 2, Hacker considers this dynamic an “everyday” form of retrenchment:¹² a cycle in which work requirements are used as a *sorting mechanism* of the deserving from the undeserving poor; with the deserving poor pushed into low-wage jobs and the undeserving poor removed from assistance altogether. At the end of this process, the welfare state has failed to meet the population’s needs, reducing its legitimacy, and contributing to its decline. This is because (1) the sorting mechanism function is a manifestation and reinforcer of the distinction of deservingness inherent in employment-focused safety-net programs, and (2) even for those who remain on benefits, the conditions necessary for work requirements to effectively ensure self-sufficiency (e.g. job guarantees, higher wage work, child care and health care provision, resolution of benefit cliff issues) do not exist.

While Mead is only concerned with work requirements acting as this sorting mechanism, the reality is that those receiving benefits have never viewed welfare and work as poles of human activity,

⁹ As W.E.B. Du Bois, “On the Freedman’s Bureau,” *Atlantic*, March 1901, notes, and Linda Williams (2003) and Barbara Fields (1982) examine, this logic has been around for a long time. For examples of such language, see C. Mildred Thompson, “The Freedmen’s Bureau in Georgia in 1865-6,” *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 5, no. 1 (1921): 40-49. 43; George Winston, “The Relation of the White to the Negroes,” *AAPS* (1901): 105-118. 113.

¹⁰ See Liz Halloran, “Lobster Boy Looms Large in Food Stamp Debate,” *NPR: It’s All Politics*, 19 September 2013, <https://www.npr.org/sections/itsallpolitics/2013/09/19/223796325/lobster-boy-looms-large-in-food-stamp-debate>; Philippe Van Parijs, *Real Freedom for All* (New York: Oxford UP, 1998).

¹¹ Michael Sosin, “Reviewed Work(s): *Beyond Entitlement*,” *Social Service Review* 61, no. 1 (1987): 156-159. 159. Emphasis added.

¹² Hacker, “Privatizing Risk without Privatizing the Welfare State,” 246.

as illustrated in the chapters that follow. As Frech would say in the midst of Ohio's efforts to cut GA and develop OWF, "We need to look at welfare and work, as opposed to welfare or work."¹³ The poor are overwhelmingly working and have been, and many working poor move in and out of the system.¹⁴ In *Working But Poor*, Sar Levitan and Isaac Shapiro argue that the day-to-day existence of the working poor "undermines the truism that a commitment to the work ethic provides a road out of poverty."¹⁵ For areas with high unemployment or for areas with a plethora of low-wage, part-time, contract jobs, the notion that those in poverty lack a "work ethic" is a cruel joke.¹⁶

There has, however, been a fundamental shift in the role of work requirements in welfare policymaking and their surrounding discourse since the 1960s. Prior to the 1960s, work 'requirements' were overwhelmingly voluntary, used as mechanisms for limited employment for men to work off benefits on public projects. Most policy debates revolved around the question of benefits cliffs – whether people have the incentive to work if benefits are clawed back at the same or a faster rate than their employment earnings – and general benefits levels. These questions assumed, for the most part, that the desire to work was present, and the need for work to provide an improved standard of living.

Since the 1960s, work requirements have become mandatory mechanisms by which men and women are pushed off the rolls and, if lucky, into low-wage private employment. Work is viewed as the end of the welfare system, rather than the means through which people achieve self-sufficiency. According to Mead, "the distinctive purpose of workfare is to raise work effort among the dependent"¹⁷ – i.e., participation in an administrative process involving registration, search, training,

¹³ Ronald Sylvester. "Director's Goal is to ensure living-wage jobs," *Athens Messenger*, 1993.

¹⁴ Mark Rank, *One Nation, Underprivileged* (New York: Oxford UP, 2004), finds that the majority of "Americans who encounter poverty experience a short-term spell of impoverishment, while only a small minority experience poverty for an extended period," but, "rather than being an event occurring among a small minority of the U.S. population, poverty is an experience that touches a clear majority of Americans at some point during their adult lifetimes," pp. 95, 92, respectively.

¹⁵ Sar Levitan and Isaac Shapiro, *Working but Poor* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1987), 128.

¹⁶ Steve Robb, "Work Ethic' a cruel joke for many Athens Countians," *Athens Messenger*, 1 January 1989.

¹⁷ Mead, "Should Workfare be Mandatory?"

accepting jobs, reporting to a work site, etc. – as opposed to reducing poverty. Furthermore, those activities, such as education, job training, job searches, which used to be counted as work activities continue to be limited.¹⁸ While the debates about benefit cliffs continue, especially as they relate to medical coverage cutoffs, debates over the levels of benefits themselves have been overwhelmed by the need to advocate for program survival.¹⁹

Another fundamental shift has been with the types of programs to which work requirements are applied. Predominantly, their application was on cash assistance programs – federal programs like Aid to Dependent Children (ADC)²⁰ and state programs like GA. However, contemporary efforts have seen work requirements applied to and strengthened for in-kind benefits such as food assistance (SNAP) and health insurance (Medicaid). These benefits, considered by many to be prerequisites to a healthy workforce, are becoming conditional on work.

However, work requirements are not just policy amendments or developments. They are part of a political agenda which emphasizes the depoliticization of poverty by focusing on its administration, narrow conceptions of competence, if not its rejection, and post-racial appeals to work (i.e. an emphasis on obligations, not rights). According to Peck, in a comprehensive article on the political and economic power of workfare discourse, “part political ideology, part policy programme, part moral crusade, *workfare* lies at the emblematic centre of the contemporary attack on the principles and practices of the welfare state.”²¹ Therefore, it is important to place work requirements and their promise within the broader contours – welfare orders and identity cleavages – of APD.

¹⁸ The DRA reauthorizing TANF established stricter worker participation rules, limiting the activities that could be counted as work and requiring states to verify work and participation in activities.

¹⁹ Interview with Phil Cole.

²⁰ ADC was a federal program but used finance sharing between the state, local, and federal governments. It was created in 1935, under Title IV of the Social Security Act of 1935. AFDC became the common name in 1950 when aid was allowed for caregivers, but newspapers maintained using ADC. See ASPE, “A Brief History of the AFDC Program,” *US DHHS*, June 1998.

²¹ Peck, “*Workfare*,” 133.

II.1.i Historical Developments of Work Requirements

Utilizing original archival material and contemporary interviews, Part II of the thesis traces these developments and consistencies of work requirements in the conservative state of Ohio. As we saw in Chapter 1, new paternalists promise that work requirements give citizens full standing, matter much more for moral development than economic gain, and improve the public perception of welfare. Through an historical examination of this policy, the discursive shifts surrounding its application and justification, and the context of state policy surrounding its developments, Part II argues that work requirements (the paradigmatic policy of the new paternalism) represent a *consistent* policy development from the logic of dependency, focused on cutting welfare rolls through their function as a *sorting mechanism*. As they are strengthened, work requirements contribute to paternalism's ability to be an *adaptive mechanism* of welfare state retrenchment, the ends of conservatism.

My interviews with individuals involved in anti-poverty work in Ohio emphasize that the contemporary perspectives on debates over work and welfare have long lineages. To illustrate, I focus on distinct time periods and gubernatorial administrations in Ohio which overlap with eras of federal welfare activity. These governors are long-serving, of both major political parties, and involved in extensive state-level debates over welfare. Throughout these periods – including decades prior to PRWORA – we see the expression of paternalism's assumptions – the building blocks of Mead's argument. Ohio illustrates how these elements are strengthened and contested at various points throughout the long history, sometimes crowded out by oppositional discourses that disappear by the 1990s. As the assumptions gain strength over time, they create the policy and discursive conditions under which the sorting mechanism most effectively operates. Much of the contestation is over the value of work, services considered work supports, and the competence of the poor.

The expressions of paternalism's assumptions chronicled in this thesis occur alongside changing expectations regarding female employment and the scope of state-approved dependency.

Single mothers – demanding both employment and protection – were no longer expected to focus on family responsibility in the home, but rather work in the low-wage private market. Thus, work requirements – as a counter to the rights claims for aid in the 1960s – began to grow in their appeal to address dependency. Throughout the empirical chapters, while I focus on the ‘workfare’ elements of paternalism, I draw out the continuing disputes over reproductive and family-focused paternalism, reminiscent of the Poor Law’s ‘old paternalism.’

Chapter 4 examines the years in which the new paternalism as an ideological strand is *latent* in welfare discourse and *emergent* through the first mandatory work requirements on GA: the long War on Poverty (1963-1971), during which James Rhodes (Republican) was governor. Chapter 5 examines the years in which paternalism is *prevalent*, due in part to the writings and advocacy of Lawrence Mead, leading to *contestations* by the Left over work requirements and benefit levels: the Reagan Era of retrenchment (1983-1991), during which Richard Celeste (Democrat) was governor.²² Chapter 6 examines the years in which paternalism is *dominant* as the framework for public policy, contributing to the triumph of the ‘welfare as self-sufficiency’ order: the long era of welfare reform (1991-1998), during which George Voinovich (Republican) was governor. Chapter 7 examines the expansion of the new paternalism in the new century to in-kind benefits once considered pre-requisites to work: the long contemporary efforts (2002-2019). Table II.1 presents a summary of these findings.

According to Dara Strolovich, “Historians have come to apply the descriptor ‘long’ to decades, centuries, and events as a way to complicate periodization schemes and make them more accurate.”²³ Through these ‘long’ classifications, we can better focus on both the continuity of paternalist efforts between the periods, and the relative strength of this ideological strand within the respective periods.

²² The 1970s are not covered, because, besides the brief Democratic Administration of John Gilligan (1971-1974), Rhodes’ third (1975-1978) and fourth (1979-1982) terms contained themes regarding welfare consistent with his first and second. Tom Diemer, et al., *James A. Rhodes: Ohio Colossus* (Kent, OH: Kent State UP, 2014).

²³ Strolovich, “#MeToo as Policy Feedback.” This designation is from the *Annales d'histoire économique et sociale* school of thought, which emphasizes long-term trends in social history.

Debates within states are continuous, both anticipating and reacting to external shocks of federal stimulation. As Weir makes clear, studying the policy and political trajectories within states helps to identify the non-dominant discourses and ideologies, which may, in the end, undermine federal level efforts. She writes, “historically-specific features of state politics and structure are essential for understanding the way states” influence the trajectory of political and ideological orders.²⁴ While this does not aim to be a complete account of welfare policymaking in Ohio between the early 1960s and the present day, it does provide the main connections²⁵ and “well-worn grooves”²⁶ of political discourse about work requirements.

Michael Katz described the “well-worn grooves” as “three historic preoccupations... that pulled attention away from the forces that generated poverty”: classifying poor people into the deserving and undeserving, identifying the effects of welfare on their behavior, and defining the guardrails of social obligation.²⁷ Specifically regarding “workfare” advocacy, Desmond King identifies three historic commonalities: public policy must instill a work ethic, “there is an assumption that indolence is a preferred lifestyle among the unemployed,” and workfare must accommodate the market system.²⁸ This thesis does not provide original argumentation on the grooves themselves, but it does provide an APD framework as the ground into which the grooves are hewn, and original material with an original case study as the empirical evidence by which the grooves are polished. Seen in its entirety, the material presented in the chapters that follow illustrates the growth of paternalism’s efforts since the War on Poverty era – its work requirements, rejection of competence, administrative emphasis, and postracial appeal – as a mechanism of welfare state retrenchment.

²⁴ Weir, “States, Race, and the Decline of New Deal Liberalism,” 159.

²⁵ Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 900-1992* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1992), 36.

²⁶ Katz, *The Undeserving Poor*, 216.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ King, *In the Name of Liberalism*, 259.

Table II.1: Summary of findings from the case study of Ohio

Paternalism's Assumptions	1963-1971 [Latent/Emergent]	1983-1991 [Prevalent/Contested]	1991-1998 [Dominant]	2002-2019 [Expanded]
The competence of those in poverty cannot be assumed <i>[abolition assumes market competence]</i>	- Welfare rights efforts exemplify civic and political competence - Fear of fraud and abuse; Incentive-focused reforms stress market competence [Latent]	- Welfare advocates argue for higher payments, assuming competence - Democrats rely on market and incentive-focused reforms [Contested]	- OWF work requirements rely on the rejection of the competence assumption - GA cuts assumes market competence [Dominant]	Work requirement expansion relies on the rejection of the competence assumption [Expanded]
Work is the greatest obligation of citizens <i>[abolition agrees private employment is the ends for citizens]</i>	- Mandatory work requirement for public assistance jobs (GA) - Tied to conversations of employment barriers [Emergent]	- Local opposition to work demonstrations (ADC and GA); resistance wanes - Advocacy for support services considered pre-requisites to work [Contested/Prevalent]	- Contractual focus of work requirements - Discourse focused on ending dependency and finding employment regardless of material outcome [Dominant]	- Work requirements expanded to Medicaid - Exemptions reduced in SNAP - Support services considered conditional on work [Expanded]
Administrative solutions to apolitical problems <i>[abolition rejects the administrative state]</i>	Welfare reorganization used to counter political efforts, resulting in financial constraints and county-level bureaucratic backbone for paternalism [Emergent]	- Counties continue to develop their work programs - Citizens urge more administrative oversight for welfare recipients' purchases [Emergent]	- Administrative requirements such as work participation rates create bureaucratic issues, push many off caseloads - LEAP and similar requirements build administrative burden [Dominant]	- Cuts in benefits require shifts to other programs, discretionary at the county level - Requirements to reduce 'entitlement dependency' increase administrative burdens [Dominant]
Interventions are postracial/colorblind <i>[abolition is in the same alliance]</i>	News coverage of the multiracial efforts fails to address racial disparities; Cleveland often in contest with Rhodes; race-neutral finance sharing burdens Cleveland [Emergent]	Public discourse reflects biased understandings of the racial composition of the poor in Ohio, distinguishing between 'welfare' and 'assistance to the poor' [Prevalent]	- Continued disparity in approval of 'welfare' and 'assistance to the poor' programs - Contestations between Administration and Cleveland over GA [Dominant]	- Initial SNAP exemptions biased in favor of white, rural poor; through colorblind legalese - Race-conscious advocacy challenged within 'egalitarian' order [Expanded]

Chapter 4.

Paternalism Latent and Emergent

The First Rhodes Administration [1963-1971] – Welfare Rights and Welfare Administration

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The Civil Rights and War on Poverty legislation of the 1960s resulted in the single greatest expansion of the welfare state since the New Deal. They also opened up access to Black Americans who had been caught in the “policy paradox institutionalized in the Progressive Era,” which the New Deal failed to solve. This paradox was one in which “the power of the national state successfully expanded in the domain of welfare policies, yet in the domain of civil rights, it either atrophied or was so misused that it was eroded.”¹ Forceful federal efforts in the 1960s attempted to resolve this paradox.² However, as Margaret Weir argues, states “were not part of the New Deal regime,” and do not follow the same conventional narrative of progressive reforms or discourses, which chronicles that “the New Deal centralized politics and built new central state capacities; and the Great Society overreached, provoking backlash.”³ In some states, the premises of a backlash were already latent.

The 1960s in Ohio were the age in which welfare rights came into stark contestation with welfare administration – organizational restructuring, devolution, burden-sharing of finances, and the tinkering of incentive-focused thresholds. As discussed in Chapter 3, welfare rights brought to the forefront of public consciousness the identity of the welfare recipient and the poor. It provided challenges to the conceptions of political and civic competence that were present in the War on Poverty and associated organizing efforts. However, aside from a national level effort for a guaranteed income, most of the visible contestations in Ohio were over increasing the level of benefits to meet 100-percent of the minimum standard set by the state in 1959 and changing ADC standards to allow clients to earn additional income without it being deducted from allowances.⁴ The welfare rights efforts were focused on the level of cash assistance being provided and work incentives, in the midst of budget constraints and ongoing concern over how that money was being spent. For the welfare

¹ Eileen McDonagh, “The ‘Welfare Rights State’ and the ‘Civil Rights State,’” *Studies in American Political Development* 7 (1993): 225-274. 270.

² King, “Forceful federalism against American Racial Inequality.”

³ Weir, “States, Race, and the Decline of New Deal Liberalism,” 171.

⁴ Levenson, “30 Welfare Marchers Reach Medina on Blistered Feet.”

marchers, the issue was always about jobs for those who could work, because they believed that people already had the will and the competence *to* work.

For conservatives opposed to these efforts,⁵ the issue was the choice people make of welfare over work. So, the 1960s saw the imposition of the state's first mandatory work requirement, an opening salvo in the struggle between the rights framework of the 1960s and the obligations framework of the 1980s. In addition, the elements of welfare administration, while anathema to libertarian conservatives such as Murray, became the foundation for Mead's new paternalism. We see important parallels between the efforts in Ohio in the 1960s, when paternalism was a real but subnational policy paradigm, and in the 1990s, when the new paternalism was paradigmatic federally.

While federally the 1960s were a period of liberation,⁶ this Chapter illustrates that the assumptions of the new paternalism (fundamental to Mead's eventual line of argument), latent in U.S. welfare policy, emerged. This Chapter proceeds as follows. First, I examine paternalism's assumption that work is the greatest civic obligation through the state's first mandatory work requirement. Then I examine the discourse surrounding the public perception of the poor, which highlights the belief that work requirements are a sorting mechanism, separating the fraudulent few from the truly needy. Second, I examine the discourse on competence as it relates to the state's incentive- and market-focused agenda. Third, I examine the colorblind nature of these policies, despite the inherent multi-racial context to the welfare rights efforts. Fourth, I examine the Rhodes Administration's emphasis on welfare administration, which was used to depoliticize the poverty problem and create financial constraints with more bureaucratic burdens. Finally, I examine ways in which paternalism was already a powerful set of assumptions, most emblematic within reproductive rights and the gendered framework of ADC.

⁵ There are many critiques of welfare policy from social control theorists of the political Left.

⁶ Robin, *The Reactionary Mind*.

4.1 The First Mandatory Work Requirement

In 1963, prior to the onset of the War on Poverty, Ohio implemented its own “work-for-relief” obligation, requiring anyone seeking relief from the state to work in public works projects or engage in a retraining program.⁷ State welfare director Denver White⁸ argued that the requirement “would reduce poor relief chiseling and slash relief costs,” in addition to giving counties the residual benefits of whatever work was done by those seeking relief.⁹ The catalytic concerns were welfare fraud and cost to the taxpayer.

Programs facilitating able-bodied men on relief rolls to work off their benefits had existed in some form in many counties since the 1940s but had been overwhelmingly voluntary. Some felt that the 1963 law making them mandatory was redundant because at the time of its passage, about three-fourths of Ohio’s eighty-eight counties used relief recipients for public work projects.¹⁰ The Allen County welfare director, for example, frustratingly remarked that the county had already had a work relief program for ten years.¹¹

In stark contrast to work-requirements in later years, these were tied to a guarantee for work, even if that work was not reliable, permanent, or paid at market value. The responsibility of employment rested equally upon the state – to provide – and the individual receiving relief – to comply.¹² The *Lima News* reported,

⁷ Robert Burdock and O.F. Knippenburg, “Work-for-Relief Bill Passed by Ohio Senate,” *Citizen-Journal*, 29 March 1963.

⁸ Denver White, from Athens County, was Rhodes’ first State Welfare Director, and the first county director when the Department was set up in 1947. His secretary started the collection that would become the Athens JFS County archive, from which this material comes. Frech, Email to Alexander Coccia.

⁹ “Work-for-Relief Law Urged,” *Columbus Dispatch*, 1963.

¹⁰ Robert Kaylor, “Relief Law Not ‘Make Work,’” *Daily Standard*, 20 August 1963.

¹¹ “Welfare Program under New Laws,” *Lima News*, 15 August 1963.

¹² Across the country, mandatory work relief was focused on providing government jobs to the “unemployable” jobless who had been removed from federal programs. However, these were not the full-fledged government jobs programs which had existed in the 1930s – construction and repair of public property, public sector sustained employment, public arts support, and production of goods for other benefit recipients. The 1930s programs were voluntary and paid at an above-poverty rate. See Nancy Rose, “Work Relief in the 1930s and the Origins of the Social Security Act,” *Social Service Review* 63, no. 1 (1989): 63-91. 84-86.

The work relief program on the county level is required to serve a “useful public purpose” and not interfere with, or displace regular employes [sic].... The county department is required to provide sufficient work relief projects on local government property. Places which receive work relief in Allen County include the children’s home, the county home, janitorial service at Memorial Hall, the Lima street and sewer departments, the county airport and the fairgrounds.¹³

Even in 1963, some counties “expressed concern that if no work can be found for able-bodied relief recipients their state funds will be cut off.”¹⁴ The state welfare department responded that special “consideration will be made if it is found suitable projects cannot be created.”¹⁵

In addition to concern that jobs would not be available, there were also worries that individuals would be required to perform “unnecessary tasks just to qualify for benefits.”¹⁶ In response, White emphasized that the projects for recipients must have a public purpose – such as trimming county roads, cleaning up parks, cutting brush, and helping janitors at county buildings¹⁷ – and that people may be exempt if they are actively seeking work through the state employment service.¹⁸ In addition, seasonal job availability led the state to cutback required work from four to three days a week each spring for those recipients already working four days per week.¹⁹ Relievers ultimately engaged in mandatory low-wage work for the city, doing the “type of job that takes a lot of people, and that we can’t afford to do with our own people,” said the general supervisor of Dayton parks.²⁰ The state forced individuals who lacked capital, to provide labor for public assistance that, if placed at market value, would be nowhere near the type of pay they would receive for the job.

In 1965, State Rep. Anthony Russo (D-Cleveland) sought an investigation into the work-relief programs to “correct any evils or abuses if they exist” and planted the seeds for subsidized *private*

¹³ “Welfare Program under New Laws.”

¹⁴ Kaylor, “Relief Law Not ‘Make Work.’” See also “Work for Relief Checks,” *Citizen-Journal*, 22 May 1963. (Edit.)

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ “Work Relief is an Old Story in 74 of Ohio’s 88 Counties,” *Plain Dealer*, 15 May 1963.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Kaylor, “Relief Law Not ‘Make Work.’”

¹⁹ “Welfare Program Work Week Cut to Three Days,” *Journal Herald*, 29 April 1965.

²⁰ Walter Gray, “Relievers Put to Work to Develop Good Habits,” *Journal Herald*, 23 February 1965.

employment. He argued, “we could develop some kind of program where private industry could employ some of the men now on relief, perhaps part-time, which in itself would give them an incentive to try to become employed and get off relief.”²¹ These ideas, however, did not take into consideration the barriers to consistent employment that welfare recipients face, such as the fear of being fired for being found out as a recipient. One recipient noted: “Some employers won’t hire you because they think if you are on welfare you must be worthless. Others don’t want to bother with filling out the welfare forms or having the welfare workers calling to get information.”²²

However, the Rhodes Administration claimed that the work requirement was a success because the initial policy goals – inculcation of work ethic, demonstration of work effort, and reduction in welfare caseloads – were broadly met. On *work ethic*, Montgomery County administrators claimed that those subject to the requirement were put to work in city and county departments “to develop good work habits, attitudes and morale, and to prevent the deterioration of these virtues.”²³ While there were about the same number of men available for work in 1960 as 1964 in Montgomery County, the number of men in the program jumped from an average of 95 to 200 per month, respectively. Those who refused to attend had their relief check reduced based on hours missed.²⁴ In Cuyahoga County, 2,100 individuals worked on 76 different county projects, and an administrator noted that absenteeism was high until it was clear that the benefits checks would not come.²⁵

On *work effort*, in 1965, Lucas County welfare recipients set a work record for time and attendance, refuting “the general theme that welfare recipients are lazy. If given the opportunity, the average welfare recipient will demonstrate that he wants to work.”²⁶ On *caseload reduction*, between

²¹ Richard Maher, “Legislature Urged to Probe Work-Relief Programs,” *Cleveland Press*, 12 January 1965.

²² James Adams, “Man Who Wants to Work Penalized,” *Cincinnati Post and Times-Star*, 17 March 1966.

²³ Gray, “Reliefers Put to Work to Develop Good Habits.”

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Faith Corrigan, “Local Welfare Scene Saw Quiet Changes in Past Year,” *Plain Dealer*, 5 January 1964. There was likely a delay between policy implementation and awareness by recipients.

²⁶ “County welfare recipients set work record,” *Toledo Times*, 16 February 1965.

October 1962 and 1963, the state's relief rolls dropped by 21,000. On this outcome measure of dependency, White gave some credit to the improved economic climate but added "that the administration's 'work for relief' law and a general tightening up of welfare administration [had] helped too."²⁷ However, White did not acknowledge that "when the state cut its support to county welfare operation from 50 to 40 percent... localities put" 10,407 people on the federally-supported ADC.²⁸

Work requirements were also relevant to the *federally* aided programs utilized by Ohio. In 1964, the state required Aid to Dependent Children of the Unemployed (ADCU) parents to have worked at least thirteen weeks in the last two-years to be eligible, ultimately cutting aid to many children.²⁹ Those who were on relief for more than two years and teenage parents who had not worked one year were ineligible.³⁰ These requirements faced instant backlash from welfare administrators who argued that it removed benefits from the deserving poor, for whom it would be difficult to prove past employment in odd jobs.³¹ At the end of 1964, the state sought to revise the law to eliminate the thirteen-week requirement. White said, "The bill would encourage the continuation of this trend to utilize federally aided assistance programs to a greater extent and to bring Ohio's relief load down to the level of other comparable states and result in more adequate standards and less cost to the taxpayer of Ohio."³² While there was a clear indication that 'dependency' in the early 1960s was viewed as a moral problem, the deeper concern was in the cost to the taxpayer and the state, which is why the administration would seek to shift the burden to the counties and the federal government.

²⁷ Richard Zimmerman, "Relief Roll Drop Credited to Economy," *Morning Journal*, 31 October 1963.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Bob Modic, "Work Rule Cuts Aid to Children," *Cleveland Press*, 1 April 1964.

³⁰ "Relief Rolls Being Cut by Program," *Bucyrus Telegraph-Forum*, 15 January 1964; "Claimants to Work for benefits under new relief program," *Daily Times*, 26 March 1964.

³¹ Wink Hess, "ADCU Effectiveness Depends on Policy, Welfare Officials Say," *Citizen-Journal*, 20 January 1964.

³² Howard Thompson, "White Seeks Revision of Ohio Welfare," *Columbus Dispatch*, 23 September 1964.

4.1.i Comparative Welfare Reform Efforts

Ohio's work-for-relief law was no doubt controversial, but it was not unique. Ohio's efforts can be compared to other programs put forth by New York (NY) and Pennsylvania (PA). Given the choice architecture for these states, we can examine briefly the paths taken in more stringent and lenient directions, respectively.

Ohio was following – albeit cautiously and with less expressed animosity for the poor – a welfare reform agenda in Newburgh, NY, that caused national controversy. City manager Joseph Mitchell stoked racist and classist fears claiming that “the ‘dregs of humanity’ were migrating to his city from the South in order to collect welfare.”³³ While Mitchell claimed that race played no role in his welfare reform efforts, he cited the influx of non-White persons and the White-flight that occurred as tantamount to the removal of a productive citizenry.³⁴ Mitchell rejected the use of state money in order to implement a revised welfare code, including a work-for-relief law, which included forty-hours per week for able-bodied men; a monthly reporting requirement to the police station to confirm work status; a family cap on unwed mothers; and a replacement of cash assistance with in-kind vouchers for food, clothing, and rent. The NY Supreme Court ultimately struck down the entire program in December 1961. While the law's impacts were limited due to recipient refusal to comply and the court decisions, it is considered by many as an opening salvo in the battle over workfare.³⁵

The State of Pennsylvania tried the opposite approach. PA raised monthly payments, salaries and educational support for caseworkers, instituted job placement supports, and cash bonuses for attending school. The welfare director explained the logic: “By raising the grants to relief cases we'll eventually get more people off public assistance. You give them too little and they can't afford to

³³ Gordon, “Who Deserves Help? Who Must Provide?,” 21.

³⁴ Stephanie Rolph, “Courting Conservatism,” in Laura Gifford, et al., eds., *The Right Side of the Sixties* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 21–40.

³⁵ Sam Roberts, “Spirit of Newburgh Past Haunts Political Present,” *New York Times*, 9 March 1992, <https://www.nytimes.com/1992/03/09/nyregion/metro-matters-spirit-of-newburgh-past-haunts-political-present.html>.

send their kids to school.” The director argued that job training programs “just crack the surface of the job problem for relievers since it mainly benefits those people who are already literate and healthy enough to work.” So, in addition, they ramped up job finding efforts, placing 5,200 recipients in jobs, which decreased the rolls by 21,000, including recipients and their dependents.³⁶

As paternalism would gain strength in the decades prior to PRWORA, by the 1990s, work requirements were sold to the American public as a necessary political compromise or a fundamental solution to the dependency problem. Their underlying logic, however, shows that getting people off the rolls only matters to paternalists so much as the private market continues to work as is, the welfare state becomes smaller, and the conservative socioeconomic power is maintained. However, this brief comparative section shows other approaches – the implication being that paternalism’s assumptions are not necessary for reforming welfare, or even for “getting people off the rolls.” PA exemplifies a different set of assumptions guiding these efforts.

³⁶ John Lawrence, “Cutting Relief Rolls: How One State Expands Welfare Now in Hopes of Long-Range Savings,” *Wall Street Journal*, February 1965.

4.2 Public Discourse: Work Requirements as a Sorting Mechanism

Despite the drop in people receiving assistance, despite the addition of work requirements to the receipt of public assistance, the editorial discourse echoed those conceptions of deservingness³⁷ that would be present in welfare policymaking for the next fifty-years. However, the editorials also reflect a time in which, as Jennifer Mittelstadt argues, debates were at least nuanced.³⁸ Much of the commentary follows a similar pattern: (1) express a deep moral disgust for fraudulent use of public funds on welfare; (2) acknowledge that most receiving welfare are not chiselers; and (3) urge the public to focus on the real issues of employment. The first stage reflects the basis for paternalism; the second contests its appeal; and the third emphasizes work but not simply as the greatest obligation. Just as the work requirement of the 1960s was tied to guaranteed employment or exemption, welfare discourses tended to be tied to the broader economy and availability of jobs.

The fear of welfare fraud is a consistent theme. It had played a role in the 1962 election in which Rhodes overwhelmingly defeated incumbent Democrat Michael DiSalle. During the campaign, DiSalle attempted to push back on the perpetual challenge with framing poverty policy debates: “Even if a few persons get welfare assistance who aren’t really needy, the whole program becomes suspect in the minds of the public.”³⁹ However, with an eye towards the election, he promised that information on such fraudulent cases would be collected and investigated by his Administration.⁴⁰

³⁷ Guetzkow, “Beyond Deservingness,” found that “‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’ are not categories that politicians and bureaucrats use when devising social policy. Deservingness is instead a second-order analytic tool used by researchers to help make sense of social policies – their scope, their generosity, and their political appeal,” p. 174. The editorials featured throughout this thesis also utilize other language as the first-order analysis.

³⁸ Jennifer Mittelstadt, *From Welfare to Workfare* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

³⁹ “DiSalle Calls for Expanded State Welfare Program,” *Columbus Dispatch*, 30 October 1962. Those interviewed for this thesis readily admit the same. According to one welfare reform veteran, “There’s also the other group of population that don’t need [welfare]... these are the welfare bums – they’re all taking advantage of the situation. Do I think it’s a large segment of society? Absolutely not. Do I have to look very far to find it? No. You could talk to any of our workers, and they’re all going to tell you about the person who abuses and takes advantage.” A representative from Jackson-Vinton CA noted that some people feel entitled to assistance but “don’t always take the initiative to do the things they need to do to help overcome the obstacles.”

⁴⁰ “DiSalle Calls for Expanded State Welfare Program.”

Before there were ‘welfare queens,’ there were chiselers⁴¹ – ‘good-for-nothing people’: “If a chiseler of any character has a friend it can only be another chiseler seeking ideas for his own use, for every decent individual is filled with disgust when he sees or learns of someone trying to ‘get something for nothing.’”⁴² One editorial illustrates the prevalence of racial-, gender- and geographic-based conceptions of deservingness: “Most citizens are justifiably resentful when public funds are distributed to malingerers, ne’er-do-wells and unemployables. [While] abuses of the rules occur,... abuse must be proved within the rules. It cannot be alleged or proved on the basis that a recipient is or is not white, male, married, illegitimate or born in Kentucky.”⁴³

To combat misperceptions, Delaware County Welfare Director Eugene Noggle emphasized that those on welfare are most subject to the whims of the economy, because they “are the last to be hired and first to be laid off when unemployment rises”; that the level of assistance is nowhere near the level to be “living high on the hog”; and that much of the welfare allowances go directly to landlords or vendors rather than in cash to the individual.⁴⁴ He wrote, “there are no more lazy people on welfare than there are working in any local industry. These people are not on relief because they want to be, and most of them prefer to feel that they have earned the money they receive from the state and county.”⁴⁵ During the work-relief debates, an intensive check by the welfare department found possible fraud in less than one-percent of the six-hundred and fifty-five ADC cases.⁴⁶

Despite the concern over chiselers, there was an acknowledgement that it was a small minority of an otherwise needy population. Rhodes’ 1962 campaign focused on the deserving and the truly needy, and framed those in poverty as “helpless victims of one of the great crises of our times. They

⁴¹ There is a shift from focusing on men to women, as seen by these stereotypes.

⁴² “Welfare and Chiselers,” *Springfield Daily News*, 8 May 1963. (Edit.)

⁴³ “New Relief Rules,” *Plymouth Advertiser*, 5 September 1963. (Edit.)

⁴⁴ Mary Ross, “Work Required of Relief Recipients Here for Years,” *Delaware Gazette*, 4 June 1963.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ James Keenan, “Ohio ADC Frauds Low,” *Citizen-Journal*, 22 May 1963. One editorial emphasized that “the Internal Revenue Service... could come forward with considerably more startling examples of fraud than any that are likely to turn up in the field of public welfare.” “Let’s Keep Our Perspective,” *Cincinnati Enquirer*, 18 May 1963. (Edit.)

represent a vast, unproductive segment of our economy and we are required by the very spirit of the underlying beliefs of our system of government to care for them.”⁴⁷ One editorial argued that a concern over chiselers did not preclude sympathy or higher benefits: “while taxpayers are giving thought to the comparatively few dollars they may be saving by the elimination here and there of a few relief chiselers, they might also be giving mind to the fact that there are many on relief entitled to far better consideration... from the hands of their fellow Americans.”⁴⁸

When the discourse moved to the third element of the editorials, the emphasis was on work – how do people move into employment? Work was certainly viewed as central to the poverty problem. One contributor even tied the notion that one must work for his food back to Captain John Smith of Virginia.⁴⁹ However, here the discussion focused on work incentives and barriers to employment. Individuals stressed the need for rehabilitation and vocational training, where “men and women on public assistance are tested for potential skills,” along with transportation services to get people to Columbus for training.⁵⁰ One author discussed the need for economic growth that reaches low-skilled jobs and for adequate training for those who lack skills in an age of automation.⁵¹ One of the most recurring policy elements discussed are benefits cliffs, which disincentivize people from maximizing employment earnings because welfare benefits have high taper rates.⁵² Benefits cliffs were almost universally challenged by welfare advocates and administrators alike.⁵³ Advocates argued that wages were too low. Administrators argued that benefits were too high. Both agreed that benefits clawed back too quickly.

⁴⁷ Bob Modic, “Rhodes Declines to Visit Reliefers,” *Cleveland Record*, 26 March 1963. 3.

⁴⁸ “Welfare and Chiselers.”

⁴⁹ “No Work, No Relief Check,” August 1963. (Edit.)

⁵⁰ Ross, “Work Required of Relief Recipients Here for Years.”

⁵¹ “No Work, No Relief Check.” (Edit.)

⁵² Barr, *Economics of the Welfare State*, 199.

⁵³ Ross, “Work Required of Relief Recipients Here for Years.”

4.3 Incentives and the State Minimum Standard

“Pity all the unemployed, nothing could be done, but drop relief to 80% in 1961. Pity DiSalle, ‘ol Governor DiSalle, nothing could he do, but drop all grants ‘nother 5% in 1962. And then there came ol Gov’ner Rhodes, as saving as he could be, and dropped all grants to 70% in 1963... Pity the governor, poor ‘ol Rhoes, he’s in an awful fix, He only saved \$25 million bucks in 1966.”
– “Up and Down Ohio’s Roads” by the Marchers for Decent Welfare⁵⁴

The disparity at the heart of the marcher’s song was between the 1959 state minimum standard of need and the actual payments toward that minimum – 73-percent in 1966. In response to the welfare rights marchers, who urged 100-percent coverage, John McElroy, aide to Governor Rhodes, argued that (1) it was primarily a local responsibility to ensure that “welfare recipients are adequately clothed and fed”;⁵⁵ (2) the federal government should establish national minimum standards for welfare payments, which would show that Ohio is above the average in payments; and (3) welfare organizers should pressure the federal government to address benefit cliffs.⁵⁶

The discourse between 1965 and 1967 centered around this third issue,⁵⁷ whether benefits either *pay too much* or *claw back too quickly* as earnings go up so as to disincentivize work.⁵⁸ Ohio passed a law letting both GA (state program) and ADC (federal program) parents keep the money they earned (called an earned income disregard) to bring them up to 100-percent of the minimum standard, in order “to encourage able bodied welfare recipients toward self-sufficiency.”⁵⁹ Critics of the state law argued that recent GA cuts were a significant contributor to the disparity between the minimum

⁵⁴ East Side Community Union, “Up and Down Ohio’s Roads,” Walk for Decent Welfare Song Sheet, 20 June 1966.

⁵⁵ Tom LaRochelle, “Adequate Welfare May Mean Higher Local Taxes – White,” *Akron Beacon Journal*, 3 November 1966.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ See “An Incentive to Work,” *Journal Herald*, 27 March 1965. (Edit.); Robert Burdock, “Relief Incentive Bill Introduced,” *Citizen-Journal*, 18 February 1965; Columbus Bureau, “Welfare Work Bill introduced,” *Cincinnati Post and Times-Star*, 18 February 1965; “Don’t Kill Incentive,” *Cleveland Press*, 23 May 1967. (Edit.); Margaret Josten, “Self Help? It Doesn’t Pay,” *Cincinnati Enquirer*, 15 May 1965.

⁵⁸ The state’s focus rarely addressed the low starting level of the benefits themselves. At the time, a Hamilton County Juvenile Court judge called “Ohio’s welfare payments the chief cause of poverty.” Margaret Josten, “Incentive to Work Removes Families from Welfare,” *Cincinnati Enquirer*, 1 February 1966. Additionally, *limited* public opinion polls indicate that there was little support for raised welfare payments. Gene Jordan, “Fairgoers say truce is far from ceasefire,” *Columbus Dispatch*, August 1967; Gene Jordan, “Polls show people tired of rioting, welfare, Vietnam,” *Columbus Dispatch*, 20 August 1967; Gene Jordan, “Voters at Fair Oppose Paying more welfare,” *Columbus Dispatch*, 23 July 1967.

⁵⁹ Edson Whipple, “U.S. Curtails Work Incentive for Aid Cases,” *Toledo Blade*, 2 October 1965.

standard and the amount recipients received. They called the law a stop-gap measure “to be used while the state is operating under a minimum level of public assistance.”⁶⁰ The U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) agreed with this conclusion and blocked the rule change for ADC recipients, arguing that it was the state’s legal responsibility to raise payments to the minimum standard. After HEW’s decision, Ohio rescinded the approved rule for GA recipients as well, despite a successful trial in Cleveland. The state was concerned that there would end up being eighty-eight different payment levels across the state, a critique of the second-order devolution that would be a hallmark of the 1990s welfare reform.⁶¹

However, the GA rule was reapproved after significant backlash, despite the state’s aspiration not to discriminate between recipients of the state and federal programs.⁶² Rhodes did advocate federally for the earned income disregard to be raised, drafting a bipartisan resolution by the National Governor’s Conference in December 1966.⁶³ Rhodes requested that HEW approve a state demonstration to allow the earned income disregard under the Social Security Act, but HEW denied the request, acknowledging that it was working with Congress for a more permanent solution.⁶⁴ These incentives were eventually introduced through the Social Security Amendments of 1967, so that women could combine employment earnings and welfare benefits, while retaining health coverage. According to Orloff, “Although favorable to beneficiaries in the short run, this line of policy development continued to leave the employed poor and most two-parent families outside the umbrella of social protection, which in turn made AFDC politically vulnerable.... Adding to AFDC’s political vulnerability, its clientele was expanding to include more women of color.”⁶⁵

⁶⁰ James Adams, “Breadwinner Can’t Add to Relief Income,” *Cincinnati Post and Times-Star*, 16 March 1966.

⁶¹ “Where’s the Incentive?,” *Toledo Blade*, 9 October 1965. (Edit.)

⁶² Edson Whipple, “Relief Work Stand Shifted,” *Toledo Blade*, 30 December 1965; “Pro and Con Incentive,” *Toledo Blade*, 5 January 1966. (Edit.)

⁶³ “Welfare Aid Changes Urged by Governors,” *Columbus Dispatch*, 18 December 1966.

⁶⁴ “Incentive Work Plan Rejected,” *Plain Dealer*, 5 January 1967.

⁶⁵ Orloff, “Farewell to Maternalism?,” 35.

A focus on work incentives more closely resembles the Murray-esque understanding of market competence than the rejection of the competence assumption made by Mead. Ohioans' central concern was the behavior that would be incentivized by HEWs ruling. One editorial wrote, since "the government confiscates every dollar [a man] has gumption enough to go out and work for," this decision incentivizes welfare parents to set bad examples for their children and "makes a welfare client sneak, cheat and lie to add a few dollars to the family's income. Or it keeps him idle, a prisoner of 'the check.'" ⁶⁶ A project director in Cleveland agreed that such a policy "fails to encourage self-support and adds to the temptation to cheat in reporting earnings." ⁶⁷ For example, the *Akron Beacon Journal* recounted the story of Anna, "a 31-year-old Negro mother of five who has been on... ADC for about 10 years." Anna saved money to pay for college by doing "day housework to supplement her grants." However, the welfare office reports stated that she earned \$1,000 more than the law permitted, requiring her to pay it back, and eliminating her chance to go to college. ⁶⁸ The belief in market competence is clear in claims that the incentives must help people "rejoin the working economy." ⁶⁹ The judgments on poor behavior are focused on incentives hoisted *upon* recipients rather than motivation and capacity *internal to* recipients, and are not entirely dismissive of the welfare system as one of possible support.

While some argued that the claw back rates disincentivized work, others argued that the real disincentive was the sheer amount of funds that people received in benefits. ⁷⁰ With the influx of money from the War on Poverty came the perception that "Washington's welfare theorists have lost sight of the force a real incentive can bring to bear in lifting people up to higher levels of earning power and productivity," and that such programs have "diminished the traditional American urgings

⁶⁶ "The Right to Make A Dollar," *Plain Dealer*, 22 May 1967. (Edit.)

⁶⁷ Bob Modic, "Work Incentive Plan Cuts Relief," *Cleveland Press*, 17 March 1965.

⁶⁸ "Ohio Penalizes Ambitious Poor," *Akron Beacon Journal*, 23 May 1965.

⁶⁹ "The Right to Make A Dollar." (Edit.)

⁷⁰ This sentiment is shared at the systems-level: the welfare state removes profit from the private sector, and, therefore, supplies a disincentive to work. See a discussion in Quadagno, "Theories of the Welfare State."

for self-improvement.”⁷¹ One author argued that anything more than a minimal amount of welfare zaps incentive for self-improvement: “Public welfare aid at any level should have an emergency function like the ring buoys on a ship, to be grasped when needed but certainly not to be considered a substitute for learning to swim.”⁷² The author levied multiple critiques about the Great Society, especially the cost to the taxpayer and perceived damage welfare programs do to recipients. He wrote,

Nothing is good that weakens the nation’s moral fiber as the administration’s policy of supplying more than enough for every person’s need is beginning to do. America has been elevated to her high place among the nations of the world by the industry and ingenuity of her people. Self-reliance is the most precious asset in the national treasure. Anything that lessens the people’s will to stand on their own feet strikes at the heart of our greatness and threatens the continuity of our way of life.

Welfare, then, is not simply an inefficient and ill-managed solution to demonstrated need that, with incentive-focused reform, could lift people out of poverty. Rather, it is a threat to the way of life in America.

⁷¹ “Federal Welfare Excesses Stand in the Way of Real Aid,” *Columbus Dispatch*, 9 February 1967. (Edit.)

⁷² Ibid. (Edit.)

4.4 The Cleveland Experiment: What Isn't Said

Way of life in America *was* changing in the mid-1960s. In the midst of a clearly race-focused Civil Rights Movement and multi-racial Poor Peoples' Campaign, what is significant in the archival material is what is not said but remains implicit. Hardly ever is race discussed; however, many of the criticisms toward welfare are directed toward Cleveland. In 1960, Cuyahoga County was 15-percent Black, while Cleveland itself was over 30-percent Black. There, ADC grew significantly between 1957 and 1964. According to reports at the time, in 1964, "it cost almost \$17 million to support 9,247 cases with 29,202 children. Eighty-seven per cent are Negroes."⁷³

Cleveland was a significant target for the criticisms of "the [Johnson] administration's policy of supplying more than enough for every person's need," given the "windfall" of War on Poverty funds it received.⁷⁴ OEO approved \$5.7million for education and work training, with additional income to 3,000 ADC recipients to bring assistance grants to 100-percent of the state minimum standard.⁷⁵ One writer commented, "If ever the proponents of Big Government had an opportunity to prove their philosophy the Cleveland experiment is it."⁷⁶ In Cleveland, however, the administrators acknowledged that work relief had been around for many years prior to the WOP funds and to the Ohio work requirements, and that many of those assigned to new programs for work had been previously assigned to work in public institutions.⁷⁷

The Rhodes Administration clashed with Cleveland administrators and advocates for the poor, as we saw in Chapter 3. In 1966, the U.S. Civil Rights Commission held hearings in Cleveland, and pointed to Cuyahoga County and the state of Ohio as "grossly inadequate" in their conduct regarding

⁷³ Faith Corrigan, "Welfare Story: 1,300 try the impossible," *Plain Dealer*, 31 January 1965.

⁷⁴ "The Welfare Windfall," *Cleveland Press*, 20 July 1965. (Edit.)

⁷⁵ Faith Corrigan, "Job Training Plan to Help Cleveland Welfare Clients," *Plain Dealer*, 4 February 1965; Bob Modic, "Details listed in program to train 3000 adults here," *Cleveland Press*, 20 February 1965.

⁷⁶ "The Welfare Windfall." (Edit.)

⁷⁷ Corrigan, "Job Training Plan to Help Cleveland Welfare Clients."

the administration of ADC.⁷⁸ The “most serious deficiency” identified in public welfare in Ohio and in Cuyahoga County was the meager level of ADC benefits.⁷⁹ Throughout the late 1960s, coalitions and groups such as the Businessmen’s Inner City Action Committee, the Mayor’s Commission of the Crisis in Welfare, and Urban Coalition urged for higher payments for ADC recipients to no avail.⁸⁰

Blame was passed between the Rhodes Administration and representatives from Cleveland, such as Reverend Bruce Whittemore of the Council of Churches of Christ in Greater Cleveland. Each accused the other of using statistics to mislead the public about ADC and for either downplaying or overplaying the success stories of ADC. Whittemore argued that pointing to individual success stories – a practice common in the social service field – and focusing on extra cents here and there from federal programs – as opposed to more substantial change in livelihood – “is diversional and misleading” and “does not alter the fact that the state has a primary responsibility for bringing welfare payments up to its own established standard.” He also argued that by passing blame to the Welfare Federation of Cleveland and other civic groups, Rhodes’ Administration showed a “cynical response to the deep problems of Cleveland’s inner city.”⁸¹ George Wiley, founder of the NWRO, called Governor Rhodes “the head bigot in Ohio.”⁸²

Despite the public perception that being on welfare meant a lack of work ethic, The Civil Rights Commission argued, “the great majority of ADC recipients do not view public welfare as a means for enabling them to live comfortable lives without working. Instead, they view the welfare program as a means to achieve *self-support* and *independence*.”⁸³ A 1967 U.S. Department of Labor report found that 15.5-percent of the workforce in poverty neighborhoods in Cleveland were jobless despite

⁷⁸ “U.S. Calls Cuyahoga ADC a Poor Example to Nation,” *Plain Dealer*, 5 January 1967.

⁷⁹ “Submitted to United Appeal of Greater Cleveland. Proposal for the Funding of the Greater Cleveland Welfare Rights Organization,” GCWRO, 13 October 1969. 5.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁸¹ Roldo Bartimole, “Rhodes Berated on Welfare Stand,” *Plain Dealer*, 21 January 1967.

⁸² Carolyn Focht, “Rhodes Burned in Effigy in Coffin by Welfare Rights Demonstrators,” *Columbus Dispatch*, 15 July 1967.

⁸³ “U.S. Calls Cuyahoga ADC a Poor Example to Nation.” Emphasis added.

active efforts to find work.⁸⁴ The program and governmental failures most substantially hurt the Black residents, “who must also face the obstacles of racial discrimination in other aspects of their lives.”⁸⁵ By 1968, “welfare” was already “a dirty word in Cleveland.”⁸⁶

Of course, as Chapter 3 made clear, the image of the welfare recipient was hardly divorced from the visual of the welfare marchers and those who supported them. One editorial at the time argued that given the marchers could walk 150 miles, “it is a shame that these same people cannot be similarly motivated to learn a skill or trade so that they will not have to look to the ‘Great Society’ and you, the taxpayers, for the rest of their lives.”⁸⁷ The fact that the National Council of Churches donated \$1,000 to the March added flames to these objections because it brought to mind the fact that the Methodist Church had established “a training school for Civil Rights agitators at the Western College for Women in Oxford, Ohio during last summer. These trained agitators were then sent down south to stir up hate between the races and *race consciousness*.”⁸⁸

These connections, however, are not coincidental, and forward the case that colorblind policymaking was taking shape in Ohio. The 1960s, as described by Camille Walsh in *Racial Taxation*, were “a brief window into a vision of overlapping and *simultaneous* claims of racial discrimination and economic injustice. At the same moment, there was also a push to frame poverty as synonymous with race and therefore with a lack of ‘taxpaying citizen’ rights.”⁸⁹ As seen throughout these chapters, one of the most common critiques of the welfare marchers and the advocates for higher benefit levels, is that welfare recipients are not taxpayers. According to Walsh, this framing goes back to Reconstruction Era assumptions that low tax base levels in high poverty communities made those

⁸⁴ “Welfare Movement – Historical Perspective.”

⁸⁵ “Submitted to United Appeal of Greater Cleveland,” 5.

⁸⁶ “Welfare Movement – Historical Perspective.”

⁸⁷ “Pardon me, but.” *Columbus Dispatch*, 1966. (Edit.)

⁸⁸ Ibid. Emphasis added.

⁸⁹ Camille Walsh, *Racial Taxation* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2018), 109. Judith Shklar, *American Citizenship* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1995), also argues that U.S. citizenship rests on earning.

individuals less entitled to citizenship rights. This was “further entrenched in the wake of the long-delayed expansion of governmental benefits to poor African Americans in the 1960s.”⁹⁰

In fact, court cases in favor of welfare rights were seen to be increasing the costs to taxpayers, while giving recipients something for nothing. *Goldberg v. Kelly* found that recipients must have due process hearings before the termination of benefits. The conservative opposition to this ruling, written by Supreme Court Chief Justice Burger, argued that the ruling created administrative morass and a legal precedent of due process at every stage of the welfare payment process.⁹¹ Denver White was quoted in the Congressional Record as saying, “It is going to cause a taxpayer revolt.” Not only are those welfare recipients not taxpayers, according to the logic, but they also do not meet other obligations of society, such as work. Congressmen feared that the *Goldberg v. Kelly* ruling would “give welfare rights militants such as George Wiley... a powerful new legal tool to combat and harass Government efforts to enforce welfare work requirements.” Wiley had promised, “We’re going to fight against forcing people to work in order to get welfare.”⁹²

The 1960s are also a clear example of ‘welfare administration’ used as a colorblind, depoliticized counterweight to the inherently multi-racial welfare rights efforts. In the midst of these efforts, detailed in the next section, Rhodes spoke to the legislature, promising, “The security of every man, woman and child, *regardless of race*, creed or color, lies with full employment and better jobs,” and not to impose new taxes.⁹³ In so doing, the Administration’s seemingly value-neutral finance-sharing formulas would have a disproportionate impact on Black Ohioans.

⁹⁰ Walsh, *Racial Taxation*, 109.

⁹¹ *Goldberg v. Kelly*, 397 U.S. 254 (1970).

⁹² Congressional Record, H3075, 15 April 1970.

⁹³ Sanford Watzman, “\$1.4 Billion Requested by Rhodes,” *Plain Dealer*, 16 February 1965. Emphasis added.

4.5 Mechanisms of Retrenchment: Spending Cuts and ‘Welfare Reorganization’

The 1963 work-for-relief law passed alongside budget cuts to GA focused on saving “administrative costs while upping recipient standards” and attempting to procure more federal aid money for welfare programs.⁹⁴ In October 1963, there was a 10-percent cut in the matching allowance to counties by the state, and a few months later, in January 1964, relief payments were lowered to 63-percent of the minimum standard.⁹⁵ The GA cuts were surprising given the fact that the caseloads had historically been “closely tied to joblessness in the state.”⁹⁶ Ultimately, this illustrates that work requirements were used as a *sorting mechanism*, then combined with cuts in spending, rather than spending being increased because of the perception that people are working.

Most of the opposition to the cuts came from Cleveland. The *Cleveland Record* ran with the headline, “‘The Budget is Balanced’ – At Whose Expense, Mr. Governor?”⁹⁷ According to *The Plain Dealer*, “local welfare officials, especially in Cleveland, charged Rhodes was creating human misery and hardship” by cutting state matching money to local communities. Some saw the cuts to GA as callous and cold-hearted, with the “state pocketing Federally appropriated increases... in order to bail out other spending efforts of the governor,”⁹⁸ rather than “to stretch and make use of state funds”⁹⁹ to serve the poor. One social worker charged that the state welfare department had brought about “prolonged hardships” due to low-levels of public assistance grants.¹⁰⁰ Acknowledging the drop in Ohio’s ADC payment levels, White chose to deflect blame by noting that fifteen states had also reduced benefits between 1961 and 1965.¹⁰¹ Some critics blamed the lack of political will for

⁹⁴ “Cut in Costs of Welfare Promised in Rhodes Plan,” *Columbus Dispatch*, 26 October 1962.

⁹⁵ “Welfare Movement – Historical Perspective.”

⁹⁶ Larkin, “State’s Welfare Bill Rises Despite Drop in Recipients.”

⁹⁷ *Cleveland Record*, 25 March 1963.

⁹⁸ “Democrats Decry Cuts in Relief,” *Citizen-Journal*, 16 April 1963.

⁹⁹ “Ohio Welfare Practices Denounced,” *Plain Dealer*, 2 November 1965.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ “White Defends Ohio Welfare Aid,” *Plain Dealer*, 6 November 1965.

continuing “this near-starvation ration in the midst of the affluent society”¹⁰²: “James A. Rhodes is probably the most dynamic whiz-bang of a governor this state has had in decades. His promotional energies in behalf of his state are limitless. It is time that he turn those energies loose on the basic problems of human welfare.”¹⁰³

However, Rhodes’ Administration was focused on shifting the burden of state spending either downward to the county and local governments or up to the federal government, in addition to cutting state spending. He convinced Republican leaders in the legislature to back a bill qualifying Ohio for federal funding under the ADCU program, which extended ADC to children of the unemployed.¹⁰⁴ Ohioans pay federal taxes, Rhodes argued, and so should receive some of the money in the form of aid packages,¹⁰⁵ as a matter of aid, rather than federal intervention,¹⁰⁶ thereby addressing criticisms from the Right about big government intervention. As a result, between 1959 and 1966, the federal government’s share of Ohio’s relief costs rose from 42 to 50-percent.¹⁰⁷

Rhodes’ efforts were focused on employment as the solution for social problems, illustrating that elites such as business interests dominate community politics.¹⁰⁸ At the Billion Dollar Luncheon celebrating new and expanding industry, he said, “we have to encourage people to get jobs to answer the problem. Every crisis comes from lack of employment.”¹⁰⁹ His emphasis was on getting private employment to the state. In response to one protest in which Rhodes’ effigy was burned in a coffin, McElroy noted that Rhodes was out of the office in Pittsburgh to “get some industrial expansion to provide jobs for Ohioans.” He told the protestors he hoped that they would qualify for the jobs.¹¹⁰

¹⁰² “The Welfare State? Not Ohio,” *Cleveland Press*, 27 July 1965. (Edit.)

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Sanford Watzman, “Rhodes Cites Welfare Role,” *Plain Dealer Bureau*, 25 December 1963.

¹⁰⁵ “At Last,” *Summit County Labor News*, 27 December 1963.

¹⁰⁶ “Time for Governor to Speak,” *Toledo Union Journal*, 1 June 1963. (Edit.)

¹⁰⁷ Bob Modic, “United States is paying half of Ohio’s Relief Bill,” *Cleveland Press*, 31 March 1965.

¹⁰⁸ Grant McConnell, *Private Power and American Democracy*, 1st ed. (New York: Knopf, 1966).

¹⁰⁹ Edson Whipple, “Ohio Industry Gaining But Relief Rolls Grow,” *Toledo Blade*, 3 May 1966.

¹¹⁰ Focht, “Rhodes Burned in Effigy in Coffin by Welfare Rights Demonstrators.”

One of Rhodes' signature achievements was a welfare administration and financing reorganization bill passed in 1965. It consolidated welfare activity to the county level, eliminated mandatory levies used to finance welfare programs, wrote ADCU into law, extended these ADCU payments to children in foster homes, and provided the state supervisory and enforcement powers over the counties.¹¹¹ This devolution created a 'state-supervised, county-administered' program for welfare benefits¹¹²: the "welfare reorganization bill places administration of all welfare programs at the county level with the State Welfare Department making the rules and regulations."¹¹³ This reorganization effort had three major impacts. First, it constrained county and local finances, leading to cuts in spending on essential services. Second, it contributed to the depoliticization of the poverty problem. Third, it laid the groundwork for the bureaucratic backbone of Mead's new paternalism.

4.5.i Welfare Reorganization as Financial Constraint

The law created a great disparity in financing between counties, with devolution typically placing more financial burden on counties with a large population on welfare. Under the welfare reorganization bill, seventy-five of the eighty-eight counties were projected to bear an increased share of welfare costs (e.g. Cuyahoga County would pay an additional \$500,000-800,000 per year),¹¹⁴ while some counties would save money (e.g. Hamilton County, the seat of Cincinnati, would save \$1,500,000 per year).¹¹⁵ Ultimately, so much of welfare provision relied on local tax bases. According to the *Akron Beacon Journal*, "Clermont County stopped relief when a local tax levy failed in 1961." *The New York Times* reported the outcome: "The needy were not forced to become self-sufficient... Instead,

¹¹¹ Press Ohio Bureau, "New Law Changes Organization of Ohio Welfare and Financing," 14 July 1965.

¹¹² Press Ohio Bureau, "Little Hoover Commission Urges Consolidation of Welfare Activities," *Cleveland Press*, 8 October 1963. Only about ten states employ a state-supervised, county-administered system. Potts, "History of Ohio's Welfare Reform Program."

¹¹³ O.F. Knippenburg, "Expect Ohio Senate Action Next Week on Welfare Bill," *Cleveland Press*, 1 July 1965.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ Press Ohio Bureau, "New Law Changes Organization of Ohio Welfare and Financing."

the burden simply was shifted from the county government to landlords, grocers, physicians, churches, schools and other civic groups.”¹¹⁶ One county auditor said of the bill, “This clearly was written by someone who knew nothing about relief,” arguing that the recommendations did not cover funding flexibility or the “inequalities in local tax support for welfare programs,” creating an unfunded mandate for casework.¹¹⁷

In 1967, the State attempted to further devolve financing responsibility to the counties. The Rhodes Administration pushed legislation that would change the State/County sharing for ADC financing from 90/10 to 50/50, and enable counties to enact new taxes to fund ADC payments.¹¹⁸ Because of the disparity in county tax bases,¹¹⁹ the proposal was opposed by many, including the Steering Committee for Adequate Welfare, Cuyahoga County Commissioners, League of Women Voters, the Ohio Association of County Commissioners, the Jewish Welfare Organization, the WRO of Franklin County, and the Catholic Conference of Ohio.¹²⁰ Ultimately, a compromise was reached in which the first \$17.5 million of state aid was available to counties on the 90/10 matching agreement, and the second \$17.5 million was available on a 33.7/66.3 agreement. It was estimated that that agreement would bring payments to 83.5-percent of the minimum standard, whereas Democrats claimed their proposal for all \$35 million to be covered by the 90/10 agreement would raise payment above 90-percent.¹²¹

While Rhodes promised in 1965 that his welfare efforts would be funded by revenue from sales tax and economic growth, not through new or increased state taxes,¹²² by 1967, his

¹¹⁶ “Reasons for ADCU,” *Akron Beacon Journal*, 12 November 1963. (Edit.)

¹¹⁷ “Wrong Answers,” *Akron Beacon Journal*, 11 October 1963. (Edit.) These complaints are resoundingly similar to the needs – funding flexibility, especially – expressed by today’s county administrators and social service organizations.

¹¹⁸ The 90/10 agreement and elimination of local levies was done under the 1965 welfare reorganization bill. “It’s the State’s Job,” *Cleveland Press*, 11 May 1967. (Edit.)

¹¹⁹ Gordon Raeburn, “Rhodes Backs 100 Per Cent welfare, legislature told,” *Citizen-Journal*, 11 May 1967.

¹²⁰ “Witnesses Object to 50-50 ADC,” *Columbus Dispatch*, 11 May 1967.

¹²¹ “Democrats Lose Battle for Aid Program,” June 1967; “ADC Deadlock Broken by Senate Compromise,” *Citizen-Journal*, 2 June 1967.

¹²² Watzman, “\$1.4 Billion Requested by Rhodes.”

Administration and the State GOP were focused on getting counties to raise taxes on utility bills, sales taxes on motel and hotel accommodations, and other “local taxes to meet their responsibilities.”¹²³ Rhodes’ focus on spending cuts and getting people off of the welfare rolls was toward saving the state money, to move “from the shadow of bankruptcy to a new place in the sun.”¹²⁴ His welfare director argued that it was a local, not a state responsibility to take care of peoples’ needs, and so, he focused on obtaining federal funding and devolving responsibility. For Robert Canary, assistant director of the Department of Welfare, the county level was appropriate for anti-poverty policy because it was the level at which social workers could “save the young mother with only one child or two, while it would still be practical for the family to become self-supporting.”¹²⁵

4.5.ii Welfare Reorganization as Depoliticization and Bureaucratization

This welfare reorganization also contributed, in Rhodes’ eyes, to the depoliticization of welfare.¹²⁶ The welfare rights marchers, who had conducted numerous organizing actions throughout 1966 and 1967, including sit ins at the Capitol,¹²⁷ clearly made welfare a political issue. According to one report, McElroy believed that “political motivations are behind the [activists] continuing their sit-in at Gov. James A. Rhodes’ office.”¹²⁸ Governor Rhodes believed that “welfare must be removed from politics and placed in the hands of professionally-trained administrators who know what they’re

¹²³ Haskell Short, “ADC Victory Lifts GOP Hopes for Tax Plan,” *Akron Beacon Journal*, 29 June 1967.

¹²⁴ Watzman, “\$1.4 Billion Requested by Rhodes.”

¹²⁵ Larkin, “State’s Welfare Bill Rises Despite Drop in Recipients.”

¹²⁶ Scholars of “poverty knowledge” have argued that depoliticization is “a profoundly political intellectual act,” p. 3. Harriss, “Bringing politics back into poverty analysis.”

¹²⁷ During 1966 and 1967, activists conducted rallies; social workers sought the U.S. Civil Rights probe; activists marched to Columbus and sought legislature recall; welfare families hosted suburbanites in their homes; activists held vigils in plea for winter clothing allotment; activists placed shock ads to spotlight problems; the Welfare Federation lobbied legislators; “Mothers attempt[ed] to sell blood to show need for money. Most found too ill to have blood taken”; the Presbytery passed and sent a resolution to Rhodes supporting increased benefit payments; activists put on a play; Public Conscience Sundays were held at churches; a petition with 100,000 signatures was sent to House finance committee; and “welfare mothers from Cleveland appeal[ed] to United Nations to consider U.S. slums as underdeveloped countries and give aid.” “Welfare Movement – Historical Perspective.”

¹²⁸ “Aide Blames State House Welfare Sit-In on Politics,” *Citizen-Journal*, 20 October 1966.

doing.”¹²⁹ He went on to argue that ‘welfare’ has only become an ugly word because of the “sad and confused political administrators in charge of the programs.”¹³⁰

This devolution also created layers of procedural complexity which made it difficult for welfare recipients to access the safety-net.¹³¹ Complexity in the rules not only discourages people from engaging with the system when they are eligible but can be used to keep people off when there is administrative discretion.¹³² In order to enforce behavioral requirements, administrative codes and social work practices “increase dependency by keeping family life at a level where it is impossible to break out and make any more toward self-support.”¹³³

Kathy Boudin, a welfare organizer, stated, “Welfare is so incredibly complicated and bureaucratic that the structure defeats itself.... The welfare system as it exists can’t work.”¹³⁴ Boudin argued that by translating the Ohio Public Assistance manual “into readable, understandable language, welfare clients will know their rights, will start demanding them and will create such confusion in welfare circles that the system will founder”¹³⁵ – a prerequisite to the welfare drives suggested by Piven and Cloward.¹³⁶ This would result in eliminating the paternalism of the public assistance system.¹³⁷ The Montgomery County Welfare director called her plan “perfectly ridiculous.”¹³⁸

¹²⁹ “Cut in Costs of Welfare Promised in Rhodes Plan.”

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ See Campbell, *Trapped in America’s Safety Net*.

¹³² See Lipsky, *Street-Level Bureaucracy*. Jack Frech told me that welfare administrators took part in a competition testing how well they knew the welfare regulations. The *most* liberal and conservative administrators knew the rules best; the former to get people benefits, the latter to keep people off.

¹³³ “Ohio Welfare Decried as Inadequate,” *Toledo Blade*, 13 August 1966.

¹³⁴ Craig Palmer, “Woman Seeks to Destroy Welfare System,” *Dayton Daily News*, 14 June 1966.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Cloward and Piven, “The Weight of the Poor.”

¹³⁷ Palmer, “Woman Seeks to Destroy Welfare System.”

¹³⁸ Ibid.

4.6 Paternalism, Welfare, and Reproduction

Ohio welfare expenditure grew from \$181.4 million to \$379.6 million between 1959 and 1969. However, over the same period, the increase in recipients of public aid was small, from 329,256 (3.3-percent of the population) to 399,792 people (3.6-percent).¹³⁹ Reports at the time argued that the fact that the ADC program “continues to grow – by 22,714 in 1969 alone – is more a reflection of social conditions than economic.”¹⁴⁰ The primary social condition for which legislators expressed concern was children being born to mothers receiving benefits. A 1962 Welfare Department study estimated “more than 100,000 illegitimate children were born in Ohio from 1945 through 1961,” pointing to family instability as the chief cause.¹⁴¹ The backlash consensus to growing rolls revolved around efforts to reduce the usage by the poor of the programs meant to serve them. This was done by policies which intentionally or inadvertently punished the poor.¹⁴²

Denver White called for stricter dependency laws and tougher enforcement.¹⁴³ Rep. Robert Netzley (R-Laura), described by one interviewee as the “king of the cavemen,” introduced punitive measures that would take children born after the first while the mother is on assistance and place them for adoption or into the care of a relative or foster home.¹⁴⁴ The bill was debated with tempers flaring in the General Assembly, and both Democrats and Republicans spoke against the measure. Citing lack of evidence that women on assistance have children for extra benefits, Rep. James from Cleveland argued that a child would receive 73 cents per day for food, and “If this is profit, I would like to know where the sponsor does his shopping.”¹⁴⁵ Netzley’s stated concern was not the amount of poverty in

¹³⁹ The number of GR recipients dropped from 110,618 in 1963 to 59,388 in 1969; while the number of ADC recipients climbed from 151,005 to 250,064.

¹⁴⁰ Robert Kotzbauer, “Public Welfare – Why it Grows,” *Akron Beacon Journal*, 13 June 1970. These are contemporary dollars; it is unclear whether they were adjusted for inflation in the article.

¹⁴¹ Larkin, “State’s Welfare Bill Rises Despite Drop in Recipients.”

¹⁴² “Family Planning and Welfare,” *Cincinnati Enquirer*, 15 June 1965. (Edit.)

¹⁴³ Larkin, “State’s Welfare Bill Rises Despite Drop in Recipients.”

¹⁴⁴ Richard Maher, “‘Take Profit Out of Welfare’ is Aim of Ohioan’s Proposal,” *Cleveland Press*, 25 January 1967.

¹⁴⁵ “House Ties ADC Aid to Birth Control,” *Plain Dealer*, 27 July 1967.

Ohio, but that “ADC is running rampant in this state and the nation.”¹⁴⁶ Ultimately, Netzley’s amendment was tabled in favor of a measure requiring county welfare agencies to refer any mothers receiving aid to family planning and birth control services, and repealing laws preventing these services from being recommended.¹⁴⁷

These measures introduced remnants of the old paternalism obfuscated by economic argumentation, i.e. mothers are incentivized to have more kids while on welfare in order to maximize their benefits. One editorial contributor wrote, “The right to reproduce carries responsibility. Those who cannot provide properly for their children – and here I mean *by gainful employment and not county welfare payments* – have no right to continually become parents,”¹⁴⁸ illustrating disapproval of any state-sponsored dependency. There was a benefit in the expanded access of reproductive services to the poor, of course. The Welfare Federation adopted a statement – hesitant to adopt the lawmakers’ paternalist intentions behind the law, but supportive of the outcome of the law – in support of expanding information and access, claiming, “responsible parenthood requires that parents of all segments of society... have the knowledge, the opportunity and the means to plan their families as medical knowledge permits.... Many Americans, particularly the poor and undereducated, are deprived of this freedom because of lack of knowledge and the means.”¹⁴⁹

At the same time, the state shifted focus to absent fathers and gave the public welfare agency authority to demand that absent fathers reimburse the agency for as much as they can afford.¹⁵⁰ This was a change from previous law which required the mothers to file charges. White argued that by removing responsibility from the mother, the county was protecting her from abuse from an irate

¹⁴⁶ “House Ties ADC Aid to Birth Control.” Despite the social control function, there is nonetheless a *desired* retrenchment effect: Netzley admits the primary concern is ADC usage.

¹⁴⁷ “Ohio Senate Oks Birth Control Measure,” *Akron Beacon Journal*, 24 June 1965.

¹⁴⁸ W.D. Underwood, “Birth control view held to be naïve,” *Toledo Blade*, 22 May 1965. (Edit.) Emphasis added.

¹⁴⁹ “Welfare Federation to Weigh Stand for Birth Control Advice,” *Plain Dealer*, 7 July 1966.

¹⁵⁰ “Pinning Responsibility,” *Toledo Blade*, 26 September 1967. (Edit.)

father which might have previously contributed to her reluctance to cooperate.¹⁵¹ White placed Allen County Welfare Director Lyle Lee in charge of the “war,” tying the criminal justice system explicitly to the welfare system.¹⁵² Lee would work with county prosecutors to find the fathers, with the hopes that even finding ten-percent would save \$5 million per year.¹⁵³ Canary stressed that “the chief element of the new legislation was to obtain support for children, and not to fill jails. It must not be used to intimidate or discourage applications” to ADC.¹⁵⁴ The law was justified as a way to “correct one problem of public relief that has made taxpayers increasingly unsympathetic toward it”¹⁵⁵ in a way similar to the ongoing justifications for work requirements.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Carolyn Focht, “Welfare War Declared on Deserting Fathers,” *Columbus Dispatch*, 21 September 1967.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Jack Hicks, “Errant Parents Welfare Targets,” *Columbus Dispatch*, 7 November 1967.

¹⁵⁵ “Pinning Responsibility.”

4.7 Paternalism Latent and Emergent

The 1960s is a period of expansion for the federal welfare state, in terms of both programs and populations gaining access to them. In our study of Ohio, we see the latent assumptions of paternalism emerge in an effort to curb this expansion.

First, we see that mandatory work requirements hardly changed the overarching politics of poverty, nor did they lessen opposition to GA through the perception that the poor are working. GA and state matching dollars were cut at the same time as work requirements were implemented, an early sign of the dominant mechanism of retrenchment (spending and program cuts) interacting with paternalism as a sorting mechanism. While the language of “civic obligation” was not used explicitly in the 1960s appeals to work, two discourses were often used which intersect to parallel this notion: work ethic as the backbone of the “nation’s moral fiber,” and workers and taxpayers contrasted with welfare recipients and chiselers.

Second, these two discourses utilize colorblind rhetoric that contributed to ideational opposition to claims of racial and economic justice. Welfare and civil rights were tied together in both their proponents’ legal appeals¹⁵⁶ and their opponents’ perception of the intended beneficiaries of the agendas. However, language regarding race was notably absent in the public discourse, except to provide context for rising ADC usage. In popular discourse, “Cleveland” meant Black, and the coverage of 1960s welfare reform efforts focused on the contestation between Cleveland and the Rhodes Administration. Rhodes utilized ‘welfare administration’ as a colorblind counter to the multi-racial welfare rights efforts. His devolution and burden-sharing efforts forced Cleveland to pay more

¹⁵⁶ In 1970, the Cleveland Welfare Federation filed an amicus brief in a case in which an ADC grandmother “accuses the state of discrimination under the 14th Amendment by paying ADC recipients less than persons on” other assistance programs, and charged the state “with failure to meet its own minimum standard of subsistence.” Alma Kaufman, “Eight Groups Join Welfare Suit,” *Plain Dealer*, 28 April 1970.

from local tax levies and disproportionately hurt the non-White residents of the city. The U.S. Civil Rights findings confirmed this.

Third, in contrast to the welfare marchers' politicization of welfare, the Rhodes Administration pushed an agenda of welfare 'reorganization,' devolution, and financing burden-sharing. Each of these efforts contributed to retrenchment through spending cuts in terms of the amount recipients gained and built the groundwork for the county-level bureaucratic complexity of the new paternalism. Depoliticization through welfare administration was useful in moving away from the political conceptions of competence that were present throughout the 1960s organizing actions.

Finally, work requirements did not resolve for policymakers or the public the question of whether work ethic was inherent in those who are poor, a central question to what Mead would call decades later, "dependency politics." While the primary concerns of the marchers – who showed political and civic competence – were higher benefit levels and better jobs, legislators debated more narrow conceptions of competence ascribed to the poor. They oscillated between belief in market competence in debates about benefit cliffs and the rejection of competence in debates regarding reproductive rights for those receiving benefits.

While not yet the federal paradigm for welfare policymaking, paternalism emerges through state-level policies like mandatory work requirements and remains latent in the discourses of the 1960s. By the end of the 1960s, Ohio welfare costs were soaring, with the rolls having grown by 60,000 from when Rhodes took office, showing that "there is more to the welfare problem than the jobs and [low] taxes that Rhodes linked in the public mind."¹⁵⁷ There was a consensus in the discourse that "the present system is obviously not working to the benefit of taxpayers, and any program which entraps so many thousands of poor on an inadequate dole is not serving them either."¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷ Bob Modic, "Welfare Rolls Grow Under Rhodes Rule," *Cleveland Press*, 10 June 1970.

¹⁵⁸ "Ohio Welfare Costs Soar, Underline Need for Change," *Akron Beacon Journal*, 31 March 1970. (Edit.)

Chapter 5.

Paternalism Prevalent and Contested

The Celeste Administration [1983-1991]
– Welfare Surplus and Limited Resistance

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“When they are deprived of the incentives for successful living, and dependency on the dole becomes a way of life, shame puts them in a social category that is inconsistent with the pride of being American, and sharing in the opportunities that are always available in America.” – V.O. Marcum¹

Ronald Reagan was elected President in 1980, touting his AFDC workfare demonstration as Governor of California. He shared the epigraph’s appeal to national pride and productivity as a backdrop for policy in the U.S. The Reagan era is most commonly associated with the dominance of retrenchment through spending cuts, ushering in the era of permanent austerity.² However, Mead argued that Reagan’s “main legacy turned out to be the expansion of workfare.”³ Reagan proclaimed, “We’ve learned that work is the only genuine path to self-respect and independence.”⁴

During the 1980s, the federal discourse revolved around Reagan’s efforts to consolidate programs, cut spending, and implement work requirements – from his welfare rule changes in 1981 and 1982, which “increased federal controls by narrowing the circumstances under which benefits must be paid,” eliminating eligibility for “household members deemed capable of working,”⁵ to the Family Support Act of 1988 (FSA). There were a number of welfare reform proposals made in 1987, prior to the passage of FSA, each with its own corresponding discourse and emphasis.⁶ But a consensus among them was that “welfare should support people’s transition into work,” for those who took responsibility for themselves.⁷

Among the proposals, there were a mix of policies focused on the market competence favored by welfare abolitionists – state flexibility and benefit reduction – and the rejection of competence

¹ V.O. Marcum, “Bondage of Welfare removes self-respect,” *Athens News*, 4 March 1985. (Edit.)

² Pierson, “Coping with Permanent Austerity.”

³ Mead, *The New Politics of Poverty*, 190.

⁴ “Reagan: States should create their own welfare programs,” *Columbus Dispatch*, 12 February 1987.

⁵ Milton Coleman, “Ohio and Its Poor Struggle Under Revised Welfare Rules,” *Washington Post*, 9 April 1985. OBRA, in fact, decreased the earned income disregarded.

⁶ See George Embrey, “Governors likely to OK welfare reform package,” *Columbus Dispatch*, 18 February 1987; “President opens fire on welfare,” *Knight-Ridder News Service*, 10 February 1987; “Reagan: States should create their own welfare programs”; “Reforming Welfare,” *Columbus Dispatch*, 22 July 1987. (Edit.); U.S. Congress, “The Fair Work Opportunities Act of 1987,” 100th Congress, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/100th-congress/house-bill/30?s=1&r=60>; “Welfare reform at hand. Let’s make a difference,” *Athens Messenger*, 4 March 1987. (Edit.); “Welfare-work plan easily approved,” *Columbus Dispatch*, 16 July 1987.

⁷ Guetzkow, “Beyond Deservingness,” 190

avored by paternalists – touting the parents (especially the mother) as responsible for poverty and requiring work. Above all, there was a consistent focus on “reducing dependency” as the primary outcome measure. What resulted was an agreement between Reagan and Clinton as chair the National Governors Association on required work for any recipient with children older than three; an established contract between the government and recipient; extended Medicaid coverage; enforced child support; and minimal education, training, day care, and job placement assistance.⁸

State policies can ultimately be “variants of the required theme[s]” set by federal law.⁹ In the case of welfare reform, state *resistance* can only be undertaken in the choice architecture limited by federal rules.¹⁰ The same dynamic can also be true for discourses which seek to influence policy.

The 1980s in Ohio were the age in which advocate hopes clashed with liberal constraints – fiscal federalism, political expediency, and the growing consensus on welfare-to-work strategies. Throughout the 1980s, Ohio took initiative in its own welfare policymaking and responded to federal policy developments, reflecting their discourses. There *was* state-level resistance to some of paternalism’s prevalent federal assumptions through (a) strong initial opposition to workfare demonstrations and (b) debates over the level of benefit raises. But there was an enduring prominence and strengthening of work requirements, as liberal resistance waned and welfare state development moved from stressing incentives to stressing coercive measures.¹¹

In Ohio, Governor Rhodes was elected to a third term in 1974 and a fourth term in 1978, serving until 1983. In 1982, at the end of Rhodes’ final term, Rep. Michael Fox (R-Hamilton) filed legislation for a workfare demonstration similar to Reagan’s in CA. There was significant opposition from member groups of the Workfare Coalition. Shortly after hearings on the program, Democrat

⁸ “Welfare law requires workfare,” *Post*, 14 October 1988. See Peck, “*Workfare*,” for a comprehensive discourse analysis.

⁹ Soss et al., *Disciplining the Poor*, 123.

¹⁰ Coccia, “Creeping Stringency.”

¹¹ Ralph Brody and Rilma Buckman, “Why Don’t More People on Welfare Take Jobs?,” *Federation for Community Planning*, 25 February 1975, 7.

Richard Celeste was elected Governor. The Workfare Coalition was successful in getting Celeste to drop support for the bill, but a similar pilot was approved in 1985.¹²

Celeste was elected on the heels of a recession that increased the numbers of people on AFDC and GA 32-percent.¹³ Primary news sources from his administration's efforts on welfare illuminate the tensions on the Left over poverty issues – especially the role of work and the level of benefits. Work was the main concern for legislators worried about expanding welfare rolls, but there was reasonable debate about the presence (or lack thereof) of proper work-supports and the purpose of the work itself. However, Ohio advocates also saw Reagan's logic of dependency inherent in the Celeste Administration's efforts around work:

The Administration's press releases regarding their work and training programs have made the point that there has been a reduction in the case loads as a result of our efforts, and have gauged our success on a reduction of our spending for these programs [rather than] an improved standard of living and... a minimum level of income to provide basic food, clothing and shelter.¹⁴

Advocates were also troubled by the Celeste Administration's approach to benefit levels. Given the context of partial Democratic control statewide,¹⁵ a budget surplus, and coordinated "within-the-system" work by organizations opposed to serious welfare cuts,¹⁶ the state-level discourse revolved heavily around the level of benefits themselves, with advocates appealing for more substantive raises. National coverage credited Celeste for ushering through back to back increases in benefit payments in 1984 and 1985, tied to the same percentage as state employee inflationary adjustments. However,

¹² Jack Frech, "1982 Work," Email to Alexander Coccia, 24 January 2020. See also David Cole, "Coalition: Workfare Coalition," Letter to Fellow PARB Members, 15 February 1983.

¹³ Coleman, "Ohio and Its Poor Struggle Under Revised Welfare Rules."

¹⁴ Jack Frech, "Welfare Work and Training," Athens County Department of Human Services, 18 March 1988.

¹⁵ Democrats controlled both houses of the General Assembly in 1983 and 1984. Through the rest of Celeste's governorship, Democrats controlled the House and Republicans controlled the Senate.

¹⁶ "There is considerable evidence of WRO's interest in working 'within the system and with the establishment today.' This is different from their strategy two years ago." Charles Dalton, "Memo to W.T. McCullough," 31 August 1971.

Frech called these efforts, “the point of bipartisan neglect,”¹⁷ because the purchasing power of the welfare check had declined 9.3-percent between 1981 and 1985.¹⁸

While paternalism is treated in this thesis as an ideological development of the political Right, part of its power as a paradigmatic framework is the acceptance of its assumptions by the political Left, the failure of the Left to counter these assumptions, or, at the very least, the softening of resistance.¹⁹ Corey Robin notes that such conservative efforts are not the purview of a single political party. The 1980s present an important lens to interacting forces in American political development: constrained and limited subnational resistance, or acquiescence, to federal efforts of retrenchment.

This chapter proceeds as follows. First, I examine the local discourses that are oppositional to the federal prevalence of paternalism’s assumption regarding the primacy of work. We see strong opposition articulating the need for expensive pre-requisites to work, such as childcare and medical insurance. Second, I examine the contestation between welfare advocates and state political leaders over the level of benefits, a debate hinging on varying understandings of competence. Third, I examine the 1980s public discourse surrounding welfare, including the fear of fraud, the conflict between the welfare recipient and the taxpayer, and need for more stringent paternalism. I conclude by arguing that the 1980s illuminate subnational contestation against paternalism’s assumptions, in a failed effort to reduce their prevalence in policymaking.

¹⁷ Coleman, “Ohio and Its Poor Struggle Under Revised Welfare Rules.”

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ O’Connor and Katz both argue that the Left has failed to come up with an effective counter-narrative. According to Katz, *Undeserving Poor*, “There is, of course, a long tradition of writing about the political economy of poverty from the perspective of the political Left.... But the political Left has lacked an intellectual tradition – a powerful counter-narrative – comparable to the reasonably coherent and powerful conservative political economy of the right that has persisted for more than two centuries. It might be worth thinking about why this is the case,” p. 273.

5.1 Oppositional Discourses on Work

The [workfare] programs will fail as previous programs have failed because the real intention is not work at living wages in the main stream of our economy for the employable poor. *The underlying and real intention is to deter the poor from asking for and receiving assistance by demeaning and shaming requirements.*

– Minnie Player, Executive Director of the GCWRO, 1982²⁰

If workfare gave recipients a fair chance at a job we would endorse it heartily. But workfare has never been shown to work. All the pilot projects and local workfare programs that have been tried, have been failures. Despite the evidence of failure Ohio is now embarking on the most extensive workfare program in the country. The regulations as written contain many unfair oppressive features.... *We ask you to avoid using workfare as an excuse to take repressive measures against the poor and needy.*

– Lloyd Snyder, on behalf of the GCWRO, 1982²¹

It is unrealistic to think that we can solve this problem and spend less money than we are currently spending. The cost of child care subsidies, medical coverage, training programs... will all cost additional money. But *if our goal is to reward work...* then we must make a commitment to spend those additional dollars.

– Jack Frech, Director of Athens County Department of Human Services, 1988²²

Since the end of the 1970s, Athens County – located on the Appalachian border – saw a continual shift from manufacturing to service jobs, with medical and education services dominating the top salary positions in the region. By 1985, “service and sales industries were the bread and butter of Southeastern Ohio,” accounting for 75-percent of all job placements.²³ While educational and medical service jobs are stable, construction jobs are seasonal and food service jobs have hours and wages geared toward student employment. This trend would continue through the 1990s with researchers calling Athens a two-tier economy: “the university and everything else.”²⁴ In the last quarter of 1985, more than twice as many industry jobs as service jobs were lost in Southeastern Ohio. With the individual and regional loss of jobs comes the need to find money to sustain a family. At

²⁰ Minnie Player, “Workfare testimony,” GCWRO, 4 October 1982. Emphasis added.

²¹ Lloyd Snyder, “Hearings on Ohio Workfare Regulations,” GCWRO, 4 October 1982. 10. Emphasis added.

²² Frech, “Welfare Work and Training.” Emphasis added.

²³ Mary Radford, “Service Jobs Taking Over,” *Athens Messenger*, 31 August 1986. Only 9-percent in manufacturing.

²⁴ Richard Heck, “Athens County poverty rating a result of 2-tier economy,” *Athens Messenger*, 20 September 1995.

the time, unemployment insurance ran out after 26 weeks, and then people had to go elsewhere.

“‘Elsewhere’ is more than likely the Department of Human Services – welfare.”²⁵

By the 1980s, there were four broad categories of work programs in Ohio:²⁶

- (1) Community work experience programs, in which participants work off grants in unpaid public jobs (provided through WIN²⁷);
- (2) Work supplementation, in which employers gain grants to subsidize private sector jobs for recipients (Subsidized employment program through WIN²⁸);
- (3) Incentives in literacy, post-secondary education, training, employment, and assessments (Ohio Fair Works Program and Education and Training Programs); and,
- (4) Employment searches through classes, referrals, and orientation sessions (Job Club).

In 1982, Rep. Fox introduced legislation, hidden in the 1983 budget bill, for a workfare demonstration for job clubs and community work experience programs (CWEP), which could result in benefits termination.²⁹ There was significant opposition to the proposal, especially from the Workfare Coalition, which included The Commission on Church and Society, Low Income People Together, GCWRO, and Ohio WRO.³⁰ The Coalition aimed to “see that implementing regulations of the Workfare Law were fair and equitable,” if not to stop the law altogether. Given the community-wide reach of the Coalition, they were able to secure many legislator meetings to express their opposition.³¹

As the epigraphs to this section make clear, from the perspective of advocates for the poor, workfare programs, especially those without material improvements for participants, were part of a

²⁵ Radford, “Service Jobs Taking Over.” It is important to note that unemployment insurance is not considered a form of welfare. Sherman, *Those Who Work, Those Who Don’t*, discusses how different benefits are perceived in terms of their moral worth.

²⁶ Frech, “Welfare Work and Training.”

²⁷ Stephen Gold, “The Failure of the Work Incentive (WIN) Program,” *University of Pennsylvania Law Review* 119, no. 3 (1971): 485-501.

²⁸ Radford, “Service Jobs Taking Over.”

²⁹ Minnie Player, “The New Slavery,” GCWRO, 27 September 1982.

³⁰ Cole, “Coalition: Workfare Coalition.”

³¹ Ibid.

broader agenda of deterring the usage of welfare state programs and repressing those taking part in the programs. Members of the Workfare Coalition testified publicly against the bill. Jackson Pyles, executive director of the Metropolitan Area Church Board, stated succinctly: “The proposal to require work relief of welfare recipients is a poorly conceived measure which will only result in added expenditures to the state and highly potential abuses to the poor.”³²

5.1.i Advocacy for Pre-requisites to Work

In his testimony, Pyles highlighted three concerns in designing a work relief program. First, the determination of eligibility given that “everyone receiving G.R. and A.D.C. has already been determined by eligibility specialists and social workers to be facing a severe economic crisis.”³³ While eligibility restrictions are such that those receiving benefits already have serious barriers to work, work requirement proponents argue that the sorting mechanism is still valuable, even if the number of abusers is miniscule compared to the broader recipient population. Second, whether the state will set up quality childcare centers, since “no mother is going to allow herself to be forced into a work relief program, unless she is assured of care for her children.”³⁴ Finally, the nature of the jobs that recipients will be made to work, e.g. medical benefits, wages, collective bargaining, non-discrimination, due process, grievance procedures.³⁵ A welfare recipient from Cleveland, Owedo Suber, also spoke in opposition to the notion that welfare recipients are too lazy to work, and advocated for jobs with adequate wages.³⁶

³² Jackson Pyles, “Testimony in Opposition to Work Relief,” 4 October 1982.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Welfare reform scenarios rarely admit “the costs or [agree] that the poor are worth the investment.” According to the director of child-care at the national Children’s Defense Fund, “experts in welfare will say – if only off the record – that the economics of welfare reform don’t work if you factor in high-quality day care.” Ellen Goodman, “Welfare reform overlooks child care,” *Athens Messenger*, 3 March 1987. (Edit.)

³⁵ Pyles, “Testimony in Opposition to Work Relief.”

³⁶ Owedo Suber, “Workfare Program,” 4 October 1982.

The GCWRO made a number of recommendations to improve for recipients the already burdensome and paternalistic work requirements. First, “if the welfare department were truly interested in helping recipients get jobs rather than terminating benefits it would provide for oral warnings, written warnings and short term suspensions prior to taking the drastic step of terminating benefits for three months.”³⁷ Second, Job Clubs funding, 25-percent of which goes to private providers, only requires the provider to supply items like chairs, telephones, and postage stamps, which already exist in county welfare departments. More responsibilities should be placed on Job Club providers. Third, CWEP employers should be *required* to give priority to CWEP recipients when job openings come up, and violations to do so should bar the participating program for five years. Fourth, education and training funding should be prioritized, since they are most likely to help transition a person off of welfare. Fifth, recipients, not case workers, should be able to decide their own career goals and which training programs to attend – an acknowledgement of civic competence.³⁸

As a counter to “workfare, a program that would expand forced labor in our county and state,”³⁹ Bob Sheak of the Athens Welfare Advisory Board recommended extending the hours available for subsidized work for recipients in order to humanize the relief program. The proposal was to create a voluntary program where recipients could “work 80 to 100 hours a month on the jobs they now work 30 or fewer hours, and continue to give them the work expense allowance and medical coverage.”⁴⁰ With more opportunity for work, both employee and employer would invest more in on-the-job skill development.

In 1985, a pilot workfare program was passed which was not as stringent as the one proposed in 1982. The penalties were reductions in benefits rather than full family sanctions, counties had

³⁷ Snyder, “Hearings on Ohio Workfare Regulations,” 6.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

³⁹ Bob Sheak, “Humanize Welfare,” *Athens Messenger*, 19 May 1983. (Edit.)

⁴⁰ Sheak, “Humanize Welfare.” (Edit.)

discretion in applying the sanctions, and there was no work participation rate requirement. Athens County operated the pilot as a volunteer program.⁴¹ In 1987, Jack Frech had a plan, similar to Bob Sheak's, that participants in CWEP could gain supplemental grants by working extra hours, essentially overtime pay that would not compromise the recipient's ability to receive medical assistance.⁴² Work sites would engage with recipients to set up a plan of additional training and work hours.⁴³ The plan was labelled "workfare" despite being focused on incentives and increasing the earning power of ADC and GR recipients in ways that previous proposals had not. Frech's goal for the program was to show the state that "money invested for training would have considerable long run payoffs."⁴⁴

The state approved programs for ten counties, including Athens, created a \$50 monthly incentive for GR recipients who completed their work assignments, and provided funds for day care to women in ADC who received job training. There was a challenge, however, in finding the people to staff the increased demand on welfare caseworkers. At the same time, new staff were needed to digitize the names of all people receiving public assistance, so that government agencies could cross-reference.⁴⁵ Ultimately, eight rural counties that took part in the workfare program reported \$5.2 million in savings, reaped through lower GR and ADC payments. In those eight counties, 2,946 welfare clients obtained jobs and moved off the rolls.⁴⁶ The majority of welfare recipients reported appreciating the job assistance.⁴⁷

⁴¹ Frech, "1982 Work"; Cole, "Coalition: Workfare Coalition."

⁴² The link between work and medical insurance has always been tenuous, leading to an income trap that keeps people from seeking employment. A social service supervisor for DHS noted that fear of losing Medicaid was a barrier to re-employment for ADC recipients: "I see the health card as one of our biggest obstacles to getting people off ADC. [The goal of the unemployed person with a family] is to stay eligible for ADC and our goal is to find them a job." Radford, "Service Jobs Taking Over."

⁴³ Roy Cross, "Proposal would allow relief workers greater earning power," *Athens Messenger*, 7 January 1986.

⁴⁴ Ruth Stump, "State Oks workfare for Athens," *Athens Messenger*, 5 January 1987.

⁴⁵ Ibid. Those interviewed emphasized the need for digitized assistance. A legal aid lawyer agreed that people should not have to share data and their stories multiple times with multiple agencies (e.g. both workforce development and JFS); however, she argued that there are broader privacy concerns about a massive dataset on welfare recipients.

⁴⁶ James Bradshaw, "Workfare saved counties \$5.2 million, study says," *Columbus Dispatch*, 30 September 1987.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Peter Hall argues that a “perennial feature of politics” is “the struggle both for advantage within the prevailing terms of discourse and for leverage with which to alter the terms of political discourse.”⁴⁸ At the heart of discourses oppositional to workfare are considerations of (1) what supportive services are needed, (2) whether jobs are available, and, if there are, (3) the kind of wages/benefits they provide. As Pyles testified, “is not the labor of a person’s hands to be justly recompensed, even if those hands happen to be those of a poor individual?”⁴⁹ If these considerations do not factor into designs of workfare, then the programs are simply a “reiteration and propagation of erroneous assumptions about welfare recipients and about the causes of poverty. [A workfare program] intervenes in the poverty cycle at the locus of the individual rather than the labor market.”⁵⁰ Work supports – broadly speaking – were relevant to state level debates over the transition from welfare to work in the 1980s. Oppositional discourse conceived them *as pre-requisites* to work, rather than *conditional on work* as they would become.

⁴⁸ Hall, “Policy Paradigms, Social Learning, and the State,” 290.

⁴⁹ Pyles, “Testimony in Opposition to Work Relief.”

⁵⁰ Gold, “The Failure of the Work Incentive (WIN) Program,” 501.

5.2 Contested Discourses on Benefit Levels

Governor Celeste developed “Ohio’s Strategic Plan: Investing in Ohio’s People” after holding nine public hearings across the state. The human services agenda centered on “promoting Ohioans’ independence by improving the ability of every citizen to get and keep a job.” It emphasized educational investments, a comprehensive state child care policy, linking education programs to employment, and new health delivery systems to contain costs.⁵¹ The final plan had three legs: “to help Ohioans achieve and maintain economic independence,” create “opportunities for Ohioans to achieve the highest possible quality of life,” and contain “the growth of expenditures while enhancing the quality of service.”⁵²

Celeste’s priority after winning office in 1982 was to ensure job creation, especially creating a marketplace for small businesses. In this way, commentators compared him to Rhodes.⁵³ While the goals were ambitious, the proposed solutions operated in the realm of human capital development and market competence. To achieve the goal of economic independence, Celeste proposed incentive grants for school districts to conduct improvement programs, combined with marketing efforts for higher education. To create opportunities for Ohioans, Celeste focused on prevention rather than correction, comprehensive child-care, and expanding affordable housing. However, all programs were to be implemented within the constraint of “containing the growth of expenditures,” especially through increasing state revenue through child support enforcement (a consistently attempted source of revenue).⁵⁴ These efforts emphasized for the most part the market competence of those in poverty. While they did not reject competence as paternalists would, they did not reinvigorate a broader conception of that competence. The hopes for the poor were tied to their access to the market.

⁵¹ “Human Resource Hearing to be Held,” *Athens Messenger*, 13 May 1984.

⁵² Lori Zonner, “Celeste presents strategic plan to improve lives of Ohioans,” *Post*, 1 October 1984.

⁵³ Robert Miller, “Rhodes, Celeste not unlike,” 1987.

⁵⁴ Zonner, “Celeste presents strategic plan to improve lives of Ohioans.”

Of course, fundamental to both market competence and broader conceptions of competence is the ability to meet one's basic needs. The 1960s had seen significant activism in favor of increasing benefit levels in addition to supportive services.⁵⁵ The Steering Committee for Adequate Welfare had transformed into the GCWRO, which, by the early 1970s, identified the most significant barriers for efforts to reduce poverty:⁵⁶ "welfare recipients have little voice with respect to quantity and quality of services rendered by social service agencies" [rejection of competence]; "the image of the welfare client held by the greater community is inaccurate, prejudicial and detrimental to the well-being of the total community" [racial prejudice]; and, the foremost problem, "inadequate welfare grants." In the 1980s, the Have a Heart Ohio Coalition, which included the GCWRO, became the primary advocate for increasing welfare benefit levels.^{57,58}

Between July 1979 and 1985, the closest that Ohio came to closing the gap between actual welfare payments and the state-established minimum standard was 61-percent in July 1981.⁵⁹ With a Democratic gubernatorial administration came the hope that there would be a significant decrease in the gap. After all, Celeste's Administration did recognize the damage done by inadequate benefits, stating in its strategic plan: "low public assistance income subsidies are viewed by some as 'incentives' that encourage recipients to find a job. This rationale is undermined by the fact that many recipients

⁵⁵ For further reading on the welfare rights movements, see Felicia Kornbluh, *The Battle for Welfare Rights* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007); Premilla Nadasen, *Welfare Warriors* (New York: Routledge, 2005); Stephen Pimpare, *People's History of Poverty in America* (New York: New Press, 2011); Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, *Poor Peoples' Movements* (New York: Random House, 1988); Guida West, *National Welfare Rights Movement* (London: Churchill Livingstone, 1971).

⁵⁶ GCWRO, "Plan of Action," 1971.

⁵⁷ The Coalition included, *Children's Defense Fund – Ohio*; *Catholic Conference of Ohio*; *National Association of Social Workers – Ohio Chapter*; *Ohio WRO*; *Athens County DHS*; *Auglaize-Mercer CAA*; *Corporation for Ohio Appalachian Development*; *Tri-County CAA*; *Metropolitan Area Church Board of Columbus*; *Council of Churches*, *Ohio Hunger Taskforce*, among others. (Italicized groups were interviewed for this thesis). Jack Frech, "Letter to Ohio WRO in support," Have a Heart Ohio Coalition, 23 April 1986. The Coalition sparked the ire of the Celeste Administration because its name was derived from Celeste's campaign slogan: Ohio, the Heart of it All. "Service Groups Show Concern About Tax Cut," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, 15 January 1985.

⁵⁸ The Coalition also advocated for voluntary jobs programs, aligning positive incentives within ADC and GA, and the principle that "any participant in work experience must be materially better off for having participated." Jack Frech, "Testimony on Welfare Reform for Human Resource Subcommittee," Have a Heart Ohio Coalition, 9 December 1987.

⁵⁹ Robert Miller, "Gap Widens between welfare payments and need."

are ill, disabled or elderly and will never be able to support themselves. *The stark consequence of inadequate income is intense suffering.*”⁶⁰

However, the budget cycles in 1985 and 1987 put into stark relief the expectations about antipoverty efforts between advocates and administrators like Jack Frech and policymakers. Celeste wanted to ride the recently good economic wave but was constrained politically. While other governors had to worry about balancing the budget, Celeste was presented with an opportunity and a dilemma. For the first time in a while, Ohio was solvent, and there was a surplus of funds in the state budget. Additionally, in 1986, there was the possibility of an automatic increase in income tax revenues for the state as the federal government proposed changes to determining Ohioans’ state taxes. The projected revenue would be \$500 million per year as long as the state did not reduce income taxes.⁶¹

However, in the most recent elections, Republicans had taken control of the state Senate, “and began warning against increased welfare spending while goading Celeste, who [was] up for reelection in 1986, to cut taxes.”⁶² Extra revenue was an impetus for an even larger tax cut. Rather than debating whether the time was right for massive investments in Ohio’s human capital infrastructure (as proposed in the strategic plan), the debate was simply about “the size of the tax cut promised by leaders of both political parties.”⁶³ In the 1985 biennial budget, Republicans proposed a 30-percent cut, while Celeste successfully countered with a 10-percent cut and only a 4-percent increase for recipients of ADC and GR (about \$12 and \$4 per month, respectively, for each of the next two years).⁶⁴ While it was an increase, advocates argued that it was nowhere near the amount needed and certainly nowhere near the increase that the state would be capable of with fewer people on the welfare rolls and a federal ADC payment increase of 2.6-percent.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Quoted in Jack Frech, “Legislative Memo,” *Plain Dealer*, 15 March 1985. (Edit.) Emphasis added.

⁶¹ Miller, “Gap Widens between welfare payments and need.”

⁶² Coleman, “Ohio and Its Poor Struggle Under Revised Welfare Rules.”

⁶³ “Service Groups Show Concern About Tax Cut.”

⁶⁴ Coleman, “Ohio and Its Poor Struggle Under Revised Welfare Rules.”

⁶⁵ Lisa Stettler, “Frech blasts Celeste’s relief plans,” *Athens News*, 11 February 1985.

Advocates like Frech argued that Celeste “parroted the Reagan administration” by bowing to political pressure and shifting the money available to “more politically popular areas,”⁶⁶ a criticism made of Governor Rhodes two decades earlier.⁶⁷ A Celeste aide acknowledged that the budget proposals were as “politically expedient as possible. It is as much as he can justly give them without submitting an outrageous proposal budget. It has to get through a Republican senate.... It’s what he was able to fiscally and politically responsibly (submit).”⁶⁸ The administration was firm in stating that the five-percent raise in the previous budget clearly showed a commitment to helping the poor.⁶⁹ The appearance of fiscal constraints, reinforced by the political constraints of a GOP Senate, presented challenges for advocates who wanted to do more for the poor in the state.

5.2.i Dashed Hopes for Democrats

Throughout his time in the welfare office, Frech would come down hardest on Democrats, since the public perceives Democrats to have the needs of the poor in mind. “When those folks turn their backs on you, there’s no one left,” he said.⁷⁰ Frech had argued that the 1985 budget went against the previous year’s strategic plan which acknowledged the myths around low welfare payments. The nod by the Celeste Administration was to a set of policies that would increase income – through cash or employment. The duplicity, then, was striking according to advocates. Not only is the administration nominally is committed to the poor, but there is also a surplus of funds (a position Ohio would find itself in countless times; see ‘rainy day fund’). However, the surplus also constrained poverty advocates by lessening public support for increased benefits. Advocates had put in “strenuous effort to publicize the needs of indigent people, a move that was suggested by the ‘political powers’

⁶⁶ Frech, “Legislative Memo.”

⁶⁷ Stettler, “Frech blasts Celeste’s relief plans.”

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

as a means of getting more support.”⁷¹ However, the public tends to view the poor as being taken care of when the economy is in recovery and there is an overarching “feel good” mood.⁷²

In 1987, Celeste ultimately decided that only 2.17-percent of the budgeted 4-percent welfare grant increase would be allowed. When the budget director was challenged about why the state would not use the \$19.7 million left in the welfare GR fund, he stated that that money should be used to “plug a few other holes in the budget.”⁷³ Frech made the case that a mother with two children only receives 45-percent of the state standard of need, while the administration emphasized the 13.8-percent benefit increases over the past four years that kept pace with cost of living increases.⁷⁴ It was a difference between wanting to be in a life-raft versus celebrating treading water.

The refusal to grant the additional 1.83-percent that was budgeted was part of a plan requiring one-percent spending cuts across *all* state agencies. However, “tax collections [were] running far enough above estimates to head off... cuts for most state agencies. But, to ensure that the state finishes the fiscal year in the black, Gov. Richard F. Celeste [ruled] out further welfare increases.”⁷⁵ This dynamic is telling of the place of the poor among government priorities. Frech acknowledged that “this is a tough political issue because of the rules of the political game,” i.e. the poor tend not to vote, do not have the resources for campaign contributions, and are not a political force.⁷⁶

Throughout the budget debates, Frech argued that a greater increase would go a long way for resource strapped families who ultimately have to make choices between basic necessities: “These choices have led to increased numbers of homeless persons, increased delinquent utility payments and

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Jackie Jadnak, “Welfare shortchanged in increases it needs,” *Cincinnati Enquirer*, 21 December 1986.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Cliff Treyns, “Celeste says no to welfare increase,” *Columbus Dispatch*, 8 May 1987.

⁷⁶ “Welfare boss says politics clouds poverty issue,” *Athens Messenger*, 29 January 1989. At this time, the GCWRO had become less of a political force and less activist in its orientation. Maris Deneke, “Against All Odds,” *Case Western Reserve University*, 20 May 1990. For example, by 1986, the Help Yourself Program – focused on self-improvement for those in poverty – had become a primary objective of the GCWRO under the label of “self-sufficiency.” These activities included a motivational class series. Mabel Watley, “Presentation to Federated Services Panel,” GCWRO, 17 October 1975.

shutoffs, greatly increased use of food pantries and more hard to quantify consequences of inadequate diets, poor housing conditions and increased family stress.”⁷⁷ State legislators such as Sen. Jan Long did “not feel it is a question of neglect, but rather of not having the money to do what is needed. He said budgeting is a matter of competing priorities.”⁷⁸ “As far as [the Celeste administration is concerned], taking care of the poorest in the state is one of their lower priorities,” responded Frech.⁷⁹ Ethel Young, of Low Income People Together in Cleveland, called the administration, “sapsuckers,” for constantly promising increases and then saying they do not have the money when the time comes.⁸⁰

But money was available: Of the \$90 million collected through court-ordered child support payments, only \$17 million went directly to families for whom the money was intended. The state used the rest to offset its own ADC payments to those families, despite the payment itself not meeting the minimum need.⁸¹ Frech argued that this, along with \$23 million in cuts in the 1987 budget to the emergency assistance program for food and shelter, as hunger and homelessness were on the rise, was evidence of the Celeste Administration’s squandering of an opportunity, and of the fact that “society’s tolerance [for poverty] has grown uncomfortably high.”⁸² Fiscal hesitancy to raise taxes and spending, political agendas within a conservative state, and their constraining discourses dashed hopes for a significant effort to reduce poverty through benefit increases.

⁷⁷ Frech, “Legislative Memo.”

⁷⁸ Steve Robb, “Poor may get poorer under Celeste plan,” *Athens Messenger*.

⁷⁹ Treyens, “Celeste says no to welfare increase.”

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Mary Yost, “Attention focuses on needs of poor, homeless in state,” *Columbus Dispatch*, 1 January 1989.

⁸² Ibid.

5.3 Public Discourse: Paternalism's False Promise

In the late 1980s, paternalists would start to argue that public perception would change if only the poor were working. *Beyond Entitlement* came out in 1986, and the notion that the poor would be viewed more favorably was rooted in Mead's assertion of 'reciprocal obligation,' i.e. the poor are respected when they meet the civic obligations already met by others. However, the mandatory work requirements in the 1960s had not quelled the bias against welfare, even as the Great Society programs had made the public more aware of the poor's circumstances.⁸³ By the early 1970s, the GCWRO identified that an inaccurate and prejudicial view of the welfare client was a significant barrier to efforts to reduce poverty.⁸⁴ With the Reagan emphasis on work requirements and the Celeste acquiescence on work requirement demonstrations, there was a similar promise that public attitudes would change.

Throughout the decade, however, public discourse parroted a number of myths about welfare. In 1987, a survey done by researchers at Ohio University of registered voters⁸⁵ showed that most Ohioans believed that the majority of the state's poor are Black, despite the vast majority of the poor in Ohio being White, with African Americans in fact comprising 26-percent. They believed that most welfare recipients receive benefits for four to six years, despite nearly half being on the rolls for less than two. They believed that most people on welfare cheated, despite the welfare fraud rate being .03-percent. They believed that welfare recipients do not use their money wisely, despite studies citing efficient use of funds by recipients. These 'myths' would be the driving force for increasingly stringent reforms to the welfare state.

And yet, illustrating the tension between American Welfare Orders, the same polling showed that Ohioans believed that the government was not adequately meeting the needs of the poor and that

⁸³ The Rediscovery of Poverty, see Harrington, *The Other America*; Dwight Macdonald, "Our Invisible Poor," *New Yorker*, 12 January 1963, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1963/01/19/our-invisible-poor>.

⁸⁴ GCWRO, "Plan of Action."

⁸⁵ "Ohioans believe myths about welfare, poll says," *Madison Press*, 11 May 1987; Terry Smith, "Survey shows public myths about poverty," *Athens News*, 14 May 1987.

the poor were not responsible for their poverty. As a result, those surveyed were “very supportive of programs designed to get people off *welfare*.”⁸⁶ More than 80-percent thought that poverty should be ranked high on the state’s concerns, and more should be done to bring awareness to poverty conditions. According to researchers, “many respondents felt poor people should be required to work for their benefits, but they also recognized that most people on *assistance* want to work and that there are not enough jobs for those who do want to work.”⁸⁷ While two-thirds of respondents supported raising the minimum wage, most would not support increased taxes for programs that help the poor.⁸⁸

As we see, in public consciousness there falsely exist two types of government help: ‘assistance to the poor’ and ‘welfare.’ The ambiguity with which both exist in public consciousness makes it difficult to believe that a very *specific* work requirement imposed on a very *specific* population will help to do away with the hatred for a very *general* program and the *perceived recipients* of that program.⁸⁹ Whether the poor are working or not, the addition of work requirements does nothing to assuage the public’s concern over people getting something for nothing. Political support for more spending or fewer conditions on recipients is hard to muster because the specter of ‘welfare’ remains.⁹⁰

Martin Gilens, in his seminal work, *Why Americans Hate Welfare*, brought similar findings to the forefront of welfare policy discourse. Fundamental to his argument was the association that White Americans make between welfare and Black Americans, forwarding racist notions of Black people as lazy and unwilling to work.⁹¹ Throughout the 1980s, Reagan had done his part to further the racist and sexist trope of the ‘welfare queen.’⁹² Heclo writes of Reagan’s additional ability to adapt to and influence public opinion: “Attacking the administrative slackness of welfare, demanding work form

⁸⁶ “OU Research report explodes myths held by public about poor,” *Athens Messenger*, 11 May 1987. Emphasis added.

⁸⁷ Ibid. Emphasis added.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Roger Cobb and Charles Elder, *Participation in American Politics*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 1983) argue that such ambiguity makes collective action from diverse motivations and values possible.

⁹⁰ This persists into the 1990s. See Toner, “Politics of Welfare: Focusing on the Problem.”

⁹¹ Gilens, *Why Americans Hate Welfare*.

⁹² Ange-Marie Hancock, *The Politics of Disgust* (New York: NYU Press, 2004).

able-bodied persons claiming income support, targeting the poor's share of resources on those presumably most in need – these were positions in tune with mainstream American attitudes regarding anti-poverty policy.”⁹³ Conservative economist Thomas Sowell wrote that those who were advocating for welfare as a right in the 1960s were now “parasites,” “indignant... at any suggestion that they change their ‘lifestyle’ so as to support themselves.”⁹⁴ This emphasis on lifestyle, choice, and internal perverse incentives allowed people like Mead to reject the assumption of competence in those who are poor. The answer, then, from the public's perspective was to reduce welfare *and* provide adequate means of support. ‘Welfare’ was tied, not to a safety net of support, but to a system that wasted taxpayer money and served a population that was Black, lazy, and fraudulent. The focus on ‘welfare’ itself was a “vehicle of discourse”⁹⁵ which obfuscated the racist undertones, helping to forward colorblind assessments of poverty.

These themes are reflected in the local discourse at the time. Contributors to the local newspapers debated (1) whether people on benefits are using them fraudulently or are actually poor, and whether their poverty is their own doing, (2) whether taxpayers should be the ones responsible for the redistributive burden, and (3) whether welfare programs ask enough of the poor in return for support. Each theme is articulated by the following editorial writers, representative of the hegemonic local and state-level discourse.

5.3.i Are they Actually Poor? Denial Reinforcing Poverty's Invisibility

Writing into the *Athens Messenger* in 1984, Vicki Ross expressed that she was tired of hearing about poor people having a hard time making ends meet given the amount of benefits they receive:

⁹³ Hugh Heclo, “The Political Foundation of Antipoverty Policy,” in Sheldon Danziger and Daniel Weinberg, eds., *Fighting Poverty* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1986), 312-340. 340.

⁹⁴ Thomas Sowell, “West has become a ‘chump society,’” *Columbus Dispatch*, 14 August 1987. (Edit.)

⁹⁵ Schmidt, “Does Discourse Matter in the Politics of Welfare State Adjustment?,” 170.

they do not pay a cent for food, they receive \$250 per month for housing, and they receive free Medical and dental care through Medicaid.⁹⁶ Even among those on public assistance, the spectre of someone receiving aid who does not need it was present, e.g. ‘Snitch calls’ in which recipients ‘snitch’ about others potentially having an undeclared job or a live-in partner act as quality-checks for the welfare office.⁹⁷ And recipients tried to distinguish themselves from the undeserving: “I wish they could understand,” one interviewee said of the public, “There are different classes of people on welfare, and it was terrible to have to go through the whole scene [of applying].”⁹⁸

Pat Gagne responded that those in poverty do have a difficult time making ends meet, but noted that “the rhetoric from those in power is that poverty has been eliminated.”⁹⁹ Part of the reason for this claim and claims like those made by Ross was the fact that poverty conditions were for the most part invisible to policymakers and the general public. Some news outlets featured editorials written by people on welfare, as well as stories on the conditions of poverty in certain areas. *Athens News* began one feature stating, “The poor of Athens County are faceless and nameless.”¹⁰⁰ One anonymous recipient wrote, “The ADC mother will probably be invisible to the community in which she lives except in the grocery store, where food stamps mark her failure as a woman without a man,”¹⁰¹ articulating a commonly held expectation of traditional gender roles alongside a rejection of state-sponsored dependency. Not only does the shame associated with welfare reciprocity make them less likely to identify as such, but program structures, meant to alleviate public shame, ultimately reinforce the invisible nature of poverty.¹⁰²

⁹⁶ Vicki Ross, *Athens Messenger*, 17 February 1984. (Edit.)

⁹⁷ Interview with Jack Frech.

⁹⁸ Sandra Shirey, “I’m gettin’ by, but it’s pretty close,” *Athens Messenger*.

⁹⁹ Pat Gagne, “Alternatives to Situation,” *Athens Messenger*, 28 February 1984. (Edit.)

¹⁰⁰ Shirey, “I’m gettin’ by, but it’s pretty close.”

¹⁰¹ Pat Jeanchild, “Think Twice before judging another’s groceries.” (Edit.)

¹⁰² One welfare reform veteran explained, “You used to have to show up physically to get your food stamps.... If we had 1.6 million Ohioans showing up to get their food stamps – But, now, it’s hidden.... Your neighbor could be on food stamps you would have no idea.” He argued that “it’s good we’re taking the stigma out of it but on the other way we just don’t get a sense how deep” the human problem is. Rather, when “we talk about our caseloads going up and down, they

5.3.ii Why Burden the Taxpayers?

As we saw in Chapter 4.4, the colorblind framing between the taxpayers and the welfare recipients had racist origins. Within Athens County, a predominantly White county, the motif was nonetheless present, reinforced by poverty's invisibility and stereotypes that transcended community boundaries. Ross and others writing into the editorial pages set up the common refrain regarding competition for resources between the taxpayer and the welfare recipient. Ross' predominant complaint: working people carry the burden of financing public assistance. However, she lays blame on those who need assistance instead of the politicians who design the tax code.¹⁰³ Similarly, Edward Stube complained that, while he and his wife work to pay for housing, food, clothing, healthcare, and heating, welfare recipients are "assisted."¹⁰⁴ He lamented that "there's talk of these bureaucrats asking for more money to assist welfare recipients with the increase we all will face in our phone bills.... My wife and I work to pay for the insurance premiums needed to be 'financially responsible drivers.' Will welfare recipients be assisted to become such?"¹⁰⁵

Wahnetta Jennice of Glouster responded by emphasizing that she and her family "have always been taxpayers and what my daughter got to live on, I helped out some on it."¹⁰⁶ Diane Bailey cited the shame associated with applying for benefits, and that "Yes, Miss Ross, us 'welfare' people have to pay a price for what we get, it's called humiliation caused by people like you that can't understand because they've never had to go through it."¹⁰⁷ Pat Gagne tried to draw solidarity between the poor and working class: "I don't think the working class should have to carry the burden of the poor, nor

become just data. They become just stats. They don't, they're not people." For a discussion on the influence of shame, see Robert Walker, *The Shame of Poverty* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2014).

¹⁰³ Ross, *Athens Messenger*. (Edit.)

¹⁰⁴ Edward Stube, "Welfare vs. Work," *Athens Messenger*, 26 February 1984. (Edit.)

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. Stube was referring to a law requiring proof of financial responsibility as a condition for operating a motor vehicle, ultimately disadvantaging rural poor who have no access to public transportation, and urban poor whose public transportation needs are not adequately met. Jack Frech, "A simple question," *Athens Messenger*, 1984. (Edit.)

¹⁰⁶ Alice Bartlett, "It's not a great living," *Athens Messenger*, 1 March 1984. (Edit.)

¹⁰⁷ Diane Bailey, "Be in My Shoes," *Athens Messenger*, 26 February 1984. (Edit.)

do I think anyone should have to live in poverty. 'There are alternatives to the situation' such as a tax structure that heavily taxes the wealthy or reducing "the defense budget by one-fifth."¹⁰⁸

The perceived division between the 'working class taxpayers' and 'welfare recipients' was prominent not just in questions about whose tax money paid for what services, but also in questions about which jobs are available. The exchange below between Dan "on general relief" and Karen in the "middle class" exemplifies these divisions:

Dan:

If it wasn't for all these jealous families trying to keep up with the Joneses and holding down two or more jobs, there would be work enough for every able-bodied person who is on welfare. I am not speaking of the really poor families (minimum wage) who need two jobs.

If these high-income families would give up one of their jobs, then the tax dollars could be used for something that would benefit everyone. Let's make job openings so welfare people can earn a living for themselves and their families.

By the way, I am on general relief.

Karen:

My husband and I would like to ask Mr. Smith if he thinks working women are overjoyed to drop their children off at day care, go off to a job where she's likely to face harassment and overwork, and then come home in time to cook, clean and fall in bed exhausted, only to do it all over again the next day? Of course not.

In the majority of two-job families when more than one member is working it is because the money is needed for the family to have a decent standard of living. Trying to buy a good car and home, nice clothes and decent food has nothing to do with "trying to keep up with the Joneses." Furthermore, as a group of welfare families often have a high school education at best and, therefore, couldn't qualify for most of the jobs that middle class families have worked and competed hard for.

By the way, we are middle class...

Dan disavows the notion that those on general relief do not want to work but places blame for lack of jobs on middle-class families with dual breadwinners.¹⁰⁹ Karen argues that the jobs are not good enough to live on only one and most welfare recipients would not qualify anyway.¹¹⁰ The debate

¹⁰⁸ Gagne, "Alternatives to Situation." (Edit.)

¹⁰⁹ Dan Smith, "Jobs Needed," *Athens Messenger*, 6 March 1984. (Edit.)

¹¹⁰ Karen S. and Terry Donaldson, "2 jobs needed," *Athens Messenger*. (Edit.)

makes very clear that the language of inequality and resource distribution was divorced in the public consciousness from the broader tax and economic structures from which the upper class benefit.

5.3.iii Are We Asking Enough of the Poor?

However resourceful the poor are, it is a continuous struggle to make ends meet. The common thread of interviews done by *Athens News*, seconded by ethnographic work such as DeParle's *American Dream*, is that the poor piece together sources of income, sometimes from work, sometimes from welfare. The poor are getting by, "but it's pretty close."¹¹¹ However, within the editorial pages, there is the desire that those in poverty need to face more paternalistic scrutiny.

Incensed at articles and reports that defended purchases made by welfare recipients, Donna Russell wrote, "Nowhere in the breakdown of expenditures do I see any percentage for cigarettes, half-operable automobiles, gas and beer, although many recipients of assistance seem to have money for all the aforementioned items.... There must be some unknown reason why so many persons who do not want to work come to our area and we as Athens Countians have the second highest poverty level in the state of Ohio."¹¹² This judgment occurs despite studies that show that women on ADC ration food and budget money better than the average consumer and despite the fact that food stamps rarely last a full month. Instead, when food stamps are used "enough people feel they have the *right and obligation* to evaluate the groceries of the ADC... mother that the welfare office receives frequent calls which are a tirade on the contents of some woman's shopping cart."¹¹³ While mothers using food stamps might get tattled on behind their backs, in person "the people behind you start making faces, they nudge one another and give you dirty looks."¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Shirey, "I'm gettin' by, but it's pretty close."

¹¹² Donna Russell, "Screen welfare cases," *Athens Messenger*, 10 August 1986. (Edit.)

¹¹³ Jeanchild, "Think Twice before judging another's groceries." (Edit.) Emphasis added.

¹¹⁴ Bailey, "Be in My Shoes." (Edit.)

The responses to people like Russell and Ross ranged from outrage – “Obviously, this lady has never had to use food stamps nor does she know all of the circumstances about welfare”¹¹⁵ – to descriptions of the conditions for those receiving benefits. Alice Bartlett of *The Plains* argued that living on food stamps and welfare is not a great life or way to make a living, and in order to actually survive, one has to be a “good manager.”¹¹⁶ With limited financial resources, “intelligence and resourcefulness” can help recipients “take advantage of ‘the system’ to become self-sufficient in the future”; however, recipients are also subject to the imperfect market, especially imperfect information. Most recipients do not have the advantages of knowing where to go or what aid is available.¹¹⁷ Bartlett explained that the ability of the poor to survive on such meager benefits proves the competency which paternalism rejects, and dispels the notion that work requirements are necessary.

Frech consistently argued that paternalist efforts aimed at changing the behavior of the poor would not work: “Implementing work incentive programs because of the notion that people on welfare just don’t want to work ‘discounts the structural reasons – shifts in the economy, plant closing, jobs that don’t pay enough – why we have poverty’.... The problems of poverty... won’t be solved because people are ‘trying to make the poor different people somehow.’”¹¹⁸ Instead of just providing more money to the poor,¹¹⁹ “what we are doing now is trying to solve poverty and all other social ills [e.g. alcoholism, lack of education, and mental health] at the same time.”¹²⁰ As we saw in Chapter 1, the correlation between poverty and other “social ills” often leads to a lack of differentiation between them, prescribing the same paternalistic interventions regardless of their inadequacy.

The notion – whether explicit or implicit – of deservingness pervades discussions of whether the poor should be subject to more scrutiny. For example, when the *Athens Messenger* covered the

¹¹⁵ Ibid. (Edit.)

¹¹⁶ Wahneta Jennice, “No great life,” *Athens Messenger*, 1 March 1984. (Edit.)

¹¹⁷ Shirey, “I’m gettin’ by, but it’s pretty close.”

¹¹⁸ Ruth Stump, “Poverty Persists in, out of shadows,” *Athens Messenger*, 1 January 1989.

¹¹⁹ Christine Nielsen, “Welfare Reform: the good, the bad, the ugly,” *Athens News*, 20 October 1988.

¹²⁰ Stump, “Poverty Persists in, out of shadows.”

myth that “the welfare rolls are full of able-bodied lazy bums,” instead of first arguing that welfare recipients are not lazy, or showing that “limited job opportunities, a lack of adequate training and punitive financial penalties are obstacles that must be overcome to move public assistance recipients toward self-sufficiency,” the factual response provided by the paper turned to children: “Statewide, nearly two-thirds of recipients are children.”¹²¹ While accurate, it is a consistent theme that instead of arguing for the deservingness of all adults, well-meaning advocates will quickly move to discussing the needs of children,¹²² on whom no one can place blame, but for whom paternalism is more ethically justified.¹²³ This illustrates an acquiescence on the Left to accept the terms of conservative discourse.

¹²¹ Mary Exline, “Myths mask real face of poverty,” *Athens Messenger*, 8 January 1989.

¹²² DeParle, *American Dream*, notes this dynamic: “A common liberal move was not to talk about poor adults at all, but instead shift the locus to children, who were innocent,” p. 96. Gordon, “Who Deserves Help?” also notes that focusing on children, and not the parent(s) caused 20th Century welfare policy to be self-defeating.

¹²³ Soss, et al., *Disciplining the Poor*, write, in the father-child relationship, “The child... lacks the capacity to know what is in her or his best interest and has yet to develop the self-discipline needed to act effectively on such knowledge,” p. 23.

5.4 Paternalism Prevalent and Contested

In the 1960s, we saw the emergent assumptions of paternalism. In the 1980s, we see the failed resistance by the Left to their newfound prevalence in welfare policymaking. These failures took place on two fronts: (1) an acquiescence to conservative efforts around work requirements, and (2) an inadequate counter to spending cut retrenchment through meager benefit raises.

First, we see that as the 1980s progressed, resistance to work requirements ultimately waned. We do see early oppositional discourse to work requirements, and advocacy for services that support a transition from welfare to work (*prerequisites to work*). But, the Celeste Administration approved pilot programs prior to the FSA, which continued to ingrain the notion that any cash-assistance should be conditional on work. At this time, we also see the emergence of Mead's "reciprocal obligation."

Second, we see the failure to counter the effects of spending cut retrenchment, since benefit raises did not approach the state minimum standard. The human capital development elements of Celeste's agenda were constrained politically by cutting taxes, despite a surplus in the state budget and other sources of revenue (e.g. child support enforcement). While the discourses surrounding these moderate benefit raises did not reject the competence assumption, they did not move beyond a belief in market competence.

Throughout the 1980s, we also see the continued false promise of paternalism, the notion that the poor will be viewed more favorably if they work. Discourses echoed myths about welfare that contributed to colorblind policymaking agendas. Editorial contributors questioned whether those receiving benefits were actually poor, whether taxpayers should have the burden of supporting them, and whether the poor should face paternalist scrutiny. At the heart of these debates was the perceived competence of those in poverty.

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Criticisms of the 1980s federal reforms were quick to come,¹²⁴ not in the least because the reality for many had not changed. Profiles published at the time highlighted the financial dilemmas of the working poor, and the persistent issue of benefit cliffs for health insurance. One profile wrote,

If he had a chance at another full-time minimum-wage job, Dave admits he would have to think twice about taking it. On one hand, he would want to take the job because of the stigma of being on welfare. (“You swallow a lot of pride,” he said.) On the other hand, he would have to consider whether the family would be better off with a full-time job, but a loss of welfare benefits. “We have to go with what’s best for our family,” Beth said.¹²⁵

Another welfare recipient, when asked whether she would go back to welfare, replied, “I would never go back. Only if it was between that and starving.”¹²⁶ Frech bemoaned what the new paternalists viewed as their goal, “people should not be forced to choose between the inadequacies of the welfare and the inadequacies of the current job market.... Unfortunately, our current welfare reform efforts are measured almost entirely in terms of dollars saved in the welfare system as opposed to improvement in the lives of our poorest citizens.”¹²⁷ These inadequacies would mean that the break between welfare reform efforts after the FSA was short-lived, as paternalism moved from prevalent to dominant.

¹²⁴ Ruth Stump, “Critics say welfare reform doesn’t go far enough,” *Athens Messenger*, 25 January 1989; Jack Frech, “Reform is more take than give,” *Plain Dealer*, 30 January 1989.

¹²⁵ Steve Robb, “Between a rock and a hard place,” *Athens Messenger*, 1 January 1989.

¹²⁶ Kerry Boyer, “Welfare was fight for survival,” *Athens Messenger*.

¹²⁷ Frech, “Reform is more take than give.”

Chapter 6.

Paternalism Dominant

The Voinovich Administration [1991-1998]
– Triumph of the ‘Welfare as Self-sufficiency’ Order

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The Introduction to this thesis gave context for the federal era dedicated to ending the entitlement to cash assistance. Following the FSA, national commentators called the early 1990s “the era of ‘mutual obligations’ and ‘the new paternalism.’”¹ National newspapers provided significant analysis of the ongoing state- and federal-level debates. Lawrence Mead was the frequently approached expert and prophet of paternalism. His argument focused on the sorting mechanism as an enforcer of public values: “What the public wants to do is not spend more or spend less, but to cause the behavior of the recipients to change.... Shall we enforce values upon which everyone is agreed?”² The question for an analysis of political ideational development is whether this consensus was a compromise position or a conservative ideological victory, won at long last after the 1960s.³

During the 1990s, work requirements were sold to the public as either a bipartisan national consensus,⁴ i.e. both parties agree on the way forward, or a political compromise, i.e. both parties sacrifice major elements, such as conservatives ostensibly sacrificing their small government commitments. This thesis adds to those who argue that a particular agenda can be bipartisan and a consensus, while still being, as this case study shows, fundamentally and historically conservative.⁵ Paternalism’s dominance reflects the logic of dependency, a deeply conservative, anti-welfare statist agenda, even if that logic is adopted by the Democrats.

There is no doubt that federal-level Democrats positioned themselves for political advantage in the 1990s. Mead noted the shift: “The threat of time limits and other restrictions on benefits by Republicans has forced the Democrats to embrace work requirements for the first time.”⁶ In so doing,

¹ Toner, “Politics of Welfare: Focusing on the Problem.”

² Ibid.

³ According to Peck, “*Workfare*,” “The fundamental strategy of the Republican right – effectively realized in the 1996 Act – was to rupture the federal superstructure of welfarism, around which the fragile gains of the 1960s in benefits and entitlements were consolidated and on which much of the contemporary politics of welfare advocacy are predicated,” p. 156.

⁴ Soss, et al., *Disciplining the Poor*, 126.

⁵ Ibid., argue, and this thesis confirms, that conservative control of local institutions was a predictor of work requirement implementation between 1960 and 1996.

⁶ Pear, “Democrats Forge New Welfare Role.”

the Democrats bought into the false promise of paternalism: tough restrictions on welfare recipients who do not work as an opportunity to make advocacy for labor market changes more palatable.

Republicans started to fear that a strict work requirement and an end to the cash assistance entitlement might lead to the creation of other entitlements such as childcare or guaranteed jobs. So, work requirements were combined with spending cuts to continue the retrenchment of the welfare state.⁷ The ultimate end of this agenda was laid bare when Democrats pointed to the hypocrisy in the Republican plan that the work participation rate could be met by kicking people off of the welfare rolls, rather than placing them in training or education,⁸ contradicting the GOPs stated desire for welfare to be transitional. While it would seem an inconsistency, it is par for the course for an agenda of dismantling the welfare state.

In either case – bipartisan consensus or political compromise – work requirements were deemed *necessary*, either because the terms of the debate had changed (i.e. Mead argued that dependency politics had overtaken debates on classic liberalism) or because the system seen to have created intergenerational dependency had to be transformed into one that promoted work and personal responsibility (e.g. the backdrop for Clinton’s promise to ‘end welfare as we know it’). However, as this case study illustrates, the justifications for necessity, respectively, are ahistorical in their assessments of the role that work requirements have played in conservative policymaking and non-empirical in their theorizing of the relationship between work, welfare, and poverty in the U.S.⁹

National critics of these ‘necessary’ reforms emphasized two elements of paternalism that are central to this thesis: (1) paternalism’s role as a mechanism of retrenchment and, (2) paternalism’s reliance on the assumption of colorblindness. First, critics recognized that “the talk about encouraging

⁷ Peck, “*Workfare*.”

⁸ Pear, “Democrats Forge New Welfare Role.”

⁹ While this thesis *does* argue that paternalism is a distinct ideational strand in a conservative political order, not a political compromise, from the perspective of how the poor are affected, the question of compromise vs. consensus is a distinction without a difference.

work and personal responsibility is simply political cover for budget cuts, a rough new recessionary politics that penalizes the least powerful.” Second, they claimed that “bashing welfare has become the next best resort for politicians [to explicit race-baiting]... a fourth generation code phrase, perhaps more powerful than busing, quotas or Willie Horton.”¹⁰ Jack Frech was interviewed for national publications and, when asked about paternalist proposals such as family caps, was quick to note their dog-whistle nature, arguing, “It smacks of eugenics, saying you can cut down on the problem of poverty if fewer [poor kids] are born.”¹¹

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Ohio in the 1990s under Governor George Voinovich illustrates effectively the state-level triumph of the ideational order of ‘welfare as self-sufficiency.’ Ohio retrenched the welfare state through (1) spending cuts to and eventual elimination of GA, and (2) paternalism through the Ohio Works First (OWF) program, which implemented work requirements on federal cash assistance.

In this Chapter, we see parallels between the 1960s and 1990s in Ohio: work requirements strengthened and buttressed by other paternalist measures around parenting; work requirements as justification for spending cuts, and vice versa; public perception of the poor unchanged by work requirements; protests across the state against spending cuts and inadequate welfare payments; and little said explicitly about racial prejudices driving these programs or the racial disparities in their implementation. The parallels illustrate that there is a continuity in efforts around welfare. I argue that paternalism is part of a *consistent* ideological agenda and an *adaptation* to further that agenda. However, the parallels are not identical in their strength.

¹⁰ Toner, “Politics of Welfare: Focusing on the Problem.” David Duke, for example, the former KKK Grand Wizard, “garnered the majority of the white vote in the Louisiana governor’s race by alluding frequently to undeserving welfare recipients.” Gwen Ifill, “Whose Welfare?,” *New York Times*, 19 January 1992. See also Taylor, “Carrots and Sticks of Welfare Reform,” A13.

¹¹ Julie Kosterlitz, “Behavior Modification,” *National Journal*, 1 February 1992. 275.

The assumptions undergirding the strands of paternalism and welfare abolition have been circulating through welfare debates since before the 1960s. While one strand may, at a particular time and in a particular place, be stronger than the other, they both act *independently* and *collaboratively* over time to limit – if not the existence of, at least the use of – the safety-net in America. This is because they both derive from the logic of dependency, which, by definition, is antithetical to the welfare state. These strands reached a peak in the 1990s, illustrating the triumph of the ‘welfare as self-sufficiency order.’

This chapter proceeds as follows. I expand on the two strands covered in the Introduction. First, the elimination of GA (welfare abolition) and, second, the creation of OWF (paternalism). Third, I examine the redefinition of cash assistance as a result of the reforms and other ongoing paternalist efforts. Finally, I examine the public discourse at the time, in which everything changes for nothing to change.

6.1 The First Strand: Retrenchment through Spending Cuts and Program Abolition

Chapter 1 established that the ‘welfare as self-sufficiency’ order is made up of two ideational strands, with different functional views for the role of government in addressing poverty and economic policies. The first strand with a limited view of government’s role is spending and program cuts, or welfare abolition as the logical extreme. Retrenchment in welfare state literature is straightforwardly associated with significant spending and program cuts.¹² Retrenchment through spending cuts is also based on the assumption in market competence for those in poverty, and so, cutting programs allegedly provides the incentives rational actors need to support themselves and their families through work.

In Ohio, the state had provided direct relief in some form for over 190 years, since its 1803 statehood.¹³ Since the 1940s, the state administered most general relief funds, sharing the financing burden with the counties and local governments.¹⁴ As we saw in the 1960s and 1980s, public discourse considered whether the benefit levels reach the state-established minimum standard and what level of government had the most responsibility to provide the difference, not whether the program should exist. Since the 1960s, however, work requirements had been strengthened in the program, reducing the number receiving benefits, priming GA for larger cuts. In the 1990s, Ohio ended general assistance for the employable “not with 1,000 cuts but, ... with two big bites.”¹⁵ This section examines the efforts in 1991 to implement time limits and benefit reductions, the subsequent protests in 1992 which exemplified the political and civic competence of those in poverty, and the elimination of the program completely in 1995.¹⁶

¹² Green-Pedersen, “The Dependent Variable Problem.”

¹³ “Traced back to the earliest township records.” Mary Yost, “Suit aims to halt welfare cuts,” *Columbus Dispatch*, 17 March 1992.

¹⁴ Dorothy Bucklin and Alden Teske, “The Administration of General Relief in the States During 1940,” *Social Security Bulletin* (1941): 32-36.

¹⁵ Thomas Suddes, “Friends of the people slap each other silly in Ohio House,” *Plain Dealer*, 6 April 1995. (Edit.)

¹⁶ Archival material for this Chapter was triangulated for accuracy with Wilson and Adams, Jr., “Welfare Reform: Ohio’s Response.”

6.1.i Program Cuts – 1991

A man who was burning clothing in an attempt to keep warm was the cause of an alarm for Athens firefighters early Sunday.

Residents on Hocking Street called the fire department at 3:40 a.m. to report what appeared to be a shed burning at the rear of 21 Elliott St. When firefighters arrived they found a man burning fabric on a grill. He told firefighters he lived in the shed, which has no heat source, and was burning what he described as clothing to keep warm.

The Messenger, Athens, 20 January 1992

“A Chill in the Heart,” by Daniel Thompson, Cuyahoga County Poet Laureate

It says you’re the heart of it all
But it seems your heart has turned
Arctic cold
With six months of darkness
Six months of light?
Who can make it through
When a half-year of days
Is one long, cold black night?

The Plain Dealer, Cleveland, 2 April 1992

The General Assistance (GA) program was cut in 1991 so that recipients were only eligible for six-months in a year.¹⁷ The epigraphs contrast this decision with the dire need in the state. Between 1992 and 1996, the number of people in Ohio receiving *any* benefits dropped 28-percent from 746,862 to 538,400.¹⁸ Since Democrats controlled the Ohio House from 1973 until 1995, the initial cut was part of a “bipartisan move to balance the budget,”¹⁹ although the initial suggestion was the Governor’s.²⁰ Voinovich had intended to cut the program completely in the 1991-1992 budget, insisting on a plan that would give counties money to develop their own assistance programs.²¹ At the time of the revised budget passing, Assistant Director of Ohio’s Office of Budget and Management, Paolo DeMaria, said, “Nobody wanted to make the cut, but the fiscal reality dictated

¹⁷ At the time, 12 states eliminated their GA programs for able-bodied individuals. Liz Schott and Misha Hill, “State General Assistance Programs are Weakening Despite Increased Need,” *Center on Budget and Policy Priorities*, 9 July 2015, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/family-income-support/state-general-assistance-programs-are-weakening-despite-increased>.

¹⁸ “Opponents say welfare changes don’t help people out of poverty.”

¹⁹ Benjamin Marrison, “Senate votes to ax general assistance,” *Plain Dealer*, 6 April 1995.

²⁰ Yost, “Suit aims to halt welfare cuts.” At the time, the state was running a deficit and was in the midst of a recession. Wilson and Adams, Jr., “Welfare Reform: Ohio’s Response,” 1368.

²¹ Dawn Hill, “GA cuts to bring hardships,” *Post*, 12 March 1992.

the cuts. It was determined that the able-bodied general assistance recipients were not a main priority of the state.”²² The government argued that these able-bodied recipients were refusing to work, and, therefore, wasting state-taxpayer money. DeMaria thought that those on GA might “explore more options for looking for work,” or would be placed in other assistance categories by case workers.²³

One critic responded: “It’s a foolish argument that \$100 a month is keeping them from getting a job. [State officials] try to rationalize an inhumane decision by blaming the victims – that it’s within their control to get jobs.”²⁴ Bob Garbo, executive director of Athens-Hocking-Perry CAA, noted that the limited benefits of \$136 per month prior to Voinovich’s Administration already made it clear that recipients were being ignored. The 1991 cuts, he argued, “just formalize it by saying, ‘you’re gone, you don’t exist.’”²⁵ While Voinovich (falsely) promised that the savings would contribute to jobs and trainings, one protestor claimed, “The whole philosophy of work was exposed to be fraudulent.”²⁶

Of the state’s 165,000 on GA, 90,000 were kicked off for six months on the First of April 1992. Cuyahoga County alone had 40,000 of the state’s GA recipients, according to ODHS. This led to a loss of \$44 million in cash benefits alone to the county.²⁷ After the 1992 cuts, homeless shelters, free clinics, and job-search programs were packed.²⁸ Cuyahoga County established and financed²⁹ the Work Preparation Alternative (WPA) and found that some GA recipients “would be employable immediately. They simply need someone to give them a job that pays a living wage.”³⁰ More than 1,800 people found jobs or job training with the WPA in the two months after the cuts.³¹ The poverty

²² Ibid.

²³ Nanette Kalis, “What happens to county after GA disappears?,” *Athens News*, 10 February 1992.

²⁴ Hill, “GA cuts to bring hardships.”

²⁵ Margie Emigh, “Speakers: welfare cuts scapegoat neediest,” *Athens Messenger*, 6 February 1992.

²⁶ Grant, “Now no General Assistance.”

²⁷ Gilbert Price, “1500 March on Statehouse; seek restoration of G.A.,” *Call and Post*, 9 April 1992.

²⁸ “New Programs help recipients of welfare cuts,” *Athens Messenger*, 22 June 1992. The numbers decreased as they found shelter with family and friends, known as ‘doubling, tripling, or quadrupling up.’ Requests to fill prescriptions, once paid by GA medical, increased 500-percent. Jim Phillips, “Coalition: GA cuts now showing up in homeless numbers,” *Athens NEWS*, 23 July 1992.

²⁹ “New Programs help recipients of welfare cuts.” \$3 million financed by the county.

³⁰ Grant, “Now no General Assistance.”

³¹ “New Programs help recipients of welfare cuts.” Capacity of 4,200 people; workers estimated 150 placements per day.

population has a wide range of actual skills and the challenge with reforms that push everyone off of benefits is that it does not allow for the time needed for training and job searching, or working with employers to “‘take a little bit of a risk’ and hire ‘one person’ who doesn’t fit the customary profile of a job candidate.”³² People assumed the cuts would push people into jobs, without recognizing the high turnover in GA to begin with, and that places of employment do not offer medical coverage to part-time employees.³³ The WPA became defunct without the proper resources.

One consequence of the cuts was the shift of about 10,500 people to disability assistance (DA) (approximately \$115 per month), a program to cover the disabled and children under 18.³⁴ However, this meant they were not eligible for jobs programs.³⁵ One social worker noted, “We’re losing a lot of people from our Community Work Experience Program. We knew when the GA program was reduced we would lose a lot of these people. We didn’t honestly know that so many GA people would qualify for DA.”³⁶ Of those cut, 1,900 were placed on AFDC,³⁷ but many did not shift to another program, as DeMaria had predicted. Additionally, when time came to reapply, 49,100 people did not. According to one report, “Human Services does not know what has happened to [those] who have not reapplied.”³⁸

Opponents to the cuts had warned that “those due to lose General Assistance will stand little chance of finding work while competing with 300,000 other unemployed Ohioans.... Their survival options include selling illegally \$111 in federal food stamps they will continue to receive, selling their blood, selling drugs, theft and prostitution.”³⁹ Case Western Reserve University tracked 1,023 GA

³² Grant, “Now no General Assistance.”

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Wilson and Adams, Jr., “Welfare Reform: Ohio’s Response,” 1369.

³⁵ Felix Hoover, “Few apply for new round of welfare,” *Columbus Dispatch*.

³⁶ Jim Massle, “Welfare cuts produce fear,” *Columbus Dispatch*, 25 May 1992.

³⁷ Hoover, “Few apply for new round of welfare.”

³⁸ “What happened to thousands slashed from welfare rolls?” *Athens Messenger*, 1 October 1992. This illustrates program cuts undermining any ostensible work agenda.

³⁹ Yost, “Suit aims to halt welfare cuts.”

recipients in Cuyahoga County from October 1991 until December 1993. The study found that 56-percent of the 43,000 recipients “went to work... after the cuts were enacted.” But most of the jobs were temporary and paid low wages, and only 10-percent of those who found jobs maintained steady work.⁴⁰ A writer to *The Plain Dealer* argued that the study demonstrates “that many welfare recipients want to work. And given the right incentives, they will find a way to work. Just as they will find a way to survive.”⁴¹ In anticipation of cutting the program two-years later, the incoming House Speaker, Rep. Jo Ann Davidson (R-Reynoldsburg), noted that previous cuts “didn’t seem to cause a crisis,”⁴² and a representative from DHS, said, “My sense is it has not resulted in the dire consequences a lot of people anticipated.”⁴³ For many, this was because of the help from friends, family, and informal networks that allowed people to survive.⁴⁴

Following the 1991 cuts, Bill Faith, from the Coalition for the Homeless, predicted future cuts to ADC, and Voinovich acknowledged, “We think that there are areas in the human service budget where we can do a better job of managing, and where reductions are logical.”⁴⁵ Not two months after, Governor Voinovich asked “for a new deal to be struck between the recipients, government and the taxpayers.” Voinovich recommended changes in welfare programs to save money and “reduce dependency on the system.” These proposals included increasing taxes for the poor (contributing to the cost of Medicaid) and paternalism (requiring welfare mothers to identify paternity and undergo family planning, a pilot requiring able-bodied ADC adults to participate in jobs training or public service work programs).⁴⁶ The Human Services Coalition (an advocacy group coalition) proposed for food stamps to be abolished in favor of cash assistance and temporarily supplementing the wages of

⁴⁰ “Living without GA,” *Plain Dealer*, 24 April 1995. Study: Claudia Coulton, et al., “How time-limited eligibility affects general assistance clients,” *Public Welfare* 51, no. 3 (1993): 29-36.

⁴¹ “Living without GA.”

⁴² Jonathan Riskind, “General Assistance faces extinction,” *Columbus Dispatch*, 15 December 1994.

⁴³ “Welfare official: Cuts not so bad,” 16 November 1992.

⁴⁴ DeParle, *American Dream*; Edin and Shaefer, *\$2.00 a Day*.

⁴⁵ “Be prepared for more welfare cuts, warns coalition director,” *Athens Messenger*, 27 March 1992.

⁴⁶ “Governor wants ‘new deal’ with welfare recipients,” *Athens Messenger*, 30 June 1992.

people who leave welfare and get jobs, without any strings attached like required family planning or paternity identification.⁴⁷ The successful version of the bill dropped the birth control counseling requirement and the demonstration project work requirement. Instead, it included a family cap on the number of children eligible for benefits in a recipient household and allowed eligible GA recipients to participate in jobs programs.⁴⁸

6.1.ii Political and Civic Competence – Protests to the GA Cuts

The budget trimming GA had passed with bipartisan support, rejecting complete abolition only because of opposition from the Human Services Coalition.⁴⁹ Bob Garbo argued that the cuts reflected a changing mentality toward the welfare system, calling it “welfare bashing time, folks.”⁵⁰ In fact, Paolo DeMaria *admitted*, “because of public perception, (GA) is an easy target... Public perception helps the process to cut back on (welfare).”⁵¹ He encouraged anyone worried about those hurt to donate to private charities, because, there, “Frankly, I know my money is better spent.”⁵²

However, six months later, April 1st, was the initial cut off for those receiving benefits. At the time of the cuts, of those on GA, half in cities and 90-percent in rural areas were White and 67-percent had work history. In cities, 41-percent were women and 53-percent had high school diplomas or equivalent. Ultimately, 106,720 were projected to lose benefits.⁵³ Democrats sponsored bills to restore cuts or delay their deadline to no avail. Sen. Abel (D-Athens) argued, “The pending cut-off of GA benefits is a threat to the very existence of those whose lives are already literally hanging by a thread.”⁵⁴

⁴⁷ Mary Beth Lane, “Cash in place of food stamps proposed,” *Plain Dealer*, 24 July 1992.

⁴⁸ “Ohio senate debates welfare reform bill this week,” *Athens Messenger*, 28 September 1992.

⁴⁹ Wilson and Adams, Jr., “Welfare Reform: Ohio’s Response,” 1369.

⁵⁰ Kalis, “What happens to county after GA disappears?”

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ “General Assistance recipients not who you might think they are,” *Athens Messenger*, 25 March 1992.

⁵⁴ Kalis, “What happens to county after GA disappears?”

As the cut-off deadline approached and passed, protestors gathered. They called it the “Poor People’s March on Columbus.”⁵⁵

Marchers traveled from Cleveland⁵⁶ just as in 1966 (Figure 6.1). 50 marchers traveled 130 miles from the Cincinnati area to Columbus in twelve days.⁵⁷ Pre-empting the arrival of the marchers, Voinovich’s spokesperson told the media, “We’re aware of what they’re doing and aware of their efforts. I think, though, it’s very unlikely that the cuts will be restored.”⁵⁸ An estimated 2,000 people protested outside the Statehouse. Bill Faith called for Voinovich’s resignation: “Someone who wants to balance the budget at the expense of the poor... is somebody who should step aside.”⁵⁹ The next day 400 demonstrators remained outside the capitol. A visibly weary Governor Voinovich fought back tears, saying, “The governor cares. I’m doing the best I can.”⁶⁰

Ohioans protested in other ways as well. Citizens fasted.⁶¹ Myriad editorials were written.⁶² Some noted that GA dollars would be lost to other areas of local economies, and, while “the conservatives in the state Legislature and among our citizenry will have indeed succeeded in saving some tax dollars and in reducing the size of the public sector.... in the process, they will have forfeited any claim to having a sense of human decency.”⁶³ And Legal Aid Services filed suit to stop the cuts,

⁵⁵ “Activists hit road to Columbus to protest state cuts for poor,” *Columbus Dispatch*, 22 March 1992.

⁵⁶ Mary Beth Lane, “Taking it to the streets,” *Plain Dealer*, 1 April 1992.

⁵⁷ “March to protest GA cuts starts Saturday,” 19 March 1992.

⁵⁸ “Activists hit road to Columbus to protest state cuts for poor.”

⁵⁹ Felix Hoover, “Silence sent message to Voinovich,” *Columbus Dispatch*.

⁶⁰ “Governor airs tearful defense of welfare cuts.”

⁶¹ “Fast Spurs attempt to restore GA cuts,” *Athens Messenger*, 9 March 1992; Mary Yost, “Fasting Woman protests cuts,” *Columbus Dispatch*, 20 March 1992.

⁶² James Biggins, “GA cuts don’t take into account medical issues,” *Athens News*, 26 March 1992. (Edit.); James Biggins, “No suitable jobs,” *Athens Messenger*, 19 March 1992. (Edit.); Sheila Carsey, “How will needy survive illness, unemployment?,” *Athens Messenger*, 19 March 1992. (Edit.); Editorial Board, “Why Cut programs for our neediest citizens?,” *Athens News*, 19 March 1992. (Edit.); Harold Evans, “Welfare cuts can kill,” *Athens Messenger*. (Edit.); Jack Frech, “Protest heartless gutting of General Assistance,” *Athens Messenger*, 27 March 1997. (Edit.); Roger McCauley, “Stop Welfare Cuts,” *Athens Messenger*, 27 March 1992. (Edit.); D.R. Murphy, “Athens Countains can beat welfare crisis together,” *Athens Messenger*, 29 March 1992. (Edit.); Rick Phillips, “Money and medical help runs out April 1st,” *Athens News*, 26 March 1992. (Edit.); Arthur Sapp, “Don’t dehumanize the poor,” *Athens Messenger*, 29 March 1992. (Edit.); Russell Sedwick, “Don’t sweep Ohio’s poor under the rug,” *Athens News*, 30 March 1992. (Edit.); Marilyn Welker, “General assistance cuts can only hurt everyone,” *Columbus Dispatch*, 8 April 1992. (Edit.)

⁶³ Arlene and Bob Sheak, “GA cuts hurt most vulnerable in society.”

arguing that the state Constitution guarantees all citizens “a right to safety,” “equal protection and benefit” from government.⁶⁴ Senator Guy Suhadolnik (R-Parma) called the lawsuit “pure baloney,” because “people don’t have a right to the *taxpayers’* dollars.”⁶⁵ Legal efforts from the 1960s and 1970s had guaranteed the right to appeal for recipients whose benefits were terminated, so nearly 10,000 appeals were filed. These appeals cost the state more than the cut benefits would have paid out. State officials blamed “social service advocates for pushing welfare recipients to file appeals in protest to the cuts made in April.”⁶⁶



Figure 6.1: Cleveland residents protesting GA cuts in Columbus⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Yost, “Suit aims to halt welfare cuts.”

⁶⁵ “Senator: GA suit misguided.” Emphasis added.

⁶⁶ “Backlog of welfare appeals costing state money,” *Athens Messenger*, 3 August 1992.

⁶⁷ Photo by Mike Levy, “A Chill in the Heart,” *Plain Dealer*, 2 April 1992.

As in the 1960s, the Governor – one of only two Republicans to be mayor of Cleveland since the early 1940s – clashed with officials from Cleveland. Prior to the six-month deadline Voinovich sent staff to Cleveland for a listening session with residents, which became heated. The state budget director said, “You have a GA (program) and a governor caught between the need to provide a number of services that Ohioans regard as essential... and modest revenue growth.” To which one resident responded, “Don’t come to us with politics. Because we ain’t about politics. We’re about people.” In an attempt to quell the anger, the executive assistant for human services said, “I hope you’re not taking this as some sort of political grandstanding,” which was greeted by derisive laughter.⁶⁸

As the protests continued through early April, members of Cleveland City Council remained in attendance. Rep. C.J. Prentiss (D-Cleveland), said that Voinovich “was too busy getting elected” to see or care about poverty in Cleveland. Voinovich called Prentiss a demagogue, who responded, “George Wallace called Martin Luther King a demagogue.”⁶⁹ Voinovich met with the Cleveland city councilors to deny allegations that he lacked compassion for the poor, and blamed the cuts on the budget deficit.⁷⁰ The councilors made the point that “the impact is not only on the lives of those directly affected but also on the cost of services that will have to be provided to care for them,” such as increased emergency room costs. Voinovich declined to visit the city to see the impact of the cuts but said his staff would work with city leaders.⁷¹ Those affected, this signified, were not a priority.

6.1.iii Program Abolition - 1995

Despite the previous cuts and expectation that recipients work, Senator Finan (R-Cincinnati) still called the program “general assistance for the able-bodied.”⁷² He argued that “unemployment is

⁶⁸ Jean Dubail, “GA cuts to force desperate acts, panel told,” *Plain Dealer*, 25 February 1992.

⁶⁹ Price, “1500 March on Statehouse; seek restoration of G.A.”

⁷⁰ “Governor airs tearful defense of welfare cuts.”

⁷¹ Jim Underwood, “City asks Voinovich for remedy,” *Plain Dealer*, 2 April 1992.

⁷² Riskind, “General Assistance faces extinction.”

low, and now is a good time to provide incentives for welfare recipients to find jobs.”⁷³ *Eliminating* GA would “give poor people an incentive to get into the workplace permanently.”⁷⁴ In response to welfare advocate claims that GA exists as a meager safety net for those who cannot find jobs for myriad reasons,⁷⁵ Governor Voinovich promised, “We’re looking at the whole program, and it’s all going to be aimed at something called *self-sufficiency*,”⁷⁶ illustrating how policy rhetoric can obscure the sorting mechanism of work requirements priming GA for eventual elimination.

In 1995, the Ohio Senate abolished GA along a party-line vote, except for one Republican from Hamilton County who voted with the Democrats.⁷⁷ At the time, GA served 120,000 Ohioans.⁷⁸ The aim of abolition, in common with many previous Ohio reforms, was to limit and “redirect assistance” from single able-bodied adults to the disabled, sick, or parents – focusing on the esteemed deserving poor and truly needy.⁷⁹ According to Ohio OBM, 95-percent of those on GA were considered able-bodied, although it is unclear the criteria used for that conclusion.⁸⁰ The resulting program was Disability Financial Assistance (DFA), for which only disabled people are eligible.⁸¹ All Democratic-offered amendments – requiring an impact study of GA program elimination, requiring notification of alternative services, providing jobs for GA recipients, increasing work allowances, retaining benefits for those over 55, and appropriating money for adult literacy – failed.⁸² Senator Dennis Kucinich (D-Cleveland), who had proposed public works jobs for 40,000 former recipients at

⁷³ John Matuszak, “Ohio Senate Votes to End welfare program,” *Parkersburg News*, 6 April 1995.

⁷⁴ Marrison, “Senate votes to ax general assistance.”

⁷⁵ Riskind, “General Assistance faces extinction.”

⁷⁶ Andrea Caruso, “Frech: Don’t nuke GA; make it better,” *Athens News*, 22 December 1994. Emphasis added.

⁷⁷ Jack Frech called this moment the “canary in the coal mine” for any sort of care about poor people.

⁷⁸ Grant, “Now no General Assistance.”

⁷⁹ “GA Abolishment Bill Goes to Governor,” *Hannab News Service*, 5 April 1995.

⁸⁰ Stephanie Warsmith and Carole Cannon, “State senate slashes welfare,” *Akron Beacon Journal*, 6 April 1995.

⁸¹ At the time, five states (Connecticut, Hawaii, Minnesota, Ohio, and Pennsylvania) eliminated benefits for ABAWDs. “In each of these states except Ohio, a portion of persons losing eligibility for cash assistance may continue to be eligible for medical assistance.” Cori Uccello and L. Jerome Gallagher, “General Assistance Programs,” *The Urban Institute A-4* (1997), 5, <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/70346/307036-General-Assistance-Programs.PDF>.

⁸² “GA Abolishment Bill Goes to Governor.”

\$160 million per year, said the state had moved “from the New deal to the raw deal, from a war on poverty to a war against the poor.”⁸³

According to social workers and advocates, “The promises that were given the recipients were uniformly broken by the legislature.”⁸⁴ None of the savings went to medical assistance, food stamps, or job training, which the governor and legislature had promised.⁸⁵ Finan had promised the cuts were a “redirection and not an elimination.”⁸⁶ To which Senator Jeff Johnson (D-Cleveland) responded, “If it’s redirection, it’s redirection off a cliff. It’s not about welfare reform. It’s about Republican unity and political privilege.”⁸⁷ Johnson’s assessment of the conservation of political privilege supports Corey Robin’s argument that conservatism is the protection of that power, and the argument of this thesis that the logic of dependency supports that desire, leading to various retrenchment efforts.

However, ire was directed toward both political parties. The Democrats were not ostensibly opposed to eliminating GA, said Sen. Ben Epsy (D-Columbus), “but did not want to cut benefits without adequate warning for recipients and helping the poor acquire skills and find jobs.”⁸⁸ During the Senate debates, Democrats “blasted the Republican leadership” for having state troopers escort to the microphone those who were testifying in opposition, many of whom were Clevelanders.⁸⁹ Long-time columnist for *The Plain Dealer*, Thomas Suddes, took both parties to task, however. While the GOP spent their time giving speeches about helping their fellow man, being compassionate, and emphasizing charity, Suddes noted, “Democrats had a lot of nerve playing to the galleries about GA.

⁸³ Matuszak, “Ohio Senate Votes to End welfare program.”

⁸⁴ Grant, “Now no General Assistance.”

⁸⁵ Alan Johnson, “Proposal to cut welfare sparks debate in Senate,” *Columbus Dispatch*, 5 January 1995; Catherine Candisky, “Senate Votes to eliminate general assistance,” *Columbus Dispatch*, 6 April 1995. To save even more money, Rep. Joan Lawrence (R-Galena) pushed a bill to allow the state to claim money from Medicaid recipients’ property going through probate court, to defray the cost of their Medicaid expenditures. She argued, “If the service from Medicaid is less important to them than having a piece of property to pass on to their children, maybe they didn’t need the Medicaid in the first place.” B.G. Gregg, “Ohio bill seeks property as payment,” *Cincinnati Enquirer*, 6 April 1995.

⁸⁶ “Senate Votes to Cut Off Welfare Program,” *Athens Messenger*, 6 April 1995.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Candisky, “Senate Votes to eliminate general assistance.”

⁸⁹ Marrison, “Senate votes to ax general assistance.”

That's because when they controlled Ohio's House, they agreed to prune GA.... It was *Democratic acquiescence* that paved the way for Ohio to kill off GA.”⁹⁰

With GA eliminated, people moved “from very, very low welfare benefits into very, very low-paying jobs.”⁹¹ However, there were not enough jobs available to offset the cuts, because, “what has changed is not the nature of the people, but the nature of the employment market.”⁹² As part of the bill abolishing GA, the Adult Emergency Assistance Program was reinstated, entitling families to \$185 once per year for utilities, transportation, and medical needs, a far cry from the amount provided under GA.⁹³ During these debates, one citizen wrote, facetiously, “Well, why go to all the bother [of providing *anything* to people], then? Just cut off their food stamps and turn off their heat assistance. They'll get jobs soon enough. If they turn to street crime and violence, put 'em all in prison and their kids in orphanages. If you have to, declare martial law in them ghettos. Call out the National Guard. Send in tanks. By God, annihilate 'em!”⁹⁴ At the end of the year, in media roundups reflecting on Voinovich's policies, there were no questions about the elimination of GA.⁹⁵

Spending cut justifications – Ohio's own Charles Murray

In 1992, there was “no climate in Ohio for any kind of tax increase in either sales or income taxes. Anybody who thinks otherwise must represent a very strange area,” said Sen. Eugene Watts (R-Galloway).⁹⁶ According to a poll of 544 registered Ohio voters, seven-percent were in favor of easing the deficit entirely through tax increases, while 18-percent favored entirely through social services reductions. 78-percent favored “sin taxes” on things like cigarettes and alcohol, while a

⁹⁰ Suddes, “Friends of the people slap each other silly in Ohio House.” Emphasis added.

⁹¹ Jim Phillips, “Study: More jobs, but also more poverty,” *Athens News*, 21 September 1995.

⁹² “Paper: Not enough jobs to offset cuts,” *Athens Messenger*, 10 July 1995.

⁹³ Warsmith and Cannon, “State senate slashes welfare.”

⁹⁴ Elizabeth Davis, “Rejecting and punishing poor people won't make poverty disappear,” *Athens Messenger*, 20 December 1994. (Edit.) Emphasis added.

⁹⁵ Sandy Theis and Christopher Davey, “Voinovich defends policies, politics,” *Cincinnati Enquirer*, 24 December 1995.

⁹⁶ Mike Curtin, “Welfare fight looms even larger in '93,” *Columbus Dispatch*, 24 May 1992.

majority opposed any other tax increases.⁹⁷ In this environment of austerity, spending was nonetheless growing (Table 6.1) and costs needed to be contained. However, as Serena Romano writes, “cost-containment measures are far from being devoid of ethical considerations. Despite the constraining role of financial and economic objectives, austerity reforms do entail *political and ideological decisions*.”⁹⁸

Table 6.1: State spending growth, 1962-1991⁹⁹

Year	Total state expenditures	Human Services expenditures	Ohio per capita income
1962	\$645,699,015	\$218,997,478	\$2,484
1972	1,954,425,137	766,520,088	4,606
1982	5,002,103,878	1,541,347,247	10,927
1991	12,501,083,000	4,968,478,000	17,961

Two economists at Ohio University, Lowell Gallaway and Richard Vedder, provided the empirical justifications for these spending cuts. In 1985, they had argued that the nation’s welfare system created more poverty than it reduced, examining correlations between state AFDC spending and poverty levels between 1966 and 1984. The authors found that “all 10 of the low-benefit states show considerably more progress in eliminating poverty than the nation as a whole.”¹⁰⁰ Their conclusion went further than simply providing correlative data, but rather, arguing that the structural diagnoses of the War on Poverty had failed to reduce the poverty rate below its original mark in twenty years. Given that the original diagnoses and proposed solutions failed, they concluded, “today’s structural poverty is something else. To a much greater extent it is poverty by choice. By that we mean that people choose poverty levels of income over non-poverty levels because they feel the combination of income and leisure... to be preferable to non-poverty.”¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ “Poll backs Voinovich’s strategy to ease deficit,” *Columbus Dispatch*, 4 April 1992. 4-percent margin of error.

⁹⁸ Serena Romano, “Ethics of Austerity in the ‘Weak Link’ of Europe,” in Serena Romano and Gabriella Punziano, eds., *The European Social Model Adrift* (London: Routledge, 2015), 127-150. 127.

⁹⁹ Curtin, “Welfare fight looms even larger in ’93.” Compiled by Tom Mattix, from Ohio Office of Budget and Management. 1962 dollars. Recreated.

¹⁰⁰ James Kilpatrick, “Welfare rolls and poverty,” *Cincinnati Enquirer*, 13 March 1986.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

In the 1990s, these findings were reexamined by the conservative Institute for Policy Innovation,¹⁰² and then applied to evaluate the Clinton and Republican welfare proposals.¹⁰³ They argued: “welfare-associated pathologies that reduce work effort, destroy traditional families, and otherwise lead to economically destructive behavior seem to dominate the effects of welfare on today’s citizenry.... A slimmed down, restructured welfare system should lead to great savings for the taxpayer – and less poverty.”¹⁰⁴ They found that Gingrich’s proposal was superior because it capped spending, rejected educational and training programs, and reduced entrenched *federal* bureaucracy.

Gallaway and Vedder were echoing the ideological claim, made by Charles Murray in *Losing Ground*, that people respond to incentives and so the failure of incentive structures inherent to the welfare state have kept people in poverty.¹⁰⁵ They differ from Murray in that they argue *some* benefits are a good thing, they just have quickly diminishing returns. Their conclusion for the poor: find a job.¹⁰⁶ This simplistic rendition reminiscent of Murray became influential within policy circles in Ohio. It kept the focus on the individual’s choices, rather than on the state-level economic figures on joblessness and changing industries, educational and health systems.

¹⁰² Richard Vedder and Lowell Gallaway, “The War on the Poor,” *Institute for Policy Innovation* 117 (1992). According to one columnist’s condemnation: “While avoiding any redistribution of wealth is a prime goal of conservatism, studies such as those commissioned by the IPI [or Heritage Foundation]... allow conservatives to pretend that their policies – less money for the poor, fewer programs for the homeless, lower taxes for the wealthy – ultimately are in the best interests of poor people.” Terry Smith, “Studies tell think tanks what they want to hear,” *Athens News*, 20 July 1992. (Edit.)

¹⁰³ Lowell Gallaway and Richard Vedder, “Recasting the Safety Net,” *Institute for Policy Innovation* 132 (1995).

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ Paul Sperry, “Will More Spending Help Poor?,” *Investor’s Business Daily*, 22 June 1992.

¹⁰⁶ “2 OU economists see ‘War on Poor’ waged by system,” *Athens Messenger*, 12 July 1992.

6.2 The Second Strand: Retrenchment through Paternalism

At the time that GA was eliminated, “Republican supporters insist[ed] the bill [was] just one part in the jigsaw puzzle of welfare reform.”¹⁰⁷ The other big piece of the puzzle was paternalism – the second strand of the ‘welfare as self-sufficiency’ order. These strands reinforce each other – with different views toward the role of government, and different conceptions of the poor. Whereas welfare abolitionism assumes market competence, paternalism rejects the competence assumption altogether. One solution for the state is to condition benefit reciprocity on work.

Since the early 1940s, Ohio had voluntary work programs for individuals to work off their public benefits. In 1963, the state made this program mandatory, and the assistance program as a whole was eliminated in 1995, as we saw in the previous section. Since the 1960s, federal AFDC reforms also included work requirements. As we saw throughout the 1960s, the debates over work requirements assumed, for the most part, that the desire to work was present, and work should provide an improved standard of living. Since the 1980s, due in part to the advocacy of Lawrence Mead, work requirements were viewed as the ends of the welfare system, rather than the means through which people achieve self-sufficiency. In the 1990s, Ohio was responding to the federal waiver activity in the AFDC program.¹⁰⁸ This section examines the developmental discourses of the Ohio Works First program, the financial assistance portion of TANF, from 1995 to 1997.

6.2.i AFDC Waiver

In the mid-1990s, Ohio was approved for an AFDC waiver to funnel tax dollars as wage supplements to private companies that hired welfare recipients. The “Communities of

¹⁰⁷ Warsmith and Cannon, “State senate slashes welfare.”

¹⁰⁸ According to Peck, “*Workfare*,” the waivers (1) compromised the integrity of the federal welfare state, (2) allowed for experiments which were all framed in cost-neutrality at the state level, (3) played off of GOP state-level advantages, and (4) had workfare in their assumptions, p. 153.

Opportunity”¹⁰⁹ engaged in the pilot were the cities of Akron, Columbus, and Portsmouth, and Cuyahoga and Hamilton counties. The job supplement allowed employers to neglect covering full wages for two years as the employee trained, with the assumption of full wages covered by the employer after the second year. The money for the subsidy was taken from what the recipients would have otherwise received in cash benefits and food stamps.¹¹⁰

In anticipation of federal welfare reform’s passage, Voinovich signed new legislation based on the AFDC waiver in 1995 and June 1996, with the goal of “no more handouts without responsibilities, and no more opportunities without obligations.”¹¹¹ The legislation required welfare recipients to sign a contract with case workers promising to work themselves off of welfare – a mandatory work requirement and sorting mechanism. It also included a three-year time limit, progressive sanctions, funding for diversion and retention, increased work disregards, and increased work supports.¹¹² The DHS director, Arnold Tompkins,¹¹³ argued the bills would allow “welfare recipients to take personal responsibility,” by giving them “the tools to become *self-sufficient*.”¹¹⁴ But Tompkins’ emphasis on the toolkit ignored what advocates had been saying for years: “Self-sufficiency is fine, if you can get a good job.” Welfare rights groups protested the changes in Hamilton and Summit counties, but numbers were sparse.¹¹⁵

Ohio had been an “early and enthusiastic adopter”¹¹⁶ of the FSA reforms, and so was a predecessor to the “bipartisan national consensus” that overtook welfare reform in the 1990s. So,

¹⁰⁹ Barazia, “Ohio Welfare reform gets nod.”

¹¹⁰ Marrison, “Ohio gets green light for welfare experiments.”

¹¹¹ “Opponents say welfare changes don’t help people out of poverty.”

¹¹² Potts, “History of Ohio’s Welfare Reform Program.”

¹¹³ Tompkins had been the Assistant Secretary for Management and Budget in US DHHS under President Bush. Voinovich asked him to come to Ohio because of a shared vision on welfare reform. Wilson and Adams, Jr., “Welfare Reform: Ohio’s Response,” 1370. In 2013, he plead guilty to ethics violations in the awarding of government contracts. Jim Provance, “Former state official pleads guilty, but might avoid jail,” *Toledo Blade*, 16 January 2013.

¹¹⁴ Hauser, “State welfare chief hits Athens to talk up proposal for reforming system.” Emphasis added.

¹¹⁵ “Opponents say welfare changes don’t help people out of poverty.”

¹¹⁶ Jack Frech, Email to Alexander Coccia.

when Clinton finally “ended welfare,” Ohio had already begun to absorb the changes due to its 1995 and 1996 legislation. The initial TANF block grant to Ohio was \$728 million, with devolution of responsibility to the states. Tompkins “promised to extend that responsibility to the counties, which will be able to tailor benefit programs to meet local needs.”¹¹⁷ As with the framing of PRWORA, the focus was on welfare, and not poverty. Tompkins said, “There’s a real effort to look at the root causes of why people are on welfare.”¹¹⁸

6.2.ii OWF – An Unequal Contract

When the federal reforms gave states ultimate flexibility in deciding conditions and sanctions, many states like Ohio rushed to the punitive side.¹¹⁹ Ohio had an interest in quickly shoring up any inconsistencies between its legislation and the federal requirements. According to one welfare caseworker, “The death of welfare-as-we-know-it is creating hostility and paranoia. ‘My clients are frantic. They’re outraged, fearful – there’s a lot of screaming and yelling at the office.’” The uncertainties led caseworkers to argue that federal reforms are “top-down policies, those at the top treading on those who are down.”¹²⁰

Rep. Lawrence continued her welfare reform work on the 1997 bill to bring Ohio completely in-line with the federal regulations. The bill that ultimately passed (Ohio House Bill 408) in July 1997 introduced OWF.¹²¹ The design was for the county board of commissioners to work with DHS to improve social service provision and hold them accountable to the state.¹²² The reforms also included increased TANF funding for emergency programs and required “self-sufficiency contracts” between

¹¹⁷ “Ohio has head start in re-inventing welfare.”

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ See Coccia, “‘Creeping Stringency’”; Steve Woo, “Ohio’s welfare reform may be tougher than the federal version,” *Athens News*, 1 May 1997.

¹²⁰ A. Clay Thompson, “New regs can be nightmare for caseworkers,” *Athens News*, 5 May 1997. (Edit.)

¹²¹ “Hoping Ohio Works for us.”

¹²² Judith Havemann and Barbara Vobejda, “After Getting Responsibility for Welfare, States May pass It Down,” *Washington Post*, 28 January 1997.

recipients and caseworkers.¹²³ The former, the Prevention, Retention and Contingency (PRC) program, provides limited funds for emergency situations, such as car repairs. PRC can only be received by households with a minor in the home and a family is only eligible once a year.

The latter spelled out the agency's commitment of benefits, the recipient requirements, and the sanctions for not living up to the contract. Fraser and Gordon credit Mead for helping to develop the strategy for "U.S. neoconservatives to assimilate 'welfare' to 'contract,'" but argue that he fails to explain how such contracts could be valid – "a voluntary, free agreement between independent individuals – when one party lacks the barest means of subsistence while the other is the U.S. government."¹²⁴ Similarly frustrated on behalf of recipients, Frech said, "I don't even pretend this is a real contract."¹²⁵ A welfare rights coalition opposing the work contract saw "the new policies as using reform for political gain and not meeting the real goal, which is getting people out of poverty."¹²⁶

OWF was perceived to be a fundamental shift in the welfare system. Joel Potts, from Ohio DHS, noted that the old system of benefits "does not meet the needs of today's society" and the new model would "take care of your needs, rather than taking care of our system."¹²⁷ OWF expanded on the devolution of the 1960s, requiring counties to develop their own assistance models. It also reflected a similar sequence of governmental responsibility: federal authority had been redeployed through devolution, requiring states to provide the commensurate investments in healthcare, childcare, education, and job availability. States, then, left it to the counties "to tailor benefit programs to meet local needs."¹²⁸

¹²³ Potts, "History of Ohio's Welfare Reform Program."

¹²⁴ Fraser and Gordon, "Contract versus Charity," 63-64.

¹²⁵ "County begins 'contracting' with its welfare recipients."

¹²⁶ "Opponents say welfare changes don't help people out of poverty."

¹²⁷ Smith, "Big changes in store for Ohio welfare system."

¹²⁸ "Ohio has head start in re-inventing welfare."

Community involvement became one of the consistent themes highlighted by the Voinovich administration, and required by OWF.¹²⁹ Since counties were given more responsibility for the administration of welfare programs, county directors like Frech gained more voice in determining the level of benefits and care. Frech's approach in Athens emphasized supportive services: work support through access to child care, mental health and substance abuse counseling, education, job training and transportation to job sites,¹³⁰ and medical support; community support through literacy programs and recreational activities for children; family support through financial assistance; and institutional support through shifting welfare agency responsibility to job placement.¹³¹

However, many of these efforts had been in place since before the 1990s. The existing Job Opportunities Basic Skills Training (JOBS) program, out of FSA, already provided training, education, and work experience.¹³² The problem remained, however, that jobs are not the answer when they are low paying. Athens JFS "finds work for about 500 people a year, but 75 percent of them earn \$6 an hour or less. Few of the jobs come with health benefits, and daycare remains a problem for working mothers."¹³³ Despite the various efforts, Frech always expounded on what was missing: "we don't give them enough to live on."¹³⁴

¹²⁹ Teresa Smith, "Local impact of welfare reform not yet known," *Athens Messenger*, 26 March 1997; Potts, "History of Ohio's Welfare Reform Program."

¹³⁰ Teresa Smith, "Welfare department to focus on helping people find jobs," *Athens Messenger*, 11 February 1998; Amelia Bizzaro, "Plan to combat county poverty," *Post*.

¹³¹ Teresa Smith, "Frech: Welfare reform will mean shifting people to work," *Athens Messenger*, 13 July 1997.

¹³² The GAO, to aid congressional debates, conducted a study of the JOBS program, and found that while it did save states money, it served very few numbers of AFDC recipients, and counties "often lacked capacity at the local level for outreach to employers to develop new job leads for ready-to-work clients," p. 4. "Welfare-to-Work," Appalachian Regional Commission, 21 May 1997.

¹³³ "Ohio has head start in re-inventing welfare."

¹³⁴ Wendy Wenerstrom, "Welfare reform is made up of many components," *Athens Messenger*, 9 April 1996.

6.3 The Logic of Dependency and the Redefinition of Cash Assistance

The GA and OWF reforms had been driven completely by the logic of dependency, in which poverty is a peripheral concern.¹³⁵ Eliminating one form of cash assistance, another was redefined from its entitlement status.

The *state-funded* GA program, which had been subject to work requirements since the 1960s, was consistently diminished over time through spending cuts, stricter requirements, and fewer exemptions to them. Ultimately, it served so few people that by the 1990s it was a prime target for elimination. Even the resulting program, DFA, would easily be eliminated years later.¹³⁶ GA is emblematic of the collaboration between the two strands of retrenchment. By taking a program which theoretically had ABAWD and non-ABAWD recipients, work requirements *sorted* ABAWDs off the rolls, justifying spending cuts. However, as time passed and the discourses surrounding the reforms were forgotten, policymakers once again perceived the program as serving both populations, and so the retrenchment cycle repeated, until there was nothing left.

The *federally-funded* OWF drastically reduced the number receiving benefits (Table 6.2). These initial drops were due to changing eligibility requirements, not yet the work requirements or time limits. However, the conditions for receiving cash assistance had been set for future recipients, and the sorting mechanism had been built in to reduce future use of the program. According to one critic: “There’s no truth [to the claim] that we really want to support [people forced off welfare]. We just want them off the welfare rolls.”¹³⁷

By the measure of dependency, the immediate effects of welfare reform were a success.¹³⁸

¹³⁵ Frech, “County welfare head: State reform mix of good, bad.”

¹³⁶ DFA was eliminated in the 2018-2019 budget by Governor Kasich and the GOP-led general assembly. Jackie Borchardt, “Ohio budget bill ended cash assistance program for people with disabilities,” *cleveland.com*, 7 August 2017, https://www.cleveland.com/metro/2017/08/ohio_budget_bill_ended_cash_as.html.

¹³⁷ Jim Phillips, “Most Welfare Reform is Already Here,” *Athens News*, 1 August 1996.

¹³⁸ Heather Skeeles, “Welfare Law reforms ‘Safety Net,’” *Post*, 26 May 1998; Mary Beth Lane, “Appalachian Welfare recipients eager for ‘real jobs’: Welfare reform falls short in Cuyahoga,” *Plain Dealer*, 6 July 1998.

Table 6.2: Federal, state, and county welfare reform caseload impact¹³⁹

	Before the reform	After the reform	% Change
National[#]	12,202 mill (Aug. 1996)	9,804 mill (Sep. 1997)	-20
Ohio[#]	550,000 (Feb. 1996)	378,706 (Feb. 1998)	-31
Athens County[#]	3,416 (Mar. 1996)	2,415 (Mar. 1998)	-29
Cuyahoga County[*]	39,420 (May 1997)	33,047 (May 1998)	-16
Franklin County[*]	18,123 (May 1997)	13,766 (May 1998)	-24
Hamilton County[*]	15,483 (May 1997)	10,478 (May 1998)	-32

#number of recipients, *number of households

The discourses immediately following reform covered the same well-worn grooves as prior efforts around work requirements. Vedder from Ohio University argued, “Any time there is a change, there are going to be losers and winners.”¹⁴⁰ Keith Wasserman, executive director of a homeless shelter in Athens, argued that having a low-wage job did not mean a commensurate improvement in livelihood, and many could not move into stable employment at the speed required by the reforms. Vedder and Wasserman disagreed on where the emphasis should be. Vedder argued that a minimum wage (“dead end”) job is better than welfare because they are gaining experience for success in the economy, whereas Wasserman argued that “If all people get jobs it doesn’t mean the problem will be solved. There has to be a safety net.”¹⁴¹ According to Kathryn Lad, director of the Appalachian People’s Action Coalition, “welfare reform by streamlining is not addressing the root problems of poverty. Poverty is not a simple problem.”¹⁴²

The consistency of these debates continued into the new century, and the impacts were stark. By the early 2000s, welfare had been essentially ended – in Ohio, most cases are child-only – and the new paternalism was dominant. Conservatives, then, had to focus on maintaining it through enforcing work and applying sanctions.

¹³⁹ Compiled by Steve Thomas, “National Welfare Reform,” in Skeeles, “Welfare Law Reforms ‘Safety Net,’” *Post*, 26 May 1998. Recreated.

¹⁴⁰ Skeeles, “Welfare Law reforms ‘Safety Net.’”

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² Heather Skeeles, “Reforms yet to make progress,” *Post*, 27 May 1998.

6.3.i Worry with Work Participation Rates

Immediately after OWF, conservatives were focused on work participation rates. Meeting them proved an issue for rural and urban areas alike. When counties have high unemployment rates, the work participation rate might still be high because recipients are involved primarily in CWEP – the remnants of the initial 1960s work requirements with promise of public employment. Tompkins said he had mixed feelings about “Appalachian Ohio’s heavy reliance on community work experience. The public jobs get people to work and give them training, but they are supposed to be temporary, not permanent, he said.”¹⁴³ His solution? Move to areas with a better economy and get private sector employment,¹⁴⁴ regardless of the impact this would have on families by uprooting mothers and children who have deep roots in their home area.¹⁴⁵

Tompkins was also concerned about a lack of progress in Cuyahoga County, and downtown Cleveland, where the work participation rate in May 1998 was only 24-percent, instead of the required 35. His concern was that regardless of whether people were finding work, their three-year clock (imposed by his administration) on benefits had already started. In order to be more aggressive, the county planned to open eleven neighborhood centers, as integrated service offices. The staff of these neighborhood centers were called “self-sufficiency” coaches, and instead of determining eligibility and writing checks, they would find people jobs.¹⁴⁶ Most of Cleveland’s welfare population was considered “hard to serve” and most who were prepared for a job had already received one because companies

¹⁴³ Mary Beth Lane, “Appalachian Welfare recipients eager for ‘real jobs’: Counties must use programs that offer work experience,” *Plain Dealer*, 6 July 1998.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Research on kinship ties show that poor families are in a catch-22. Either they stay in depressed economic regions in which they have support ties that aid survival, e.g. borrowing, child care, and sharing basic goods, or they move to more economically booming regions with no guarantee that they will find support ties or work that pays a wage commensurate with the expensive city. Matthew Desmond, “Disposable Ties and the Urban Poor,” *American Journal of Sociology* 117 (2012): 1295-1335; Carol Stack, *All Our Kin* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974). In fact, it was kinship ties that kept people from falling off the “edge of subsistence” after GA was time-limited in 1991. Kevin Sack, “Trying to cut welfare the Ohio way,” *New York Times*, 3 April 1995.

¹⁴⁶ Lane, “Appalachian Welfare recipients eager for ‘real jobs’: Welfare reform falls short in Cuyahoga.”

like Jo-Ann Fabrics, Inc., began hiring off the rolls. However, with the addition of stringent work and paternity testing requirements, the sanctions were taking a toll. According to Rep. Prentiss, “the current system of sanctions is unforgiving. The only impact will be to further depress recipients’ and children’s standard of living and undermine our long-term goal of success.”¹⁴⁷ Despite the criticisms, Rep. Lawrence replied, “It’s really premature to revisit the law. We haven’t given it long enough, and it seems to be doing what it was supposed to do.”¹⁴⁸

6.3.ii Other Forms of Paternalism

Throughout the 1990s, other well-worn grooves of paternalism were present in welfare reform proposals. Starting under Governor Celeste in 1989 and continuing through the 1990s, Ohio conducted the Learning, Earning, and Parenting (LEAP) program which gave pregnant teenagers or teenage mothers \$62 per month to stay in school, with bonuses upon grade completions and graduation. According to DeParle, “the problem [with programs such as LEAP] is that they assume that small incentives – cuts or bonuses of \$50 or \$100 a month – will cause big changes in behavior,”¹⁴⁹ while studies found that LEAP does nothing *systemically* “to reform the schools” where teens reported that they did not feel safe.¹⁵⁰ While it was focused on market competence and incentives, the \$62 would be removed if the student dropped out or had more than two unexcused absences a month.¹⁵¹ LEAP faced opposition from both welfare advocacy groups and frontline caseworkers, the latter concerned that they would have to sanction teen parents for noncompliance.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Jason DeParle, “Why Marginal Changes Don’t Rescue the Welfare System,” *New York Times*, 1 March 1992.

¹⁵⁰ David Long, et al., “Three Year Impacts of Ohio’s Welfare Initiative to Improve School Attendance Among Teenage Parents: Ohio’s Learning, Earning and Parenting Program,” *MDRC*, April 1996. ES-3.

¹⁵¹ Darrel Rowland, “Ohio’s LEAP effort wins funding,” *Columbus Dispatch*, 8 September 1995. DeParle cites programs like LEAP as a typical example of the “new paternalism.” Jason DeParle, “Latest Plan to Cure Welfare Troubles Borrows W.P.A. Blueprints of 1930’s,” *New York Times*, 13 March 1992.

¹⁵² Wilson and Adams, Jr., “Welfare Reform: Ohio’s Response,” 1368.

To reduce birth rates among the welfare population in the first place, Voinovich had wanted to require family planning counseling for people to remain on benefits.¹⁵³ He also proposed that mothers could receive a one-time cash bonus if they established paternity so that the state could pursue child support.¹⁵⁴ Bob Netzley had proposed something similar in the 1960s. Still in office, in 1993, Netzley introduced a bill which would require ADC mothers to identify the father,¹⁵⁵ institute a family cap on additional children, and only allow custody if a parenting course was taken. It would give fathers the option of getting a vasectomy (\$1,000 bonus), paying child support, spending two years in jail, or doing community service. And it would give mothers the choice to have a tubal ligation (\$1000 bonus and 150-percent increase in ADC monthly benefit). According to Netzley, “Farmers in my district treat their livestock better than do some parents of unwanted children.”¹⁵⁶ These sexist and racist expressions of paternalism were a consistent theme in efforts to both maintain social control over particular populations *and* lessen the use of welfare programs.

¹⁵³ Lane, “Cash in place of food stamps proposed.”

¹⁵⁴ Irvin and Lolli, “Recipients say programs help get their lives together.”

¹⁵⁵ PRWORA allows states to sanction mothers for failure to establish paternity or assist in the collection of child support payments, an element of paternalism that may set a family with a non-custodial parent into conflict at the behest of the state. Stone, *The Samaritan's Dilemma*, 158.

¹⁵⁶ Thomas Suddes, “Lawmaker proposes tough welfare rules,” *Plain Dealer*, 6 May 1993.

6.4 Public Discourse: The Lampedusa Principle

One of Clinton's greatest hopes in signing the welfare reform legislation was that it would help do-away with the ugly racist, sexist, and classist stereotypes of people receiving welfare.¹⁵⁷ He thought that if people were working for their benefits – a stance that Democrats embraced strongly – then the public would support the expansion of safety-net policies and leave in-kind benefits like food stamps and Medicaid untouched. Dick Morris, who was a GOP strategist before becoming Clinton's political advisor, convinced Clinton that "he'd be setting the stage for a broader liberal resurgence. Once taxpayers saw the poor as workers, a more generous era would ensue. Stereotypes would fade. New benefits would flow."¹⁵⁸ However, stigma and stereotypes ran deep. One could not expect a Bob Netzley in 1993 to change his tone three years later.

The well-worn grooves continued to be polished throughout the 1990s, reflecting the logic of dependency and emphasis on self-sufficiency. Sharing Clinton's hope even after GA was cut, Mike DeWine campaigned for U.S. Senate in 1992, saying, "food stamps and government health care could continue, but families would be put on notice that cash assistance would not go on forever," and AFDC time limits "would encourage families to find work to support their families."¹⁵⁹ Fears of fraud and abuse were flamed to assist the GA cuts, despite complaints that Republicans were causing "such human suffering to correct the problems that a minority of General Assistance recipients exhibit."¹⁶⁰ A *Plain Dealer* and Channel 8 TV series on fraud in Ohio DHS misrepresented the level at which most welfare fraud occurs, which is not the level of the individuals, who "were at one time themselves taxpayers and will again be taxpayers."¹⁶¹ Local columnists debated whether welfare recipients deserve

¹⁵⁷ DeParle, *The American Dream*, 150.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 151.

¹⁵⁹ Mary Yost, "DeWine suggests ways to reform welfare system," *Columbus Dispatch*, 16 June 1992.

¹⁶⁰ Bob Garbo, "Keep GA Program," *Athens Messenger*, 10 March 1992. (Edit.)

¹⁶¹ Carolyn Miller, "Picture of the poor needs a different focus," *Plain Dealer*, 31 December 1990. Jack Frech argues that this fear is also a smokescreen: "We don't really care about waste, fraud, and abuse.... When we are more afraid that some child is going to go hungry or some mom is not going to be able to feed him... than we are that she got an extra ten bucks, that's when things will have turned around. But we're not anywhere near that now."

any compassion from society, especially as views such as Netzley's entered the mainstream. One columnist wrote that the "wildest and unkindest claim is that there is no love in the families of persons dependent on welfare. For many of those people, love is their strength. It's all that keeps them sane as they try to deal with a society which ranks them as somewhat less than human."¹⁶²

Even throughout newspaper profiles intended to destigmatize reciprocity and elicit compassion, distinctions are made between the deserving and undeserving, and their level of competence. Kehana Wills, for example, was a teenage mother of two, completing her high school degree. By staying in school, she was one of 260 in Butler County receiving LEAP benefits. She also received child-care and transportation services for her and her kids. She said, "I hear people talk about 'welfare this and welfare that,' but I really don't look at it that way for me because I help myself."¹⁶³ Wills viewed herself as different from the recipients giving welfare a bad name: "A lot of teen-age pregnant mothers are making it look bad for the ones who are doing good, who are doing something with their lives. They keep having babies. They (the system) make it too easy for people to just stay at home. I think adults *should* go off after two years." What separates her from those generational welfare families? "A lot of drive and desire," according to her boyfriend. Another recipient sought to distinguish herself by saying, "I'm not on welfare because I won't work, or because I have a drug or alcohol problem. Although there are people who fit into that category, I'm not one of them."¹⁶⁴

Other profiles featured stories of medical emergencies, factory closings, unexpected pregnancies, domestic violence, family deaths, regional job loss, and other factors that push people on the edge of poverty into it. Once they fall in, one columnist wrote, "too often, the rules and regulations of the welfare system are designed to promote *dependency* and discourage attempts at *self-sufficiency*."¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² John Jay Jackson, "Bashing poor is cruel, claims lack foundation," *Columbus Dispatch*, 21 March 1992. (Edit.)

¹⁶³ Irvin and Lolli, "Recipients say programs help get their lives together."

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Miller, "Picture of the poor needs a different focus." Emphasis added.

6.5 Paternalism Dominant

The 1990s was the decade in which paternalism's assumptions became dominant in public policy. The ideological strand of welfare abolition had been consistently strong at the state level, not the least of which because states are required to balance the budget and there are fewer barriers to formal revision for state policies like GA.¹⁶⁶ The strand of paternalism emerged in the 1960s, became prevalent by the 1980s, and dominant in the 1990s. Due to the collective strength of the two strands, Ohio illustrates the triumph of the 'welfare as self-sufficiency' order.

First, we see the collaboration between the cuts to GA and the introduction of OWF, to completely reshape the welfare landscape in Ohio – those sorted from GA were expected to get jobs; those receiving TANF were required to do so. Republicans admitted that both were part of the broader welfare reform puzzle. As dual mechanisms of retrenchment, abolition of state programs and paternalism in federally mandated programs caused overall usage of Ohio cash assistance programs to drop precipitously.

Second, we see parallels with the 1960s in the civic and political competence shown by those who opposed the GA cuts, and in the contested relationship between the gubernatorial administration and members of Cleveland. We also see the continued insistence by lawmakers on either market competence through GA cuts – to *incentivize* people to work – or the rejection of competence through work requirements – to *force* people choosing dependency to work.

Third, despite the activism surrounding the welfare reform efforts, the logic of dependency reigned as the dominant paradigm, and paternalism was discussed as the dominant solution. Ohio was featured in national discussions on the development of dependency politics, identified as a fast follower of the “maverick Wisconsin” when it came to welfare experiments.¹⁶⁷ *A US News and World*

¹⁶⁶ Hacker, “Privatizing Risk without Privatizing the Welfare State.”

¹⁶⁷ Ifill, “Whose Welfare?,” 271.

Report article titled, “War on Welfare Dependency,” summarized this discourse and policy: “Unlike Murray, Mead wanted to keep government in the welfare business.... To date, the new paternalism has adhered more to Mead’s tough-love prescriptions than to Murray’s scrap-welfare scheme.”¹⁶⁸

Fourth, the addition of work and other exacting requirements did not change either the effectiveness of programs in alleviating poverty or public discourse in support for the poor. While Mead claimed that work requirements “were a blend of the ‘old conservatism,’ which consists of ‘cutting welfare to throw off the less deserving,’ and the new or ‘big-government conservatism,’ in which ‘the aim is not to save money but to... set public expectations of good behavior,’”¹⁶⁹ the 1990s illustrate empirically that the agenda of ‘old’ conservatism reigned. According to the coverage, “On four occasions since 1967, Congress has enacted changes that allowed state officials to reduce a family’s grant if an able-bodied adult turned down a job opportunity. However, since states consistently underfunded work programs, most welfare recipients did nothing but register for jobs that never materialized.” The article concluded, “there is little reason to believe that the new paternalism will provoke an upsurge in work.... Far more likely is another unhappy possibility: that the new paternalism will actually backfire.”¹⁷⁰

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At the start of the decade, welfare and dependency were the dominant political discourses. Poverty was hardly emphasized. According to presidential election reports, “In their messages for 1992, the candidates seem to have scrubbed poverty from their agendas. If they talked about the poor at all, it is to promote ideas like earned income-tax credits.” Candidates promoted the logic that a rising tide lifts all boats.¹⁷¹ As the decade came to a close and the nation prepared for another

¹⁶⁸ David Whitman, “War on welfare dependency,” *US News and World Report*, 20 April 1992. 35.

¹⁶⁹ Ifill, “Whose Welfare?,” 274.

¹⁷⁰ Whitman, “War on welfare dependency,” 37.

¹⁷¹ Ifill, “Whose Welfare?”

presidential election, the Reverend Jesse Jackson conducted a weeklong tour of Appalachia, promising “to put the region and its poverty at the forefront of the national debate.”¹⁷²

With a booming economy and a decreasing poverty rate, the challenge of highlighting poverty was apparent. Frech said, “If they don’t see poverty as one of the problems that needs to be solved, they’re not going to devote any time or resources to it.”¹⁷³ So Jackson spoke at Hocking College in Athens, promising that healthcare, housing, jobs, and education would be central to a potential campaign. According to reports, “Jackson said the persistent poverty transcends politics.”¹⁷⁴ Marching with Jackson were Martin Sheen, Reverend Jerry Falwell, and between 2,500 and 5,000 others. The crowd was “diverse in age and color. It included business owners and laborers, coal miners from Ohio, West Virginia and Illinois, black lung sufferers from Kentucky and Illinois, and students from nearby Hocking College and Ohio University.” Cecil Roberts, president of United Mine Workers, spoke to loud applause. Jackson tied poverty’s existence to political representation: “If you vote your fears, they will rejoice. If you vote your hopes, many of them will be replaced. You have the power to change American’s priorities. We’re here to change the terms of the national debates.”¹⁷⁵

The debates did change, but not as Jackson would have hoped. Proponents of paternalism would begin to argue that work requirements were ineffective *only* because “lawmakers so narrowed the definition of ‘able-bodied’ and so broadened the definition of ‘participation’ that the vast majority of welfare parents were effectively exempted” from them.¹⁷⁶ Indeed, the dependency discourse would be so strong, that “many traditional Democrats [would be] as drawn to one-dimensional explanations of welfare dependency as the conservatives they bash.”¹⁷⁷ And so, we see in Chapter 7, the expansion of work requirements to programs beyond cash assistance.

¹⁷² James Benton, “Appalachian Poverty Gets National Attention,” *Akron Beacon Journal*, 28 September 1998.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Whitman, “War on welfare dependency,” 37.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

Chapter 7.

Paternalism Expanded

The New Paternalism in the New Century [2002-2019]
– The Expansion of ‘Work Supports’ Conditional on Work

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Welfare reform made paternalism the hegemonic policy paradigm. It nearly eliminated adult cash assistance in Ohio and changed the focus of debates from “should work be involved... to how much should work be involved.”¹ When I asked a representative from Policy Matters about welfare programs in Ohio, she responded: “Well, what welfare are you talking about? We don’t have cash assistance anymore for the most part. It’s really pretty non-existent.” Instead, she listed those ‘welfare’ programs that might be considered ‘assistance to the poor’: “We have the EITC, which you have to work to receive. We have food aid, which comes with a lot of strings. And Medicaid and expanded Medicaid here in Ohio.” As we will see in this chapter, however, the specter of ‘welfare’ plagues even the latter programs, and the same promise of the transformative power of work requirements is made.

Given the over two-decades since PRWORA and OWF, it would be apt to evaluate the new paternalism against its own criteria of success, by asking, what, if anything has changed in terms of the politics and discourses of anti-poverty programs. Would those showing a work effort be in better standing in society, both in the esteem of others and in terms of their own financial situations? Would adding work requirements do away with opposition to programs?

However, the new paternalism continued the effects of retrenchment – removing people from welfare rolls and orienting the market as the center of reform efforts, regardless of the health of the market itself.² A systematic review³ of studies on TANF shows that since 1997 more than 2 million families nationwide lost all TANF direct assistance because of sanctions relating to failure to meet work-requirements. These studies show that states and counties apply work requirements inappropriately because of administrative error,⁴ difficulty identifying those who should be exempt,⁵

¹ Interview with Buckeye Institute.

² Soss, et al., *Disciplining the Poor*.

³ Pavetti, “TANF Studies Show Work Requirement Proposals for Other Programs Would Harm Millions.”

⁴ Heidi Goldberg and Liz Schott, “A Compliance-oriented Approach to Sanctions in State and County TANF Programs,” *Center on Budget and Policy Priorities*, 1 October 2000.

⁵ LaDonna Pavetti, et al., “Review of Sanction Policies and Research Studies,” *Mathematica Policy Research*, 10 March 2003.

and in ways that disproportionately affect African Americans.⁶ Most notably, the review concludes that “*work requirements have contributed to the near elimination of the cash safety net in many states, without generating lasting gains in work.*”⁷

Nor did the new century bring a new discourse.⁸ Each iteration of work requirements disproves the claim that the public will support the efforts to increase benefits. According to the representative from Policy Matters, “There were some progressive or centrist or sympathetic scholars or policy makers at the time [1990s] who thought, ‘well, if all of these people are working, then surely the demonization will cease.’ And I don’t think that that’s proven to be the case at all.” Yet, some in the welfare reform space believe that “the best piece of welfare reform didn’t cost any money at all and... it changed the perception, it changed the purpose.... That it really was just changing that mindset that if you can work you need to work. It’s that simple, we’re not doing people any favors.”⁹ Nor has “poverty” re-emerged as the problem definition. According to Mary Jo Bane, “It seems fair to conclude that politicians in 2009 do not see a poverty agenda as important politically, either as a potential positive aspect of their campaigns or as something to be attacked – at least not under the label of ‘poverty.’”¹⁰

Work requirements have become a bipartisan mechanism by which welfare is reformed and the safety net is retrenched – a fundamentally conservative goal. According to Peck, “What began as an experimental modification of a limited number of welfare programmes has matured, first into a federal institutional framework and subsequently into... a repository for all things *anti* welfare.”¹¹

⁶ Sanford Schram, et al., “Deciding to Discipline,” *American Sociological Review* 74, no. 3 (2009): 398-422.

⁷ Pavetti, “TANF Studies Show Work Requirement Proposals for Other Programs Would Harm Millions,” 2. Emphasis added.

⁸ The consistency of the welfare reform canon was noted by Darrel Rowland, “Old welfare-reform articles sound familiar,” *Columbus Dispatch*, 29 April 1997, comparing headlines from 1964 such as “Sweeping Changes Urged in Ohio’s Welfare Setup” and “Welfare Reform At Last,” to the 1997 bills. (Edit.)

⁹ Interview with OJFSDA.

¹⁰ Mary Jo Bane, “Poverty politics and policy,” *Focus* 26, no. 2 (2009): 75-80. 77.

¹¹ Peck, “*Workfare*,” 134.

Even though Ohio work requirements had been mandatory since 1963, and the FSA federally imposed work requirements, this was not enough. Instead, throughout the 2000s and 2010s, states, including Ohio, maintained a “creeping stringency” in their efforts to reform welfare.¹²

More contemporary efforts illustrate that the new paternalism and its work requirements are not a dying public policy, but rather undergoing significant expansion. In fact, it is clear that, as the hegemonic policy, the new paternalism also shapes the policy discourse and the assumptions underlying it – acting as the “center of interpretive processes.”¹³ As more services once-considered safety-net programs (or work supports, pre-requisite to work) are being classified as work supports *conditional on* work, they have become targets for the retrenchment efforts of the new paternalism. The application of work requirements beyond cash assistance makes clear that paternalism is its own ideational strand, rather than a political compromise.¹⁴

This chapter proceeds as follows. First, since alleged financial constraints are a consistent part of the retrenchment agenda (cost-containment justifying spending cuts and work requirements), I examine one of the recurring contestations throughout Ohio’s history of welfare: if and how surplus money is spent. Second, I examine the contemporary relationship between work and welfare, and how the existence of the working poor challenges the logic of dependency. I then examine the conservative notion of ‘entitlement dependency’ as a response to that challenge. Third, I examine how this notion is used to frame pre-requisites to work – specifically, food assistance and Medicaid – as conditional upon work, justifying the expansion of work requirements. For this, I examine the Ohio SNAP and Medicaid programs.

¹² Coccia, “Creeping Stringency.”

¹³ Battistelli and Ricotta, “Management Rhetoric and Citizen Participation in Three Italian Cities,” 672-673.

¹⁴ While the elimination of cash assistance entitlement could be seen as a one-off, not as proof of a retrenchment agenda, the expansion of work requirements to in-kind entitlements makes clear that it is one piece of this agenda, and not a behavioral one.

7.1 Welfare Surplus and ‘Cost-Containment’

Financial constraints are one justification used for spending cuts and work requirements as a sorting mechanism to redirect aid to the deserving poor. As we have seen, however, one of the recurring conflicts in Ohio is the battle between activists and the state in allocating “rainy day funds,” a state surplus encompassing state and federal funds. When cash assistance (AFDC) was made into a block grant (TANF), states gained flexibility in how the money was spent, as long as the money was used in the “core spending areas” of the PRWORA legislation, such as reducing out-of-wedlock births. In 2004, only four states spent all of their TANF money.¹⁵ According to DeParle, “in a perfectly legal maneuver, states also used billions just to sustain programs they had previously financed themselves. That freed funds for other uses but did nothing for the poor.”¹⁶

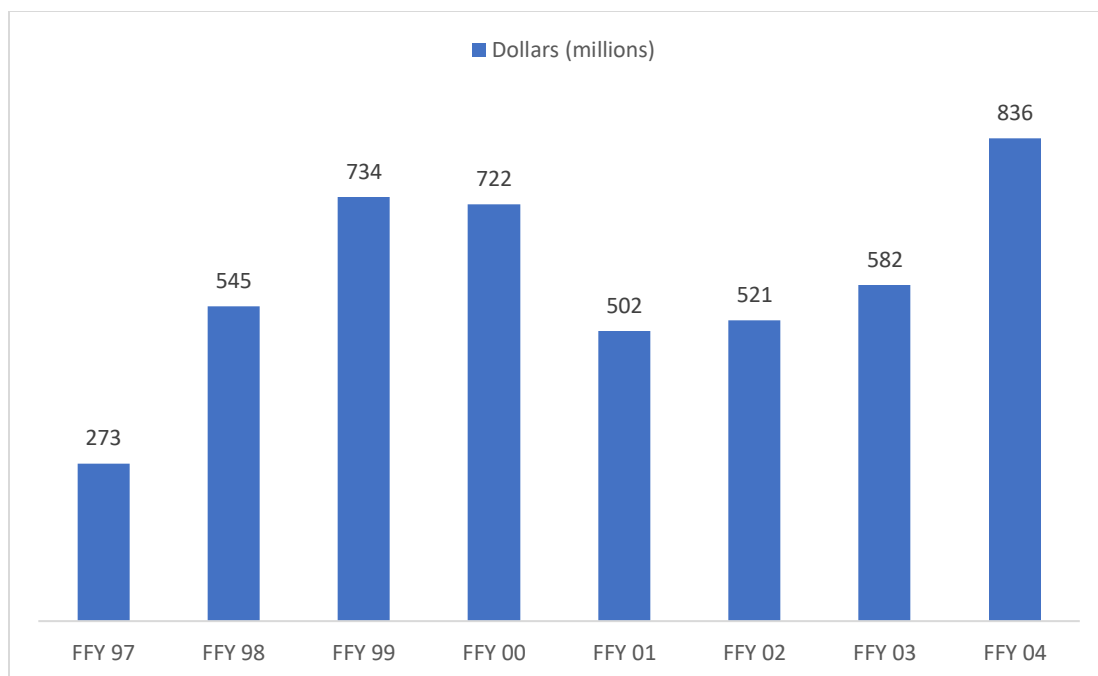


Figure 7.1: Ohio's cumulative unspent TANF funds¹⁷

¹⁵ Cole, “Rich Ohio but Poor Ohioans.”

¹⁶ DeParle, *American Dream*, 216. This was not new. Ohio had done this since Rhodes, getting federal money to cover state costs.

¹⁷ Ohio Legislative Service Commission, “Budget Footnotes,” 28, no. 3 (2004), <http://www.lbo.state.oh.us/fiscal/publications/periodicals/bfn/V28N03.pdf>. In Jack Frech, “Ohio’s Poorest Children,” Athens County JFS, 2004. Recreated.

In 2004, Ohio sat on \$836 million in federal money designated for aid to the poor (TANF fund).¹⁸ As a result, people are having to make “ungodly decisions every day between these kinds of basic necessities in life.”¹⁹ Between 1997 and 2004, the OWF caseload dropped more than 50-percent because of the three-year time limits.²⁰ Between 2000 and 2004, the number of Ohioans in poverty rose 17-percent.²¹ In Cleveland, nearly one in three families lived on less than \$35,000 per year, and about 7,500 in Cuyahoga County received cash assistance.²² The logic of dependency was clear: “State officials take tremendous pride over removing people from welfare – 749,000 recipients in 1992 compared with 195,000 today – but they are mighty stingy in paying out the money collected to help people.”²³

When Frech pushed for the funds to be spent by increasing cash grants, Tom Hayes, JFS director, called the plan “idiotic” and said the money would be “better spent to help the poor find jobs.”²⁴ “Giving a few more dollars to a TANF family isn’t going to help them. What’s going to help them in the long run is to deal with whatever barriers they have, to help them move toward employment and out of poverty,” Hayes said.²⁵ Hayes’ successor, Barbara Riley, would echo the same sentiment: “We are making aggressive efforts to get more money into the hands of the *working* poor.”²⁶ This is despite the fact most OWF recipients were grandparents raising their grandchildren, and single mothers, and “recipients have to meet strict... work requirements, in order to be eligible.”²⁷

¹⁸ \$330 million was unobligated while the remainder became unobligated as counties underspent.

¹⁹ Ted Wendling, “Money for poor not spent; sparks fly,” *Plain Dealer*, 29 September 2004.

²⁰ “TANF hoard,” *Courier*, 31 January 2006. (Edit.)

²¹ Cole, “Rich Ohio but Poor Ohioans.”

²² Ibid.

²³ Sam Fulwood III, “Taft guarantees lifetimes of poverty,” *Plain Dealer*, 8 February 2005. (Edit.)

²⁴ Wendling, “Money for poor not spent; sparks fly.”

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Cole, “Rich Ohio but Poor Ohioans.” Emphasis added.

²⁷ Jack Frech, “Abject Need must not be allowed to go on,” *Athens Messenger*, 3 February 2009. (Edit.)

In 2018, the Center for Community Solutions found that since 2004 the declining caseloads were due to recipients meeting the time limit or failing to meet the work requirements. According to the report,

Meeting this work requirement is increasingly hard to do, as robust work support programs are not available across the state and it can be challenging to meaningfully engage clients in core activities. Ohio no longer collects any data after people leave the program, so there is no way to know how many people move into successful employment, although this is often the way work requirement supporters interpret the declining caseload number.²⁸

However, in 2004, the state claimed that the money would be used only if caseloads *increased* (see Figure 7.2). The Center for Community Solutions proposed the unspent funds be used to restore childcare funding that had been cut.²⁹ By 2006, *Time Magazine* reported that “no state hoarded like Ohio, which has \$900 million in unused TANF funds – a surplus twice as big as second-ranked New York.”³⁰ In 2018, public pressure from a report by the Center for Community Solutions, led the *Columbus Dispatch* editorial board to ask, “Which is worse – not having the resource available to help children in need, or hoarding the resources that could relieve some of their struggles?”³¹ The state decided to use the money for Step Up to Quality, a state quality-requirement for childcare, which disadvantages rural populations with no access to the criteria for accreditation.³²

²⁸ Britton and Lusheck, “Majority of Ohioans living in deep poverty don’t receive cash assistance,” 8-9. The latter part of the claim is exemplified by Robert Doar, “Off the track on workfare,” in Jennifer Marshall and Rea Hederman, Jr., eds., “2014 Index of Culture and Opportunity,” *The Heritage Foundation*, (2014), “This decrease is partly the result of work requirements prompting potential recipients to not even bother with welfare—they decide to just get a job,” p. 51.

²⁹ Wendling, “Money for poor not spent; sparks fly.” Ultimately, \$60 million over three years were spent to provide subsidized childcare to eligible families; \$45 million went to home energy assistance. “Where the Money Will Go,” *Plain Dealer*, 27 May 2006.

³⁰ Cole, “Rich Ohio but Poor Ohioans.”

³¹ Editorial Board, “Ohio program for poorest children holds back on help,” *Columbus Dispatch*, 12 October 2018. Discussing this under-spending, a representative from Ohio CDF told me that people have justified the under-spending “for several reasons: because state government can’t forecast how much is needed, number one. And, number two, because you can’t just spend all that money; you have to save some of it in case there’s a rainy day. I would say right now it’s raining, and it’s been raining.”

³² Catherine Candisky, “Poverty Persists as Ohio Accumulates Surplus of welfare funds,” *Columbus Dispatch*, 1 October 2018.

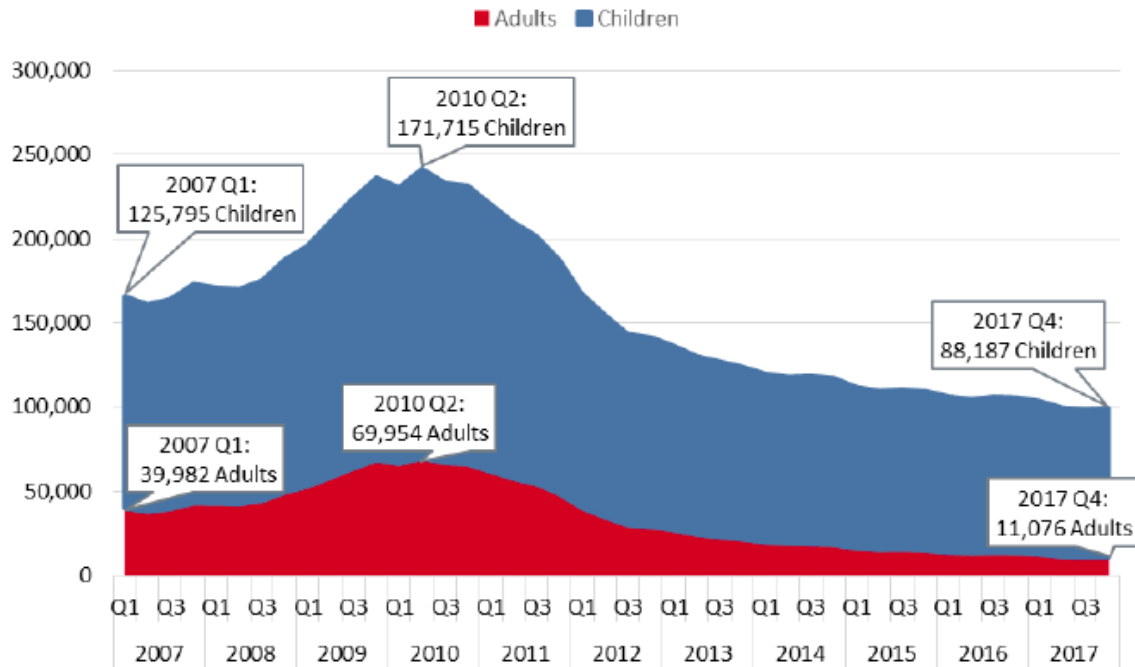


Figure 7.2: Ohio Works First quarterly caseload, 2007-2017³³

While advocating for increased benefits over the years, the counties were still involved in finding people work through subsidized jobs programs. A major change had occurred, however, when recipients were allowed to work for private, *for-profit* organizations. Athens County Commissioner Bill Theisen “expressed concern that the county was subsidizing for-profit organizations with workers... who were not being hired after six months of job training.” While Theisen wanted to eliminate the businesses that do not hire after six months from the list of approved employers, Frech disagreed given the sparse number of jobs to begin with.³⁴

By the early 2000s, welfare experts recommended that if a recession were to occur, “states may want to provide community service jobs for those unable to find work in the private sector. In the absence of such programs, it will be hard for states to enforce existing work requirements and time limits on welfare.” Their argument for mandatory public sector workfare – reminiscent of that in the

³³ Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, “Public Monthly Assistance Statistics.”

³⁴ Casey Elliott, “Concerns voiced over Work Experience Program,” *Athens Messenger*, 19 November 2005.

1960s – maintained the justification of a sorting mechanism: “The availability of community service jobs is not only the ultimate safety net but helps to discriminate between those who really want to work and those who use the perceived lack of jobs as a reason to stay home.”³⁵ While few states still provide public sector work, it would be a full-circle development from the early 1960s.

³⁵ Isabel Sawhill and Ron Haskins, “Welfare Reform and the Work Support System,” in Isabel Sawhill, et al., eds., *Welfare Reform and Beyond* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2002): 107-119. 116.

7.2 'From Welfare to Work but Still not Making It'

“A job should always be a better option for somebody and frankly I find it offensive that we ever try to compete with work. Poverty is not comfortable. We shouldn’t spend our time trying to make it comfortable.” – Welfare reform veteran

While work has always been central to the question of welfare, the new paternalism brought about two explicit shifts. First, the new paternalism expanded the centrality of work in discussion of all safety-net programs, not just cash assistance, as we will see in 7.3. Second, the new paternalism assumed that work is important for moral and cultural, not material, benefit, and that *any* demand on the safety-net is a detriment. This adaptation was necessary to justify paternalism’s development and reinforce the logic of dependency, because the existence of the working poor – either receiving cash or in-kind benefits or not – challenges the notion that work is enough for true self-sufficiency.³⁶

According to the representative from Policy Matters, “In the roots of our founding is the notion of working people and... the role that good jobs play in eradicating poverty.” However, workers in Ohio have long required public benefits to make ends meet. In 2006, a study of Walmart, McDonalds, and thirty-eight other companies in Ohio found that 104,652 employees received Medicaid, 73,110 used food stamps, and 7,253 received OWF cash assistance checks.³⁷ Some would be working multiple jobs in order to receive assistance and make ends meet. Even then, they “don’t have the money to do anything,” except make it to the next day.³⁸ Welfare benefits are low enough that they keep the working poor reliant on low wage jobs, and allow employers to pay low wages because of high demand. According to Soss et al., workfare programs like OWF “are designed to service ‘low road’ capitalism by offering up labor on whatever terms the market will bear,”³⁹ asking nothing of employers.

³⁶ See Robert Stoker and Laura Wilson, *When Work Is Not Enough* (Washington, DC: Brookings, 2006); Diane Suchetka, “From welfare to work but still not making it,” *Plain Dealer*, 4 June 2006.

³⁷ Julie Carr Smyth, “Ohio Workers depend on public benefits,” *Plain Dealer*, 25 February 2006.

³⁸ Casey Elliott, “We don’t have the money to do anything,” *Athens Messenger*, 2 September 2007.

³⁹ Soss, et al., *Disciplining the Poor*, 15.

However, their predicament is a success in welfare reform terms, because at least the poor are working.⁴⁰ As with all things, success depends on the measurement. As Schram and Soss note, “perceptions of reform as a policy success depend chiefly on the diversion of attention away from standards of evaluation and interpretations of evidence that might suggest failure.”⁴¹ It is well known, and this thesis emphasizes, that welfare reform – conducted through a logic of dependency – measures the wrong thing: drops in welfare usage. Frech argued, though, that “there was no requirement that we do anything about poverty. Everything was work first.” Shawn Fremstad, from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, agreed, “People are getting off welfare but not out of poverty.”⁴²

One contributor to *The Plain Dealer*, noted in 2006, “If you look at the numbers, welfare reform has been an amazing success. In fiscal year 1997, the government sent welfare checks to 186,206 families across Ohio. By 2005, that number plummeted by more than half to 82,597.”⁴³ An Ohio JFS official claimed, “welfare reform was not designed to cure poverty. It has not cured poverty. What it has done is provide those supports so that families can be so much more self-sufficient.”⁴⁴ Joel Potts, who supported the reform efforts in Ohio, thought that the focus should be getting people into career paths, regardless of the pay in entry-level jobs.⁴⁵ Federal officials agreed that “the only pathway out of welfare is work.”⁴⁶ Robert Rector, from the Heritage Foundation, argued that welfare reform made huge gains “in helping welfare dependents to move toward *self-sufficiency*. It dramatically reduced the caseload of dependents, reduced child poverty and increased employment among single mothers.”⁴⁷

⁴⁰ Ashlee Monroe, “Experts look at welfare reform’s impact here in Appalachian Ohio,” *Athens News*, 15 November 2007.

⁴¹ Sanford Schram and Joe Soss, “Success Stories,” *ANNALS AAPSS* 577 (2001): 49-65. 49.

⁴² Candisky and Johnson, “Getting off welfare no guarantee of success.”

⁴³ Suchetka, “From welfare to work but still not making it.”

⁴⁴ Ibid

⁴⁵ Candisky and Johnson, “Getting off welfare no guarantee of success.”

⁴⁶ Suchetka, “From welfare to work but still not making it.”

⁴⁷ Ibid. Emphasis added.

7.2.i The Expanded Notion of ‘Entitlement Dependency’

However, other caseloads increased, just as they had in the 1960s. Those who had received state or federal cash assistance in the 1990s had to seek out other sources of support, especially Medicaid and food stamps. For example, in Washington County, families on cash assistance dropped from 427 to 3 between 1997 and 2004. But during that time, Medicaid recipients rose from 4,020 to 7,316. Statewide that number grew by 600,000 to 1.7 million.⁴⁸ Statewide, the number of food stamp recipients rose nearly 11-percent, from 842,673 in January 2003 to 932,221 in January 2004.⁴⁹ That number rose to 1.1 million in 2008, doubling the 2001 caseload. Another 500,000 were deemed eligible but not enrolled.⁵⁰

In 2004, *The Columbus Dispatch* ran a week-long feature called “Lines of Despair,” focusing on the thousands of Ohioans in food lines. Food pantries, such as one in Nelsonville, became a source of relief for many across the state, especially in Southeastern Ohio. Even before the recession, more and more people with jobs were showing up to soup kitchens and food pantries. An employee at the Nelsonville Food Pantry told me that they had to add Saturday as a day the pantry would be open “because a lot of people that come here actually work. They have jobs but they just don’t make enough money to live on.”⁵¹ The overarching impact of welfare reform in places like Appalachian Ohio were stagnant poverty rates and movement of those who once received cash assistance “to some sort of benefits, such as food stamps or disability or pensions supplements.”⁵²

Despite cash assistance being eliminated as an entitlement, conservative think tanks like AEI continue to focus on ‘entitlement dependency’ as the main issue related to government spending,

⁴⁸ Dennis Cauchon, “Welfare reform opens Medicaid to millions,” *USA Today*, 1 August 2005.

⁴⁹ Candisky and Johnson, “Getting off welfare no guarantee of success.”

⁵⁰ “Record 1.1 million Ohioans using food stamps,” *Athens Messenger*, 23 March 2008.

⁵¹ Nelsonville Food pantry was also featured in Robert Samuels, “‘They’ve Shifted the burden to us,’” *Washington Post*, 1 November 2018,

https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/theyve-shifted-the-burd...2-cb0c-11e8-a3e6-44daa3d35ede_story.html?utm_term=.d61a9ae9a09e.

⁵² Richard Heck, “Welfare reform under review,” *Athens Messenger*, 14 November 2007.

economic malaise, and moral decline. Whereas critics of PRWORA see its legislative success as emblematic of a trend of “neoliberal paternalism,”⁵³ Nicholas Eberstadt, an AEI fellow, argues that, “the story of AFDC/TANF... is a one-off, a major exception to the general trend” of increasing claims of food stamps and Medicaid. He is concerned that other entitlement windows, including those mentioned above and Supplemental Security Income, were “simultaneously thrown open.”⁵⁴

Eberstadt makes a number of claims which are mainstream in conservative circles. First, he argues that material hardship is not to blame for increased claims on means-tested benefits, citing the slight decrease in unemployment compared to the large increase in claims between 1983 and 2012. While he argues that actual need does not correspond to the number of claims, others have concluded these numbers reflect the rise in low-wage, precarious work.⁵⁵

Second, he argues that by 2012, “the number of people taking home means-tested benefits was more than twice the number of those living below the poverty line — meaning a decisive majority of recipients of such aid were the non-poor.” He ignores the fact that the qualitative difference between 100 and 200-percent of the FPL is not a difference between poor and not-poor.⁵⁶ In fact, in many states like Ohio, the greatest increases in material hardship have come between these thresholds.⁵⁷ Eberstadt’s conclusion *should* be a re-evaluation of the poverty line to better account for need based on cost-of-living and actual self-sufficiency measures, as we saw in Chapter 3.⁵⁸ Instead,

⁵³ Soss, et al., *Disciplining the Poor*.

⁵⁴ Nicholas Eberstadt, “American Exceptionalism and the Entitlement State,” *National Affairs*, Winter 2015, <https://www.nationalaffairs.com/publications/detail/american-exceptionalism-and-the-entitlement-state>.

⁵⁵ Halbert, “Ohio blue collar jobs report: May 2017.”

⁵⁶ Casey Elliott, “Robbing Peter to pay Paul,” *Athens Messenger*, 3 September 2007; Heather Boushey, et al., *Hardships in America* (Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute, 2001). As Shipler, *The Working Poor*, writes, “An exit from poverty is not like showing your passport and crossing a frontier. There is a broad strip of contested territory between destitution and comfort,” p. 5.

⁵⁷ Interview with IMPACT CAA.

⁵⁸ Conservative thinkers do advocate for a new poverty line measurement focused on consumption. The Trump Administration issued guidance on calculating poverty by including government transfers, indexing more closely to inflation, and using the family as the sharing unit. By doing this, poverty dropped from 19.5-percent in 1963 to 2.3-percent in 2017. Council of Economic Advisors, “Reducing Poverty and Increasing Self-Sufficiency in America,” in *Economic Report of the President* (March 2019), 427-484. 429. <https://www.scribd.com/document/402374188/ERP-2019>.

he thinks that the increase in caseloads is a testament to the entitlement mentality of the poor and not the nature of need.

According to the logic of dependency, people moving between programs of support is evidence of a character deficit and the incompetence that Mead argues requires paternalism and its work requirements, rather than the demand sparked by existing need. Therefore, conservatives have expanded retrenchment efforts to close those avenues of support.

Alice O'Connor, "Embattled Legacy," University of Oxford, 10 May 2019, noted that this CEA report shifts the conservative argument from "The War on Poverty was a failure and the welfare system can't solve it," to "The War on Poverty was a success, so major efforts to end poverty are misplaced." These contradictory strands are possible in the same vision of conservatism because they both result from the logic of dependency. The former leads to welfare abolition, and the latter leads to paternalism. It is easy to identify such adaptations when the rhetorical shifts are so significant. Other adaptations, such as rhetorical policy goals, oftentimes obfuscate their underlying logic.

7.3 Work Requirement Expansion in Ohio

“We have more working poor people in our system today than non-working poor people. I never thought we’d see that ever. But that creates a whole new nuance that we’ve never dealt with before. Our programs are built... for a very small subset. They were never meant to be a work support.”

– Welfare reform veteran

“I believe in my heart of hearts that if you really want to help people, those who can work ought to work. It’s the only way you’re going to get public support.” – Welfare reform veteran

The seeming incompatibility between the epigraphs – the latter stating that welfare policies must enforce work and the former stating that they were never meant as work supports – illustrates the tension present in welfare reform efforts that prioritize workforce transitions and not increases in livelihood. In-kind benefits like Medicaid and food stamps were once considered fundamental tools in increasing livelihood, and, in the process, easing barriers to work. Both Healthy Start and Healthy Families (Medicaid) and Ohio Food Assistance Program (SNAP) are safety-net programs which are rightfully viewed as *pre-requisites* to work. Individuals and families need health and sustenance in order to seek and maintain a job. However, Ohio and other states are making them *conditional on* work, expanding the assumptions of paternalism to cover in-kind benefits.

7.3.i Healthy Start and Healthy Families

Healthy Start and Healthy Families (Medicaid in Ohio) was expanded through the Affordable Care Act in Ohio by Republican Governor John Kasich, through a procedural maneuver with the controlling board, and to the opposition of the state GOP.⁵⁹ This expanded health coverage to people at 138-percent of the FPL, covering 700,000 more individuals. State enrollment continued to grow

⁵⁹ Dan Zak, “Spurning the Party Line,” *Washington Post*, 5 January 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/sf/national/2016/01/05/deciderskasich/?utm_term=.bbce7f700468.

from 2.74 million in 2014 to 3.08 million in 2015 but has since been dropping slightly.⁶⁰ In 2021 Ohio will have to cover 10-percent of the cost, approximately \$5.2 billion.⁶¹

Medicaid work requirements were a gubernatorial campaign focus in 2018 for Mike DeWine, who argued that they were the only way to make Medicaid expansion sustainable, despite the increased costs for managing their bureaucracy, the dropping Medicaid rolls because of people being healthier and finding work, and the life-saving impact of expansion in a state ravaged by the Opioid crisis.⁶² After DeWine's election, Ohio used the CMS 1115 Waiver (a mechanism of conversion) to propose work requirements – private or community service work for twenty-hours per week – for those covered by the ACA expansion. They were approved in March 2019 to take effect in 2021. The state estimates that 250,000 of those covered are already working, and another 250,000 would be exempt by being over 50, participating in drug or alcohol treatment, pregnancy, or complying with SNAP work requirements.

According to Ohio Medicaid Director Maureen Corcoran, “while many individuals within the Medicaid program work, more can be done to encourage employment and community engagement efforts that promote financial independence and economic stability while improving health outcomes.”⁶³ The remaining 110,000 would be required to get a job, increase work hours, or attempt to find an exemption. In anticipation of criticisms around due process for termination of benefits, the state has said that individuals will not lose benefits until they have spoken with a caseworker.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Centers for Medicare and Medicaid, “Data: Ohio Enrollment,” *US DHHS*, <https://data.medicaid.gov/Enrollment/Total-Enrollment-per-State/ky2f-nj3e>.

⁶¹ Karen Kasler, “Work Requirements for Ohio Medicaid Expansion will start in 2021,” *WOSU Radio*, 13 November 2019, <https://radio.wosu.org/post/work-requirements-ohio-medicaid-expansion-will-start-2021#stream/0>.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Maureen Corcoran, “Testimony to the Finance Committee of the Ohio House of Representatives,” *Ohio Department of Medicaid*, 20 March 2019.

⁶⁴ Associated Press, “Ohio work requirement to be ‘more individualized,’” *Journal Gazette*, 3 November 2019, <https://www.journalgazette.net/news/local/ohio/20191103/ohio-work-requirement-to-be-more-individualized>.

Corcoran called this process a “warm handoff,” “not meant as punishment but as a way to humanely emphasize the importance of work.”⁶⁵

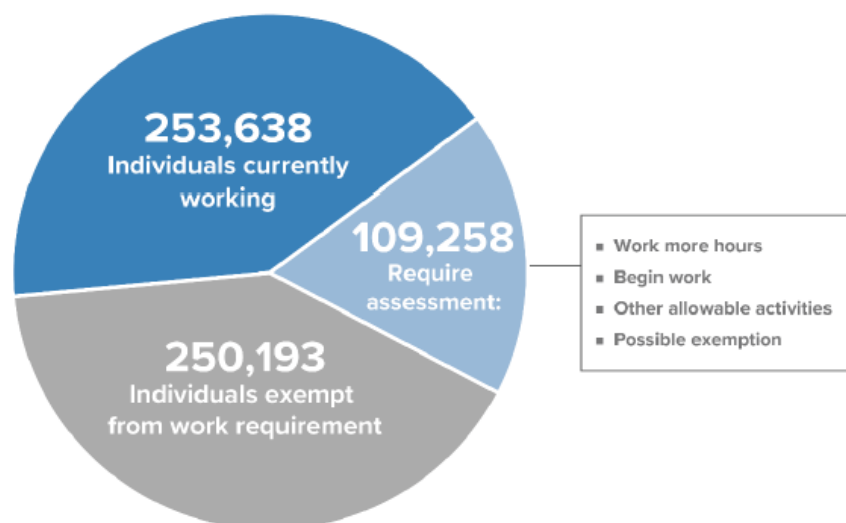


Figure 7.3: Ohio Medicaid expansion work and community engagement requirements⁶⁶

At the end of 2019, Ohio was one of nine states with work requirement waivers approved but not implemented. Three of these – Arkansas, Kentucky, and New Hampshire – were stalled by the district courts.⁶⁷ In February 2020, the U.S. Court of Appeals upheld a ruling that the State of Arkansas’ program is “arbitrary and capricious.”⁶⁸ The Court argued that the objectives of the work demonstration program given by US DHHS – improve health outcomes (which might be correlated with employment), “address behavioral and social factors that influence health outcomes,” and “incentivize beneficiaries to engage in their own health care and achieve better health outcomes” – were not the core objective of the program, namely to provide medical coverage to the needy. In fact,

⁶⁵ Kasler, “Work Requirements for Ohio Medicaid Expansion will start in 2021.”

⁶⁶ Estimated impact based on February 2019 data. Corcoran, “Testimony to the Finance Committee of the Ohio House of Representatives.”

⁶⁷ “Medicaid Waiver Tracker,” *Kaiser Family Foundation*, 10 March 2020, <https://www.kff.org/medicaid/issue-brief/medicaid-waiver-tracker-approved-and-pending-section-1115-waivers-by-state/#Table2>.

⁶⁸ Charles Gresham, et al., v. Alex Michael Azar II, US Court of Appeals for the District Columbia Circuit. No.19-5094, 14 February 2020. 3.

the Court cited TANF as an example of Congress changing the law to make explicit the goal of ending dependency and promoting work:⁶⁹ “The fact that Congress did not similarly amend Medicaid to add a work requirement for all recipients... demonstrates that Congress did not intend to incorporate work requirements into Medicaid.”⁷⁰

During the 1990s, then House Budget Committee Chair John Kasich, along with his fellow Republicans, *had* wanted to turn Medicaid into a block grant, ending its status as an entitlement.⁷¹ A lawyer from the Legal Aid Society of Columbus said that her main concern is that “everything is going to go the way of TANF,” which would make it harder to litigate. As a healthcare entitlement, Medicaid has less of a stigma than cash assistance, and so many counties advertise and enroll people through aggressive sign up efforts.⁷² Some argue, “The success of welfare reform in moving people off of cash assistance and into low-paying jobs has... moved the nation a step closer to a government-run national health care system,”⁷³ with Medicaid rolls in Ohio at 2.95 million in 2018.

For conservatives like Ron Haskins, to prevent the expansion of the Medicaid entitlement, it must be tied to work: “the original sin of social policy was tying Medicaid directly to welfare. Now, it’s tied to working.”⁷⁴ Ohio’s rules around Medicaid eligibility are stricter than most states, but those who qualify receive a wider package of coverage.⁷⁵ In fact, many recipients fear losing their Medicaid payments if their pay increases, because some businesses like Walmart provide fewer benefits in the company plan for \$273 more.⁷⁶ A representative from the Buckeye Institute, a conservative Ohio

⁶⁹ Ibid., 14.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 15-16.

⁷¹ William Hershey, “OhioCare given poor prognosis,” *Akron Beacon Journal*, 6 April 1996.

⁷² Cauchon, “Welfare reform opens Medicaid to millions.”

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid. Tying health insurance to employment is the second sin, exemplified by the U.S. response to COVID-19. In Ohio, work requirements were waived for food stamp and cash assistance recipients. Catherine Candisky, “Coronavirus pandemic puts Ohio’s safety nets to the test,” *Columbus Dispatch*, 6 April 2020.

⁷⁵ For an examination of the relationship between federal, state, and city governments in implementing Medicaid, see Jamila Michener, *Fragmented Democracy* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2018).

⁷⁶ Cauchon, “Welfare reform opens Medicaid to millions.”

think tank, argued that because of this, *Medicaid* can “entrap people in poverty and lower economic mobility,” as opposed to the trap being significantly low wages and a lack of single-payer healthcare.

7.3.ii Ohio Food Assistance Program

According to welfare lore, when the first relief agency was being established by its administrator Harry Hopkins in the 1930s, Hopkins was questioned by a congressional committee whether a relief program would in the long run undermine work ethic. Hopkins responded, “People don’t eat in the long run. People eat every day.”⁷⁷ Now, the USDA describes SNAP as “intended to ensure no one in our land of plenty should fear going hungry, [however] its rules also reflect the *importance of work and responsibility*.”⁷⁸

In the early 1990s, the debate over work requirements took shape in the food stamp program, when House Republicans, led by Speaker Newt Gingrich, proposed to cut the program by 11-percent over the next five years. The debates followed the same political positioning as PRWORA in which Democrats argued for more stringent work requirements, but in exchange demanded money for supportive services.⁷⁹ In 1995, food stamps were one of the largest assistance policies for low-income people, with more than 27 million people receiving it, many of whom were not eligible for any other government assistance. The proposed Republican legislation was framed as “one piece of a huge bill intended to free poor people from dependence on Government while vastly increasing the power of state officials to run their own welfare programs free of Federal supervision.”⁸⁰ The legislation required ABAWDs to fulfill work requirements of 80 hours per month after three months of receiving

⁷⁷ Frech, “Reform is more take than give.”

⁷⁸ Food and Nutrition Service, “SNAP Work Requirements,” *U.S. Department of Agriculture*, <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/work-requirements>. Emphasis added.

⁷⁹ Robert Pear, “House Republicans Propose Using a Work Requirement to Help Cut Food Stamp Costs,” *New York Times*, 6 March 1995.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

assistance.⁸¹ The initial legislation had had a work provision, but only required people to be in training or searching for work.

More recent attempts have been made to strengthen implementation of the 1990s requirements. This is because states can grant exemptions to counties with “insufficient jobs” or a 24-month unemployment rate at least 20-percent above the national average, just as Ohio had considered during the 1963 work requirement.⁸² While the work requirement was waived during the recession, it was reinstituted in 2014. In 2017, Governor Kasich exempted twenty-six counties from the requirement, an ostensibly colorblind policy with disparate impacts based on race: 97-percent of Ohio families in those counties were White. Residents of counties like Cuyahoga and Lucas, which have larger unemployment numbers within the city centers and whose residents are predominantly Black, were not exempt until amendments to the FY2019 budget.⁸³

A representative from Buckeye Institute expressed concern regarding exemptions made to program requirements in Medicaid and SNAP. He said, “you need some exemptions based on physical health, disability.... [But] you want to be careful having too many exemptions because then it carves it out.... you want to be prudent and making sure that you’re not excluding too many people” from the requirements. In December 2019, the Trump Administration approved a rule which would limit states’ abilities to make area unemployment exemptions.⁸⁴ This change was hailed by Ron

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Lola Fadulu, “Hundreds of thousands are losing access to food stamps,” *New York Times*, 4 December 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/04/us/politics/food-stamps.html>.

⁸³ White, “Who receives food assistance in Ohio?”

⁸⁴ Laura Reiley, “Trump Administration tightens work requirements for SNAP,” *Washington Post*, 4 December 2019, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2019/12/04/trump-administration-tightens-work-requirements-snap-which-could-cut-hundreds-thousands-food-stamps/>.

In fact, “the core of Mr. Trump’s safety net policy is an expansion of work requirements to foster self-sufficiency among recipients of food assistance, Medicaid and housing subsidies to reduce dependence on the government.” Glenn Thrush and Erica Green, “Behind Trump’s Plan to Overhaul the Government,” *New York Times*, 21 June 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/21/us/politics/trump-government-overhaul-safety-net.html>. Trump has also proposed adding work requirements to rental assistance programs. Will Fischer, “Housing work requirements would harm families,” *Center on Budget and Policy Priorities*, 3 May 2018, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/housing/housing-work-requirements-would-harm-families-including-many-workers>.

Haskins as a continuation of the 1990s work requirement efforts.⁸⁵ In Ohio, JFS estimates that 45,000 people will be impacted by the new rule, just as many others lose Medicaid coverage.⁸⁶

At the same time, HB 200, introduced by Rep. Scott Wiggam (R-Wooster), would increase the age threshold at which point recipients would be exempt from work requirements. According to Rep. Don Manning (R-New Middletown), “People that can work should work. In my opinion, rewarding people who are able to work but not working is nothing short of socialism.” Democrats in opposition claimed that in order to meet the current requirements, recipients have had “to sort and resort a pile of red and blue pen caps or to paint a pile of rocks white.”⁸⁷ This concern over unnecessary work is similar to that raised by opponents of the 1963 work requirements.⁸⁸

HB 200 was one of many similar bills promoted throughout the U.S. by a Florida-based conservative think tank, Opportunity Solutions Project. The OSP policy director testified that HB 200 “will make sure millionaires and other people with significant resources won’t take advantage of the program,” to which *The Columbus Dispatch* editorial board responded that it is absurd to think that “Ohio’s food stamp rolls are fattened by greedy ineligible recipients who are willing to commit fraud for the \$1.37 per meal that SNAP provides.”⁸⁹ It is telling that HB 200 and similar efforts to increase work requirement application are not about saving money, per se, since any resulting reduction in the caseloads would save federal money, but increase state and county administration costs.⁹⁰

⁸⁵ Ron Haskins, “Trump’s work requirements have been tested before. They succeeded,” *Washington Post*, 25 July 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/trumps-work-requirements-have-been-successful-before--under-bill-clinton/2018/07/25/cbfbcd0-9039-11e8-8322-b5482bf5e0f5_story.html.

⁸⁶ Laura Hancock, “President Donald Trump’s SNAP rule to have effects in Appalachia and on Ohio Medicaid work requirements,” *Cleveland.com*, 6 December 2019, <https://www.cleveland.com/open/2019/12/president-donald-trumps-snap-rule-to-have-effects-in-appalachia-and-on-ohio-medicaid-work-requirements.html>; Lola Fadulu, “Cities Prepare for the Worst as Trump’s Food Stamp Cuts Near,” *New York Times*, 25 January 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/25/us/politics/trumps-food-stamp-cuts.html>.

⁸⁷ Catherine Candisky, “Advocates for poor say work requirements won’t help food stamp recipients,” *Columbus Dispatch*, 4 June 2019.

⁸⁸ To the representative from HAPCAP, this is a valid concern: “There’s this commonly accepted thought that if we make them work for it then they’re going to be adding value to society, but they don’t really understand the cost either... in supervising folks and having work ready for them to do, and employers that are willing to host a different population.”

⁸⁹ Editorial Board, “Lawmakers: Don’t Make it harder to feed hungry families,” *Columbus Dispatch*, 9 June 2019.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

7.3.iii Contemporary Oppositional Discourse

Work requirements are “us making ourselves feel better about giving somebody help.”

– CAA representative

Work requirements for Medicaid were front and center in the minds of those interviewed for this thesis, a “really good real time example” of how poverty politics plays out in the state of Ohio.⁹¹ Those involved in the anti-poverty space were fundamentally opposed to the requirements. Phil Cole, director of OACAA, said that the Medicaid requirement “is stupid. It’s wrong.” While the requirement “is not the barbaric waiver that some states have asked for and it doesn’t affect that many people... it doesn’t matter if you’re one of those people,” Cole said. The Medicaid requirement is especially contentious because, “Medicaid expansion has been the key to getting people out of poverty... the numbers of people who have been able to erase medical debt, it’s been pretty substantial. You have to have a healthy workforce to have a healthy economy.”

Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, from Ohio Foodbanks, wove the Medicaid work requirements into a longer story about “political overreach” by Republicans in the state. Ohio was one of the first states to re-impose the SNAP work requirements after the recession, which saw plant closures and massive dislocation of labor. Initially, the state estimated that 134,000 would be affected by the re-imposition of work requirements, when in fact the caseloads dropped by about 370,000.

This happened simultaneously to two other developments. The first: “We had a real drug epidemic on our hands in the state of Ohio. That was nothing new, that had been going on for more than a decade, it just raised to the surface” because those affected by the opioid epidemic were predominantly White. The re-imposition of work requirements, then, impacted the urban cores, while

⁹¹ Interview with Lisa Hamler-Fugitt.

“a handful of Appalachian counties... continued to get the [exemption] waiver, they’re Republican dominated.”⁹²

The second development was that Medicaid expansion brought on 720,000 people (rather than the state estimated 250,000). According to Hamler-Fugitt, “By and large these two are the same populations. So we’ve given them a Medicaid with one hand, saying, ‘get your physical, mental, behavioral disabilities treated,... this is going to be an opportunity for you to get your health back on course so you can work,’ but then...not very productive if you can’t feed yourself.” Ultimately, Hamler-Fugitt summarized the nature of retrenchment through work requirements – sorting and shrinking – in the new century: “we continue to have this race to the bottom as it relates to this growing segment of the population.”

⁹² Ibid. During the recession, Ohio created an anti-poverty taskforce. It was reported that one CAA representative stated, “Southeastern Ohio representation is critical.... It’s not that poor people in Cleveland don’t suffer, but we have a higher percentage of poverty. We are seeing a new picture of poor people... *these aren’t the welfare stereotypes, but working people* who are having a hell of a time making ends meet.” Matt Gallagher, “State task force to look at poverty,” *Athens Messenger*, 30 May 2008. Emphasis added.

7.4 Paternalism Expanded

As we saw in this chapter, the new century brought a precarious link between work and welfare. State budget priorities and policies continued to make life difficult for the poor. Nationally, conservatives were looking for ways to close off other avenues of support. Beyond just being framed as work supports, the expansion of paternalist assumptions to Medicaid and their strengthening in SNAP classify the programs as “work supports *conditional on work*.” Some of this framing is due to the conservative push for work as the litmus test for any sort of welfare reform. As one former GOP state legislator said, “Poverty advocates have to get over their resistance to requiring people to work for benefits,” noting that work is an American value, not a partisan one.⁹³

However, some is due to liberal acceptance of the frame, because it is still hoped that the language of work support, rather than handout, will change the perception of and generosity towards the poor. A social worker from Northeast Ohio acknowledged that messaging research plays a big role in how programs are framed. A representative from United Way of Central Ohio confirmed that it is easier to fundraise using the phrase “working poor,” because of the stigma attached to poverty, and the notion that work brings deservingness. When asked how she would frame poverty to a conservative legislator, the representative from Policy Matters said, “I would ask that legislator, ‘Do you really think that someone who *works full-time, year-round, 40-hours a week*, should have to get food aid for their kids to survive?’” Even on the liberal side, the framing supports distinctions of deservingness long inherent in conservative efforts to reduce the safety-net.

Part of the challenge for anti-poverty advocates is getting away from the lingering hope in the perpetual promise of work requirements. One interviewee expressed frustration with the framings: “Medicaid is a work support that helps working class people” and “This is the way that we can help

⁹³ The representative from Buckeye Institute echoed this, saying, the Left needs to realize “asking [the poor] to participate and have requirements for their own success is not something that is mean, and it’s something they are capable of.”

working class people who are working hard and have been paying their taxes to keep their jobs.” She says, “none of the framing is about, ‘It would just be absolutely apprehensible [sic] for us to take away someone’s only source of food.’ Period, full stop.” At the federal level, the Center for American Progress is actively opposed to work requirement efforts. One representative emphasized the necessity to *test the assumptions* of work requirements in political discourse. She said, “it’s not that people like work requirements, *they don’t understand what they are.*” By asking, then, whether taking away someone’s health insurance or the money used to put food on the table is the best way for them to find work, the answer will nearly always be, “no.” Non-elite discourse, therefore, differs from the elite discourse. Instead, it becomes clear that work requirements are “a straw man or ruse to detract from the fact that [elite actors] don’t want to make the changes that would be necessary for wealth and income to be distributed in such a way that everybody can have a living wage.”⁹⁴

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The efforts in the new century empirically contradict the promises made by proponents of new paternalism. We do not see the limiting of work requirements to cash assistance, but rather their eager expansion into other in-kind programs – implemented in Medicaid, strengthened in SNAP – as a sorting mechanism for the deserving and undeserving, in order to reduce dependency.⁹⁵ Nor do we see “peace [declared] on the safety net,” as promised by Arthur Brooks, of AEI,⁹⁶ or more public support for safety-net programs. Instead, as we saw at the start of this thesis, paternalists like Mead testify there is still much work to do to expand the paternalist agenda: increase work tests for major

⁹⁴ David Cooper, “How We Can Save \$17 Billion in Public Assistance – Annually,” *Talk Poverty*, 18 February 2016, <https://talkpoverty.org/2016/02/18/can-save-17-billion-public-assistance-annually-minimum-wage/>. The cost savings in food stamp work requirements (\$5.5. billion over five years) could be found in raising the minimum wage.

⁹⁵ For state comparisons, see Heather Hahn, et al., “Work requirements in social safety net programs,” *Urban Institute*, December 2017, https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/95566/work-requirements-in-social-safety-net-programs_0.pdf.

⁹⁶ Brooks has argued, “with these three ideas – declaring peace on the safety net, safety net only for the indigent, and always with work – then we can have an interesting moral consensus and policy competition of ideas and maybe make some progress.” Obama, et al, “Conversation on Poverty at Georgetown University.”

income programs; include poor men in the “help and hassle”; and reform programs like disability that allow able-bodied workers to divert from the labor force.⁹⁷ And so, the era of paternalism expanded sees the same cuts, restrictions, and work requirements that encompass the welfare reform proposals of yesterday and, perhaps, tomorrow.

⁹⁷ Mead, “Making Welfare Work: Testimony before the Subcommittee on Human Resources.”

Conclusion.

Paternalism and the Maintenance of Conservative Power

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C.1 From *Self-Sufficiency* to *Wellbeing*: The Next Conservative Adaptation

“I am employed by Odd Lots no. 29.
I wonder if the customers believe I’m doing fine.
I hear the receipt printing slower than the day before.
I see the irritation in the face of the next customer.
I want more time off and better pay.
I am almost happy every single day....
I understand that I’m doing it all for my son.
I say that one day I’ll be someone.
I dream that he’ll understand my reasons why.
I try to hold back the tears I want to cry.
I hope I get a better job in time.
I am employed by Odd Lots no. 29.”¹

Discourses, such as the epigraph, express the nature of a problem. In the case of the cashier: not quite being happy, low wellbeing, a bad job. Solutions to the problem depend on their intervening logics. Ideational strands can effectively adapt their power by presenting alternative or parallel ideas which carry normative distinctions and by co-opting elements of oppositional discourses.² The likely ambiguity of these adaptations allows for those who might disagree with the intervening logic, to nonetheless support the solutions proposed from it. It is when these adaptations are not parsed for their underlying logic, that that logic – and especially, its preferred policy solutions such as paternalism – may be maintained. The task for analysts is not to “*avoid ambiguity*” but to “*clearly reveal the strategic spots at which ambiguities necessarily arise*.”³

Chapter 3 argued that adaptations of rhetorical policy goals create this ambiguity, shielding the underlying policies from scrutiny. *Self-sufficiency* as it is conceptualized in policy is a positive framing of the logic of dependency. As a goal of welfare policy, it is an adaptation of that logic, allowing the logic to survive.⁴ *Self-reliance* and *personal responsibility* had similar effects. This section briefly outlines

¹ Unknown author, “I am a Cashier,” 2006-2007. Emphasis added.

² Offe, “Political Institutions and Social Power,” 22.

³ Burke, *A Grammar of Motives*, xviii.

⁴ President Trump’s efforts to eliminate the safety-net through increasing work-requirements are under the banner of self-sufficiency. Council of Economic Advisors, “Reducing Poverty and Increasing Self-Sufficiency in America.”

the next adaptation in service of the conservative maintenance of power in welfare policy: the movement to *wellbeing*.⁵

On 16 March 2013, Arthur Brooks, then president of AEI, told the Conservative Political Action Conference that conservatives had to reshape their image in order to win: “If you want to be seen as a moral, good person, talk about fairness and helping the vulnerable. You want to win? Start fighting for people!... Lead with vulnerable people. Lead with fairness!... By telling stories, we can soften people.” However, he reassured the room that it was only their messaging – not their policies – that was at issue. According to Jane Mayer, “to persuade the public, they needed more compassionate packaging.”⁶ As a result, Richard Fink, a strategist for the Koch brothers, argued in 2014 that conservatives needed to “launch a movement for well-being.”⁷

This rhetorical adaptation emerges explicitly from the logic of dependency: “government programs caused dependency, which in turn caused psychological depression.”⁸ The solutions remain tied to work. As one AEI report notes, “Work requirements could generate greater self-sufficiency.... But work can do more than simply improve material well-being.... ‘Work is the secret to dignity. Study after study shows that for the big majority of people, work (both market work and non-market work) is an intrinsic source of worth, of earned success, and human happiness.’”⁹ The shift also relates to literature on the hollowing out of the core institutions of “middle America,” (e.g. YMCA, churches, volunteer organizations) and the commensurate lack in a feeling of belonging.¹⁰ And the effort is tied to attempts to deny the extent of deep poverty in America.¹¹ For example, a representative from the

⁵ To the best of my knowledge, this is a novel analysis.

⁶ Jane Mayer, *Dark Money* (London: Scribe, 2016), 355.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 359.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 360.

⁹ Amelia Irvine, “New Fronts in the War on Poverty,” *AEI Ideas*, 4 October 2018, <https://www.aei.org/economics/new-fronts-in-the-war-on-poverty-work-requirements-job-training-and-the-eitc/>.

¹⁰ See, e.g. Yuval Levin, *The Fractured Republic* (New York: Basic Books, 2017); Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000). These assessments are often post-racial.

¹¹ Jamie Bryan Hall and Robert Rector, “Examining Extreme and Deep Poverty in the United States,” *Heritage Foundation* 3285, 20 February 2018, <http://report.heritage.org/bg3285>. Katz, *The Undeserving Poor*, notes that the conservative

Buckeye Institute argued, “The traditional poverty rate is less useful than it used to be, because if you’re getting more money through the EITC,... health care subsidies,... Medicaid expansion, that’s not going to show up in your poverty rate. But your actual household wellbeing will be higher.”

The move to *wellbeing* has taken hold at the federal level. However, conservatives are focused on the same suite of policies. In 2016, Speaker Paul Ryan and House Republicans published, “A Better Way: A vision for a confident America.”¹² This report focuses on both work requirements – requiring more accountability for states to meet them and strengthening SNAP requirements – and work incentives – connecting child-support enforcement programs to workforce development activities. In October 2017, AEI hosted a panel comprised of welfare reform personalities, including Robert Rector to discuss welfare reform under President Trump. The solutions proffered were the same: enforced work; strict eligibility and spending cuts to curb rampant fraud and abuse;¹³ and marriage incentives to reduce out of wedlock births.

Rector, however, emphasized that material poverty does not matter as much as wellbeing. According to Rector, “The more important thing is not the income, it’s that [behaviors such as dropping out of high school, poor work ethic, single parenthood, criminal activity, drug abuse, and welfare dependence] have a direct, devastating effect on human *wellbeing*.... Everybody’s income could be doubled, and if those behaviors were not altered there really would be very little improvement in human wellbeing.” However, as a side effect to improving human wellbeing, he argued, “income poverty will go way down.”¹⁴

retrenchment of the welfare state began in a similar place, “with an attempt to deny that poverty remained a major problem,” p. 169.

¹² House Republicans, “A Better Way,” Taskforce on Poverty, Opportunity, and Upward Mobility, 7 June 2016.

¹³ Heritage Foundation has advocated for work requirements as a way to reduce the welfare fraud of double-dipping, i.e. holding a non-welfare source of income without reporting it. Rachel Sheffield and Robert Rector, “Setting Priorities for Welfare Reform,” *Heritage Foundation*, 24 February 2016,

<https://www.heritage.org/welfare/report/setting-priorities-welfare-reform>.

¹⁴ “Welfare policy and the Trump Administration,” *AEI*, 10 October 2017, <https://www.aei.org/events/welfare-policy-and-the-trump-administration-what-do-conservatives-think/>. Emphasis added.

In 2018, AEI published, “This Way Up: New Thinking about Poverty and Economic Mobility,” in which Arthur Brooks proposes a new¹⁵ central question for policy discussions around poverty: “How can we rebuild an economy and a culture where everyone has the tools to be necessary? To their families, their communities, and their employers.’... That’s what it comes down to – not just successful public policy, but love.”¹⁶ This love, however, is undeniably “tough,” given that the policy proposals included in the “new thinking” are part of an old conservative agenda: lowering corporate tax rates and increasing private sector charitable responsibility;¹⁷ strengthening work requirements in SNAP, TANF, and disability; and expanding work requirements to men.¹⁸

Despite the policies staying the same – emerging from a logic of dependency – the conservative emphasis on wellbeing signifies the next shift in policy goal adaptation. *Wellbeing* may very well result in a “discourse hegemonic shift”¹⁹ and create a new coalition surrounding it²⁰ – perhaps even providing an avenue for well-meaning liberals, once again, to increase paternalistic “help and hassle” in the safety-net. *Wellbeing* may also be an effective adaptation, because it borrows from a more comprehensive understanding of social and economic policy, without providing the commensurate policy changes. For example, the OECD emphasizes the social, economic, environmental, and political factors that impact wellbeing.²¹ Each of these elements alone, however, would require massive investment in the welfare state and public sector.

The shift to focusing on wellbeing instead of material poverty maintains the *de facto* importance of money for the operation of power but changes the conversation to one that matches with a romantic liberal vision. Indeed, it was Robert Kennedy who said, “even if we act to erase material

¹⁵ The old question being, “How can government become more efficient or more effective at helping people in poverty?”

¹⁶ Arthur Brooks, “The Dignity Deficit,” in Tamar Jacoby, ed., *This Way Up* (Washington, DC: AEI, 2018), 4-6. 5.

¹⁷ Paul Ryan, “Conservative Economic Stewardship Will Help Janesville,” in *Ibid.*, 7-9.

¹⁸ Lawrence Mead, “Help and Hassle,” in *Ibid.*, 34-36.

¹⁹ Maarten Hajer, *The Politics of Environmental Discourse* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995).

²⁰ Fischer, *Reframing Public Policy*, 147.

²¹ OECD, *How's Life? 2020: Measuring Well-being* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.1787/9870c393-en>. See the OECD “How’s Life?” series measuring well-being.

poverty, there is another greater task, it is to confront the poverty of satisfaction - purpose and dignity - that afflicts us all. [The Gross National Product] can tell us everything about America except why we are proud that we are Americans.”²² It is hard to disagree with an emphasis on wellbeing and meaning, after all, they are at the heart of some of the great existential questions that humanity has pursued. However, there is reason to doubt its sincerity when coming from advocacy groups and think tanks that have, for decades, emphasized the materiality threading the American Dream.²³

²² Robert Kennedy, “Remarks at the University of Kansas,” 18 March 1968, <https://www.jfklibrary.org/learn/about-jfk/the-kennedy-family/robert-f-kennedy/robert-f-kennedy-speeches/remarks-at-the-university-of-kansas-march-18-1968>.

²³ As Desmond King, “Making People Work,” in Mead and Beem, eds., *Welfare Reform and Political Theory*, 65-81, wrote similarly, “The case for workfare may be answered in part by doubting whether it is sincere,” p. 71.

C.2 Paternalism as Retrenchment: Insights from Ohio

Newt Gingrich believed conservatives “must start ‘thinking like a majority’ by accepting the logic of incremental progress. That’s how the welfare state was built, he said, and that is how it must be dismantled.” – Thomas Medvetz²⁴

According to Corey Robin, conservatism is “a meditation on – and theoretical rendition of – the felt experience of having power, seeing it threatened, and trying to win it back.”²⁵ The development of the welfare state in the U.S. has been an effort toward redistribution, even if only modestly, and limited in the eligible populations with access. It has been an effort to protect citizens from the vagaries of the market, to remove from the market those things deemed to be rights, and to develop a floor which provides economic security. Conservative efforts of retrenchment have been aimed “at the core structure and the core values of the welfare state,”²⁶ especially through spending cuts and program elimination. But even as they are under siege, the welfare state persists.

This has left conservatives with the question which “every counterrevolutionary faces....: how to defend an old regime that has been or is being destroyed?” Robin claims, “the counterrevolutionary must look [beyond the regime’s ancient truths] for materials from which to fashion his defense of the old regime.”²⁷ Similarly, Margaret Weir argues that “elite political strategies require acceptance – or at least acquiescence – from below if they are to be successful.”²⁸ As conservatives today admit, they “have long sought, in vain, to roll back the welfare state.... The time has come to try a different approach.”²⁹

This concluding section discusses (1) the empirical evidence from Ohio for the claim that paternalism is an adaptive mechanism of retrenchment, (2) how these findings reflect institutional and

²⁴ Thomas Medvetz, “The Strength of Weekly Ties,” *Politics and Society* 34, no. 3 (2006): 343-368. 356.

²⁵ Robin, *The Reactionary Mind*, 4.

²⁶ Newt Gingrich to the Young Republican Leadership Conference in 1992, quoted in Amy Bernstein and Peter Bernstein, eds., *Quotations from Speaker Newt* (New York: Workman Publishing, 1995), 28.

²⁷ Robin, *The Reactionary Mind*, 95.

²⁸ Margaret Weir, “When does politics create policy?,” in Shapiro, et al., eds., *Rethinking Political Institutions*, 171-186. 171-172.

²⁹ Howard Husock, “Better than Government Work,” in Tamar Jacoby, ed., *This Way Up*, 51-54. 51.

ideational adaptations within American Political Development (APD), and (3) the contribution of this thesis to understanding how the two strands of retrenchment – abolition and paternalism – contribute to conservatism’s maintenance of power.

C.2.i The Empirical Evidence

This thesis asked, what kind of a solution to poverty is paternalism? How does paternalism retrench? To what extent does paternalism contribute to conservative ideational development?

Conceptually, I established that the new paternalism is a retrenchment policy that emerges from the logic of dependency, which redefines the problem of poverty. I found empirically that paternalism acts as a mechanism of retrenchment through its function as a sorting mechanism, distinguishing the deserving from undeserving. I illustrated how paternalism fits into state political developments by working in tandem with welfare abolition as part of the ‘welfare as self-sufficiency’ American Welfare Order.

Specifically, through discourse analysis and analytic history, I examined how work requirements as an element of the new paternalism are used in Ohio to reduce access to the welfare state. Through this lens, I showed how paternalism’s assumptions develop and strengthen over time.

In the 1960s, we saw the emergent groundwork for paternalism’s ultimate dominance thirty years later. Ohio instituted a mandatory work requirement which hardly changed the overarching politics of poverty. The work requirement was instituted as GA and state matching dollars were cut illustrating the relationship between the mechanisms of the ‘welfare as self-sufficiency’ order. Governor Rhodes utilized ‘welfare administration’ as a color-blind, depoliticized counter to the inherently multi-racial welfare rights efforts that also emerged from Ohio. The welfare ‘reorganization’ efforts contributed to retrenchment through spending cuts and built the groundwork for the county-level bureaucracy that would be a calling card of paternalism in the 1990s. Legislators

oscillated between belief in market competence in debates about benefit cliffs and the rejection of the competence assumption in debates regarding reproductive rights for recipients.

In the 1980s, we saw the failed resistance by the Left to the prevalence of paternalism's assumptions in policymaking. Resistance to work requirements ultimately waned as the Celeste Administration approved pilot programs prior to the FSA. Celeste also failed to curb spending cut retrenchment, since benefit raises did not approach the state minimum standard. While we saw services that support a transition from welfare to work become viewed as *prerequisites to work* in the early 1980s, we also saw the continued appeal to racist myths around welfare and the false promise of paternalism articulated in editorial pages. The desire to make policies already in existence palatable to public opinion was a consistent justification for reform efforts.

In the 1990s, we saw the triumph of the 'welfare as self-sufficiency' order, through the developed strength and newfound dominance of its paternalist strand. We also saw the collaboration between the cuts to and elimination of GA and the introduction of OWF to completely reshape the welfare landscape in Ohio. We saw the legislative rejection of the assumptions of civic and political competence shown by those who opposed the GA cuts, and contestation between the Voinovich Administration and representatives of Cleveland. We also saw the logic of dependency become hegemonic in public discourse, as 'welfare' and 'dependency' were the dominant policy issues in local and national publications.

Finally, in the new century, we see the continued dominance of this logic. We see conservatives expand the work requirement agenda to in-kind entitlements of Medicaid and SNAP. We see the notion of 'entitlement dependence' developed to justify this expansion, making safety-net programs once considered *prerequisites to work conditional on it*. We see exemptions to SNAP work requirements disproportionately neglecting Black Ohioans. We also see conservative efforts to maintain socioeconomic power by declaring peace on the safety-net in one breath and proposing the

same retrenchment policies in the next, ignoring fundamental economic drivers of poverty such as low wages. Table II.1 summarizes these empirical findings.

Reading the history of welfare reform and work requirements in Ohio, it is clear that work requirements represent a policy development consistent with the logic of dependency, a deeply conservative, anti-welfare statist agenda. The continued false promise of work requirements to creating public support makes this agenda clear. As they are strengthened, work requirements contribute to paternalism's ability to be an *adaptive mechanism* of welfare state retrenchment, by allowing conservatives to capture (1) both forceful federalist and small government views, (2) beliefs in both market competence and its rejection, and (3) advocacy for colorblind policymaking.

C.2.ii Institutional and Ideational Adaptations in APD

By examining Ohio as a conservative state, we also see the ways in which conservative ideational development occurs, illuminated through the relative strength of each of paternalism's assumptions. These assumptions shape the discursive landscape around work and welfare through: (a) the ascription to those in poverty characteristics that require paternalist oversight; (b) the elimination of material benefit as a primary goal for work, removing the job market and broader economy from discourses about alleviating poverty; (c) the depoliticization of poverty through the technocratic language of bureaucratic administration; and, finally, (d) the unification of conservatives and liberals through colorblind appeals to policy,³⁰ leaving the racist stereotypes associated with 'welfare' to moderate public consciousness.

Within APD, orders – such as the American Welfare and Racial orders – have particular survival strategies that eliminate, mitigate, or pre-emptively deny challenges.³¹ As we have seen, ideas

³⁰ King and Smith, "Without Regard to Race."

³¹ Offe, "Political Institutions and Social Power."

are central to these strategies. In order for conservatism to maintain its socioeconomic power in the U.S. by retrenching the welfare state, it has had to adapt. As Robin and Weir predicted, conservatism has adapted by co-opting opposing *institutions* (i.e. the federal government) and *ideas* (i.e. policy goals such as *wellbeing*) in order to maintain power.

Paternalism has helped conservatism adapt in two ways:

First, paternalism explicitly and implicitly appeals to “technically competent administration”³² as a way to camouflage the inherently political (and, therefore, power-based) nature of poverty. Its emphasis on colorblindness and work as the basis for citizenship appeals to “allegedly universal and nondiscriminatory incidence of benefits,”³³ despite it obfuscating the exclusion of many. Second, by creating policy alternatives to those fearful of welfare abolition but unsure of generous economic policies, paternalism provided “for a choice of parallel institutional forms that apply to the same field of action,”³⁴ and thereby neutralized the monopolistic power of another institution, i.e. the Left’s monopoly on federal government intervention.

The *unifying logic of dependency* has also aided conservatism’s adaptation in two ways:

First, the logic centers individual barriers, not broader economic opportunity, because it relies on a pessimism regarding poverty, in which the problem seems so intractable that any potential challenge is deemed quixotic. While poverty might seem intractable, *dependency* seems solvable – attracting efforts from across the political spectrum. As a result, “as potential sources of critique are silenced and disorganized, the power of the privileged is rendered invisible.”³⁵ Second, the logic’s policy goal adaptations – e.g. self-sufficiency and wellbeing – appeal to the intrinsic value of the

³² Ibid., 22.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid., 23.

³⁵ Ibid., 22.

proposed solutions “rather than their instrumental value (if perhaps only because their long-term causal effects are hidden behind a veil of ignorance).”³⁶

C.2.iii The Contribution: Two Strands of Retrenchment

Ultimately, the subnational case study illuminates the relationship between the strands of conservative development, unified in their emergence from the logic of dependency as dual mechanisms of welfare state retrenchment. Recent research in political theory, political science, and sociology has also emphasized this duality of conservative commitments toward the welfare state. Frances Fox Piven argues that “the political mobilization of business” and “the politics of resentment and marginalization” intersect to shape contemporary welfare policy.³⁷ Theda Skocpol emphasizes that the agenda of Republican extremism is a “dually radicalized synthesis years in the making – a marriage of convenience between anti-government free-market plutocrats and racially anxious” activists and voters.³⁸ Joe Soss, et al. combine neoliberalism and paternalism as a matter of poverty governance.³⁹ Nicholas Jacobs, et al. argue that “self-styled conservatives have developed constitutional arguments and political strategies that presuppose recasting national administrative power in their own image”⁴⁰ rather than eliminating federal power. My thesis extends this literature by focusing on the new paternalism’s assumptions as historical drivers of its particular strand of welfare state retrenchment, as opposed to social control, illustrating its *fundamentally conservative* nature.⁴¹

The issue, we find, is not that conservatism wants small government. It is that conservatism wants to maintain a minority in power. The essence of arguing that these are two different strands

³⁶ Ibid., 23.

³⁷ Frances Fox Piven, “Globalization, American Politics, and Welfare Policy,” *ANNALS AAPSS* 577 (2001): 26-37. 26.

³⁸ Theda Skocpol, “The Elite and Popular Roots of Contemporary Republican Extremism,” in Theda Skocpol and Caroline Tervo, eds., *Upending American Politics* (New York: Oxford UP, 2020), 3-28. 22.

³⁹ Soss, et al., *Disciplining the Poor*.

⁴⁰ Jacobs, et al, “Building a Conservative State,” 456.

⁴¹ And given the justifications provided by Mead, a radical one at that.

rather than the results of compromise is that, as we saw in this thesis, they both interact to maintain conservative economic and political power by ensuring that the safety-net fails to meet the public's needs. That, ultimately, is paternalism's agenda, not simply governance or social control. By combining welfare abolition and paternalism as the guardrails of public discourse, conservatism has provided distinct policy alternatives but constrained them in ways that make it more difficult to challenge conservatism itself. The oscillation between these two strands creates strategic ambiguities, which it is the task of the political scientist to illuminate.

Indeed, the distinction ostensibly made by work requirements, for example, as a sorting mechanism between the deserving and the undeserving is an ever-shifting goal post.⁴² Rather than improving access to the welfare state for the deserving, work requirements act as a smokescreen for broader realignment of the welfare state which makes access for *all* more difficult.⁴³ As welfare state developments occur, as we saw in Ohio, it matters a great deal what the intervening logics are. While welfare abolition operates from the logic of dependency, so too does paternalism, continually sorting and shrinking, *ad infinitum*. Paternalism, then, is an adaptive mechanism for conservatism, the ends of which is the decimation of the welfare state. And, what one seeks to destroy, one cannot abandon.

⁴² Lynn, Jr., "Rejoinder to Mead," complains that Mead continually changes the ground of his argument for mandatory workfare.

⁴³ Hacker, "Privatizing Risk without Privatizing the Welfare State."

C.3 Beyond Paternalism

“We may ask whether we, in the shadow of defeat, have simply come to accept and repeat, without realizing it, the story he has been telling us for decades. And then we may come to a realization: that the task at hand is not to retrace and rebut his moves from premise to conclusion, but to go back and start again with different premises.” – Corey Robin⁴⁴

In order to eject ‘entitlement’ from its institutional and ideational position of privilege in social policy circles, Lawrence Mead wrote *Beyond Entitlement*. However, the assumptions of his replacement solution – the new paternalism – had been a consistent part of the poverty debate for decades. Since the 1990s, its assumptions have been dominant factors in driving anti-poverty policy approaches. The ‘new paternalism’ has become the paradigmatic mechanism of retrenchment for the welfare state – limiting access to those who need it.

This thesis has predominantly been an *analysis* of conservatism, of the political Right. However, in so doing, it has also been a *critique* of the political Left. The acquiescence of the Left in advocating for a robust safety-net, for accepting as indisputable the Right’s emphasis on work for work’s sake, and the narrow conceptions of market competence or the rejection of it altogether, contributed to the dominance of paternalism. Indeed, many well-meaning individuals on the Left find common cause with the political Right on some of the elements of paternalism – an active federal government, an emphasis on personalized casework, and a technocratic and administrative focus to the poverty problem. According to Frank Fischer, “when the ideological premises for or against an action are embedded in the existing discourses, people will accept them as part of how the world works and not recognize them as ideological.”⁴⁵ In order, then, to “dislodge the suffocating paradigm,”⁴⁶ the Left needs to move beyond paternalism and reject the logic of dependency.

⁴⁴ Corey Robin, *The Enigma of Clarence Thomas* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2019), 221.

⁴⁵ Fischer, *Reframing Public Policy*, 63.

⁴⁶ Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, “Review: Retrospective Comments,” *Perspectives on Politics* 1, no. 4 (2003): 707-710. 710.

The safety-net is failing many, and the economy is failing even more. This thesis focused on paternalism because to move forward and create a more equitable safety-net and economy, we must move away from policies, the assumptions of which are derived from a logic antithetical to the welfare state. Welfare programs, like any policies, are designed under a set of assumptions. If we believe in the capacity of those who are poor, as liberals must, then we must develop programs which are based on the understanding that even if there are those incredibly few who ‘cheat the system,’ the system itself should not be designed around them. Rather, it should be designed around the assumption that no one deserves to be poor – requiring investment in people and the places they call home.⁴⁷

Important policy work can be done to strengthen the safety net into a sturdy floor to meet the demands of individuals and communities, while nonetheless focusing on the dignity of work. But, as Matthew Desmond writes, “because liberals have allowed conservatives to set the terms of the poverty debate, they find themselves arguing about radical solutions that imagine either a fully employed nation (like a jobs guarantee) or a postwork society (like a universal basic income).... [and, therefore,] we neglect the importance of the poverty fixes we already have.”⁴⁸ Safety-net programs continue to lift people above the poverty line and out of deep poverty by the tens of millions.

A 2016 report from US DHHS found that while the largest overall impacts on the U.S. poverty rate [Figure C.1] come from programs that reach broad segments of the population (Social Security, the Child Tax Credit, and nutrition programs), “safety net programs [Figure C.2] that reach relatively fewer individuals and families, ... reduce total poverty to a lesser degree, but have substantial poverty reduction impacts for the group of individuals who received each particular benefit.”⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Michener, *Fragmented Democracy*, argues that exclusively people-based policies – such as cash assistance and any accompanying incentive programs – “may exacerbate the deep inequalities that presently plague American cities.” However, she notes that the problem is not people-based policies per se, but “the challenge lies in harmonizing people- and place-based policies in ways that draw on the strengths of each, while mitigating their weaknesses,” p. 132.

⁴⁸ Matthew Desmond, “Americans Want to Believe Jobs are the Solution to Poverty. They’re Not,” *New York Times Magazine*, 11 September 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/11/magazine/americans-jobs-poverty-homeless.html>.

⁴⁹ Chaudry, et al., “Poverty in the United States,” 4. Figures, pp. 15, and 18, respectively.

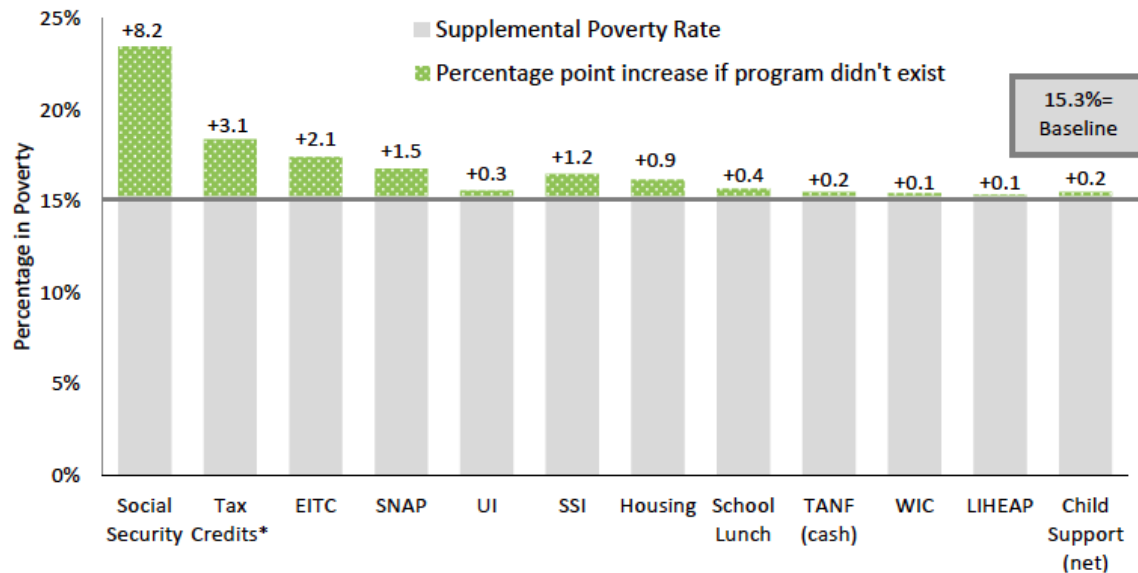


Figure C.1 Impacts of safety net programs on supplemental poverty rate, 2014

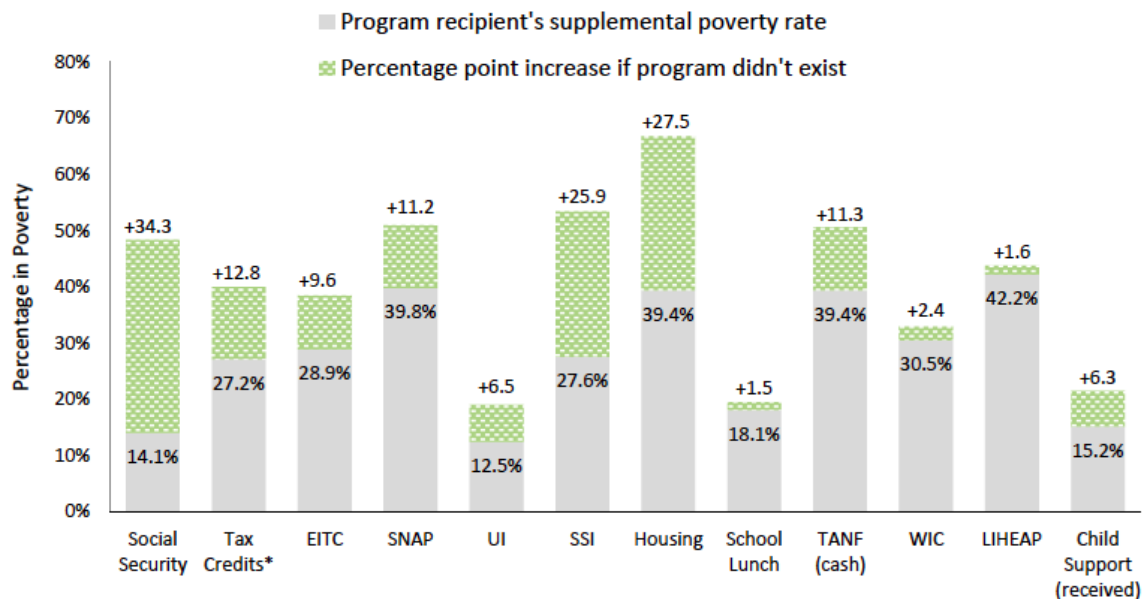


Figure C.2 Impacts of select safety net programs on supplemental poverty rate for program recipients, 2014

Attacks on the welfare state are often framed as attempts at ensuring effectiveness, reducing fraud and abuse, and promoting work. However, on their way to retrenching the welfare state, paternalist policies contribute to program ineffectiveness, serving fewer people, and, therefore, mitigating the positive impacts such programs can have. According to Desmond, “effective social-mobility programs should be championed, expanded and stripped of draconian work requirements.”⁵⁰

Understanding paternalism’s place within American political development is fundamental because we can then begin to ask: Which institutional, ideational, and racial orders are *most beneficial* to those in poverty? In order to move beyond the orders which focus on dependency as the problem and paternalism as the solution, the Left must reclaim civic competence and race-consciousness⁵¹ as fundamental assumptions and lenses to welfare policy in order to bring structural accounts of poverty to bear – countering paternalism on its first principles.

⁵⁰ Desmond, “Americans Want to Believe Jobs are the Solution to Poverty.”

⁵¹ According to Wilson, *The Truly Disadvantaged*, “In framing public policy we should not shy away from an explicit discussion of the specific issues of race and poverty,” p. 286.

Appendices

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A.1 Participant Information Sheet

N.B. A version of this sheet was provided until September 2019; however, it did not substantively alter any aspects of the information provided.

1. What is this study about?

This study aims to explore how the elements of narratives about poverty influence local level understandings of poverty and corresponding policies in areas of concentrated and persistent poverty in the US. It is conducted by Alexander Coccia, a doctoral student in political science at the University of Oxford, working under the supervision of Professor Desmond King. This research is being funded through the generous support of the Rhodes Trust, St. John's College, the Murray Speight Grant, and the Rothermere American Institute.

2. What will happen in the interview?

You have been invited to take part in the study because you are either: (a) someone with experience in the creation and/or implementation of policies aimed at alleviating poverty; (b) someone with expertise in the area of policy development aimed at alleviating poverty; or (c) someone with experience participating in or near policies aimed at alleviating poverty.

If you are happy to take part in the research, you will be asked for oral consent for an audio-recorded interview in an environment and at a time agreeable to you. The interview will last between 30 minutes and one hour and aims to offer you a chance to share your insight on matters related to and your experience in poverty alleviation. No risks are anticipated to follow from taking part in this study. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time or skip any question you like. With your permission, there may be opportunities for follow-up interviews.

3. What will happen to the data I provide?

Your insights on poverty and alleviation-focused policies will inform the researcher's dissertation. The completed thesis will be deposited in the University of Oxford's archives, which are available online with open access to Internet users. The doctoral student will have access to the data provided, which will be stored on a personal hard drive and an external hard drive backup. All research data and records will be stored for at least 3 years after publication or public release of the work of research. The data may be used for the student's doctoral dissertation and subsequent peer-reviewed journal articles and/or book manuscript.

4. What if I have questions or concerns?

The University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee has reviewed this project and granted it approval. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to the researcher (614-738-1173) or his supervisor Desmond King (+44 1865278578). If you remain unhappy, you can contact the chair of the Research Ethics Committee at the University of Oxford at ethics@socsci.ox.ac.uk and use CUREC ethics reference SSH_DPIR_C1A_18_012.

A.2 Sample Interview Protocol

N.B. Protocols were adapted prior to each interview to incorporate relevant background research on the organization. Protocols were adapted from the first round of interviews (May 2018) and the subsequent rounds (August and September 2018; April 2019).

Can you tell me a bit about your role?

Can you tell me a bit about how you see the role of your organization?

What are the goals of your office?

What gap does your organization fill and how do you work with legislators and other organizations?

What are the limitations/opportunities to eliminating poverty with your organization?

Have you seen the debates over poverty – especially its causes – develop since your time in your organization? Where would you like to see them move?

How would you articulate the causes of poverty?

What do you think is missing in these debates about poverty?

Within Ohio, what do you think tend to be claimed as the central causes of poverty?

With the GDP in the US, it would be expected that we'd have higher mobility and less persistent poverty than other countries with similar levels of economic growth. However, we nearly double OECD countries with the level of persistent poverty. What do you think accounts for this difference?

Thoughts on the 1115 Waiver for Medicaid work requirements?

Are there differences that you've noticed between government investment in those areas classified as persistent poverty counties (Vinton, Athens, and some surrounding counties), and other areas of deep poverty in urban areas?

Have you seen effective approaches, narratives, policies aimed at alleviating or eliminating poverty?

How do these approaches address the capacity or agency of those in poverty?

Are there other aspects of poverty that our discussion has overlooked?

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