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Critical Divides:
Race, Immigration, and the Transformation of U.S. Welfare Policy

By

Hana Erin Brown

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

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in

Sociology

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Margaret Weir , Chair

Professor Irene Bloemraad

Professor Sandra Smith

Professor Cybelle Fox

Professor Michael Omi

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Abstract

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Hana Erin Brown

Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Margaret Weir, Chair

In 1996, the United States witnessed one of the most dramatic transformations in the history of its social welfare policy. “Welfare reform” eliminated individual entitlements to poverty relief, enforced strict terms of participation for welfare recipients, and formally denied welfare benefits to nearly all immigrants. Existing research suggests that the states which passed the most punitive welfare reform policies were those with the most Black and Latino welfare recipients. However, a number of states with strikingly similar demographics and politics passed vastly different welfare reform policies. These outcomes are surprising given the large body of historical work demonstrating that, throughout the 20th century, racialized constructions of welfare have undermined the development of a generous social safety net in the U.S. Did large Black and Latino populations influence welfare reform in some states but not in others? Under what conditions did race and immigration factor into welfare reform decisions?

This dissertation investigates these questions by examining four of the most critical state welfare decisions: time limits, work requirements, sanctions, and benefits to immigrants. Drawing on an array of methods, including legislators’ and governors’ papers, non-profit organization records, media content analysis, and in-depth interviews with legislative leaders and welfare advocates in each state, I examine the interplay between race, immigration, and welfare policymaking in four states: Alabama, Georgia, Arizona, and California. Among states with large Black recipient populations, Georgia passed punitive welfare reform policies, including the shortest time limits and strictest sanctions in the nation, while Alabama adopted some of the most lenient policies, allowing welfare recipients the maximum possible allowances available under federal law. Similarly, among states with large Latino recipient populations, Arizona passed particularly punitive policies in comparison to California, despite their shared political and economic configurations at the time and a virulent anti-immigrant movement in California.

While the literature highlights the role of public opinion, racial resentment, and stereotypes in welfare policymaking, I advance a racial conflict model to explain the relationship between race, immigration, and contemporary welfare politics. I argue that while racialized stereotypes of welfare recipients may be ubiquitous, whether race and immigration spur punitive welfare policies depends on the content and structure of antecedent political conflicts in a polity. In states with large Black and Latino populations, policymakers passed punitive policies when welfare reform arose after the activation of widespread racial conflicts. These racial conflicts,

even if unrelated to poverty policy, had three enduring consequences for welfare reform, ultimately fueling the passage of punitive policies. First, they activated racial threats and resentments which both constrained the actions of politicians and provided a political resource for them. Second, the frames used in these racial conflicts limited the availability of frames during welfare reform and made some frames more politically advantageous than others. Finally, these conflicts determined how much politicians stood to gain politically from passing punitive policies. In constructing this theory of racial conflict, I also argue that the involvement of minority politicians and race-based advocacy groups in the welfare reform process had disparate impacts in the South than in the West. While activism by Latino elected officials facilitated the passage of lenient reforms, activism by Black elected officials hindered it. This pattern reflects the finding in existing research that across most spheres of social life, integration is harder for Blacks than for Latinos.

These findings suggest a new way to think about the relationship between race, immigration, and policy. Scholars typically view support for welfare as reflective of public opinion or racism. This study reveals welfare policy's roots in existing social and political conflicts. It also moves beyond the Black-White divide to address how public policies shift in response to other ethno-racial minority populations like Latinos. Finally, by developing a theoretically-driven account of the welfare reform process that moves beyond public opinion analysis or discussions of individual racism, the dissertation brings a fresh perspective not only to debates about welfare state development but to debates about how and when race and immigration enter into contemporary politics.

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Chapter 1

Race, Immigration, and the Politics of Social Policy

In 1996, the U.S. Congress overhauled social assistance programs for the poor, ushering in the most dramatic transformation in welfare policy since the 1960s. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) or “welfare reform” dramatically reconfigured the parameters of anti-poverty policy in the United States. The act eliminated individual entitlements to poverty relief. It replaced the long standing Aid to Families with Dependent Children, an entitlement program,¹ with a block grant to states, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Welfare reform shifted the focus of anti-poverty policy squarely toward regulating the behavior of recipients, enforcing strict work requirements and mandating a five-year lifetime time limit for receipt of benefits. Additionally, the act formally denied welfare benefits to many non-citizens in the country. Furthermore, in one of its most striking protocols, PRWORA also forced states to restructure their welfare policies for the first time in three decades. From 1996 to 1997, each of the fifty states hammered out a series of new policies regarding the terms of welfare participation.

After the reforms passed, the federal government left states to recalibrate their own welfare policies to meet federal mandates. Leading academic accounts suggest that the states which adopted the most punitive reforms in 1996-1997 were those with large numbers of Black and Latino welfare recipients.² However, in the wake of welfare reform, a number of states with strikingly similar demographics and politics passed vastly different welfare reform policies and continued to do so in the decade following the act’s passage. For example, among states with large Black recipient populations, Georgia passed punitive welfare reform policies while Alabama adopted some of the most lenient policies in the country, on par with liberal states like Hawaii and Vermont. Similarly, among states with large Latino recipient populations, Arizona passed particularly punitive policies in comparison to California, despite the presence of a virulent anti-immigrant movement in California at the time.

As I will elaborate below, these policy outcomes are puzzling for both race-centered, political, and economic theories of welfare state development. They indicate that despite on-going interest in the role of race in welfare state development, little consensus exists on the nature of the relationship between ethno-racial context and welfare policy today. Did large minority populations undermine welfare reform efforts in some states but not in others? When

¹ Technically, Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) and its successor Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) were entitlements to states. Each state had a significant amount of discretion as to how it would allocate its federal funding, and states had only to submit their eligibility rules to the Department of Health and Human Services for approval. This level of state discretion changed somewhat in the 1970s and 1980s when the federal courts became more involved in welfare policymaking and ruled on the constitutionality of some of the local exclusions employed throughout the country.

² Schram et al., “Deciding to Discipline.”; Soss et al., “Setting the Terms of Relief.”; Soss et al., “The Hard Line and the Color Line: Race, Welfare, and the Roots of Get-Tough Reform.”; Soss, Fording, and Schram, “The Color of Devolution.”; Hero, “Racial/Ethnic Diversity and States’ Public Policies.”; Hero, *Faces of Inequality*; Howard, *The Welfare State Nobody Knows*. The percentage of Black welfare recipients in a state significantly predicts each of the most punitive policy decisions made in the course of welfare reform, from the stringency of sanctions to the length of time limits. While the relationship between the Hispanic population size and policy punitiveness is less consistent, many studies find that the percentage of Hispanic welfare recipients in a given state frequently predicted how stringent states were in their post-welfare reform decisions.

and how, exactly, does ethno-racial context enter into contemporary welfare policymaking? Moreover, when doesn't it matter?

This dissertation answers these questions through a comparative-historical analysis of welfare reform (1986-1996) in the four states mentioned above: Alabama, Georgia, California, and Arizona. I argue that while racialized stereotypes of welfare recipients may be ubiquitous,³ whether race spurs punitive welfare policies depends on the content and structure of antecedent political conflicts in each state. In states with large Black and Latino populations, policymakers passed punitive policies when welfare reform arose after the activation of widespread racial conflicts. These racial conflicts activated racial threats and resentments, elevating racial divisions as the dominant social and political cleavage in a polity. The discursive framing of these racial conflicts and the cultural constructions of worth they employed also limited the public salience and political utility of non-racial framings of welfare. Together, these threats, resentments, and framings created electoral advantages for politicians who supported punitive policies.

These findings bridge and extend existing theories of race and social policy which emphasize racial threat, cognitive processes, and individual-level prejudice to generate a holistic theory which accounts for the shifting salience of race and the complexities of the policymaking process. Moreover, these findings suggest that there are choices and politics at play which can change the seemingly inevitable link between ethno-racial demographics and social welfare policies. The racial conflict model, thus, explains not only when and how race affects welfare policies but also how pre-existing political conflicts structure new and even thematically distant policy debates. The case studies presented here demonstrate how policies with little direct relevance to welfare shape welfare policy outcomes. In each of the four states profiled here, the debate, event, or conflict which dominated the state political scene just prior to welfare reform had drastic effects on the structure, tone, and framing of subsequent welfare debates, suggesting that politics, as with social movements and policies, have unintended consequences and feedback effects for even unrelated policy outcomes.

The theories and questions addressed herein are particularly relevant given on-going shifts in the present racial landscape and in American politics more generally. Over the last few decades, the rising Hispanic population in the United States has generated heightened concern about transformations in the U.S. racial hierarchy and the role of race in politics. In this dissertation, I shed light on these provocative questions. I argue that while racial conflict is the dominant dynamic at work in the race-policy relationship, the way large Latino populations structure policy outcomes is more variable than it is for Blacks. The framing choices made by activists during immigration conflicts in the Western states created divergent pathways to reform, sometimes destabilizing the racialization of welfare. These findings reveal the complex nature of ways in which race intersects with politics and policy in the contemporary United States and demonstrate how divisive conflicts about race and immigration structure social policies. While racial conflicts prompt welfare state retrenchment and restriction, immigration conflicts may tip the balance toward safety net expansion, depending on the structure and framing of the debates and the scope of the reforms. These findings about immigration not only inform larger and emerging debates about the role of Latinos in U.S. politics, they speak to

³ Gilens, *Why Americans Hate Welfare*.

concerns across Western democracies about possibility of maintaining a strong social safety net in the face of rapid immigration.

Welfare Reform and State Politics

Since Alexis de Tocqueville's treatise on American democracy, scholars have cited racial divisions as a major stumbling block in U.S. political development.⁴ Historical accounts of the U.S. welfare state highlight racialized economic systems as the major reason the country adopted weak social welfare policies.⁵ Not only did New Deal policies fail to incorporate minorities on the same terms as working White men, later permutations of poverty programs suffered from their associations with African-Americans political activism.⁶ With respect to non-citizens, exclusions from social welfare programs began in the 1970s, picking up momentum over the next decades as fears of rising welfare costs increased.⁷

Existing research offers compelling evidence that race and immigration continue to shape welfare policy development. One of the most enduring findings regarding race, immigration and contemporary welfare policy across western democracies is that the more ethno-racial minorities in a population, the weaker public support for social welfare programs, the lower per capita welfare expenditures, and the more punitive social policies.⁸ However, we do not know *how* large minority populations undermine the development of a generous social safety net, nor do we know whether this relationship is immutable. To shed light on these questions, this dissertation analyzes the 1996 welfare reform act. Welfare reform is an ideal focus for exploring the link between ethno-racial context and anti-poverty policy. On a scale of sheer transition and change alone, welfare reform is worthy of analysis. The reforms are the most recent and largest major transformation of U.S. social policy since the 1960s. They altered the conditions of welfare receipt, the process of welfare service delivery, and the structure of welfare institutions federally and across the country. Welfare reform offers a unique opportunity for the study of state policy decisions. PRWORA forced states to restructure their welfare policies for the first time in three decades. As a result, the welfare reforms of the mid-1990s mark one of the only times in recent memory when all states had to respond to the same federal mandates at roughly the same time and under the same conditions. This sequencing is ideal for analyzing state welfare decisions because, unlike other welfare policy choices, these were made in somewhat of a controlled environment.⁹

Welfare reform also generated tense debates about race and immigration. By the mid-1990s, public disdain for welfare had reached new heights, fueled by concerns about the ethics and morality of recipients, Black and immigrant alike. Stereotypes of Black recipients depicted them as Mercedes-driving welfare queens, defrauding the system by refusing to work or having babies to receive more benefits.¹⁰ Public debates surrounding immigrants depicted primarily Hispanic immigrants as falsifying documents to receive benefits to which they were not

⁴ Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*.

⁵ Quadagno, "Race, Class, and Gender in the U.S. Welfare State."; Quadagno, *The Color of Welfare*; Lieberman, *Shifting the Color Line*; Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White*.

⁶ Quadagno, *The Color of Welfare*; Gilens, *Why Americans Hate Welfare*.

⁷ Fox, "A New Nativism? Federal Citizenship and Legal Status Restrictions in Medicaid and Welfare."

⁸ Soss et al., "Setting the Terms of Relief."; Alesina and Glaeser, *Fighting Poverty in the US and Europe*.

⁹ Soss et al., "Setting the Terms of Relief."

¹⁰ Hancock, *The Politics of Disgust*.

entitled.¹¹ Democrats' support for generous welfare policies had become a political liability. Democratic policymakers struggled to convince the White electorate that they believed in self-discipline and personal obligations.¹² When President Clinton signed the act, he and other liberal policymakers hoped that by replacing entitlements with a work activation program they could de-racialize welfare and free the Democratic Party from its debilitating relationship to a stigmatized program.¹³

Concerns about welfare abuse by ethno-racial minorities prompted many of welfare reform's most punitive measures.¹⁴ In their testimonies on the floor of Congress, politicians regularly repeated stereotypes of welfare recipients as lazy, as overly fertile, and as drug abusers.¹⁵ They argued that welfare recipients were enmeshed in a cycle of poverty which would end only with the passage of stringent work requirements and sanctions. They accused immigrant welfare recipients of abusing the system by accessing benefits without proper immigration documentation.¹⁶ Whether attacking citizens or non-citizens, politicians argued that welfare recipients were a drain on collective resources, devouring the country's tax dollars without contributing themselves. Many have suggested then that at the state and federal level welfare reform served as a "politically convenient [way] to vent racial resentments and reinforce racial inequalities."¹⁷

To understand the conditions under which large minority populations fueled the passage of punitive policies, I examine three specific policy decisions under welfare reform: time limits, work requirements, and sanctions. In the West where immigration prompted concerns about public assistance, I also explore policy decisions about benefits to non-citizens. Typically, research on state-level welfare policy has examined benefit amounts or per capita welfare expenditures; however, this approach is likely reflective of limitations on data availability about other decisions and policies. As Hero suggested, non-expense measures are often preferable to purely fiscal measures.¹⁸ The conditions of welfare participation are perhaps more reflective of the social control functions or intentions of welfare policies than are benefit amounts.¹⁹

This is particularly important because welfare has long been seen as a program designed to alter individual behaviors and promote adherence to specific social norms.²⁰ Furthermore, welfare reform did not require states to change their benefit levels but rather to determine the terms of welfare participation. Indeed, policy decisions about sanctions, time limits, work requirements, and non-citizen benefits were the most critical to the states in that they required major shifts in the day-to-day administration of welfare policy, attracted the most media attention, and were the most widely debated across the states.²¹ These decisions have also been

¹¹ Fujiwara, *Mothers without Citizenship*; Reese, *Backlash against Welfare Mothers*.

¹² Weaver, *Ending Welfare as We Know It*.

¹³ Kaus, *End of Equality*; DeParle and Holmes, "A War on Poverty Subtly Linked to Race."; Weaver, *Ending Welfare as We Know It*; Soss and Schram, "A Public Transformed? Welfare Reform as Policy Feedback."

¹⁴ Hancock, *The Politics of Disgust*; Fujiwara, *Mothers without Citizenship*.

¹⁵ Hancock, *The Politics of Disgust*.

¹⁶ Fujiwara, *Mothers without Citizenship*; Reese, *Backlash against Welfare Mothers*.

¹⁷ Reese, *Backlash against Welfare Mothers*, 28.

¹⁸ Hero, *Faces of Inequality*.

¹⁹ Piven and Cloward, *Regulating the Poor: the Functions of Public Welfare*; Schram and Turbett, "The Welfare Explosion."

²⁰ Piven and Cloward, *Regulating the Poor: the Functions of Public Welfare*.

²¹ Fujiwara, *Mothers without Citizenship*; Soss et al., "Setting the Terms of Relief."; Joseph, *Families, Poverty, and Welfare Reform*.

the most closely scrutinized in the aftermath of the reforms as scholars assess the effects of PRWORA on welfare recipients and caseloads.²²

What freedoms did states have in making each of these decisions? With respect to time limits, the federal welfare reform act set a five year maximum lifetime limit on welfare receipt, but states had the option of setting a shorter time limit or a longer one, provided the state paid for the additional support on its own. Federal regulations also required that recipients begin some form of work activity after receiving welfare for twenty-four months, but again states could require work efforts earlier if they so chose. While time limits aimed to end long-term dependency on welfare and work requirements to promote individual responsibility and personal obligations, sanction policies were central to welfare reform's "get tough" intentions.

In dealing with recipients who violated the terms of their welfare participation, states could choose to enforce different types of sanctions. The weakest possible sanction terminated only a portion of the adult benefit amount. Some states adopted a moderate sanction in which the penalties grew progressively worse after each successive violation. The strictest sanctions cut off the entire family benefit, even those benefits intended for dependent children. The options available to states regarding benefits to non-citizens were more complex. PRWORA denied TANF benefits to many non-citizens in the country. With a few exceptions, most legal non-citizens residents could apply for benefits only after residing in the country for five years. States could opt to restore benefits to non-citizens who had arrived in the country prior to the passage of welfare reform. They could also choose to extend TANF benefits to immigrant residing in the United States for less than five years.²³

To understand the conditions under which ethno-racial context affected these welfare reform decisions, I draw on a comparative-historical analysis of welfare policymaking in four

²² Clark, Long, and Ratcliffe, "Income Support and Social Services for Low-Income People in Alabama."; Montgomery, "Recent Changes in California Welfare and Work, Child Care, and Child Welfare Systems."; Bilskie, "From Entitlement to Empowerment: Welfare Reform in Georgia, Part I."; Ezzard, "But Good Things are Happening: Petty Sanctions Dilute Goal of Welfare Reform."; Gallagher et al., "One Year after Federal Welfare Reform."; Legislative Analyst's Office, "CalWORKs Welfare Reform: Major Provisions and Issues."; Zedlewski and Giannarelli, "Diversity among State Welfare Programs: Implications for Reform."; Deparle, "Welfare Aid Isn't Growing as Economy Drops Off."; Goodman, "From Welfare Shift in '96, a Reminder for Clinton."; Goodnough, "Massachusetts Cuts Back Immigrants' Health Care."; Oppenheim and Seigel, *From "Work First" to "Worker Mobility": A Critical Review of Career Advancement Strategies*; Poole, "Preparing Low-Skilled Workers for the Jobs of Tomorrow."; Woodward, "The Multiple Meanings of Work for Welfare-Reliant Women."; Korteweg, "Welfare Reform and the Subject of the Working Mother."; Reese and Ramirez, "The New Ethnic Politics of Welfare."; Fujiwara, "Asian Immigrant Communities and the Racial Politics of Welfare Reform."; Weaver and Gais, *State Policy Choices Under Welfare Reform*; Holcomb et al., "Recent Changes in Alabama Welfare and Work, Child Care, and Child Welfare Systems."

²³ Reports provide conflicting information on which states adopted which of these policy options. These inconsistencies derive from the fact that some states made their decisions via legislative proceedings while others used administrative rulings. States could also reevaluate and change their decisions after submitting their initial plans. Therefore, even the figures published by the Department of Health and Human Services sometimes reflect states' *intentions* for their plans, not the actual plans they implemented. Confirming the actual plans in action requires archival and/or interview work in the actual states, a task I was not able to complete for all fifty states. As a general indicator, however, Soss et al (2001) reported that twenty-one states adopted a shorter time limit than federally required. Twenty-six states adopted work requirements stricter than federally required. Fifteen adopted weak sanctions as opposed to twenty-one which adopted moderate sanctions, and fourteen which adopted strict ones. According to Fujiwara (2008), the overwhelming majority of states restored benefits to pre-PRWORA immigrants. According to the Urban Institute, by 2000, eighteen states used state funds to cover non-citizens who were not eligible for TANF benefits under PRWORA.

states: Alabama, Georgia, Arizona, and California. This focused analysis of a small number of cases permitted me to isolate causal forces and connect them to specific outcomes while allowing for the possibility of alternative policy outcomes.²⁴ The four states selected here differ on the basis of two key variables: the ethno-racial demographics of the state's welfare recipient population and the nature of TANF policy decisions. Georgia and Alabama both had large Black populations in 1996 and welfare rolls that were over 70% Black, yet Alabama passed lenient reforms while Georgia passed extremely severe reforms.²⁵ Georgia passed more punitive sanctions, time limits, and work requirements than federally mandated while Alabama adopted the most lenient policies possible with respect to these guidelines. Similarly, Arizona and California had large Hispanic populations in 1996 and welfare rolls that were approximately 40% Hispanic yet Arizona passed punitive sanction, work, and time limit reforms while California passed lenient ones (see Table 1.1).²⁶ California also extended TANF benefits to non-citizens while Arizona did not. The anomalies highlighted in this analysis allow for an exploration of the circumstances under which race and immigration shape welfare politics. Isolating two anomalous cases and comparing them to two cases which are consistent with existing patterns will illuminate the specific mechanisms at play in welfare reform.²⁷

The Southern States: Georgia and Alabama

Georgia and Alabama are paired together in popular imagination by their histories of slavery and civil rights struggle. In the formative years of U.S. political development, both states relied heavily on plantation agriculture and were part of the southern "Black Belt," an area first named for its Black soil but which came to demarcate the Southern counties stretching from Mississippi through Georgia and north to Virginia where Blacks accounted for upwards of 50% of the population.²⁸ As the civil rights movement dawned in the 1950s and 1960s, both states were hotbeds of organizing and of movement opposition. Martin Luther King, Jr. pastored at Atlanta's Ebenezer Baptist Church, simultaneously leading organizing efforts around the country under the auspices of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). Alabama is the site of the Selma to Montgomery march, organized by the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the SCLC and is often considered the emotional peak of the civil rights movement.

In the years following the civil right struggle, both Georgia and Alabama continued to have high levels of racial income inequality; however, major civil rights groups continued to have a much stronger presences in Georgia than in Alabama. Due in part to the state's crackdown on the NAACP in the 1960s, Alabama's civil rights groups continued to be locally-based and oriented through the end of the 20th century while Georgia's organizations had a strong presence in Atlanta that emanated statewide and even nationally. Conservative politicians

²⁴ Amenta et al., "The Political Origins of Unemployment Insurance in Five American States."

²⁵ Georgia imposed stricter rules than required by the federal government on all of the dependent variables in this study. The state imposed harsher time limits, a family cap, and stricter work requirements than required by federal mandate. Additionally, the state imposed some of the harshest sanctions in the country on rule violators. Alabama on the other hand, imposed only a family cap.

²⁶ California imposed only a family cap and made no additional steps to impose additional punitive regulations on welfare recipients. Arizona, on the other hand, imposed stricter mandates on all variables than was required by the federal government.

²⁷ Burawoy, "Two Methods in Search of Science."

²⁸ Wolters, *The Burden of Brown*.

dominated both states, although late into the 1990s both legislatures still had a large number of Dixiecrat Democrats. At the time of welfare reform, both states had robust and expanding economies.

In addition to these similarities, the two states were nearly identical with respect to their social, economic, and political configurations at the time of welfare reform. As I will show in the next section, existing studies would thus predict that the two states would pass identical and very punitive policies under welfare reform. This, however, was not the case. Georgia was among the most punitive states in the country with respect to its TANF decisions, fitting the pattern in existing research of a state with a large ethno-racial minority population passing punitive policies. It adopted a forty-eight month time limit and demanded immediate work participation from nearly all welfare recipients. It also adopted a full-family sanction. Case workers did not hesitate to sanction families for seemingly minor offenses such as not showing up for a parent-teacher conference or for a prenatal doctor's appointment.²⁹ Alabama, on the other hand, enforced only the federal minimum required for each of these three policy choices. Given the opportunity and the funds to do so, the state chose *not* to enforce strict standards for welfare participation, despite its large Black population and predominantly Black welfare recipient population. Instead, Alabama made among the most lenient policy choices in the entire country.

The Western States: Arizona and California

Although Alabama and Georgia are often considered to be politically and socially similar, Arizona and California are rarely thought of in this way, particularly in the 21st century. These two western states, however, share more in common than is generally perceived. Both states are western frontier states that became a part of the United States after extended periods of Spanish and Mexican rule. The vast majority of the territory of both states was ceded to the United States at the end of the Mexican-American War in 1848 through the Treaty of Guadalupe Hildago. Arizona and California also saw strong popular support in the late 19th century for the Populist and Progressive movements.³⁰ Agribusiness plays a significant role in the economies of both states, although more so in California than Arizona where copper mining has been a major enterprise. Both states have also historically had large Native American populations. Native Americans comprise a larger percentage of Arizona's total population than any other state while California is home to the largest total number of Native Americans.

Given each state's historical relationship to Mexico and position along the U.S.-Mexico border, both states have a long history of tense Anglo-Mexican relations. Across the Southwest, Mexicans worked in agriculture in a social world heavily stratified by class and race.³¹ In the early 20th century, Mexicans were frequently portrayed as a dependency problem and perceived as likely to rely on or turn to public assistance programs.³² Viewed as health threats and presumed to be illegal aliens, they encountered Jim Crow-style segregation across the Southwest and faced an on-going threat of deportation.³³ Despite the Chicano movement of the 1960s and

²⁹ Ezzard, "But Good Things are Happening: Petty Sanctions Dilute Goal of Welfare Reform."

³⁰ Reingold, *Representing Women*.

³¹ Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines*.

³² Fox, "Three Worlds of Relief: Race, Immigration, and Public and Private Social Welfare Spending in American Cities, 1929."

³³ Ngai, "The Strange Career of the Illegal Alien."

civil rights efforts from organizations like the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF) and the Southwest Voter Registration Project, stigma against Hispanics remained high and overall Hispanic political participation rates remained low in both states through the 1980s and the early 1990s.³⁴ California has historically had a more generous welfare state than Arizona although the policies applied in California toward Mexicans have historically been the strictest and most punitive in the country.³⁵

By the late 20th century, both states had witnessed tremendous population growth, urbanization, and economic transformation. Budget crises wracked the political scene in Phoenix and Sacramento, and around each state, residents expressed growing concern with what they saw as fiscal irresponsibility. The Hispanic population took much of the blame for these social problems. By the mid-1990s, a “Latino Threat” narrative pervaded public discourse throughout the region.³⁶ The narrative was characterized by a fear that Hispanics, unlike previous immigrant groups, were unwilling and unable to assimilate, that they were numerically taking over the United States, and formally seeking to re-conquer the Southwest. These sentiments fueled the passage of English-Only statutes in both states. In California, concerns about illegal immigration flooded the political scene as evidenced by the state’s passage of Proposition 187, which denied undocumented immigrants access to social services. California was recognized nation-wide as the hub of anti-immigrant sentiment in the 1990s. At this time, Arizona’s movement was less virulent. Indeed, Arizona’s anti-immigrant mobilization did not reach a fever pitch until the next decade, largely because the flow of undocumented immigrants to Arizona did not rise dramatically until stricter border patrol measures known as Operation Gatekeeper made it more difficult to cross the border into California. In addition to these trends, the two states shared similar demographic, political, and economic configurations in the mid-1990s, a point I will elaborate on in the next section.

Given these similarities, it is surprising that California and Arizona passed such different policies in the wake of welfare reform. California adopted the minimum requirements mandated by federal law while Arizona adopted stricter sanctions, harsher work requirements, and shorter time limits than federally required. In fact, Arizona made it impossible to receive welfare benefits for more than two years in any five year period. With respect to non-citizens, California established a state program to provide benefits to those ineligible for federal TANF benefits while Arizona did not. Indeed, the contrast is even starker than these rules indicate. Not only did California adopt the federal minimum five year time limit, it was one of only two states in the country (with New York) to create a state-funded safety net program to support families timing out of TANF. California was also one of only two states (with Maine) to restore all welfare benefit programs, not just TANF, to non-citizens. These results are particularly surprising because that these programs were established in California despite the state’s economic and budgetary woes and widespread public concern about immigration and its effects on the state.

Political and Economic Factors and State Welfare Decisions

Of course, race relations dynamics are not the only factor shaping public policy decisions. Scholars and public commentators offer various accounts for why states pass punitive

³⁴ Foley, “Becoming Hispanic: Mexican Americans and Whiteness.”; Hero, “From Rhetoric To Reality.”

³⁵ Reese, *Backlash against Welfare Mothers*.

³⁶ Chavez, *The Latino Threat*.

welfare policies. I group these accounts into five types of explanations, none of which adequately explains why Georgia, Alabama, Arizona and California took the paths they did. (See Tables 1.2 and 1.3)

Dependency

Research on welfare suggests that poverty rates and welfare take-up rates influence the development of social policy. In the United States, poverty has long been associated with dependency.³⁷ With the rise of industrialization, dependency became a stigmatized and deviant attribute, and the term “welfare dependency” came to dominate public discourse. Explanations for poverty and dependency highlighted the personal failures of individuals rather than the structural conditions that generate poverty. By the 1990s, concerns about long-term dependency reached an apex. Politicians expressed widespread concerns that welfare recipients spent too much time on the dole, overwhelming national and state welfare bureaucracies and budgets.³⁸ Given these trends, it might be expected that higher poverty rates might prompt states to enact punitive policies. Yet this does not appear to be the case among these states. Alabama (17%), Georgia (14%), California (17%), and Arizona (18%) had very similar poverty rates in the mid-1990s. California passed lenient policies despite having a higher per capita caseload rate (8%) than Arizona (4%). Although Georgia did have a higher per capita caseload rate (4.8%) than Alabama (2.5%), my content analyses of news media stories (presented in Chapter 2) show that concerns about welfare dependency were significantly greater in Alabama’s public discourse at the time with nearly twice as many references to the issue as in Georgia.

Labor Market Context

Scholars who analyze welfare state development and state policy-making also suggest that local labor markets may pattern welfare decisions. Some scholars argue that welfare systems function to meet the needs of economic markets.³⁹ Economic downturns coupled with public unrest lead to the expansion of the safety net in order to pacify the poor and stabilize the state. When turmoil wanes, relief programs contract and push needed workers back into the labor market. Research also demonstrates that at the state and local level, employer demands for low-wage labor and the structure of local labor market influence the desirability of providing a strong or weak social safety net.⁴⁰ Given the dearth of widespread civil unrest at the time of welfare reform and the economic up-turn taking place around the country, some scholars operationalize these theories by looking at the effect of state-level unemployment rates on welfare decisions.⁴¹ While these studies find a correlation between low unemployment rates and restrictive welfare decisions (particularly work requirement policies), the states under study here do *not* vary significantly on the basis of their labor market conditions. Both Alabama and Georgia had unemployment rates of 5% in 1996 while California and Arizona’s rates were 7% and 6%, respectively. Therefore, unemployment rates cannot explain the disparate policy decisions made by these states.

³⁷ Fraser and Gordon, “A Genealogy of Dependency.”

³⁸ Soss et al., “Setting the Terms of Relief.”; Hancock, *The Politics of Disgust*.

³⁹ Piven and Cloward, *Regulating the Poor: the Functions of Public Welfare*.

⁴⁰ Fox, “Three Worlds of Relief: Race, Immigration, and Public and Private Social Welfare Spending in American Cities, 1929.”

⁴¹ Soss et al., “Setting the Terms of Relief.”

Reproductive Behavior

Another theory frequently advanced to explain the passage of punitive welfare policies involves reproductive behavior. Throughout their history, social welfare programs in the United States have attempted to control the reproductive behavior of poor women.⁴² Earlier in the 20th century, AFDC program administrators implemented regulations to regulate women's intimate and familial relationships and to chastise illegitimacy.⁴³ In passing PRWORA, politicians sought to counter poverty by promoting marriage and discouraging out-of-wedlock childbirth.⁴⁴ A morality discourse centered on illegitimacy and teen parenthood fueled this political agenda.⁴⁵ Because policymakers may respond to tangible statistics about marriage and parenthood in developing welfare policies, some theorize that punitive welfare decisions at the state level are a response to high out-of-wedlock childbirth rates.⁴⁶ However, the four states under study here had virtually identical rates of non-marital childbearing in 1996. Of all childbirths in Alabama and Georgia, 34% and 35%, respectively, were to unmarried women. The gap was somewhat wider in Arizona (32%) and California (39%) but in the opposite direction than expected. Therefore, it is unlikely that different concerns about morality and family life prompted these states to pass different welfare policies.

Policy Innovation and Continuity

Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis once remarked that states can be laboratories of democracy. The idea that states are often innovators in policy development undergirds a central hypothesis in the literature on state welfare decision-making. The line of thought suggests that some states are more likely than others to adopt new and creative policies, reflective of a general tendency toward innovation.⁴⁷ Studies also suggest that some states have a stable propensity to pass more stringent welfare policies, independent of their political culture or party alignments.⁴⁸ Is it possible that the punitive states in this dissertation were more inclined toward policy innovation or toward punitive policies than the more lenient states? Judging by their previous record of waiver requests under AFDC, the answer is no. As AFDC expenditures increased between 1950 and 1967, states increasingly requested waivers from the federal government to implement work requirements and otherwise restrict welfare participation.⁴⁹ Another round of waiver applications ensued in the late 1980s and early 1990s as states sought to implement further guidelines for welfare participation. Alabama and Georgia were among the earliest states to implement work mandates (1953) and both applied for waivers in the late 1980s to strengthen the terms of welfare participation. California and Arizona were also among the earliest states to implement work mandates (1953 and 1950, respectively) and both received waivers in 1994 to tighten work requirements and reduce the welfare caseload.

Political Culture and Electoral Politics

⁴² Fraser and Gordon, "A Genealogy of Dependency."; Hancock, *The Politics of Disgust*; Mink, *Welfare's End*.

⁴³ Neubeck and Cazanave, *Welfare Racism*.

⁴⁴ Mink, *Welfare's End*.

⁴⁵ Hancock, *The Politics of Disgust*.

⁴⁶ Soss et al., "Setting the Terms of Relief."

⁴⁷ Soule and Zylan, "Runaway Train?"

⁴⁸ Gray, "Innovation in the States."

⁴⁹ Soule and Zylan, "Runaway Train?"

A final strand of research suggests that political party control and state political culture direct welfare policymaking.⁵⁰ According to Elazar's classic definition, political culture is "the particular pattern of orientation to political action in which each political system is embedded."⁵¹ Political culture encompasses people's understandings of the role of government, who has influence in the political system, and the purpose of politics itself. Elazar classifies Georgia and Alabama as both Traditionalistic/Individualistic states in which party competition is minimal and the public holds a skeptical view of the elite-dominated government and the market. Elazar also classifies Arizona as a Traditionalistic/Moralistic state and California as Moralistic/Individualistic.⁵² It should be noted, however, in the 1990s California and Arizona's approaches to diversity and poverty politics were more similar than their political ideologies would indicate as racial context proved a better predictor of policy outcomes than did political culture.⁵³

While political culture is a more enduring feature of a state's political landscape, party control may shift more regularly. States or countries which are more liberal politically adopt less punitive and more generous welfare policies. At the time of welfare reform, however, Republicans controlled the governorship in three of the four states under study. Paradoxically, only in the most punitive state, Georgia, did a Democrat hold the governorship. Democrats controlled the state legislatures in both Georgia and Alabama. In Arizona, however, the state legislature was controlled by Republicans unlike in neighboring California. As a result, the political ideology of state government may have influenced the welfare outcomes in the western states but was unlikely to have influenced the southern states.

Race, Immigration, and Welfare Politics

Just as the divergent welfare reform outcomes in Georgia and Alabama present a theoretical puzzle for non-racial accounts of state welfare choice, so too are race-centered approaches unable to account for these anomalies. A substantial body of research attests to the role of ethno-racial diversity in determining the minimalist nature of the American welfare state, its late development, its limited protections, and its vulnerability to political attacks. Analyses of early U.S. welfare state development view institutional arrangements, political conflicts, and economic structures as mediating the role of ethno-racial diversity in welfare policy development.⁵⁴ However, in the post-civil rights era, the eschewal of overt racism and racial discourse has proven a stumbling block for scholars interested in tracing the effects of race on politics and policy. Academic accounts of social policy development have shifted their analyses from the multi-faceted nature of race relations and politics to the study of attitudes, stereotypes, and individual racism as causal explanations for policy developments.⁵⁵

These studies have produced compelling evidence that racial attitudes correlate strongly with support for a generous safety net for the poor.⁵⁶ Whites' beliefs about the work ethic of African Americans predict their levels of support for welfare.⁵⁷ Political and media elites project

⁵⁰ Rom, "Transforming State Health and Welfare Programs."

⁵¹ Elazar, *American Federalism*.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Hero, *Faces of Inequality*.

⁵⁴ Lieberman, *Shifting the Color Line*; Quadagno, *The Color of Welfare*.

⁵⁵ Gilens, *Why Americans Hate Welfare*; Neubeck and Cazanave, *Welfare Racism*; Hancock, *The Politics of Disgrace*.

⁵⁶ Gilens, *Why Americans Hate Welfare*; Krysan, "Prejudice, Politics, and Public Opinion."

⁵⁷ Gilens, *Why Americans Hate Welfare*.

a coherent and racialized public identity of welfare recipients as lazy, immoral, and promiscuous reforms.⁵⁸ Sociologists and political scientists have argued that these beliefs about the worthiness of policy beneficiaries affect the feasibility and attractiveness of specific policy options.⁵⁹ Steensland, “Cultural Categories and the American Welfare State: The Case of Guaranteed Income Policy.”; Schneider and Ingram, *Deserving and entitled*; Soss, Fording, and Schram, “The Color of Devolution.” Thus, it is not surprising that scholars have argued that race affects policymaking through the social construction of target populations,⁶⁰ through its effects on public opinion,⁶¹ or through the stereotypes and cognition of policy elites.⁶²

Despite some explanatory power, these efforts to explain the role of race in contemporary welfare policymaking share three weaknesses. First, they equate race with Blackness, examining how Black subordination or stereotypes of Blacks influence policy outcomes.⁶³ This approach obscures the potential role of immigration and immigrants in welfare policy formation. Immigration to the United States is rapidly changing the meaning and practice of ethno-racial diversity.⁶⁴ Drastic increases in the Hispanic population in the United States have prompted questions as to whether this influx of Hispanic immigrants will prompt renewed conservatism in social welfare policy.⁶⁵ Studies have linked the total Hispanic population in a state or county to increased support for anti-immigrant measures such as English Only laws and immigrant exclusions from social services.⁶⁶ With respect to social policy, we know that the percentage of Hispanics in a state predicts the punitive nature of welfare policies but does so to less of a degree than the percentage of Blacks in a population. In this dissertation, I explore welfare policy decisions as they relate both to Blacks *and* Latinos in an effort to expand our understanding of racial context to account for the diverse and shifting American ethno-racial landscape, contributing to evolving discussions of racial dynamics beyond the Black-White divide.

A second theoretical flaw in existing studies is their tendency to treat racism, whether elite or public, as a personal weakness and a historical legacy rather than as part of a broader system of racialized social, political, and economic relationships and institutions. While many scholars accept at face value the social constructionist view of race, studies of race and welfare suffer from a demographic determinism in which population numbers alone spark distrust⁶⁷ or in which static stereotypes of a stable target population alter policy outcomes.⁶⁸ However, the social construction of target populations is an on-going and shifting process. Moreover, collectivities do not always adopt group identities or act on group interests.⁶⁹ By neglecting these observations, existing accounts of the race-policy relationship fail to identify how policies continually “make race” by creating and reinforcing racialized categories of deservingness and

⁵⁸ Hancock, *The Politics of Disgust*.

⁵⁹ Schneider and Ingram, *Deserving and entitled*; Steensland, “Cultural Categories and the American Welfare State: The Case of Guaranteed Income Policy.”; Soss, Fording, and Schram, “The Color of Devolution.”

⁶⁰ Hancock, *The Politics of Disgust*; Schneider and Ingram, “Social Construction of Target Populations.”

⁶¹ Brooks and Manza, *Why Welfare States Persist*; Gilens, *Why Americans Hate Welfare*.

⁶² Soss, Fording, and Schram, “The Color of Devolution.”

⁶³ For notable exceptions see Fox, “The Changing Color of Welfare?”; Reese, *Backlash against Welfare Mothers*.

⁶⁴ Kasinitz, “Not Just Black And White.”

⁶⁵ Kymlicka and Banting, “Immigration, Multiculturalism, and the Welfare State.”

⁶⁶ Hero and Tolbert, “A Racial/Ethnic Diversity Interpretation of Politics and Policy in the States of the U.S.”; Hero, *Faces of Inequality*.

⁶⁷ Putnam, “*E Pluribus Unum*.”

⁶⁸ Schneider and Ingram, “Social Construction of Target Populations.”

⁶⁹ Loveman, “Is ‘Race’ Essential?”

need.⁷⁰ In Chapters 2 and 4 of this dissertation, I draw on media content analysis from each of the four states under study to show that the prevalence of racism and stereotypes about welfare recipients cannot explain the policy outcomes in these states. Chapters 3 and 5 draw on an array of other data sources to contextualize both racism and the policymaking process.

A third shortcoming of existing research is its view of welfare as an independent domain, isolated from external political pressures and struggles. Studies of welfare policy-making, for example, examine only media stories and legislative debates which are explicitly related to welfare policy.⁷¹ Many cognitive approaches neglect the politics involved in policymaking, more broadly, all together.⁷² When scholars do examine the effect of broader political context on welfare, they limit their analyses to the study of political culture⁷³ and party control.⁷⁴ There are multiple issues with these approaches. In analyzing political culture, scholars address only the dominant culture in a given jurisdiction and offer only a static measure of political environment.⁷⁵ Analyzing party affiliations and control neglects the fact that all politicians may face some incentive to support punitive welfare policies, regardless of their party. Finally, these approaches do not highlight or analyze the fact that welfare policy debates are not insulated from broader social or political conflicts. Given the symbolic nature of welfare policy⁷⁶ and the centrality of cultural categories of worth to policymaking,⁷⁷ it is likely that welfare policy debates are intricately tied to other policy discussions. That is, if policy changes alter the playing field for subsequent movements and policies,⁷⁸ the social and political conflicts preceding welfare reforms should alter the goals, crafting, and political stakes of those reforms as well as the salience of race to the reform process. In Chapters 3 and 5, I show that welfare policy debates are not immune from such conflicts but rather reflect and animate them.

A Racial Conflict Perspective

In this dissertation, I use state-level comparisons to gain leverage on two questions. When and how does ethno-racial context matter for welfare policymaking? Furthermore, under what circumstances does it not matter? To answer these questions, I draw on multiple sources of data and multiple forms of analysis including archival research, media content analysis, public opinion polls, and qualitative interviews. From 2008-2009 I spent time in the legislatures and state archives in each of the four states, reviewing governors' papers, legislative files, and documents from the relevant state agency responsible for welfare policy implementation. A handful of advocacy and non-profit agencies in the states also allowed me access to their files from the welfare reform era. In addition to archival research, I reviewed public opinion polls from each state to see how shifts in public opinion related to policy milestones, and I examined news stories from each state in an effort to reconstruct the basics of the welfare reform process. In tandem with this research, I also coded a sample of stories from each state to assess the prevalence of welfare-related stereotypes (see Chapters 2 and 4). Finally, after completing the

⁷⁰ Wacquant, "Towards and Analytic of Racial Domination."

⁷¹ Hancock, *The Politics of Disgust*; Gilens, *Why Americans Hate Welfare*; Neubeck and Cazanave, *Welfare Racism*.

⁷² Soss, Fording, and Schram, "The Color of Devolution."; Hancock, *The Politics of Disgust*.

⁷³ Elazar, *American Federalism*.

⁷⁴ Hero, *Faces of Inequality*.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Calavita, "The New Politics of Immigration."

⁷⁷ Steensland, "Cultural Categories and the American Welfare State: The Case of Guaranteed Income Policy."

⁷⁸ Burstein, Einwohner, and Jocelyn, "The Success of Political Movements: A Bargaining Perspective."

mentioned analysis, I conducted interviews with the major players in welfare reform in each state from elected officials and welfare bureaucrats to the leaders of anti-poverty advocacy groups. Where available (California and Georgia), I also read oral histories and interviews with relevant players housed in various university archival collections (See Appendices I-II).

Theoretically, this dissertation advances a framework for understanding the role of ethno-racial context in policymaking that accounts for shifting nature of group difference and the practical complexities of the policymaking process. I present a racial conflict perspective which asserts that large minority populations in an area spurred the passage of punitive policies when welfare reform debates were preceded by the activation of racial conflicts. Following Olzak and Shanahan, I define racial conflict as “the public [or collective] expression of racially or ethnically based grievances against specific ethnic or racial targets.”⁷⁹ I argue that the political conflicts which were immediate antecedents to welfare reform in each state highlighted specific group-boundaries by attracting different stakeholders and publicly activating specific political and social divisions. When these conflicts were racialized, racial divisions undermined efforts to pass generous welfare policies, constraining the efforts of activists and upping the political stakes of welfare reform debates. Despite the fact that these conflicts arose *outside* of welfare reform debates, the divides had enduring consequences for the reform process. In advancing this racial conflict theory, I draw from three existing strands of research: racial threat, racial resentment, and framing.

Racial Threat

Drawing upon V.O. Key’s classic formulation, racial threat theories argue that the larger the proportion of minorities in a community the more Whites will feel threatened by those minorities.⁸⁰ Threat theories are widely used to predict a variety of punitive policies from felon disenfranchisement to the rise of White flight academies.⁸¹ Within the context of welfare policy, some scholars have speculated that the more Black or Latino elected officials in a state or the more registered minority voters, the more likely a state would be to pass punitive policies. However, as Tables 1.4 and 1.5 show, there was little difference within each pair of states here along these lines. Each state had a relatively large minority population (25% and 27%, respectively, in Alabama and Georgia and 19% and 26% in Arizona and California) so if demographics alone fuel threat and threat prompts punitive policies we would expect to see restrictive reforms in all four states. Also, while threat approaches would assume that greater minority political power would translate into threat it was the lenient states (Alabama and California) which had the largest percentage of Black (25%) and Latino elected officials (15%), respectively. Finally, Blacks and Latinos were equally active as voters in these states (around 25% in the South and 11% in the West). In states with large Latino populations, another possible measure of threat might be the percent change in immigrants in a state in the decade of welfare reform, but, again, there is little variation between California (196%) and Arizona (202%).

⁷⁹ Olzak and Shanahan, “Racial Policy and Racial Conflict in the Urban United States, 1869-1924,” 490.

⁸⁰ Key, *Southern Politics in State and Nation*.

⁸¹ Behrens, Uggan, and Manza, “Ballot Manipulation and the Menace of Negro Domination.”; Bobo and Hutchings, “Perceptions of Racial Group Competition.”; Eitle, D’Alessio, and Stolzenberg, “Racial Threat and Social Control.”; Quillian, “Prejudice as a Response to Perceived Group Threat.”; Quillian, “Group Threat and Regional Change in Attitudes Toward African-Americans.”; Taylor, “How White Attitudes Vary with the Racial Composition of Local Populations.”; Andrews, “Movement-Counter-movement Dynamics and the Emergence of New Institutions.”

Therefore, traditional measures of threat give little insight into why these states passed the policies they did. Nonetheless, I argue in this dissertation that racial threat does play a critical role in the relationship between racial context and welfare policymaking, but the role is somewhat different than what previous studies might suggest. I argue that threat is not a matter of demographics or numbers but rather of perceptions and group position.⁸² The sense or feeling of racial threat is not a function of demographics per se but rather emerges from an array of events, conflicts, or provocations.⁸³ The sentiment of threat to one's group is of key significance rather than the numbers. With respect to welfare reform, I argue that a sense of threat emerged from the activation of racial conflicts in the punitive states. This threat provided politicians with the political motivation to pass punitive policies. However, while critical to the approach presented here, racial threat must be analyzed in tandem with other factors to understand exactly *how* race structures policymaking.

Racial Resentment

The racial conflict approach also draws from the literature on racial resentment. Racial resentment is a combination of negative stereotypes about an ethno-racial minority and feelings of resentment arising from the belief that a particular minority group is making excessive claims for or receiving too much in the way of public resources.⁸⁴ The resentment argument directs our attention to individual-level cognition, prejudice, and xenophobia linking them to political attitudes and political campaigning. Studies that tie racial resentment to welfare find that negative attitudes about racial minorities, their work ethic, and their fitness for citizenship are directly related to White ambivalence about welfare spending and the extension of benefits to non-citizens.⁸⁵ The argument here is that when welfare is associated with a stigmatized group, the public will not favor the expansion of the social safety net for the poor.

These approaches provide a useful window into the cognitive and individual-level processes that underlie policy opinions. It is not clear; however, how this resentment might lead to restrictive or punitive welfare policies. Some argue that policy responses follow public opinion.⁸⁶ Others assert that it is politically expedient for politicians to milk this racial resentment in campaigns while still others argue that politicians do not just exploit but *create* this resentment to push their own policy agendas.⁸⁷ Another line of thinking argues that policy actors rely on socially salient group reputations in decision-making. The relevance of race in policymaking depends on how big a contrast there is perceived to be between racial groups in the cognition of individual politicians.⁸⁸ Regardless of their formulation, these theories rely heavily on stereotypes and racial attitudes as explanatory factors behind policy decisions. With respect to the four states under analysis here, public opinion varied little prior to welfare reform with respect to views on the work ethic of Blacks and Latinos or the desire for punitive welfare measures (see Tables 1.6 and 1.7). As I will show in Chapters 2 and 4, stereotypes or “the social construction of target populations”⁸⁹ differed little in each pair of states.

⁸² Blumer, “Race Prejudice as a Sense of Group Position.”

⁸³ Brown, “‘They must be discontented’.”

⁸⁴ Mendelberg, *The Race Card*.

⁸⁵ Citrin et al., “Public Opinion Toward Immigration Reform.”; Gilens, *Why Americans Hate Welfare*.

⁸⁶ Brooks and Manza, *Why Welfare States Persist*.

⁸⁷ Mendelberg, *The Race Card*; Alesina and Glaeser, *Fighting Poverty in the US and Europe*.

⁸⁸ Soss, Fording, and Schram, “The Color of Devolution.”

⁸⁹ Schneider and Ingram, “Social Construction of Target Populations.”

Thus, as with racial threat, resentment theories do not explain the mechanisms by which resentment translates into punitive policy. The strength of racial resentment literature is instead its ability to explain racial animosity in the context of welfare policymaking and the incentive politicians have to use race in their campaigns. In presenting a racial conflict model, I argue that resentment becomes important in welfare policymaking because its activation in the face of racial conflicts provides a political resource for politicians and constrains the policy options available to them.

Framing

A broad literature in social movements and political sociology examines framing, the active, agentic, and often contested production of or meanings in the mobilization process.⁹⁰ Frames allow people to identify, label, and organize specific phenomena in such a way that gives these phenomena meaning and guides individual action.⁹¹ In the realm of politics, frames are a critical means of mobilizing support and de-mobilizing opposition. Because framing analyses focus on how movements make meaning, they cannot independently account for the effect of framing on policy outcomes.⁹² Nonetheless, the racial conflict model adopts two central tenants from framing theories. First, for frames to be effectively, they must be highly visible. Although micro-level ties may promote frame diffusion, it is the media and policy elites who diffuse an issue or message into the public sphere.⁹³ As the scope of a conflict changes, so too do its repercussions.⁹⁴ Second, the resonance, legitimacy, and efficacy of frames depend on the wider political and cultural context.⁹⁵ Resonant frames exploit the vocabulary and cleavages that underlie prominent narratives in the broader environment.⁹⁶ While it may be common for advocates to shift the definition and perception of target groups and possible policy interventions, the salient political context can make it easier or harder to do so.

To date, relatively few framing scholars have addressed the question of how frames diffuse across social movements, geographic areas, or policy arenas.⁹⁷ In developing a racial conflict approach to welfare policymaking, I highlight the diffusion of frames from one political conflict to another. Specifically, I argue that the frames used in political debates immediately prior to welfare reform efforts were easily adopted and not easily challenged during reform efforts. These frames were particularly effective in fueling support for punitive policies when racial conflicts activated racial threat and resentment just prior to welfare reform.

The Racial Conflict Model

Taking relevant insights from the threat, resentment, and framing literatures, this dissertation advances a racial conflict approach to understanding the restriction of welfare policies. I argue that race structures welfare policy choices when these policy debates arise after the activation of a high publicized racial conflict. These racial conflicts may be substantively

⁹⁰ Benford and Snow, "Framing Processes and Social Movements."

⁹¹ Goffman, *Frame Analysis*.

⁹² Koopmans and Olzak, "Discursive Opportunities and the Evolution of Right - Wing Violence in Germany."

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Schattschneider, *The Semi-Sovereign People*.

⁹⁵ McCammon et al., "Movement Framing and Discursive Opportunity Structures."

⁹⁶ Ferree, "Resonance and Radicalism: Feminist Framing in the Abortion Debates of the United States and Germany."

⁹⁷ Benford and Snow, "Framing Processes and Social Movements."

unrelated to welfare or relatively small in scope; yet, when they dominate media coverage in a community or state, they structure the wider context in which welfare debates develop, altering public perceptions and demands as well as the calculus of lawmakers. The racial conflict model thus explains not only whether a polity will pass punitive policies but when we can expect restrictive policies to be implemented.

According to this racial conflict model, as racial conflicts divide a populace and its political actors by race, these events, even if unrelated to poverty policy, fuel the passage of weak policies through a multi-step process. First, these conflicts ignite a palpable sense of threat among majority group members and generate widespread resentment of the targeted minority group. Because the actors in racial conflicts necessarily express racialized grievances against race-specific targets, they elevate the socio-political salience of racial categories both for direct participants in the conflict (politicians, activists, and the media) and for observers. These threats and resentments prime residents to identify and emphasize the social significance of racial categories and divisions.

Second, the discursive framing of these racial conflicts by the media, politicians, and citizens disseminates and popularizes specific racialized constructions of deservingness. The framings of racial conflicts not only conflate racial categories and cultural categories of worth, they create a new discursive opportunity structure for future political debates. In these new debates, race is a readily available and highly resonant frame for interpreting welfare and poverty. Because of these conflicts, race-specific framings of welfare have heightened resonance among the public and among policymakers. Moreover, the resonance of race as a frame limits the power and effectiveness of non-racial framings of welfare. Members of the public and political leaders themselves more readily accept policy justifications and portrayals of poverty that emphasize race. While politicians can milk racialized understandings of poverty to fuel the passage of punitive policies, advocates for lenient reforms struggle to create and employ alternative frames due to the discursive constraints posed by the racial conflict.

Together, these threats, resentments, and frames create electoral advantages for politicians who support punitive policies. Thus, racial conflicts structure the rewards that come from passing restrictive policies and serve as active resource that politicians can manipulate to their benefit. As the media devote increasing attention to a racial conflict and white resentment and group threat spread, advocates for lenient reforms must grapple with insurgent racial animus as well as resonant racial framings of social problems as they pursue their goals. Even with plentiful resources, they face significant obstacles in overcoming the cognitive, discursive, and political effects of racial conflicts. This argument does not preclude the ability of advocates to alter the course of policy events. Shifting configurations of stakeholders and on-going efforts by advocates may allow for the active re-framing of poverty and social problems during welfare debates. However, as I show in subsequent chapters, the social cleavages activated in prior debates or conflicts, by and large, determined the racialization of welfare politics and the appeal of punitive policies.

Looking Ahead

I present the findings from this study in three parts. The first examines the process of welfare reform in the southern states, Georgia and Alabama. In Chapter 2, I delve further into the historical similarities and differences between these two southern states. I argue that while the two states share a common historical arc from the colonial era to the present, the presence of

a strong Black middle class in Atlanta shaped the civil rights movement and subsequently post-civil rights era Black politics quite differently than in Alabama so that contemporary ideas about what constitutes a racial political issue is somewhat different issues now in each state. To assess the state of contemporary racial and welfare politics in each state, I draw on content analysis from the two largest newspapers in each state to assess the prevalence of welfare stereotypes, determine the salient racial categories used in each state and their relevance for welfare debates, and identify the major political and social conflicts facing each state when welfare reform took center stage. While scholars frequently argue that the social construction of target populations affects policy outcomes,⁹⁸ I find that neither the quantity nor the substance of welfare stereotypes is related to the passage of punitive welfare policies. However, the data show that welfare reform and contemporary politics were clearly more overtly racialized in Georgia, the punitive state, than in Alabama, the lenient one.

The content analysis results suggest that the social and political conflicts which dominated state politics in the mid-1990s were also quite different, something I explore further in Chapter 3. In that chapter, I draw on public opinion poll data, archival research, and in-depth interviews to show that in Georgia, conflicts over the Confederate emblem on the state flag triggered concern among rural White voters of a demanding Black population that took more than its fair share. The flap pitted White “deserving” individuals as bearers of the state’s history against “undeserving” Black advocacy groups. The conflict drew explicit racial boundaries, invoked White racial resentment, and made the passage of punitive reforms a political imperative for a governor facing re-election. In Alabama, ethno-racial stereotypes were present during early reform discussions but were derailed by the budget and tort reform debates that monopolized the state political scene prior to welfare reform and legitimated the struggles of low-income Alabamians. However, when a racialized debate did arise years later in Alabama over voter identification, the governor capitulated and passed punitive welfare reforms.

The second section of the dissertation turns to the western states, Arizona and California. Chapter 4 again assesses the historical similarities and differences between the two states with a particular eye to immigration and welfare policies. I also draw on content analysis of news stories from the two states from the years just prior to and during welfare reform to assess the state of racial, immigration, and poverty politics in both states. I find that welfare stereotypes are significantly less frequent in these states than in the southern states and that their use bears little relation to the direction that reforms took in each state. The data also reveal that welfare reform debates arose in each state on the heels of major conflicts about immigration. The social categories of worth drawn in these conflicts, however, differed in the two states. While the major boundaries highlighted in Arizona were between immigrants and citizens, the most salient boundary in California was between illegal immigrants and legal immigrants.

In Chapter 5, I draw on historical and interview data to make sense of these patterns. I show that in California, anti-illegal immigration measures (especially Proposition 187) triggered public suspicions of a population of individuals, mostly Mexican, who were cheating the state’s citizen population and abusing permissive welfare programs. Constructions of deservingness pitted “undeserving” illegal immigrants against “deserving” legal immigrants. Because the 1996 welfare reforms focused solely on legal immigrants, citizens and politicians were less concerned about forcing punitive measures than in Arizona where an on-going Mexican Assault identified

⁹⁸ Schneider and Ingram, “Social Construction of Target Populations.”

Mexican immigrants and nationals as the source of white citizens' economic problems. The histories of reform in these western states also suggest that the involvement of minority politicians and race-based advocacy groups in the welfare reform process had disparate impacts in the South than in the West. While activism by Hispanic elected officials helped the passage of lenient reforms, activism by Black elected officials hindered it. This pattern reflects the finding in existing research that across most spheres of social life, it is much easier for Hispanics to integrate than it is for Blacks.⁹⁹

These first two sections of the dissertation examine the construction of worth and deservingness in political debates and the consequences of those constructions for welfare policy making. The final chapter revisits the racial conflict model and assesses its applicability to ongoing debates about the role of race in politics, the effect of social movements on public policy, and the shifting racial configuration of the United States. As scholars, policymakers, and activists contemplate the ever-changing landscape of American politics and race relations, the racial conflict model suggests that the social cleavages and categories of worth employed in one political arena have dramatic implications for future, even unrelated, political debates. While these initial conflicts may pose significant restraints on policy options, understanding how these debates structure one another may also illuminate opportunities for intervention, advocacy, and change.

⁹⁹ Massey and Mullan, "Processes of Hispanic and Black Spatial Assimilation."; Massey and Denton, *American Apartheid*; Qian, "Breaking the Last Taboo."

Table 1.1: Case Studies		
	High % of Black Recipients	High % of Hispanic Recipients
Lenient Policies Adopted	Alabama	California
Punitive Policies Adopted	Georgia	Arizona

Table 1.2: Selected Control Variables for Comparative-Historical Analysis of Southern States, 1996		
	Alabama	Georgia
Poverty Rate	17%	14%
Unemployment Rate	5%	5%
% Black in Population	25%	27%
Welfare Recipients, % Black	73	72
Party of Governor	Republican	Democrat
Initial Implementation of AFDC Work Mandates	1953	1953
Latest AFDC Waiver Request (Range 1988-1995)	Yes	Yes
Births to Unmarried Women as % of All Births	34%	35%

Table 1.3: Selected Control Variables for Comparative-Historical Analysis of Western States, 1996		
	Arizona	California
Poverty Rate	18%	17%
Unemployment Rate	6%	7%
% Hispanic in Population	19%	26%
Welfare Recipients, % Hispanic	40%	38%
Party of Governor	Republican	Republican
Initial Implementation of AFDC Work Mandates	1950	1953
Latest AFDC Waiver Request (Range 1988-1995)	1994	1994
Births to Unmarried Women as % of All Births	32%	39%

Table 1.4: Racial Threat in the Southern States, 1996		
	Alabama	Georgia
Blacks as % of All Active Voters	24%	27%
Black Elected Officials as % of Total, State Legislature	25%	19%
% Black in Population	25%	27%
Welfare Recipients, % Black	73%	72%

Table 1.5: Racial Threat in the Western States, 1996		
	Arizona	California
Hispanics as % of All Active Voters	11%	12%
Hispanic Elected Officials as % of Total, State Legislature	9%	15%
% Hispanic in Population	19%	26%
Welfare Recipients, % Hispanic	40%	38%
% Change in Noncitizen Population, 1990-2000	202%	196%

Table 1.6: Resentment and Public Opinion in the Southern States, 1996		
	Alabama	Georgia
% of Residents Favoring Two Year Time Limit	80%	82%
% of Residents Who Believe Most Blacks are Hardworking ¹⁰⁰	8%	7%
% Black in Population	25%	27%
Welfare Recipients, % Black	73	72

¹⁰⁰ This question on the National Election Survey (1996) asked respondents to rate how hardworking or lazy they believed Blacks to be with a score of 1 being hard working and a score of 7 being lazy. These tallies represent the percentage of respondents who selected 1 as their response. The average answer for Alabama was 4.0 while the average for Georgia was 3.8. In ranking Hispanic work ethic, residents in the two states were equally likely (3.57) to believe Hispanics were hard working or lazy.

Table 1.7: Resentment and Public Opinion in the Western States, 1996		
	Arizona	California
% of Residents Who Favor a Two-Year Time Limit	70%	71%
% of Residents Who Believe Hispanics are Hardworking ¹⁰¹	4%	7%
% Hispanic in Population	19%	26%
Welfare Recipients, % Hispanic	40%	38%

¹⁰¹ This question on the National Election Survey (1996) asked respondents to rate how hardworking or lazy they believed Hispanics to be with a score of 1 being hard working and a score of 7 being lazy. These tallies represent the percentage of respondents who selected 1 as their response. The average answer for Arizona was 3.62 while the average for California was 3.33. In ranking Black work ethic, Californians were somewhat more likely to believe Blacks were lazy (4.1) than were Arizonans (3.89).

Chapter 2

Welfare in Black and White: History, Poverty, and Race in Georgia and Alabama

From conservative politics and civil rights to southern accents and soul food, Georgia and Alabama occupy similar places in public imaginings of the Deep South. To a great extent, these perceived commonalities reflect reality. The states share a common historical route from plantation agriculture and slavery in their early histories to tense race relations and right-wing politics in the modern era. With respect to welfare politics, both states were among the most punitive and least generous in the nation prior to the 1996 welfare reforms. Their benefit levels were among the lowest in the country, and their welfare policies and administration reflected deep-seeded racial animosities. Elected officials from each state, Senator Richard Shelby (R-AL) and Representative Newt Gingrich (R-GA), were key players in the development and passage of PRWORA at the federal level. Public opinion polls from the time reveal that residents of each state were equally supportive of time limits for welfare receipt and equally likely to believe that Blacks and Hispanics were lazy.¹⁰² Given their commonalities, scholars and the public had every reason to believe the two states would take a strict and punitive approach in enacting the 1996 law. Why, then, did their decision-making diverge so drastically in the wake of welfare reform? Why did Alabama pursue such lenient strategies – on par with liberal states like Hawaii and Vermont - while Georgia adopted one of the most punitive policies in the nation?

In this chapter, I begin to answer this question by providing historical context to the Georgia-Alabama comparison. I show that the states' similarities extend beyond the quantitative variables presented in the first chapter. Prior to welfare reform, the states took similar approaches to past anti-poverty reform efforts and have a shared history of racial conflict, exploitation, and protest. These similarities extend to the recent expansion of Black political power in each state. However, I also identify significant differences between the two states with respect to Black civil rights activism. Post-1965, civil rights organizations took different turns in the two states, assuming a more prominent state-wide role and tackling a broader range of political, economic, and social issues in Georgia than in Alabama. Atlanta also developed a stronger and more powerful Black middle class than did Birmingham or other Alabama cities. These patterns prove consequential as I turn my attention to a more explicit analysis of the 1996 reforms. I draw on content analysis of newspapers from each state at the time of welfare reform to assess contemporary race relations and welfare politics in Georgia and Alabama. To gauge the political and racial atmosphere in each state in the mid-1990s, I ask three specific questions of the dataset. First, I ask whether welfare stereotypes were more prevalent in one state than the other. This question emerges from the literature on welfare stereotyping, public opinion, and the social construction of target populations. Existing studies suggest that a coherent stereotype of welfare recipients pervades welfare policy debates and undermines support for generous social policies. Might differences in public stereotypes account for these disparate reform decisions?

Second, I examine whether welfare debates were more racialized in one state than the other. Are the greater prominence of civil rights groups and a larger Black middle class in Georgia evident in coverage about welfare? Typically content analyses of textual data ignore the

¹⁰² National Election Survey, *National Election Survey*. Questions: 961323, 961312, and 961313.

direct use of racial terminology for clues about welfare policymaking, despite the evidence that implicit and explicit references to race have divergent impacts on policy debates and public opinion.¹⁰³ It is reasonable to assume that different uses (both in frequency and content) of racial discourse might provide clues regarding the policy paradoxes under examination here. Were welfare reform debates more explicitly racialized in one state than the other?

Third, I ask whether welfare reform arose in a different political environment or context in each state. This question has yet to be addressed in research on welfare policy more generally and welfare reform in particular. Studies on social policy formation tend to view welfare as an independent and isolated domain. For example, they examine only media stories and political debates which are explicitly related to welfare policy.¹⁰⁴ However, welfare policies likely reflect or animate other existing political and social conflicts. Any attempt to theorize how race and welfare intersect must analyze not only political and public debates which are explicitly about welfare but also other concurrent debates which may animate ethno-racial divides. I specifically look to see if any conflicts from the civil rights era were activated in the years just prior to welfare reform efforts.

My analyses of these questions indicate that, despite what the literature would suggest, stereotypes of welfare recipients were more common in the lenient state, Alabama, than in the punitive one. The content of these stereotypes varied little across the two states. These findings suggest that the social construction of target populations alone cannot account for the divergent welfare reform trajectories taken by the two states. The analysis does indicate that the racialization of welfare debates and the political conflicts preceding welfare debates may have propelled Georgia and Alabama in different directions. The data show that welfare reform was more racialized in Georgia, the punitive state, than in Alabama, due in part to the re-emergence of racially polarized political conflicts and the prominence of race-based advocacy groups in Georgia. Specifically, welfare debates in Georgia arose at a time when racialized conflicts were at a head. Historical conflicts over the confederate emblem on the state flag inflamed racial tensions just as the mandate to reformulate the state's welfare policies came down from the federal government. In Alabama, the political conflicts that captured the state at the time of welfare reform were not racialized but rather highlighted tensions around legal and budgetary matters.

The Politics of Welfare

Historically, Georgia and Alabama have shared a determination to provide a meager social safety net for the poor and to restrict access to benefits by whatever means necessary. As early as the 1935 Social Security Act, poverty-relief policies relied on racially-grounded occupational exclusions served to pacify White Southern elites whose economic livelihood depended on African-American labor.¹⁰⁵ By establishing a decentralized structure for Aid to Dependent Children (ADC), the assistance program for the non-elderly poor, policymakers allowed states and localities substantial flexibility to implement group-based rules of

¹⁰³ Mendelberg, *The Race Card*.

¹⁰⁴ Hancock, *The Politics of Disgust*.

¹⁰⁵ Quadagno, "Race, Class, and Gender in the U.S. Welfare State.;" Quadagno, *The Color of Welfare*; Lieberman, *Shifting the Color Line*; Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White*.

participation to exclude African-Americans.¹⁰⁶ In the southern states, these local regulations served first and foremost to exclude African-Americans from welfare programs. As the century progressed, southern states used this local control to establish punitive and paternalistic welfare policies. Racial membership data suggest that virtually no Black families in disproportionately Black states received mothers' pension aid in the 1930s.¹⁰⁷ In the 1950s and 1960s, states denied welfare benefits to anyone displaying "bad character" such as giving birth to a child out of wedlock or living in a common law marriage. "Suitable home" laws in the Deep South even required the denial of welfare benefits to and the removal of children from homes deemed morally questionable.

In the 1950s, Georgia initiated a "purge" of its welfare rolls by cutting benefits and implementing work requirements.¹⁰⁸ At this same time, Alabama adopted the lowest benefit levels in the country and received a waiver from the federal government to mandate that able-bodied welfare recipients go to work.¹⁰⁹ By the 1990s, Alabama and Georgia had among the lowest benefit levels in the entire country (46th and 50th respectively). Both states adamantly refused to raise benefit levels beyond a paltry minimum. In the years leading up to welfare reform, both states took advantage of the federal waiver possibilities available through the Family Support Act to enact work training programs. Alabama implemented Avenues to Self-Sufficiency through Employment and Training Services (ASSETS) which was designed to develop more effective work, training, and child-support enforcement across the AFDC and Food Stamp programs.¹¹⁰ Georgia implemented its Positive Employment and Community Help Program (PEACH), a job training and placement program.¹¹¹ Both started as experimental programs in localized areas with the intention that they would be implemented across the state if successful. Services for each program rarely met demands. In Alabama, ASSETS provided support for only 18 of the state's 67 counties.¹¹² By the mid-1990s, PEACH was available to all AFDC recipients across the state, but the program was plagued by chronic underfunding and long waitlists.¹¹³ Federal welfare reform in 1996, however, put a stop on plans to expand both programs. As a result, both states confronted the federal mandate to reform their welfare programs having recently experimented with work requirements and having rejected calls to raise benefit levels for low-income families.

Historical Racial Cleavages & Welfare Policies

The historical similarities between Georgia and Alabama's welfare politics are part of a broader shared history of politics and race. Prior to the 1996 welfare reforms, Georgia and Alabama were typical of the Deep South in most regards. The economies of both states were dominated by labor intensive agriculture up through the middle of the 20th century. Black slaves worked the cotton plantations in both states, and Whites expressed high levels of anxiety about

¹⁰⁶ Lieberman, *Shifting the Color Line*. In 1962, ADC was renamed Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC).

¹⁰⁷ Neubeck and Cazanave, *Welfare Racism*.

¹⁰⁸ Reese, *Backlash against Welfare Mothers*.

¹⁰⁹ Soule and Zylan, "Runaway Train?"

¹¹⁰ Clark, Long, and Ratcliffe, "Income Support and Social Services for Low-Income People in Alabama."

¹¹¹ The program name ignited the ire of many African-Americans who felt the name demeaned their race (Plummer 1993).

¹¹² Clark, Long, and Ratcliffe, "Income Support and Social Services for Low-Income People in Alabama."

¹¹³ Bilskie, "From Entitlement to Empowerment: Welfare Reform in Georgia, Part I."

the large Black populations in their midst.¹¹⁴ During the Civil War, both states ceded from the union and retained significant pride in their Confederate heritage in subsequent decades. The state economies continued to rely on agriculture, particularly cotton, with sharecroppers working the fields and Jim Crow laws regulating day-to-day contact between the races even after the Civil War.

Industrialization occurred in Birmingham, Alabama sooner than it did in Georgia. Known as “The Magic City” and one of the 20th largest cities in the country in 1920, Birmingham drew many Blacks away from the rural areas and into the city in search of work.¹¹⁵ By mid-century Georgia had also developed a manufacturing sector that was not insubstantial and grew in size to become the largest city in the southeast. For the first half of the twentieth century, legal and institutional barriers to Black political participation such as poll taxes, literacy requirements, and property qualifications prevented Blacks from voting or winning political representation in either state.¹¹⁶ Rural White voters held immense sway in state politics due to legislative malapportionment.¹¹⁷ White political elites refused to appropriate funding for Black facilities which remained poorly equipped and politically ignored.

Leading up to the civil rights movement, both states followed a Black protest trajectory similar to other Deep South states. Significant protest and organizing occurred immediately after emancipation, followed by little visible protest during WWII. In both states, a genuine social movement emerged in the 1960s.¹¹⁸ During the civil rights movement, Georgia and Alabama were hotbeds of civil rights activity, and organizing efforts were met by White violence and massive resistance. Birmingham, the city Martin Luther King called “the most segregated in the world,” saw dozens of racially motivated bombings from the late 1940s to the mid-1960s, including the infamous 1963 bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church.¹¹⁹ Freedom riders encountered violence as they passed through the state, and courts barred the NAACP from organizing in Alabama, demanding the names and addresses of all members statewide.¹²⁰ In perhaps Georgia’s most famous civil rights event, activists unleashed massive protests in Albany, Georgia from 1961 to 1962 in an unsuccessful effort to force school desegregation.

These political similarities between Georgia and Alabama persisted through the end of the 20th century. Dixiecrat Democrats retain substantial political power in both state legislatures. Black political power increased in both states in the decades following the civil rights movement. Descriptive representation in each state’s legislature increased dramatically between the early 1970s and the late 1990s.¹²¹ To date, Alabama has more Black elected officials as a percentage of those holding office than any other state in the country. Both states established Black Legislative Caucuses in the 1970s which gained representation and influence in the latter years of the 20th century. The Georgia Black Legislative Caucus was particularly influential in state politics in the 1990s, leading Menifield and Shaffer to argue that “African-American lawmakers are victorious more frequently [in Georgia] than in the average Southern state.”¹²² The Alabama

¹¹⁴ Mickey, “Paths out of Dixie: the Decay of Authoritarian Enclaves in America’s Deep South, 1944-1972.”

¹¹⁵ Jeffries, *Bloody Lowndes*.

¹¹⁶ Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth-Century Atlanta*.

¹¹⁷ Key, *Southern Politics in State and Nation*; Menifield and Shaffer, *Politics In The New South*.

¹¹⁸ Jeffries, *Bloody Lowndes*.

¹¹⁹ McWhorter, *Carry Me Home*.

¹²⁰ Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, “Permanent Exhibition.”

¹²¹ Menifield and Shaffer, *Politics In The New South*.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 195.

Democratic Caucus became the main statewide organization representing African Americans. Its purpose was primarily increasing Black political representation, monitoring voting, employment, and political appointments, and advancing legislation to create greater political representation.¹²³

These similarities in welfare and racial politics, however, mask crucial differences between the two states in regard to race and politics in the civil rights and post-civil rights era. Unlike any Alabama city, Atlanta witnessed the growth of a solid Black middle class over the course of the 20th century.¹²⁴ As early as the 1920s, Atlanta's Black elite placed a major emphasis on winning the vote and had the political power to oppose referendums that were against their interests. The city's Black community achieved a modicum of services thanks to a biracial coalition formed between White and Black business leaders. The coalition jointly support White progressive mayoral candidates, and the Black community received improved community services in exchange for delivering votes.¹²⁵

The civil rights movement took a dramatically different tone in Atlanta than elsewhere in the Deep South, largely due to the presence of this Black middle class. Atlanta's business community successfully urged Martin Luther King, Jr. to prevent direct action there out of concern for the city's business image.¹²⁶ Black civil rights leaders threatened unrest and protest if White leaders did not desegregate public schools, a strategy that proved widely successful and limited the use of direct action in the city.¹²⁷ Civil rights activists also organized the two states in different ways even outside of Atlanta. Georgia served as the headquarters for the nation's most prominent civil rights groups, the Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC) and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), as well as for the regional office of the NAACP. The NAACP was the dominant protest organization in Georgia, but local chapters led the push for civil rights, each adopting distinctive strategies and tactics.¹²⁸ Despite the crucial role of Black churches in civil rights efforts nation-wide, there was no state-wide network of Black churches in Georgia. Unions, neighborhood clubs, Black media, and businesses were more influential in the struggle.¹²⁹ Organizing efforts in Alabama, on the other hand, were led primarily by *external* organizations, notably those headquartered in Atlanta: the SCLC and SNCC. Although Black churches did play a major role in mobilization efforts, there were few indigenous Black networks to support wide scale protest.¹³⁰

Following passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964, the SCLC and NAACP remained actively involved in Georgia politics but less so in Alabama. In Georgia, civil rights groups expanded their interests beyond segregation, fighting for increased Black control in public schooling, employment, and economic uplift.¹³¹ A biracial Action Forum formed in Atlanta with the intention of bringing Blacks into municipal decision-making. Atlanta's Black elite, known as the Auburn Ave elite, maintained significant sway in the city along with the NAACP. Owing to its strong local branches during the civil rights movement, the NAACP remained the only

¹²³ Jeffries, *Bloody Lowndes*.

¹²⁴ Reese, *Backlash against Welfare Mothers*; Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth-Century Atlanta*.

¹²⁵ Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth-Century Atlanta*.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ Tuck, *Beyond Atlanta*; Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth-Century Atlanta*; Grant, *The Way It Was in the South*; Marx, *Making Race and Nation*.

¹²⁸ Tuck, *Beyond Atlanta*.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*; Jeffries, *Bloody Lowndes*.

¹³¹ Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth-Century Atlanta*.

organization in the state that most Blacks could turn to for assistance.¹³² Public opinion polls in the 1980s revealed that the NAACP was well-known among White Georgians “as an organization bent on agitating Georgia black people who would be satisfied except for such outward interference.”¹³³

In Alabama, White politicians usurped many of the programs established to assist Black communities in the years following the Civil Rights Act. In the state’s Black Belt, Black activists tried to use funds from the War on Poverty to force compliance with federal statutes designed to promote racial equality, but were largely unsuccessful. By late 1968, the government had disbursed over \$96 million to Alabama in federal poverty funds, but Governor George Wallace channeled \$62 million to programs controlled by White politicians.¹³⁴ Unlike in Georgia where Black advocacy groups branched into municipal politics, poverty programs, and other political realms, Alabama’s organizations used their limited influence primarily to improve rural health conditions and to start adult education programs.¹³⁵ These contemporary interests of the states’ largest Black political groups reflect these differences. While the Georgia Black Legislative Caucus and other civil rights groups in the state address a wide range of social, political, and economic inequalities, the Alabama Democratic Caucus (the state’s Black political advocacy group) and Legislative Black Caucus focus their energies on voting and political representation. As will become clear in the next chapter, these differences not only explain when Black groups will mobilize in each state, they explain which issues are most likely to inflame racial tensions.

Contemporary Politics in Georgia and Alabama

Given these similar historical trajectories, what did the welfare politics look like in Georgia and Alabama? In this section, I draw on media content analysis to assess the state of race relations and welfare debates in each state at the time of the 1996 welfare reforms. Given their similar economic, political, and racial trajectories, Georgia and Alabama should have taken a similar and overwhelmingly punitive approach to welfare reform. This was not the case. Despite these similar pre-PRWORA trajectories, however, the two states adopted radically different approaches to their decision-making during welfare reform. Although Georgia’s reform policies were among the most punitive in the nation, Alabama was one of the most lenient states in the country with respect to its decisions on sanctions, work requirements, and time limits.

Specifically, in this section I address the validity of four hypotheses which might explain this paradoxical outcome: stereotype prevalence, stereotype content, racialization, and issue activation. The stereotype prevalence and content hypotheses emerge from the literature on public opinion about race and welfare and the literature on racial resentment. They suggest that the prevalence of negative welfare stereotypes and the content of those stereotypes might shift the direction of state policymaking. In short, perhaps Alabama passed lenient reforms because state residents harbored few stereotypes about welfare recipients or because the stereotypes they did have were not potent enough to fuel anti-welfare sentiment. The racialization hypothesis emerges from the literature on racial priming and suggests that welfare reform decisions will be more punitive in areas where welfare is implicitly racialized and more lenient or liberal when

¹³² Tuck, *Beyond Atlanta*.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 245.

¹³⁴ Ashmore, *Carry It On*.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

welfare politics is overtly racial. Finally, the issue activation hypothesis emerges from the literature on racial formation and issue evolution. Although rarely considered together, these theories suggest that the recent re-activation of historical racial conflicts might inform state-level responses to welfare reform mandates.

To test these hypotheses, I draw on content analysis of local media stories (see Appendix III). The foundation for this content analysis is a dataset of 500 articles published between 1993 and 1997 and derived from the largest newspaper in each state: *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* and *The Birmingham News*. These papers had the largest total circulation in their respective states in 1996 and had a wide geographic circulation. I opted to code local news stories for two reasons. First, most Americans receive their news from local papers rather than national ones. This was even more true in the 1990s before the rapid rise of online news media.¹³⁶ Second, the local news media in a state provides a better opportunity to analyze the content of local debates and to assess contemporary and local conflicts about race and welfare than do the national news or other sources. While national media do have effects on local agenda-setting these effects are overridden when the political initiative at hand is local in scope as were state-level welfare debates.¹³⁷

The data for this content analysis come from a computerized search of LexisNexis Academic. To create the sample, a research assistant and I searched for articles containing the term “welfare” for each state for each year. This initial search yielded upwards of 3000 news stories per state per year. We then read through each story and retained only those stories which met two characteristics. First, the articles remained in the dataset only if they used the term “welfare” to refer to means-tested assistance for low-income individuals. This meant excluding from the sample all stories about animal welfare, corporate welfare, agricultural welfare, and general stories about the “welfare and well-being” of individuals or communities. Second, we retained only those articles about the state in question. This meant that we excluded from the sample those stories which only addressed federal welfare reform. This procedure excluded a significant portion of stories from the sample (see Table 2.1).

After creating a dataset of relevant news stories for each state, we then randomly selected fifty stories per state per year to create the final dataset. To reach this final figure, we retained every Nth article in the sample depending on the number of stories available in the entire universe. For example, if there were 100 relevant stories about welfare for a specific year we retained every second article for the final sample. Because the newspapers differ substantially in the number of articles they publish per day, the percentage of stories retained for the final sample varied across the states (see Table 2.1).

To code the data I used Atlas.ti 5.2. Quotations, the primary measure for the software, represent each paragraph in a story as they appeared in the computerized document. It should be noted that these quotations are not identical in size due to variations in the page constraints and the authors and editors of the papers. Many of the paragraphs were only one or two sentences long which resulted in an artificially high number of quotations. Consequently, percentage of paragraphs with codes is smaller than would have been the case had paragraphs been longer. The final sample of Alabama articles contained 3147 quotations as compared to 3155 for Georgia. Very roughly, this translates to 63 quotations per story for both states.

¹³⁶ Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, *Online Papers Modestly Boost Newspaper Readership*.

¹³⁷ Gibson and Hester, “The Agenda-Setting Function of National Versus Local Media: A Time-Series Analysis for the Issue of Same-Sex Marriage.”

A research assistant and I coded the full sample of stories, each coding every other story in the sample to limit bias. Before beginning the coding process in earnest we each coded a random sample of 15 stories from each paper. We compared our codes to standardize the coding instrument and make necessary changes to the specifications of each code. We also conducted intercoder reliability tests on 15 stories per state. All codes with an intercoder reliability rate of less than 70% were dropped. The overall intercoder reliability rate for the Alabama-Georgia codes was 84%.¹³⁸

Drawing on these results, I find little support for the stereotype hypotheses or the racialization hypothesis. In fact, I find the opposite patterns for the stereotype prevalence and racialization hypotheses as predicted in existing research. The data show that stereotypes were identical in content across the two states and more prevalent in the lenient state, Alabama, than the punitive one. While the racial priming literature suggests that the use of explicit racial appeals makes it more challenging to pass punitive policies, welfare debates were more racialized in the punitive state. The data also provide support for the issue activation hypothesis, suggesting that the activation of historically-situated racial cleavages prior to welfare reform may have pushed states to pass more punitive welfare policies.

Stereotypes

The first set of tests used local news stories as an indicator of public stereotype prevalence to test the visibility of welfare stereotypes in each state. The study of welfare stereotypes has become increasingly common since Ronald Reagan shifted the terrain of welfare politics by making the “welfare queen” a centerpiece of his 1976 presidential campaign. In an oft-quoted statement, Reagan used the term to describe someone who “has eighty names, thirty addresses, twelve Social Security cards and is collecting veteran's benefits on four non-existing deceased husbands. And she is collecting Social Security on her cards. She's got Medicaid, getting food stamps, and she is collecting welfare under each of her names.”¹³⁹ The “welfare queen” became a catchphrase for the anti-welfare movement, a rallying point for conservative politicians and citizens alike. The term epitomized the racialized and gendered stereotypes about welfare recipients that pervaded AFDC and captured the essence of public discontent with the program. Although Reagan first used the term “welfare queen” in 1976, the roots of the stereotype trace back to the 1960s. Beginning in 1965, the U.S. media initiated an unprecedented racialization of public images of poverty, causing white support for welfare programs to plummet.¹⁴⁰ Over the course of the 20th century, the American public viewed welfare recipients as Black, lazy, and undeserving of welfare benefits.¹⁴¹

Academic accounts of the race-welfare relationship post-1960 focus heavily on the prevalence and consequences of these welfare dependency stereotypes. In his seminal work on race and anti-welfare sentiment, Gilens found that public attitudes about African-Americans bear directly on support for or against welfare policy.¹⁴² Americans on the whole are skeptical about welfare recipients' actual need, believing most recipients to be undeserving of benefits. These beliefs are tied directly to the perceived racial make-up of welfare recipients and to beliefs about

¹³⁸ This rating is significantly higher than in other similar studies (see Hancock 2004).

¹³⁹ Staff Writer, “‘Welfare Queen’ Becomes Issue in Reagan Campaign.”

¹⁴⁰ Gilens, *Why Americans Hate Welfare*.

¹⁴¹ Misra, Moller, and Karides, “Envisioning Dependency.”

¹⁴² Gilens, *Why Americans Hate Welfare*.

the work ethic of African-Americans as a whole. While Gilens' work highlighted the connection between stereotypes of African-Americans and anti-welfare sentiment, Hancock later examined the use of the welfare queen stereotype in media stories and Congressional debates. Her study connected references to the welfare queen directly to policy proposals to limit the scope of the safety net for the poor.¹⁴³ Hancock argued that a systematic "public identity" of a welfare queen exists, a public identity which emphasizes the laziness, hyper-fertility, and criminal backgrounds of welfare recipients. This public identity was frequently associated with specific policy prescriptions for limiting the scope of welfare in 1996.

Not only have scholars linked stereotypes to public opinion about welfare and to policy proposals, stereotypes are critical to theories of racial resentment. "Racial resentment" arises through a combination of stereotyping and a belief that minorities are making unreasonable or undue claims for resources.¹⁴⁴ Some scholars argue that when welfare is stigmatized because of its associations with a minority group, these resentments will grow and public support for welfare will falter. In some accounts, politicians respond to these stereotypes and resentments by passing punitive or less generous welfare policies.¹⁴⁵ In other accounts, what matters is how prevalent these stereotypes are in the minds of individual politicians.¹⁴⁶

At their basis, these various accounts echo the argument that the social construction of target populations affects the feasibility and attractiveness of specific policy options.¹⁴⁷ Advanced by Schneider and Ingram, this theory suggests that state variations in welfare policy decisions in the mid-1990s might be the result of variations in the prevalence of welfare stereotypes across states.¹⁴⁸ If this is indeed the case we would expect to see more stereotypes of welfare recipients in the states which passed punitive welfare policies (Georgia) than in the more lenient states (Alabama). To determine the relationship between stereotypes and welfare policymaking, I rely on this dataset to answer two specific questions. First, were stereotypes of welfare recipients more prevalent in the states which passed punitive policies? Second, I move beyond stereotype prevalence to stereotype content. Were certain specific stereotypes more consequential in the punitive states than in the lenient states? To answer each of these questions, I use a modified version of Hancock's coding scheme for the public identity of the welfare queen.¹⁴⁹ Because Hancock was interested in establishing whether there is a "public identity" for the welfare queen, that is, a combination of stereotyping and moral judgments used as ideological justifications for policy action, her coding scheme distinguished between moral judgments about welfare recipients and stereotypes. My goal is not to establish whether a public identity exists but rather to understand the pervasiveness of stereotypes. As a result, I consolidated some of Hancock's codes which distinguished between judgments and stereotypes. I also eliminated some of the codes which were insignificant in Hancock's study and added a final code "Education" based on a preliminary review of the data. Table 2.2 lists the welfare queen stereotype codes and their descriptions.

¹⁴³ Hancock, *The Politics of Disgust*.

¹⁴⁴ Mendelberg, *The Race Card*.

¹⁴⁵ Fox, "Three Worlds of Relief: Race, Immigration, and Public and Private Social Welfare Spending in American Cities, 1929."

¹⁴⁶ Soss, Fording, and Schram, "The Color of Devolution."

¹⁴⁷ Schneider and Ingram, *Deserving and entitled*.

¹⁴⁸ It is worth noting that Gilens (2001) argues that states should not vary in the prevalence or content of welfare stereotypes as national media influence trumps that of local markets.

¹⁴⁹ Hancock, *The Politics of Disgust*.

Stereotype Prevalence

In the sample of stories from Georgia and Alabama, I find significant support for Hancock's assertion that stereotypes and moral judgments pervade news stories about welfare and welfare recipients.¹⁵⁰ Over 20% of the total quotations coded for each state included at least one stereotype of welfare recipients. However, stereotypes did not appear more frequently in Georgia (punitive) stories than in Alabama (lenient) stories, as one might expect. Overall, 26% of Alabama quotations contained at least one welfare queen stereotype, compared to 21.5% of Georgia quotations, a statistically significant difference at $p < .001$ (see Table 2.3). Very roughly, this means that every story in Alabama contained 16 welfare stereotypes while each story in Georgia contained 13. Given the higher rate of welfare queen stereotypes in Alabama than Georgia, it appears unlikely that the presence of such stereotypes predicts the passage of punitive policies. If it did, we would expect the opposite results from this content analysis.

Stereotype Content

But perhaps the crucial difference for policy outcomes is not the prevalence of total stereotypes but the content of those stereotypes. Are certain aspects of the welfare queen stereotype more likely to promote a punitive response? Did welfare debates differ significantly between the two states with respect to the specific stereotypes employed? The results do not provide support for this argument (see Table 2.3). Rather, the results suggest that, as reflected in their similar historical approaches to welfare politics, Georgia and Alabama utilized similar frames to stereotype welfare recipients. In both states the two most frequently occurring stereotypes were *Lazy/Don't Work* and *Pathological Family*. The following two quotes illustrate these themes:

Quote 1:

I rarely encounter a welfare recipient who is dying to have a job, to have to get up and go out to work every day in order to have a better life. Most seem fairly satisfied with the status quo.¹⁵¹

Quote 2:

The final group [of people on welfare] is made up of those who refuse to work and basically rely on the hearts of others, especially our "bighearted" government, to pay for their unwise spending and illegitimate children.¹⁵²

The first quote contains the theme *Lazy/Don't Work*, chastising welfare recipients for being unwilling to hold a job or go to work every day. The second quote contains both the *Lazy/Don't Work* and the *Pathological Family* codes, arguing that welfare recipients "refuse to work" and have "illegitimate children."

These two codes appeared more frequently than any other welfare stereotypes in both Georgia and Alabama. *Lazy/Don't Work* appeared in 6.23% of Alabama quotations as compared to 5.23% of Georgia quotations. This translates to 3.9 *Lazy/Don't Work* stereotypes per article in

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Burton, "Welfare: The American Way (Letter to the Editor)."

¹⁵² Clark, "Should Help Those Who Help Themselves (Letter to the Editor)."

Alabama as compared to 3.3 in Alabama. For the *Pathological Family* stereotype, the pattern is reversed. The *Pathological Family* stereotype appeared in 4% of Alabama stories as compared to 5% of Georgia stories. Although these differences are statistically significant, the difference is quite small in terms of actual occurrence in the dataset.

Looking at the second most frequently occurring codes, two of these stereotypes appear more frequently in Alabama, the lenient state, than in Georgia, the punitive state: *Drain Collective Resources* and *Long Term Dependency*. Examples of quotations with these two themes are:

Quote 1:

We must stop the welfare generations which are such a burden to taxpayers.¹⁵³

Quote 2:

I am not offended by a young woman who has one child and is on welfare (provided she is attending school or making some effort to become self-supporting). I am offended by a welfare recipient who has three or four children, is pregnant and whose parents and grandparents were also on welfare. That is a lifestyle, not an interim solution.¹⁵⁴

In the first quotation, the writer clearly expresses a judgment that welfare receipt is a long-term multi-generational problem (*Long Term Dependency*) and one which is subsidized by taxpayers and the government (*Drain Collective Resources*). The second quotation also references *Long Term Dependency*, claiming that some welfare recipients are third generation recipients for whom welfare is a “lifestyle” rather than a temporary solution to personal struggles. *Drain Collective Resources* appeared in 3.6% of Alabama quotations as compared to 1% of Georgia quotations, a statistically and substantively different result. *Long Term Dependency* appeared in 2.3% of Alabama quotations compared to 1.4% of Georgia quotations.¹⁵⁵ Each of these appeared in less than 1% of all quotations in both states and less than once per article.

The results in this section indicate that there were some differences in the content of welfare reform debates in Georgia and Alabama, but that these differences likely do not account for their divergent policy trajectories. The data reveal that stereotypes were more commonly employed in Alabama, the lenient state, than in Georgia, and that the specific stereotypes used in each state were nearly identical. Given the higher rate of welfare queen stereotypes in Alabama than Georgia, it appears unlikely that the presence or content of such stereotypes predicts the passage of punitive policies. If anything, Alabama enacted lenient policies *in spite* of the high prevalence of welfare stereotypes in welfare reform debates in the state.

Racialization

In addition to coding for welfare queen stereotypes, I also coded the news stories for the use of racial categories or markers and references to race-based advocacy groups in an effort to assess the interplay of race and welfare in politics in each state. Welfare politics has been

¹⁵³ McKinney, “Cleaning Our House (Letter to the Editor).”

¹⁵⁴ Fancher, “Unwed Teen Parents and Welfare (Letter to the Editor).”

¹⁵⁵ Of the most infrequent stereotypes, three of the five appeared more frequently in Alabama and two of the five more frequently in Georgia.

indelibly linked with race for decades.¹⁵⁶ The evidence is convincing that stereotypes of Blacks undermine White support for welfare; however, it is unclear exactly how the explicit racialization of welfare politics might affect policymaking. The racial priming literature suggests that racial messages are most effective in a campaign when those messages are implicit.¹⁵⁷ As soon as racial messages become explicit, they lose their power to sway voters. According to this line of thinking, the use of overt racial markers in welfare news stories would limit the ability of politicians to pass punitive welfare reforms and would remove the political advantage to doing so.¹⁵⁸ The historical prelude in this chapter suggests that Black advocacy groups were more involved in Georgia's welfare politics than in Alabama's. Is it possible that welfare debates were more overtly racialized in Alabama, the more lenient state? To answer this question, I coded the news stories in the dataset for both the explicit use of racial markers (White, Black, etc) and the use of indirect racial indicators such as "diversity." Because there is evidence that anti-racist advocacy by race-based groups may counteract racial resentment, I also coded for mentions of race-based advocacy groups like the NAACP or the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.¹⁵⁹

While welfare queen stereotypes appeared more frequently in Alabama, articles that mention welfare were more overtly racialized and race-based advocacy groups more prominent in Georgia reporting. Across all sub-categories, references to race appeared more frequently in Georgia than in Alabama (see Table 2.4). In both Georgia and Alabama news stories, the most frequently occurring racial categories were *White* and *Black/African-American*. References to "Blacks" or "African-Americans" appeared 44% more often in Georgia than in Alabama stories about welfare. These references appeared in 4% of Georgia quotations as opposed to 2.7% of Alabama quotations, a statistically significant difference at $p < .01$. Georgia also saw more references to "Whites" (1.4% to 1%) and more references to *Latinos* and *Asians*, although in the case of *Latinos* and *Asians* the references appeared in less than 10 of the 3155 quotations (8 total references to *Asians* and 9 to *Latinos* as compared to 1 and 3 respectively in Alabama). While these differences are statistically significant only the difference in *Black/African-American* codes is large enough to merit attention. There were nearly 75% more uses of implicit racial terms like "diversity" in Georgia than in Alabama; however, this difference is not statistically significant.

Not only were Georgia news articles more overtly racialized, the context in which race was used also differed (see Table 2.5). In Alabama, racial terms surfaced in articles that referred to *historical* segregation or racial animosity. In Georgia, the more punitive state, they were more likely to appear in stories about *contemporary* racial conflicts and inequality. For example, Alabama news stories which referenced race and welfare were frequently about former Alabama governor and pro-segregationist George Wallace or about the history of poverty in the state's Black Belt region. The following quotation from a story about Birmingham exemplifies this trend:

¹⁵⁶ Gilens, *Why Americans Hate Welfare*; Quadagno, *The Color of Welfare*; Manza, "Race and the Underdevelopment of the American Welfare State."

¹⁵⁷ Mendelberg, *The Race Card*.

¹⁵⁸ It is important to note that the racial priming literature tends to focus on the visual use of race in political campaigns (e.g. in print photography or television ads), not the written use. It is possible that the use of explicit racial markers has a different effect when the markers are written into a text rather than portrayed visually. This study is not set up to compare the two uses of racial markers. Rather, I am inferring that the impact would be the same.

¹⁵⁹ Mendelberg, *The Race Card*.

Until the New Deal era, the city and county [of Birmingham] had almost sole responsibility for those areas [public health, welfare, and police], and, except for police, almost exclusively left them to private concerns. After that, federal funding became a primary source. Racial oppression guided many of the city's actions...¹⁶⁰

The story continues on to discuss the role of racial oppression in the administration of Birmingham in the 1960s and 1970s. In Georgia stories, however, quotations about race and welfare, such as the two that follow, addressed contemporary social problems or Black political power rather than historical trends:

Quote 1:

After working with homeless adults in Atlanta for two years, I have been extremely frustrated at a socioeconomic system that seems to keep poor blacks poor. However, crying, "It's their fault," at the establishment does very little good, and current welfare policy fosters dependency and can cripple poor blacks who are fighting to survive and succeed."¹⁶¹

Quote 2:

Race also appears to divide House and Senate members on many issues, with broad disagreement between white and black legislators over how to reform welfare, reduce crime and improve the quality of Georgia schools.¹⁶²

The contrast in these quotations is stark and pervades the news stories in the data set. Overall, 45% of the uses of race codes in Alabama were references to historical events or trends. On the other hand, only 11% of references to race in Georgia stories were historical. An astonishing 89% were references to contemporary racial trends and patterns. In looking at the *Black/African American* code specifically, the contrast is still in evidence. While 38% of the *Black/African American* codes in Alabama were historical references, only 12% were in Georgia.

These results suggest that welfare reform debates in Georgia took place in an environment that was much more racialized than did debates in Alabama, despite the fact that welfare queen stereotypes appeared more frequently in Alabama. Furthermore, the results also indicate that race-based organizations played a much more significant advocacy role in welfare reform and other political debates in Georgia than in Alabama. Of the advocacy organizations quoted on welfare reform in Alabama from 1993-1997, 100% of these organizations were not race-based (see Table 2.6). In fact, these quotes are confined to one organization, Alabama Arise, a coalition of over 100 religious organizations which took a prominent role advocating against punitive welfare reform measures in the state. On the other hand, in Georgia, historically prominent race-based groups like the NAACP, the Georgia Black Legislative Caucus, and Martin Luther King's Southern Christian Leadership Council spoke out frequently against punitive welfare reform measures. While race-neutral organizations like Georgians for Children

¹⁶⁰ Nabbefeld, "Sowing, Reaping Ed Lamonte Tells View of City Politics, Welfare in Book."

¹⁶¹ Serb, "In the Meantime (Letter to the Editor)."

¹⁶² Foskett, "Winds of Change."

were quoted more frequently in Georgia, approximately 30% of all claims for lenient approaches to welfare reform came from race-based organizations as opposed to none in Alabama. The data indicate that welfare reform debates were more explicitly racial and that race-based organizations were more active in welfare discussions in Georgia and may have influenced welfare reform decisions in the state. That these groups appeared to participate more in Georgia welfare reform debates than in Alabama ones may reflect the different civil rights trajectories in each state mentioned earlier in the chapter.

Issue Activation

The final analyses conducted using this dataset addressed the social and political conflicts which overlapped with welfare reform debates in each state. These questions expand on political context approaches to the study of social policy. When scholars analyze the effect of “political context” on welfare decisions, they tend to focus their attention on political culture or party affiliations as predictors of policy outcomes.¹⁶³ These not only are identical in the case of Georgia and Alabama, they neglect the fact that political debates often inform each other.¹⁶⁴ The social cleavages activated in one conflict may change the stakes or shift the stakeholders in a subsequent political debate, a pattern particularly true with respect to racial struggles.¹⁶⁵ Furthermore, the re-ignition of racial conflicts from the civil rights movement or other points in history may alter the tone and content of welfare reform debates.

The dataset is well-structured to analyze the political and social cleavages which were salient in each state prior to welfare reform. Because the sample includes stories that have the term “welfare” in the body but not necessarily in the title, welfare itself was often a subtext of larger issues in these articles. To determine which issues were activated in each state prior to welfare reform, I coded a subset of articles to determine the major political debates in each state. I then developed a set of specific policy codes based on this initial process and coded the entire sample using seven codes: Education, Flag Change, Crime Policy, State Budget, Election Campaigns, Deadbeat Dads, and Tort Reform. For example, in the below quotation welfare is discussed in tandem with *Crime Policy*, *Education*, and *Election Campaigns* in Alabama:

Martin [a candidate for state office] said his campaign will also present a "workfare instead of welfare plan" and will make crime a major issue. Martin said he is looking at using closed military bases as temporary housing for criminals. A 1936 graduate of Tarrant High School, Martin said his education plan focuses on basics and would utilize the experience of seasoned teachers. He said it is a disgrace that about 25 percent of Alabama's population is functionally illiterate. "(State education) Superintendent Wayne Teague has been in that job for 17 years," he said. "He should have been gone 16 years ago. If he was in the private sector, he'd have been fired."¹⁶⁶

This next quotation contains the code for *Deadbeat Dads*:

¹⁶³ Brown, “Party Cleavages and Welfare Effort in the American States.”; Hero, *Faces of Inequality*.

¹⁶⁴ Carmines and Stimson, *Issue Evolution*.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.; Omi and Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*.

¹⁶⁶ Sikora, “Martin Blasts Folsom over Education Reform.”

For too long, it has been socially acceptable for men to desert their children, whatever their financial status. Some child advocates call the nation's failure to collect child support a sanctioned form of child abuse, because so many fathers have been let off the hook. Theirs are the children most likely to be pushed into poverty and onto the welfare roles.¹⁶⁷

As these quotations reveal, welfare itself was not always (or even often) discussed as an isolated political issue. Using these results, I ask the questions: did welfare reform arise amidst different political debates in Georgia and Alabama? Might the activation of these different political and social issues have altered the trajectory of welfare reform in each state?

The data reveal compelling patterns in the political context in which welfare arose. Not only did welfare reform occur on the heels of different concurrent political debates, the results indicate that these debates may have played an important role in the direction that welfare reform took in each state. In both Georgia and Alabama, welfare references occurred frequently in the context of larger debates or reports about *Education* policy and *Deadbeat Dads* (see Table 2.7). These connections between education, deadbeat dads, and welfare are not surprising. In both states, education consistently ranked as the top issue of concern in public opinion polls in the 1990s.¹⁶⁸ Similarly, in both states and nationally, *Deadbeat Dads* took center stage in welfare policy debates, and welfare featured prominently in debates about absent fathers: if deadbeat dads paid their child support, fewer single mothers would need to go on welfare. While these concurrent themes are unsurprising and common to both states, there are some significant differences in the policy context in which welfare arose in each state. In Alabama, 7% of quotations focused on the *State Budget* as compared to only 1.3% of Georgia stories. The following quotation typifies the *State Budget* references in Alabama:

When this legislative session began in early February, our Montgomery bureau chief, Michael Sznajderman, wrote an article about the most pressing issues lawmakers would face. He listed: The budgets, tort reform, a multimillion-dollar highway loan and welfare reform. All of those are still hanging, at least in part, on the very last day of the session. Instead of having a bitter memory of lawmakers for not responsibly tackling tough issues, we breathe a sigh of relief if the budgets are passed.¹⁶⁹

The quote above clearly identifies welfare as one of a set of issues subsidiary to the state budget in the state legislature during a session rife with debates about business and legal agendas. Whereas *State Budget* appeared frequently in Alabama stories, the most common concurrent policies discussed in Georgia were *Election Campaigns* and then Governor Miller's effort to remove the Confederate emblem from the *State Flag*. This quotation contains both codes:

¹⁶⁷ Editorial, "Getting Serious with Deadbeat Parents."

¹⁶⁸ Applied Research Center, "Georgia State Poll, Fall 1996.;" Institute for Social Science Research, "Capstone (Alabama) Omnibus Study 627, 1996B."

¹⁶⁹ Editorial, "The Last Day Monday, the Alabama Legislature Ends Its Session either With a Flame-Out or an Explosion of Bills."

Over fried fish, with country and gospel music, Gov. Zell Miller launched his re-election bid outside this tiny South Georgia town Monday night, preaching populist themes of welfare reform, stopping juvenile crime and cutting government spending. But he avoided the one issue that may have gotten him in most trouble with rural white voters: his failed attempt to strip the Confederate battle emblem from the Georgia flag.¹⁷⁰

This quotation not only discusses a political campaign and the state flag, it highlights the racially divisive nature of the flag debate. No such conflict appears in the Alabama stories about the state budget. These patterns indicate that, despite the states' similarities, the political environment in Alabama and Georgia differed significantly at the time of welfare reform. They also suggest that the issues activated in the wake of welfare reform in each state may have influenced the racialization of welfare debates and the political stakes involved in pursuing particular welfare reform policies.

Summary & Implications

Plantation states with large slave populations, Georgia and Alabama share a common history of racial oppression and economic exploitation. As they entered the civil rights movement, however, their historical trajectories diverged somewhat. Black leaders in Georgia negotiated with local authorities and national civil rights organizations to desegregate and to keep major protests out of Georgia cities. Alabama's White leaders, on the other hand, adopted a policy of massive resistance and desegregated only with federal intervention. In the years after the movement, Georgia's Black middle class grew substantially and civil rights groups played an active role in state politics in a number of realms, including welfare policies. In Alabama, statewide Black advocacy continued to focus on more traditional civil rights subjects like voting and representation rather than on welfare.

These historical differences are reflected in the news coverage of welfare reform in each state. Welfare reform was much more racialized in Georgia than in Alabama despite the fact that welfare stereotypes, typically racialized, were more prominent in Alabama than in Georgia. When newspapers discussed welfare reform in both states, they drew on the same set of stereotypes about welfare recipients, emphasizing their "immoral" family structures or their poor work ethic. That stereotypes were similar in content in both states and more prominent in the lenient state indicates that stereotypes are unlikely to account for the divergent policy paths taken by the two states and that stereotypes alone cannot account for the passage of punitive welfare policies. The content analysis does indicate a possible connection between the politicization of race, the standing political climate at the time of welfare reform, the passage of punitive welfare policies, although this relationship is not in the direction predicted by existing research. The dataset demonstrates that welfare debates were more overtly racialized in the punitive state than the lenient one, suggesting that the public recognition of racial cleavages may have pushed reform debates in a punitive direction. This finding challenges existing studies which suggest that the explicit use of race in campaigns dampens the effectiveness of political appeals. That the racialization of welfare dovetailed with the activation of a historically sensitive racialized issue in Georgia, the confederate flag, suggests that the recent ignition of racial cleavages and the

¹⁷⁰ Smith, "Governor Kicks off Re-Election Campaign Miller Touts Plan On Welfare Reform."

activism of race-based organizations may have provoked the passage of punitive welfare policies. I explore this possibility further in the next chapter.

Chapter 2 Tables

Table 2.1: Sampling of News Stories, Southern States

Full = Initial search; Relevant = Tally of relevant welfare stories

% Retained = % of stories retained for a sample of 50

	Alabama			Georgia		
	Full	Relevant	% Retained	Full	Relevant	% Retained
1993	330	47	100%	1518	206	24%
1994	267	53	94%	1514	344	15%
1995	562	189	26%	1582	368	14%
1996	391	89	56%	1510	63	79%
1997	788	257	19%	1300	68	74%

Table 2.2: Welfare Stereotype Codes, Southern States

Code	Description
Drain Collective Resources	Cash welfare programs take up too much of the national or state budget, sometimes at the expense of other more “legitimate” groups
Lazy/Don’t Work	Welfare recipients do not work and most do not work because they are lazy and don’t want to work – don’t include “workfare not welfare”
Long-Term Dependency	Welfare recipients remain on welfare too long; their children will grow up to be welfare recipients (thereby perpetuating the problems we have today); welfare becomes a way of life for recipients that is very hard to escape
Overly Fertile	Welfare mothers have too many children even though they cannot afford them and they often receive more benefits from having these children
Pathological Family	Welfare families do not have traditional family structures. Most are single-parent families or families with children born out of wedlock (illegitimacy); single parenthood and illegitimacy economic self-sufficiency; welfare is anti-family and welfare policy destroys families by discouraging marriage; welfare encourages out of wedlock births by providing additional money to women who have more children
Drug Users	Many welfare recipients have current or past problems with drug abuse
Crime	Many welfare users perpetuate crimes (non-drug-use crimes)
Teen Mothers	Most welfare recipients are teens or teen mothers
Education	Welfare recipients don’t care about pursuing education or have little education
System Abusers	Most welfare recipients are getting assistance that they do not deserve because they are cheating the system or engaging in welfare fraud
Inner-City Resident	Most or all welfare recipients resident in the inner-city (includes references to specific cities with large minority populations and high levels of poverty like Atlanta, Montgomery, Los Angeles, or Oakland; also includes use of terms like ghetto, barrio, distressed neighborhood, etc)

Table 2.3: Welfare Stereotypes, Georgia and Alabama

		PERCENT (QUOTATIONS)	
		Alabama	Georgia
Total Negative Stereotype	***	26.06%	21.52%
Crime		0.54%	0.67%
Drain Collective Resources	***	3.59%	0.95%
Drug Users		0.76%	0.51%
Education		1.91%	2.00%
Inner City	*	0.83%	0.44%
Lazy/Don't Work	*	6.23%	5.23%
Long Term Dependency	**	2.26%	1.43%
Overly Fertile		0.64%	0.76%
Pathological Family	***	4.04%	5.01%
System Abuser	***	1.53%	0.60%
Teen Mothers		1.78%	2.25%

*** p < .0001, ** p < .001, * p < .01

Table 2.4: Race in Georgia and Alabama

		PERCENT (QUOTATIONS)	
		Alabama	Georgia
Asian	**	0.03%	0.25%
Black/African-American	**	2.67%	3.93%
Latino/Hispanic	*	0.10%	0.29%
Native		0.00%	0.00%
Other/Implicit Racial Terms		0.35%	0.60%
White		1.08%	1.43%

*** p < .0001, ** p < .001, * p < .01

**Table 2.5: Historical and Contemporary Race References,
Georgia and Alabama**

		PERCENT (QUOTATIONS)	
		Alabama	Georgia
Historical References to Race	***	31.67%	10.06%
Contemporary References to Race	***	68.33%	89.94%
Historical References to Blacks	***	68.00%	88.19%
Contemporary References to Blacks	***	32.00%	11.81%

*** p < .0001, ** p < .001, * p < .01

**Table 2.6: Public Support for Lenient Measures,
Georgia and Alabama**

	PERCENT (QUOTATIONS)	
	Alabama	Georgia
Race-Based Organization *	0.00%	27.27%
Non-Race-Based Organization *	100.00%	72.73%

*** p < .0001, ** p < .001, * p < .01

Table 2.7: Issue Activation in Georgia and Alabama

		PERCENT (QUOTATIONS)	
		Alabama	Georgia
Flag Change	***	0.00%	1.90%
Education	***	3.59%	1.24%
Deadbeat Dad	*	3.65%	3.01%
Tort Reform	***	1.11%	0.00%
Budget	***	6.83%	1.33%
Election/Campaign	**	3.53%	5.26%
Crime Policy		1.59%	1.97%

*** p < .0001, ** p < .001, * p < .01

Chapter 3 **“Hoodwinked, Hogtied, and Screwed in the Process”: Race Meets Federal Mandate in Dixie**

News coverage of welfare reform debates in Georgia and Alabama indicates that despite their similarities, the political atmosphere in the two states differed at the time of welfare reform. Race animated welfare debates in Georgia more so than in Alabama, and race-based groups were more vocal in the state’s welfare reform efforts. Furthermore, the issues activated prior to welfare reform differed in each state. What impact did the confederate flag debates and race-based organizations have on welfare reform in Georgia? Why is race noticeably absent from welfare articles in Alabama? Did the configuration of Black political organizations and their priorities impact welfare policy outcomes?

In this chapter, I draw on archival data, public opinion polls, and interviews with state legislators and welfare advocates to demonstrate how the political conflict which preceded welfare reform efforts in each state produced dramatically different results for social policy developments. I apply the racial conflict model to welfare reforms in Georgia where race fueled the passage of punitive reforms through the activation of a racial conflict about the Confederate flag. Governor’s papers and constituent letters from Georgia reveal that conflicts over the Confederate emblem on the state flag triggered concern among rural White voters of a demanding Black population that took more than its fair share. The “flag flap” pitted White “deserving” individuals as bearers of the state’s history against “undeserving” Black citizens and advocacy groups. The clash drew explicit racial boundaries and invoked White racial resentment. Because of the flag debate, welfare entered the political arena in Georgia surrounded by rhetoric about the selfish and demanding nature of Blacks. These resentments and frames as well as the political fallout from his push to change the flag made the passage of punitive reforms imperative for a governor facing re-election.

In Alabama, the budget and tort reform debates that monopolized the state political scene prior to welfare reform did not polarize the state by race or ignite racial threat or resentments. Because no historically-rooted racial conflicts were activated prior to welfare reform and no race-based advocacy groups advocated for lenient policies, Alabama citizens saw no need to crack down on welfare recipients by passing punitive policies. Thus, anti-poverty advocacy groups could gain significant control over the framing of the welfare debate, and politicians had less to gain from exploiting racial animosities or hatred to pass punitive welfare policies. Moreover, the tort reform debate which preoccupied the state at the time highlighted joblessness and corporate greed as the major problems facing the state. Advocates for lenient welfare reforms were successfully able to capitalize on these discourses to justify lenient reforms and supportive services for low-income residents in the state.

Georgia’s “Flag Flap” and the Politics of Welfare Policy

The prelude to Georgia’s welfare reform efforts began with the election of Democrat Zell Miller to the governorship in 1991. Miller took office promising in his inaugural speech that one of his highest priorities as governor would be the fight against racism.¹⁷¹ Indeed, one of his earliest political campaigns in office was a push to remove the Confederate emblem from the

¹⁷¹ Orrock, “Nan Orrock Oral History Interview.”

state flag. Governor Miller first mentioned changing the state flag in a speech to the state assembly on January 12, 1992. With the Olympic Games headed to Georgia in 1996, Miller argued that businesses and tourists would boycott the games if the state legislature did not vote to remove the Confederate emblem from the flag. He feared not only for Georgia's international reputation but for the state's ability to capitalize on the lucrative business opportunities that came with hosting the Olympics.

From the earliest stages of the "flag flap," as it came to be known, the most vocal proponents of the flag change statewide were Georgia's civil rights organizations: the NAACP, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and the Georgia Legislative Black Caucus. Efforts to remove the Confederate emblem from the state flag were not new. Black legislators, specifically the Georgia Legislative Black Caucus (GLBC), had worked since the mid-1980s to change the flag, but the issue never reached a boiling point until Miller made it a centerpiece of his governorship.¹⁷² In the 1990s, leaders from these civil rights organizations flanked Miller at public events and published materials advocating for a new and inclusive flag.¹⁷³ In publicity materials and media campaigns, the Georgia Legislative Black Caucus stated their goal "to adopt an inclusive state flag which will positively uplift all of our citizens." They argued, "The present Georgia Flag represents the darkest era of Georgia history which glorified slavery and human oppression. This flag is extremely offensive to a large number of the state's tax paying population, and is one that many of our citizens cannot and will not honor with respect and pride."¹⁷⁴ When Miller spoke to the legislature in 1992 about the flag, he took a similar rhetorical approach. He advised legislators to think about their political careers and about how they would like to be remembered on this issue. One day the flag will change, he said, "and history will look back on which side you were on. And how many of you are going to wish you could clean up your record later?"¹⁷⁵

Over the course of 1992 and early 1993, Miller publicly touted his plan to change the flag and proposed legislation in the General Assembly to replace the Confederate battle emblem with red and white horizontal bars - a design originally adopted by the state in 1879. In fiery addresses at the state capitol, Miller called changing the flag "a matter of sheer guts" and an act which would "give bigotry no sanction and persecution no assistance."¹⁷⁶ Miller's proposal to change the state flag generated considerable public uproar. Members of the public and state officials alike pushed Miller to put the issue to a statewide referendum rather than allow legislators the ultimate decision. Miller never consented to such a strategy, presumably because he knew it would fail. Public opinion polls at the time indicated that only 25% of the state wanted to see the Confederate emblem removed.¹⁷⁷

In 1993, Miller beefed up his efforts to change the state flag, proposing additional legislation to compel the change. He went on national television on the "Larry King Show" to express his views on the flag. His advocacy efforts won him little support from state political leaders or white citizens. In one of the most tense moments of the flag flap, a group of Black

¹⁷² Foskett, "The Flag Debate: Retreat on Issue a Sore Point for Governor."

¹⁷³ Southern Christian Leadership Conference, *Coalition for Georgia State Flag that Unites!*; Georgia Legislative Black Caucus, *Capitol Report*.

¹⁷⁴ Holmes, *Draft of Agenda: Memo to GLBC*, 3.

¹⁷⁵ Orrock, "Nan Orrock Oral History Interview."

¹⁷⁶ Foskett, "The Flag Debate: Retreat on Issue a Sore Point for Governor."

¹⁷⁷ Atlanta Journal-Constitution, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution Georgia Poll, October 1992*. [hdl:1902.29/D-30509](https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1902.29/D-30509).

student activists burned the state flag on the steps of the capitol. As images of the burning flooded the news, anger swelled among the state's white residents, many of whom blamed the NAACP for the flag burning incident. Black advocacy groups soon became the target of white rage over the incident and the flag change proposal. Ultimately, opposition to the flag change was so strong that the proposal never even came up for a vote in the legislature, and Miller abandoned his effort to change the flag.

Race Politics and Consequences

Although thematically unrelated to poverty policy, the “flag flap” erupted into two-year controversy that had enduring consequences for welfare reform efforts in subsequent years. Specifically, the activation of a historical racial conflict over the confederate flag fueled the passage of punitive welfare policies through three mechanisms: racial threat and resentments, frames, and political gain. Of white residents polled in 1992, an overwhelming 81% did not want to see the flag changed. On the other hand, a majority 55% of Black residents did support the change.¹⁷⁸ The flag debate divided the populace by race, and the debacle mobilized race-based advocacy organizations around the state, particularly in Atlanta. In a state where white voters viewed the NAACP and other Black advocacy groups as overly demanding rabble-rousers, activism by these groups ignited a sense of threat among white residents stirred up racial resentments among white voters who feared that African-Americans in the state were gaining too much political power.

These threats and resentments arose inside and outside of the state capitol. From 1992 to 1993, an estimated 10,000 letters about the flag flooded into government offices and into the state's major newspapers.¹⁷⁹ While such letters do not provide a representative sample of public opinion, they are a useful tool for analyzing how mass public opinion becomes activated in the wake of major conflicts and crises.¹⁸⁰ To assess the messages conveyed by these letters, I coded a randomly selected sample of 121 constituent communications with the governor (see Appendix IV). Of the total sample, 90.1% of constituents wrote in opposition to the flag change proposal. In their letters, these constituents frequently accused Governor Miller of pushing the flag change in an effort to appease Black interest groups or win the votes of minority voters. The following quote from a constituent letter illustrates these patterns:

I am furious at your leadership last year in attempting to change the current state flag. Poll after poll has indicated that the majority of people in Georgia support our flag. Why are you fighting the will of the citizens? Unfortunately you have empowered a group of people with no understanding or appreciation of our state's history. The NAACP would like to remove every reference or symbol of the Confederacy. Why are you aiding their attempt to rewrite history?¹⁸¹

While the above quote demonstrates the constituent's belief that the NAACP threatened his state's “history,” the racial resentment sparked by the flag comes across clearly in the following statement to the governor about the students who burned the state flag:

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ This figure is based on author and archivist estimates of Miller's flag letters the Georgia State Archives.

¹⁸⁰ Lee, *Mobilizing Public Opinion*.

¹⁸¹ Constituent A, *Letter to Governor Zell Miller*.

I just saw the Negroes burning our GA Flag on TV... I think you are a disgrace to Georgia to allow our flag to be destroyed just to please the Black people. The more you honor their wishes the more they demand... They plan to destroy all of us... Their own people sold them to our country for slaves. We had nothing to do with that. Why don't they bury their hatred and get along with their lives. They have more rights now than the whites. We are being discriminated against but we ... don't have the money or time to do protesting.¹⁸²

Overall, 37% of the coded letters expressed a sense of racial threat or resentment. Of these, over 64% claimed that Blacks were gaining increasingly more rights in the modern era, so much so that they now had or would soon have more privileges than whites. Approximately 60% of these constituents specifically argued that minority interest groups such as the NAACP controlled Miller's agenda at the expense of the state's non-Black residents. They accused Miller of "succumbing" to the NAACP, "kissing the ass" of Black voters, or "selling his soul" to Black interest groups. These letters reflect a general trend evident in public opinion poll data at the time wherein half of the state's residents believed the state was providing too much assistance to Blacks and only 14% believed Blacks received too little assistance.¹⁸³ Only 19% of state residents believed the government should help Blacks improve their standard of living.¹⁸⁴

The flag controversy clearly polarized the state, both its citizens and politicians, by race and generated significant racial threats and resentments. The debate also popularized particular frames which gained substantial sway as welfare reform took center stage. These frames included a *generalized race frame* which depicted all social problems facing the state as attributable to race, a *behavior modification frame* which portrayed Blacks as in need of discipline, and a *welfare frame* which directly drew on punitive welfare policies as a means of stopping the flag flap and limiting Black political activism. These frames were particularly consequential for welfare reform because they accomplished core framing tasks: assigning blame, articulating solutions, and urging action.¹⁸⁵ Together, these frames achieved such prominence in Georgia prior to welfare reform that they dominated the political scene during welfare reform because of their wide resonance among politicians and the public.

The generalized race frame was most frequently employed among legislators as politicians continued to draw on racial divisions as explanations for social problems. House Representative Larry Walker, argued on the floor of the Assembly that he "never remembered a session where race was such a beginning and ending point of everything." He said that "the leadership from across the state, black and white, [had fanned] the flames of polarization... the flag issue really brought out the white animosity and lent itself to a racially charged situation."¹⁸⁶ In an interview, Assemblywoman Nan Orrock characterized the fears about the flag change expressed by many White legislators:

¹⁸² Constituent E, *Letter to Governor Zell Miller*.

¹⁸³ Martin, "Georgia Spring Poll, 1994."

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Benford and Snow, "Framing Processes and Social Movements."

¹⁸⁶ Orrock, "Nan Orrock Oral History Interview."

In a very real way a racist ideology... prevailed. You can talk about the strategy and the tactics and how another approach might have garnered more votes, and that sort of thing... the bottom line is the... views held by whites that blacks get too much already, we're tired of giving in. I heard legislators say, [mocking], "Hell, I'm tired of giving. We gave enough already... I've given 'til I've done give out. I ain't giving no more"... seeing [support for the flag change] as caving in to black demands.¹⁸⁷

The above quote reflects the construction of social problems as racial problems, but it also utilizes the *behavior modification frame* in which politicians and citizens viewed Blacks as "getting too much already" and needing to be put in their place. Approximately one-third of constituents who expressed racial resentments in their letters voiced the view that African-Americans needed some sort of behavior modification. This constituent emphasizes the poor work ethic of African-Americans in a letter to the governor:

I disagree with this proposal because the only reason why you are doing this, Mr. Governor, is because of all the afro-americans in this state (sic). They all complain that everybody else is racist. Well, I'll tell you, Mr. Governor, there wouldn't be any of these problems if we wouldv'e picked our own cotton. The afro-americans are the ones who are racist because they think any little thing that reminds them of the Civil War needs to vanish so it can't remind them. The 'AFRO-AMERICANS' think society owes them something today. Well, we don't owe them a damn thing. We freed them from being slaves, is that not enough? What are we supposed to do? Feed all of them, pay for everything they want? They are just as good as everybody else to go work for what they want.¹⁸⁸

Another letter writer accuses African-Americans of being demanding, discriminatory, and sexually promiscuous:

Governor Miller I voted for you and thought you would be a good Governor, but I will not vote for you again and I will do everything to get everyone I can not to vote for you if you run again. I am very disappointed in you. Don't white people have some rights here? We have given Blacks everything they ask for... Blacks say they are offended by the state flag. Well, we are offended by the damned Big X we see on hats and t-shirts, too. Can you do something about stopping that? X is the sign of Black trouble makers just like Martin Luther King was. Do something to help white people. White people do not discriminate against the blacks. It is the Blacks that are discriminating against the white people. Wake up, can't you see what's happening? I am not prejudice (sic), I just think you or someone should say to the blacks, enough is enough. Black people have everything given to them now. People give blacks 99% of the pie. But they want all of it and half is mine, too.... Don't you have something better to do?¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Constituent B, *Letter to Governor Zell Miller*.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

Some letters even use a *welfare frame*, linked the flag debate, racial tensions, and the need for behavior modification directly to welfare. One constituent wrote, “I just want you to know that I do not support your position on the Georgia Flag. First of all there are more pressing problems in this state than the Flag – how about establishing some proper priorities... [like] Crime [or] Welfare Reform. Real issues need to be addressed!!!!”¹⁹⁰ Another stated, “As a tax paying citizen of this state I demand that you quit playing politician with our beloved flag... and get on with more important tasks such as encouraging the welfare malingerers to get a job so that we taxpayers can have some financial relief.”¹⁹¹ That these frames for the flag flap were so salient just prior to welfare reform made them more readily accessible during the welfare reform debates and more politically valuable than other frames.

The flag flap also made punitive welfare policies politically advantageous for politicians. It jeopardized Governor Miller’s bid for reelection. In 1993, Miller abandoned his efforts to change the flag “in an apparent attempt to jettison a political anchor that could stand in the way of his re-election” in 1994 and to re-secure the support from rural white voters.¹⁹² Speaking of Miller’s reelection campaign, Representative and member of the Georgia Legislative Black Caucus, Tyrone Brook, stated, “The flag issue is the highest negative he faces. If he continues to talk about the flag, he will not get re-elected.”¹⁹³ Public opinion polls and letters to the governor from 1992 to 1993 support these conclusions. Over the course of the two-year flag flap, Miller’s approval ratings dropped dramatically. At the end of his first year in office, public opinion polls showed that only 24% of the population disapproved of Miller’s performance.¹⁹⁴ But by the time the flag flap reached a crescendo in 1993, disapproval ratings had jumped to 41%.¹⁹⁵

The deluge of constituent letters arriving at Miller’s desk provided additional concerns about the governor’s political future. Approximately 22% of constituent letter writers threatened not to vote for Miller in the upcoming election if he did not abandon his plan to change the state flag. Implying the imminent nature of Miller’s political demise, one constituent wrote:

I believe that besides a few white ultraliberals like yourself and a few powerful militant black friends of yours in Atlanta, the vast majority of Georgians want the flag left alone... We did not elect you nor any of our other state officials to change the state flag. As you not doubt observed in the last elections, incumbents do poorly. You have already alienated many in Georgia ... and frankly, those of us that live in rural areas wonder about your politics. To change our state flag will be the final insult and we will not forgive those that make or allow it to happen.¹⁹⁶

Adopting a more civil tone, other constituents informed Miller that despite their initial votes for him in 1990, they would not vote for his re-election in 1994: “I was happy to vote for you as governor. I believed that you had earned the position. Now I write to tell you that I am ashamed

¹⁹⁰ Constituent G, *Letter to Governor Zell Miller*.

¹⁹¹ Constituent D, *Letter to Governor Zell Miller*.

¹⁹² Smith, “Governor Won’t Renew.”

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Kingery, *Georgia Fall Poll, 1991*.

¹⁹⁵ Atlanta Journal-Constitution, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution Georgia Poll, December 1993*. *hdl:1902.29/D-30515*.

¹⁹⁶ Constituent F, *Letter to Governor Zell Miller*.

of your actions as my governor and I will not vote for you again."¹⁹⁷ Some expressed their views in terms of party politics: "Being a Republican of course, your effort has delighted myself and other Republicans who now see an opportunity to elect the first Republican Governor of our great state. I would like to personally thank you for your proposal to change the flag in this regard."¹⁹⁸ These statements mirror public opinion poll results wherein only 28% of registered voters said that they would cast a vote for Miller in the upcoming election.¹⁹⁹ Regardless of the framing, public opinion polls, constituent letters, and news coverage of the flag flap sent a clear message to Miller that the flag flap severely jeopardized his chances of re-election.

Getting "Welfare Maligners" to Work

As the flag debacle began to dwindle, welfare reform had become a hot-button topic at the national level. By that point in 1993, many white voters in the state felt the flag flap threatened their heritage, privileged Blacks over whites, and strengthened the political prowess of Black advocacy groups. When Miller abandoned the flag change efforts that year, he did so amidst a racially-charged political environment in which white racial resentment was high, race was a readily available frame for political debates, and his own political future dangled by mere threads. To resuscitate his political image in the state and to convince his detractors that he was not a pawn for Black interests groups or voters, Miller avidly pursued punitive welfare reforms in the years following the flag flap. Many journalists and political figures asserted that Governor Miller's focus on punitive welfare measures constituted an effort to detract attention away from the unpopular flag debate and to re-capture the support of conservative whites in the state whose support he lost with the flag proposal.²⁰⁰

Although welfare reform never featured in Miller's political agenda prior to the flag flap, the governor increasingly turned to poverty politics to improve his political image in subsequent years. Advocating punitive welfare policies was not only a political strategy for Miller, it was a line of action requested by constituents. The patterned introduction of welfare into Miller's political agenda is evidenced by his letters of reply to constituents who wrote in about the flag flap. In 1992, when Miller responded to constituents, he focused on the flag's relationship to desegregation. Miller advised constituents that they must resolve the flag issue before taking on the other important challenges of the time, challenges ranging from infant mortality to economic development.²⁰¹ However, by early 1993 when he pushed his flag legislation so adamantly on the state and national scene, Miller appealed to distressed voters with blatant references to racial injustice: "it is very clear that the flag was adopted in opposition to integration, and I believe it is the time to put it behind us."²⁰² By April and May of 1993, when it became clear that the flag change would not pass, Miller's reply letters specifically introduced welfare reform as a centerpiece of his agenda. He stated that he was not pushing the change because the flag change

¹⁹⁷ Constituent H, *Letter to Governor Zell Miller*.

¹⁹⁸ Constituent C, *Letter to Max Cleland*.

¹⁹⁹ Atlanta Journal-Constitution, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution Georgia Poll, December 1993*. [hdl:1902.29/D-30515](https://www.newspapers.com/reading-room/atlanta-journal-constitution-georgia-poll-december-1993/).

²⁰⁰ Sherman, "The People's Business Government, Crime And Courts 1993 Legislature."; Baxter, "Troubling flag issue remains up in the air."; Sherman, "Miller signs controversial welfare bill, says it puts Ga. in forefront of reform."; Schwartzkopff, "Democrats in tug of war over Miller welfare plan Clinton faces tough choice as friends hotly debate proposal to limit benefits."; Editorial, "Vote can defuse flag issue."; Editorial, "Another chance at welfare reform."

²⁰¹ Miller, *Letter to Constituent*.

²⁰² Miller, *Letter to Constituent*.

“was overshadowing my other proposals, such as the expenditure of lottery funds for new education programs, welfare reform, expanded health care coverage for all Georgians, budget reform, tougher drunk driving laws, and anti-crime measures like life without parole.”²⁰³ Finally, the last set of letters from Miller to constituents constituted a complete reversal from the 1992 letters. Miller claimed that he no longer intended to push the flag change and had pushed welfare reform to the front and center of his platform.²⁰⁴ Publicly, Miller stated, “I don’t intend to pursue the change in the Georgia flag. There are more important things like welfare reform [to focus on].”²⁰⁵ Said Miller, “I’m not going to lead any more parades, now or ever. I did my duty. I’m moving in a different direction.”²⁰⁶ Miller’s new direction focused prominently on welfare reform and an overall more conservative approach “... designed, in part, to narrow differences between Miller, a lifelong Democrat, and a growing contingent of Republicans hoping to become governor in November.”²⁰⁷

Why did welfare so rapidly become a centerpiece of Miller’s letters? Public opinion polls and constituent letters indicate that the flag flap placed Miller’s political future in serious jeopardy and cost him the support of rural white voters whose support was necessary for his 1994 bid for re-election. The flag flap polarized the state by race and made punitive welfare reforms politically advantageous for the struggling politician. Miller first introduced welfare reform measures in the state legislature in 1993. Prior to that point, Miller had appointed a Welfare Reform Task Force to research various alternatives for welfare reform in the state. Composed of 17 businessmen, state legislators, and advocates, the Task Force recommended that the governor eschew the more punitive work requirements, time limits, and sanctions proposed in other states and instead adopt an approach to welfare reform that emphasized work supports and education. Faced with dwindling poll numbers and threatening letters from constituents about the flag flap, Miller dropped the recommendations of the Task Force and proposed a bill which implemented requirements that welfare recipients work as soon as possible after receiving welfare and face dire sanctions, including a termination of benefits even for children, if adults failed to meet requirements.

Miller’s bill was assigned to the Children and Youth Committee, chaired by Georganna Sinkfield, the chairwoman of the Georgia Black Legislative Caucus (GLBC). Dismayed and angered by the bill’s provisions, Sinkfield and the GLBC held a series of public forums about the bill. Leading up to the public hearings, advocacy groups became very involved in the process, contacting Sinkfield, sending information, and expressing thanks for her “courageous” work to defeat the bill.²⁰⁸ Advocates disliked the punitive measures in Miller’s bill and instead wanted greater social supports for work, full funding for PEACH (the state’s job training and placement program), and increased child support enforcement.²⁰⁹ They asserted that the “job requirement [in the bill] is being proposed because many people think that mothers receiving AFDC are lazy and do not want to work. The fact is, families do not need to be forced to work.”²¹⁰

²⁰³ Miller, *Letter to Constituent*.

²⁰⁴ Miller, *Letter to Constituent*.

²⁰⁵ Smith, “Governor Won’t Renew.”

²⁰⁶ Foskett, “The Flag Debate: Retreat on Issue a Sore Point for Governor.”

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁸ Sinkfield, “Georgianna Sinkfield Oral History Interview.”; McLennan, “Letter to The Honorable Georganna Sinkfield.”

²⁰⁹ National Organization for Women, *Georgia NOW Wants Real Welfare Reform*.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

On the eve of the first hearings, the governor requested permission to speak at the events.²¹¹ Sinkfield expressed great surprise at this request and thought the Speaker of the House was joking when he told her the news. Even though there was no precedent for it, the governor did come and speak at the hearing.²¹² According to Sinkfield, “I’ve been told by people who have been here thirty or thirty-five years that this is the first time they have ever known a governor to testify before a committee.”²¹³

Miller’s determination to see the bill passed was evidenced by his participation in the public hearings and his reaction when, by March, his bill had not moved out of committee because Sinkfield would not release it. That month, Miller wrote two memos to members of the House of Representatives. The first memo had a sense of urgency and implored politicians to vote for his welfare reform bill, “held captive” in the Children and Youth Committee “by a leadership who cannot grasp the concept that welfare demands the same level of responsibility that it requires from the tax payers.”²¹⁴ In ridiculing the “leadership” of the committee for holding “captive” the bill, Miller was outwardly criticizing a Black woman with a public face and speaking to white voters concerned about Black political power. Responding to the public framing of Blacks as irresponsible and in need of behavior modification, Miller stated that his bill, which “would restore the values of personal responsibility to the system and restore public confidence in the system,” had “languished” in the committee for two months. “THIS IS IMPORTANT!” he wrote. “Please urge the House leadership, the chairperson and members of this committee, to act today to move the bill out so that the full House can make its desires known. To keep it in committee past today [March 1] will kill the bill.”²¹⁵ Miller’s sense of urgency stemmed from the fact that the 28th day of the session, the day the letter was dated, was what he viewed as “just about the last chance for significant welfare reform to happen this session.”²¹⁶ Activists from the Georgia Public Assistance Coalition and the Georgia Legislative Black Caucus distributed the memo to other advocacy groups with a media alert from Georgians for Children which argued that “the proposals in House Bill 85 are contrary to the recommendations of Governor Miller’s own blue-ribbon Welfare Reform Task Force,” indicating that Miller’s efforts sparked a backlash from advocates around the state, ignited more activism from Black political groups.²¹⁷ The press release announced an event two days later at the capitol for women, children, and advocates to speak out against Miller’s bill. In expressing their opposition to the punitive policies in Miller’s plan, race-based organizations statewide accused Miller and legislators of racism against welfare recipients.²¹⁸

Ultimately that month, the bill never left the Children and Youth Committee. It reached the floor of the legislature as a floor substitute to a senate bill. Miller claimed that “since floor substitutes and floor amendments can be confusing, I wanted to take this chance to remind you of the main parts of my welfare reform proposal. . . . First and foremost, I propose that able-bodied welfare recipients, who can work, should work.”²¹⁹ Although Miller began the letter by

²¹¹ Sinkfield, “Georgianna Sinkfield Oral History Interview.”

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Miller, *Memo to Members of the House of Representatives Regarding Welfare Reform*, 1.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Georgians for Children, “Media Alert.”

²¹⁸ Smith, “Legislature off to bumpy start Republican newcomers send signal.”

²¹⁹ Miller, *Memo to Members of the House of Representatives Regarding Welfare Reform*, 1.

saying he wanted to clarify and remind, the letter seemed more like an effort to implore politicians to support the bill. He concluded, “Finally, I continue to believe that meaningful welfare reform requires welfare recipients to exercise the same level of personal responsibility that is required of taxpayers who pay the bill.”²²⁰ By the second to last day of the session, the bill still had not passed, and Miller threatened to call a special session to ensure the bill landed on his desk. The bill passed in the final hour of the session and was implemented in 1994.²²¹

Getting Right with the Angels

Did Miller’s push for punitive reforms prove politically successful? Before the 1994 elections, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* editorialist Dick Williams wrote that “Zell Miller came into office, raised fees and raised hell with the state flag of Georgia. Then, last year, he got right with the angels by pushing welfare reform.”²²² While the flag flap pulled Miller’s approval ratings to an all-time low, the passage of this initial welfare reform bill sent Miller’s ratings in the opposite direction. Indeed, during the 1993 legislative session when Miller first achieved some success in his welfare reform proposals, his disapproval ratings dropped from 47% to 29% and by the spring 1994 session they were down to 25% (see Figure 3.1).²²³

In 1994, the initial measures went into effect, and Miller cajoled the legislature into passing even more punitive reforms. The year 1994 was also an election year. Republican Guy Millner challenged Zell Miller for the governorship. Miller’s campaign centered on welfare reform as well as issues like crime and cutting government spending.²²⁴ Miller avoided “the one issue that may have gotten him in the most trouble with rural white voters: his failed attempt to strip the Confederate battle emblem from the Georgia flag.” According to reporters, Miller “received the most enthusiastic applause [on the campaign trail] when he touted his controversial welfare reform plan.”²²⁵ Said Miller, “I fought the special interests, I fought the ACLU. I even had to fight the [Georgia House] speaker some... but we won on the closing night of the session. Now I’m having to fight some Washington bureaucrats to get a waiver for it.”²²⁶

Miller’s punitive stance on welfare resonated with voters, and he won his re-election bid. Welfare reform continued to dominate his political agenda during his second term in office. Over the course of the next three years his approval ratings shot up to over 70% as he passed the most punitive welfare reforms in the country and completely abandoned his push to change the state flag (see Figure 3.1).²²⁷ By the end of his campaign, Miller had alienated many of his Black supporters who committed themselves to challenging his anti-welfare agenda. Upset by Miller’s welfare reform proposals and his backtracking on the flag flap, many African-American leaders spoke out publicly against Miller and the Democratic Party. Said Joe Beasley, regional

²²⁰ Ibid., 2.

²²¹ The welfare reform debates in Georgia continued over the next four years following the first efforts in 1997. During this time, the legislature tightened sanctions and imposed a four year lifetime time limit on welfare assistance, one year less than required by the federal government. Additional information and analysis of these debates and events is available upon request.

²²² Williams, “‘Bait for Bubbas’ is Zell Miller’s Stump Game.”

²²³ Martin, “Georgia Spring Poll, 1994.”; *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution Georgia Poll, October 1992*. hdl:1902.29/D-30509; Simonetta, “Georgia State Poll, Fall 1993.”

²²⁴ Smith, “Governor Kicks off Re-Election Campaign Miller Touts Plan On Welfare Reform.”

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Applied Research Center, “Georgia State Poll, Summer 1997.”

director of the Rainbow Coalition, “The only thing we have become accustomed to from [Zell Miller and the Democrats] is lies and broken promises.”²²⁸ The year after the election proved an “unusually divisive and contentious” year for Georgia legislators in which issues of race once again divided both chambers of the state legislature on many issues, “with broad disagreement between white and black legislators over how to reform welfare.”²²⁹ The GLBC pursued supportive welfare policies with vengeance, arguing that any welfare program in place must be geared towards needs assessment, health coverage, and employment assistance. The organization specifically spoke out against the full-family sanction on the table in the legislature, stating that children should not be punished for their parents’ actions.²³⁰

The racial tensions over welfare reform were evident outside the state capitol building as well where the strict work requirements passed by the legislature generated uproar. In the fall of 1995, the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* ran an editorial cartoon in which a White man in a business suit held a Black baby high in the air with one hand and clutched a document labeled “Welfare Reform” in the other. With a scowl on his face, the White man gripped the terrified Black baby by the neck of its shirt as the baby’s bottle dropped to the ground. The man barked at the baby, “Either your unskilled, uneducated mother gets a job or you’re dead meat!” When the newspaper ran the cartoon, the editors thought they were publishing yet another cartoon by their award-winning nationally-syndicated cartoonist, but the response generated by the cartoon indicated that this was not just any sketch.

In the days following its publication, the cartoon incited a passionate reaction from the newspaper’s readership. Hundreds of angry letters swamped the main editorial office, and phones rang off the hook at the regional NAACP office and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Calling the cartoon “deplorable,” “insensitive,” and “trash,” the writers criticized the cartoonist and the paper for depicting all welfare recipients as Black. Some claimed that the cartoon perpetuated the stereotype that Black women were, on the whole, “uneducated” and “unskilled.” Many writers and callers demanded that the newspaper apologize for publishing such a racist cartoon.

In response to these criticisms, hundreds of additional letters flowed into the paper, pointing out the satiric nature of the cartoon. They argued that the cartoonist’s intention was to criticize Congress for its stereotypes and for the poorly designed welfare policies it was developing as part of President Clinton’s push to overhaul the national welfare system. A handful of readers claimed that the newspaper’s Black readership needed to invest its time and energy into fighting “real” social problems rather than attacking an esteemed editorial cartoonist.

The debate became so intense that within the week the newspaper devoted an entire page to the debate. The words, “Controversy Over A Cartoon,” spanned the top of the page in large bold type. Under the headline, the newspaper’s editors reprinted the original cartoon and some of the letters they had received. They also printed a letter from the cartoonist himself, Mike Luckovich. In the letter, Luckovich explained his intentions in drawing the cartoon. The cartoon tried to capture his belief that members of Congress, mired in debates over welfare reform, harbored deep-seeded racist stereotypes about welfare recipients, and these stereotypes were driving a push for punitive welfare policies, policies which would punish innocent children. He

²²⁸ Foskett, “Campaign ’94 Black Voters May Opt to Side ‘with the Devil’.”

²²⁹ Foskett, “Session Outlook: Divisive Battles.”

²³⁰ Georgia Legislative Black Caucus, *Legislative Agenda 1995-1996*.

expressed regret for not labeling the White man in the cartoon as “Congress” but stopped short of apologizing for the illustration which offended so many.

Over the course of welfare reform debates, each action taken by Black activist groups, whether the response to the Luckovich cartoon or the earlier drive to replace the state flag, resulted in a new drive for punitive welfare reforms. Georgia’s final welfare reform bill passed in 1997, as required by federal law. The act limited welfare lifetime limits to 48 months, required participants to engage in work activities no later than 24 months after receiving assistance, and included a full-family sanction for non-compliance. The Georgia Legislative Black Caucus quickly came out against the reform package, stating that families “take different amounts of time to overcome the barriers to work or self-sufficiency. To choose a shorter time limit is to unnecessarily risk these families and their children being placed in jeopardy... the Governor’s proposed 4 year time limit should be changed to 60 months.”²³¹ Although the GLBC continued to challenge the welfare reform package over the course of the next year, the issue did not receive serious consideration, and the state moved forward with the implementation of its policies. Said GLBC leader Billy McKinney of Black leaders’ dealings with Miller, “we were hoodwinked, hogtied, and screwed in the process.” McKinney and other Black politicians accused Miller of “subminial race-coding” and of using welfare reform to fuel racial tensions.²³² However, while existing studies would²³³ predict such accusations would lower support for punitive welfare reform policies, the on-going involvement of Black politicians and their accusations about race-baiting re-ignited racial threats and resentments ultimately fueling additional racial politicking in the state and incentivizing the passage of punitive welfare policies.

The Georgia case reveals the implications of racial conflict for welfare policymaking. The contemporary activation of a historical racial conflict just prior to the passage of federal welfare reforms incited racial tensions in the state, leading many white citizens to demand policy action to control a “deviant” Black population. The flag flap polarized advocacy groups on the basis of race and made punitive welfare policies a political imperative for a governor facing re-election. Before the flag flap escalated, Governor Miller’s self-selected Welfare Reform Task Forces proposed lenient and supportive welfare programs for the state, including 29 measures to improve the condition of individuals on welfare by “allowing AFDC recipients to keep more of their earnings, providing tax incentives for employers to subsidize child care and freezing rents for publicly housed AFDC recipients who become employed.”²³⁴ The Task Force spoke out adamantly against some of the punitive measures ultimately pushed by Miller. Despite his initial faith in the Task Force, Miller abandoned their recommendations in the face of the flag debacle. Facing increasing criticism for his alliances with Black political groups and his support for racially liberal policies, Miller advanced strict welfare policies to resuscitate his plummeting public opinion poll ratings and his re-election campaign. He continued to benefit politically from the policies even after the initial round of reforms because they communicated to white voters an implicit and conservative stance on racial issues and a willingness cracking down on the state’s “demanding” Black residents.

²³¹ Holmes, *Draft of Agenda: Memo to GLBC*.

²³² McKinney, *Letter to Zell Miller*.

²³³ Mendelberg, *The Race Card*.

²³⁴ Jacobson, “Miller Plan Gives Needy Little Hope.”

Tort Tops Welfare: Alabama's Reform Efforts

Across the state line in Alabama, welfare reform efforts unfolded in a different fashion. Like its neighbor to the east, Alabama has long been home to one of the weakest social safety nets in the country. However by 1997, welfare reforms had taken such a dramatically different turn that some recipients from Georgia even moved across the border to Alabama where work requirements were less strict. If the flag flap set Georgia on a path to restrictive reforms, on-going battles over punitive damage awards in lawsuits positioned Alabama quite differently with respect to welfare. The subsequent campaign for tort reform which swept through the state in the 1990s mobilized trial lawyers against business interests, rarely if ever sparking racial threat or resentment. Furthermore, advocates framed these debates in a way that emphasized the economic need for legal reforms, highlighting the lack of jobs in the state and the dire consequences of social inequality for low-income Alabamians. This discourse opened doors for welfare reform advocates to promote lenient reforms. Indeed, how could the state expect welfare recipients to work when prevailing political discourses claimed that low-income families were facing job losses due to corporations and greedy lawyers? In the absence of racial conflict, advocates also had wide ranging flexibility to construct non-racialized framings of welfare, poverty, and need.

In the end, tort reform reached such a fevered pitch in the mid-1990s that policymakers identified caps on punitive damages as the solution to any problems facing the state's welfare system. With welfare reform subsumed under tort reform, political leaders stood to gain more politically from passing legal reforms rather than punitive social ones. Although key players in welfare reform attempted to racialize debates to attract support for restrictive policies, their attempts failed as the tort battles never mobilized constituencies by race or activated racial divisions. Moreover, the prevailing narratives about tort reform and the limited visibility of welfare debates in the state opened doors for policymakers and advocates to construct and disseminate broadly resonant claims for supportive services for low-income families.

Tort Hell

By the mid-1990s, Alabama had become the staging ground for national concerns about excessive punitive damage awards to injured parties in lawsuits. In the late 1980s, a tidal wave of anxiety about medical malpractice suits and skyrocketing insurance costs drew nation-wide attention to inequalities in state civil justice systems and tort law. One-by-one, forty-two different states enacted some form of tort reform legislation to remedy the problem, placing caps on punitive damage awards.²³⁵ In Alabama, unease over insurance costs prompted the legislature to pass an array of reforms; however, the state Supreme Court proceeded to void all of the measures, arguing that they violated the state constitution.

By the mid-1990s, debates about punitive damages in Alabama captured both state and national attention. In the 1970s, the state Supreme Court never awarded more than \$150,000 in damages in a single suit, but by 1995 it upheld an award of \$15 million.²³⁶ Although multi-million dollar verdicts were extremely rare elsewhere in the nation, there were 60 such verdicts in Alabama from 1991 to 1994. Some awards reached as high as \$60 million dollars, a pattern

²³⁵ Stewart, "Comment: Damage Caps in Alabama's Civil Justice System: An Uncivil War within the State."

²³⁶ Daniels and Martin, "The Incidence, Scope, and Purpose of Punitive Damages: Punitive Damages, Change, and the Politics of Ideas."

“unparalleled in the history of American jurisprudence.”²³⁷ In a case which thrust Alabama into the national spotlight, a Jefferson County court ordered that BMW pay a Birmingham doctor \$2 million in damages because of a bad paint job.²³⁸ In another settlement, plaintiffs in a small town case won a \$10 million settlement over a \$1500 fee dispute. These outlandish settlements prompted the *Wall Street Journal* to christen Alabama “the Land of Lawsuits” and *Forbes Magazine* to label the state “Tort Hell.”²³⁹ As the national movement for tort reform gained steam, Alabama rapidly became the embodiment of all that was wrong with punitive damage awards in the country. Portrayed by the media as a failure and embarrassment, Alabamians and their elected leaders sought to pass new and comprehensive tort reform legislation. In the mid-1990s, tort reform was a defining and provocative issue in election campaigns, but in three consecutive years the state legislature failed in its efforts to pass such reforms.

Unlike the flag flap in Georgia which mobilized activists, political leaders, and residents by race, the intense debate over tort reform pitted big business interests against trial lawyers and to a lesser extent consumer groups, smaller businesses, and civil justice advocates.²⁴⁰ Each side claimed to hold the moral high ground on the issue. Trial lawyers asserted that large punitive damage awards protected Alabamians from big corporations, preserving individual rights and opportunities for redress. They declared a “crisis” in Alabama’s justice system and feared tort reform would limit the liability of a few large and dishonest corporations.²⁴¹ Advocating against tort reform, the Executive Director of the Alabama Trial Lawyers Association argued that if trial lawyers succeed in stopping the reforms “it will be because the proponents of [reform] legislation don’t have the best interests of the majority of Alabamians at heart. It will be because our legislators know that corporate interests should not outweigh human interests.”²⁴²

Businesses, on the other hand, claimed that unfair settlements threatened the viability of Alabama’s business sector and its economic future. When he ran for and won the governorship in 1994, Republican Fob James claimed that punitive damages harmed the state’s image and its economy, compelling companies to leave the state and take much needed jobs with them. A spokesperson for the Alabama Business Council said that the legislature’s repeated failure to pass reforms “will have a severe negative impact on needed jobs for the people of Alabama.”²⁴³ One prominent state legislative candidate claimed, “Such court decisions hurt business and cost Alabamians jobs while the main benefactor is some trial lawyer who literally becomes a multimillionaire overnight.”²⁴⁴ Although few formal analyses tested these assertions about damages and job growth (and there were many indications that the state was booming economically despite tort reformers claims to the contrary), media reports reinforced this vision, arguing that the risk of excessive damage awards was driving businesses out of the state and fueling widespread job losses. A 1996 editorial in the *Wall Street Journal* even went so far as to

²³⁷ LeBlond, “Bad Faith in Alabama’s Civil Justice System: ‘Tort Hell’ or Reformed Jurisdiction?”.

²³⁸ Years later the Alabama Supreme Court cut the damages to \$50,000 after nation-wide uproar ensued and the United States Supreme Court ordered the state court to revisit the suit. Jerry Underwood and Stan Bailey, “State High Court Cuts to \$50,000 Award over BMW,” *Birmingham News* (Birmingham, AL, May 10, 1997).

²³⁹ Noe, “Alabama Judicial Selection Reform: A Skunk in Tort Hell.”

²⁴⁰ Underwood, “James; Tort Reform Proposals Stop Short, Some Critics Say.”; White, “Tort Split May Ignite Huge Fight.”

²⁴¹ Pratt, “Time for Peace Between Trial Bar, Business Groups.”

²⁴² Gilbert, “Readers’ Opinions.”

²⁴³ Bailey and Fox, “High Court Delivers Blow to Tort Reform.”

²⁴⁴ Bailey, “Big Jury Awards Main Issue in Top Supreme Court Race Hornsby Says Alabama Law Leads Nation.”

say that the state's repeated failure to enact tort reforms was "tantamount to placing giant 'Keep Out' signs at the [Alabama] borders."²⁴⁵

It is hard to imagine how debates about excessive damages, legal reforms, and judicial ethics might structure a polity's social policy choices, but the tort reform debacle affected Alabama's welfare reform efforts in unexpected yet powerful ways. For one, although tort reform discussions proved extremely divisive in the years leading up to welfare reform, the battles never activated racial divisions or animus. Over the course of my research I found only two moments in which race emerged in the tort discourse. In one instance, a local news article reported *The American Lawyer* magazine as saying, "National business coalitions have long used Alabama as the Willie Horton of the tort reform debate," referring to an implicit racial appeal made in a George Bush campaign ad in 1988. In the second instance, two Auburn University professors wrote an editorial for the *Birmingham News* equating efforts to restrict punitive damages with past racial injustices. Protecting business interests from punishment, they argued, "[harkens] back to Alabama's segregationist past, [revives] images of racial discrimination and [will] not attract businesses that will thrive in the 21st century."²⁴⁶ These remarks were clearly passing references in a much larger debate. Furthermore, in neither of these situations did constituencies or advocacy groups mobilize by race around tort reform. While Black leaders in the state generally favored tort reform and used their votes to secure concessions on other issues, tort reform itself did not activate racial resentments or threat and was not a major concern for Black officials.²⁴⁷ As the next section will show, the limited salience of race in the political sphere at the time made racial stereotypes and racial framings of welfare particularly ineffective at compelling restrictive policies. Moreover, the limited significance of race at the time offered advocates for lenient reforms significant flexibility in constructing narratives to justify their policy positions.

Equally important, although trial lawyers and business interests disagreed on the need for tort reform they agreed wholeheartedly on who would suffer if their pursuits failed: everyday Alabamians. In their tort reform rhetoric, both sides signaled the moral rightness of their position by citing the struggles of the state's residents. Pro-tort reformers stressed the economic hardship faced by Alabamians who lost their jobs because the state's poor business image limited economic development, forced companies to leave, and stunted the growth already underdeveloped state. Their opponents claimed that punitive awards were a matter of basic human rights and decency, the one chance for average or struggling citizens to get what was rightfully theirs.

These narratives identified working and low-income Alabamians as deserving citizens. They also criticized class inequalities in the state. While trial lawyers claimed that big corporations wanted tort reform so they could avoid punishments for wrongdoing while maximizing profits, business groups claimed that already-rich trial lawyers were the only winners from damage awards. Thus, no matter which tort reform voice Alabamians heard, they heard a similar message: Alabamians are the victims not only of limited job growth but of a class-system which privileges the already privileged and leaves everyday residents alone in their struggles. As welfare reform emerged on the state scene, these messages provided great fodder for advocacy groups and political figures seeking supportive reforms.

²⁴⁵ Editorial, "Alabama Blows One."

²⁴⁶ Grafton and Permaloff, "Officials Must Take Responsibility for State's Poor Image."

²⁴⁷ Editorial, "More Eagerton EEOC Complaint Shows Why Commissioner Must Go."

A final implication of tort reform related to its intransigence as a political issue. Despite years of efforts, legislators failed again and again to reach a consensus on a package of tort reform bills. Each year the issue went unresolved, media attention to tort reform escalated, further heightening the stakes in the debate. In 1996 and 1997 when the state turned its attention to welfare reform, tort reform still topped the political agenda. While thousands of letters about tort reform flooded the Governor's office, only a handful of constituents wrote in to express concerns or preferences for welfare reform. Archival records show that most of those who did write about welfare approached the Governor not to state a policy opinion but to turn in their neighbors for welfare fraud.²⁴⁸ In the media as well as in the state capitol, tort reform supplanted welfare reform as the major issue on the state agenda. Some political leaders even identified tort reform and its promise of job creation as the solution to any welfare problems faced by the state.²⁴⁹

The only other political issue to gain traction during this time period was the state budget. As the content analysis in the previous chapter suggested, concerns about the fiscal burden of welfare surfaced in stereotypes of welfare recipients in Alabama. These specific stereotypes emerged directly from the conflict over the state budget that ensued just as federal mandates made welfare reform an imperative for the state. During the budget battles, the governor, Fob James, refused to sign multiple budgets "saying they contained too much money for the pet projects of powerful lawmakers."²⁵⁰ The legislative standoff on the state budget led journalists and public officials to speculate that the government might shut down.²⁵¹ Together, concerns over both the budget and tort reform took the limelight off of welfare politics, leading one major anti-poverty advocate assert to that welfare reform was largely underreported in the press and was "buried" among other political battles.²⁵² In the end, not only did the resonant tort reform discourses in the state open the doors for lenient welfare reforms, politicians had more flexibility and more incentive to support such reforms given the imperative placed on the tort and budget issues.

'Like Weaning a Baby'

Despite the prominence of the tort reform and budget issues, welfare reform still generated heated debates in Alabama, particularly in the state capitol. Alabama Governor Fob James, a renowned religious conservative who championed prayer in schools and the teaching of creationism, appointed a Welfare Reform Commission in 1996 to assess potential avenues for reform.²⁵³ Chaired by conservative legislator, Jim Carns, the Commission held a series of contentious debates in the lead up to state reforms in 1997. The 39-member commission included state legislators and representatives from the governor's office and other state agencies. Also sitting on the commission was Kimble Forrister, the director of Alabama Arise, a coalition of 95 religious and community organizations in the state and the state's main anti-poverty advocacy group.

²⁴⁸ James, *Tort Reform*.

²⁴⁹ Forrister, "Both Consensus and Quandaries about Welfare."

²⁵⁰ Editorial, "The Budget Pox So Who is to Blame if State Government Shuts Down?"

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Montgomery, "Letter to Gerald Sanders, Alabama Arise."

²⁵³ Clark, Long, and Ratcliffe, "Income Support and Social Services for Low-Income People in Alabama."

The Welfare Reform Commission's work proved contentious and controversial because of the opposing positions taken by its members. While elected officials pushed for strict reforms such as two-year lifetime limits on welfare, Alabama Arise and the state's welfare reform director, Joel Sanders, advocated for supportive services for recipients. Alabama Arise repeatedly spoke out against the Governor's unwillingness to include additional anti-poverty advocacy groups or current welfare recipients on the Commission.²⁵⁴ Said Arise Director, Kimble Forrister to Governor James, "... your introductory statements [about the commission described] meetings that would be open and inclusive of a range of viewpoints. We never saw the promised retreat for Commission members to build consensus, nor the proposed statewide public hearings, nor the opportunity to provide meaningful input into any recommendations coming from the Commission."²⁵⁵ Commission meetings were closed to the public, and even when citizens traveled to Montgomery to express their views at meetings they were denied access.²⁵⁶ Alabama Arise suggested the names of other advocates for inclusion, but these recommendations were never adopted.²⁵⁷ The commission remained dominated by conservative anti-welfare forces.

Both the state's Department of Human Resources (DHR) and state legislators were angered by Arise's persistent push for supportive programs and its negative portrayal of the state welfare apparatus. Carns said that Arise's approach "upset me because we would all be working together towards a common goal, and the legislators were reading [negative comments from Arise] so that didn't help things. But it made Alabama Arise higher profile across the state."²⁵⁸ Joel Sanders of DHR who stood politically between Arise and the conservative legislators and governor said that "there were a number of occasions when I got irritated with [Arise] because they were so focused on the negatives or what could become negatives that it made my job harder... They were making it harder. But they serve a valuable role. Kimble did a good job. He may have felt on the spot at times, but he articulated a vision, a more generous vision, of what [welfare] could be."²⁵⁹ Conflicts between Alabama Arise and the Commission reached a boiling point when Carns requested that Arise not speak at meetings. Despite persistent challenges from Arise, the Commission continued to pursue punitive goals such as a two-year time limit on welfare assistance as opposed to the federal five-year allowance.²⁶⁰ Upset with the progress of the Commission, the Arise leadership prepared a strategy by which to remove itself from the group.²⁶¹ In the end, Arise decided to remain on the Commission although the organization protested the punitive recommendations in the Commission's final report.²⁶²

In addition to complaints about membership and public accessibility, controversy also arose over the Commission's stereotype-driven proposals. Interviews, media reports, and archival materials all suggest that the commission's meeting were extremely contentious and rife with stereotypes and slander about welfare recipients. One of the central metaphors used during the meetings was the idea of "weaning" recipients from welfare, an image that infantilized

²⁵⁴ Forrister, "Letter to Governor Fob James."

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Alabama Arise, *Scenario for Arise's Exit from Welfare Reform Commission*.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Carns, "Interview with the Author."

²⁵⁹ Sanders, "Interview with the Author."

²⁶⁰ Alabama Arise, *Scenario for Arise's Exit from Welfare Reform Commission*.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Alabama Arise, *Abedlard Proposal: 1994-1995 Program Goals and Objectives*.

welfare recipients. Interestingly, these negative constructions of welfare recipients were so strong that even proponents of lenient reforms used them to make their case. For example, to protest the weaning arguments, Alabama Arise unleashed a battery of position papers, editorials, letters to the editors of state newspapers, and press releases not only arguing that welfare recipients *want* to work but that “you don’t only wean a baby from, you start it on other food.”²⁶³ The argument emphasized welfare recipients may and do want jobs, they need transitional assistance like transportation and child care. However, the claim also reiterated the dependent and child-like position of welfare recipients.

The head of the state’s Department of Human Resources, Martha Nachman, was reportedly “unsympathetic to the struggle of the welfare mother”²⁶⁴ who she caricatured as “a 15 year old pregnant with the third kid and addicted to crack.”²⁶⁵ She declared at the first commission meeting her desire to spend all TANF funds on programs other than cash assistance for the poor.²⁶⁶ During the meetings, Chairman Carns asserted that welfare was “eating the country alive.”²⁶⁷ In an interview, Carns summarized his work on the commission,

We wanted to do the right thing. If you didn’t have a job, we wanted to get you trained and in a job. We didn’t want you sitting there are not wanting a job and not wanting to be trained to have a job. And let your child watch you do that because the child grows up and does the same thing the parent does. And that is the decay of the family. And we all know what that brings to society – on a community level.²⁶⁸

Representatives from the Department of Human Resources went so far as to say that rather than use federal funds to help welfare recipients they would “kick ‘em in the ass.”²⁶⁹ State legislators and the governor shared many of these views. According to the state’s leading political journalist at the time, the majority of legislators argued that “we’ve got to stop these folks from living off the dole their whole lives,” a message that resonated with their constituencies.²⁷⁰ By spouting these stereotypes, political leaders sought to activate the racial subtext of welfare by promoting the widespread beliefs that welfare recipients were “Blacks [who were] just sucking at the government’s breast.”²⁷¹

Despite the power and presence of such racialized welfare stereotypes, Alabama slowly inched toward more lenient welfare reform, led by the work of Alabama Arise and the level-headed conciliatory style of Joel Sanders, the head of state welfare programs. Although political leaders attempted to racialized welfare discussions, their efforts never captured the public’s attention. For one, tort reform debates still dominated media attention in the state, giving welfare reform less traction with the public. Secondly, no prior racial conflict had polarized the state by race or inflamed racial tensions. As a result, race itself had less political salience at this

²⁶³ Alabama Arise, *Scenario for Arise’s Exit from Welfare Reform Commission*.

²⁶⁴ Sanders, “Interview with the Author.”

²⁶⁵ Forrister, “Interview with the Author.”

²⁶⁶ Sanders, “Interview with the Author.”

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Carns, “Interview with the Author.”

²⁶⁹ Sanders, “Interview with the Author.”

²⁷⁰ Sznajderman, “Interview with the Author.”

²⁷¹ Ibid.

particular historical moment in Alabama. It proved challenging for political elites to activate racial resentments or threats when they had not been primed by a previous conflict. Furthermore, while the welfare advocacy of Black leaders and interests groups further inflamed racial tensions ignited by the flag flap in Georgia, Black groups and leaders were not united on welfare reform. Alabama Arise (whose leaders were both Black and White) had representation from only a small handful of African-American churches and organizations, something Arise viewed as a major shortcoming.²⁷² According to Kimble Forrister,

One of the frustrations internal among the [welfare] activists was that some of our closest allies from the civil rights and poverty advocacy side thought it was a losing discussion [to advocate for supportive welfare programs]. Or some black legislators felt that they did not want to be defending those lazy people sitting around on the front porch... It just broke my heart... But they said, “We want Alabama Arise to get out there. We want you working on it, but we want to work on prosperity agenda.”²⁷³

Even the Legislative Black Caucus was divided on the issue of welfare reform in Alabama. While some of Arise’s closest allies were members of the Caucus leadership, so were some of its staunchest opponents. As a result, racial divides did not surface during welfare reform debates. Summarizing the welfare reform process, Joel Sanders echoed the views of each of the major players in the reform efforts: “I don’t remember a lot of battles across racial lines.”²⁷⁴

The advocacy work of Alabama Arise also played a significant role in achieving lenient reforms. At the time, the organization had a virtual monopoly on antipoverty work in the state. Nearly every news article from the time cited Arise and its activities. With an impressive organizing and publicity team, the organization frequently mobilized its member groups to speak out on welfare reform and regularly published editorials throughout the state providing data to disprove welfare queen stereotypes. When it became clear that welfare reform would become a reality at the federal level, Arise convened a press briefing “to help the reporters to understand the issues and know the questions to ask” of politicians as they crafted welfare legislation.²⁷⁵ Said Director Kimble Forrister, “we’ve learned a lot about messaging over the years” and sought to help journalists avoid welfare stereotypes by giving them “other message frames” to draw on when reporting on welfare reform. For example, “when the governor held his first press conference and started talking about the \$3 trillion this country had spent [on welfare] ... quoting the Heritage Foundation – we had briefed these reporters to ask, “now, are you including veteran’s benefits in that \$3 trillion and social security and education spending?”²⁷⁶ Arise’s endeavors benefited from these strategic moves but also from their position as the sole anti-poverty group in the state. Said Forrister, “It was a rare case for us out of our 20 years... The dynamic of reporters who want an opposition viewpoint, it worked great for us because they’d

²⁷² Alabama Arise, *Abedlard Proposal: 1994-1995 Program Goals and Objectives*.

²⁷³ Forrister, “Interview with the Author.”

²⁷⁴ Sanders, “Interview with the Author.”

²⁷⁵ Forrister, “Interview with the Author.”

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

quote the governor and then come to for a counter-quote” unlike in other battles where multiple groups competed for media attention.²⁷⁷

The tort reform debates also created a lucrative opening for Alabama Arise in their advocacy work. Since the Commission refused to hear public views on welfare reform, Arise coordinated 32 “listening sessions” across the state at which people on welfare came forward to express their concerns about reforms and their needs.²⁷⁸ The overwhelming concerns voiced by welfare recipients were that the lack of jobs, child care, and transportation preventing people from moving off of welfare. Arise adopted this mantra, “jobs, child care, and transportation,” as the main frame for its welfare advocacy. Advocates for tort reform had long claimed that the current tort system limited economic development in the state and that reform would bring businesses to the area, create jobs, and provide widespread benefits to Alabamians. Because this rhetoric emphasized the state’s weak economy and limited development, Arise’s arguments about the lack economic opportunities for low-income families had great resonance among Alabama’s citizens and lawmakers. Arise lobbied for supportive programs in these arenas while also combating attempts to pass restrictive time limits, work requirements, and sanctions for non-compliance.

While traveling the state and speaking with the media, Arise further emphasized the meagly allowances received by the state’s welfare recipients. The average monthly benefit amount for a family on welfare totaled a mere \$164 in Alabama. The increase awarded for an additional child was a paltry \$28 per month. While politicians sought to convince Alabamians that welfare recipients were scamming the system or depleting state coffers, \$164 seemed negligible in comparison to the multi-million dollar damage awards on the news. Indeed, if Alabamians were the victims of a flawed tort system, certainly punitive welfare reforms would do little to resolve broader inequalities in the state. Over time, members of the welfare reform commission even came to champion tort reform as the job creation mechanism that would solve struggles faced by welfare recipients or any flaws in the welfare system itself.²⁷⁹

In 1996, the Commission published a final report which attracted little fanfare or attention. Welfare reform efforts took a backseat to tort reform until 1997 when federal mandates required that the state revisit the issue. As welfare reemerged, the Governor proposed a bill, sponsored by Jim Carns, that recommended work requirements after two years of welfare receipt or sooner if deemed possible by caseworkers and with sanction determinations left entirely to the discretion of the Department of Human Resources. Alabama Arise prepared a separate bill which contained the same work requirements but sketched out detailed sanction policies to ensure that sanctions only impacted the adult(s) on the case and that permanent disqualification was extremely rare.²⁸⁰ Another key difference in the two bills was that the Carns bill provided virtually no work supports for families on welfare while the Arise bill included provisions for transportation, child care, and other transitional assistance. In the end, largely due to Arise’s advocacy and publicity work throughout the state, the tone of welfare reform debates shifted away from “a preoccupation with pregnancy and dependency to a serious discussion” about job availability and supportive services for the working poor.²⁸¹

²⁷⁷ Forrister, “Letter to Governor Fob James.”

²⁷⁸ Alabama Arise, *Arise Announces Welfare Reform Proposals*.

²⁷⁹ Forrister, “Both Consensus and Quandaries about Welfare.”

²⁸⁰ Alabama Arise, *Welfare Reform Comparison: Smitherman’s Package Compared to Governor’s Package*.

²⁸¹ Alabama Arise, *Champions for Alabama’s Poor Celebrate 10 Years of Making a Difference*.

The legislative debates around these welfare reform proposals were no less contentious than those of the Welfare Reform Commission. Ultimately, on the last day of the legislative session, Carns, Governor James, Sanders, and Forrister participated in closed-door negotiations to hammer out a final agreement. This event marked the first and only time in Arise's history that it was invited to closed-door negotiations with legislators.²⁸² Arise and DHR engaged in point-counterpoint discussion of the welfare bill, finally agreeing on a five-year time limit and a series of supportive policies. Said Forrister, "that small group came up with [a plan that] we were willing to live with and really thought were the best we could win."²⁸³ Even Carns, initially the conservative anti-welfare advocate, agreed on final structure for the program. According to Carns, when the debates started "we were like two porcupines trying to slow dance" but worked out a successful plan in the end.²⁸⁴ Joel Sanders of DHR, the state's welfare reform guru, said Carns and the conservatives

finally gave up on [the more punitive proposals]. I do think, perhaps Kimble gets some credit perhaps I get some credit, but I saw a lot of evolution with Jim Carns. I mean he came at that as a very conventional conservative. His early talks about welfare were around runaway budget issues. Overtime he became a lot more adept and talking about the other parts of welfare, the needs that people had. He grew. I think Jim Carns grew in that process. You'd have to be a stump to not learn because he sat through so much, so many conferences!²⁸⁵

Ultimately, however, this final package which emerged from the closed-door negotiations died in the final two hours of the legislative session following a filibuster by an anti-welfare proponent. Governor Fob James stated that he saw no need for a special session on welfare reform, arguing that he could "implement most of the elements of his welfare-reform proposal through administrative rules and the legislature can revisit the issue next year when the state has greater experience in the area."²⁸⁶ Neither Arise nor the conservative wing of the legislature pushed for a special session because both trusted Joel Sanders to implement the reforms as sketched out in the negotiations.²⁸⁷ As of January 1998, the legislature had not returned to the issue, and the state implemented its lenient requirements agency through regulations.²⁸⁸

Facing re-election that same year, Fob James nonetheless saw no reason to push welfare reform legislation further, opting instead to run on his religious and education credentials, a decision which may have doomed his campaign.²⁸⁹ In fact, welfare reform surfaced only once during the campaign and worked against James in a surprising way. In an attempt to "brag about putting welfare recipients to work," James held a news conference shortly before the November 1998 elections.²⁹⁰ James' campaign staff invited twelve women on welfare to participate, all of

²⁸² Forrister, "Interview with the Author."

²⁸³ Ibid.

²⁸⁴ Carns, "Interview with the Author."

²⁸⁵ Sanders, "Interview with the Author."

²⁸⁶ Clark, Long, and Ratcliffe, "Income Support and Social Services for Low-Income People in Alabama."

²⁸⁷ Carns, "Interview with the Author.;" Forrister, "Interview with the Author."

²⁸⁸ Clark, Long, and Ratcliffe, "Income Support and Social Services for Low-Income People in Alabama."

²⁸⁹ Sack, "The 1998 Campaign: The South; 3 G.O.P. Candidates for Governor Face Trouble - New York Times.;" Carns, "Interview with the Author."

²⁹⁰ Poovey, "News Conference on Welfare Insults Job-Training Students."

whom were currently taking courses to get their high school equivalency diplomas or enrolled in job training courses. Public outcry resulted, however, as a result of James' decision to use the women as a "backdrop" for his speech, and James received negative publicity from newspapers and the Department of Human Resources for publicly embarrassing women who were struggling.²⁹¹ James' Assistant Press Secretary apologized for the stunt. That the event was a rare entrance of welfare policy in the election suggests that welfare reform was an insignificant issue in the minds of many Alabamians in the time. The campaign was dominated instead by debates about the education budget.²⁹² When James lost the election to Don Siegelman, he lost primarily due to Sieglman's popular proposal to develop a state lottery to increase funding for public education. Furthermore, that the welfare event turned against James and in support of welfare recipients suggests the success of the work that Alabama Arise did to shift the framing of welfare debates.

Vote Stealing and Race Baiting

The legislative battles to secure passage of a reform proposal suggest two central differences between Georgia and Alabama's welfare debates. First, while Georgia's reform efforts followed a contentious and racialized battle over the state flag, Alabama's did not. Tort reform and the state budget were "bigger hot potatoes" and welfare reform debates faded into the background amidst "colorful rancorous debates over other sorts of things that were just more interesting to [legislators]."²⁹³ Because welfare reform was not framed by a racial conflict, racial resentments were not rife prior to welfare reform. The public were less inclined to view the state's large Black population as a threat, and political leaders were less able to manipulate race as a political tool. Second, the framing of tort reform facilitated advocacy efforts for lenient reforms. The jobs and inequality messages underlying the tort battle resonated with calls for greater supportive services for low-income families. Arise capitalized on this framing to such a great extent that the organization's push for "jobs, child care, and transportation" swayed even the conservative chair of the Welfare Reform Commission to support more lenient policies. These conscientious framing efforts dovetailed with strategic work with the press to avoid the public airing of other welfare frames.

As the previous chapter explained, Black advocacy groups and leaders in Alabama devoted their attention less to social issues and more to traditional civil rights concerns. As a result, it is not surprising that tort reform and welfare failed to activate racial animus. The state branch of the NAACP focused its efforts on local policies and community organizing; other groups largely focused their efforts on issues like voting and political representation. Indeed one of the only times race entered into welfare debates happened when Fob James did not appoint a single Black state legislator to the Welfare Reform Commission. The act provoked significant anger among the Alabama Legislative Black Caucus who boycotted subsequent meetings with James.²⁹⁴ Therefore, when race did enter into welfare debates it did so only briefly and in the context of conflicts over political appointees.²⁹⁵

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² Holmes, "The 1998 Elections: State by State -- South; Alabama."

²⁹³ Sznajderman, "Interview with the Author."

²⁹⁴ Staff Writer, "Montgomery Boycott."

²⁹⁵ Sznajderman, "Interview with the Author."

If race prompts the passage of punitive welfare reforms through the contemporary activation of historical racial conflicts, then we would expect to see Alabama tighten its welfare policies on the heels of a widely publicized and contentious racial conflict. Indeed, this is exactly what happened in 2002 when political battles over voter identification wracked the state political scene. After welfare reform passed, the legislature contemplated requiring voter identification at the ballot box. Black advocacy groups jumped on the cause as discriminatory and ignited a multi-year struggle over the voter identification issue. The voter identification initiative drummed up racial resentments among the state's residents, and Governor Don Siegleman worked through administrative channels to implement a full-family welfare sanction and other restrictive requirements.

When voter identification first emerged as a political issue, few whites in Alabama saw it as a racial issue. Jim Carns, the former chair of the welfare reform commission, expressed his surprise that voter identification became so contentious. When voter identification was first proposed he thought, "Voter ID? That'll be easy to pass." However, his predictions proved wrong:

There was so much suspicion [of voter identification]. The defense was, it's going to... diminish people's right to vote because they'll be intimidated and won't go to the polls. But you can't do anything without showing ID now! I mean, especially after 9-11. And the bill didn't pass until after 9-11. But there was just too much distrust. It took years [to pass the bill].²⁹⁶

Indeed, unlike tort reform or welfare, the voter identification battle lit a fire under Black advocacy groups who had decades of experience in the civil rights arenas of political representation and voting. While white Alabamians did not initially see voter identification as a racial issue, it was in fact an "enormous issue for those [Black] organizations... They felt that having to show id was discriminatory because you have so many elderly blacks who haven't driven."²⁹⁷

Although voter ID initially surfaced on the legislative agenda in 1996 it did not pick up steam until after the 2000 presidential election. When voting irregularities in Florida surfaced and thousands of Black residents claimed they were unfairly turned away at the polls, Alabama's political elites wanted to ensure the same results would not arise in the state. Conservative lawmakers believed that the 2000 debacle created a great opportunity to build support for voter identification. Said one white lawmaker, "Democrats have been stealing elections for 40 years, going back to 1960 that we are aware of... I think this is the opportunity to make John Q. Citizen aware that the same thing could happen in this state because we don't have the protections we need for honest elections."²⁹⁸

On the other hand, Black lawmakers were increasingly critical of the initiative in light of the Florida situation. The issue, as well as the news from Florida, resurrected civil rights era concerns about repression and discrimination at the ballot box. Organizational leaders argued that the identification requirement would "diminish people's right to vote because they'll be

²⁹⁶ Carns, "Interview with the Author."

²⁹⁷ Sznajderman, "Interview with the Author."

²⁹⁸ Gordon, "Dixon: Voter ID Needed to Stop Election 'Stealing'."

intimidated and won't go to the polls."²⁹⁹ The Black Caucus adopted voter identification as a major issue, embarking on a multi-year campaign to defeat the initiative and portraying the voter identification campaign as a "multifaceted attack on Black voting rights."³⁰⁰ "We don't need to make voting more difficult for people," said Black Caucus member Rep. Demetrius Newton. "We already don't have high enough turnout at the polls." Jerome Gray, field director of the Alabama Democratic Conference, a Black political lobbying group, argued that voter identification was "another barrier or test that white officials are putting in... They may think it's good government [but] they thought literacy tests were good government."³⁰¹

The voter identification battle received widespread attention in the media. State news outlets framed the voter identification battle in purely racial terms, pitting the majority of white legislators against Black leaders determined to see the bill fail. The *Birmingham News* regularly reported on the "racial split" which prevented any resolution on the question.³⁰² While depicting Black politicians as the main obstacle to voter identification, the mainstream news media outright rejected the possibility that voter identification might disproportionately affect Blacks, arguing that everyone now must show identification on a daily basis whether at the bank, the liquor store, or the library.³⁰³ An editorial in the same paper even called Black concerns about the discriminatory implications of the bill "hogwash." Implying that Black opponents of voter ID had something to hide, the contributor wrote,

There's nothing wrong with having a law to make sure the person voting is the person who should be voting. The only people who'll be scared away from the polls by voter ID are the people who are pretending to be somebody else and shouldn't be voting."³⁰⁴

Public sentiment at the time appeared to favor the passage of a voter identification bill. Residents chided the state's Black community for always trying to "put a racial face" on any and all election issues.³⁰⁵ Constituents wrote into newspapers with stories about deceased relatives whose names were used for voter fraud and admonished the state's leaders for finding it "so difficult to pass a simple voter ID bill."³⁰⁶ The legislature's inability to reach a consensus on what seemed like such a straightforward issue led many to doubt the qualifications of their leaders for office. Governor Don Sieglman had placed a premium in his campaigning on passing voter identification. As racial divisions proved intractable in the state legislature and Sieglman's political career suffered, both he and other white lawmakers passed an array of policies which disproportionately hurt Blacks in the state. Over the course of the voter identification debate, the state's white political leaders blocked a \$4.5 million appropriation to Tuskegee University, a historically Black university in the state, and cut other spending for poor children in the Black Belt.³⁰⁷ In an apparent effort to shore up conservative white votes during the voter identification battle, Governor Sieglman also strengthened the state's welfare sanctions and pushed for drug

²⁹⁹ Carns, "Interview with the Author."

³⁰⁰ Rawls, "Governor Pushing Voter-ID Passage."

³⁰¹ White, "Governor to Attempt Voter-ID Bill Again."

³⁰² "Blacks on House Panel Back Bill Requiring State Voter ID."

³⁰³ Editorial, "Election Law Look Complete Review of State Election Process Called For."

³⁰⁴ Editorial, "Carding Voters Important to Pass Some Form of Voter ID."

³⁰⁵ Brown, "Readers' Opinions."

³⁰⁶ Marshall, "Readers' Opinions."

³⁰⁷ Editorial, "Race and Bad Votes."

screening for welfare recipients, a stance not taken by any conservative legislators in 1997.³⁰⁸ Unresponsive to a strong anti-poverty agenda, Sieglman's "political calculus apparently was, I've got those votes [from African-Americans] whether I help them or not."³⁰⁹ The voter identification battle ended with the Black Caucus agreeing to support the bill if the governor would sign a bill granting voting rights to ex-felons; however, after signing the voter identification bill the governor reneged on his promise and vetoed the ex-felon bill. Said a Black Caucus member, "His acts were acts of a coldblooded racist when he vetoed the bill."³¹⁰

Discussion and Summary

This chapter highlighted racial conflict as an explanation for when and how states with large Black populations pass punitive policies. The Georgia and Alabama case studies demonstrate that punitive welfare policies resulted after the activation of historical racial conflicts. These racial conflicts had three enduring effects on welfare policymaking. First, they determined whether a state's white residents viewed Black residents as a threat or whether they were openly resentful of Blacks. The activation of racial conflicts ignited racial resentments and polarized residents and advocates by race, fueling a push for punitive policies. Second, the frames used in these racial conflicts limited the availability of frames during welfare reform and made some frames, particularly racialized ones, more politically advantageous than others. Finally, these conflicts determined how much politicians stood to gain politically from passing punitive policies. However, the chapter also demonstrated that even when the conflicts that preceded welfare reform were not racialized, they had significant consequences for poverty politics by virtue of the categories of worth they employed, their framings, and their implications for electoral politics.

In Georgia, the explosion of a racial conflict over the Confederate emblem on the state flag generated concern among rural White voters about Black residents and interest groups which threatened their heritage and resources. Because of the flag debate, welfare entered the political arena in Georgia in a racially polarized atmosphere where white citizens demanded a crack down on a seemingly deviant Black population. Struggling to resuscitate his image after pushing for the flag change, the governor saw punitive welfare policies as an expedient way to ensure his re-election. In Alabama, tort reform debates monopolized the state political scene prior to and during welfare reform. This conflicts divided the state along non-racial lines, pitting lawyers and business people against consumer and civil justice groups. Advocates on both sides of the issue accused corporations and greedy lawyers of immoral practices which jeopardized the livelihood of the state's citizens and families. These framings provided discursive openings for anti-poverty advocates to champion lenient welfare reforms. Furthermore, because no historically-rooted racial conflicts were activated prior to welfare reform and no race-based advocacy groups advocated for lenient policies, anti-poverty advocacy groups gained considerable control over the framing of the welfare debate. As a result, politicians had less to gain from exploiting racial animosities or hatred to pass punitive welfare policies. If anything, the tort reform debates provided incentives to pass more supportive reforms.

The racial conflict theory of welfare policy development elaborates on existing theories about why and how large Black populations lead to weaker and stingier welfare policies. The

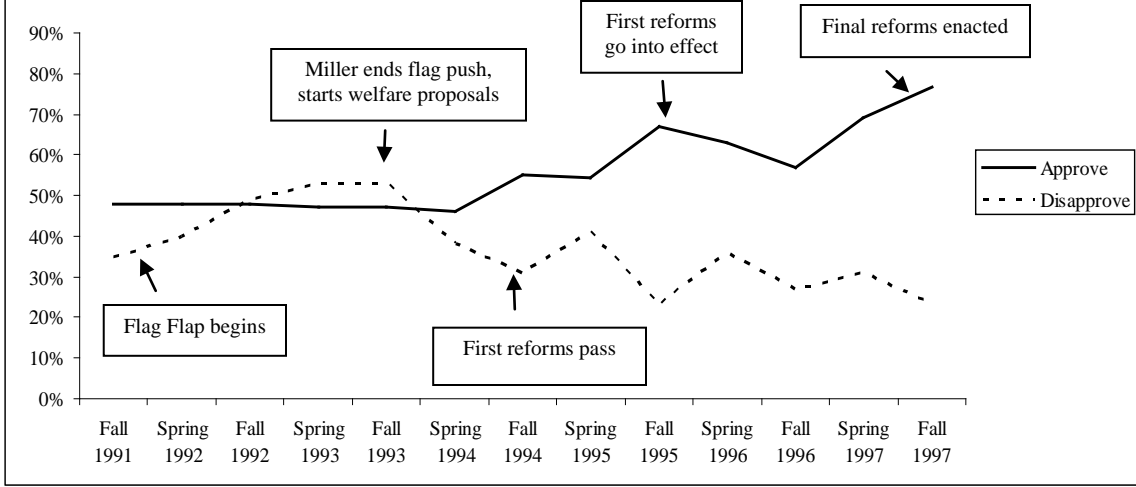
³⁰⁸ Sanders, "Interview with the Author."

³⁰⁹ Sznajderman, "Interview with the Author."

³¹⁰ White, "Riley Blasted on Felon Voting Bill."

larger a state's Black population and the more racial conflicts in the state's history, the more likely the re-activation of such conflicts in the present day. The Georgia and Alabama comparison reveals that racial resentment and threat are major facet of the race-welfare relationship in contemporary society, but explanations of welfare policymaking cannot be reduced to these issues alone. Furthermore, the comparison suggests that the explicit introduction of race into policy debates does not necessarily make political appeals less effective. In Georgia, even when Black advocacy groups declared punitive welfare reforms to be racist or accused the governor of race-coding, politicians still gained politically from advancing punitive policies. A final finding from the chapter is that the mere act of advocating against punitive reforms harmed the endeavors of race-based organizations. When the NAACP, GLBC, or SCLC lobbied in Georgia, their activism re-ignited concerns among white voters of a demanding Black populace and fueled claims for punitive control policies.

Figure 3.1: Georgia Welfare Milestones and Approval Ratings for Governor Zell Miller



Chapter 4 The Magic Lure: Hispanics, Immigration, and the Racialization of Welfare

In 2010, the Arizona state legislature passed SB 1070, the Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act. This highly controversial measure garnered national attention for being the strictest state-level anti-immigration law in the United States, requiring non-citizens to carry their documentation with them at all times and giving police the power to stop anyone they suspect might be in the country illegally. For many, the passage of SB 1070 reinforced Arizona's image as a politically conservative and anti-immigrant state. In the public eye, California posed a stark contrast given its long history of immigration and its liberal politics.

These contemporary accounts of California and Arizona obscure a surprisingly complex and often contentious history of politics, race, and immigration in these states. Despite its current reputation as the epitome of progressivism and racial harmony, political liberalism in California has long been tempered by persistent and often extreme racial distrust, discrimination, and conflict. The Republican Party, associated increasingly with a "get tough" approach to welfare and immigration, has consistently played a major role in state politics, both in the governor's office and in the state legislature. Because state laws give counties significant sway in the policy-making process, Republican control of county-level offices has also filtered up to state politics, particularly with respect to welfare politics. Although California has long had one of the strongest social safety nets in the country,³¹¹ it has historically denied social rights to Mexican Americans, repatriating them based in part on claims about their dependence on welfare.³¹² Over the 19th and 20th centuries, California's Mexican population also encountered forced sterilizations, deeply ingrained racism, and odious property ownership and segregation laws.

Just as California's reputation belies its history, so too does Arizona's. The shift to Republican-dominated politics in Arizona did not occur until the mid-1990s. Prior to that point, the state's legislature was typically Republican-heavy, but the federal congressional delegation was split 4-4, Republican-Democrat. In the early 1990s the Arizona conservative coalition was not as strong as it had been in previous years. Indeed, Democrat Bill Clinton lost the state's electoral college votes by the narrowest of margins in the 1996 presidential election.³¹³ In the 1970s, Hispanic Democrats rose to political prominence in the state legislature. Furthermore, while state welfare benefit levels have historically been in the middle of the pack nationally, anti-immigrant sentiment did not reach its present level of virulence until the late 1990s and early 2000s, years after the passage of federal welfare reforms.

These trends reveal more similarities between the states' politics and race relations that might be expected today. Both had Republican governors in the 1990s who were vying for national prominence. Both had large Hispanic populations and histories of punitive welfare politics. Public opinion polls in 1996 also reveal that residents of each state were equally supportive of time limits for welfare receipt and equally likely to believe that Blacks and Hispanics were lazy.³¹⁴ Given their commonalities, scholars and the public had every reason to

³¹¹ Geen et al., *Income Support and Social Services for Low-Income People in California*.

³¹² Reese, *Backlash against Welfare Mothers*.

³¹³ Berman, *Arizona Politics and Government*.

³¹⁴ National Election Survey, *National Election Survey*. Questions: 961323, 961312, and 961313.

believe the two states would take a strict and punitive approach in enacting the 1996 law. However, California adopted the most lenient sanctions, work requirements, and time limits allowed by federal law while Arizona adopted punitive reforms. Why did their decision-making diverge so drastically in the wake of welfare reform? Why did California pursue such lenient strategies while Arizona adopted one of the most punitive policies in the nation?

In this chapter, I begin to answer this question by providing historical context to the comparison of these two western states. I show that the states' similarities extend beyond the quantitative variables presented in the first chapter. Prior to welfare reform, the states took similar approaches to anti-poverty reform efforts and had a shared history of racial conflict, exploitation, and protest. In fact, the history of racial strife and segregation among Anglos and Mexicans was in many ways more virulent in the more lenient state, California, than in Arizona. After reviewing these historical trajectories, I conduct a more explicit analysis of the 1996 reforms. Using content analysis of newspapers from each state at the time of welfare reform, I assess contemporary race relations and welfare politics in California and Arizona. To gauge the political and racial atmosphere in each state in the mid-1990s, I ask three specific questions of the dataset. First, I ask whether the prevalence or content of welfare stereotypes were more prevalent in one state than the other. This question emerges from the literature on welfare stereotyping and public opinion. Existing studies suggest that a coherent stereotype of welfare recipients pervades welfare policy debates and undermines support for generous social policies. Might differences in public stereotypes account for these disparate reform decisions?

Second, I examine whether welfare debates were more racialized in one state than the other. Typically content analyses of textual data ignore the direct use of racial terminology for clues about welfare policymaking, despite the evidence that implicit and explicit references to race have divergent impacts on policy debates and public opinion.³¹⁵ Here, I examine whether the different uses (both in frequency and content) of racial discourse might provide clues regarding the policy paradoxes under examination. Were welfare reform debates more racialized the more punitive state, as was the case with the southern states examined in Chapter 2? Or does the race-welfare relationship manifest differently in states with large Hispanic populations?

Third, I ask whether welfare reform arose in a different political environment or context in each state. Studies on social policy formation tend to examine only media stories and political debates which are explicitly related to welfare policy.³¹⁶ However, welfare policies likely reflect or animate other existing political and social conflicts. To assess this possibility, I specifically look to see which, if any, conflicts about immigration were activated in the years just prior to welfare reform efforts and analyze which cultural categories of worth were employed in each state.

My analyses indicate that welfare stereotypes were equally prevalent in the two states. Moreover, the content of these stereotypes varied little across the two states. These findings buttress the results from Chapter 2, suggesting that stereotype prevalence and content cannot account for the role of race in welfare policymaking. Welfare debates were also more openly racialized in California, the lenient state, than in Arizona, suggesting that racialization alone did not propel the states in different directions. However, a closer examination of the pre-existing conflicts in each state reveals key nuances about the intersection of race, immigration, and welfare politics in each state. In Arizona, political debates prior to welfare reform pitted

³¹⁵ Mendelberg, *The Race Card*.

³¹⁶ Hancock, *The Politics of Disgust*.

Mexican and Hispanic immigrants against citizens. These debates inflamed racial tensions, emboldening an anti-welfare guard. In California, the political conflicts that captured the state at the time of welfare reform were not racialized but rather juxtaposed undeserving “illegal” immigrants against worthy and law-abiding “legal” immigrants.

Mexican-Americans in the Southwest

Race relations in the Southwest have historically been very complex due to the diverse populations inhabiting the region. Unlike the Deep South where a racialized slave-based economy reinforced a Black-White divide, interactions between Mexicans, Native Americans, Anglos, and other groups structured the history of race relations and racial categorization in the Southwest. The first Mexicans in the region were not immigrants, however. At the close of the Mexican-American War, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ceded to the United States the contemporary states of California, Arizona, Texas, Nevada, Utah, Wyoming, Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, and New Mexico.³¹⁷ Approximately 50,000 Mexican nationals became U.S. citizens following the signing of the treaty. Despite their legal guarantee to citizenship rights, these Mexican-Americans faced considerable stigma and discrimination in the U.S. and were “slowly but surely relegated to an inferior, caste-like status in the region’s evolving social system”³¹⁸ Many Anglos viewed Mexicans as a mixed race, incapable of assimilation, little different from African-Americans or American Indians.

As economic development progressed following the treaty, the land-owning Mexican-American elite in the southwest saw their landholdings and their political influence collapse in the second half of the 19th century.³¹⁹ Around this time California’s economy shifted to commercial agriculture from a small-scale pastoral and subsistence farming economy. Mexican Americans lost their jobs and had to find work in agriculture where they had to accepted low-skilled low-status positions. A dual-wage structure consistently paid them less than white workers.³²⁰ Mexicans also became a small minority of the population very quickly as the gold rush spurred the in-migration of nearly 200,000 individuals to the state. A state-levied Foreign Miners Tax sought to discourage foreign prospectors, primarily Mexicans, from mining gold, and American prospectors forcibly removed Mexicans and other Latin Americans from the mines. Compounded by taxation shifts and the passage of arcane landholding laws, these economic and demographic changes prompted a drastic decline in Mexicans’ socioeconomic position during the gold rush era.³²¹ The political disenfranchisement of Mexican-Americans soon followed as white elites adeptly thrust Mexicans from political circles.

In Arizona during the 1870s and 1880s, government land grants to railroads and miners prompted industrial development in both agriculture and in mining. In the 20 years after the Gadsden Purchase a small elite of Mexicans, Anglos, and European immigrants dominated Arizona’s economy and politics. However, as in-migration from eastern states rose, a more distinct racial divide emerged as well. The Southern Pacific railway shifted the social landscape of the region, connecting the state’s mines to a broader national and international economy. The railway facilitated the rise of a racial hierarchy wherein Mexican Americans and Mexican

³¹⁷ Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors*.

³¹⁸ Nakano-Glenn, *Unequal Freedom*; Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors*, 13.

³¹⁹ Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines*.

³²⁰ Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors*.

³²¹ *Ibid.*; Jimenez, *Replenished Ethnicity*.

nationals were subordinate to Anglos.³²² Industrialized mining operations had the same effect as *enganchadores* (contract laborers) traveled into Mexico to recruit and bring back mine workers. These companies brought in their own Anglo managers and skilled laborers from eastern states, leaving Mexican and Indians the lowliest positions. Indigenous workers usually had the lowest paying jobs, followed by Mexicans.³²³ After statehood, the Arizona legislature passed English literacy laws and restricted voting rights to people who could read English, disproportionately disenfranchising the state's Mexican population. A coherent Mexican American identity began to emerge around this time by virtue of this new socio-economic position, persistent racism, and subordinate social status.³²⁴

By the 1920s, political and economic changes in Mexico sparked a wave of immigration to the Southwest.³²⁵ During this period, Mexican immigration briefly rivaled the biggest European immigrant flows of the late 19th century.³²⁶ In California, the expansion of the railroads and the growth of irrigated agriculture created a demand for labor that, thanks to official exclusions of immigrants from China and Japan, was increasingly met by Mexicans. By the 1920s, Mexicans comprised 75% of California's farm laborers, giving rise to a racialized group of wage laborers who were outside the mainstream socially, politically, and economically.³²⁷ In the railroad and agricultural industries in California as well as in the copper mines and cotton fields of Arizona, Anglos argued that Mexicans would "degrade" and "pauperize" European immigrant workers.³²⁸ Employers saw Mexicans as "docile and tractable [with] few ambitions," and they sought to keep the borders open to encourage immigration and a steady supply of cheap labor.³²⁹

The dawn of World War I created a new demand for labor in the United States; at the same time the Mexican Revolution exacerbated the flow of Mexicans across the border. In both Arizona and in California, World War I fueled an explosion in nativist sentiment, prompting labor unions and others to express increasingly anti-immigrant views. A strike began in Arizona in 1917 as Mexican and Slavic workers called for better wages and an end to the blacklisting of union members. Sheriff operatives raided the workers' homes and deported 12,000 mine workers. Known as the Bisbee deportation, the events marked "the most egregious instance of union busting in the WWI era."³³⁰

The Great Depression sparked a renewed scapegoating of immigrants in California and in Arizona, and cities nationwide organized campaigns to deport Mexican workers. The largest such campaign took place in Los Angeles which had the biggest concentration of Mexican immigrants in the country. Over 80,000 Mexican immigrants and native-born children were pressured to return to Mexico from 1929 to 1937.³³¹ For those Mexican communities remaining behind, life chances were dire. In Los Angeles, Mexican housing was rated the worst of all

³²² Meeks, *Border Citizens*.

³²³ Ibid.

³²⁴ Ibid.

³²⁵ Jimenez, *Replenished Ethnicity*; Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors*; Meeks, *Border Citizens*.

³²⁶ Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors*.

³²⁷ Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*.

³²⁸ Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors*; Meeks, *Border Citizens*.

³²⁹ Jimenez, *Replenished Ethnicity*; Meeks, *Border Citizens*; Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors*; Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*.

³³⁰ Meeks, *Border Citizens*, 107.

³³¹ Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors*.

groups, and infant mortality rates two to five times higher than for the general population. One Mexican area just outside Los Angeles had the highest infant mortality rate in the country.³³²

In the inter-war period, Mexican-American activism strengthened the struggle against poor working conditions and discrimination. Like the earlier strikes in Arizona's copper mines, California labor activists began to address Anglo discrimination, arguing that the low wages and poor working conditions reflected racial discrimination. Fortified by the support of *mutualistas*, mutual aid societies, over 160 strikes occurred in California from 1933 to 1937.³³³

The demand for labor during WWII created new higher-status job opportunities for Mexicans in the U.S. However, significant anti-immigrant sentiment accompanied war preparations.³³⁴ In 1942, the government-sponsored Bracero Program allowed employers to recruit farm workers from Mexico. By 1947, 220,000 *braceros* had participated in the program, with the majority working on farms in California.³³⁵ At the time, the government also turned a blind eye to undocumented immigration from Mexico in an effort to appease agricultural interests.³³⁶ Yet, pressure from nativist forces prompted the government to embark on Operation Wetback, a drive to repatriate undocumented workers and to force the Mexican government to agree to the renewal of the Bracero Program. In 1954, the U.S. Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) apprehended and detained over one million Mexican immigrants.³³⁷ In California in particular, INS sweeps terrorized Mexican communities, affecting citizen and non-citizen Mexicans alike and revitalizing the push for expanded social and political liberties for these communities.³³⁸

Second generation Mexicans in California faced significant obstacles to integration and encountered on-going discrimination and violence. Attacks on Mexican-American youth like the Zoot Suit riots sparked little outrage from the media who were unsympathetic to Mexican youth, blaming their troubles on their "primitive and backward culture."³³⁹ Mexican and African-American civil rights groups protested the enduring segregation in the state. Said one civil rights leader, "Everybody is upset about conditions in Mississippi and Birmingham but they should be upset about conditions in Los Angeles."³⁴⁰ Segregation and discrimination persisted throughout the Southwest although not necessarily in such violent forms as in California. Cities in both California and Arizona sponsored segregated picnics and public events.³⁴¹ Los Angeles remained gripped by unrelenting segregation. According to an observer in Arizona, "Phoenix was just like Mississippi. People were just as bigoted. They had segregation. They had signs in many places, 'Mexicans and Negroes not welcome.'"³⁴²

World War II and the G.I. Bill offered new opportunities for Mexican-Americans to integrate into mainstream American society. California and Texas were the epicenters of burgeoning Mexican-American activism, an activism focused on Chicano nationalism and pride,

³³² Ibid., 91.

³³³ Ibid., 101.

³³⁴ Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors*.

³³⁵ Calavita, *Inside the State*; Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors*.

³³⁶ Jimenez, *Replenished Ethnicity*.

³³⁷ Massey, Durand, and Malone, *Beyond Smoke and Mirrors*.

³³⁸ Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors*.

³³⁹ Ibid., 125.

³⁴⁰ HoSang, *Racial Propositions*, cf 60.

³⁴¹ HoSang, *Racial Propositions*; Meeks, *Border Citizens*.

³⁴² Meeks, *Border Citizens*, 160.

while similar efforts took on a more subdued integrationist tone in Arizona.³⁴³ In the 1970s, undocumented immigration resurfaced on the political scene as major news outlets published stories about the “influx...flood...invasion” of illegal immigrants.³⁴⁴ Arizona and California remained among the top immigrant receiving states in the 1980s and 1990s.³⁴⁵ From 1990 to 2000, the non-citizen population doubled in Arizona, inflaming concerns about immigration once again. Attacks on unauthorized immigration were more pernicious in California than in Arizona because migration trends funneled significantly more undocumented immigrants across the border at Tijuana than through the Arizona desert. By 1992, 62% of all legally admitted Mexicans intended to live in California and 60% of all unauthorized immigrants lived in the state.³⁴⁶

Over the second half of the 20th century, citizens in both Arizona and California took a conservative stance on racial and immigration issues. Arizona voters rejected initiatives to expand state-wide civil rights celebrations. In California, virtually every single civil rights or racial justice ballot initiative failed in the state from World War II to 2000.³⁴⁷ Voters rejected fair employment laws in 1946, repealed antidiscrimination legislation in housing in 1964, and ended school desegregation mandates in 1972 and 1979. California, along with Arizona, also terminated bilingual education in the 1980s. Symptomatic of wider fears, these anti-bilingual education measures “tapped into deep, deep feelings of resentment that voters have against immigrants who they perceive as being unwilling to learn English.”³⁴⁸ Gripped by balanced-budget conservatism, citizens and politicians in both states entered the 1990s with what HoSang calls an “enduring racial animus,” which directed not only diversity initiatives but, I will argue, the politics of social policy more generally.³⁴⁹

Poverty Politics in the Southwest

In addition to their rocky history of race relations and immigration politics, Arizona and California share somewhat similar approaches to welfare politics, particularly as they relate to Mexican Americans and other Hispanics. In the early part of the 20th century, Anglo social workers in the southwest viewed Mexicans as lazy, disease-ridden, and dependent on public assistance.³⁵⁰ Social workers and reformers contended that Mexicans received more relief than other groups and were more likely to rely on long-term charitable assistance, identifying Los Angeles as the epicenter of Mexican dependency.³⁵¹ It was these concerns, in part, which led Western states like California and Arizona to deny Old Age Assistance to non-citizens well into the mid-century.³⁵²

In California, concerns about the high fertility of Mexican Americans prompted a commitment to involuntary sterilization as a means of controlling the birth rates of Mexican

³⁴³ Meeks, *Border Citizens*; Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors*; Fatigoni, *The Contract With America: A.K.A. the Right Wing's Plan to Bulldoze Minorities*; Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American*.

³⁴⁴ Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors*, 188.

³⁴⁵ Durand, Massey, and Parrado, “The New Era of Mexican Migration to the United States.”

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁷ HoSang, *Racial Propositions*.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, cf 154.

³⁴⁹ HoSang, *Racial Propositions*.

³⁵⁰ Fox, “The Boundaries of Social Citizenship: Race, Immigration, and the American Welfare State, 1900-1950.”

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*

³⁵² Hanson, “Arizona Juggles Old-Age Aid Laws.”; Brilliant, *The Color of America Has Changed*.

women.³⁵³ A leader in the national eugenics movement, California carried out one-third of all forced sterilizations from 1909 to 1979.³⁵⁴ Chiding Mexicans for their inability to assimilate and their poor work ethic, social workers in California and in Arizona lobbied for restrictions on immigration and even participated in the repatriation of Mexicans into the 1930s.³⁵⁵

Despite these concerns about Mexican dependency, California and Arizona adopted different levels of benefit provision as early as the first quarter of the 20th century. California developed extensive public relief programs while Arizona and other southwestern states pursued more moderate plans, fearful that generous welfare programs would attract “a flood of migration from Mexico.”³⁵⁶ Although California’s relief programs were more generous, Arizona was the first state in the country to enact old-age and mothers’ pensions.³⁵⁷ Due to its substantial Native American population, Arizona also relied heavily on federal poverty relief, despite its public anti-welfare stance.

Post-World War II both California and Arizona earned a reputation as innovators in welfare relief programs, passing work requirements and restricting eligibility for AFDC in the 1950s. Anti-Mexican and anti-Black organizations led the charge against welfare, alleging that racial minorities depended too heavily on welfare assistance and taxpayer generosity.³⁵⁸ Over the next decades, the tax revolt exacerbated racial divides and white voters in California and Arizona embraced increasingly anti-welfare stances, fearful that their tax dollars were supporting programs for idle and unworthy recipients.³⁵⁹

Nevertheless, by the early 1990s, both states opted *not* to cut AFDC benefit levels. In California, voters turned down an initiative in 1992 to cut welfare benefits, and, that same year, Arizona Governor Fife Symington refused benefit cuts as well, claiming that the state could not “tolerate a 5 percent decrease in the AFDC benefits for the poorest of the poor.”³⁶⁰ As was the case in the 1950s, however, both California and Arizona were the vanguard in welfare reforms in the early 1990s, passing additional work requirements for welfare recipients and restricting the terms of AFDC participation in the years leading up to the federal welfare reforms. As a result, both states confronted the federal mandate to reform their welfare programs having recently experimented with stricter AFDC requirements.

Politics in California and Arizona in the 1990s

These histories of welfare experimentation and racial conservatism suggest that California and Arizona would approach the welfare reforms of the 1990s from similar angles. However, they did not. Did these similarities between California and Arizona extend to welfare policies and race relations in the welfare reform era? As with the southern states, I address this question through content analysis of news stories from both states around the time of welfare reform. I use this analysis to explore possible explanations for why California and Arizona,

³⁵³ HoSang, *Racial Propositions*; Fox, “The Boundaries of Social Citizenship: Race, Immigration, and the American Welfare State, 1900-1950.”; *Stop Forced Sterilization Now*.

³⁵⁴ Fox, “The Boundaries of Social Citizenship: Race, Immigration, and the American Welfare State, 1900-1950.”

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*; Meeks, *Border Citizens*.

³⁵⁶ Berman, *Arizona Politics and Government*, 153.

³⁵⁷ A court later voided the old-age and mothers’ pension measures because of poor drafting. Berman, *Arizona Politics and Government*.

³⁵⁸ Reese, *Backlash against Welfare Mothers*; Berman, *Arizona Politics and Government*; Meeks, *Border Citizens*.

³⁵⁹ Edsall and Edsall, *Chain Reaction*; Berman, *Arizona Politics and Government*.

³⁶⁰ Ryle, “Tax Cuts at Whose Cost?”

despite their similarities, passed such contrasting approaches to welfare reform. I revisit the same hypotheses explored in Chapter 2 for Georgia and Alabama (stereotype prevalence, stereotype content, racialization, and issue activation) as well as an additional hypothesis about constructions of citizenship.

To revisit the hypotheses presented in Chapter 2, the stereotype prevalence and content hypotheses reflect consistent findings or claims from the literature on racial attitudes, welfare, and racial resentment. These bodies of work suggest that the prevalence of negative welfare stereotypes and the content of those stereotypes might shift the direction of state policymaking. For example, perhaps California passed lenient reforms because state residents harbored few stereotypes about welfare recipients or because the stereotypes they did have were not potent enough to fuel anti-welfare sentiment. These hypotheses assume that public opinion is a central force behind welfare policy decisions. The racialization hypothesis arises from the literature on racial priming and suggests that welfare reform decisions will be more punitive in areas where welfare is implicitly racialized and more lenient when welfare politics is overtly racial. Building on this racialization hypothesis, I also explore the possibility that variations in welfare policy outcomes in the western states reflect different constructions of citizenship. This citizenship hypothesis echoes themes from research on boundary-making which eschews the *a priori* acceptance of socially-based categories of difference and instead encourages scholars to focus on the construction of said categories and their implications. Given this claim, it is possible that the different welfare decisions made in Georgia and Alabama reflect differing constructions of citizenship and immigration. Finally, the issue activation hypothesis emerges from the literature on racial formation and issue evolution. Although rarely considered together, these theories suggest that the content and structure of racial conflicts shape state-level responses to welfare reform mandates.

To test these hypotheses, I draw on content analysis of local media stories. The foundation for this content analysis is a dataset of 500 articles published between 1993 and 1997 and derived from the largest newspaper in each state: *The Los Angeles Times* and *The Arizona Republic*. These papers had the largest total circulation in their respective states in 1996 and had a wide geographic circulation beyond their home city. As mentioned in Chapter 2, I opted to code local news stories for two reasons. First, most Americans receive their news from local papers rather than national ones.³⁶¹ Second, the local news media in a state provides a better opportunity to analyze the content of local debates and to assess contemporary and local conflicts about race and welfare than does the national news media. While national media do influence local agenda-setting, these effects diminish when the political initiative at hand is local in scope, as were state-level welfare debates.³⁶²

The data for this content analysis come from a computerized search of LexisNexis Academic. To create the sample, a research assistant and I searched for articles containing the term “welfare” for each state for each year. This initial search yielded upwards of 3000 news stories per state per year. We then read through each story and retained only those stories which met two characteristics. First, the articles remained in the dataset only if they used the term “welfare” to refer to means-tested assistance for low-income individuals. This meant excluding from the sample all stories about animal welfare, corporate welfare, agricultural welfare, and

³⁶¹ Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, *Online Papers Modestly Boost Newspaper Readership*.

³⁶² Gibson and Hester, “The Agenda-Setting Function of National Versus Local Media: A Time-Series Analysis for the Issue of Same-Sex Marriage.”

general stories about the “welfare and well-being” of individuals or communities. Second, we retained only those articles about the state in question. This meant that we excluded from the sample those stories which only addressed federal welfare reform. This procedure excluded a significant portion of stories from the sample (see Table 4.1).

After creating a dataset of relevant news stories for each state, we then randomly selected fifty stories per state per year to create the final dataset. To reach this final figure, we retained every Nth article in the sample depending on the number of stories available in the entire universe. For example, if there were 100 relevant stories about welfare for a specific year we retained every second article for the final sample. Because the newspapers differ substantially in the number of articles they publish per day, the percentage of stories retained for the final sample varied significantly across the states (see Table 4.1). The dataset includes approximately 30% of the total available Arizona stories but only 11% of the total California stories.

To code the data I used Atlas.ti 5.2. Quotations, the primary measure for the software, represent each paragraph in a story as they appeared in the computerized document. It should be noted that these quotations are not identical in size due to variations in the page constraints and the authors and editors of the papers. Many of the paragraphs were only one or two sentences long which resulted in an artificially high number of quotations. Consequently, percentage of paragraphs with codes is smaller than would have been the case had paragraphs been longer. The final sample of Arizona articles contained 4332 quotations as compared to 4236 for California. Very roughly, this equates to 89 quotations per story for Arizona and 85 for California.

A research assistant and I coded the full sample of stories, each coding every other story in the sample to limit bias. Before beginning the coding process in earnest we each coded a random sample of 15 stories from each paper. We compared our codes to standardize the coding instrument and make necessary changes to the specifications of each code. We also conducted intercoder reliability tests on 15 stories per state. All codes with an intercoder reliability rate of less than 70% were dropped. The overall intercoder reliability rate for the Alabama-Georgia codes was 76%.³⁶³

Drawing on these results, I find little support for the stereotype hypotheses or the racialization hypothesis. In fact, similar to the results presented for the southern states in Chapter 2, I find no evidence for the stereotype prevalence and content hypotheses. The data show that stereotypes were identical in prevalence and in content across the two states; however, on the whole welfare stereotypes were much less prevalent in the western states than in the southern states. I do, however, find welfare debates were more overtly racialized in the lenient state. Also, while debates about welfare in California portrayed illegal immigrants as a drain on welfare, the construction of citizenship in Arizona demonized all non-citizens regardless of their legal status. The data also provide support for the issue activation hypothesis, suggesting that the activation of racial cleavages prior to welfare reform may have pushed states to pass more punitive welfare policies.

Stereotypes

The first set of tests used local news stories as an indicator of public stereotype prevalence to test the visibility of welfare stereotypes in each state. The long-standing emphasis

³⁶³ This rating is significantly higher than in other similar studies (see Hancock 2004).

on the African-American “welfare queen” both in popular knowledge and in academic research minimizes the extent to which welfare stereotypes have been applied historically to Hispanics as well. Over the 20th century, Mexicans in particular have encountered virulent and negative constructions of their reliance on public benefits and, correspondingly, their presumed engagement with illicit and immoral activities.

Historically, narratives about Hispanics and welfare use centered around constructions of “The Mexican Dependency Problem.”³⁶⁴ In the decades prior to the Great Depression, social workers in the Southwest viewed Mexicans as a drain on taxpayers because of their presumed reliance on public outdoor relief. Implicit in this construction of Mexican dependency was a belief that Mexicans lacked ambition and a solid work ethic. Social workers actively argued for restrictions on Mexican immigration based on their belief that Mexicans were incapable of assimilating into U.S. society.³⁶⁵ After the stock market crash in 1929, these concerns about Mexican dependency spread from the Southwest across the country.

Not only did prevailing discourse characterize Mexicans as lazy and dependent on public relief, Mexicans rapidly became associated with “illegal” immigration in the 1920s.³⁶⁶ Legitimized by the 1924 Immigration Act, the division between legal and illegal aliens permeated U.S. immigration enforcement and deportation policies. While European and Canadian immigrants were disassociated from the “illegal” category, characterizations of Mexicans as illegal stymied their integration into American society and fueled another set of stereotypes of Mexican-Americans which justified exclusion from the polity.

Fears about Mexican dependency and illegality continued over the course of the 20th century, reaching a new form in the 1970s. At that point, new fears arose that Mexicans were planning to “reconquer” the Southwest virtue of their refusal to assimilate. This alarmist reconquest narrative characterized Mexicans as depleting the country’s welfare, education, and medical resources and was buttressed by stereotypes of Latino dependence on welfare and of Latina hyper-fertility.³⁶⁷ Anti-immigrant groups argued that not only would mainstream cultural traditions disappear over time, Mexicans specifically and Hispanics in general would demographically take over the United States, depriving white citizens of access to welfare, medical, and educational services. Through the 1990s, national news media, politicians, and some prominent academics continued to portray Hispanics as a threat to national security (due to their presumed high birth rates and criminal tendencies) and a drain on national resources.

In the 1990s, public attention to Latino welfare use skyrocketed. Politicians drew increasing attention to immigrant use of welfare both to criticize the social welfare system and to push for heightening immigration restriction.³⁶⁸ Accompanying depictions of out-of-control Latina welfare use, especially in the mid-1990s, was a generalized “Latino threat” narrative which depicted Hispanic immigrants as unwilling to assimilate and as a demographic threat to U.S. culture and resources, particularly social services like welfare.³⁶⁹ Politicians began

³⁶⁴ Fox, “The Boundaries of Social Citizenship: Race, Immigration, and the American Welfare State, 1900-1950.”

³⁶⁵ Fox, “Three Worlds of Relief: Race, Immigration, and Public and Private Social Welfare Spending in American Cities, 1929.”

³⁶⁶ Ngai, “The Strange Career of the Illegal Alien.”

³⁶⁷ Chavez, *The Latino Threat*.

³⁶⁸ Fox, “The Changing Color of Welfare?”; Chavez, *The Latino Threat*.

³⁶⁹ Chavez, *The Latino Threat*.

referring to welfare as “the magic lure” which tempted Mexican immigrants to cross the border into the United States.³⁷⁰

Although there is significant scholarly agreement on the relationship between white attitudes about Blacks and public opposition to welfare, the issue has been explored significantly less as it relates to Hispanics. While some studies have found that white views of Blacks and Hispanics are equally negative, others assert that white attitudes about Hispanic immigrants and welfare are not as strong or as consequential as their views about Blacks.³⁷¹ There is also speculation that when Hispanic-directed racial resentment and anti-immigrant sentiment rise, anti-Hispanic attitudes will become more closely associated with public opposition to welfare. These findings and claims raise the question of whether differences in welfare policymaking in the Western states might reflect variations in the prevalence or content of welfare stereotypes. Perhaps, Arizona passed more punitive welfare policies than California because racialized stereotypes of welfare recipients were more prominent or more powerful in that state.

To assess the relationship between stereotypes and welfare policymaking, I rely on this dataset to answer two questions. First, were stereotypes of welfare recipients more prevalent in the states which passed punitive policies? Second, were certain specific stereotypes more consequential in the punitive states than in the lenient states? As in Chapter 2, I answer these questions using a modified version of Hancock’s coding scheme for the public identity of the welfare queen.³⁷² For the analyses in this chapter For Arizona and California, I also added two new stereotypes to the scheme: *Illegal Immigrants* and *Immigrant Drain*. Derived from a careful analysis of existing research on welfare and immigration, these codes capture welfare stereotypes presumed to reflect sentiments specifically about Latino immigrants. The *Illegal Immigrant* code reflects the assumption in existing studies that illegal immigrants are overrepresented on the welfare rolls. The *Immigrant Drain* code, on the other hand, echoes the Latino Threat narrative outlined above and the claim that immigrants place an undue burden on the social welfare, even at times coming to the United States with the expressed purpose of receiving welfare benefits. Table 4.2 lists the welfare queen stereotype codes and their descriptions for the analysis in this chapter.

Stereotype Prevalence

As with the results from Georgia and Alabama, there appears to be no connection between the prevalence of welfare queen stereotypes and the passage of punitive policies in California and Arizona. Overall, 10% of Arizona quotations contained at least one welfare queen stereotype as compared to 11% of California quotations, a statistically insignificant difference (see Table 4.3). In addition to statistical insignificance, the higher rate of welfare queen stereotypes appeared in the more lenient state thus making it unlikely that the presence of such stereotypes predicts the passage of punitive policies. It is worth noting that welfare queen stereotypes were far less common in Arizona and California than in Georgia and Alabama. Whereas over 20% of quotations in the Georgia and Alabama articles used stereotypes of welfare recipients, only around 11% of quotations in Arizona and California contained such stereotypes.

³⁷⁰ Associated Press, “Illegal Immigrants Face Loss of California Health Benefits.”

³⁷¹ Edsall and Edsall, *Chain Reaction*; Lamont, *The Dignity of Working Men: Morality and the Boundaries of Race, Class, and Immigration*; Fox, “The Changing Color of Welfare?”

³⁷² Hancock, *The Politics of Disgust*.

These stereotypes lend support to claims that the association between Hispanics and welfare is less strong than is the association between Blacks and welfare.

Stereotype Content

The content of the stereotypes in each state was also similar (see Table 4.4). As was the case in the southern states, two of the most common stereotypes of welfare recipients in California and Arizona were *Lazy/Don't Work* and *Pathological Family*. In the western states, *Drain Collective Resources* was also one of the most prominent stereotypes, perhaps reflecting the enduring impact of the economic recession of the 1990s on the region. In one illustration of all three stereotypes, Eloise Anderson, head of California's Department of Social Services, wrote in an op-ed piece for *The Los Angeles Times*,

... There is a growing mass of people who do not contribute to the money-pool, but instead take from it, returning little and surely not carrying their share of their load. For them, that famous dream appears to be a "free ride." Hundreds of thousands of children are born each year into this... Under our current system, the ranks of the "needy" who require more and more of the tax dollar for food, shelter and services continue to swell. Those services and benefits are costly; in fact now, in California, if you have more children while on welfare, your "need standard" goes up-and so does the amount of benefits the state, read that "the taxpayers," gives you.³⁷³

In advocating for more punitive welfare measures, Anderson claims that welfare recipients get a "free ride" and "do not contribute to the money-pool" by working and paying taxes. These individuals not only fail to work, placing undue strain on public resources, they bear "hundreds of thousands of children" who allow their parents to obtain even more in cash benefits.

Other newspaper articles in California quoted political figures who spouted stereotypes about the work ethic and hyper-fertility of welfare recipients as well as of the threat they posed to collective resources. In an article about California's welfare reform efforts, State Legislator Mike Thompson, who would later take a leading role on the state's welfare reform committee, said, "Welfare discourages marriage and it discourages family unification."³⁷⁴ Stereotyping the work ethic of welfare recipients, Governor Pete Wilson said for one news story that "no able-bodied adult has a right to refuse honest work and expect the taxpayers to continue supporting him on welfare. Welfare should be a safety net, not a hammock."³⁷⁵

New stories in Arizona echoed these same stereotypes about laziness, pathological families, and collective resources. For example, one reader wrote in to the *Arizona Republic*,

Illegitimate children are not the same as legitimate children and should not be treated the same way. Until the government realizes this and stops encouraging out-of-wedlock children with their welfare and paternity policies, the children living in single-parent homes will continue to skyrocket.³⁷⁶

³⁷³ Anderson, "Welfare Cuts."

³⁷⁴ Ellis, "In Tightening Welfare, State Encourages Marriage Benefits."

³⁷⁵ Editorial, "Special Guide To California's Elections Governor's Race."

³⁷⁶ Anonymous, "It's Hardly a 'Love' Child."

Like the quotes from the California news stories above, this Arizona story stereotypes welfare recipients as producing “skyrocketing” numbers of illegitimate children, and, in fact, argues (as did Eloise Anderson and Mike Thompson in California) that the welfare system itself encourages single-parenthood and out-of-wedlock childbearing. Invoking the *Drain Collective Resources* stereotype, an editorialist at the newspaper argued that, “Huge sums of tax money are being spent to create succeeding ranks of undereducated and politically dependent citizens, who, in turn, generate proliferating public costs for welfare and public-safety programs.”³⁷⁷ Bringing stereotypes about welfare recipients’ work ethic into the mix, State Senator Tom Patterson argued in yet another story that “the [welfare] system gives pregnant teens an incentive to move out of their parents’ houses and not work. It’s wrong to say that the welfare of children depends on more government programs [like welfare]. The welfare of children depends on strong families and [whether] parents get jobs.”³⁷⁸ These stories and quotes emphasize the similarities in welfare stereotype content across California and Arizona. Not only were the same three stereotypes (*Lazy/Don’t Work*, *Pathological Family*, and *Drain Collective Resources*) the most prominent in both states, of these three only *Pathological Family* was significantly different between the two states, with more references in California (the lenient state) than Arizona (see Table 4.3).

In the entire content analysis for the western states, these three stereotypes were the only codes that appeared in more than 1.4% of quotations. Of the remaining ten codes, seven occurred more frequently in California. The analysis shows that for all ten of these other codes the differences between the two states were very small and in most cases statistically insignificant, including for the newly tested *Illegal Immigrant* and *Immigrant Drain* codes. To reiterate, these codes emerged from existing studies of welfare and immigration wherein the rise in Hispanic immigration to the United States in the 1980s and 1990s prompted close associations with immigration and welfare. Exemplifying the *Illegal Immigrant* stereotype, a local resident wrote a letter to the editor of *The Los Angeles Times* saying, “With Los Angeles County and the entire state on the verge of bankruptcy, it is comforting to know that some ‘local Latino elected officials’ have come together to form PRIDE, an illegal alien rights group. God forbid that they should lose their free health care and welfare benefits.”³⁷⁹ In this California quotation, a candidate for statewide office joined the *Illegal Immigrant* and the *Immigrant Drain* stereotypes:

Illegal immigration is one of the chief causes of the explosive growth in welfare programs that is bankrupting California. Our overburdened prison and public education systems are also strained by illegal immigration. Illegal is illegal, and the taxpayers of California cannot afford to pay for benefits to those here illegally.³⁸⁰

These two codes, despite their assumed overall presence in discourses about immigrants, did not surface frequently in news stories about welfare in either Arizona or California. The claim that illegal immigrants tended to rely on welfare surfaced less often than any other

³⁷⁷ Rooney, “Voucher System Would Deny Public Schools Their Captive Audience.”

³⁷⁸ Nichols, “Arizona’s Unwed Mothers Will Have To Go It Alone.”

³⁷⁹ Rivera, “Protecting Immigrants.”

³⁸⁰ Editorial, “Campaign Issues and Answers.”

stereotype in Arizona and was the second rarest stereotype to appear in California stories. While the *Immigrant Drain* stereotype appeared more regularly (the 4th and 6th most common stereotype in California and Arizona, respectively), the difference in occurrence between the two states was statistically insignificant.

The results in this section indicate that there were some differences in the content of welfare reform debates in California and Arizona, but that these differences likely do not account for their divergent policy trajectories. As with Georgia and Alabama it appears unlikely that the more lenient reforms passed in California resulted from a lack of welfare queen stereotypes in the state or that the strength of different stereotypes accounts for the different outcomes in California and Arizona. The two states did not differ significantly in the prevalence of stereotypes invoked in the years surrounding welfare reform. Similarly, they differed little in the content of the stereotypes invoked.

Racialization

Whereas Georgia and Alabama stories about welfare referred most frequently to *Blacks/African-Americans* and *Whites*, in both California and Arizona, *Latino/Hispanic* was by far the most frequently coded racial category. The following quotation criticizes stereotypes of Hispanic welfare abuse in Arizona:

They think all Hispanics, that we're all trouble, that we steal and we don't work for a living and we're just on welfare and we're in gangs and we carry guns, which we don't. They treat us all the same.³⁸¹

Despite the diversity in the U.S. Hispanic population, anti-immigrant and anti-Hispanic sentiment has typically targeted Mexican nationals and Mexican Americans.³⁸² As a result, I coded direct references to Mexicans as *Latino/Hispanic*. Unlike the above quotation, others, both in California and in Arizona, directly identified Mexicans as the perpetrators of welfare abuse. The below excerpt from a story about immigration in California exemplifies the tendency to equate welfare use with Mexican-Americans:

“You'd never guess we're six hours north of the border,” Hobbs said. “...My neighbor was trying to rent his house for \$1,100 a month. Well, here comes this Mexican lady with three bambinos and pregnant with a fourth. He asked her how she would pay, and she said 'no problem' and started talking about all this Section 8 and AFDC money she was getting.”³⁸³

That *Latinos/Hispanics* were the most common racial code in the dataset for both states offers support for suggestions made in the literature that the existence of a large Latino population in a state plays a role in discussions of welfare policymaking. However, although the code appeared more frequently than other racial codes in both states, references to *Latinos/Hispanics* were significantly and substantively more common in California (4.6%) than in Arizona (2.1%). Uses of less specific racial markers like “diversity” or “minority” also

³⁸¹ Roberts, “‘No Racism’ Boast Belies Police Acts.”

³⁸² Chavez, *The Latino Threat*; HoSang, *Racial Propositions*; Ono and Sloop, *Shifting Borders*.

³⁸³ Shaffer, “California Considers a Lid for Melting Pot: Proposition 187 Targets Illegal Aliens.”

appeared significantly more often in California (2%), the lenient state, than in Arizona (0.7%).³⁸⁴ These findings suggest that while the active racialization of welfare as Black fueled the passage of punitive policies (as revealed in Chapters 2 and 3), the corresponding racialization of welfare as Latino may have less of an effect on welfare policy development. As the next section shows, in these western states with large Latino populations, the constructions of citizenship, more so than the active racialization of welfare, shifted the direction of welfare policymaking.

While references to Hispanics were the most common of all racial references in both western states, it is also worth noting that the groups that received the second most references differed in Arizona and California. References to *Native Americans* were more common in Arizona welfare-related stories, typically overlapping with discussion of casino politics, as with the following quotation:

The people of Arizona support tribal gaming on reservation land, according to polls. They understand that there are clear social benefits linked to tribal gaming: it takes people off welfare rolls, creates tax-paying jobs and provides a means of self-sufficiency for Indian people.³⁸⁵

Although *Native Americans* were a major secondary reference group in Arizona, *Asian Americans* played that role more often in California (1.7% of quotations) than in Arizona (less than .03% of quotations). As the below excerpt demonstrates, the welfare debate in California clearly involved some discussion of how welfare reform efforts would alter the life chances of Southeast Asian refugees who depended on public assistance for their livelihood:

The [welfare reform] bill would allow refugees five years' worth of aid; the Norngs [a Cambodian family] are well past that limit. Mrs. Norng is a naturalized citizen, so it is unclear how much welfare aid the family might keep. Mr. Norng and their 15-year-old son receive disability aid, Supplemental Security Income. The other children receive Aid to Families with Dependent Children.³⁸⁶

That references to *Asian Americans* and *Native Americans* featured differently in welfare reform debates in Arizona and California clearly reflect different residential patterns among Native Americans and different historical patterns in immigration to the United States from Asia. Indeed, as of the 1990 census, approximately 1% of California residents self-identified as Native American versus 6% in Arizona. About 10% of California's population self-identified as Asian/Pacific Islander as compared to only 2% in Arizona. That news stories mirror these demographics is perhaps unsurprising. However, the trends do pose an interesting question which I will explore further in the next section and next chapter: did these different demographics and their related policy issues influence debates about Hispanic immigration and welfare?

Citizenship and Issue Activation

³⁸⁴ Twenty-percent of the Latino references in California stories were to Hispanic or Latino political leaders. This figure contrasts starkly to Arizona where less than one percent of stories mentioned Latino leadership.

³⁸⁵ Prescott, "It's Time to Let Indian People Manage Their Own Affairs."

³⁸⁶ Yarborough, "Aid Cuts: 'What Can I Do to Help My Family?'".

To determine which issues were activated in each state prior to welfare reform, I examined a subset of articles and identified the following policy arenas and frames as overlapping with welfare discussions: Budget, Crime Policy, Deadbeat Dad, Disability and Health, Education, Election/Campaign, Homelessness, Illegal Immigration, and Immigration (general). For example, one article in California brought a number of these areas together:

That aspect of the bill is expected to have dramatic impact in the Vietnamese community, where many of those who collect welfare receive SSI, which provides cash assistance for the elderly, disabled and blind. Of the 880 immigrants who receive SSI in Orange County, 95% are Vietnamese.³⁸⁷

Unlike the above quote which discusses immigration in a generalized fashion, not identifying the legal status of the Vietnamese individuals under discussion, this next quotation from an Arizona discusses welfare in the context of *Illegal Immigration* specifically and *Election Campaigns*:

Both Symington and Basha [candidates for governor] said increased economic opportunities on both sides of the border should reduce the flow of illegal immigration while allowing the Border Patrol to do a better job. Libertarian [candidate] John Buttrick said the real solution is to end the lure of welfare benefits in Arizona and the United States. “You attack the cause, not the effect,” Buttrick said. “And that is the welfare state.”³⁸⁸

As with the two southern states, welfare reform arose in each state amidst a different array of concurrent political debates in Arizona and California and also within different narratives about race, citizenship, and immigration (see Table 4.5). In California, stories about welfare frequently addressed the political issue of *Illegal Immigration* (nearly 7% of quotations) and the *State Budget* (6% of quotations). In Arizona, the codes for *Election Campaigns* (4%) and *Education* (4%) appeared most frequently in the dataset. *Immigration (General)* was one of the most frequently occurring policy codes in both states.

Because immigration was so prominent an issue in each state, I also broke down the *Immigration (General)* and *Illegal Immigration* policy codes in an effort to identify the significant differences or similarities in state-level immigration debates, paying particular attention to the categories of legal status cited in stories. Specifically, I coded quotations about immigration policy and illegal immigration policy based on references to distinct “categories” of immigrants: *Generalized Immigrant*, *Illegal Immigrant*, and *Legal Immigrant* references (see Table 4.6). By examining which immigrants news stories implicated or identified, I could get some sense of the salient divides in each state with respect to immigration and citizenship and assess the worth or legitimacy afforded to each. For example, the following quotation from a news story in Arizona references *Generalized Immigrants* without referring directly to legal or illegal status:

You are mixing apples with oranges. You equate the quality of today's immigrants with those of the early part of the century. A review of recent articles in the

³⁸⁷ Dizon, “Waiver Law May Help Infirm Win Citizenship.”

³⁸⁸ Pitzl, “Mexico Question a Tough Nut for Governor, Rivals How to Balance Illegals, Trade.”

Republic contradicts your philosophy. The impact of today's immigrants, mainly from third world nations, does not add to the U.S. economy or culture, but rather adds to street crime, burdens our welfare system and overcrowds our already strained prison system.³⁸⁹

This California story, on the other hand, specifically refers to *Illegal Immigrants*:

How can this country have these requirements and the United States allow illegal immigrants to obtain welfare, the finest in health care and free schooling and we, the American people, are paying for it? What a joke on us.³⁹⁰

Finally, this last quotation from California references *Legal Immigrants*:

The vast majority of Latino immigrants in Los Angeles County are legal residents who work hard, earn relatively little, tend to live in traditional family settings and are less likely than other low-income people to receive public assistance, according to a study scheduled for release today.³⁹¹

My analysis of these immigrant sub-codes revealed that California had more references to each type of code than did Arizona (see Table 4.6). Importantly, the patterns within each code are interesting, however. California quotations had more than three times as many explicit references to *Illegal Immigrants* than did Arizona codes and nearly six times as many explicit references to *Legal Immigrants*. Of the quotations mentioning *Illegal Immigrants*, California quotations were twice as likely as Arizona quotations to also mention *Legal Immigrants*, a statistically significant difference at $p < .05$. The following quotation exemplifies the tendency in California to discuss immigrants in terms of their legal status rather than more generally as in the first quotation above:

Wilson outlined a sweeping immigration reform plan in Los Angeles on Monday that called for a constitutional amendment to deny citizenship to the children of unlawful residents. He also recommended in an open letter to President Clinton that the federal government cut off health and education benefits for illegal immigrants and prepare a tamper-proof identification card to ensure that public services are provided only to legal residents.³⁹²

The quotation clearly pits legal immigrants against illegal immigrants, asserting that the former deserve access to public services whereas the latter are undeserving. Wilson's distinction reflects how immigration in California was more commonly portrayed as a divide between legal and illegal immigration than it was in Arizona. This is important, showing that a more targeted anti-illegal immigrant sentiment prevailed in California debates. In Arizona, however, stories were more likely to reference *General Immigrants* than either *Illegal Immigrants* or *Legal*

³⁸⁹ Farnsworth, "Illegal Immigration Killing Us."

³⁹⁰ Pearson, "Moving to Mexico."

³⁹¹ McDonnell, "Study Seeks to Debunk Stereotypes of Latinos Prop. 187."

³⁹² Leshner, "Wilson Blames the U.S., Not Illegal Immigrants."

Immigrants, framing immigration as a generalized public issue, with little difference between illegal immigration and legal immigration.

Interesting patterns also arise in examining the co-occurrence of race and immigration codes (see Table 3.10). The *Latino/Hispanic* code was more likely to co-occur with the immigration codes in Arizona than in California (although the difference for *General Immigration* is statistically insignificant). This pattern indicates that debates about immigration were more often race-coded in Arizona (specifically they were more often about Latino immigrants).³⁹³ The following two quotations demonstrate this trend in Arizona to conflate Hispanics and illegal immigrants in Arizona. The first quotation is from Arizona whereas the second is from California:

Referring to your Sept. 25 article "Advocates fear rising resentment against immigrants in U.S." (read Third World Hispanic illegal immigrants). An article the following day states the economic cost to the United States is \$29 billion a year. Who are these brain-dead advocates who fail to see the costs to the United States in dollars, welfare, health, crime, our education system and erosion of American culture?³⁹⁴

We don't want anybody to go hungry, we don't want anybody to go uneducated or uncared-for. We just want everybody who is here illegally to go home! And if you're in that foreign country thinking about coming here illegally, don't! The free-for-all is over!³⁹⁵ Campbell, "Judge Blocks Prop. 187."

These two quotations demonstrate the overarching trend regarding race and immigration narratives in Arizona and California. Both quotations clearly express animus toward undocumented immigrants, but only the first (the Arizona quotation) explicitly identifies these immigrants as Hispanic.

Summary and Implications

Frontier states with large Mexican populations, Arizona and California share a common history of racial oppression and tense debates about immigration. Despite California's history as a generous welfare state, both of these southwestern polities routinely accused Mexican Americans of being idle, inassimilable, and prone to welfare dependency and enforced stringent citizenship requirements for Old Age Insurance. These accusations fueled both anti-Mexican and anti-welfare sentiment throughout the 20th century. A more active Chicano movement and a larger Hispanic population kept issues of race and immigration front and center in California politics while they were increasingly emergent concerns in Arizona. Despite their different commitments to welfare generosity, both Arizona and California implemented strict AFDC work requirements as early as the 1950s and rejected calls for benefit reductions in the early 1990s.

³⁹³ The two welfare queen stereotypes about immigration were more likely to co-occur with the Latino code in Arizona than in California, but these co-occurrences were so small as to be irrelevant (between two and six quotations for each state out of over 4,000 total quotations per state).

³⁹⁴ Farnsworth, "Let Mexico Pay for Emigrants."

³⁹⁵ Campbell, "Judge Blocks Prop. 187."

News coverage of welfare reform efforts in the 1990s revealed on-going concerns in both states about pathological family structures in welfare recipient families and the burden placed on taxpayers by welfare recipients. That stereotypes were similar in prevalence and in content in both states indicates that stereotypes are unlikely to account for the divergent policy paths taken by the two states and, moreover, that stereotypes alone cannot account for the passage of punitive welfare policies. These findings confirm the results from Chapter 2. These similar patterns in welfare stereotyping, however, belie stark contrasts in the structure and content of welfare reform debates in California and Arizona. In Arizona, welfare reform discussions overlapped with immigration debates targeted at Hispanics generally and Mexicans in particular. In California, attacks on unauthorized immigrants immediately preceded welfare reform. These debates popularized particular frames of worth in the years leading up to welfare reform. Arizona's political debates pitted Mexican and Hispanic immigrants against citizens. In California, on the other hand, the political conflicts that captured the state at the time of welfare reform were not racialized but rather juxtaposed undeserving "illegal" immigrants against worthy and law-abiding "legal" immigrants. These findings suggest that public racialized conflicts about immigration may have pushed reform debates in a punitive direction in Arizona while the activation of different categories of worth in California limited support for punitive reforms. I explore this possibility further in the next chapter.

Chapter 4 Tables

Table 4.1: Sampling of News Stories, Western States

Full = Initial search; Relevant = Tally of relevant welfare stories

% Retained = % of stories retained for a sample of 50

	Arizona			California		
	Full	Relevant	% Retained	Full	Relevant	% Retained
1993	1251	155	32%	1708	476	11%
1994	1863	167	30%	2044	435	11%
1995	2008	146	34%	2212	423	12%
1996	1576	122	41%	1973	411	12%
1997	1218	250	20%	2061	622	8%

Table 4.2: Welfare Stereotype Codes, Western States

Dimension	Description
Drain Collective Resources	Cash welfare programs take up too much of the national or state budget, sometimes at the expense of other more “legitimate” groups
Lazy/Don’t Work	Welfare recipients do not work and most do not work because they are lazy and don’t want to work – don’t include “workfare not welfare”
Long-Term Dependency	Welfare recipients remain on welfare too long; their children will grow up to be welfare recipients (thereby perpetuating the problems we have today); welfare becomes a way of life for recipients that is very hard to escape
Overly Fertile	Welfare mothers have too many children even though they cannot afford them and they often receive more benefits from having these children
Pathological Family	Welfare families do not have traditional family structures. Most are single-parent families or families with children born out of wedlock (illegitimacy); single parenthood and illegitimacy economic self-sufficiency; welfare is anti-family and welfare pol
Drug Users	Many welfare recipients have current or past problems with drug abuse
Crime	Many welfare users perpetuate crimes
Teen Mothers	Most welfare recipients are teens or teen mothers
Education	Welfare recipients don’t care about pursuing education or have little education
System Abusers	Most welfare recipients are getting assistance that they do not deserve because they are cheating the system or engaging in welfare fraud
Inner-City Resident	Most or all welfare recipients resident in the inner-city
Illegal Immigrants	Most welfare recipients are illegal immigrants
Immigrant Drain	Immigrants come to the U.S. to go on welfare and abuse public services

Table 4.3: Welfare Queen Stereotypes, California and Arizona

	PERCENT (QUOTATIONS)	
	Arizona	California
Total Negative Stereotype	10.60%	11.20%
Inner City *	0.10%	0.30%
Illegal Immigrants **	0.10%	0.40%
Overly Fertile	0.40%	0.40%
Education *	0.80%	0.40%
Crime	0.40%	0.60%
System Abuser	0.40%	0.60%
Teen Mothers **	1.10%	0.60%
Drug Users *	0.40%	0.70%
Long Term Dependency **	1.20%	0.70%
Immigrant Drain	0.90%	1.10%
Drain Collective Resources	1.60%	1.30%
Pathological Family **	1.40%	2.10%
Lazy/Don't Work	1.90%	2.10%

Table 4.4: Race in California and Arizona

		PERCENT (QUOTATIONS)	
		Arizona	California
Asian	***	0.23%	1.68%
Black/African-American	*	1.32%	0.83%
Latino/Hispanic	***	1.64%	4.60%
Native	*	1.43%	0.78%
Other Racial Terms/Markers	***	0.69%	2.05%
White	*	0.78%	1.20%

Table 4.5: Issue Activation in California and Arizona

		PERCENT (QUOTATIONS)	
		Arizona	California
Budget	***	2.56%	6.02%
Crime Policy	***	2.49%	1.39%
Deadbeat Dad	*	2.08%	2.79%
Disability and State Health Plans		0.95%	0.78%
Education	*	3.86%	2.97%
Election/Campaign	***	3.99%	2.01%
Homelessness	*	1.45%	1.04%
Illegal Immigration	***	1.89%	6.92%
Immigration (General)	***	3.32%	9.09%

Table 4.6: Immigration in California and Arizona

		PERCENT (QUOTATIONS)	
		Arizona	California
General Immigrant	***	1.59%	4.32%
Illegal Immigrant	***	0.99%	5.74%
Legal Immigrant	***	0.25%	0.15%
Co-Occurrence			
Illegal/Legal Immigrant	***	0.07%	12.00%

Table 4.7: Race and Immigration in California and Arizona

	PERCENT (QUOTATIONS)	
	Arizona	California
General Immigrant & Latino	40%	34%
Illegal Immigrant & Latino ***	31%	11%
Legal Immigrant & Latino ***	33%	16%

Chapter 5

“Thanks American Working Dummy!”: Legal and Social Citizenship on Welfare’s Western Front

In the mid-1990s, the halls of Congress filled with rancorous debate about how best to transform a public aid system viewed as debilitating for the poor and wasteful for the country. While members of Congress weighed competing plans, Arizona and California leapt ahead of federal lawmakers, initiating early attacks on their own welfare programs and restructuring the rules of welfare participation. Embarking on these efforts, both states not only struggled to reach consensus among competing parties, they did so while the flames of recent immigration conflicts still burned. As the analyses in the previous chapter suggested and the results in this chapter confirm, these immigration conflicts inflamed different social cleavages, one focusing on immigration and the other on race.

In this chapter, I use archival data, public opinion polls, and interviews with state legislators and welfare advocates to apply the racial conflict model to Arizona and California. Much like Georgia, racial conflicts in Arizona fueled the passage of punitive welfare policies in these western states. However unlike in Georgia, welfare reforms in Arizona snuck through the legislature with little fanfare or public attention. They were championed by a newly elected class of conservative legislators with strong business ties and by a governor suffering from ethics allegations. Sparked by rising immigration levels from Mexico, a general anxiety about Hispanics (not differentiated as legal or illegal) pervaded discussions about welfare, facilitating the passage of punitive policies. As suggested by the content analysis in the previous chapter, a debate about immigration also preceded welfare reforms in California. There, anti-illegal immigration measures triggered public suspicions of a population of individuals, mostly Mexican, who were cheating the state’s citizen population and abusing permissive welfare programs. According to legislative leaders and public records, constructions of deservingness pitted “undeserving” illegal immigrants against “deserving” legal immigrants. These constructions, perhaps less racialized in California due to the diversity of the state’s immigrant population, filtered into welfare reform debates. Because the 1996 welfare reforms focused solely on legal immigrants, citizens and politicians were less concerned about forcing punitive measures. By demonizing undocumented immigrants, valorizing documenting immigrants, and sparking Latino political participation across the state, Proposition 187 guaranteed that the state with the “most notorious reputation for immigrant bashing” would become the most generous in terms of its welfare policies for non-citizens.³⁹⁶ Furthermore, these immigration conflicts created a new cadre of Latino elected officials and a new Latino voting base who demanded more lenient welfare programs. Republicans stood to lose politically from passing more punitive policies.

These findings not only support the racial conflict model, they demonstrate how seemingly unrelated political debates become coupled in both the narratives they use and the political realities they create. Although the racial conflict model explains how race fueled the passage of punitive policies in Arizona just as in Georgia, the addition of the California example suggests that the race-welfare relationship differs for African Americans and Latinos. In brief, the California analysis indicates that Latinos may be able to position themselves more easily than

³⁹⁶ Hagan et al., “The Effects of Recent Welfare and Immigration Reforms on Immigrants’ Access to Health Care,” 447.

African-Americans as legitimate and deserving of public support. That is, being a “legal” immigrant provides individuals, communities, and politicians with more political resources than does a racial label like Black. These findings reflect the claims in existing research that across most spheres of social life, it is much easier for Hispanics to integrate than it is for Blacks.³⁹⁷

“The Illegal Immigrant State”: California’s Proposition 187

In the 1990s, a new wave of anti-immigrant sentiment swept California under then governor, Republican Pete Wilson. When Wilson assumed the governorship in 1990, California faced a major economic recession. With the end of the Cold War, the state lost 600,000 defense-related jobs.³⁹⁸ Housing values dropped drastically, the state’s tax base declined, and both poverty and income inequality skyrocketed.³⁹⁹ The low-point of the recession came in 1993 when the state had to issue promissory notes to pay its contractors.⁴⁰⁰ At that time, immigration to the state had increased significantly over the last decade. California had by far the largest number of immigrants of any state in the country, home to over one-third of the country’s entire immigrant population and 40% of the total U.S. population of undocumented immigrants.⁴⁰¹ Immigration from Asia and Latin America increased the state’s population by 25% in the 1980s as non-Hispanic residents declined from 71% to 59% of the total population.⁴⁰² Immigration restriction became a top priority for California politicians on both sides of the aisle. By 1993, Governor Wilson joined the anti-immigrant fray, largely to boost falling poll numbers leading up to his 1994 re-election campaign. Wilson made illegal immigration and welfare reform a centerpiece of his governorship, depicting undocumented immigrants as a threat to the state and blaming them for the state’s fiscal woes.⁴⁰³ In 1993, Pete Wilson attempted to get the federal government to pay for services provided to both documented and undocumented immigrants and sued the federal government for expenses incurred.⁴⁰⁴

The lynchpin of Wilson’s anti-immigration campaign was a state ballot initiative, Proposition 187. The 1994 proposition amended the state’s Penal Code, Welfare and Institutions Code, Health and Safety Code, Education Code, and Government Code to deny social rights to undocumented immigrants and to ramp up immigration enforcement within the state’s borders. Proposition 187 declared unauthorized immigrants ineligible for public benefits, education, and health services and required all public employees to report anyone they suspected might be an undocumented immigrant. It also mandated that every school in the University of California, California State University and California Community College systems verify the legal status of all students.

The campaign for Proposition 187 was a well-organized effort led by a coalition of California nativists who rallied the state’s citizens against “illegal” immigrants. Dubbing California the “Illegal Immigrant State,” these activists preyed on public fears of an emerging

³⁹⁷ Massey and Mullan, “Processes of Hispanic and Black Spatial Assimilation.”; Massey and Denton, *American Apartheid*; Qian, “breaking the last taboo.”

³⁹⁸ Santa Ana, *Brown Tide Rising*.

³⁹⁹ HoSang, *Racial Propositions*.

⁴⁰⁰ Santa Ana, *Brown Tide Rising*.

⁴⁰¹ Geen et al., *Income Support and Social Services for Low-Income People in California*.

⁴⁰² HoSang, *Racial Propositions*.

⁴⁰³ Chavez, *The Latino Threat*.

⁴⁰⁴ Flannery, “Symington Wants U.S. to Pay Immigrants’ Tab; Proposal Could Follow California’s Lead.”

Latino majority.⁴⁰⁵ Across the state, supporters rallied behind the proposition as prominent Democrats like U.S. Senator Diane Feinstein and President Bill Clinton and even members of the state legislature's Latino Caucus lauded Wilson's efforts to address the issue of illegal immigration.⁴⁰⁶ Public outcry about illegal immigration swelled in the year leading up to the election, and the Proposition passed with nearly 2/3 of the vote in November 1994. Proposition 187 also ensured Pete Wilson's re-election that year. When they went to the polls, 90% of Californians knew Wilson's stance on the issue, more than knew that Sacramento was the state capitol.⁴⁰⁷

Declared by some scholars as "the most important direct democracy proposal for the last 25 years," Proposition 187 is widely regarded as having reshaped the landscape of American immigration politics.⁴⁰⁸ Although prominent civil rights groups like the ACLU and MALDEF ultimately succeeded in overturning the proposition in the courts, the initiative emboldened anti-immigration campaigns across the country, spawning similar propositions in myriad states and fueling dramatic shifts in federal immigration enforcement.⁴⁰⁹

The effects of Proposition 187 were not confined to the sphere of immigration politics. In California, the initiative shifted the terrain of welfare policy, altering not only the options available to policymakers during welfare reform but the political stakes as well. When welfare reform took center stages in the state in 1995, it did so amidst a sea of nativism and anti-welfare sentiment.⁴¹⁰ But despite the racially-tinged nature of Proposition 187, it was fundamentally a conflict about legal status, not simply race and, as a result, the frames from the Proposition 187 campaign ironically pushed welfare reform debates in a more lenient direction.

"Suffering" Californians: 187 and Resentment of Illegal Aliens

One of the main effects of the campaign for Proposition 187 was to elicit widespread resentment against undocumented immigrants in the state. Indeed, proponents of Proposition 187 appealed to discontented Californians, successfully blaming the state's economic woes on undocumented immigrants. The text of the initiative reveals the sense of threat posed by undocumented immigrants and the resentments harbored by 187 proponents:

The People of California find and declare as follows:

That they have suffered and are suffering economic hardship caused by the presence of illegal aliens in this state.

That they have suffered and are suffering personal injury and damage caused by the criminal conduct of illegal aliens in this state.

⁴⁰⁵ Fujiwara, *Mothers without Citizenship*, 10.

⁴⁰⁶ HoSang, *Racial Propositions*.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁸ Wroe, *The Republican party and immigration politics*, 3; Jacobson, *The new nativism*; Santa Ana, *Brown Tide Rising*; Ono and Sloop, *Shifting Borders*; HoSang, *Racial Propositions*.

⁴⁰⁹ Mehan, "The Discourse of the Illegal Immigration Debate."

⁴¹⁰ Reese, "Routing the Opposition."

That they have a right to the protection of their government from any person or persons entering this country unlawfully.⁴¹¹

These words clearly evoke a firm resentment toward illegal immigrants who were presumably stealing the jobs of Californians, abusing taxpayer dollars, and engaging in criminal behavior. In August of 1993, an overwhelming 87% of Californians viewed illegal immigration as a serious problem facing the state.⁴¹² A corresponding 74% felt that illegal immigrants had a negative effect on the state as a whole.⁴¹³

This fear of illegal immigrants and resentment toward them emerged not only from the text of the proposition but from the discourse surrounding it. As Mehan (1997) eloquently explained, the rhetoric around Proposition 187 portrayed the quest for state resources as a zero-sum game: the more illegal immigrants received the less available for a more deserving public. In a widely-viewed television ad, Pete Wilson showed undocumented immigrants streaming across the U.S.-Mexico border while an ominous voice-over declared, “They just keep coming... Those illegal aliens streaming across the border are taking your jobs and abusing your social services”⁴¹⁴ The imagery evoked in the ad and the accompanying narrative captured the fears of many Californians that a flood of unworthy undocumented immigrants was drenching the state and leeching public services and benefits. As one re *Los Angeles Times* reader put it:

We don't want anybody to go hungry, we don't want anybody to go uneducated or uncared-for. We just want everybody who is here illegally to go home! And if you're in that foreign country thinking about coming here illegally, don't! The free-for-all is over!⁴¹⁵

Even opponents of Proposition 187 reinforced this narrative after political consultants reassured them that a direct challenge to the initiative would prove unsuccessful given the daunting consensus against illegal immigration in the state.⁴¹⁶ Rather than directly challenge the initiative, Proposition 187 opponents validated these threats and resentments of illegal immigrants in their campaigning but to denounce the initiative they suggested that the initiative was not the right solution.⁴¹⁷ For example, a prominent anti-187 organization argued that,

Proposition 187 is NOT A REAL SOLUTION... every day, hundreds of thousands of undocumented workers HANDLE OUR FOOD SUPPLY in the fields and restaurants. Denying them basic health care would only SPREAD COMMUNICABLE DISEASES THROUGHOUT OUR COMMUNITIES and place us ALL at risk.⁴¹⁸

A piece in the San Diego newspaper criticized the proposition for its potential effects on crime:

⁴¹¹ Save Our State, “California Proposition 187 (1994).”

⁴¹² The Field Institute, *California Poll, October 1993*, Question 62.

⁴¹³ Save Our State, “California Proposition 187 (1994),” Question 63.

⁴¹⁴ Mehan, “The Discourse of the Illegal Immigration Debate,” 263.

⁴¹⁵ Campbell, “Judge Blocks Prop. 187.”

⁴¹⁶ Mehan, “The Discourse of the Illegal Immigration Debate.”; HoSang, *Racial Propositions*.

⁴¹⁷ HoSang, *Racial Propositions*.

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 181.

If undocumented youths are expelled from schools, many will spend their idle hours on the street... [increasing] graffiti, drive-by shootings, gang activity, and other youth-related crime...⁴¹⁹

These anti-187 ads reified the perception that illegal aliens were a threat to the state, arguing that Proposition 187 would not solve the crisis at hand.

Not only did Proposition 187 heighten fears about illegal immigrants' health, criminal tendencies, and economic gains, it also prompted concerns about their supposed abuse of public assistance. State legislator, Pete Knight attracted widespread attention from the media and from Latino advocacy groups when he cited illegal immigrants' use of welfare benefits in a poem he wrote and distributed to the Republican caucus:

I came for visit, get treated regal
So I stay, who care illegal
Send for family, they just trash
But we all draw welfare cash.
We have a hobby, it's called breeding.
Welfare pay for baby feeding.
By and by I got plenty money
Thanks American working dummy!⁴²⁰

Despite calls for Knight to apologize for his poem and to be censured by the state legislature for its circulation, the policymaker called the response to the stanzas "a total overreaction." The poem circulated among state political leaders and residents with some even appearing on pumps and local gas stations, fomenting local anti-illegal immigrant sentiment in some areas.⁴²¹

To fuel the Proposition 187 fire, the Wilson administration released a report published by the state Office of Planning and Research and the Department of Finance declared that

Advocates who insist that illegal immigrants pay their own way are wrong... To cover the cost of services they receive in California, the average illegal immigrant household would have to earn \$100,000 a year... This should put to rest once and for all the erroneous argument that California benefits from illegal immigration.

These elite claims about illegal immigrants' abuse of public resources in general and welfare in particular resonated on a very personal level with many Californians who came to view illegal immigration as the direct cause of their own economic troubles.⁴²² Exemplifying these widespread worries about undocumented immigrants, one constituent wrote in to the *Los Angeles Times* relaying concerns specific to welfare use:

⁴¹⁹ "Editorial."

⁴²⁰ Hernandez, "Politician's Racist Doggerel is Sign of a Troubled Nation."

⁴²¹ Chandler, "Latinos Fail to Change Knight's Viewpoint Race relations."

⁴²² Mehan, "The Discourse of the Illegal Immigration Debate."

How can this country have these requirements and the United States allow illegal immigrants to obtain welfare, the finest in health care and free schooling and we, the American people, are paying for it? What a joke on us.⁴²³

The quote clearly portrays illegal immigrants as welfare cheats, depleting the state's resources and duping the state's residents. As the campaign for Proposition 187 raged on, residents of the state felt increasingly threatened by illegal immigration, generating significant resentment toward them.

Framing Worth and Legitimacy

As suggested in the previous chapter, the debate around Proposition 187 institutionalized two overarching citizenship categories in public discourse: deserving legal and undeserving illegal. Although Pete Wilson has received much of the credit for the attacks on illegal immigrants that swept California in the 1990s, it was Diane Feinstein, a Democratic California Senator, who launched the initial anti-immigration campaigns. In the early 1990s, Feinstein targeted illegal residents in the state, attributing California's fiscal, crime, and drug problems to lax federal border enforcement and the state's undocumented population. Explaining her tactics, Feinstein argued that she chose to fan the flames of anti-illegal immigrant sentiment in order "to avoid a serious backlash against all immigrants."⁴²⁴ From the start, as the content analysis in the previous chapter suggested, the very campaign against illegal immigration assailed illegal immigrants by extolling the virtues of their legal counterparts.

When Pete Wilson joined in the illegal immigration debates around 1993 to resurrect his floundering public approval ratings, he, much like Feinstein, derided illegal immigrants while stressing the virtues of documented immigrants.⁴²⁵ In campaign ads and writings, he and other pro-187 advocates juxtaposed the foreign "alien" threat of illegal immigrants against tax-paying citizens and documented immigrants:

If we ignore the flood of illegal immigration, we'll erode the quality of life for those who live here legally. Our classrooms are bursting, our public health-care facilities are swamped... public safety will continue to suffer while California spends billions to incarcerate enough illegal aliens to fill eight prisons. It is hard working legal immigrants who suffer the most from our family to deal with illegal immigration.⁴²⁶

Wilson's rhetoric clearly depicted legal immigrants as the innocent bystanders, the victims, of illegal immigration. In a television ad, Wilson even joined the struggles of contemporary legal immigrants to contemporary U.S. citizens saying:

⁴²³ Pearson, "Moving to Mexico."

⁴²⁴ HoSang, *Racial Propositions*, cf 172.

⁴²⁵ Bustamante, "Don't Cast Legal Immigrants Adrift."

⁴²⁶ Wilson, "Closing the Door."

It's how most of us got here. It's how this country was built. But now the rules are being broken. There's a right way and there's a wrong way. To reward the wrong way is not the American way.⁴²⁷

Contrasting imagery of legal immigrants receiving citizenship with footage of illegal immigrants cascading across the border, the ad blurred the distinction between citizen and documented immigrant, emphasizing the worthiness of legal immigrants and the unworthiness of unauthorized immigrants.

According to former Speaker of the Assembly, Cruz Bustamante, “all the supporters of 187 and the opponents of diversity and opponents of bilingual education and opponents of this kind of diversity [used] the word ‘illegal’ because of the visceral reaction [it provoked from the public].”⁴²⁸ By voting for Proposition 187, many Californians believed they were simply voting to uphold the law, to punish criminal activity.⁴²⁹ An unrecognized implication of the term “illegal,” however, was that it's opposite (“legal”) carried with it associations of worth and legitimacy. When welfare reform reached the center of the state's political agenda in following years, it did so amidst significant outcry over illegal immigration and a valorization of legal immigrants. Because welfare reform denied aid to all undocumented immigrants, debates in California centered only on assistance for documented non-citizens. As I will show, the respect showered on legal immigrants during Proposition 187 made possible the passage of lenient welfare reforms in the following years by limiting the ability of politicians to demonize legal immigrant welfare recipients.

Political Advantage

A third effect of 187 was to reduce the political advantage to be gained by passing punitive reforms. Proposition 187, with its draconian measures, prompted many immigrants to naturalize and to race to the polls in subsequent years. Given projections that Latinos would soon become a majority of the state's residents, both political parties sought to woo Latino voters. Given this emerging Latino electorate, Republicans feared that their prior support of Proposition 187 and other anti-immigrant measures might undermine the future viability of their party and, indeed, their own careers. The initiative also fueled the election of many Latino elected officials who would rise to prominence on the state political scene. Fearful of appearing anti-Latino or anti-immigrant and newly aware of the political importance of the Latino vote, politicians recognized that passing punitive welfare reforms, widely unpopular in Latino and Asian communities, might jeopardize their political futures.

Proposition 187 provided a common cause around which Latinos and immigrant communities could unite.⁴³⁰ Tens of thousands of Latino protesters rallied against the proposition throughout the campaign, burning images of the governor in effigy.⁴³¹ The ballot initiative sparked a 40% increase in Latino voter turnout from the 1994 to the 1996 elections and a 250,000 rise in naturalizations for Latinos, who voted in record numbers in 1996.⁴³² The

⁴²⁷ Wroe, *The Republican party and immigration politics*, 66.

⁴²⁸ Bustamante, “Interview with Author.”

⁴²⁹ HoSang, *Racial Propositions*.

⁴³⁰ Lait, “A Tone of Exclusion.”

⁴³¹ Marquis, “Wilson Blames Ills on Illegal Immigrants Election.”

⁴³² California Latino Caucus, “Latino Legislative History and Purpose.”

threats posed to immigrant communities by Proposition 187 also fueled widespread mobilization, resulting in the creation of formal organizations which then represented Latino and Asian interests in welfare reform debates, providing individual and communities with the resources required to lobby the legislature and a conduit through which to reach elected officials.⁴³³ In bringing together previously disconnected groups like Mexicans and Koreans, for example, welfare reform efforts allowed advocacy groups to increase their organizational resources and develop new advocacy strategies.⁴³⁴ According to Dion Aroner, a leader of welfare reform efforts in the state legislature, the proposition galvanized immigrants across the state, prompting significant attention from immigrants to the issue of welfare reform when it surfaced on the state political scene.⁴³⁵

Some scholars have attributed the passage of lenient welfare reforms to the cadre of Latino leaders elected to state office in the wake of Proposition 187.⁴³⁶ As of the 1980s, Latino political power was weak in California with little formal organization.⁴³⁷ According to state legislator, Charles Calderon, “Latinos... always used to fight amongst each other. They had always been set to fight against each other.”⁴³⁸ Proposition 187 sparked a new unity among Latino political leaders and communities. Members of the Latino Caucus met to discuss plans for the election of a Latino to the speakership, ultimately coordinating the election not only of Cruz Bustamante to Speaker of the Assembly but to other leadership positions as well. By the 1997 legislative session, Latino lawmakers held an array of posts including co-chair of the welfare reform committee, House Majority Leader, Senate Majority Leader, Chair of the Assembly Budget Committee, and the House speakership. Overall, there were 18 Latino legislators, 15% of the total legislature. These numbers were up from seven in the 1980s and only two in the 1960s. As welfare reform debates gained steam, these Latino legislative leaders, part of the largest multi-ethnic caucus in the history of the state legislature, were proving to be stalwart advocates for liberal causes like lenient welfare reforms and for Latino communities across the state.⁴³⁹

Although these leaders were instrumental in passing lenient welfare reforms, Latino leadership explanations cannot alone explain why California pursued the course it did or even why so many Republican legislators switched sides to vote for a generous plan. Heightened immigrant political involvement made some Republican politicians, including Pete Wilson, fearful of electoral reprisals if they continued to support anti-immigrant measures.⁴⁴⁰ One of Pete Wilson’s top aides stated that Republican lawmakers in the legislature voiced concerns that supporting punitive reforms would further their reputation as anti-immigrant, a reputation they hoped to shed in advance of upcoming elections.⁴⁴¹ Because Proposition 187 attracted statewide and also national attention, it inspired many members of the Republican Party to moderate their

⁴³³ Reese, “Routing the Opposition.”

⁴³⁴ Ibid.

⁴³⁵ Aroner, “Interview with Author.”

⁴³⁶ Reese and Ramirez, “The New Ethnic Politics of Welfare.”

⁴³⁷ Calderon, *Charles Calderon Oral History*.

⁴³⁸ Ibid.

⁴³⁹ Skelton, “Will Latino Lawmakers Walk the Walk?”

⁴⁴⁰ Reese, “Routing the Opposition.”

⁴⁴¹ Cummins, “Interview with Author.”

anti-immigrant rhetoric and to demonstrate their commitment to protecting the *legal* immigrants whose cause they championed during 187.⁴⁴²

Welfare Reform Drafting and Passage

When faced with the federal mandate to reform welfare, the state's lawmakers quickly turned their attention to the task. Reform efforts were not easy. The legislative battles that ensued proved quite contentious, and California was the last state in the country to pass a set of TANF policies. The debates which held up the policymaking process, however, were not related to the most critical or symbolic decisions about time limits, sanctions, work requirements, or benefits for immigrants. Rather legislators disagreed over how extensive a safety net the state should provide to individuals who timed-out of TANF and were no longer eligible for federal assistance. In the end, California was one of only two states to re-extend all federally-denied welfare benefits to legal non-citizens; it was also one of only two states in the country to create a safety-net program using state funds to support any adults or children who surpassed the federal five year time limit. As this section will reveal, the resentments and frames popularized by Proposition 187 played a significant role in these policy decisions as did the rising electoral power of Latinos in the state.

The state's TANF plan, CalWORKs, ultimately arose from debates between Governor Wilson and key legislative leaders including Latinos Cruz Bustamante and Antonio Villaraigosa, both newly elected after Proposition 187.⁴⁴³ In late negotiations, these legislators composed a bill which included a battery of supportive services and the most flexible work requirements, time limits, and sanctions allowed by federal law.⁴⁴⁴ They subsequently created state-level programs to restore various benefits to documented immigrants. While the role of Latino leaders in pushing through these reforms is sometimes cited in accounts of California's welfare reform program, less recognized is the role of Proposition 187 rhetoric in limiting the viability of strict policies regarding welfare participation. Latino elected officials used Wilson's pro-legal immigration rhetoric to pass programs for legal non-citizens and supportive programs for citizens.⁴⁴⁵

Pete Wilson's push for punitive reforms began around the same time as Prop 187 when the state passed cuts to its AFDC program which, although celebrated by the Bush administration, were overturned by federal courts. In 1994, Wilson proposed two-year lifetime welfare time limits as part of his budget proposal.⁴⁴⁶ Said Wilson of his proposed welfare cuts, "I am convinced [welfare recipients] will be able to pay the rent, but they will have less for a six-pack of beer."⁴⁴⁷ These welfare reductions, as with Proposition 187, reproduced long-standing stereotypes of undocumented workers as criminals, welfare queens, health risks, and breeding

⁴⁴² Wroe, *The Republican party and immigration politics*.

⁴⁴³ Bustillo, "California and the West; Latino Democrats in Capitol Flex Muscle as Numbers Grow; Politics."; Lindlaw, "State GOP Faces Uphill Battle to Win Over Latino Voters."; Reese and Ramirez, "The New Ethnic Politics of Welfare."

⁴⁴⁴ Many of these provisions had been laid out and negotiated by one of the legislature's most liberal members, Dion Aroner.

⁴⁴⁵ McDonnell, "State Restored Most Aid Noncitizens Lost in '96; Welfare."; Aroner, "Interview with Author."; Bustamante, "Interview with Author."

⁴⁴⁶ Brownstein, "Wilson Finds Allies on Illegal Immigrant Funds Politics."

⁴⁴⁷ Weintraub, "No More Mr. Moderate."

machines.⁴⁴⁸ Wilson ramped up his anti-welfare proposals in advance of his 1994 re-election campaign with the support of a number of high-ranking state legislators. Wrote Wilson for the *Los Angeles Times*, “Hard work and personal responsibility are time-honored values, but until recently, government programs like the welfare system actually punished these virtues. That’s why I fought for welfare reforms.”⁴⁴⁹ Wilson led in the polls for much of the race and ultimately won the election.

Wilson began 1996 by proposing additional cuts in welfare spending and by endorsing a program to put welfare families to work within two years and phasing out benefits after five years. When the legislature returned for a brief session in August 1996, lawmakers did not address welfare reform despite the federal requirement to formalize a policy by July 1997. Rather, lawmakers grappled with issues such as the three-strikes legislation, same sex marriage, and earthquake insurance. Republicans criticized Democrats for not bringing welfare reform to the table. Democrats Senate President Pro Tem Bill Lockyer like responded that there was not enough time to pass a comprehensive plan, and that reforms should not be addressed before a bi-partisan commission could explore the options.⁴⁵⁰

At the end of the year, Wilson announced publicly that he would allow legal non-citizens who arrived in the U.S. before PRWORA to continue to be eligible for welfare. He did not extend eligibility to those arriving after. According to journalists, Wilson made the announcement just before his 1997 State of the State address to appease Latino voters and to soften his public image. Since Proposition 187, Wilson had been portrayed as an immigrant basher. Nonetheless, “as a practical matter, even if Wilson had wanted to scrap welfare for noncitizen families, the legislature--led by Latinos in the Assembly--probably would have beaten him down.”⁴⁵¹

In 1997, the legislature and governor faced the reality of the federal reform mandate. A range of groups introduced competing proposals in the legislature including the governor, the Legislative Analyst’s Office, the County Welfare Directors Association, and a coalition of children’s advocacy organizations. Each proposal advocated for the maximum five year time limit and for partial sanctions, but the governor’s plan demanded that welfare recipients engage in work activities sooner than the other proposals required. Only the governor’s plan rejected benefit extensions for all legal non-citizens although each proposal had various ideas about how to extend benefits and how to fund them.

Democrats responded harshly to the Republican proposal. “It appears the governor’s proposal tilts unnecessarily toward punishing poor people rather than assisting them,” said Senate President Pro Tem Bill Lockyer.⁴⁵² Assembly members Cruz Bustamante (the Assembly Speaker) and Antonio Villaregosa both spoke out to oppose the strict work requirements. Mimicking the rhetoric from Proposition 187 about law-abiding legal immigrants, the Children’s Advocates argued in favor of their proposal that welfare reform should reward families that are “playing by the rules, complying with work requirements, actively seeking work but unable to find self-sustaining employment.”⁴⁵³ The Black and Latino Caucuses emphasized the

⁴⁴⁸ Ono and Sloop, *Shifting Borders*.

⁴⁴⁹ Wilson, “Sowing the Ground for a Better California.”

⁴⁵⁰ Gladstone, “Contentious Issues Greet Lawmakers; Politics.”

⁴⁵¹ Skelton, “Wilson Won’t Play Scrooge to Immigrants.”

⁴⁵² Ellis and Leshner, “Wilson Details Welfare Changes to Save \$550 Million.”

⁴⁵³ Children’s Advocates, *Approaches to Key Issues in Welfare Reform and Safety Net Redesign*.

vulnerability of legal immigrants in welfare reform debates stating, “They are some of the most vulnerable persons and those who will be cut off first as a result of the federal bill.”⁴⁵⁴

An 18-member Joint Assembly-Senate Special Committee on Welfare Reform formed to consolidate the proposals. Committee members recognized the significance of their position. Said committee co-chair Assemblywoman Dion Aroner, “From my perspective, it was a major victory [being on the committee] because [the Wilson] administration had to work off of our document... It was our language as well not just that it was our topics and our positions, it was our language.” She added, “Certainly what you figured out very early on is the guy that controls the language controls what happens.”⁴⁵⁵

In May, the Welfare Reform Committee introduced its legislation which did not stray from federal minimum requirements or sanctions, created a safety net program for individuals timing out of federal TANF assistance, and re-extended benefits for legal immigrants. The governor vetoed the first bill, however, within a matter of minutes.⁴⁵⁶ During floor debates about the bill, the issue of immigration surfaced as a contentious point. Diane Watson, a member of the Joint Committee and a spokesperson for lenient reforms criticized Republican lawmakers for attacking vulnerable populations like legal immigrants by saying,

The Governor and my Republican colleagues would have us end welfare with virtually no safety net. They would risk putting elderly immigrants on the streets, take food out of the mouths of immigrant children, and limit struggling families to no more than two years on public assistance, even during a major depression... Our plan is about investing in people with job opportunities, training programs, and a humane safety net for vulnerable children, seniors, and legal immigrants.⁴⁵⁷

The California State Association of Counties (CSAC) reaffirmed these sentiments in its new-found support for the plan. Because California law requires counties to provide General Assistance, a separate cash assistance program, for eligible individuals but does not finance the program, CSAC leaders recognized that counties would bear the burden if the state passed punitive reforms that expelled many residents from the rolls. Although previously supportive of the more conservative California Welfare Directors Association (CDWA) plan, CSAC offered vocal support for the Joint Committee plan arguing, “Denying federal benefits to legal immigrants disproportionately harms California communities... [and] would have a devastating effect on California’s counties which are obligated to be the providers of last resort” [emphasis in original].⁴⁵⁸ Just as Proposition 187 had emphasized the *illegal* in the term “illegal alien,” these stances for more lenient welfare reforms stressed the *legal* and law-abiding character of documented immigrants, asserting their entitlement to a generous social safety net.

As prominent Democrats stressed the legitimate need of legal immigrants, Roy Ashburn, a stalwart Republican and proponent of punitive reforms attempted to reverse the discourse about legal immigrants, portraying them as defrauders who relied on welfare despite their families’ initial promises to sponsor them when they immigrated. Ashburn testified before the legislature

⁴⁵⁴ California State Senate, *Issues Previously Endorsed by the Black and Latino Caucuses*.

⁴⁵⁵ Aroner, “Interview with Author.”

⁴⁵⁶ Cummins, “Interview with Author.”

⁴⁵⁷ Watson, “Testimony before State Legislature on Conference Committee Bill.”

⁴⁵⁸ Lockyer, “Letter to Diane Feinstein.”

that, “we [Republicans] do have some of the same concerns that President Clinton and the Congress experienced in respect to providing benefits to legal immigrants, who come to this country under sponsorship, and then expect to be provided with welfare benefits. Thus, these are programs that need more debate.”⁴⁵⁹ Ashburn also argued that the safety net for legal immigrants proposed in the Joint Committee plan would instigate a rise in state costs as new immigrants arrived in the state and used the new entitlement program.

Over the course of the summer, Democrats and Republicans remained deadlocked around the issues of work requirements and the safety net for both citizens and legal non-citizens with Republicans refusing to support the Welfare Reform Committee’s proposal. Republicans outlined the “Four Fatal Flaws” of the committee’s plan including the plan’s weak stance on welfare fraud and “phony time limits,” an implicit attack on the proposed safety net program which would benefit many immigrants as well as citizens.⁴⁶⁰ Through the debates, welfare reform efforts attracted significant attention from immigration communities across the state fearful of the possible loss of benefits. During March, thousands of immigrants rallied in Los Angeles to push for the re-extension benefits for documented immigrants. In April, hundreds of welfare recipients rallied in Los Angeles to express their concerns about welfare reform. Maxine Waters and Antonio Villaraigosa both attended and spoke at the rally which gave welfare recipients the opportunity to participate in workshops to craft legislation.⁴⁶¹ Twice in the first half of 1997 immigrants flooded legislative offices advocating for lenient welfare reforms, including the re-extension of benefits to immigrants.⁴⁶² The Northern California Coalition for Immigrant Rights, the Western Center for Law and Poverty, and a number of Asian-American organizations spearheaded the effort, combining to form a strong multi-racial movement.⁴⁶³ Many of these groups had prior organizing experience during the campaign against Proposition 187, and their mobilizing efforts gained renewed urgency in 1997. According to a leading welfare reform advocate:

This was the point when the immigrant community galvanized even more so than after the '94 initiative. To me, this is when their strength showed much more obviously... and I think there were some worries that [Republicans] did not want to continue to potentially offend immigrant communities... the Latino immigrant community was a presence, more generally on reform, because many immigrants were permanent residents and it wasn’t just a question of whether they were effected by the limits on aid to immigrants that the federal government proposed, but they constituted a significant proportion of the case load and had a stake in all the issues, not just the ones that effected immigrants particularly.⁴⁶⁴

Thus, not only did immigrants and immigrant organizations across the state mobilize in favor of more supportive welfare programs, their organization sparked concern among Republican lawmakers that they stood to lose politically if they failed to cater to these communities.

⁴⁵⁹ Ashburn, *Confidential Letter to Curt Pringle: Little 4 - Welfare*.

⁴⁶⁰ Cummins, “Interview with Author.”

⁴⁶¹ Rohrlich, “Welfare Recipients Take Steps to Mobilize.”

⁴⁶² Fujiwara, *Mothers without Citizenship*.

⁴⁶³ Reese and Ramirez, “The New Ethnic Politics of Welfare.”

⁴⁶⁴ Anonymous Anti-Poverty Advocate, “Interview with Author.”

As legislative leaders and the advocacy community lobbied to end the deadlock in Sacramento, these immigrant organizations became increasingly involved in the debate. Their concerns about welfare reform extended beyond the question of non-citizen benefits. Said one prominent anti-poverty advocate,

The immigrant community definitely played a role especially in immigrant issues. But they were a presence, more generally on reform, because many immigrants were permanent residents and it wasn't just a question of whether they were effected by the limits on aid to immigrants that the federal government proposed, but they constituted a significant proportion of the case load and had a stake in all the issues, not just the ones that effected immigrants particularly.⁴⁶⁵

Throughout these efforts, advocates drew on the discourse used during Proposition 187 to valorized legal immigrants and avoided any mention of the undocumented population. According to Dion Aroner, advocates for more lenient welfare reforms made a concerted effort to avoid discussions about illegal immigrants: “[we were okay pushing lenient reforms] as long as we steered away from the undocumented.”⁴⁶⁶ The Joint Conference Committee on Welfare Reform in the state legislature repeated these sentiments in constructing its policy proposals: welfare reform legislation “should not discriminate against legal immigrants in need of assistance solely because they aren't U.S. citizens.”⁴⁶⁷

As Proposition 187 proponents had previously done, advocates for lenient welfare reforms equated the struggles of legal immigrants and those of citizens:

There are still legal immigrants in need of a safety net who are in danger of falling through cracks. It is basic decency for us to make sure that people who came to this country legally and worked hard and paid taxes don't have to live in terror of being thrown into destitution... Partisan stunts to block welfare reform hurt Californians who are paying for the failed system we have now, hurt poor families struggling to make it off the welfare rolls and hurt...legal immigrants who have no place else to turn.⁴⁶⁸

Cathie Wright, Republican member of the Welfare Reform Committee and a vocal opponent of non-citizen benefits countered this argument by saying, “[Democrats] want everybody taken care of till the umpteenth degree, and that's not possible.”⁴⁶⁹ Yet the criticism largely fell on deaf ears. Legislative leader, Antonio Villaraigosa, said of legal immigrants: “They came here in search of the American dream, the dream of freedom and a better life. It's wrong to abandon them to save a few dollars.”

This sympathy for legal immigrants contrasted starkly with the on-going resentments toward illegal immigrants. Wilson's office commissioned and reported on studies which attested to the burden undocumented immigrants place on the state finances. However, the framing of

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁶ Aroner, “Interview with Author.”

⁴⁶⁷ Joint Conference Committee on Welfare Reform, *From Welfare to Work*.

⁴⁶⁸ Bustamante, “Don't Cast Legal Immigrants Adrift.”

⁴⁶⁹ Ellis, “Panel Drafts Broad State Welfare Overhaul.”

the Proposition 187 discussions made it difficult for politicians to demonize documented immigrants who received welfare benefits because public debates had already labeled these individuals as hardworking, law-abiding, and deserving of public services. In essence, by focusing the debate on *legal* immigrants, Democratic leaders, particularly the Latino leadership in the legislature, effectively turned conservative political rhetoric against conservatives themselves. In essence, politicians who failed to reward the “good” behavior of legal immigrants risked losing the support of a newly mobilized political force of immigrants. In early June, lawmakers approved a measure by Villaraigosa (45-20 vote) to establish programs for legal immigrants who stood to lose their benefits, including cash benefits, food stamps, long-term care, and citizenship classes.⁴⁷⁰

The issues of extended time limits (the safety net) and work requirements remained unresolved, and Governor Wilson called a meeting of the Big Five to address these standing issues. The Big Five was the popular name used for meetings between the governor and majority and minority leaders of both houses of the legislature, typically convened to sort out budget issues. Not only did the Big Five meet for the first time to discuss non-budgetary issues, a group of legislative leaders known as the Little Four also met behind closed doors for three weeks to craft legislation from the on-going negotiation efforts. Active participants in these negotiations, Latino leaders Bustamante and Villaraigosa heightened their emphasis on legal immigrants. To pressure Wilson, Bustamante created a commercial in which he and other Latino political leaders pushed Wilson to support new state programs to aid legal immigrants. The ad placed renewed pressure on Wilson to counter his anti-immigrant image or face electoral reprisals. The Democratic caucus also held up the governor’s budget for three weeks in protest, the second longest delay ever in the state budget process.⁴⁷¹ In a separate event, Bustamante and Villaraigosa countered the Governor’s efforts to press for more punitive policies for immigrants by turning Wilson’s pro-legal immigrant rhetoric against him,

Democrats believe that ‘legal is legal.’ If people are here legally, have played by all the rules, paid their taxes, and gone to work, they are entitled to the same benefits the rest of us are entitled to. The Democratic proposal believes providing the same benefits for legal immigrants to which all of us are entitled is fair and rejects the Gingrich attempt to equate legal and illegal immigrants.⁴⁷²

Staffers from key Republican legislators argued that this narrative about the worth and legitimacy of legal immigrants resonated with Republican leaders who “felt really strongly that there was a big distinction” between legal and illegal immigrants. “A legal resident who is going through the motions of doing everything to become a citizen and who has followed the rules seemed to us to be fair to allow them to have a system... We did not get federal assistance for those persons so we created a state only program. That was done in a bipartisan way [in the end].”⁴⁷³ Said Diane Cummins, a former staffer for Pete Wilson, as the debate came to focus more clearly on legal immigrants, Republican leaders had more room to maneuver politically.

⁴⁷⁰ Ingram and Vanzi, “Assembly Backs Welfare for Legal Immigrants.”

⁴⁷¹ Reese and Ramirez, “The New Ethnic Politics of Welfare.”

⁴⁷² Bustamante and Villaraigosa, “Memo to All District and Capital Offices,” 3.

⁴⁷³ Anonymous Republican Staffer, “Interview with Author.”

Ultimately, debates “focused on the mechanics of who was who and who would get services... not the people [themselves].”⁴⁷⁴

In late July, the Little Four produced a series of compromise bills which created the state’s TANF program, CalWORKs. CalWORKs passed the Senate 33-5 and the Assembly 64-11. The governor signed the plan in August. The program had a five year lifetime limit and two year work requirements as well as a safety net for timed out individuals, including legal immigrants. The bills retained the partial sanctions set forth in earlier proposals. Although the final compromise plan differed little from that created by the Joint Conference Committee, Republican legislators deemed the revised plan a triumph, one which “eliminates nearly all of the problems of the Democrats’ scheme.”⁴⁷⁵ Wilson gave up ground on work requirements and community service jobs. New recipients would receive aid for 18 months but counties could extend to 24. Current recipients would get 24 months of aid before work was required. Community service would be available to those who could not find jobs after 24 months. The agreement, despite its passage, left unsatisfied individuals on both sides of the aisle. Democrat Dion Aroner surrendered her leadership position in the Joint Committee when the lack of support for generous measures made her “want to vomit.”⁴⁷⁶ Criticizing his fellow Republicans for accepting the bills, Representative Tom McClintock dubbed the bills “a policy defeat of titanic proportions” which “moved the state well to the left of Bill Clinton.”⁴⁷⁷

“We May Be Next”: Arizona’s Mexican Assault

In the early 1990s, Arizona lagged behind California as a home for undocumented immigrants. Until the launch of Operation Gatekeeper which beefed up border patrol efforts in California and Texas in the mid-1990s, the border at San Ysidro, just south of San Diego, was the busiest in the world. Immigrants, documented or otherwise, rarely ventured through the brutal Sonoran desert to cross at Arizona until heightened border patrol efforts made crossing in California a much more dangerous and treacherous endeavor. Thus, when welfare reform arose on the national arena in the early 1990s, Arizonans’ fears about illegal immigration paled in comparison to those voiced by Californians.

Nonetheless, California’s Proposition 187 also dominated news stories in Arizona. Fearful that events in California were a harbinger of things to come in their state, Arizonans contemplated the benefits of passing a similar policy. However, rather than pit legal immigrants against illegal, state residents found themselves embroiled in a racialized conflict heightened by debates about over NAFTA and English-Only laws in addition to conflicts in neighboring California,. These debates combined to form what I call a “Mexican assault,” pitting Mexicans (both nationals and immigrants) against white residents. This racial conflict framed welfare reform debates by sparking resentments against Mexicans, demonizing all Hispanics as unworthy of social rights, and providing a political incentive for elites seeking advantages at the ballot box.

The Mexican assault of the 1990s reached its apex in Arizona in the wake of Proposition 187 and the Rodney King riots in California. Although a California-grown and inspired initiative, the campaign for Proposition 187 attracted immediate and sweeping attention in Arizona in the early 1990s as the campaign tactics in California directly targeted Arizona.

⁴⁷⁴ Cummins, “Interview with Author.”

⁴⁷⁵ Ashburn, *Confidential Letter to Curt Pringle: Little 4 - Welfare*.

⁴⁷⁶ Aroner, “Interview with Author.”

⁴⁷⁷ McClintock, “How Republicans Botched Welfare Reform.”

California proponents for the initiative posted large signs at the California-Arizona state line reading, "Welcome to California, the Illegal Immigrant State. Don't let this happen to your state."⁴⁷⁸ Local Arizona newspapers cautioned that "Arizona may be next," forecasting growth in the state's undocumented immigration population and an eventual crusade against undocumented immigrants.⁴⁷⁹ One of the authors of California's 187 traveled to Arizona multiple times in 1993 and 1994 to meet with interested residents and spark a copycat initiative. The Save Our State Arizona campaign eventually took off, led by Dan Dahlstedt, a businessman from Scottsdale. The group organized 543 people around the state to collect signatures for a ballot proposition and beefed up advertising efforts. By early 1995, 86% of Arizonans were familiar with Proposition 187, and 80% identified immigration as a major concern facing the state. Arizona residents began calling for a similar proposition.

Widespread public support for a 187-style initiative pointed to growing public concern about Mexican immigrants in the state. Indeed, the discussions about an Arizona Proposition 187 followed contentious debates about the state's growing Hispanic population. In 1988, Arizona passed an English-only law widely understood as an attack on Spanish-speaking residents. In 1992, the state legislature once again placed the issue center stage as it considered a ballot proposal requiring a public vote in an effort to pre-empt legal challenges to the policy. Appealing to "an ugly anti-foreigner sentiment lurking in the state," the initiative directly targeted Spanish-speakers who faced increasing discrimination following the passage of the initial law.⁴⁸⁰ As debates about the law escalated, Hispanic protesters marched on the state capital and called the law "insulting" and "very racist."⁴⁸¹

Added to this, in the early to mid-1990s, the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) exacerbated racial tensions as white residents feared their jobs and livelihood would be lost to those south of the border. Despite promises that NAFTA would stem the tide of immigration from Mexico, many Arizonans doubted that such a treaty would reduce the lure of the American dream. Mexican nationals and immigrants bore the brunt of these economic uncertainties.

As a result, in the years leading up to federal welfare reforms, popular sentiment in Arizona favored the passage of restrictive policies targeting illegal immigrants, widely conflated with Mexicans; however, state lawmakers refused to support a 187-like initiative. The state had drawn national ire in the early 1990s when it refused to adopt a Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. Having garnered a reputation as a hostile and bigoted state and having lost its promised 1993 Super Bowl as a result, Arizona found itself between a rock and a hard place in the mid-1990s. Political leaders sought to redeem the state's image and feared that a 187-style campaign would threaten their public image. Seeking to fortify his pro-business reputation, Governor Fife Symington also spoke out against Proposition 187 in an effort to strengthen public relations with Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo who was angered by California's actions. Speaking directly to Arizona's Martin Luther King Day critics and to President Zedillo, Symington publicly called Proposition 187 "a thoughtless mistake... Arizona would never stoop so low."⁴⁸²

⁴⁷⁸ Fujiwara, *Mothers without Citizenship*.

⁴⁷⁹ Shaffer, "California Considers a Lid for Melting Pot: Proposition 187 Targets Illegal Aliens."

⁴⁸⁰ Editorial, "Official English: Let Courts Handle It First Before Seeking Vote."

⁴⁸¹ Santoro, "Conventional Politics Takes Center Stage," 899.

⁴⁸² Editorial, "Mexico Treats Illegals Worse."

Political leaders sought to redeem the state's image, but spiraling controversies about Hispanic-White relations dominated the Arizona political scene. Unlike in California, these conflicts heightened specifically racial cleavages, pitting Hispanic and white residents against one another. Even when these racial conflicts focused specifically on illegal immigration, they spoke directly to Mexican immigrants and did not legitimize legal or citizen Hispanics as worthy recipients of government benefits. Rather, they juxtaposed Mexicans and Hispanics against Anglo citizens. Since a copycat 187 initiative was impossible to achieve in the mid-1990s (indeed, it only passed in 2004), politicians sought other avenues to appease a racially conservative populace. Welfare reform provided the answer.

"A Permanent State of Chaos": Mexican Threat and Resentment

The Mexican assault, marked by the confluence of Proposition 187, the Rodney King riots in Los Angeles, and NAFTA, spurred a widespread sense of threat in many Arizonans who feared they would soon be overrun by Hispanic migrants leaving California or would lose their jobs to Mexican nationals. This threat translated into heightened resentment not just against illegal immigrants, as was the case in California, but against Hispanics more generally. As the content analysis in Chapter 4 indicated, even when Arizonans did express threat or resentment toward illegal immigrants they routinely identified these immigrants as Mexicans, much more so than in California.

One source of this threat sentiment was the local Arizona media which portrayed the state as an innocent victim of California's conflicts. As news coverage of Proposition 187 and the Rodney King riots flooded the Arizona media, journalists speculated that the state would soon see an "influx of refugees fleeing a permanent state of chaos in southern California."⁴⁸³ After highlighting Phoenix's relative homogeneity in comparison to Los Angeles, one news writer stated, "[In L.A.] there is now a multitude of Hispanic or Asian organizations also demanding a share of funds shrunken by the nation's crippled economy... Life is so unfair in L.A. that Arizona may see an increasing number of... southern California refugees of all types seeking a job, or to buy a home or property in Arizona."⁴⁸⁴ Arizonans became increasingly concerned not only about a possible exodus of Hispanics from California but of the lack of federal border control efforts to prevent an influx from Mexico itself. Wrote one angry reporter:

A move by Congress last year to put 350 new agents on the border resulted in 300 being earmarked for California and 50 for El Paso. Arizona got none. What Arizona did get was a 62 percent increase in arrests for illegal border crossings in the Tucson sector, which includes Nogales. That's bad for Arizona.⁴⁸⁵

This fear that refugees from California and Mexico would amass in Arizona paralleled a continuing stream of worry about the effect NAFTA would have on Arizona's population. Despite politicians' promises that the free trade agreement would foster economic growth that would reduce immigration levels from Mexico, Arizona residents feared otherwise. Terrified of job losses to Mexican workers, one Mesa, Arizona resident wrote:

⁴⁸³ Brinkley-Rogers, "Sunny Days Disguise LA's Dim Future."

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁵ Editorial, "Our Fair Share."

Now Please! Can someone explain to me one more time how the Free Trade Agreement will be good for us? It will be fantastic for companies who will fire all their American work force, and move across the border where they will hire Mexican workers. The new workers will be paid a small fraction of what previous U.S. workers were paid.⁴⁸⁶

Linking NAFTA directly to Mexican welfare use, another resident explained,

The proliferation of jobs in Mexico will, we are told, persuade Mexican workers to stay in Mexico by offering wages of roughly \$60 per week, complete with poor working conditions and a lack of safety standards... It is preposterous to believe that the United States, with its promise of generous welfare benefits, food stamps, free and readily available medical care, bilingual public education and the dream of a better life will no longer attract hordes of disenchanting Mexicans.⁴⁸⁷

While in California, Proposition 187 triggered white resentment toward illegal immigrants, the above quotes clearly demonstrate that the perceived threat sparked by 187 and NAFTA in Arizona spurred a deeply-held resentment of Mexicans, both those living in Mexico and those living in the U.S., regardless of documentation status. This resentment surfaced in a widely covered story implicating Mexicans (in Arizona and in Mexico) as perpetrators of a major welfare fraud scheme. According to the news coverage, Mexican nationals were conspiring with their U.S. resident family members to obtain the documents necessary to obtain government relief. One Associated Press story explained,

The way the deception works, a Mexican mother will bring her children across the border and enroll them in the Gadsden School District, using the address of an Arizona relative as the family home. The family then applies for social services using false documents. The relative will vouch for the family when investigators call the residence.⁴⁸⁸

Claiming that the problem was “totally out of control” and that “easily” 5,000 people on the Mexican side of the border were receiving aid under false pretenses, local officials in one border town asserted, “We have the volume of mail of large city. And a large part of it is U.S. government checks that end up in Mexico... There’s no telling how much fraud is going on down there.”⁴⁸⁹ The IRS reportedly withheld tax refunds for all city residents that year as it investigated, further inflaming racial tensions between Hispanic residents who felt victimized by the accusations and Anglo residents who blamed Mexican families for their delayed tax refunds.

Not only did Arizonans voice concern about Mexican welfare use, they equated Mexican immigrants with trespassers and criminals: “The criminal gangs and individuals who seek residence in the United States are costing us more than our own citizens. They are a threat to the peace and welfare of our country and must be stopped... We have enough crime without

⁴⁸⁶ Buckhannon, “Fare Trade Helps.”

⁴⁸⁷ Hill, “The Sellout Continues.”

⁴⁸⁸ Associated Press, “Postal Boxes Tools for Welfare Fraud.”

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid.

importing more.” Demands for public action against Mexico itself and against Hispanic residents in Arizona dominated news headlines. Claiming that “Even Mexicans think we’re crazy for not taking action,” one Tucson resident demanded that the state and the federal government use every means at their disposal to enforce the border at Nogales.⁴⁹⁰

These resentments of Mexicans in particular and of minorities in general surfaced in a poll conducted by Arizona State University. It showed that the majority of the state’s Anglo residents felt that Arizona was paying too much attention to minority issues and spending too much on government aid for minority groups. Over 60% believed that minorities were not doing enough to help themselves. Said one Anglo respondent in a local news piece, “Someone’s always beating the drum.”⁴⁹¹ As the Mexican assault raged on, immigration rights groups in the state blamed “unscrupulous politicians for fanning the flames” of resentment against Hispanics, blaming them for state and national problems, including welfare.⁴⁹²

Categories of Worth: Mexican and Citizen

If the debate about Proposition 187 fueled a sense of threat and resentment of illegal immigrants in California, the on-going Mexican assault in Arizona was openly racialized in nature, demonizing all Hispanics regardless of documentation status or country of residence. The racialized nature of these conflicts is particularly apparent in the narratives that anti-Mexican and anti-immigrant activists used to frame their arguments. While both 187 opponents and proponents demonized illegal immigrants while valorizing legal residents in California, activists in Arizona pitted Mexicans against presumably white citizens. Thus, while immigrants in California could claim moral worth on the basis of their legal status, corresponding discourses in Arizona prevented legal Mexican immigrants from doing the same, instead racializing them as either “Mexican” or “Hispanic” and obscuring diversity in legal status amongst the population.

Despite the lack of a well-orchestrated campaign, proponents of a 187-like initiative in Arizona used a common set of frames to convey the problems facing the state. The first was to explicitly demonize all Hispanics, often referencing the “southern border” or Mexicans directly. According to one activist,

It’s time we confront the fact that we have a hemorrhage of people across our southern border, and that this is costing taxpayers dearly in money spent on medical care, education, law enforcement, welfare, housing prisoners, etc. [Some say] a wall would reinforce ‘the racist stereotype of Mexican immigrants as criminals.’ To me an ‘immigrant’ is someone who abides by the rules of both countries before he crosses the border to permanently change his residence. Otherwise, he is, in fact, a criminal.⁴⁹³

In order to justify the need for restrictions on social services and for a wall at the border, this statement directly identifies Mexico and Mexicans as the source of the state’s current problems. As he makes these claims, the activist conflates illegal immigrants with Mexicans and with criminality. In the most extreme incitement of racial animosity, a group of Ku Klux Klan

⁴⁹⁰ Favor, “Stop the Invasion.”

⁴⁹¹ Fritze and Nichols, “Most Arizonans Feel Racism Alive in State, Anglos, Minorities Give Views in Poll.”

⁴⁹² Pence, “Border Patrol reports 51% more arrests.”

⁴⁹³ Holland, “This Country Can’t Afford to be Rich Uncle to the World.”

members in Glendale, AZ circulated four page fliers around the community which accused Mexicans, regardless of citizenship status, of stealing American jobs and abusing welfare services. Although the Klan had been relatively quiet in the state in previous years, its sudden appearance on the political scene terrified Hispanic residents in the state, regardless of their citizenship status, but encouraged some white residents. Said one Glendale resident, “Maybe if [the Klan] can clean up some of this immoral crap that’s going on, they might be able to put a stop to this social decay.”⁴⁹⁴

Not only was the anti-immigrant sentiment in Arizona more openly racialized than in California, leaders of the Mexican assault identified U.S. citizens as the victims of Mexican immigration:

On an average day I have at least five Mexican immigrants come to me asking for a job... This whole issue angers me because of the fact that they come into our country illegally, yet are treated better than most of the homeless and down-and-out U.S. citizens in this country. They receive countless forms of government aid, including welfare, food stamps, [Medicaid] and numerous other health-care benefits.⁴⁹⁵

Echoing the view that illegal immigration from Mexico constitutes a betrayal of the U.S. citizen, one resident wrote to the *Arizona Republic*,

Winners? The illegals who get jobs that pay five times what they can earn in their country, plus food stamps, medical care and an education... The Mexican government that benefits from a reduction in pressure from dissatisfied Mexican citizens, as well as from the funds sent back to Mexico by the illegals. Just follow the money.

Losers? The hard-working, overtaxed American citizen paying for the above mess through higher taxes for welfare, medical care and education. The American citizen who is deprived of medical care in public facilities that are packed with illegals... The American citizen who has been robbed or assaulted by illegal-alien criminals.⁴⁹⁶

Whereas the anti-immigrant discourse in California portrayed legal immigrants as the victims of illegal immigrant, the corresponding narratives in Arizona, such as the one above, consistently conflated “Mexican” with “illegal” and identified U.S. citizens, not legal immigrants, as the casualties. That concerns about NAFTA implicated all of Mexico as complicit in American economic instability only furthered these associations. Anglo residents demanded that Mexico assume the costs of educating and jailing “its own citizens,” either reimbursing the United States or preventing immigration in the first place.⁴⁹⁷

⁴⁹⁴ Staff Writer, “Some Assail, Others Applaud Distribution of Fliers by Klan.”

⁴⁹⁵ James, “Aliens vs. Homeless.”

⁴⁹⁶ Taylor, “Winners, Losers of Immigration.”

⁴⁹⁷ Farnsworth, “Let Mexico Pay for Emigrants.”

Perhaps because support for a 187 copycat measure was so disjointed, no formal contingent of opponents arose to mount a campaign against the Mexican assault. The fractured voices that did speak up during this period made public the racialized nature of the discourse and attempted, unsuccessfully, to legitimize a subset of immigrants and Mexicans as worthy citizens. When pro-immigration advocates countered claims about service-abusing Mexican immigrants, they argued that rather than enter the U.S. specifically for health and welfare benefits, the “motives are usually nothing more than a Mexican's simple quest for a job.”⁴⁹⁸ However, given widespread fears that Arizona Anglos were losing their jobs to Mexico, these arguments only reinforced anti-Mexican sentiment. In an effort to expose the racism inherent in the Mexican assault, Ernest Perez, a Scottsdale resident, berated the Arizona public for its lack of response to stories about a homeless and undocumented immigrant from England. A welfare recipient with five children, her pending deportation sparked calls from her friends and family for legislative action which would allow her and her children to remain in the U.S. Questioning why no public outcry arose about the case, Perez asked, “What's wrong with this picture? Don't we hear similar stories everyday? Isn't this an example of an alien using up our resources without contributing to our output? Could the difference be that this alien is from England, rather than from Mexico?”⁴⁹⁹ Senate minority leader Cindy Resnick reiterated these concerns stating that the state only assumed problems arose from Mexico and Mexican immigrants, not Canadians or other foreigners.⁵⁰⁰ Speaking directly to the homogenization of Hispanic residents in the state, one editorialist declared that the Mexican assault was “dehumanizing a whole class of people [including] legal immigrants and U.S.-born Latinos.”⁵⁰¹

Despite calls for a public vote on service provisions for illegal aliens, politicians across the state refused to comply. The most vocal opponent was Republican Governor Fife Symington who believed a state-wide referendum to deny social services to illegal immigrants would compromise Arizona's fledgling business relations with Mexico. Rather than punish immigrants directly and risk angering Mexico, Symington responded to public outcries by demanding that the federal government reimburse the state for the immigration-related expenses it incurred. Symington recognized that he walked a fine line between preserving trade relations with Mexico and appealing to public anti-Mexican demands, and struggled to balance the competing interests. Even in this pursuit, however, Symington reinforced the frames used in public discourse, demonizing all immigrants and identifying Mexico as the source of the state's ills. For example, while Pete Wilson's California lawsuit against the federal government spoke directly to the issue of “illegal aliens,” Symington's congressional testimony argued that Arizona faced a broad-sweeping “immigrant invasion” and that “the Constitution guaranteed the states protection against invasion.”⁵⁰² He claimed that the state's fiscal woes resulted from “an immigration problem”⁵⁰³ Whereas other governors, Pete Wilson included, only demanded that the federal government reimburse the state for the costs of illegal immigration, Symington demanded reimbursement for costs associated with *all* forms of immigration, permanent residents to

⁴⁹⁸ Editorial, “Our Fair Share: Beefed Up Border Patrol.”

⁴⁹⁹ Perez, “What's Wrong with this Picture.”

⁵⁰⁰ Pitzl, “Governor Covets U.S. Cash; Wants Federal Money for Services Aliens Use.”

⁵⁰¹ Editorial, “Our Fair Share: Beefed Up Border Patrol.”

⁵⁰² Sontag, “3 Governors Take Pleas On Aliens to the Senate.”

⁵⁰³ Pitzl, “Governor Covets U.S. Cash; Wants Federal Money for Services Aliens Use.”

undocumented immigrants.⁵⁰⁴ By not differentiating between documented and undocumented immigrants, Symington's framing of the immigration issue implicitly identified U.S. citizens as victims, reinforcing the categories of worth and deservingness around which the Mexican assault was built.

"Riding a Winning Horse"

The ensuing racial conflict in Arizona not only sparked a pervasive sense of threat and resentment against Mexicans who many Anglos believed were stealing jobs and resources from deserving citizens, the Mexican assault made it politically imperative that politicians speak to anti-Mexican demands. In continuing to support a free trade agreement with Mexico and refusing to endorse the campaign for an Arizona 187, Governor Fife Symington, along with other state politicians, faced the challenge of appeasing racially resentful voters who doubted the deservingness of the state's Mexican population and feared that their own citizenship rights were in jeopardy. As welfare reform debates heated up in Washington, DC, Symington also faced allegations of financial misconduct at home in Arizona. He turned to welfare reform to resurrect his career and resuscitate his bid for re-election in 1994.

Fife Symington first assumed the governorship in Arizona in 1991, elected after the impeachment of Democratic Evan Mecham. At the time of Symington's election, seven state legislators were facing indictments for bribery and related charges after a sixteen month police undercover operation known as "AzScam."⁵⁰⁵ A moderate Republican, Symington committed to running the state like an ethical business operation, bringing responsibility and profit to the state. Early in his term, Symington not only sought to forge strong business relations with Mexico, he fought tooth and nail against proposals which would decrease welfare benefits in the state.⁵⁰⁶ As public resentment toward Mexico and Mexicans swelled in 1992 and 1993, Symington and other public officials drew public ire for their refusal to support the Save Our State Arizona campaign. The news media proclaimed Symington's political endeavors "a major failure" which "embarrassed the governor and occasionally the GOP majority." The lack of unity in the Republican Party threatened upcoming elections in 1994: "Symington's staff at times was sharply at odds with GOP lawmakers. In several instances, there were back-room blow-ups allowing rifts to develop [in the party]."⁵⁰⁷

Initially a politician who "attracted people who were more moderate in their beliefs," Symington "drifted pretty far to the right side of the spectrum and became in my mind much more hardened ideologically," said former state legislator Jack Jewett.⁵⁰⁸ Responding to escalating concerns about Mexicans in the state, Symington launched attacks on affirmative action and attempted to undo school desegregation proposals.⁵⁰⁹ Dubbing him the "George Wallace" of Arizona, Hispanic leaders assailed Symington for abandoning their interests and betraying Republican Hispanics who helped elect him.⁵¹⁰ Despite these efforts, Symington's political fortunes remained uncertain as his 1994 re-election neared. His public approval ratings

⁵⁰⁴ Flannery, "Symington Wants U.S. to Pay Immigrants' Tab; Proposal Could Follow California's Lead."

⁵⁰⁵ Mydans, "New Beginning Pledged for Arizona."

⁵⁰⁶ Ryle, "Tax Cuts at Whose Cost?"

⁵⁰⁷ Flannery, "Governor Had Up-Down Year, Lawmakers Say."

⁵⁰⁸ Jewett, "Interview with Author."

⁵⁰⁹ Berman, *Arizona Politics and Government*.

⁵¹⁰ Murphy, "George Wallace of AZ?"; Murphy, "Hispanics Assail Governor."

stood at a mere 29%, having declined precipitously over the course of his first term in office.⁵¹¹ The only governor who suffered from worse approval ratings was Evan Mecham, just before his impeachment.⁵¹²

Seeking to capitalize on the anti-Mexican sentiment running rampant in the state, Symington joined forces with Pete Wilson and other governors seeking to reclaim funds from the federal government to cover the state's incurred immigration expenses. As outlined above, Symington conveyed more nuanced messages about immigration than did many of the other governors. He simultaneously denounced illegal immigration while proclaiming all immigration a drain on the state. Because state residents widely associated Hispanics with welfare use, Symington also turned his attention to welfare reform efforts in 1994. According to one legislative leader, "Symington found where the country might be going... [he and other politicians] really figured out that people were unhappy. There was a sense that people were gaming the system, that we were paying for folks to be professional welfare recipients and I think people saw some, to be candid, political profit and blaming welfare recipients and welfare program for all the ills of the world."⁵¹³ Arizona's push for punitive welfare reforms began in the legislative session just prior to the 1994 election and continued through 1997, making possible another term for Fife Symington and launching the political careers of a host of previously unknown politicians. Given racial divides activated by the Mexican assault, the administration and other politicians knew they were "riding a winning horse" as stringent welfare policies swept through the state legislature.⁵¹⁴

Cheapened Citizenship: Welfare Reforms in the Copper State

The first signs of Symington's budding commitment to welfare reform occurred in early 1994 when he argued in his State of the State address that the current welfare system discouraged education and work.⁵¹⁵ Welfare reforms held multiple appeals for politicians in the state. First, passing stricter welfare policies allowed politicians to project the public image that they were cracking down on Hispanic abuse of public services. Secondly, punitive welfare reforms appealed to Arizona voters who expressed a fervent commitment to balanced budget conservatism which emerged from a sense of economic security and frustration intimately related to concerns about Mexico and Mexicans.⁵¹⁶

The belief that Mexicans in particular languished on the welfare rolls, depleting state resources, propelled many political figures to support an early assault on welfare. Former gubernatorial staff reported a range of "destructive stereotypes" of Hispanics on both sides which "constantly had to be challenged."⁵¹⁷ With public calls to crack down on welfare and immigration, state political leaders sought to take early action on welfare reform, even before the federal government finalized its own policy. In the legislature, Ruth Solomon (D) and Pat Blake (R), both members of the House Human Services Committee, co-sponsored a package of bills "to dump people off welfare or encourage people to work, depending on which side you're on."⁵¹⁸

⁵¹¹ Murphy, "Hispanics Assail Governor."

⁵¹² Flannery, "Symington's Approval Rating Lowest of Tenure."

⁵¹³ Hamilton, "Interview with Author."

⁵¹⁴ Ibid.

⁵¹⁵ Wiley, "Governor Says Little, Says It with Feeling, and Looks Good Saying It."

⁵¹⁶ Calavita, "The New Politics of Immigration."; Plotkin and Scheuerman, *Private interest, public spending*.

⁵¹⁷ Liggett, "Interview with Author."

⁵¹⁸ Noyes, "'Good cop, bad cop' tackle state welfare reform."

These early bills proposed strict new time limits for welfare recipients and tightened work requirements. Arguing for these new regulations, the Senate Majority Leader asserted, "All welfare programs have failed, and they've failed because they created too many exemptions."⁵¹⁹ The bills passed with little debate as politicians on both sides of the aisle sought to solidify their positions before the upcoming November election. The final bills initiated a new state welfare program called EMPOWER (Employing and Moving People Off Welfare and Encouraging Responsibility) which limited adult AFDC eligibility to two years within a five-year period and required adult job training or work participation once a child reached two-months old.

By the end of the legislative session, internal squabbles in the legislature prevented nearly every other major policy from passing, but welfare reform solidified the reputation of Symington and the state's legislative leaders as tough on both government waste and those who create it. Although he entered the session a much maligned political figure, the welfare gains reignited Symington's political career. By the end of the legislative session, former critics were praising Symington for his successes. Wrote one columnist, "It's taken three full years, but Republican Fife Symington finally seems to have hit his stride as governor. After a disastrous first year and an only marginally better second one, the state's chief executive officer has poked his head above the water line and managed to stay afloat."⁵²⁰ Championing his own successes, Symington said, "Arizona has charged ahead with its own welfare reform... Arizona can no longer afford to waste its time on Lyndon Johnson's 30-year loser that Bill Clinton has adopted. Our program is different, it is better, and it will fulfill the promise theirs can't. It will be the beginning of the end of welfare as we know it."⁵²¹ The racial undertones of the policy were not lost on State Senator Huppenthal who argued the bill was clearly "a strike at a particular population."⁵²²

Following the legislative session, campaigning for the gubernatorial race heated up as did the Mexican assault, fueled by the on-going campaign for Proposition 187 in California. Immigration and welfare reform featured prominently in both the gubernatorial primaries for both parties and the general election, with candidates linking the immigration problem to the availability of welfare benefits in the U.S.⁵²³ Even those politicians who sought to dispel the myth that Mexicans immigrated for the sake of welfare benefits still reaffirmed the stereotype. Said one, "Immigrants may not come to the U.S. to get on the welfare rolls, but when they arrive in this country and do not find a better life...they then see how easy it is to obtain welfare."⁵²⁴ By November, the race had dwindled from six candidates to two major contenders: Democrat Eddie Basha and Fife Symington. Symington promised to continue the lawsuits against the federal government, touting his success in passing work requirements and a two-year time limit for welfare.⁵²⁵ Just prior to the elections, news surfaced that the number of undocumented immigrants crossing into Arizona from Mexico had increased dramatically over the five years

⁵¹⁹ "Panel passes welfare reform shifting responsibility to recipients."

⁵²⁰ Wiley, "Kevin Wiley Grades the Governor: Symington Deserves Kudos for Tax Cuts."

⁵²¹ Symington, *Symington Requests Waiver for Welfare Reform Programs that Encourage Work, Responsible Parenting*.

⁵²² Arizona State Senate, *Minutes of Committee on Health, Welfare, and Aging, Arizona State Senate, 41st Legislature, 2nd Regular Session, February 15, 25*.

⁵²³ Foster, "Johnson Unveils Reform Package as Governor Would Revamp Schools, Welfare, and Justice."; Pitzl, "Barbara Barrett to Take on Symington in GOP Primary."; Pitzl, "Mexico Question a Tough Nut for Governor, Rivals How to Balance Illegals, Trade."

⁵²⁴ Richwine, "Groups upset by proposed welfare cuts; Non-citizens may face complete loss of benefits."

⁵²⁵ Pederson, "Cynicism and apathy chilled vote; Negativity, dollars seen as influences."

prior.⁵²⁶ Compounded by continued fears that Mexicans were entering the United States to access welfare benefits, these new figures added further fuel to the racialized anti-welfare fire and increased the appeal of Symington's "tough on welfare" rhetoric. Symington handily won reelection in 1994, despite the fact that he faced much skepticism prior to the election for suspicions of his business dealings. Symington had been sued by federal regulators and was under criminal investigation at the time for his past business pursuits.

The passage of Proposition 187 in California and the re-election of Symington in Arizona did not yield the end of anti-Mexican sentiment and punitive welfare reforms in Arizona but rather the beginning of a new round of racially-motivated welfare cuts. In January 1995, the federal government rejected Arizona's waiver request to implement its new programs and policies, saying that they were too harsh, but Symington resolved to implement EMPOWER with or without federal approval.⁵²⁷ In challenging federal authorities to take responsibility for welfare recipients by approving his waiver, Symington reaffirmed his anti-immigration rhetoric, blaming federal irresponsibility for the state's struggles with its Hispanic population. Symington's stance generated opposition from key Democratic leaders. Eschewing the racialized discourse around welfare, House Minority Leader Art Hamilton argued, "it is very popular to run against the poor and blame them for their poverty and punish them for their failure not to have done as well as some of the other folk" claiming that Republicans were "punishing poor folk for being poor."⁵²⁸ Ultimately, however, the federal government approved EMPOWER with the stipulation that those facing benefit termination receive a year of transitional medical coverage.

When PRWORA passed at the federal level, the EMPOWER regulations were adopted as part of Arizona's TANF plan and submitted to the federal government in October 1996. However, the federal reform mandates required that Arizona revisit the initial structure of EMPOWER and make new determinations about time limits, work requirements, sanctions, and benefits for immigrants. These obligations incited the most extensive and most widely covered welfare debates in the state. During the last few months of 1996, a legislative Interim Committee on Block Grants met to develop and publish recommendations for how the legislature should pursue TANF compliance.⁵²⁹ These heated committee debates preceded contentious debates in the legislature about the utility of full-family sanctions, the need for extensive work requirements, and the question of benefits for non-citizens.

These debates about the state's new TANF plan which would be known as EMPOWER Redesign coincided with renewed debates about Mexican immigration and NAFTA. As part of NAFTA negotiations, Symington proposed a plan to build a private prison in Mexico to house Arizona's skyrocketing Mexican inmate population which increased over 4,000% from 1980 to 1997. News reports stated that Mexicans accounted for 10.5 percent of the 22,697 inmates in Arizona, a larger percentage than in neighboring California. In an effort to sell the private prison idea "to the Mexican authorities, Arizona officials painted the plan as a humanitarian gesture. There would be no international border to block family visits. The prison language would be Spanish. The food would be Mexican."⁵³⁰ At the same time politicians publicly made arguments

⁵²⁶ Pence, "Border Patrol reports 51% more arrests."

⁵²⁷ Parish, "U.S. Approves Arizona's Welfare-Reform Package."

⁵²⁸ Noyes, "Demos accuse GOP of warring on poor."

⁵²⁹ Arizona State Legislature, "Report of the Joint Interim Study Committee on Block Grants."

⁵³⁰ Brooke, "With Jail Costs Rising, Arizona Wants to Build Private Prison in Mexico."

about how illegal immigrants from Mexico were overwhelming social services and medical institutions in the state, despite the fact that existing data did not confirm the point.⁵³¹ Reports at the time made it increasingly clear that any welfare reforms would “disproportionately affect... minorities” like Hispanics and Indians.⁵³² As this news inflamed public distrust of Mexicans, politicians once again saw welfare reform as a politically expedient way to win voter approval and to appear tough on immigration.

The powerful forces of Hispanic resentment and pro-citizen rhetoric were nowhere more evident than in debates about whether to extend welfare benefits to non-citizens. Federal law mandated that if states wanted to extend TANF benefits to all but a select group of non-citizens, they would need to do so with state funding. As in California, an array of advocacy groups and legislators struggled to achieve such gains. However, unlike in California their efforts were stymied by the discursive frames popularized during the Mexican assault as well as by their own lack of coordination. Independently at Joint Committee meetings, advocates from an array of social service and advocacy organizations declared the need for such a state program to support legal non-citizen TANF recipients. Eddie Sissions, Executive Director of the Arizona Justice Institute, declared that 44% of the savings estimated by the committee around welfare reforms would come at the expense of legal immigrants.⁵³³ Monsignor Ryle, a lobbyist for the Catholic Church, expressed concern about what would happen to undocumented immigrants, saying local agencies like United Way could not independently meet the needs of the population.⁵³⁴

These groups were supported in their efforts by a small cadre of Arizona politicians who lobbied for benefits for legal non-citizens. Representatives Herschalla Horton and Marion Pickens separately expressed concerns about the effect of welfare reform on the state’s non-citizen residents. In one very contentious debate, Herschella Horton tried to win benefit extensions for legal immigrants “who have been taxpaying citizens.”⁵³⁵ These efforts to highlight the contributions of legal non-citizens largely fell on deaf ears given that preceding public discourse had demonized all immigrants, regardless of documentation status, lumping them together in an over-arching category of unworthy Mexicans. Thus, when Horton declared legal immigrants to be “taxpaying citizens” or argued that legal immigrants rarely access public relief, Senator Patterson and other legislators countered by expressing “doubt that legal immigrants use fewer services than citizens” and asserting that “U.S. had become a magnet for immigrants due to its welfare benefits.”⁵³⁶ Committee leaders even refused to gather estimates for how much it would cost for counties to pick up services for non-citizens.⁵³⁷ Referencing the over-arching anti-immigrant tone of the debates, one Hispanic advocate called welfare reform “another example of immigrant-bashing...and the effort to confuse the American public on the issues of legal and illegal immigration.”⁵³⁸ Indirectly asserting the racial divisiveness of the meetings, Art Hamilton criticized the legislature by saying, “We’re not trying to fight the Civil

⁵³¹ Jewett, “Interview with Author.”

⁵³² Editorial, “Targeting minorities, poor.”

⁵³³ Arizona State Legislature, “Report of the Joint Interim Study Committee on Block Grants.”

⁵³⁴ Ibid.

⁵³⁵ Arizona State Legislature, *Minutes of Meeting, Committee on Block Grants, Arizona House of Representatives, 43rd Legislature, 1st Regular Session, February 19, 1990*, 10.

⁵³⁶ Arizona State Legislature, “Report of the Joint Interim Study Committee on Block Grants.”

⁵³⁷ Ibid.

⁵³⁸ Ibarra, “Welfare bill cuts aid to immigrants.”

War all over again.”⁵³⁹ The conflation of Hispanic and immigrant with unworthy echoed in discussions about the news meanings attributed to “citizenship” in welfare debates. By linking welfare and citizenship, said one southern Arizona immigrant rights advocate, welfare reform “cheaped citizenship because now [politicians] can impugn the motives of people who may be motivated purely by their love of this country... citizenship, which prior to welfare reform was simply an act of patriotism, . . . is now turning into...a question of the ability to receive welfare benefits.”⁵⁴⁰

If the resentment toward illegal immigrants and the valorization of legal immigrants in California facilitated advocacy for lenient reforms, the overwhelmingly anti-Mexican and anti-immigrant rhetoric that predominated in Arizona limited the ability of advocates to claim that welfare recipients, non-citizen recipients in particular, deserved state support. These efforts were further hindered by a lack of organization among anti-poverty advocates. If a sea of advocacy groups emerged in California to contest punitive reform efforts, Arizona activists formed a mere puddle. Regular attendees at the Joint Committee meetings were representatives from the Children’s Action Alliance (a Phoenix-based children’s advocacy group), the Arizona Community Action Association, the Arizona Justice Institute, and a lobbyist for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Phoenix, Monsignor Edward Ryle. Prior to the discussion of EMPOWER Redesign, these groups as well as over 200 others endorsed a document entitled “Block Grants with a Vision.” Composed by the Arizona Community Action Association, it outlined principles to guide a discussion of welfare reform. Although advocates were united in their support for the text, the document’s prescriptions were vague at best calling for local community control, public-private partnerships, and government accountability.⁵⁴¹ It made no coherent policy recommendations.

The lack of recommendations presaged a “disjointed” advocacy effort which never yielded a cohesive voice for lenient measures.⁵⁴² Remarking on the situation one Representative lamented, “There is no organized attempt to find out what might be best for us.”⁵⁴³ In one committee meeting, advocates from three different organizations testified back-to-back, the first arguing for child care support, the second for an over-arching anti-poverty strategy in the state, and the third for limited sanctions.⁵⁴⁴ In other meetings, a slew of advocacy groups testified but no two organizations pushed for the same policies.⁵⁴⁵ Even groups who agreed on the need for supportive transitional programs for welfare recipients did not sing as a choir in committee meetings, stifling the call for lenient reforms. Particularly absent in these debates, given their corresponding presence in California, were Hispanic advocacy groups. Yet, while the organized and targeted Proposition 187 campaign in California sparked a mobilization of Latino voters and the election of a new class of Latino elected officials, the diffuse Mexican assault in Arizona prompted no such response. Indeed, if well-organized movements prompt the emergence of

⁵³⁹ Noyes, “Demos accuse GOP of warring on poor.”

⁵⁴⁰ Wabnik, “Many legally in U.S. lose benefits today.”

⁵⁴¹ Arizona Community Action Association, *Block Grants with a Vision*.

⁵⁴² Anderson, “Interview with Author.”

⁵⁴³ Wabnik, “Rep. Pickens calls for welfare hearings.”

⁵⁴⁴ Arizona State Legislature, “Report of the Joint Interim Study Committee on Block Grants.”

⁵⁴⁵ Arizona State Senate, *Minutes of Committee on Health, Welfare, and Aging, Arizona State Senate, 41st Legislature, 2nd Regular Session, February 15*.

cohesive countermovements, spurring the development of institutional resources and capacity,⁵⁴⁶ the Mexican assault failed to stimulate any strategic mobilization or reaction among Hispanics in Arizona. When welfare reform efforts reach full-swing, the state had a poorly organized Hispanic Legislative Caucus and no cadre of Hispanic advocacy organizations. Only once did an organization, Chicanos Por La Causa (a social services agency) testify at hearings to demand a greater role in reform efforts.⁵⁴⁷ Although Hispanic legislators were all opposed to punitive welfare reforms, “it seemed more like a confluence of personal opinions more than an organized thing.”⁵⁴⁸

Not only was Latino advocacy weak, no multi-ethnic campaign arose in Arizona as did in California due in part to the structure of TANF itself. In California, Asian and Hispanic groups joined forces to fight for lenient reforms. In Arizona, the most likely allies for Hispanic groups, aside from the advocacy organizations mentioned above, were Native American tribes. Not only were the communities disproportionately affected by welfare reforms given their high take-up levels, citizenship issues and tribal issues were fused together in hearings as part of a common “Native American and Safety Net” committee. In these meetings, tribal issues received the overwhelming attention of legislators, perhaps at the expense of a safety net for non-citizens. Widely supportive of tribal concerns, members of the Joint Committee on Block Grants issued invitations to tribal leaders to attend the meetings and discuss their concerns without issuing similar invitations to representatives from immigrant or Hispanic groups.⁵⁴⁹ Given this attention, an alliance between tribal and Hispanic interests might have proven fruitful. However, federal welfare reforms stipulated that tribes be allowed to establish their own TANF programs, independent of state-run programs. This regulation effectively prevented such an alliance. Given this situation and the prevalent demonization of Hispanics in the state, denying benefits to non-citizens remained “politically high-profile.”⁵⁵⁰ In its final report, the committee recommended that EMPOWER Redesign include progressive full-family sanctions for non-compliance, no safety net for non-citizens, and the maintenance of the stringent time limits and work requirements from EMPOWER.⁵⁵¹

In the 1997 legislative session competing voices clashed as Arizona made final determinations about the committee recommendations. Given the prevailing racial climate in the state, politicians voted largely in favor of the recommendations. Reflecting on the political incentives to pass the punitive package, Mark Anderson, chair of the Joint Committee, stated, “Now, the time is on the horizon and people are actually starting to think, ‘Hey, November is coming and what am I going to do?’”⁵⁵² While the final version of the state’s TANF policy strayed little from the committee’s recommendations, Senator Tom Patterson successfully lobbied to privatize a portion of the state’s welfare services, making Arizona one of only two

⁵⁴⁶ Andrews, *Freedom Is a Constant Struggle*; Meyer and Staggenborg, “Movements, Countermovements, and the Structure of Political Opportunity.”

⁵⁴⁷ Arizona State Legislature, *Minutes of Meeting, Committee on Block Grants, Arizona House of Representatives, 43rd Legislature, 1st Regular Session, February 5.*

⁵⁴⁸ Patterson, “Interview with Author.”

⁵⁴⁹ Arizona State Legislature, *Minutes of Meeting, Committee on Block Grants, Arizona House of Representatives, 43rd Legislature, 1st Regular Session, February 14.*

⁵⁵⁰ Patterson, “Interview with Author.”

⁵⁵¹ Arizona State Legislature, “Report of the Joint Interim Study Committee on Block Grants.”

⁵⁵² Wabnik, “Welfare cuts are apt to hit women first.”

states in the country to privatize welfare.⁵⁵³ Although Patterson initially proposed the privatization of the entire EMPOWER program, his plan drew substantial resistance from state employees. Eastern Maricopa County, just east of Phoenix, became the pilot site for Arizona Works, the privately operated program. The Arizona Works pilot program was more lenient than the state-run program. Unlike its counterpart, it gave participants community service and education options to fulfill work requirements. The life time limit under the privatized program was five years whereas participants in the mainstream program could only receive benefits of two of five years. For most families, the grant amount was also higher under Arizona Works, the privatized program.⁵⁵⁴ Because Arizona Works was implemented in a predominantly white section of the state, the division between private and public systems effectively granted many of the state's Anglo welfare recipients with a more generous and less punitive welfare program.

It also provided Tom Patterson with additional political capital as he sought to win higher office in 1998. A long-time proponent of punitive welfare reforms, a vocal critic of Hispanic welfare use, and a staunch conservative, Patterson exploited anti-Mexican sentiment in the state to build steam for a gubernatorial campaign. Early in his campaign planning, Patterson targeted welfare as the centerpiece of his platform.⁵⁵⁵ Patterson lobbied long and hard for the most stringent of work requirements for welfare recipients, claiming that previous welfare reforms failed because they were riddled with exemptions.⁵⁵⁶ His views on welfare and the state's Mexican population resonated with many voters. Explaining his position in an interview Patterson said,

Welfare is very corrosive to human beings and it's one of the worst things that can happen to you to fall into a welfare trap... It's short term, it gets people through a rough spot, but in the long term it ruins their lives and I think it's been a horrible influence particularly on minorities... I think welfare is the number one reason why the civil rights movement stalled out... [In Arizona] it applies to a little different minority but the dynamics are basically the same.⁵⁵⁷

During welfare reform debates Patterson publicly accused all immigrants of being welfare recipients and voiced his view that Hispanic legislators only vote for bills that help their own, a "my people get them and your people pay for them" attitude.⁵⁵⁸ In pressing for a privatized welfare system, Patterson garnered a reputation among Democrats as being "very cold, very calculating and very ambitious."⁵⁵⁹ However, his work earned him praise from public circles as a principled and moral politician.⁵⁶⁰ Seeking to capitalize on his welfare successes, Patterson produced an infomercial just as he declared his candidacy for governor. The ad detailed his accomplishments around welfare and explained the state's new welfare system to tv-watching residents. The video began with an explanation of the Legislature's effort to end "the failed welfare policies of the past that led to a whole culture of dependence on government." It

⁵⁵³ Phillips and Franciosi, "Does Arizona Works Work? Arizona Issue Analysis 163."

⁵⁵⁴ Children's Action Alliance, *Arizona Network for Community Responsibility*.

⁵⁵⁵ Liggett, "Interview with Author."

⁵⁵⁶ Patterson, "Interview with Author.;" McKinnon, "2 more welfare bills target jobs for benefits."

⁵⁵⁷ Patterson, "Interview with Author."

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁹ "Patterson, Killian competition is causing legislative concern."

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid.

then introduced Patterson, thanking him ``for his dedication and commitment to the principles of limited government, economic opportunity, individual liberty and personal responsibility embodied in the Arizona Works (welfare) program.”⁵⁶¹

Patterson achieved notoriety for his efforts, but ultimately withdrew from the gubernatorial race after Fife Symington was convicted of bank fraud in federal court. That Symington’s financial scandals ruined Patterson’s electoral chances did not undermine his strategy to use welfare reform as centerpiece of his campaign. Said one lobbyist,

You’ve got to feel sorry for Tom Patterson because that was a brilliant strategy and it would have worked... I think had [Symington] not been convicted and removed from office Tom would have been better able to marshal support...No, he had a brilliant strategy I mean you could write a tragic play about it, it should have worked, he should have been governor.

Public recognition as a leader in Arizona’s welfare reform revolution was, indeed, a “politically opportunistic place to be.”⁵⁶² As concerns about immigration from Mexico continued to mount in the state over the next decade, political leaders continued to place welfare on the chopping block to protect their political futures.

Discussion and Summary

Despite their large Hispanic populations, Arizona and California pursued drastically different approaches to welfare reform in the 1990s. A politically-motivated racial conflict in Arizona characterized by an intensifying assault against Mexican nationals and immigrants, demonized all immigrants and all Hispanics in the state as welfare leeches and criminals, undeserving of public support. Hispanic threat and resentment made it politically advantageous for politicians to pass punitive welfare reforms and to position themselves as tough on immigration and government waste. When anti-poverty and immigrant rights advocates attempted to legitimize some immigrants and some Hispanics as worthy of assistance their claims fell on deaf ears as prevailing discourses in the state dictated that citizens, presumably Anglo, were the state’s sole benefactors. Combined with weak advocacy coalitions, the Mexican assault racialized welfare, prompting the passage of punitive reforms.

Despite the racial undertones and draconian directives of Proposition 187, the major cleavages activated by the initiative were primarily based on legality, unlike in Arizona where racial divisions constituted the major social cleavage. Proposition 187 sparked a resentment against illegal immigrants in California, fostered in part by the threat many Californians perceived to their social and material well-being. The campaigns both for and against 187 institutionalized two cultural categories of worth - illegal and legal - which had significant implications for welfare reform. Debates about benefits restoration addressed legal immigrants only, a group which Proposition 187 campaigners lauded as law-abiding victims deserving of public benefits. Combined with heightened Latino political prowess, this valorization of documented immigrants facilitated the passage of lenient reforms as conservative politicians struggled and failed to denounce legal residents.

⁵⁶¹ Fischer, “Gubernatorial hopeful gets free welfare infomercial.”

⁵⁶² Hamilton, “Interview with Author.”

The welfare reform trajectories of these two western states demonstrate the utility of the racial conflict model in explaining when and how race limits the development of a more generous social safety net. These histories also suggest that the political conflicts which preceded welfare reform debates cannot easily be decoupled from welfare itself. Regardless of the cleavages they activated, Proposition 187 and the Mexican assault, as with the Flag Flap and Tort Reform in the southern states, activated or created political identities and coalitions and altered the rewards to be gained by passing punitive welfare packages. These histories also indicate the multi-faceted nature of immigration as a political issue. Scholars frequently point to the diversity in both the Hispanic population and the immigration population.⁵⁶³ Welfare reform efforts in California and Arizona illustrate that whether and how political elites emphasize this diversity, which categories of worth they employ and which aspects of this diversity they highlight, has significant implications for poverty alleviation programs and for policy outcomes more generally.

⁵⁶³ Jimenez, *Replenished Ethnicity*; Foley, "Becoming Hispanic: Mexican Americans and Whiteness."; Massey, Durand, and Malone, *Beyond Smoke and Mirrors*.

Chapter 6

Conflict, Categories, and Consequences: Demographic Diversity and the Politics of Poverty and Inequality

With the recent economic crisis, state social assistance programs face increasing threats as governments contemplate how best to balance their budgets. Medicaid, TANF, Head Start, and other programs targeted at low-income families are now the focal point of debates about the size of government and state fiscal woes. The Great Recession has fueled attacks on the social safety net, but these assaults are not new. Since the late 1940s, the U.S. welfare system has been the target of both state and federal challenges as a “backlash against welfare mothers” ensued. This anti-welfare crusade has emerged despite the fact that the United States sports one of the highest child poverty rates in the industrialized world.⁵⁶⁴ Other affluent democracies have historically been more effective at limiting poverty. These successes are due in large part to their generous social safety nets. Yet as their economies struggle and as rising immigration levels redefine their social fabric, industrialized democracies around the world are now witnessing revolts against their social assistance programs.

Scholars have argued that the seemingly color-blind anti-tax rhetoric which fueled these cutbacks in the past was actually a product of racial animosity.⁵⁶⁵ Heightened concerns about immigration and racial divisions continue to prompt such arguments today. The question, then, of how ethno-racial diversity affects social welfare policy has both immediate and international relevance. Sociologists, economists, and political scientists have all identified a link between ethno-racial demographics and welfare policy outcomes. Not only is public support for welfare weaker in polities with large minority populations, the actual provisions of these welfare programs are stingier and more restrictive.⁵⁶⁶ These patterns were no where more evident than during the U.S. welfare reforms of the 1990s. Debates about the reforms’ effectiveness have been fierce, but one thing is resoundingly clear: the punitive side of welfare reform has hit Blacks and Hispanics particularly hard. Although the overall welfare rolls have decreased markedly since the reforms, the proportion of Black and Hispanic recipients has increased, reaching record highs.⁵⁶⁷ These individuals have had the hardest time moving off of welfare, receive the weakest supportive services, and have been more likely to face punitive sanctions from case workers.⁵⁶⁸ Because racial demographics track so closely with policy outcomes, the increasing proportion of minority recipients may very well threaten the future of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families as a program and for social assistance programs more generally. The possibility that race may fuel additional welfare cutbacks is particularly worrisome given the current imperative to reduce deficits and the subsequent desire of politicians to appear attentive to and critical of “wasteful” spending.

Yet, to assess such speculations or to identify opportunities for intervention requires a thorough and nuanced understanding of exactly *when* and *how* race structures social policy

⁵⁶⁴ Reese, *Backlash against Welfare Mothers*.

⁵⁶⁵ Edsall and Edsall, *Chain Reaction*; Reese, *Backlash against Welfare Mothers*.

⁵⁶⁶ Fellowes and Rowe, “Politics and the New American Welfare States.”; Eger, “Even in Sweden.”; Alesina and Glaeser, *Fighting Poverty in the US and Europe*; Fox, “Three Worlds of Relief: Race, Immigration, and Public and Private Social Welfare Spending in American Cities, 1929.”; Soss et al., “Setting the Terms of Relief.”

⁵⁶⁷ DeParle, “Shrinking Welfare Rolls Leave Record High Share of Minorities.”

⁵⁶⁸ Schram et al., “Deciding to Discipline.”

developments. In this dissertation, I argued that the link between racial demography and welfare policy is not pre-ordained but rather conditioned by political conflicts and the social salience of racial divisions. I presented a racial conflict theory which explained that race structures welfare reforms through the activation of widely publicized racial conflicts. The racial conflict model argues that as racial conflicts divide a populace and its political actors by race, these events, even if unrelated to poverty policy, fuel the passage of weak policies through a multi-step process. First, these conflicts ignite a palpable sense of threat among majority group members and generate widespread resentment of the targeted minority group. Because the actors in racial conflicts necessarily express racialized grievances against race-specific targets, they elevate the socio-political salience of racial categories both for direct participants in the conflict (politicians, activists, and the media) and for observers. These threats and resentments prime residents to identify and emphasize the social significance of racial categories and divisions.

Second, the discursive framing of these racial conflicts by the media, politicians, and citizens disseminates and popularizes specific racialized constructions of worth and deservingness. The framings of racial conflicts thus create a new discursive opportunity structure for future political debates in which race is a readily available and highly resonant frame for interpreting welfare and poverty. Because of these conflicts, race-specific framings of welfare have heightened resonance among the public and among policymakers. Moreover, the resonance of race as a frame limits the power and effectiveness of non-racial framings of welfare. Members of the public and political leaders themselves more readily accept policy justifications and portrayals of poverty that emphasize race. While politicians can milk racialized understandings of poverty to fuel the passage of punitive policies, advocates for lenient reforms struggle to create and employ alternative frames due to the discursive constraints posed by the racial conflict.

Together, these threats, resentments, and frames create electoral advantages for politicians who support punitive policies. Thus, racial conflicts structure the rewards that come from passing restrictive policies and serve as active resource that politicians can manipulate to their benefit. On the other hand, in the absence of a racial conflict it can be quite challenging for political elites to use race to achieve punitive policy goals. Just as racial conflicts condition the political utility of race, they hinder the efforts of advocates who seek to build a stronger safety net for the poor. As the media devote increasing attention to a racial conflict and white resentment and group threat spread, these advocates must grapple with insurgent racial animus as well as resonant racial framings of social problems as they pursue their goals. Even with plentiful resources, they face significant obstacles in overcoming the cognitive, discursive, and political effects of racial conflicts. Taken together, the racial conflict model then tell us not only *how* race structures welfare but *when* we might expect racial divisions to fuel the adoption of punitive welfare policies or the passage of welfare cutbacks.

How does the racial conflict model explain the findings in existing quantitative research in which demographics elicit specific policy outcomes? It stands to reason that racial conflicts are more likely to occur in areas with large minority populations and historically-rooted racial divisions. As a result, demography tracks closely with social welfare policies. However, the model itself suggests that racial conflicts would prompt predominantly white states to pass punitive reforms in the same way that they do in more heterogeneous polities. Similarly, in the absence of racial conflicts, large minority populations alone would fail to produce restrictive outcomes. The model thus explains why we sometimes see counterintuitive outcomes with

respect to racial demographics and welfare policy but also why we so consistently see a strong relationship between the two. In the future, the racial conflict approach could be refined and possibly extended by operationalizing and testing it in quantitative analysis. Furthermore, additional studies should assess model's ability to predict welfare outcomes in Canada and Western Europe. Expanding and testing the theory on an international scale will reveal the extent to which racial conflicts structure global welfare state retrenchment.

Methods and Theory

The racial conflict approach presented in this dissertation bridges and expands existing theories of race and policymaking, creating a synthetic and holistic theory of how group divisions alter the policymaking process and policy outcomes. I constructed this theory through a structured analysis of welfare reform efforts in Alabama, Georgia, California, and Arizona, four states with large Black or Latino populations. Given our understandings of the demography-policy connection, we might have expected each of these states to adopt strict reforms in the 1990s. However, Alabama and California were among the most lenient states in the nation with respect to these and other decisions. These state-level comparisons provided methodological advantages in the search for the mechanisms that underlie the race-welfare relationship. With the mainstream eschewal of *de jure* discrimination and increasing public acceptance of anti-racist attitudes in the post-civil rights era, scholars have increasingly turned to social-psychological or quantitative analyses of welfare policy development to assess how race affects policy choices. Although they offer insightful commentaries on the demography-policy trend and the cognitive underpinnings of policy opinion, these approaches cannot capture the intricacies of the policymaking process or the lived complexity and shifting salience of race. As a result, our efforts as scholars have routinely identified victims and perpetrators of "welfare racism" rather than the mechanisms at play.⁵⁶⁹

By drawing on an array of historical, media, and interview data and comparing multiple states which pursued contradicting paths despite their other similarities, this study overcomes these obstacles. At the time of welfare reform, the news media in each state espoused stereotypes of welfare recipients at relatively equal rates. Residents of each state expressed equally negative views of Black/Latino work ethic and voiced resounding support for punitive reforms. Yet, these states pursued different welfare reform outcomes.

The racial conflict model accepts, as have other scholars, that racial stereotypes of welfare recipients are ever-present, but deviates from these studies in its assertion that the ubiquity of stereotypes does not render them consequential for welfare policy outcomes, despite the innate human propensity to classify.⁵⁷⁰ For stereotypes to achieve political significance, they must be accompanied by a racial conflict which increases their visibility, their resonance, and their utility. This approach is consistent with the argument that race must be salient in a particular context for it to have political consequences.⁵⁷¹ However, by embracing the cognitive, opinion, and political underpinnings of both race and policymaking, the racial conflict model broadens such approaches by accounting for the sources of race's political salience, the role of

⁵⁶⁹ Neubeck and Cazanave, *Welfare Racism*; Wacquant, "Towards and Analytic of Racial Domination."

⁵⁷⁰ Hancock, *The Politics of Disgust*; Neubeck and Cazanave, *Welfare Racism*; Soss, Fording, and Schram, "The Color of Devolution."

⁵⁷¹ Soss, Fording, and Schram, "The Color of Devolution."

non-legislative actors in the policy process, and the political, not just cognitive processes, that prompt political elites to employ racial divisions to achieve policy ends.

Although the racial conflict approach explains the mechanisms by which race structures welfare policy, it does not assume that racial divisions are the only force prompting the passage of restrictive policies. As numerous scholars have shown, institutional arrangements, political coalitions, and economic forces all structure the welfare state. One advantage of the multiple case study approach here is that it controls for these other factors to isolate racial effects. However, when positioned within the broader context of welfare state research, the racial conflict model bridges racial and non-racial theories of welfare state development by recognizing the shifting and sometimes contradictory ways that race operates in the political sphere. A central debate in social policy research concerns the question of how consequential race is and has been to welfare state development. On one side, scholars have argued that racism has always and continues to undermine U.S. social policy development.⁵⁷² Citing the ubiquity of racialized welfare stereotypes or the power of public racism, these accounts of the U.S. welfare state identify race as the primary stimulus for retrenchment and devolution.⁵⁷³ Still other scholars have asserted that race has not played an instrumental role in U.S. welfare state development. Economic arrangements, political coalitions, and institutions limit the development of a strong social safety net.⁵⁷⁴ How can such divergent accounts be reconciled? The racial conflict model suggests that stereotypes and racism, however commonplace, do not of themselves produce punitive policy outcomes, despite widespread assumptions to the contrary. Indeed, because scholars have rarely before analyzed outliers in the race-policy pattern, they easily adopt the notion that stereotypes fuel policy outcomes. However, the racial conflict model asserts that because racial divisions are shifting and contingent, they may undermine policy decisions in one context but not in another. This means that non-racial factors can be the primary source of welfare cutbacks even in the presence of racial stereotypes and attitudes. However, when racial conflicts do arise, they become an overwhelming force in the fight for punitive reforms. Furthermore, because race structures such welfare reforms through racial conflicts it is possible and even likely for these conflicts to inflame not only racial divisions but other political or economic cleavages. Indeed, historical racial conflicts themselves may be the source of state propensities toward innovation, state political cultures, or political and economic coalitions.

Yet, the insights of this dissertation extend beyond a new understanding of the forces fueling welfare policy developments. The histories of welfare reform in these states demonstrate how policies with little direct relevance to welfare shape welfare policy outcomes. In each of the four states profiled here, the debate, event, or conflict which dominated the state political scene just prior to welfare reform had drastic effects on the structure, tone, and framing of subsequent welfare debates. This is no where more clear than in the two outlier states, California and Alabama. In California, Proposition 187 created a new coalition of Latino activists who gained experience, resources, and networks that they activated in 1997 to abjure punitive reforms. The cultural categories of worth employed in the 187 debates also limited the ability of politicians to

⁵⁷² Neubeck and Cazanave, *Welfare Racism*.

⁵⁷³ Quadagno, "Race, Class, and Gender in the U.S. Welfare State."; Quadagno, *The Color of Welfare*; Neubeck and Cazanave, *Welfare Racism*; Hancock, *The Politics of Disgust*.

⁵⁷⁴ Soule and Zylan, "Runaway Train?"; Zylan and Soule, "Ending Welfare As We Know It (Again)."; Weaver, *Ending Welfare as We Know It*; Weaver and Gais, *State Policy Choices Under Welfare Reform*; Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers*.

demand restrictive policies. Having celebrated the contributions of legal immigrants during the campaign, political leaders struggled just two years later to convince constituents that these same individuals posed a threat to the state's welfare system. In Alabama, the tort reform debates that preceded welfare reform emphasized the imperative for economic development and the lack of jobs in the state. Not only did tort reform shift attention away from welfare reform, its job growth message provided a discursive opportunity for advocates for lenient reforms. Alabama Arise capitalized on this opening, arguing that the state could not expect welfare recipients to go to work when the state had so few jobs to offer them. The message proved so resonant that by the end of the reform process even the staunchest advocates for punitive reforms capitulated and threw their support behind job training and other supportive programs.

This dissertation, thus, identifies a new and powerful source of welfare policy outcomes and have implications for political sociology more generally. Our understandings of the welfare policymaking process derive largely from legislative histories, analyses of the Congressional Record, or news media reports about reforms. Pure legislative analyses of welfare policy developments overlook key aspects of the political context in which such decisions are made. Highly contentious and widely publicized political debates may shift political discourse, create new stakeholders and alliances, or activate specific group boundaries and categories of worth. These transformations have enduring effects for subsequent policy discussions and outcomes, particularly those which arise in their immediate aftermath when the resonance of these debates is still high and their resulting cleavages still strong. Thus, just as social movements have unintended consequences, so too do institutionalized politics and public political events.⁵⁷⁵ Current speculation about the possible effects of Arizona's new immigration law or of New York City's mosque controversy focus rightly but narrowly on discrimination. This dissertation suggests, however, that these conflicts have potentially wide-reaching influences on politics, policy, and political discourse, in unforeseen ways and in unanticipated realms. It, therefore, behooves politicians and activists to imagine the effects of their efforts and their narratives not only on the immediate debate at hand but on the future of politics more generally.

The New Demography

Another central theme in this dissertation has been the relationship between immigration and welfare politics. Indeed, the welfare reform trajectories of these southern and western states also speak to on-going debates about the growing country's Hispanic population and its place in the U.S. racial and political order. By 2000, the proportion of Latinos in the United States had increased to 12.5% of the total population, an increase of 50% from 1990. Nearly a decade later in 2009, Hispanics accounted for 16% of the total population, making them the largest and fastest growing ethno-racial minority group in the country.⁵⁷⁶ In light of these demographic changes, the media, pundits, and scholars alike have speculated about what these trends mean for race relations in the United States as well as for American politics. On one hand, the Hispanic population is cast as a "sleeping giant," whose large numbers are capable of swaying national elections and reconfiguring party politics. On the other hand, Hispanics are caricatured as lazy welfare abusers and undocumented immigrants who birth "anchor babies" in order to reap the benefits of American citizenship and perhaps even re-conquer the country. Both of these themes echo in the welfare reform histories in California and Arizona.

⁵⁷⁵ Giugni, "Was It Worth the Effort?"

⁵⁷⁶ Pew Hispanic Center, "Statistical Portrait of Hispanics in the United States, 2009 - Pew Hispanic Center."

Welfare reform provides an opportunity to assess the sometimes puzzling question of how Hispanics fit into U.S. politics and political development. Although the proportion of Hispanics in a population does correlate with weak welfare outcomes, this relationship is neither as well established nor as strong as it is for African-Americans. Why is this so? The comparison of California and Arizona's welfare reform efforts offers insight. Since the 1960s, white Americans' associations with Blacks and welfare have been consistently and strongly negative. However, the content analysis results in Chapter 4 showed that stereotypes about Hispanic welfare recipients were much less prominent in the West in the 1990s, despite anti-welfare fervor. Indeed, news stories in the South were more than twice as likely as the western states to employ stereotypical depictions of welfare recipients. While the prevalence of stereotypes did not predict which state passed punitive policies, these results indicate that public associations of Hispanics with welfare are much weaker than for African-Americans.

More importantly, the Arizona and California histories demonstrate that even though racial conflict was the primary dynamic fueling punitive reforms, the process was more nuanced than in the South, largely because of the intervening issue of immigration. In recent decades, the terms "immigrant" and "immigration" have become synonymous with Hispanic and Mexican, despite the ethno-racial and national diversity of immigrants in the United States. The media and politicians conflate immigration with Mexico and Latin America. Hispanics themselves view immigration policy as a major issue with cultural, social, political, and economic implications for their own lives.⁵⁷⁷ Meanwhile, immigration is now a focal point of social policy debates. In the 1970s, the federal government began to restrict access to social services for undocumented immigrants and restrictions on access for documented immigrants ensued over the next few decades.⁵⁷⁸

Despite these associations between Hispanics, welfare, and immigration, immigration itself adds a layer of complexity to social policy debates not seen in Black-white histories of welfare policymaking. For one, immigration policy opens wide doors for cross-racial coalition building. When welfare reform denied Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) to non-citizens living in the country for less than five years, a strong multi-racial movement mobilized nationwide to restore these rights.⁵⁷⁹ Asian-American groups, Hispanic organizations, and other immigration activists joined forces and resources to compel policy changes. Similar mobilization developed in California as groups like the California Immigrant Welfare Collaborative, the Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council, and the state's Latino Caucus conducted coordinated and comprehensive advocacy efforts to create state-level cash aid, food stamps, and medical programs for non-citizens. Because immigration-related policies have the potential to affect multiple constituencies, it can offer a powerful basis for social mobilization and advocacy, uniting a broad and multi-racial base of supporters. Unlike southern civil rights and social justice campaigns which have rarely had broad appeal beyond African-Americans, alliances between different constituencies around immigration can preempt the strict racialization of a campaign. Moreover, as these groups pool resources and strategies they increase the likelihood of that their mobilization efforts will induce policy change.

Immigration also complicates the race-welfare relationship because of the many ways in which the issue can be framed and the many categories of worth evoked by the topic. The

⁵⁷⁷ Jiménez, "Weighing the Costs and Benefits of Mexican Immigration."

⁵⁷⁸ Fox, "A New Nativism? Federal Citizenship and Legal Status Restrictions in Medicaid and Welfare."

⁵⁷⁹ Reese and Ramirez, "The New Ethnic Politics of Welfare."

immigrant population in the United States is composed of not only different nationalities and ethnicities of different citizenship and documentation statuses. Studies show that these complexities affect immigrants' ethno-racial identification, their views on immigration, their political participation, and their chances for upward mobility.⁵⁸⁰ As the California and Arizona case studies demonstrate, the cultural categories employed in immigration debates can vary drastically and have unforeseen consequences for politics beyond immigration itself. The Mexican Assault in Arizona clearly constituted a racial conflict which cast Mexicans both in the United States and in Mexico as a threat to state's resources and stability. Immigration was one of many concerns underlying the assault which identified Mexicans, regardless of citizenship status or nativity, as perpetrators of the state's problems. California's debates about Proposition 187 also had racial undertones. Many Hispanics in the state viewed 187 as a direct attack on them.⁵⁸¹ White residents who lived in counties with large Hispanic populations were particularly supportive of the initiative.⁵⁸² Furthermore, Pete Wilson's campaign ads employed images of undocumented immigrants fleeing across the Mexican border, skirting around of cars on the freeway to rush into the United States.

Yet despite the racial subtext of Proposition 187, the structure of the initiative did not resoundingly denounce Mexicans or Hispanics as was the case in Arizona. Rather, the discourse around Proposition 187 divided the state's residents by legal status, projecting subjective value judgments onto legal and illegal immigrants. Not only white voters but some African American, Hispanic, and Asian American voters adopted the distinction between "good" and "bad" immigrants.⁵⁸³ As a result, the 187 debate offered legitimacy to a large proportion of Hispanics, those who were citizens or who held legal documentation. Lawmakers and activists pounced on these portrayals of deservingness to force concessions from advocates for punitive welfare reforms. While these constructions of worth offered little validation for undocumented immigrants, they prevented the strict racialization of welfare reform efforts and created openings to champion supportive reforms.

This situation stands in stark contrast to the debates which played out in Georgia on the eve of welfare reform. If immigration can at times serve as a buffer, limiting the rise of out-right racial conflicts, few similar issues offer such avenues for African-Americans. The welfare reform trajectories of these four states demonstrate that the immigration discourses and patterns present myriad options for portraying Hispanics in particular and Mexicans specifically as deserving and entitled. Despite significant achievements in the post-civil rights era, few such discursive strategies exist for Blacks in contemporary politics, particularly in the wake of racial conflicts.

Conflict and Consequences

How inevitable are racial conflicts in polities with large minority populations?
Moreover, must racial conflicts always prompt stringent and weak welfare policies?

⁵⁸⁰ Pew Hispanic Center, "Statistical Portrait of Hispanics in the United States, 2009 - Pew Hispanic Center."; Jimenez, *Replenished Ethnicity*; Banerjee, "Indian Information Technology Workers in the United States."; Bloemraad, *Becoming a Citizen*; Brown, "Refugees, Rights, and Race: How Legal Status Shapes Immigrants' Relationship with the State."; Durand, Massey, and Parrado, "The New Era of Mexican Migration to the United States."

⁵⁸¹ HoSang, *Racial Propositions*.

⁵⁸² Hero, *Faces of Inequality*.

⁵⁸³ HoSang, *Racial Propositions*.

Historically, racial conflicts have proven detrimental to welfare state development. In the 1960s in particular urban riots and political battles over political control divided major cities by race as Black communities sought to capitalize on the War on Poverty.⁵⁸⁴ As *de jure* segregation and discrimination have waned, racial animus now operates more implicitly than it did in the past; however, racial conflicts are still a stable feature of the American political landscape. Just as in the 1960s, they continue to stunt the expansion of the social safety net. The racial conflict approach assumes that areas with large minority populations are more likely to witness racial conflicts. In areas where racial divisions have historically proven intractable, contemporary political struggles may inflame deeply-rooted racial animus and re-ignite centuries-old debates. As immigrants settle in new destination areas their arrival may trigger such conflicts as well, particularly when local labor market conditions create heightened competition or perceptions of competition for jobs and resources.

Although the racial conflict approach advanced in this dissertation posits that such conflicts are more likely to arise in areas with large minority populations, the model also suggests that racial conflicts will prompt the passage of punitive policies regardless of where they arise, provided they achieve wide media publicity. Indeed, it is the coverage and reach of these conflicts that matter more so than their actual size. Although resentments and frames may spread through micro-level interactions, it is the media who diffuse an issue or message into the public sphere.⁵⁸⁵ The conflicts preceding welfare reform in Alabama, California, Georgia, and Arizona were the dominant political issue in each state and all received at least some national media attention. In this sense, the media play a central role in disseminating messages about particular conflicts, in sparking racial animus, and, ultimately, in directing policy outcomes. When racial conflicts receive less attention, their effects will likely be less pronounced. When racial conflicts receive heightened coverage, their effects can be extremely challenging to derail.

But are the effects of such conflicts on welfare outcomes inevitable? The Georgia and Arizona histories suggest that the challenge posed by racial conflicts is formidable. In both states lawmakers and activists sought to de-racialize welfare and popularize non-racial framings of poverty and welfare. However, in both states racialized understandings of these issues ran so deep both among the public and in the state government that efforts to counter them fell flat. Georgia activists in particular sought to expose the racial underpinnings of reform efforts by labeling the Governor's bills as "racist"; however, these claims only reaffirmed the views of rural white voters that Black advocacy groups engaged in race baiting and demanded more than they were entitled. In her work on race and campaigning, Tali Mendelberg argued that racial appeals to voters lose their effectiveness when the racial nature of the appeals is made explicit. However, she also argues that charges of racism risk being misconstrued as mudslinging and can easily backfire. The civil rights groups and Black legislators who directed advocacy efforts for lenient reforms were among the country's most well-established, most experienced, and most esteemed. That they failed in their efforts to expose the racial origins of welfare reform reveals how challenging it can be in practice to condemn racism in a supposedly color-blind society.

Although the relationship between racial conflicts and stringent social policies may be challenging to subvert, the Alabama and California case studies offer some glints of hope. In both states policymakers attempted to inflame racial animus as evidenced by Pete Knight's racist

⁵⁸⁴ Quadagno, *The Color of Welfare*.

⁵⁸⁵ Koopmans and Olzak, "Discursive Opportunities and the Evolution of Right - Wing Violence in Germany."

poem or the off-color comments made in Alabama's Welfare Reform Commission meetings. However, in both instances these efforts were derailed. These examples demonstrate that race can be difficult to manipulate in welfare reform debates when previous political debates have not activated it. They also suggest that strong multi-racial coalitions can be an effective force in thwarting a welfare backlash. This was particularly true in California, but also evident in Alabama where a handful of Hispanic and Black organizations joined Alabama Arise in their quest for lenient reforms. The structure of TANF prevented Hispanics in Arizona from forming coalitions with Native Americans, giving each group a distinct and disparate set of interests in the reform process. Efforts by other advocacy groups were fractured. In Georgia, Atlanta's civil rights groups created a powerful anti-welfare force, but their prominence only re-ignited fears of Black political power generated by the flag flap. Although the National Organization for Women (NOW) participated in organizing efforts, no centralized anti-poverty lobbying organization existed in the state as did in California and Alabama. These findings suggest that the effects of racial conflict are particularly hard to overcome in the absence of a multi-racial advocacy network or a strong anti-poverty network.

Still, the Alabama and California histories indicate that if such activists are well-established or well-organized they can capitalize on existing political debates to achieve their welfare policy goals. By staying attuned to political discourses and the cleavages and categories of worth mobilized in on-going debates, they can identify opportune times to advocate for the expansion of the safety net. Although other forces may stand in the way, this dissertation demonstrates that even in conditions inhospitable to welfare state expansion, prevailing political conflicts can open doors for reforms if policymakers and advocates are adept and strategic enough to identify it. As racial minorities grow as a proportion of the welfare rolls, this may pose an increasing obstacle.

While the racial explicitness of Georgia's flag flap may seem atypical in this day and age, it is evidence of a much broader pattern. The southern states remain the most punitive and least generous in terms of their welfare provisions, just as they were earlier in the 20th century. These patterns likely result from the social significance of race in these states and its enduring political nature. Moreover, racial appeals and racially divisive political battles are a regular feature of mainstream U.S. politics. Even as a colorblind ideology removes explicit mentions of race from political discourse, implicit appeals remain strong and meaning-laden code words identify race without referencing it directly. As the Hispanic population continues to grow and disperse into new regions of the country, these demographic shifts will also alter the meaning and role of race in local, state, and national politics. Though states with well-established Hispanic populations, Arizona and California offer different visions of what the future may portend for both immigration and welfare politics in these new destinations. The framing and structure of current debates about local immigration enforcement may have enduring effects on social programs and on the shape of future political coalitions. Regardless of the demographic transformations to come in the next decades, it appears certain that race and immigration will continue to alter the face and structure of welfare policy. For advocates and activists, the struggle will pose a fierce challenge. However, the efforts are commendable and the fight a worthy one.

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Appendix I: Archives Consulted

Alabama Arise Archives
Montgomery, AL

Alabama Department of Archives and History
Montgomery, AL

Arizona State House of Representatives
Phoenix, AZ

Arizona State Senate
Phoenix, AZ

Arizona State Library, Archives, and Public Records
Phoenix, AZ

Arizona State University Library, Special Collections
Phoenix, AZ

California Regional Oral History Office
Sacramento, CA

California State Archives
Sacramento, CA

Georgia Archives
Atlanta, GA

Georgia State University Library, Special Collections
Atlanta, GA

Appendix II: Interviews and Oral Histories⁵⁸⁶

Mark Anderson Arizona State Legislature
Dion Aroner, California State Legislature
Cruz Bustamante, California State Legislature
Charles Calderon, California State Legislature (OROH)⁵⁸⁷
Jim Carns, Alabama State Legislature
Curt Childs, California State Legislature Staff
Diane Cummins, California Governor's Office
Ellen Dektar, California State Legislature Staff
Kimble Forrister, Alabama Arise
Bob Gilligan, Arizona Department of Economic Security
Art Hamilton, Arizona State Legislature
Jack Jewett, Arizona State Legislature
Tom Lawrence, Georgia State Legislature (GGDP)⁵⁸⁸
Bruce Liggett, Arizona Department of Economic Security
Jodi Liggett, Arizona Governor's Office
Nan Orrock, Georgia State Legislature (GGDP)
Sherry Novick, California State Legislature Staff
Tom Patterson, Arizona State Legislature
Janet Regner, Arizona Community Action Association
Joel Sanders, Alabama Department of Human Resources
Georganna Sinkfield, Georgia State Legislature (GGDP)
Michael Sznajderman, *The Birmingham News*
Hector Yturralde, Arizona Hispanic Community Forum
Diane Watson, California State Legislature (OROH)
Cathie Wright, California State Legislature (OROH)
Anonymous Anti-Poverty Advocate, California
Anonymous Republican Legislative Staffer, California

⁵⁸⁶ Affiliations are from the time of welfare reform. Current affiliations are not listed. Some interviewees asked to remain anonymous. All interviews were conducted by the author unless otherwise specified.

⁵⁸⁷ The Office of Regional Oral History (OROH) conducted these oral histories which are housed at the California State Archives and the Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley.

⁵⁸⁸ The Georgia Government Documentation Project (GGDP) at Georgia State University conducted these interviews. Transcripts are housed in the Special Collections Division of the Georgia State University library.

Appendix III: Content Analysis Sampling and Coding (Newspapers)

The codes used in the media content analysis portion of this study emerged from a review of existing literature and from a review of the dataset itself. Here, I detail the sampling technique used in creating the dataset, the dimensions of each set of codes, and the coding process itself.

Dataset and Sampling

The use of newspaper stories for content analysis is an established trend in the social sciences. To conduct the content analysis for this project, I drew a sample of 50 news stories per state per year from 1993 to 1997 yielding a total of 250 news stories per state and a total dataset of 1000 news stories. The stories were taken from the largest newspaper in each of the four states. The four papers selected had the largest circulation in their respective states in the mid-1990s both in terms of actual size and geographic distribution. The four papers were *The Birmingham News*, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, *The Los Angeles Times*, and *The Arizona Republic*.

The data for this content analysis come from a computerized search of three different news databases: LexisNexis Academic (*The Birmingham News* and *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* stories), ProQuest (*The Los Angeles Times* stories), and CD News: The Arizona Republic (*The Arizona Republic* stories). It would have been ideal to draw the entire dataset from just one resource; however, no one resource archives the stories for all four papers. The Alabama, Georgia, and California news stories were available online, but the Arizona news stories were only accessible via a program at the Arizona State University library.

To create the sample of 1,000, a research assistant and I searched for articles containing the term “welfare” for each state for each year. This initial search often yielded large numbers of news stories per state per year (see Table A.1). We then read through each story and retained only those stories which met two characteristics. First, the articles remained in the dataset only if they used the term “welfare” to refer to means-tested assistance for low-income individuals. This meant excluding from the sample all stories about animal welfare, corporate welfare, agricultural welfare, and general stories about the welfare and well-being of individuals or communities. Second, we retained only those articles about the state in question. We excluded from the sample those stories which only addressed federal welfare reform, for example, and kept those stories about state-level reforms. This procedure excluded a significant portion of stories from the sample (see Table A.1).

After creating a dataset of relevant news stories for each state, we then randomly selected fifty stories per state per year to create the final dataset. To reach this final figure, we retained every Nth article in the sample depending on the number of stories available in the entire universe. For example, if there were 100 relevant stories about welfare we retained every second article for the final sample. Because the newspapers differ substantially in the number of articles they publish per day, the percentage of stories retained for the final sample varied significantly across the states (see Table A.1).

Coding

To code the data I used Atlas.ti 5.2. Quotations, the primary measure for the software, represent each paragraph in a story as they appeared in the computerized document. It should be

noted that these quotations are not identical in size due to variations in the page constraints and the authors and editors of the papers. The final sample of Alabama articles contained 3147 quotations as compared to 3155 for Georgia. Very roughly, this translates to 63 quotations per story for both states. The total sample for Arizona consisted of 4437 quotations as compared to 4236 for California. This translates to approximately 89 quotations per story for Arizona and 85 for California.

A research assistant and I coded the full sample of stories, each coding every other story in the sample to limit bias. Before beginning the coding process in earnest we each coded a random sample of 15 stories from each pair of states. We compared our codes to standardize the coding instrument and make necessary changes to the specifications of each code. We also conducted intercoder reliability tests on 15 stories per pair. All codes with an intercoder reliability rate of less than 70% were dropped. The overall intercoder reliability rate for the Alabama-Georgia codes was 84%. For the Arizona-California codes the rate was 76%.

Article Type

Each quotation was coded for article-type: news reporting, letter to the editor, column, or editorial (see Table A.2). Approximately 75% of the Alabama quotations were news reporting as compared to 73% of Georgia stories. Columns made up approximately 15% of the quotations for both states, and letters to the editor made up approximately 5%. Alabama saw slightly fewer editorials (4%) than Georgia (7%). Looking at the western states, approximately, 69% of Arizona quotations were news reporting as compared to 75% of California quotations. Columns made up approximately 15% of the quotations for both states, and letters to the editor made up approximately 5%. Arizona saw more editorials (10%) than California (4%) (see Table A.3).

Welfare Queen Codes

To code for stereotypes of welfare recipients, I drew largely on Hancock's (2004) dimensions for the public identity of the welfare queen. However, I did consolidate a selection of Hancock's codes. In her analysis of the welfare queen, Hancock was interested in establishing whether there is a "public identity" for the welfare queen, that is, a combination of stereotyping and moral judgments used as ideological justifications for policy action. Given this definition, Hancock's coding scheme distinguishes between moral judgments about welfare recipients and stereotypes. Because my goal is not to establish whether a public identity exists but rather to understand the pervasiveness of stereotypes, I consolidated some of Hancock's codes which distinguished between judgments and stereotypes. I also eliminated some of the codes which were insignificant in Hancock's study and added a final code "Education" based on a dialogue with the dataset at hand. I also added two codes about immigration for the California and Arizona analyses, derived from a review of the existing literature about immigration, Latinos, and welfare and from engagement with the dataset itself (see Table 4 for a full list of codes and descriptions).

Other Codes

In addition to coding for welfare queen stereotypes, I coded for a variety of other themes and identifiers including policy context, race, immigration/citizenship, speaker characteristics, policy options identified, and advocacy strategies used. The policy context codes emerged from a cursory review of the dataset and different for each pair of states (see Tables A.5 and A.6).

The race and immigration codes also emerged from a dialogue with the data (see Tables A.7 and A.8). The historical/contemporary race coding and the immigration coding were conducted after the coding was already complete for all four states. We returned to the data to delver further into the patterns revealed by the policy context and race codes. The codes for speaker characteristics, policy options identified, and advocacy strategies used produced little in the way of useful data and are rarely reported on here (see Tables A.9, A.10, and A.11 for a description of the codes).

Table A.1: Sampling of News Stories, All States

Full = Initial search; % Retained = % of stories retained for a sample of 50

	Alabama		Georgia		Arizona		California	
	Full	% Retained	Full	% Retained	Full	% Retained	Full	% Retained
1993	330	100%	1518	24%	1251	32%	1708	11%
1994	267	94%	1514	15%	1863	30%	2044	11%
1995	562	26%	1582	14%	2008	34%	2212	12%
1996	391	56%	1510	79%	1576	41%	1973	12%
1997	788	19%	1300	74%	1218	20%	2061	8%

Table A.2: Article Type Codes	
Type	Description
Column	Signed articles written by regular or guest authors
News Reporting	Article portrays facts and events
Editorial	Article is unsigned and written member of the paper's editorial board
Letter to the Editor	Article is a letter to the editor of the paper

Table A.3: Article Type Distribution				
Type	AL	GA	AZ	CA
Column	15.5%	14.5%	15.0%	16.2%
Editorial	4.3%	7.9%	9.9%	4.0%
Letter of the Editor	5.0%	4.8%	6.1%	4.6%
News Reporting	75.0%	72.8%	6.9%	75.1%

Table A.4: Welfare Stereotype Codes, All States

Dimension	Description
Drain Collective Resources	Cash welfare programs take up too much of the national or state budget, sometimes at the expense of other more “legitimate” groups
Lazy/Don’t Work	Welfare recipients do not work and most do not work because they are lazy and don’t want to work – don’t include “workfare not welfare”
Long-Term Dependency	Welfare recipients remain on welfare too long; their children will grow up to be welfare recipients (thereby perpetuating the problems we have today); welfare becomes a way of life for recipients that is very hard to escape
Overly Fertile	Welfare mothers have too many children even though they cannot afford them and they often receive more benefits from having these children
Pathological Family	Welfare families do not have traditional family structures. Most are single-parent families or families with children born out of wedlock (illegitimacy); single parenthood and illegitimacy economic self-sufficiency; welfare is anti-family and welfare policy destroys families by discouraging marriage; welfare encourages out of wedlock births by providing additional money to women who have more children
Drug Users	Many welfare recipients have current or past problems with drug abuse
Crime	Many welfare users perpetuate crimes (non-drug-use crimes)
Teen Mothers	Most welfare recipients are teens or teen mothers
Education	Welfare recipients don’t care about pursuing education or have little education
System Abusers	Most welfare recipients are getting assistance that they do not deserve because they are cheating the system or engaging in welfare fraud
Inner-City Resident	Most or all welfare recipients resident in the inner-city (includes references to specific cities with large minority populations and high levels of poverty like Atlanta, Montgomery, Los Angeles, or Oakland; also includes use of terms like ghetto, barrio, distressed neighborhood, etc)
Illegal Immigrants	Welfare recipients are mostly illegal immigrants (AZ and CA only)
Immigrant Drain	Immigrants come to U.S. to go on welfare and abuse public services (AZ and CA only)

Table A.5: Issue Activation Codes (Alabama and Georgia)

Code	Description
Flag Change Policy	Discussion of proposals to change the state flag
Education Policy	Discussion of proposals to change state education policy
Deadbeat Dad Policy	Discussion of proposals to change state policy on fathers who owe child support
Tort Reform Policy	Discussion of proposals regarding tort reform
State Budget Policy	Discussion of proposals to pass or change the state budget (this does not include general finance or departmental budget issues – only references to passing the state budget)
Election Campaign	Discussion of election campaigns
Corrupt or Unethical Officials	Discussion of corrupt or unethical public officials
Crime Policy	Discussion of proposals to change state crime policy

Table A.6: Issue Activation Codes (Arizona and California)

Code	Description
Education Policy	Discussion of proposals to change state education policy (includes discussion of community colleges)
Deadbeat Dad Policy	Discussion of proposals to change state policy on fathers who owe child support
State Budget or Tax Policy	Discussion of proposals to pass or change the state budget or new taxes (this does not include general finance or departmental budget issues – only references to passing the state budget or imposing/retracting new taxes)
Election Campaign	Discussion of election campaigns, does not include campaigns about propositions
Corrupt or Unethical Officials	Discussion of corrupt or unethical public officials
Crime Policy	Discussion of proposals to change state crime policy
Proposition 187	Discussion of Prop 187 to deny public benefits to illegal immigrants
Illegal Immigration	Discussion of illegal immigration as policy issue (does not include Prop 187 discussions)
Medicaid/SSI	Discussion of Medicaid or SSI at the state level (likely will be in the context of federal policy). In Arizona, this will often be referenced as the Arizona Health Cost Containment System and in California as MediCal.
Other Immigration Policy	May include efforts to naturalize immigrants, refugee policy, etc. Includes federal immigration policy
Native American Policy	Policies regarding Native American tribes (tribal governance, casinos and gaming, etc)
Homelessness	Debates about homelessness or shelters

Table A.7: Race Codes	
Code	Description
Asian	Reference to Asians, including references to those immigrants classified as "Asian" by the census
Black	Reference to Blacks, African-Americans, or African immigrants.
Latino/Hispanic	Reference to Latinos or Hispanics, including country-specific references.
Native	Reference to Native Americans
White	Reference to Whites, includes references to those immigrants classified as "white" by the census
Other Mention of Race	Other explicit mention of race – either the race of the speaker, the race of welfare recipients, etc. Does not include the mention of race-based organizations. Should include uses of the terms race, racism, diversity, minorities, etc.
Race Historical	Reference to race is historical, pre-1980 or generally referencing civil rights era or earlier history (AL and GA only)
Race Contemporary	Reference to race is contemporary, post-1980 or generally referencing the present (AL and GA only)

Table A.8: Immigration Codes (AZ and CA only)

Code	Description
General Immigrant	General reference to immigration in which the immigration or immigrant (group) is not specifically labeled as legal or illegal. Includes references to non-native English speakers, refugees, and citizenship/naturalization.
Illegal Immigrant	Explicit reference to illegal or undocumented immigrant/immigration. Does not include border patrol references or instances in which the undocumented status of an individual or group is implied.
Legal Immigrant	Explicit reference to the legal status of an immigrant (group). The reference must be stated explicitly not nuanced. For example, references to refugees do not count unless the wording explicitly states that these individuals have legal status. Do not assume average readers know which documentation status is legal and which isn't.

Table A.9: Advocacy Strategy Codes

Code	Description
Data - Counter WQS	Data presented (qualitative or quantitative) to challenge the veracity of the welfare queen stereotype
Data - Support WQS	Data presented (qualitative or quantitative) to support the veracity of the welfare queen stereotype
Mention Race-Based Group - Support Punitive Measures	Race-Based advocacy organization is mentioned in order to invalidate claims for lenient policies (may frequently be cross-coded with SC4); punitive measures include reduced benefits or requirements stricter than federal minimums (any advocacy for family caps, for time-limits shorter than 60 months, for sanctions on participants, for work requirements after less than two years of benefits, for no benefits for immigrants).
Mention Race-Based Group - Support Lenient Measures	Race-Based advocacy organization is mentioned in order to support claims for lenient policies (may frequently be cross-coded with SC4); lenient measures include adopting federal minimums on work requirements and time limits, extending benefits to immigrants, avoiding a family cap, providing services to welfare recipients (transportation, child care).
Mention Non-Race-Based Group - Support Punitive Measures	Non-Race-Based advocacy organization is mentioned in order to invalidate claims for lenient policies (may frequently be cross-coded with SC5); punitive measures include reduced benefits or requirements stricter than federal minimums (any advocacy for family caps, for time-limits shorter than 60 months, for sanctions on participants, for work requirements after less than two years of benefits, for no benefits for immigrants).
Mention Non-Race-Based Group - Support Lenient Measures	Non-Race-Based advocacy organization is mentioned in order to support claims for lenient policies (may frequently be cross-coded with SC5); lenient measures include adopting federal minimums on work requirements and time limits, extending benefits to immigrants, avoiding a family cap, providing services to welfare recipients (transportation, child care)
Racism	Claim that welfare or politicians are racist (most likely made to criticize punitive policies).
Punishing the Poor	Claim that welfare reform will punish the poor (most likely made to criticize punitive policies)
Xenophobia	Claim that welfare or politicians are xenophobic (most likely made to criticize punitive policies). May be cross-coded with race and immigration codes. (AZ and CA only)

Table A.10: Speaker Characteristics Codes

Code	Description
Candidate for Political Office	Speaker is a candidate for political office in the state (not for national positions but for state/local offices)
Politician – State Executive Branch	Speaker is a politician/policymaker from the executive branch of the state government (governor, appointed official, bureau employee)
Politician – State Legislative Branch	Speaker is a politician/policymaker from the legislative branch of the state government
Politician - Other	Speaker is another type of politician (local government, federal government, from another state, etc)
Politician Party Affiliation - Republican	Speaker is a politician and a Republican (code only for elected officials)
Politician – Party Affiliation - Democrat	Speaker is a politician and a Democrat (code only for elected officials)
Organizational Representative - Race-Based Group	Speaker is a representative of or speaking on behalf of a race-based group such as the NAACP, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the Black Legislative Caucus, the Latino Alliance, etc. Should be cross-coded with a race code.
Organizational Representative - Non-Race-Based Group	Speaker is a representative of or speaking on behalf of an organization that has no ostensible connection to race (Alabama Arise, Georgians for Children, etc)
Welfare Recipient - Former	Speaker is a former welfare recipient
Welfare Recipient - Current	Speaker is on welfare
Welfare Recipient - Potential	Speaker is/was at risk of going on welfare

Table A.11: Policy Options Codes

Code	Description
Family Caps (Pro)	Welfare recipients should not be able to receive additional benefits if they have more children while on welfare
Family Caps (Con)	Welfare recipients should be able to receive additional benefits if they have more children while on welfare
Time Limits (Pro)	There should be time limits placed on welfare eligibility. Recipients should be kicked off after they've been on welfare for a certain period of time.
Time Limits (Con)	Welfare eligibility should have no time limit. Or, states should not restrict time limits beyond those required by the federal government.
Workfare (Pro)	Welfare recipients should be required to work or be in job training in order to receive cash assistance, regardless of how long they've been on welfare
Workfare (Con)	Welfare recipients should not be required to work or be in job training in order to receive cash assistance, especially if they have young children or have only been on welfare a short time
Sanctions (Pro)	Welfare recipients should be punished for violating the rules of welfare participation
Sanctions (Con)	Welfare recipients should not be punished for violating the rules of welfare participation
No Immigrant Benefits (Pro)	Immigrants should not be able to receive welfare under any circumstances (AZ and CA only)
No Immigrant Benefits (Con)	Immigrants should be able to receive welfare always or under certain circumstances (AZ and CA only)

Appendix IV: Zell Miller Letters Sampling and Coding

This appendix details the sampling and coding for constituent letters to Georgia Governor Zell Miller about the flag debate in the early 1990s (Chapter 3). The letters are housed at the Georgia Archives in Atlanta Georgia. I selected a random sample of letters for coding from Zell Miller's files (Georgia Governor's Office - Executive Department - Governor's Subject Files 01-01-005; 97-926A; "Flag Letters." Although an exact tally is impossible, the archivists and I estimated that the boxes contained a total of over 10,000 letters. Because the letters were not organized in the boxes by any particular format, I selected forty letters from each of the three boxes of letters present in the archives for a total of 120 letters.

With a research assistant I then reviewed the letters to create a coding system with the overarching codes and sub-codes in Table A.12. I coded 100% of the letters with the research assistant coding a subset of 15 to determine intercoder reliability. The intercoder reliability rating was 90%.

Table A.12: Codes for Miller Letters	
<u>Miller</u>	
Miller 1	Constituent explicitly threatens not to vote for Miller again or expresses regret at voting for him in the first place
Miller 2	Constituent connects Miller to minority interests or implies he is only trying to please minority voters or groups
Miller 3	Constituent says will vote for Miller again because he wants the flag changed.
<u>Threat/Resentment</u>	
Threat 1	Constituent feels blacks are getting more rights than whites, that whites are losing ground to blacks (losing financially, politically, culturally, etc)
Threat 2	Constituent feels that special interests, black activists, or trouble makers are agitating for the flag change (usually implying that Miller is being duped)
Threat 3	Constituent says flag debate is making racial tensions worse
<u>Alternative Agenda</u>	
Agenda 1	Constituent feels that Miller should focus on a different political agenda or issue or congratulates Miller for shifting focus

<u>Values/Behavior</u>	
Values 1	Constituent suggests that blacks have behavioral problems or suggests behavior modification for blacks (better work ethic, fewer teen pregnancies, crime prevention, etc)
Values 2	Constituent believes blacks take without giving
<u>Pro-Change</u>	
Pro-Change 1	Constituent expresses support for changing the state flag although not necessarily adopting Miller's suggestion
<u>Pro-Flag</u>	
Pro-Flag 1	Constituent or Legislator wants to keep the flag because most Georgians like it and only a minority don't like it
Pro-Flag 2	Constituent wants to keep the flag because it represents his/her heritage