

UCSF

UC San Francisco Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

Constructing deservingness

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8qn5w6j5>

Author

Yoo, Grace Jeanmee

Publication Date

1999

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

Constructing Deservingness: Federal Welfare Reform,
Supplemental Security Income and Elderly Immigrants

by

Grace Jeanmee Yoo

DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

Sociology

in the

GRADUATE DIVISION

of the

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN FRANCISCO

Date

University Librarian

Degree Conferred:

In memory of
“Haraboji”
Park, Yong Chang
(1916-1996)

and

“Como”
Yoo, Soon Yi
(1919-1998)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

On December 13, 1996, my grandfather “haraboji” left this earth. My grandfather had spent his last twenty years in the U.S., and his greatest contributions were taking care of his 17 grandchildren. Months earlier the federal welfare reform bill had passed, I vividly recall the mean-spirited rhetoric used to describe elderly immigrants on Supplemental Security Income. These elderly immigrants were seen as non-contributing members of society. I was troubled by the discourse. The discourse didn’t represent the experiences of my grandparents who provided daily contributions to their families. Yet in the making of this policy, politicians seemed oblivious to such realities.

My dissertation chair, Carroll Estes, inspired me to pursue these thoughts into a dissertation. Over the past five and half years, Carroll has been my mentor and teacher. From her sheer example, I’ve learned that one can be a scholar and be part of creating social change. Carroll has been there also to witness many of the different growth spurts and changes that I’ve experienced in graduate school. After the birth of my son, Carroll encouraged me to keep the dissertation in sight. Because of Carroll’s encouragement, at three weeks postpartum, I was inspired to start coding my newspaper articles and begin analyzing and writing up my data.

I have also been fortunate to have wonderful dissertation committee members. I have learned greatly from these four individuals. I hope as a teacher and researcher I can reflect the kindness and generosity that these mentors have shown me.

Pat Fox always provided a listening ear to many differing dissertation ideas. Even though my ideas were unorganized and were mere thoughts floating inside my head, he

always understood what I had to say and never discouraged me even if my thoughts were a bit outlandish.

Although I don't consider myself a great writer, Robert Staples was always quite impressed with every draft submitted. His encouragement gave me the confidence to write. He also generously gave me the opportunity to publish some of my work in his book, The Black Family.

No matter the distance, David Takeuchi provided continued support on this dissertation. Whether by phone, email or in person, David was always available to answer my questions about not only this dissertation, but the graduate school process.

Throughout my graduate career, several other individuals have provided support in getting through this process. Karen Linkins was my official big buddy in this program, and from her I received advice and support on getting through course work, the third area and the dissertation. I also had the opportunity to work with Karen Linkins and Carroll Estes at the Institute for Health and Aging and am grateful to have received a three year crash course in research methods.

I wish to thank Marlon Hom, Chairman of the Department of Asian American Studies at San Francisco State University, for the opportunities to gain valuable teaching experience. I would also like to acknowledge and thank Deanna Jang at the Asian Pacific Islander American Forum and Donna Yee at the National Asian Pacific Center on Aging for the experience to understand firsthand the effects of federal welfare reform on immigrant communities.

I would also like to acknowledge the generous support I received from the following fellowships: American Sociological Association/ National Institute on Mental

Health Minority Fellowship Program, Graduate Opportunity Fellowship and the University of California President's Dissertation Year Fellowship.

I wish to recognize the support that I received from these individuals: Teresa Schertzer, Karen Linkins, Barbara Bedney, Carol Dawson, Judith Barker, Alice Wong and Kara Bikson. They were willing to read parts of this dissertation knowing that it was a work in progress. Also a special thanks to the following individuals who watched me grow through this process and offered a listening ear to all of my graduate school (and postpartum) neurosis: Carol Dawson, Judy Goldstein, Sabrina Wong and Becky Ancheta.

Thank you to Teresa Schertzer for being "Auntie T." All the dinners at Brothers could not repay you enough for your friendship and companionship post-partum. Jeremy and I appreciate your generosity

Special thanks to Jeremy Yong-ho Chang-Yoo for arriving into this world and motivating Mommy to finish this dissertation. Thank you to my parents, Frank Sung Kung and Wendy Wang Sook Yoo, for instilling in me the value of an education.

Last but not least, special thanks to my husband, Jason Yongkyoo Chang. His support throughout this process was unwavering. Since Jeremy's birth, he has spent numerous evenings and weekends watching Jeremy as I wrote this dissertation. Moreover, he listened to my worried thoughts and provided helpful advice in getting through this process.

**Constructing Deservingness:
Federal Welfare Reform, Supplemental Security Income and Elderly Immigrants,**

Grace J. Yoo

ABSTRACT

On August 22, 1996, President Clinton signed the welfare reform law that ended eligibility for all immigrants to federal means tested entitlements. No longer are immigrants eligible for federal cash assistance, food stamps and Medicaid. Poor elderly immigrants were specifically targeted. Eligibility of Supplemental Security Income for this population became problematized and debated throughout.

This study documents how national Aging and Asian American organizations, policy makers and the media responded to these policy changes. Before, after and during the federal welfare debates these entities made an impact in responding to the debate. The following are the major research questions: 1) How were elderly immigrant welfare recipients perceived before, during and after the federal welfare reform debates? 2) How did these key actors and players from national Aging and Asian American organizations define and influence the federal welfare reform and immigrant debate?

The approach used was an in-depth content analysis and intensive telephone surveys. Congressional hearings, news articles and editorial articles were examined. Telephone interviews were conducted with national aging and national Asian American advocates. In analyzing the data, both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used.

Findings from this dissertation demonstrate that older immigrants were constructed as “undeserving” in newspaper editorials, news articles, and policy hearings

prior to the passage of the federal welfare reform bill. However, the findings demonstrate that after the passage of the federal welfare reform bill that coverage of older immigrants on Supplemental Security Income started to change, and older immigrants became portrayed as “deserving.” The findings also show that national aging and Asian American advocates played a role in changing the direction of the debate through coalition-building and educating the public and policy makers.

Carroll J Estes

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|------|
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | iv |
| ABSTRACT | vii |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS | ix |
| LIST OF TABLES | xiii |
| | |
| CHAPTER 1: Federal Welfare Reform: The End of a Federal Safety Net | |
| I. Introduction..... | 1 |
| II. Importance of the Study..... | 6 |
| III. Outline of the Dissertation..... | 8 |
| | |
| CHAPTER 2: Perspectives on Policy-Making, Welfare State Backlashes, and Anti-Immigration Backlashes | |
| I. Background Supplemental Security Income Program..... | 11 |
| II. Theoretical Frameworks..... | 14 |
| A. Theories on Public Policy Making..... | 14 |
| 1. Pluralist/Interest Group Perspectives..... | 15 |
| 2. Sociology of Knowledge..... | 21 |
| 3. Symbolic Interactionism..... | 24 |
| B. Welfare State Backlashes..... | 29 |
| 1. Pluralist/Interest Group Perspectives..... | 29 |
| 2. Discourse Theory..... | 30 |
| 3. Neo-Marxist Perspective..... | 35 |
| 4. Labeling: Race and Ideology..... | 37 |
| 5. Political Economy..... | 42 |

| | |
|---|----|
| C. Theories to Explain Anti-Immigrant Sentiments..... | 46 |
| 1. State Theory..... | 47 |
| 2. Functionalism..... | 48 |
| 3. Discourse Theory..... | 49 |
| 4. Rational Choice/Competition Theory..... | 51 |
| 5. Social Constructionism..... | 53 |
| III. Conclusion..... | 57 |

CHAPTER 3: Methodology

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| I. Study Objectives..... | 60 |
| II. Research Questions..... | 62 |
| III. Research Design..... | 64 |
| IV. Data Collection Methods..... | 66 |
| A. News Articles..... | 66 |
| B. Op-Ed Articles..... | 67 |
| C. Congressional Hearings..... | 68 |
| D. Key Informant Interviews..... | 68 |
| V. Data Analysis..... | 70 |
| A. Newspaper Analysis..... | 70 |
| B. Congressional Hearings..... | 72 |
| C. Key Informant Interviews..... | 73 |
| VI. Limitations of the Study..... | 74 |

CHAPTER 4: Congressional Record

I. Hearing on Supplemental Security Income Fraud Involving Middlemen..... 76

II. Hearing on Supplemental Security Income Modernization Project..... 79

III. Hearing on Growth of the Supplemental Security Income Program..... 83

IV. Hearing on Contract with America: Welfare Reform..... 86

V. Hearing on Use of Supplemental Security Income and
Other Welfare Programs by Immigrants..... 90

VI. Hearing on Welfare Reform..... 94

VII. Discussion and Conclusion..... 97

CHAPTER 5: Newspaper Analyses

I. Introduction..... 102

II. News Article Findings..... 102

III. News Editorial Findings..... 112

IV. Conclusion..... 120

CHAPTER 6: Telephone Interviews

I. Introduction..... 123

II. Telephone Interview Findings..... 123

 A. Organizational Information..... 124

 B. Organization’s Role in Welfare Reform..... 125

 C. Organization’s Collaborative Efforts..... 128

 D. Perceptions of Elderly Immigrant Welfare Recipients..... 132

 E. Organization’s Influence..... 139

III. Conclusions..... 144

CHAPTER 7: Conclusions

1 Summary of Results

2 Contributions to Theory

A Fiscal Crisis: Budget D.

B Social Movements

C Framing Fraud, Abuse a

D Anti-Immigrant Sentime

E Who Speaks?

3 Implications for Policy

A Current Legislation

B Policy Implications on I

3 Future Directions

BIBLIOGRAPHY

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Appendix B

Appendix C

Appendix D

Appendix E

CHAPTER 7: Conclusions

I. Summary of Results.....147

II. Contributions to Theory.....150

 A. Fiscal Crisis: Budget Deficit.....150

 B. Social Movements.....153

 C. Framing Fraud, Abuse and Dependency.....154

 D. Anti-Immigrant Sentiments.....156

 E. Who Speaks?.....158

III. Implications for Policy..... 159

 A. Current Legislation..... 159

 B. Policy Implications on Immigrant Families..... 161

IV. Future Directions..... 164

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....167

APPENDICES.....178

| | |
|------------|--|
| Appendix A | Telephone Script |
| Appendix B | Telephone Interviews: Follow-up Letter |
| Appendix C | Telephone Interviews: Survey |
| Appendix D | Newspaper Articles: Code Sheet |
| Appendix E | Newspaper Articles: Codebook |

LIST OF TABLES

| | |
|---|-----|
| Table 1: Types of Themes within House and Senate Hearings..... | 99 |
| Table 2: Types of Hearing Witnesses at House and Senate Hearings..... | 101 |
| Table 3: Number of Articles on SSI and Immigrants per Newspaper by Year..... | 104 |
| Table 4: Types of Individuals Quoted in Feature Newspaper Articles..... | 105 |
| Table 5: Types of Themes in Feature Newspaper Articles..... | 106 |
| Table 6: Percentage of Themes in Feature Newspaper Articles..... | 108 |
| Table 7: Types of Themes in Quotes by Individuals..... | 109 |
| Table 8: Types of Major Newspapers with Editorial Articles..... | 114 |
| Table 9: Types of Editorial Articles..... | 115 |
| Table 10: Year Frequencies..... | 115 |
| Table 11: Types of Stance in Editorial Articles..... | 116 |
| Table 12: Types of Editorial by Year and Mean..... | 116 |
| Table 13: Types of Authors of Editorial Articles by Mean and Number..... | 117 |
| Table 14: Types of Themes found in Editorial Articles..... | 119 |
| Table 15: Percentage of Themes in Editorial Type Articles Before and After..... | 120 |
| Table 16: 1998 Organization Budget..... | 124 |
| Table 17: Types of Involvement in Federal Welfare Reform..... | 126 |
| Table 18: Importance of Welfare Reform Before and After..... | 128 |
| Table 19: National Collaborations Made..... | 129 |
| Table 20: Overview of Federal Welfare Program Eligibility for Immigrants..... | 160 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| | |
|---|-----|
| Figure 1: Immigrants Receipt of SSI Benefits Has Grown..... | 3 |
| Figure 2: Collaborations made between and among National Organizations..... | 130 |

Chapter 1

Federal Welfare Reform and Immigrants: The End of a Federal Safety Net

Introduction

Throughout different periods of US history, immigrants have been constructed as outsiders and therefore undeserving of employment, housing, education and other collective resources and goods. Immigrants have been welcomed in times of economic prosperity and despised during economic downturns. Anti-Catholic movements in the 1830s and later in the 1870s were directed towards new immigrants who were Roman Catholic. Numerous laws were enacted to penalize Irish immigrants in particular. In the 1870s in California, Chinese immigrants were blamed for lower wages and worsening working conditions. Because of public pressures from California, Congress banned all Chinese immigrants from entering the United States. One hundred years later, anti-immigration movements are still part of the US history. In the 1980s, "English Only" movements emerged in areas with high immigrant populations. Now in the early 1990s, the country encounters another anti-immigrant mood, but this time it is directed towards immigrants' use of public services. Several propositions surface in California, like proposition 187, which bans all public services to illegal immigrants. Anti-immigration sentiments were also behind the passage of the August 22, 1996 welfare reform bill. President Clinton signed the law that ended eligibility for all immigrants to federal means-tested entitlements. This dissertation investigates the evolution of this particular law and examines how older immigrants on Supplemental Security Income became constructed as "undeserving" as a result of anti-immigrant sentiments in the U.S.

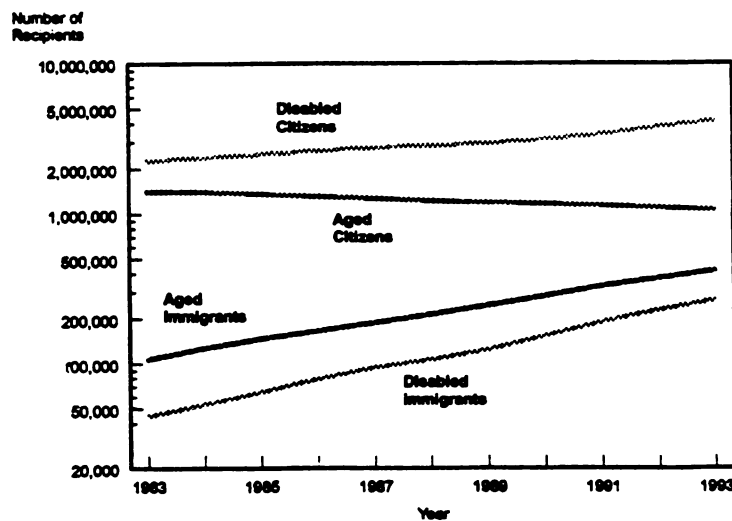
Because of federal welfare reform, immigrants are no longer eligible for federal cash assistance, food stamps and Medicaid. The legislation affected approximately 500,000 legal immigrants in the United States who were not citizens and who were either disabled or elderly. These cuts accounted for \$13.5 billion of the law's \$55 billion in long-term savings. Although the use of immigrant scapegoating is prevalent in US history, anti-immigration tones were quite strong in the welfare reform passage, and therefore elicited widespread outrage which was responsible for the restoration of some federal entitlements to immigrants.

The Balanced Budget Act of 1997 restored Supplemental Security Income and Medicaid to those that who were here before August 22, 1996. The Agricultural Research Act of 1998 restored food stamps to low-income immigrants who were here prior to August 22, 1996. However, legal immigrants who arrived in the United States after August 22, 1996 were, and still are, without a federal safety net. Only when immigrants have lived in this country for five years and then become naturalized are they then eligible for federal means-tested entitlements. If they are not US citizens, their sponsors' income will be counted with their income to determine eligibility. Due to changes in the law, sponsors must now show proof that they have an income level, at or above 125 percent of the Federal poverty level, in order to sponsor a family member to come to the United States. If sponsors do not provide basic support to new immigrants, they may be sued by the sponsored immigrants and by the agencies for the amount of benefits provided to sponsored immigrants (Immigration Naturalization Service 1997).

The congressional welfare reform hearings between 1994 and 1996 particularly focused on immigrants' use of Supplemental Security Income. SSI is a federal welfare

program that assists the low-income elderly and disabled people. The average monthly SSI payment for an aged or disabled person living independently is \$626 in California (California Department of Social Services, 1996). From 1986 to 1994, the number of noncitizen SSI recipients grew by about 15 percent annually, while the native population growth rate has been about 5 percent annually (See Figure One) (US General Accounting Office 1996). In 1986, noncitizens represented 6 percent of all SSI recipients, and in 1994 they represented 12 percent of all recipients (US General Accounting Office 1996). The US General Accounting Office attributed this growth to program outreach, disability eligibility expansion, and increased immigration. About 3 percent of noncitizens receive SSI compared with 1.8 percent of citizens (US General Accounting Office 1996). Approximately 70 percent of noncitizens on SSI represent the elderly. In 1995, noncitizens represented one-third of the aged cases.

Figure 1: Immigrants Receipt of SSI Benefits has Grown (1983-1993)



Note: A logarithmic scale was used to illustrate relative rather than absolute changes in numbers of recipients.

Source: SSA, 1993.

According to the Social Security Administration (1996), immigrants most affected by the discontinuation of Supplemental Security Income include immigrants from Mexico, the former Soviet Union, Cuba, Vietnam, China and the Philippines. The states most affected by the law include: California, New York and Florida. Although the states could have dropped immigrants from their welfare rolls, most states have chosen to provide some assistance to this population. According to the US General Accounting Office (1998), states' future challenges include verifying the citizenship or immigration status of applicants for all federal public benefits and enforcing affidavits of support for new immigrants sponsored by relatives. Although the welfare reform bill had, and continues to have, major implications for immigrant elders and their families; local and state lawmakers, health and social service providers face the greatest amount of uncertainty in terms of future funding of their programs (Yoo 1997; US General Accounting Office 1998).

These recent increases in the numbers of aged non-citizen recipients of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) concerned federal lawmakers. Ultimately, these concerns prompted federal law makers to enact legislation that would end all entitlements to immigrants, despite the fact that only 22 percent of elderly immigrants on SSI qualify for Social Security compared with over 60 percent of all aged recipients. (US General Accounting Office 1996). This lack of coverage by Social Security may explain why elderly immigrants are a more significant portion of the aged receiving SSI. However, there were also reports that 60 percent of aged noncitizens SSI recipients had been in the country less than five years and applied for SSI, and this raised questions of whether immigration policies should allow older immigrants into the United States. Moreover,

there was anecdotal information, not substantiated, that affluent sponsors abandoned responsibilities for their aging relative (US General Accounting Office 1996).

Despite these figures and reports, the policy was enacted without a broad understanding of its impact. Moreover, the impact on immigrant communities has been politicized because there is a lack of data on the issue. The available datasets, by the U.S. Bureau of the Census documenting welfare use, include the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) and the March Current Population Survey (CPS). Both datasets report demographic information, but also the economic conditions of individuals on welfare. However, only the CPS dataset contains information on immigrants. Yet, the information available through the CPS is not representative of immigrant communities since the sample size is quite small, which makes it difficult to make generalizations. However, in congressional hearings, witnesses make conclusive statements based on research with non-representative samples. Information provided by the Social Security Administration seems to be most representative, but since it is not available for public use, scholars have yet to do any significant or published work with this data.

This dissertation is dedicated to understanding how such a policy evolved and focuses on the frames used and the players involved in this construction. Moreover, this dissertation asks how were elderly immigrant welfare recipients perceived before, during and after the federal welfare reform debates. The data analyzed in this dissertation looks at how recipients were perceived by those in the media, government and national advocacy organizations; how each of these entities were involved in the framing of elderly immigrant welfare recipients before and after the welfare reform debates; and how these key actors and organizations define and influence the federal welfare reform and

immigrant debate. The data examines the role of these different organizations and their influence in contesting and constructing frames in the welfare reform debates.

Importance of the Study

According to Rochefort and Cobb (1994), problems are given descriptive definitions but so are afflicted groups and individuals, especially in social welfare policy making. The social construction of target groups refers to the cultural characterization or popular images of the persons or groups whose behavior and well-being are affected by public policy (Schneider and Ingram 1993). In policy, social welfare policymaking is conditioned by social perceptions of recipients (Schneider and Ingram 1993; Rochefort and Cobb 1994).

Cook and Barrett (1992) note that public support for entitlements is based on the recipient's deservingness. Individuals must be seen as worthy of help and lacking in all other resources. They must be perceived as being in their situation out of forces beyond their own control, and must possess the will to be independent. Cook and Barrett (1992) observe that the "recipients must not be seen to abuse their limited resources or to spend recklessly" (Cook and Barrett 1992, p. 40). They must be seen as "worthy." Cook and Barrett's study is one of the few studies examining the concept of deservingness; however, they do not discuss issues of inclusion and exclusion, nor issues of race and ethnicity. How do certain groups become seen as outsiders or non-members of a community and therefore undeserving of collective help? The findings of this dissertation will add a new dimension to the social science and policy literature in terms of

understanding how certain individuals and groups are and can be constructed as “undeserving.”

Another theoretical concept that this dissertation investigates is frame analysis. Based in Goffman’s (1974) work, this sociological tool examines how certain meanings can be used to explain an event or situation. A frame organizes reality, helping to provide order in the world. There are multiple arenas in which frames happen. One area is in news coverage and in policy development. These frames organize meanings emerging from issues. This dissertation will examine news articles, editorials and commentaries and congressional hearings to understand the frames that emerge about elderly immigrants on Supplemental Security Income.

Edelman (1988) suggests that news reports shape policy making. “A political news item is therefore likely to give each reader, viewer, or auditor the impression of a specific meaning that belies its utility as a catalyst for other ideological projections (Edelman 1988, p. 91).” Edelman (1988) sees that interpretation is part of news creation and dissemination. “Officials, interest groups, and critics anticipate the interpretation of particular audiences, shaping their acts and language so as to elicit a desired response (Edelman 1988, p. 95). In other words, policy-makers interpret news stories for decision-making purposes and rely on the lay public’s perceptions and interpretations of the news stories. Edelman (1988) also describes how political language and political reality are constructed.

In interviewing key informants from national aging and Asian American organizations, the purpose is to understand their level of involvement and influence in the federal hearings on welfare reform and immigrants. National organizations that were

involved in the national debate around welfare reform and immigrant not only represent an array of ideological spectrums and causes, but also represent a diverse set of constituencies. In reaction to welfare reform, new collaborations and coalitions formed across diverse constituencies. There are a limited number of studies examining practices of coalition-building among immigrants communities, other disenfranchised communities and the mainstream community. Moreover, there are a dearth of studies of how national organizations representing disenfranchised immigrant communities do advocacy and gain influence in the US. Studying this aspect of welfare reform is important because national advocates have been actors in defining and constructing problems in the policy arena. One of the research questions seeks to understand how national aging and Asian American organizations contested popular perceptions of SSI elderly immigrant recipients. In the creation and response to these perceptions, national organizations do assume an advocacy role in policy making. Based on the findings from these interviews the key variables involved in successful advocacy efforts will be identified.

Outline of the Dissertation

Chapter one outlines the statement of the problem and the importance of this study. A section that deals with a background and theoretical approaches to the problem follows chapter one. Outlined briefly is the history of the Supplemental Security Income program. This is important to provide a context of reforms made to this particular entitlement program. Later in this chapter, there is an examination of why and how public policies get defined and how they garner public support, and how politicians and others can scapegoat immigrants for problems confronting society. This is followed by sections

addressing theories on welfare state backlashes. The discussion of welfare state backlashes is limited to the United States, partly because there are a finite number of articles looking at such backlashes. In the conclusion of the literature review, key theoretical frameworks are summarized and a theoretical framework of the dissertation is included.

Chapter three discusses the methodology used for this study. Several approaches were used, including telephone interviews and content analysis. Chapter four contains findings from my analyses of congressional hearings from 1994-1996 focusing on Supplemental Security Income and immigrants. In this chapter, I describe both a quantitative and qualitative content analyses and identify key themes and witnesses that arose from the hearing debates.

Chapter five is devoted to an analysis of major US newspapers discussing Supplemental Security Income and immigrants. The first part of the chapter is an analysis of news stories examining Supplemental Security Income and immigrants from the top circulating newspapers in the United States: *USA Today*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Wall Street Journal* and *New York Times*. The latter part of this chapter is devoted to an analysis of editorial, commentaries and Letters to the Editor from the major newspapers in the United States. Again for both of these analyses, I demonstrate – both qualitatively and quantitatively – the key voices and themes that come from the data.

Chapter six contains findings from telephone interviews conducted with key informants from national Asian American and Aging organizations. The questions asked revolve around the following domains: perceptions (e.g. media, policy level, community)

of immigrant welfare recipients, the role of collaborations and coalition-building on this issue, and the organization's role in the debates.

Chapter seven attempts to provide an overall understanding of the images and perceptions that emerged through the media and policy hearings of elderly immigrant welfare recipients before, during and after the 1996 federal welfare reform law. And this chapter seeks to provide an analysis of how key activists and organizations contested and challenged these perceptions during this time period. Finally, I will discuss the theoretical, methodological and policy implications of this dissertation.

Chapter 2

Perspectives on Policy-Making, Welfare State Backlashes and Anti-Immigration Backlashes

Introduction

This chapter provides background on the Supplemental Security Income program, and the origins and subsequent policy changes to this program. The next section of this chapter is a review of various theoretical frameworks. I examine three different theoretical frameworks – theories on policymaking, theories on welfare state backlashes, and theories to explain anti-immigrant sentiments -- that might provide a better understanding of why the welfare reform law passed.

I. Background of the Supplemental Security Income Program

The Social Security Act enacted in 1935 commenced the first of America's welfare programs. This act created three programs: Old Age Assistance (OAA), Aid to the Blind (AB), and Aid to Dependent Children (ADC). These provisions provided means tested entitlements to low-income elderly, the blind, and poor children with absent fathers. The Social Security Act was enacted and had two sections - Title I and Title II. Under Title I, the federal government, equally in partnership with states, agreed to care for low-income elderly people in their states, which became known as the Old Age Assistance (OAA) program. Title II served as old age insurance, also known as Social Security. Historically, the passage of the Social Security Act was guided by several philosophical principles including the following: equity, entitlement, self-reliance and public responsibility (Achenbaum 1993). Because of the stock market crash of 1929,

widespread poverty was rampant and families found themselves unable to help their elderly members. Moreover, the onset of industrialization, and the increased longevity of older adults, no longer made assistance to adults a private issue but also a public issue (Achenbaum 1993).

In this early period of 1935, the generosity of the OAA programs and the eligibility requirements varied widely across states. During the decade of the civil rights movement and the war against poverty, a coalition of liberals and moderates in Congress were able to secure more generous welfare benefits (Achenbaum, 1983). In 1964, Congress passed the Food Stamp Act which provided low-income families with food coupons, in 1965 Medicaid was enacted to provide health care to poor families and in 1965 Medicare was passed to provide health care to elderly Americans. In 1964, the Economic Opportunity Act also was passed. Unlike previous welfare laws, this act provided community development, job training and housing. Moreover, there was a serious fight against the root causes of poverty (Blaustein 1982).

In 1972 Congress also passed legislation which combined the state run assistance programs of OAA, Aid to the Blind (AB) and Aid to the Permanently and Totally Disabled (APTD), and created a federally funded and administered program called Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Like Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is an entitlement for low-income older adults and disabled individuals. According to Skinner (1991) the concept of entitlement can be broken down into different dimensions: not an entitlement, an earned entitlement, an implied entitlement. Public debate concerning public assistance for immigrants has been hotly contested. Who is entitled to receive public assistance in time of need? According to Achenbaum (1983),

the original intent of Old Age Assistance, which later became Supplemental Security Income, was an attempt to provide the minimum cash assistance toward meeting the financial needs of poor elderly. Even those who had not been employed could become eligible for this entitlement. "Those who had not earned benefits through gainful employment could receive them anyway, if they could demonstrate a legally acceptable relationship with someone who had made sufficient contributions" (Achenbum 1983, p. 42).

The original SSI legislation passed in 1972 stated that non-citizens would be eligible for Supplemental Security Income, as long as they were legal permanent residents (Parrott et al. 1998). In 1974 more than 3 million people came onto the rolls of the Supplemental Security Income program. In July 1975, the General Accounting Office reported that large expenditures of federal and state tax money including SSI had been made to support immigrants and their families. The GAO then recommended that Congress make sponsors promise to support immigrants and that it be legally binding. As early as 1977, there was legislation - HR 7200, the Public Assistance Amendments of 1977 - that was proposed and discussed and never passed but would have made deeming legally binding. Deeming means that the immigrant's sponsor's income, and that of the immigrant's are used to determine eligibility for federal safety nets. Later during the Carter Administration, HR 3236 which became P.L. 96-265 made sponsors legally responsible for their relative for the first three years of the immigrant's residency. When the Republicans gained a majority in Congress in 1994, public assistance and immigrants became hotly contested. Under the new Republican majority Congress, hearings were initiated to end eligibility to Supplemental Security Income and other federal safety nets

such as Medicaid and food stamps to addicts, children and immigrants. During the 1996 welfare reform debate, politicians of varying perspectives worked to end federal entitlements to immigrants. During President Clinton's re-election campaign for the presidency, he pledged to the nation to "end welfare as we know it," and that included immigrants. As discussed later in subsequent chapters, the focus of many of the hearings on Supplemental Security Income and welfare reform were about problematizing immigrants eligibility to this program.

II. Theoretical Frameworks

A. Theories on Public Policy Making

This section discusses theoretical approaches to public policy. There are several socio-political approaches to this perspective. While my particular focus is looking at sociological theory, this section also provides perspectives from political and communication sciences. First, I examine the pluralist/interest group theory, which posits that there are many competing groups and issues, and the state is just one of many institutions involved in serving the interests of society. In this section, I pay close attention to how symbolic politics is used in the art of debate and persuasion among competing groups. The second approach I examine is the sociology of knowledge perspective, where I examine the role of academicians, journalists, policy makers and other professionals in policy-making. The last approach is symbolic interactionism and social constructionism, and an examination of how frames are constructed in the media and policy arenas.

1. Pluralist/Interest Group Perspectives

Scholars working from the pluralist approach see cutbacks to welfare policies as an outcome of debate and persuasion. The expansion or rollbacks to the welfare state are based on the political influences of interest groups. So the adoption of any new policy changes is seen as a direct result of the influence of interest groups or the consent of the electorate. Moreover, consent is achieved through the ways in which welfare programs and target populations are framed. Political scientists have documented how the use of symbolic politics can be used to manipulate and garner support for a policy issue.

Symbolic politics are about how a problem is defined (Rochefort and Cobb 1993; Rochefort and Cobb 1995) including the nature of the problem: its' severity, incidence, novelty, crisis, and the characteristics of the problem population. How a target population is constructed can determine if it is seen as worthy or unworthy, and, as a result, deserving or not deserving of the benefits of a particular policy. Rochefort and Cobb (1993) suggest that if the problem population is framed as strange, not familiar, and threatening, policy cutbacks to the group ensue. Edelman (1988) states that "to blame vulnerable groups for the sufferings and guilt people experience in their daily lives is emotionally gratifying and politically popular, and so the construction of enemies underlies not only domination, oppression, and war, but policy formation, elections, and other seemingly rational and even liberal activities (Edelman 1988, p. 89)." Although Edelman does not fully discuss immigrants and the welfare state, one can deduce that Edelman would agree that immigrants are a politically vulnerable group, and as a result "myths" used to vilify are constructed to propel political purposes. In this case,

immigrant foreigners, can be constructed as different and sinister. Nativism, which is defined as anti-foreign, is the ideology used to propel anti-immigrant movements.

Schneider and Ingram (1993) propose that social constructions of target groups and their political strength can be broken up into four categories: advantaged (strong power and positive constructions), contenders (strong influence and negative constructions), dependents (weak influence but positive construction) and deviants (weak influence and negative constructions). The social construction of target groups refers to the cultural characterization or popular images of the persons or groups whose behavior and well being are affected by public policy (Schneider and Ingram 1993). In policy, social welfare policymaking is conditioned by social perceptions of recipients (Schneider and Ingram 1993, Rochefort and Cobb 1994).

John Kingdon (1995), the author of Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies, is a political scientist that also provides a pluralistic theory perspective on policy making. Kingdon distinguishes between participants and processes that are involved in policy making. Participants can be involved in processes such as problem recognition, policy generation and politics. He suggests that elected officials and their appointees, not government bureaucrats or nongovernmental actors, are the most influential in policy making. He further suggests that a hidden cluster includes specialists in the bureaucracy and in the professional community who are influential in the “specification of the alternatives from which authoritative choices are made (Kingdon 1995, p. 19).”

According to Kingdon (1995), the “Cohen-March-Olsen garbage can model of organization choice” best describes the agenda setting process. Three processes are part of this model: problems, policies and politics. They are different from one another; but at

one point they cross and are linked, and policy changes eventually grow out of the coupling of problems, politics and policies. Moreover, problems become part of policy discussions when crisis-like events precede them.

Kingdon posits that there are many policy proposals floating, the ones that stick with lawmakers are the ones that fit with public opinion, but also with technical and budget specifications. Kingdon (1995) proposes that the current political mood is an important ingredient in agenda setting, which is usually a result of administration/legislative turnover and interest group campaigns. Kingdon states that “coupling” most happens when a crisis or a political stream opens windows. Policy entrepreneurs are then the actors that are involved in bringing the attention of policies or problems to lawmakers. “Significant movement, in other words, is more likely if problems, policy proposals, and politics are all coupled into a package” (Kingdon 1996, p. 20).

Deborah Stone (1997), the author of Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision-Making, describes how problems are defined and presented to the general public. According to Stone (1997), problem definition is strategic because “groups, individuals and government agencies deliberately and consciously fashion portrayals so as to promote their favored course of action” (Stone 1997, p. 133). Stone proposes several different ways to define policy problems: symbols, numbers, causes, interests, and decisions. She discusses how symbols have four components: narrative stories, synecdoches, metaphors, and ambiguity. Narratives are stories with “a beginning, a middle, and an end, involving some change or transformation” (Stone 1997, p.138). There are heroes and villains in these stories. There are also different twists to these

stories and they are composed of either decline, helplessness and control, conspiracy and blame the victim. Many policy stories entail a situation being out-of-control and a need to stop and limit. And policy stories also tend to point the finger to the few conspirators responsible or the few people who suffer from the problem. Again, the stories of hope are about controlling the so-called bad guys, whether it be the victims or conspirators.

Synecdoche is also an aspect of symbol making in which one element represents the totality of all things. According to Stone (1997), this type of symbolic gesture captures the impressions of the general public but also the policy response to the problem. She discusses how the “welfare queen” became the symbol during the welfare reform debates, and how politicians and interest groups chose an outlying case to represent the universe. At the same time, that one case is utilized to gain support for overturning a policy that benefits the whole. Stone (1997) suggests this type of symbolic representation is powerful “because it can make a problem concrete, allow people to identify with someone else, and mobilize anger” (Stone 1997, 147).

The use of metaphors is also part of symbol making processes. Stone discusses how there are different types of metaphors including metaphors related to living organisms, machines and mechanical devices, wedges and inclines, containers, disease, and war. Ambiguity is also part of the policy discourse, and is the way symbols can mean different things to different people:

Symbolic representation is a fundamental part of all discourse, political or other, and by conveying images of good and bad, right and wrong, suffering and relief, these devices are instruments in the struggle over policy (Stone 1997, p. 156).

According to Deborah Stone (1997), one way to construct a policy problem is to measure it in some way. She suggests that dialogue of a certain policy can be initiated because of figures showing that a problem is growing in size. "Counting must begin with categorization, which in turn means deciding whether to include or exclude" (Stone 1997, p. 164). Counting automatically means that inclusion and exclusion is about the discourse. Counting specifies also who is a recipient and who is not. "Debating the size of a phenomenon is one of the most prominent forms of discourse in public policy" (Stone 1997, p. 167). According to Stone, numbers are about where to draw the line. She further suggests that counting creates groups that become a vehicle for political organizing and mobilizing.

Stone (1997) further discusses how causal reasoning is also part of defining the problem. It provides an understanding of how the world works, but also assigns responsibility. Once the cause is known, it is used to "place burdens on one set of people instead of another" (Stone 1997, p. 189). According to Stone (1997), the types of causal theories are intended and unintended actions that are either unguided or purposeful. Accidents or freaks of nature, like earthquakes or floods, are events that are not willed or done purposely. While those with an inadvertent cause, like carelessness and omission, are the result of unintended, and purposeful actions. The other end of the spectrum are intended and purposeful actions which causes such things as oppression, fraud and conspiracies. Actions that are intended and unguided are linked to a mechanical cause, like the result of a machine or some other human made design. A mechanical cause to a problem is caused by some intervening variable -- complex systems, historical or institutional -- which are "designed, programmed or trained by humans to produce certain

consequences” (Stone 1997, p. 193). In order to avoid blame and responsibility, a larger entity might made to be seen as culpable.

According to Stone (1997), causal arguments can be used to challenge or protect interests, rules and institutions; assign blame and responsibility for finding solutions; legitimize actors as problem solvers; and create new collaborations among different groups who would be affected by the problem. Problems are also constructed as choices in decisions. The rhetorical approaches in decision-making include cost-benefit analysis, risk-benefit analysis and decision analysis. “Portraying problems as a decision is a way of controlling its boundaries: what counts as problematic and what does not, how the phenomenon will be seen by others, and how others will respond to it” (Stone 1997, p. 243).

Like Stone, Estes (1979) in The Aging Enterprise discusses how policies are made and not always with the interests of those who are in need. In her study of the Older Americans Act, she discusses how intentional ambiguity in the policy making process can prevent lay persons from becoming involved in the policy process. She suggests that deliberate vagueness of a policy permits multiple interpretations, and no clear expectation of what the actual outcome should be. Like Stone, Estes (1979) suggests that this ambiguity is deliberate and done so only select individuals with expertise can participate in the decision-making process. “As long as policies are nonspecific and ambiguous, the American “pluralist democratic” system is permitted to operate in the interest of the strongest of those who influence legislation and program operations” (Estes 1979, p. 70).

2. Sociology of Knowledge

Gans (1995) illustrates how the label formation of the underclass takes place. He proposes that legitimators communicate these labels, and their credential justify their conclusions. “Direct legitimators participate personally, by speaking, writing, or letting their words be used directly for justification purposes” (Gans 1995, p. 21). Gans illustrates how journalists are disseminators in the construction of the underclass. In his study, he found that the use of “underclass” rose from less than 6 stories per year in 1970 to over 100 in the mid 1980s. Journalists have great influence in policy and public opinion.

Edelman (1988) suggests that news reports shape policy making. “A political news item is therefore likely to give each reader, viewer, or auditor the impression of a specific meaning that belies its utility as a catalyst for other ideological projections” (Edelman 1988, p. 91). Edelman (1988) sees that interpretation is part of news creation and dissemination. In other words, policy-makers interpret news stories for decision-making purposes and rely on the lay public’s perceptions and interpretations of the news stories. Edelman (1988) also describes how political language and political reality is fabricated. “Reason and rationalization are intertwined. That intertwining and the impossibility of marshaling evidence that is persuasive to everyone are the hallmarks of political arguments” (Edelman 1988, 105). Although Edelman does not specifically discuss the role of think tanks, his work speaks about the power of so-called, “objectivity”. He suggests that research and technical reports mystify the realities taking place, and members of society hardly question it. Rather, many accept it, and take it as truth.

Gans (1995) also illustrates how academic social scientists and funded think tanks are involved in legitimating myths of the underclass. He discusses how these legitimators were useful in the label-making process. In fact, journalists in their news articles often quote researchers. Gans writes about how researchers have taken on roles as either the alarmists or the counters (i.e. those provide counts of the phenomenon). "A good deal of social scientific counting is alarmist in nature, because social scientists are rarely asked to count anything unproblematic" (Gans 1995, p. 49). Gans further describes how conservative foundations fund researchers who propagate the idea that poverty is the fault of the poor.

Stefancic (1997) explains that after the passage of California's proposition 187 in 1994, conservative think tanks began to focus on both illegal and legal immigration. Stefancic (1997) states that the American public is not simply swayed by emotional appeals, but by facts. "In order to change once cherished beliefs, they need to be convinced that immigrants hurt their job chances, that immigrants consume huge quantities of social services...most university researchers will not make such bald statements; they know reality is more complex than that. The conservative think tanks leap nimbly into the breach" (Stefancic, 1997, p. 132). She further explains that think tanks are highly ideological, yet respectable among legislative circles. Moreover, they have been described by Stefancic as supplying the research tools for the "new nativism, making anti-immigrant measures seem sensible, humane, and ethically and economically sound" (Stefancic, 1997, p. 132). On the other hand, in terms of research think tanks, liberals have nothing comparable - in terms of the massive financial backing - to the CATO institute, Heritage Foundation or Pioneer Fund.

Besides the media, it is important to understand who else become the primary definers of particular policy problems. According to Brint (1994), policy experts are powerful because they establish the initial framework from whence all policy discussion flows. Those who define the problem are those with power and prestige. “The argument is often based on a sense that, as public policy issues become more complex, the public become less and less able to make informed decisions” (Brint 1994, p. 130). Therefore, decision-making power rests in the hands of policy experts -- because the public is uninformed to the technicalities of which only the expert is aware. At the same time, Brint (1994) demonstrates that even though experts have power because of their specialized knowledge, their roles are much more supportive to the agenda of top political officials. They provide knowledge, data or analysis to a particular framework. And if they provide specialized knowledge, such as a particular scientific study, that does not fit the political agenda of the times their work is most “often suppressed, distorted, or simply ignored” (Brint 1994, p. 136).

Brint (1994) further elaborates how an organization’s influence in federal decision-making is highly stratified by resources, political connections, and reputation. He suggests that only the organizations with the most resources are the key actors in policy making. “This stratification structure leads to a model of influence that can best be described as structured around concentric bands of organizations surrounding the principal authorities in a policy domain” (Brint 1994, p. 131). According to Brint, organizational policy fields also segment the political structure. The chief actors in a field such as health are not the same as those in immigration. However, Brint (1994) stresses

that ultimately in policy-making, political elites have the final power to accept, amend or reject a policy.

3. Symbolic Interactionism

The symbolic interactionist perspective views social problems as a collective construction. Social problems are not seen as objective in nature, but are fabricated to be issues. When looking at how policy is constructed, the concept of framing may provide an analysis concerning why welfare state cutbacks may happen to particular targeted groups. The concept of framing is a useful link between cognition and culture. Rooted in the work of Erving Goffman, framing is a discussion of “what would otherwise be a meaningless aspect of the scene into something that is meaningful” (Goffman 1974, p. 21). Framing is about how individuals organize information that influences their perceptions and interpretations, and part of the analysis is to determine its’ ideological sources and effects.

According to the social constructionist perspective, welfare state backlashes happen because of the interpretative packaging of policies. There are different sets of interpretations on policies, but one interpretation prevails and allows for cutbacks in the system. According to Gamson and Modigliani (1989), how policy is made is based on the social construction of meaning at an institutional and individual level. “Each system interacts with the other: media discourse is part of the process by which individuals construct meaning, and public opinion is part of the process by which journalists and other cultural entrepreneurs develop and crystallize meaning in public discourse” (Gamson and Modigliani 1989, p. 2).

In their study of nuclear power, they found that meaning of the issue is constructed in multiple, complex ways from specialist's discourse to oral discourse made by officials to public opinion discourse. The authors suggest that public discourse is created by journalists who contribute their frames and their own interpretation of the problem. They argue that these meanings on issues, also known as issue cultures, can be thought of as a process. Package frames incorporate cultural resonance, sponsor activities, and media practices. Cultural resonance is about how specific packages of ideas resonate with the large cultural themes. Gamson and Modigliani suggest thinking of these themes as dialectic: there is no theme without a countertheme. Themes and counterthemes are based in American culture and values. For example, in terms of welfare and immigrants, welfare causing dependency is a theme while welfare meaning self-sufficiency could be a countertheme.

On the contrary to social constructionism, Wolfsfeld (1997) writes that framing is not simply influenced by its' construction, but also by political events. Wolfsfeld (1997) is critical of the social constructionism approach and argues that events are relevant and that social processes are insignificant because journalists rely on events. Events matter and journalists react to them. "Journalists focus on events; the events serve as the initial stimulus for the entire story-building process" (Wolfsfeld 1997, p. 35). According to Bader (1996), triggering events are instrumental in raising the issue with the media and law makers. The event then defines how it will be understood and how those in power will respond.

Hilgartner and Bosk (1988) discuss that social problems evolve through collective definitions, but they propose that competition plays a large role in whether a problem is

viewed as one. “We assume that public attention is a scarce resource, allocated through competition in a system of public arenas” (Hilgartner and Bosk 1988, p. 55). Social problems must compete to remain on the public agenda and much of this process involves organization and culture. The newspaper and congressional hearings are public arenas in which the problem is framed and presented to the public. According to Hilgartner and Bosk, these arenas have a “carrying capacity” that is bound by the number of social problems it can absorb. In other words, newspapers have limited space in which to print articles on the topic and congressional committees are limited to a number of hours to schedule hearings. Moreover, individuals are also limited in the amount of “surplus compassion” they can marshal in terms of the issue.

The authors suggest that how problems are selected, in wake of a carrying capacity, is based on drama, culture and politics. The problem must be dramatic and capture the public with new symbols and events. However, the presentation can not be repeated too many times so the public becomes saturated and desensitized to the issue. In addition to drama, the problem needs to be related to American cultural themes. Finally, the problems that are selected must fit with the current political mood. Hilgartner and Bosk (1988) also propose that social problems that do not get onto the public agenda can remain alive if there are advocacy groups that have the resources to keep the issue active.

Issues are also defined and constructed by sponsors. “Sponsorship is more than merely advocacy, involving such tangible activities as speech making, interviews with journalists, advertising, article and pamphlet writing, and the filing of legal briefs to promote a preferred package” (Gamson and Modigliani 1989, p. 6). Social movement organizations, such as national advocacy organizations on immigration and aging, can be

instrumental in the framing process. Through their advocacy work, they can reframe issues and get media to highlight other competing frames not voiced by politicians. In other words, they have the potential to change the direction of political debate. Snow and Benford (1988), in their work on social movement organizations, suggest that organizations occupy the role of “signifying agents” and are active participants in the packaging of frames. Through their active production of meaning, they can not only change the direction of a political debate, they can also mobilize and organize supporters that again can deter and. “demobilize antagonists”

Other perspectives in symbolic interactionism that play a role in policy making in the welfare state, include labeling theory. Labeling theory deals with the process by which individuals and groups are labeled as deviant or outsiders because they differ from the norm, because of behavior, appearance or other signifying differences. Deviants can be produced by welfare states “as readily as kitchen appliances, rifles, automobiles, medals of military valor, or any other mass-producible thing... so too must the modern state produce deviance if it is to convince its citizens that they their well being is menaced by an internal conspiracy” (Oplinger 1990, p. 18). According to Oplinger, deviance is constructed when the dominant group faces a threat to status and their resources. The dominant group utilizes this construction in policy making to seek out their own interests by including or excluding the deviant group. “Deviance is mass produced when powerful groups believe their values and interests to be embattled and find it to their advantage to establish a moral boundary” (Oplinger 1990, p. 30). Oplinger (1990) proposes that the mass production of deviance is related to a high level of external demand by the public or other social institutions for such boundaries.

Moral panics arise out of labeling and the construction of deviance on a particular group of individuals. The labeled individuals represent evil and “folk devils are deviants; they are engaged in wrongdoing; their actions are harmful to society; they are selfish and evil; they must be stopped, their actions neutralized” (Goode and Ben-yehuda 1994, p. 29). In the phenomenon of moral panics, the belief is that if the problem is not solved there will imminent ruin of society.

Moral panics are made-up of several elements: concern, hostility, consensus, disproportionately, volatility. Moral panics are characterized by a high level of anxiety found among the general public about a particular group of persons or a type of behavior that has implications for the rest of society. In addition to anxiety, there is also an elevated level of hostility directed to these persons or this behavior. “That is, not only must the condition, phenomenon , or behavior be seen as threatening, but a clearly identifiable group or segment of the society must be seen as responsible for this threat” (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 1994, p. 34). Moreover, in order for a moral panic to take a life of its’ own, it must achieve a level of consensus in society that this problem warrants panic. Another criteria is “disproportionately”: a belief that the numbers are getting out of control. Moral panics are also characterized by abruptness and volatility. “They erupt fairly suddenly, and nearly as suddenly, subside” (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 1994, p. 38). Actors involved in the construction of a moral panic include the following: the press, the public, law enforcement, politicians and legislators, action groups.

Who is panicked? An elite theory approach to understanding moral panics is an understanding that the elite “orchestrates hegemony, that is, manages to convince the rest of the society -- the press, the general public, the courts, law enforcement -- that the real

enemy is not the crisis” (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 1994, p. 136) but another entity. According to this perspective, the media is the communicator and legitimator of this perspective. “The elites frames an issue; all other interpretations of reality must take their cue from, and argue against, elite formulations” (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 1994, p. 137). The media take their cue from elites. According to this perspective, “panic” is constructed to deflect from the true source of problems: economic interests of the powerful.

B. Welfare State Backlashes

Although the theoretical literature on the expansion of welfare states is vast, the available literature on understanding why welfare state backlashes occur is quite small. There is a lack of a specific theoretical literature about why welfare state rollbacks occur. Of course, there are - such as Neo-Marxist, Pluralist/Interest-Group and Discourse perspectives - which provide explanations to welfare state rollbacks in the US. However, most of the existing welfare state theories explain why welfare states expand, but are unable to explain why they also change over time. “Welfare state retrenchment remains largely uncharted terrain” (Pierson 1996, p.143).

1. Pluralist/Interest Group Perspective

The pluralist approach sees cutbacks to welfare policies as an outcome of debate and persuasion. “Proponents of this theory stress that it is the exercise of political pressure to serve the interests of some group or another that lies behind the decision to introduce state welfare programs” (Midgley 1997, p. 103). How an issue is framed

determines the outcome according to many pluralists. Again, there are many competing issues and groups, and the issue that gets the attention of lawmakers is a result of how it is framed. Paul Pierson (1996) suggests welfare state cutbacks happen - not because of how a particular problem is framed - but also when politicians feel like they can take actions without fears of voter backlash. At the same time, a politically vulnerable group is targeted for cutbacks when there is a significant electoral slack, and governments perceive that they are politically immune from the rollbacks they enact (Pierson, 1996). Because governments want to avoid blame for cutbacks, framing the issue as a fiscal crisis provides protection (Pierson 1996). Pierson (1996) suggests that in order for this to occur collaboration with the political opposition needs to take place. At the same time, the need for consensus makes it difficult for radical restructuring.

Pierson further proposes that the success of welfare state backlashes is best when there is a lack of visibility. "Those seeking retrenchment will try to avoid political outcries by diminishing the visibility of their cutbacks or by trying to hide their own responsibility for unpopular outcomes" (Pierson 1996, p. 177). For instance, the use of federalism under Reagan shifted the blame for the cuts at that time (Estes 1991). Pierson also explains how altering the ways in which trade-offs between taxes, spending and deficits are constructed and decided upon can change the balance of political power. He outlines how these reforms are manifested in the following ways: an increase in the reliance of means-tested measures, transfer of responsibility to the private sector, and changes in the benefits and eligibility rules of a particular program (Pierson 1996).

2. Discourse Theory

Sanford Schram, a political scientist, is committed to promoting applied social science that benefits the underclass and not simply policymakers. He perceives that the current backlashes of welfare reform are symptomatic of the exclusive discourse that exists simply among those in the policy arena. “Contemporary welfare policy research is created by the government and has come to be written in a discourse that reinforces the state interests about how to understand the poor” (Schram 1996, p. 4). In other words, welfare policy research is simply part of the discourse used to justify the existence of the state. Welfare policy research is not meant to challenge the status quo, but maintain existing assumptions held by state actors.

Schram (1996) sees that there is a certain exclusivity in language and actors involved in setting current welfare policies. Because of this exclusivity, new ways of examining things are not even a possibility, and as a result not benefiting those who need it most. “When policymakers do take welfare policy research into account, it is largely limited to technical considerations related to fine-tuning existing programs. Welfare policy research in the dominant mode is thus both politicized and depoliticized... All the while aspiring to scientific impartiality, welfare policy research achieves political credibility not by its objectivity, but by its consistency with the prevailing biases of welfare policy discourse” (Schram 1996, p. 6). Schram (1996) further states that reforming welfare and backlashes experienced are simply symptomatic of the state’s angst about a budgetary crisis. Therefore, policy research is meant to reinforce the state. “Welfare reform cannot help but then perpetuate the established orientation of trying to change people’s behavior so that they will be more willing to respond to the right incentives, forego being dependent on the state, and thereby ease managerial anxiety

about welfare burdens” (Schram 1996, intro). Moreover, “lost is attention to the broader structural context and forgotten is the possibility that without changing culture and economics, poverty will persist” (Schram 1996, XXVII). Rather, the state’s voice in welfare policy is about the lack of economic possibilities and the stress on individual responsibility.

Fraser (1989) also discusses how social policy debates are not necessarily about addressing the root causes of poverty, but more about “discourses about needs”. Fraser proposes that welfare state backlashes need to be framed from the politics of need interpretation. Through discursive practices, she examines the context and contentious character of “needs claims.” She problematizes how the interpretation of needs is constructed, and finds it troublesome that the dialogue is not about the realities that welfare recipients face. Finally, she discusses how “socially authorized forms of public discourse available for interpreting people’s needs” (Fraser 1989, p. 164) and the social institutions that they represent are taken for granted as adequate and fair. However, the means of “interpretation and communication” are “stratified, differentiated into social groups with unequal status, power and access to resources, traversed by pervasive axes of inequality along lines of class, gender, race and ethnicity, and age” (Fraser 1989, p. 165).

Fraser further proposes that in policymaking certain discourses are “officially sanctioned and authorized,” while others are unheard, disqualified and discounted. Needs talk becomes a site of struggle between those in subordinated and dominant groups. “Dominant groups articulate need interpretations intended to exclude, defuse and/or co-opt counterinterpretations” (Fraser 1989, p. 166). Welfare state backlashes emerge from how “needs” are interpreted and how those involved in this discourse contest or validate

this discourse. There are no alternative discourses, rather “runaway needs that have broken out of domestic or official economic enclaves enter that hybrid discursive space that is dubbed the social” (Fraser 1989, p. 171). This then becomes part of the rationale of cutbacks and rollbacks in the welfare state.

Fraser further discusses how “expert need discourses are the vehicles for translating sufficiently politicized runaway needs into objects of potential state intervention. They are closely connected with institutions of knowledge production and utilization, and they include qualitative and especially quantitative social science discourses generated in universities and ‘think tanks’” (Fraser 1989, p. 175). Fraser suggests that the expert redefinition turns welfare recipients into cases and not groups or political bodies. Rather, they are seen as passive and ill-equipped at interpreting their needs and shaping their life conditions. When the experts’ discourse becomes institutionalized, its’ purpose is to normalize and stigmatize difference.

Fraser and Gordon (1994) in their *Signs* article – *A Genealogy of Dependency*, suggest that welfare state backlashes are reflective of the power of the dominant discourses of language and meaning. In fact, interpretations of welfare dependency are used “to delegitimize or obscure others, generally to the advantage of the dominant groups in society and to the disadvantage of subordinate ones” (Fraser and Gordon 1994, p. 111). Fraser and Gordon argue that welfare dependency has evolved into an individual problem due to moral or psychological deficiencies, so much, in fact, that the “term carries strong emotive and visual associations and a powerful pejorative charge” (Fraser and Gordon 1994, p. 111). They propose that dependency has many dimensions to its definition, including the following: depending economically on another or institution,

lack of a legal or public identity, subjected to a ruling power and an individual character trait like the lack of will power or excessive emotional neediness. They suggest that the term in preindustrial English usage was about subordination and that over time white workingmen demanded civil and electoral rights, and claimed to be independent.

Shifts in meaning occurred and those not earning a wage were constructed as dependent and being not independent. A pauper relying on poor relief was considered to have deficiencies, usually rooted in biology. Moreover, images of blacks relying on public assistance meant a different type of dependency: “Their image as “savage” “childlike” and “submissive” became salient as the old, territorial sense of dependency as a colony became intertwined with a new, racist discourse developed to justify colonialism and slavery. There emerged a drift from an older sense of dependency as a relation of subjection imposed by an imperial power on an indigenous population to a newer sense of dependency as an inherent property or character trait of the people so subjected” (Fraser and Gordon 1994, 317). As a result, welfare dependency became part of racist discourse. In order to be truly independent, a family wage was a way of achieving independence, yet this was deeply affected by gender, race and class. In the United States, freedom and independence became associated with the notion of merit, and that if anyone remained dependent that they had moral or psychological deficiencies.

The long American love affair with independence was politically double-edged. On the one hand, it helped nurture powerful labor and women’s movements. On the other hand, the absence of a hierarchical social tradition in which subordination was understood to be structural, not characterological, facilitated hostility to public support for the poor (Fraser and Gordon 1994, p. 320).

Fraser and Gordon (1994) discuss how the New Deal created a two track welfare system: workers and the poor. The later track created stigma and those on this track were considered dependent. Independence was about a persons' ability to earn a wage and be self-supporting. "Yet this norm still carries a racial and gender subtext, as it supposes that the worker has access to job paying a decent wage and is not also a primary parent" (Fraser and Gordon 1994, p. 75). The 1996 welfare reform law emerged out of this notion of individuality, but also older racist ideologies. Experts studying welfare may cite social and economic factors in dependency, but they also may claim the culture and behavior of the recipient as troublesome. Both Fraser and Gordon propose that in order to stop the backlashes that are occurring "an adequate response would need to question our received valuations and definitions of dependence and independence in order to allow new, emancipatory social visions to emerge" (Fraser and Gordon 1994, p. 332).

3. Neo-Marxist Perspective

Piven and Cloward (1982) explain how gains are made in terms of public provisions, but they also illustrate how cuts and rollbacks to the welfare state also emerge. In *The New Class War*, they discuss the Reagan legacy and cuts made to several federally subsidized programs. They argue that these cuts were done purposively to aid in the development of capital. Cash assistance programs were helping large numbers of persons and this affected the labor market by keeping wages strong. Piven and Cloward (1982) describe in detail the reasons why the powerful and wealthy elite have targeted such programs. The power of huge employers diminishes to the extent that the state offers an alternative like a cash assistance program which indirectly stabilizes workers' wages,

and have “weakened capital’s ability to depress wages by means of economic insecurity, especially by means of manipulating the relative numbers of people searching for work” (Piven and Cloward 1982, p. 31). Since there have been no downward pressures on wages, massive unemployment would result in the lowering of wages. Because of the availability of a safety net, “unemployment has lost some of its terrors, both for the unemployed and for those currently working” (Piven and Cloward 1982, p. 31).

According to Piven and Cloward, the most effective way to ‘regulate the poor’ in the labor market is to close off access to alternative means of subsistence. “An insecure labor force is thus a more productive labor force and a cheaper one, quite apart from wage levels. Conversely, a labor force that is made more secure by the possibility of alternative means of subsistence is less docile, less productive, and more costly” (Piven and Cloward 1982, p. 28). For example, cuts in cash assistance programs, means that workers would have to accept and be susceptible to oppressive working conditions, and to accept below average wages in the face of inflation. With cuts to cash assistance, economic insecurity will be exacerbated, and those on cash assistance would be forced to become part of the larger pool of unemployed persons. Cuts in cash assistance would not only affect those in poverty, but it also would indirectly affect the working because it would lower their current wages, and in turn increase unemployment. For example, if the age eligibility for Social Security increases, many older workers in the industrialized and unionized sector will remain in the work force, thus heightening the scramble for jobs and exerting pressures for lower wages.

On the one hand, public provisions weaken capital, but at the same time public provisions “contribute to profitability by lowering the costs to employers of maintaining

a healthy and skilled labor force” (Piven and Cloward 1982, p. 30). Without public provisions, employers would be burdened with paying the costs for health, education, and other benefits and services, or increase wages so workers could afford to pay for these needed services. Second, public provisions aid capital because it pacifies those who are angry with the system, especially those without work. According to Piven and Cloward, this is seen as a strategy by the ruling class because by inducing cash, political organizing diminishes and “with the expansion of these programs, the body politic presumably grows more compliant, listless and enfeebled” (Piven and Cloward 1982, p. 29).

4. Labeling: Race and Ideology

Herbert Gans (1995) in his book, *The War Against the Poor*, discusses how myths of welfare recipients are constructed to justify cutbacks on the poor. The basis of ideology construction is to condemn the poor. There are two uses for this type of social construction. First, this social construction allows the undeserving poor to be scapegoated for the country’s economic problems. One way this is done is by blaming recipients for the high levels of taxation and the economic crisis. The second use of this social construction is to label the immoral undeserving and force them out of the mainstream, and at the same time preserve jobs for deserving citizens. “People assigned to the underclass may be forced out of the economy on the grounds that they are biologically unable to perform as workers” (Gans 1995, p. 8).

Gans (1995) outlines how this ideology is facilitated. First, if poor people don’t abide by mainstream principles, then they are labeled as undeserving. They are

undeserving because they have deviant beliefs, and deliberately do not want to assimilate into mainstream America. It is because of these deviant beliefs and attitudes that they are impoverished. Another premise is that poor men are inherently lazy and lack a work ethic. They are unable to understand the value of hard work, and because of their bad values they become criminals. On other hand, women who make-up the undeserving poor are immoral and unhealthy for having children out of wedlock. Finally, if the undeserving poor do not change their values and practices voluntarily, “they must be forced to do so, for example, by ending welfare payments” (Gans 1995, p. 7).

According to Gilens (1995), opposition to welfare has arisen out of class-based economic self interest or individualistic ideology. Welfare is unpopular because of two major reasons. First, middle-class Americans end up paying for services used by the poor. Second, American ideals value individualism and individual responsibility. Laissez-faire economic ideologies are part of the US and inherent in this belief is that all people are rational and self interested. Because of this type of ideology, those who do not succeed can be blamed and judged. This can be interpreted to mean that “the affluent are one sort of creature and working people another. It follows that these different sorts of creatures require different systems of incentives and disincentives if they are to be prodded to greater economic effort” (Gilens 1995, p. 39).

Cook and Barrett (1992) note that public support for different kinds of entitlements is based on the following: recipient deservingness, program effectiveness, the public’s self-interest, the Congress’ self interest and respondent’s political predisposition. According to the recipient deservingness theory, five requirements need to be met for a recipient to be considered “deserving.” Individuals must be seen as worthy

of help and lacking in all other resources. In addition, they must be perceived as being in their situation out of forces beyond their own control, and must possess the will to be independent. Finally, Cook and Barrett (1992) observe that the “recipients must not be seen to abuse their limited resources or to spend recklessly” (Cook and Barrett 1992, p. 40). They must be seen as “worthy.”

Gans (1995) suggests that there is a lack of systematic study of racialization and the poor. He does suggest that labels for the poor have been synonymous with “immigrants and dark-skinned people in the United States and elsewhere” (Gans 1995, p. 16). The racialization and labeling of the poor originates from those in power. In England, those labeled poor were the Irish. In past US history, the Irish, who were primarily immigrants, were labeled poor. Later, these labels were also transferred to Southern European Catholics and Eastern European Jews (Gans, 1996). As Gans (1996) illustrates, racialization and labeling of the poor is a tool in facilitating welfare state cutbacks.

Cook and Barrett (1992) speculate that support for the welfare state is based on the public’s perceived self-interest: “How will the policy in question affect me?” Cook and Barrett’s study neglects how the racialization of welfare recipients may generate opposition to welfare. In fact, most studies examining popular attitudes and welfare ignore how the racialization of welfare recipients affects welfare state changes.

In a study by Gilens, he found that whites who attribute racial inequality to blacks’ lack of effort are more likely to oppose welfare than those who blame social conditions. According to Gilens (1995), even though attitudes have changed and there is increasing racial tolerance, views on welfare and welfare recipients are racialized and

racist. For example, he found that racist attitudes such as blacks lacking commitment to the work ethic were common among many white Americans, and were most often associated with those who oppose means-tested entitlements. Gilens argues that even though advocates involved with means-tested entitlements are moving away from using race to characterize welfare recipients and utilizing class, many white Americans associate welfare recipients with blacks, and those who oppose such entitlements, usually also have negative perceptions of blacks. “Any anti-poverty policy will have to face the very substantial skepticism of white Americans toward the deservingness of the black poor. Whether race-specific or race-neutral, anti-poverty policy in this country has become hostage to white American’s cynicism toward poor blacks and specifically to the belief that black’s economic problems are of their own making” (Gilens 1995, p. 1011).

Edsall and Edsall (1992) discuss the growing discontent among California voters desiring tax relief. As early as 1978, the tax revolt was highly organized in California. Proposition 13 passed and proposed to cut property taxes. “The tax result opened up a new schism in American politics, pitting taxpayers against tax recipients (Edsall and Edsall, 1992). The division was between tax payers and tax recipients and was connected to racial divisions: non-whites were constructed as the primary recipients of public assistance. Race became associated with the conservative coalition opposed to the liberal welfare state (Edsall and Edsall, 1992). High taxes became associated with racialized tax recipients.

Even with current debates surrounding welfare reform and non-citizens, recent immigrants - who are primarily Latino and Asian - have been racialized and constructed as non-deserving because of their unassimilable characteristics. According to those who

advocate for restrictions on immigrants and public assistance, “the cultural characteristics of current immigrants will have consequences for the US far into the future” (Brimelow, 1995). Immigrants have been constructed as non-white and thus “the prevalence of race or ethnicity” serves as an “organizing principle in the American welfare state.” According to Thomas Faist (1995), “race has been one of the two most important dividing lines in American welfare state politics, though it shapes politics in manifold and elusive ways. Race has become a cleavage in the American welfare state to such an extent that we find racial segmentation of the constituency” (Faist 1995, p. 229).

Quadagno (1996) argues that US social policy has become linked with race, and how welfare backlashes have developed. Although Franklin D. Roosevelt laid the groundwork for a welfare state, he did not address racism and racist inequality that was so widespread in the USA (Quadagno 1994). In 1935, most blacks resided in the south and many sharecropped. In order to pass the Social Security Act, Roosevelt needed the support of Southern congressman. However, Southern congressmen opposed any federal legislation that would give direct cash to blacks (Quadagno 1994). They feared that direct cash would destroy the plantation industry. Instead, southern legislators lobbied for the states to have the right to determine eligibility (Quadagno 1994). Since the states determined eligibility, many blacks - who were concentrated in the agricultural and domestic industries -- were denied the major programs of the Social Security Act (Quadagno 1994). Moreover, the states’ standard for ADC eligibility was based on adherence to traditional marital and family arrangements (Abramovitz 1996). Poor black mothers - who were not married, divorced or separated -- were disqualified from receiving ADC. At the time, eligibility for ADC was for widows only and most of the

recipients were white (Mink 1995). In 1931, ADC recipients were 96 percent white, 3 percent black, and 1 percent other (Bell 1965). In addition to limiting eligibility, the same southern legislators also opposed a national benefit standard to the Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) program. They wanted the states to have the right to limit payments below the standard of minimum need (Bell 1965; Abramovitz 1988).

Initially, the states were given the right to set eligibility and payment standards. Later, federal eligibility rules and standards were constructed to prevent discriminatory practices of the state and local welfare agencies (Abramovitz 1996). This allowed poor mothers, who were not widows, to apply for ADC. The Social Security Act as amended in 1939 also strengthened the Old Age Insurance (OAI) benefit and included eligibility for widows and their children. However, the shift of widows to the old age insurance program (OAI) from ADC exacerbated the racial divide and increased the stigmatization of ADC recipients (Abramovitz 1996). ADC now served divorced, never-married and separated single mothers. Since black men could not qualify for social security benefits, their widows and children could not qualify for OAI, and many had no other option but to apply for ADC (Abramovitz 1996). “Transfer of white widows to OAI ensured that in the future nonwidowed and non white single mothers would become overrepresented on ADC, leaving the program open to hostility from a public that continued to denigrate the poor, women and people of color” (Abramovitz 1996, p. 65).

5. Political Economy

Political economy offers another perspective of why welfare state backlashes occur. In this section, I have separated the discussion of political economy into two parts:

fiscal crisis, and the aged. Although I discuss each separately, they are all inter-related in that immigrants and the aged have been used as scapegoats in the construction of a fiscal crisis, and the expansion of capital. This perspective is helpful because it looks at the intersections of politics and the economy, and is not simply a Marxist material interpretation. This paradigm focuses its' attention on how the state is a key player in welfare state cutbacks.

James O'Connor in his book, The Meaning of Crisis, discusses how the concept of fiscal crisis is a subjective reality, and not necessarily objective. "More specifically the practical importance of this work is to show that 'crisis' is not and cannot be merely an 'objective' historical process. Crisis is also a subjective process – a time when it is not possible to take for granted "normal" economic, social, and other relationships" (O'Connor 1987, p. 3). According to Connor, capitalistic societies encounter "crisis" when capital doesn't return profits, and the reliance on credit engenders a crisis. This crisis is then thrown into the political arena and the federal or state budget. Conflict ensues as parties involve themselves to remedy the situation. Moreover, this construction of crisis is not simply about labor and profits, but about culture and ideology.

O'Connor (1987) proposes that class struggle doesn't occur in a vacuum, but within the walls of institutions. For example, the evolution of personal responsibility evolved overtime because government became perceived as inefficient. The failures of government were not tied to the contradictions of capital; rather there were perceptions that "mass politics and modern party systems had become barriers to capitalist accumulation" (O'Connor 1987, p. 44). In reality, disorganized capitalism had moved

towards the de-massification of labour and the decline of a clear and collective working-class interest, a decline in the institutions of organized capital and more especially, of organized labour and the undermining of the authority and capacity of the interventionist state. (Offe 1984; Pierson 1991).

In an attempt to restore long-term profitability, “crises are the cauldrons in which capital qualitatively restructures itself for economic, social, and political renewal and further accumulation” (O’Connor 1987, p. 94). According to Estes (1983), the crisis designation also means that action will have to take place. “Such policy-delineated sacrifices, while appearing to be equally shared, tend to be disproportionately borne by working class and poor people” (Estes 1983, p. 447). Estes (1983) further outlines how the crisis designation means that people perceive a climate of uncertainty and “legitimizes the rejection of old and familiar ideas and assumptions, while previously acceptable and radical ideas become the focus of active debate and struggle” (Estes 1983, p. 447). Finally, Estes describes how public anxiety over the crisis means that public officials are granted additional authority which can be problematic, especially if the remedies to the so-called crisis are not well conceived. “Those with sufficient power to do so may declare crises. And to such declarations, we must all, in some way, respond – whatever we believe the true, underlying crises to be” (Estes 1984, p. 94).

Fiscal crisis is used to deflect from the expansion of capital taking place. Rather, the focus of the problem becomes those who are the most economically and politically vulnerable. According to Piven and Cloward (1982), major rollbacks occurred under Reagan through the use of rhetoric speculating “fraud” and “malingering,” and the system having no checks and balances, and as a result providing cash assistance to some

who were not eligible or using their assistance recklessly. The outcome of this type of abuse meant a government fiscal crisis. Reagan made claims that this was plundering the state's resources, and those who were lazy or trying to get rich were stealing from tax payers. Moreover, the moral character of welfare recipients was also under attack. Estes (1984) proposes that crises are an outcome of globalization and political and economic problems, rather than about a few fraudulent welfare recipients. However, crises mean that policy "will likely continue to be defined in terms of narrower politics, particularly in terms of the need to cut social spending" (Estes 1984, p. 113).

Estes (1991) suggests that the aged are part of this fiscal crisis construction. She explains that under President Reagan, economic crisis was used to "justify the imposition of cost-containment policies in health care that shifted costs from the state to individuals (including the elderly) and transferred funding from public and nonprofit health-provider organizations to for-profit enterprises" (Estes 1991, p. 59). Estes illustrates how ideological constructions are used to implement policies. In order for these views to be sustained, images should be constructed by policymakers, the experts and the media, and they should appeal to economic principles. Estes further illustrates how the aged fit into such a construction. The aged are seen as taking from the system because of their increased longevity and need for resources. The rationale for cuts to programs that serve the elderly is that it is "robbing the young." Estes (1991) further describes that "antistatist sentiments have been expressed in the unfounded contention that state policy to provide for formal care will encourage abdication of family responsibility for the aging, which in turn will bankrupt the state." She suggests that the state's refusal to provide long term care is based on the state's gendered assumption that the informal, non-

paid sector will provide such care. Estes (1991) explains that future estimations of chronic illness burden at 'pandemic' proportions has also contributed to the construction of crisis. These estimations have been used to attack elderly entitlements. "The elderly are accused of crippling the state and capital with unsupportable demands" (Estes 1991, p. 77).

According to Estes (1991), the elderly are perceived as not entitled, but 'greedy geezers' who are exhausting the state's and the younger generations' resources. Estes (1991) attributes welfare state backlashes and the elderly to this ideological construction. She further states that there are material consequences to rollbacks. Cutbacks and rollbacks of elderly entitlements means a "resurgence of patriarchy". Second, trends to restructure the welfare state mean that "publicly financed resources redirected to rationalized and efficient health providers through the restitution of market forces in health care" (Estes 1991, p. 77). Estes (1991) discusses how privatization policies promote the ideology that non-governmental services are much more efficient than services provided by the government.

C. Theories to Explain Anti-Immigrant Sentiments

Why is there a backlash against immigrants and public assistance? Historically, anti-immigrant sentiments emerge because of political, economic and cultural instability. Migration becomes the symbol of the internationalization of the economy, and the supposed source of all problems. Furthermore, "the unintended settlement of labour migrants and the high levels of new immigration have taken place at a time of major welfare state retrenchment" (Faist 1995, p. 231). Faist (1995) notes that the context of

immigration to several western industrialized countries is shifting from an open and welcoming attitude to nationalist-populist attitudes. Political debates about immigration are erupting, and signal an “intensified ethnicization and racialization in the United States” (Faist 1995, p. 221).

1. State Theory

The state is highly involved in the making of both immigration and welfare policies. “A state can use immigration policy to encourage its enemies’ enemies and its’ friends’ friends and to say whom it values and whom it shuns” (Fitzgerald 1996, p. 9). In another words, the state is a powerful actor which pursues its’ self interests. Fitzgerald suggests that the state uses immigration policy for several reasons, most notably for nation building. Immigration policy decides the national identity of a nation. It also influences the economy and can strengthen or abet labor movements, by increasing the availability of cheap unskilled and skilled labor. Fitzgerald also proposes that the state is highly involved in this policy because of its’ role in influencing foreign policy. For example, a state uses refugee policy to “increase its influence in the world” (Fitzgerald 1996, p. 51). Over the course of several decades, a state infrastructure was created to control immigration. “The state, however, now had at its disposal a body of law and the administrative capacity to coordinate a response to immigration that was flexible. A national policy making network existed with fledging interest groups, state governments, and a whole community of experts as participants. Because there was little organized opposition, one should expect the state to use such autonomy and capacity to pursue its own ends and to dominate the policy formation process” (Fitzgerald 1996, p. 144).

Because of this new role of the state, developments in refugee policy emerged. Immigration policy became a more state-centered apparatus. Fitzgerald suggests that from 1925 to WWII, the state was strongest because fascism became a strong concern, and although those at the grassroots wanted to keep immigrants from coming in to the US because of maintaining racial purity and preventing economic troubles, the state associated the problems of immigration with foreign policy, administrative efficiency and universalistic values. According to Fitzgerald, by the end of WWII, immigration policy: front gate, back door and refugee policy and the state's agenda was predetermined. "The Immigration and Naturalization Service, and especially the State Department, had the means however, to influence the political agenda, pursue state interests, and define issues in liberal, international and state-centered terms (Fitzgerald 1996, 150)." Fitzgerald suggests that since the Cold War was over, the national origins scheme for immigration was abolished. As a result, state bureaucrats can now see immigrants as not mere racial or ethnic groups, but human capital as part of an instrument of production in global capitalism. At the same time, the inability of national bureaucracies to take care of undocumented immigration or other fraudulent activities committed by immigrants fuels backlashes against immigrants.

2. Functionalism

According to Milton Gordon, immigrants face problems when they have not become like the dominant culture: when they have not become part of the melting pot. This approach blames immigrants for contributing to backlashes against them. Immigrants who voluntarily segregate themselves and refuse to learn English and adopt

American practices are seen as the source of the problem. Whereas, immigrants who have adopted American practices and quickly forgotten their native tongue and culture face less problems from society at large. Policies are enacted when the general public feels uneasy with the lack of assimilation of a new immigrant group. The lack of assimilation is used to justify cutbacks and the denial of particular public services, including health care, education and other services that are subsidized by American tax payers. According to this perspective, immigrants bring on conflict with the native born. “Those culturally or even racially different are also favorite targets of public sentiments hostile to foreigners which spread in times of social crises. Thus, according to this functionalist view, the inability of certain minorities to integrate into the structure and culture of the host society leads the majority population to xenophobic rejection” (Wimmer 1997, p. 22). The immigrants foreignness supposedly causes problems. The major problem with this perspective is that it does not problematize power and inequality. It assumes that immigrants have the same level of power as US born persons, and that institutional racism is not a barrier to mobility.

3. Discourse Theory

In terms of immigrants and welfare state backlashes, immigrants are constructed as the racialized other: racially different from the dominant culture. These perceptions of immigrant welfare recipients are not simple reflections of society at large. Rather these perceptions are validated and reproduced in text by elites (van Dijk 1993). Elite discourse reproduces social structure and inequality, and often times is unnoticed by the

masses: “subtly and indirectly enacted or preformulated by various elite groups and their discourses” (van Dijk 1993, p. 2).

This discourse is reproduced within politics, media, education, and big business. “We have seen that the mainstream news media largely support the prevailing political attitudes on ethnic affairs and immigration. At the same time they contribute to the public reproduction of the ideologies of the political and other elites by publishing scare stories or so-called in-depth reports about ‘floods’ or ‘massive invasions’ of refugees, ‘illegal’ ‘immigration’” (van Dijk 1993, p. 3). Because elites are highly educated and usually professionals with high status, they have authority in society, and their thoughts and opinions are highly regarded. Their thoughts and opinions are hardly ever problematized; even though they represent hegemonic ideologies. As a result, individuals are “more or less passive participants in many discourse types and communicative events controlled by the elites, such as those of the mass media, politics, education, scholarship, business corporation, the churches, the unions” (van Dijk 1993, p.10). According to van Dijk (1993), elites control this means of “symbolic reproduction” and ultimately have control over public opinion. Elites not only control public opinion but also use it to justify their own agenda. As a result, “dominant groups may indirectly control the minds of others. They may do so through the persuasive discourse and by other means that limit acquisition and the use of relevant knowledge and beliefs necessary to act freely and in one’s own interests” (van Dijk 1993, p. 21).

Elites have social capital that allows them to be influential in this process. This social capital includes not only assets and income, but also powers in decision making, knowledge, expertise, and other social and ideological resources. The power resources of

elites may be multiple and include property, income, decision control, knowledge, expertise, position, rank, as well as social and ideological resources such as status, prestige, fame, influence, respect, and similar resources ascribed to them by groups; institutions, or society at large (Domhoff 1978). Essential for our discussion is that power elites have special symbolic resources, such as preferential access to systems of sociocultural discourse (van Dijk 1993). Not only do they make decisions that may affect the lives of many people, they also have significant control over the means of production of public opinion.

4. Rational Choice/Competition Theory

According to competition theorists, conflict between immigrants and the welfare state is due to competition for scarce resources. Olzak (1987) suggests that during America's industrial boom, there was an ever-increasing supply of low-wage labor, but was combined with an economic depression which contributed to panic and competition among immigrants, African Americans, and native whites. Because immigrants received lower wages than native whites, and could be distinguished by language, custom or skin color, immigration "heightened consciousness of ethnic and racial boundaries" (Olzak 1992, p. 33). Olzak (1992) suggests that because immigrants were willing to receive lower wages and usually were recruited to work in sites where there was labor unrest, this resulted in low wages for blacks and whites, and unsuccessful labor strikes.

According to Bonacich (1972), conditions of the labor market in which wages are split between ethnic groups ignite conflict and antagonisms because of the native whites' fears about the threat of possible job loss. Bonacich, a split labor market theorist, proposes that under capitalism, employers engage in differential pay scales based on

ethnicity and race, so they can divide and ultimately divert from organizing. "Threats to prevailing wage levels from immigrants were often met with collective behavior designed to remove or terrorize immigrant populations" (Olzak 1992, p. 34). Olzak hypothesizes that a large number of new immigrants increase levels of ethnic competition and the rate of ethnic collective actions. She suggests that this happens because of the perceptions of threats to jobs and wage levels. The impact of a sudden arrival of large numbers of a distinctly different population that can be expected to place burdens on existing housing, labor, and other markets, sharpening perceptions of in- and out-group relations (Park 1949, Olzak 1992). Olzak (1992) further proposes that when the economy experiences a decline - ethnic competition and conflict increases because of the lack of jobs. Moreover, Olzak (1992) illustrates that "rising advantage and rewards for disadvantaged ethnic populations increase levels of ethnic competition initially, leading to higher rates of ethnic collective action" (Olzak 1992, p. 43). Olzak further suggests that "periods of political challenges by third parties and other social movement organizations raise rates of collective action" (Olzak 1992, p. 44). Olzak cites examples of the passage of immigration laws between 1882-1924 and how this legislation was mobilized on the west coast and slowly effected subsequent legislation.

Carlson (1989) states that nativist sentiments recur at "regular intervals in almost precisely the same form" (Carlson 1989, p. 365). Moreover, anti-immigrant movements not only surface for political reasons, but arise out of the fears and discontents of Americans. Burgess and Park (1921) in their discussion of the race relations cycle suggests that ethnic and racial competition between groups cause such tensions and conflict. Immigrants compete for jobs and limited resources. For example, the Know-

Nothing Movement (1850-1853) and the American Protective Association Movement (1890-1896) were two movements in the United States which were organized for direct political action against Roman Catholic Immigrants. During the Irish potato famine of the 1840s, the migration of millions of Irish Roman Catholic immigrants emerged. These two movements generated millions of followers. The Know Nothing party had 1.25 million members at its peak in 1857, while the APA movement recruited 2.4 million members and was politically active in 1896. The Know Nothing movement molded the perceptions of Americans by providing a precise cause and simple solution for all the social ills of the 1850s - the Roman Catholics. The movement initially emerged in the south. Many southerners were threatened by the immigrants from the north and Midwest. Moreover, the slavery issue had greatly divided the country, and the anti-Catholic sentiments provided an easy enemy and a unifying theme (Bennett 1988).

5. Social Constructions

Edelman (1971) claims that there are social-psychological processes at work in creating mass tensions in the political arena. First, Edelman posits that perceptions and stereotypes contribute to this escalation. He argues that these myths supposedly deal with realities. "When they feel threatened, the empirical facts are translated into the forms that provide acceptable meanings and justify action to retain privileges" (Edelman 1971, p. 98). Edelman further describes how these myths are used to maintain a groups' self-interest. These myths are then used in the political arena. Persons/groups are identified/constructed as the enemy, which unleashes emotional

responses and political support. Specifically, he states that the choice of enemies are those most vulnerable politically.

Edelman (1988) suggests that enemy construction is used to justify present frustrations, and those that are “different” and politically vulnerable are easy targets to condemn. The APA movement in the early 1890s was fueled by the stock market crash and the depression. Because of the fear and angst among the American people, many were recruited in the APA movement. This movement accused Catholics of causing the crash by “running” on the banks. It blamed Catholic immigrants for taking away jobs from Americans. Many disenfranchised middle-class Protestants felt threatened by the growing Catholic middle class (Bennett 1988). According to McCauley (1987), these two movements were characterized by their exclusive membership. “They achieved this by utilizing various rituals, ceremonies and symbols in order to define their group and to distinguish themselves from Roman Catholic” (McCauley 1987, p. 87). McCauley goes on to state these movements were exclusive and yet very political. The common element of both these movements is that they developed ideas to convince themselves of their superiority to Roman Catholics and their right to more privileges. McCauley sees how these organizations were direct and felt justified in “attacking any immigrant group that failed to fit the American mold” (McCauley 1987, p. 89).

Edelman’s (1988) work on the construction and uses of political enemies can also be used to explain anti-Chinese sentiments that occurred in California’s history. In 1849, the Chinese started to come to California because of the gold rush. As the numbers grew, so did the racist violence. By 1875, more than 80,000 Chinese were in California (Bennett 1988). Many had been recruited to work as unskilled laborers for mines and the

railroad industries. According to historian David Bennett (1988), to American workers, the Chinese were “coolies,” a horde of “mongol peons” willing to work for slave wages. Bennett (1988) explains that when the economic disaster of 1873 - the year of the great crash - hit, there was also widespread news that the coming exhaustion of the richest silver mines in the Comstock would happen. Economic turmoil devastated California. By the mid 1870s, 30 percent of California’s work force was unemployed (Bennett, 1988). In California, labor unions blamed the economic problems of the state on the Chinese.

As racist violence increased, politicians capitalized on this sentiment. In 1877 a California Special Committee on the Chinese problem stated that the Chinese were no longer considered mere coolies but a competing labor force threatening the working conditions and wages of white workers. The Chinese were seen as a threat in several ways. First, they accepted low wages and bad working conditions which other workers would not accept. Second, the California economy was threatened because they sent their wages home. The Chinese were also seen as deviant and a threat to social norms. Many cited prostitution, gambling houses, and congested living conditions as evidence (Fong 1991). This anti Chinese sentiment became so widespread throughout California that in an 1879 election referendum every county experienced 95 percent of voters voting to end Chinese immigration. The anti-Chinese mood was spreading throughout the country. By 1882, the US Congress enacted the Chinese Exclusion Act which barred immigration from China.

The recent passage of Proposition 187 also embodies the use of political enemies that are different and politically vulnerable. In California, the passage of Proposition 187 - by the majority of voters - bans undocumented immigrants from most social services

including public education, all non-emergency medical care and prenatal clinics. "Proposition 187 was not simply a policy statement designed to limit undocumented immigration or reduce state spending; instead, it was a political statement, primarily to send a symbolic message" Calavita 1996, p. 297). Calavita (1996), a social scientist, describes how proposition 187 was an expression of economic insecurity and balanced budget conservatism. She describes how the concern over the balanced budget diverted the attention from economic transformations, and focused instead on government spending and the budget deficit as the cause of the economic crisis. She further suggests that proposition 187 was symbolic because it blamed illegal immigrants for overburdening government services and contributing to this fiscal crisis. Moreover, it was symbolic in that it allowed people to express their discontent.

Like Calavita, Smith and Tarallo (1995) suggest that proposition 187 was clearly a political move. It is no mere coincidence that Republican Pete Wilson, originally trailing behind Democratic Kathleen Brown, was re-elected by a 55% to 40% margin. Smith and Tarallo (1995) discuss how these two events are closely related and proposition 187 was a "cornerstone" of Wilson's re-election strategy. Moreover, Wilson capitalized on the electorate's fears and discontent arising out of the unstable political, economic and cultural restructuring of California. California had gone through a major downsizing of the defense industry. Smith and Tarallo (1995) argue that the state is central in organizing and shaping racial and ethnic relations and formations, and that the shaping of proposition 187 is an example of such a formation. With the loss of hundreds of jobs in the defense and aerospace industry, immigration provided a platform for Wilson. The focus on immigrants helped Wilson avoid the tough issues, like economic

restructuring, facing California. Although proposition 187 focused on undocumented immigrants, it wasn't long before other anti-immigrant legislation spread rapidly at the federal, state and local levels. Smith and Tarallo (1995) state that the rhetoric has been about "invasion" and "takeover" tinged with a racist patina. Wilson's endorsement lent proposition 187 legitimacy, especially since those associated with this proposition were fringe grassroots organizations that provided the "resources necessary to mobilize the voter's fears and resentment with him and not against him" (Tarallo 1995, 665).

III. Conclusion

The chapter reviews the different theoretical perspectives on policy-making, welfare state backlashes, and anti-immigration sentiments. The approach employed here combines pluralist/interest group, social constructionist, sociology of knowledge and discursive approaches rooted in political economy to explain current welfare state backlashes against immigrants. These approaches complement my choice of methodology: telephone interviews and content analysis. Content analysis is used often by sociologists who employ a sociology of knowledge, discourse and social constructionist approach. This approach is used often with these theoretical orientations because often the purpose is to understand underlying meanings and messages in recorded communication. While studies utilizing the pluralist/interest group approach often use surveys, like telephone interviews, to investigate their phenomenon.

Neo-Marxist and rational choice/competition theories on welfare state and immigrant backlashes were used in this dissertation to provide added discussion of the macro processes at work. These two perspectives may help explain backlashes against the

welfare state or immigrants. How is race and age used? These perspectives contribute to an overall understanding of why intergenerational conflicts occur between the young and the old. Resources are limited and the old are considered a non-working population that does not contribute, but rather takes from the system, and as a result are seen as “unworthy”.

Although quite useful in understanding why intergenerational tensions emerge over scarce resources, these perspectives do not discuss the micro processes involved in how older immigrants get constructed as undeserving. For example, rational choice/competition and Neo-Marxist theorists focus on the labor market and wages, and how conflicts develop between immigrants and US citizens. Their thesis is that threats to jobs and wage levels create conflicts. Moreover, the focus in this approach is on young, working immigrant population, not on an older immigrant population. In fact, studies with this perspective, focus on immigrants, but assume they are a young, working population.

Because the focus of this dissertation is on older immigrants, questions are concentrated on how labels about immigrants form and develop, but also how race, and age factor in the development of labels. Edelman’s work on symbolic politics provides an explanation of how politically vulnerable groups become the focus of labeling in the policy arena. In addition, Deborah Stone’s work on how problems are defined helps with the analysis, especially in terms of symbols, numbers, and causes. The social constructionist approach demonstrates the power of framing and the packaging of a social problem, and how ultimately it is strategic to promote a favored course of action. The political economy perspective, found in studies by Estes, provides an understanding of

how a fiscal crisis is used to rollback entitlements to vulnerable populations like the elderly. The focus of the 1996 Federal Welfare Reform bill was on women, children and older and disabled immigrants. Why? Political economy provides the context for discussing the debate, while the pluralist/interest group, social constructionist, sociology of knowledge and discourse theories provide a method, strategy and framework for studying how elderly immigrants became constructed as “undeserving.”

Chapter 3

Methodology

This chapter discusses the objectives, research questions, data collection methods, and data analyses. Description of the variables are also discussed.

I. Study Objectives

One of the major objectives of this study is to understand the images and perceptions of immigrant welfare recipients that were used in the recent debates on federal welfare reform in the United States. Past studies looking at policy-making suggest that the perceptions of recipients are influential in policy decision making. Cook and Barrett (1992) note that public support for individuals is contingent on whether they are seen as worthy of help and lacking in all other resources. In addition, recipients must be perceived as being in their situation out of forces beyond their own control, and must possess the will to be independent. In policy, social welfare policymaking is conditioned by social perceptions of recipients (Schneider and Ingram 1993, Rochefort and Cobb 1994). In policy formation, eligibility for certain kinds of federal or state programs involves this kind of labeling and stigmatization (Schneider and Ingram 1993). Policy debates deciding eligibility for cash assistance programs and other government assistance involves using images and symbolic representation of recipients (Rochefort and Cobb, 1994, Schneider and Ingram, 1993). The objective of this study is to understand how these perceptions evolved during the welfare reform debate and to understand how newspapers, actors and policy makers were involved in these constructions.

The process by which perceptions enter the policy debate is through framing. According to the social constructionist perspective, welfare state backlashes happen because of the interpretative packaging of policies. According to Gamson and Modigliani (1989), how policy is made is based on the social construction of meaning at both an institutional and individual level. In their study of nuclear power, they found that meaning of the issue is constructed in multiple, complex ways from the oral discourse made by public officials, to the media, but also by advocacy organizations that are involved in the issue. Issues are also defined and constructed by sponsors. "Sponsorship is more than merely advocacy, involving such tangible activities as speech making, interviews with journalists, advertising, article and pamphlet writing, and the filing of legal briefs to promote a preferred package" (Gamson and Modigliani 1989, p. 6).

Social movement organizations, such as national advocacy organizations representing Asian Americans and Aging constituents, can be instrumental in the framing process. Through their advocacy work, they can reframe issues and get media to highlight other competing frames not voiced by politicians. In another words, they have the potential to change the direction of political debate. Snow and Benford (1988), in their work on social movement organizations, suggest that organizations occupy the role of "signifying agents" and are active participants in the packaging of frames. Through their active production of meaning, they can not only change the direction of a political debate, they can also mobilize and organize supporters that again can deter and "demobilize antagonists" According to Hilgarter and Bosk (1988), social problems that do not get onto the public agenda can remain alive if there are advocacy groups that have the resources to keep it alive. This study seeks to understand how national organizations

representing disenfranchised communities do advocacy and gain influence in the US, and ultimately challenge and contest the frames that come into being of elderly immigrant welfare recipients.

II. Research Questions

The following are two broad sets of questions, with each consisting of hypotheses, addressing how immigrant welfare recipients became constructed as undeserving, and the role of key actors and organizations in shaping, collaborating and responding to these perceptions:

Q. 1. How were elderly immigrant welfare recipients perceived before, during and after the federal welfare reform debates?

Q. 1a. How are elderly immigrant welfare recipients framed as “undeserving”?

HYPOTHESIS a1: Elderly SSI immigrant welfare recipients were more likely to be framed as “undeserving” prior to the passage of the federal welfare reform bill than after its passage.

Rationale: Elderly immigrants on Supplemental Security Income seem to have been characterized negatively prior to the passage of the federal welfare reform bill. Because of the lack of data and research on this population, anecdotal information seems to have been presented in the media and in congressional hearings.

Q. 1b. How are elderly immigrant welfare recipients framed as “deserving”?

HYPOTHESIS b1: Elderly SSI immigrant welfare recipients were more likely to be framed as “deserving” after the passage of the federal welfare reform bill than before the passage.

Rationale: Elderly immigrants on Supplemental Security Income seem to have been characterized as legitimately deserving after the passage of the federal welfare reform bill. Because of the efforts of national advocacy organizations and the media, low-income elderly immigrants seem to have been presented as a vulnerable and legitimately needy population.

Q. 2. How did these key actors and organizations define and influence the federal welfare reform and immigrant debate?

Q. 2a. Who are the key actors and organizations involved as advocates in the federal welfare reform and immigrant debates?

HYPOTHESIS a1: The professional middle class (e.g. policy officials, journalists, researchers) had more influence in the federal welfare reform and immigrant debates than immigrant welfare recipients.

Rationale: In congressional hearings and in press coverage, educated professionals seem to be heard most on this issue. These educated professionals represented policy officials, academicians, government bureaucrats; but also health and social service providers. It seems that even though this bill had enormous ramifications on elderly immigrants, they were not given a voice in this issue.

HYPOTHESIS a2: National Aging and Asian American Organizations with budgets over 1 million dollars were more likely to be involved in the welfare reform and immigrant debate than national organizations with budgets less than a million dollars.

Rationale: Organizations with over a million dollars seem more likely to have at least two paid staff persons, an office in Washington DC and resources for grassroots organizing through use of mailings and/or the Internet.

Definition of Variables

Elderly Immigrant Welfare Recipients: Over the age of 65, low-income, immigrant and on SSI, food stamps and Medicaid.

Before the passage of the federal welfare reform bill: Prior to August 22, 1996.

After the passage of the federal welfare reform bill: After August 22, 1996.

SSI program: federal cash assistance program for low-income disabled and elderly persons.

Professional middle class: policy officials, researchers (social scientists), journalists, professional SMOs.

Undeserving: Characterized as not entitled to a federal safety net.

Deserving: Legitimately entitled to a federal safety net.

Influence: Power to change the direction of the debate (e.g. through appearing as witnesses in congressional hearings or being quoted in major US newspapers).

III. Research Design

Rationale for Methods

The first set of questions is understanding the social construction of welfare reform and immigrants. To answer these questions, a content analysis will be used. Past studies examining the formation of policy issues have used a content analysis to understand how the mass media (Gamson and Modigliani 1989) and policy makers (Burstein 1991; Burstein, Bricher and Einwohner 1995) frame policy debates.

Content analysis is a nonreactive measurement which is most useful when studying a topic from a distance because it can reveal messages in a text which are difficult to see (Neuman 1991). Content analysis can provide a description in terms of press coverage. Fan and Prisuta (1996) studied press coverage of the elderly by utilizing the Lexis/Nexis database to examine stories from newsmagazines, newspapers, wire services and television network news. Their study revealed that the coverage of older persons was somewhat negative and that more than 80% focused on the dependent nature of older adults, rather than the contributions that they make. In another study by Fan and Prisuta (1996) focusing on Medicare coverage in 1995, they found the coverage unfavorable and focused more on cutbacks, than on improvements. Jacobs and Shapiro (1995) examined news stories on Social Security from Associated Press stories, and coverage from the New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Washington Post, USA Today, Time, Fortune, ABC News and CNN. They tracked trends and patterns in news media coverage by detecting themes, directions and shifts. One of their findings was that the media shaped Social Security in terms of controversy and partisan conflict.

Several social scientists have used content analysis for several purposes. One area is the influence of the press on agenda setting. The media's ability to shape public opinion on key policy issues. McCombs and Shaw (1972) theorized that the mass media coverage of a political issue has agenda setting capabilities. They analyzed press coverage of campaigns in local and national presses. Fan and Norem (1992) focused on the Medicare Catastrophic Extension Act of 1988 and examined a representative sample of news stories from major US newspapers. Their study confirmed that trends of opinion were shaped by the mass media. Hertog and Fan (1995) applied their theory to a study of newspaper and newsmagazine coverage of AIDS from 1987 to 1991 and examined coverage from the New York Times, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, Chicago Tribune, Time magazine, Newsweek, US News and World Report and United Press International newswire stories and found that news content affected public opinion and attitudes on HIV transmission.

The second question relies on content analysis, but also intensive telephone surveys. This methodology is an advantage because most non-profit organizations and activists can be contacted by telephone. This method has a mean response rate of about 90% and is inexpensive: half the costs of face to face interviews (Neuman 1991). The telephone surveys will be conducted using a Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system. CATI technology enables quicker interviews, reduces interviewer error and produces a greater level of control over the interviewing process (Neuman 1991). Past studies of policy elites have also used this methodology and also achieved response rates of greater than 80% (Estes et al., 1986, Estes et. al. 1988).

IV. Data collection Methods

1. News Articles

The Lexis/Nexis on-line news service will be used for data collection in both the analysis of newspaper articles and op-eds and editorials. The newspapers: Los Angeles Times, New York Times, and Washington Post, Wall Street Journal and USA Today are the top highly circulated newspapers (Carpenter et. al. 1993). Using the Lexis/Nexis database, I utilized a purposive sample and selected texts from five major newspapers: USA Today, Wall Street Journal, Los Angeles Times, New York Times, Washington Post. A purposive sample uses a non-probability sample since it focuses on particular publications, and also requires a specific research justification (Riffe et al. 1998). I followed stories on SSI utilization and immigrants as early as 1990.

To retrieve relevant stories, I programmed Lexis/Nexis to download stories with the words Supplemental Security Income or SSI and Immigrants or Refugees or Noncitizens. All of these articles were retrieved. There was a total of 541 articles that were identified. The stories were examined to identify only those stories focused on SSI utilization and immigrants. This method has been used by previous studies on content analyses (Fan and Norem, 1992). The search was filtered through identifying articles with at least two mentions of Supplemental Security Income or SSI and Immigrants, Refugees or Noncitizens. The following is the Lexis/Nexis search string used to obtain all the stories in these five newspapers during the time period and containing at least two mentions of each of the words, *Supplemental Security Income or SSI and Immigrants, Refugees or Noncitizens* :

Library: NEWS

File: LAT, NYT, WPOST, WSJ, USATDY

Search request: Supplemental Security Income or SSI and Immigrants, Refugees or Noncitizens and atleast2(Supplemental Security Income or SSI and Immigrants, Refugees or Noncitizens)

In order to get the subset of feature articles, each text had to be reviewed. Op-eds, *letters* to the editor and editorials were discarded from the analysis. The focus of this *analysis* were news stories. Moreover, if one of the feature articles did not contain *mention* of Supplemental Security Income or immigrants or refugees or noncitizens it *was* also eliminated from the analysis. In this way, the universe of 145 feature articles *was* selected, or 27% of the total universe of articles on SSI and immigrants.

2. Op/Ed Articles

The major newspapers selected were United States newspapers listed in the top 50 *circulation* in Editor & Publisher Year Book. Lexis-Nexis, an on-line data base, was used *to retrieve* the articles. The following is the Lexis/Nexis search string used to obtain all *the stories* in these major newspapers during the time period and containing at least two *mentions* of each of the words, *Supplemental Security Income or SSI and Immigrants, Refugees or Noncitizens* :

Library: NEWS

File: MAJPAP

Search request: Supplemental Security Income or SSI and Immigrants, Refugees or Noncitizens and atleast2(Supplemental Security Income or SSI and Immigrants, Refugees or Noncitizens)

Initially the search found a total of 585 articles. However, in order to get the subset of all Letters to the Editors, Commentaries and Op-Eds each text had to be reviewed, and news stories were discarded from the analysis. Again, the focus of this analysis was looking at the published opinions produced by major US newspapers Upon reviewing each article, 120 editorial articles were collected. These 120 articles were the universe of editorials, letters and op-eds.

3. Congressional Hearings

Through the Congressional Information Service (CIS) Congressional Universe Internet database (<http://www.cispubs.com>), I was able to locate all hearing transcripts and submitted testimony from 1988 to 1996 by the subject headings "immigrants and supplemental security income." Since the CIS database has text of all congressional hearings from as early as 1988 this year was used as a start date, while the year 1996 was used to culminate the search since this was the year that federal welfare reform passed. The US congressional/senate hearing text, all subcommittee and committee hearing documents pertaining to welfare and immigrants were used in this analysis as a source of textual information and for analyses of the evolution of the debate. Six hearings were identified and analyzed for themes and frames. These six hearings represented the universe of congressional hearings devoted to the discussion of Supplemental Security Income and non-citizens.

4. Key Informant Interviews

The methodology for these telephone interviews follows guidelines established by the University of California, San Francisco Committee on Human Research (CHR). An application for human subjects approval for this project has been approved by the CHR. To protect the confidentiality of participants, all informants were identified by the type of affiliation and position rather than the name of the actual organization.

The basis for selecting an organization or activist is based on their ability to affect national political outcomes (Field, Higley and Brown 1990). A list of national aging organizations were identified from those who were members of the Leadership Council on Aging in 1998. The membership list was obtained from the Worldwide Web (<http://www.ncoa.org/cao/memdir.htm>) and was last updated on June 2, 1998. While a list of national Asian American organizations, identified from the Organization of Chinese American (OCA) database of national Asian American organizations, and the membership list of the National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (<http://www.ncapanet.org>) were used.

The universe from these two areas were identified and a list of a total of 72 organizations was constructed. A total of 41 national aging organizations were contacted for this study and a total 31 national Asian American organizations were contacted. Fifty-eight of these organizations responded to this survey, with an approximately 80% response rate. Twenty seven, or 87% of the National Asian American organizations responded to this telephone survey. While thirty-one or 76% of National Aging organizations responded to this survey. Telephone calls were made between September 1998 to December 1998. If the staff member was not available, at least 5 callbacks were made to make an appointment for a telephone interview. In this survey, all members

from the list were contacted and faxed a letter inviting them to participate (See Appendix B). Usually telephone interviews encounter a refusal rate of about 20% (Neuman 1991).

The telephone interview protocol is attached (See Appendix C). Domains in the telephone survey include information regarding the organization and its' role in welfare reform, collaborative efforts, perceptions of immigrant welfare recipients and influence in policy making. Questions were constructed based on these domains. A majority of the questions were open-ended to permit an unlimited number of answers, however some close-ended questions were used for comparison and analysis. One of the questions measures the importance of welfare reform to the organization and utilizes a Lickert scale. The survey was then pre-tested with several non-profit advocates prior to the start of these telephone interviews to get an understanding of the length of the questionnaire, question order, format, non-responses, and question format. Modifications were made after the initial pre-testing.

V. Data Analysis

1. Newspaper Analysis

The full articles were read in their entirety and analyzed using standard content analysis procedures. A coding sheet was devised to be used for each entry (see Appendix D) which included cells for an identification number, date, word count, and codes for newspaper, individual quoted, and themes. A codebook was developed for the types of individuals quoted and the themes found within each article. A well-organized codebook was developed which details information on the coding system (see Appendix E).

The unit of analysis of this study consisted of the recording unit and the context unit. The recording unit is how immigrants on SSI are characterized in news articles and the context unit is the meaning of the article in terms of SSI use among immigrants.

Procedures for coding were designed and documented to make replication possible. A set of rules were constructed in terms of how to systematically code the news articles. According to Holsti, coding is a process where "raw data are systematically transformed and aggregated into units which permit precise description of relevant content characteristics (Holsti 1969, 94)." Two types of coding were used: manifest coding (coding the visible) and latent coding (looking for meaning). Manifest coding means creating a list of adjectives and phrases used in the article and hearing text to describe immigrant SSI recipients. Latent coding means to later classify these adjectives into themes. Manifest coding will also be used to identify those quoted by affiliation.

The coding categories selected were mutually exclusive, independent and derived from a single classification principle (Holsti 1969). My recording unit was how immigrants on Supplemental Security Income were perceived, and the context is the background piece of the recording unit. Codes were constructed based on themes that came up about immigrants on supplemental security income.

The editorial pieces were also coded (scored 1-5) for directionality in terms of whether they were in support of safety nets to older immigrants, or opposed. The stances were coded for degrees of agreement or disagreements for limiting safety nets to older immigrants like the following: (1) Strongly disagree that restrictions should be made to limit safety nets to older immigrants, (2) Disagree that restrictions should be made to limit safety nets to older immigrants, (3) Neutral, (4) Agree that restrictions should be

made to limit safety nets to older immigrants, (5) Strongly agree that restrictions should be made to limit safety nets to older immigrants.

Each coding decision was then recorded on a coding sheet with an identification number and space for information of all the measurement variables. Codes were then data-entered onto SPSS to do a quantitative statistical description of the findings. Descriptive frequencies and crosstabulations were done to address the research questions. Furthermore, reproducibility or intercoder reliability was done for this study to measure consistency and shared meanings. A trained research consultant in content analysis was hired to provide intercoder reliability (Weber 1990). A subset of the editorial articles were given to this consultant to test for inter-rater reliability. Three items were coded by this consultant and compared to the codes given to the same items by the researcher. On the five point editorial stance score, the inter-rater reliability score was 57%. However, when the disagree and strongly disagree codes, and the agree and strongly agree codes were collapsed into a three-point scale, the inter-rater reliability score jumped to 86%. In terms of themes for the editorials, the inter-rater reliability score was 71%. In terms of the themes for the news features, the inter-rater reliability score was 75%.

2. Congressional Hearings

Themes were identified in these congressional hearings. The hearings were analyzed chronologically and themes were noted over the course of time. According to Altheide (1996), themes are a way at looking “mini-frames.” “Themes are general definitions of interpretative frames. “Themes are the recurring typical theses that run through a lot of the reports. Frames are the focus, a parameter or boundary for discussing a particular event” (Altheide 1996, p. 31). In the write-up of these findings, themes were

identified qualitatively, but the types of witnesses by organizational type were also identified quantitatively.

3. Key Informant Interviews

The purpose of the telephone interviews with key informants is multidimensional. First, these interviews were used to identify the key nonprofit organizations and activists involved in the issue. The second goal was to provide descriptive information of these organizations and activists and their organizational structure, budget, constituency and organizational mission. An important goal was to understand how these organizations respond and effectively advocate at the beginning, during or after welfare reform. In order to answer this question entirely, both a qualitative and quantitative approach was utilized. Each coding decision was then recorded on a coding sheet with an identification number and space for information of all the measurement variables. These codes were then data-entered onto SPSS to do a quantitative statistical description of the findings. Descriptive frequencies and crosstabulations were done to address the research questions. Themes from the transcripts were identified and then coded quantitatively and data-entered onto SPSS for further statistical analyses.

In addition, another objective in studying these key informants is to understand if collaborations existed between and among these two distinct kinds of groups, and if so the strength and direction of these coalitions. Empirical techniques were used to identify network centralization and density through the UCINET software program, a social network analysis program. The Krackplot software program was used to graph these ties.

VI. Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations to this study. In terms of the telephone interviews, a small number (N=58) of organizations were interviewed; moreover the types of organizations were limited to national Aging and Asian American organizations. Due to the limitations in time and resources, these two types of organizations were examined. Another limitation is that not all responded to the survey and there are several reasons why this is the case. First, some of these organizations operated on a volunteer basis without a full-time staff person, and therefore could not adequately respond in a timely basis. Second, those that did not respond to the survey may have felt that they lacked the expertise or knowledge to answer questions pertaining to advocacy and federal welfare reform. Despite these limitations, findings from these interviews are a good starting point to do further research on this topic with other (e.g. welfare rights) national organizations.

The content analysis of newspaper coverage and the congressional record was limited to the examination of the recorded communication. According to Babbie (1992), validity is more difficult in this type of analysis, however reliability is stronger, especially because one can refine one's codes over and over again. Another limitation of the content analysis of newspaper features is that it was limited due to time and resources to the top five highly circulating newspapers. In the future, an examination of coverage in all major US newspapers would be more comprehensive.

Chapter 4

Congressional Record

The purpose of this chapter was to analyze congressional hearings occurring after 1988 to 1996 on Supplemental Security Income and immigrants. All hearings dedicated to the discussion of Supplemental Security Income and use by immigrants were examined. These hearings ultimately became part of the welfare reform debates which ended eligibility for Supplemental Security Income for all non-citizens. These hearings were committee or subcommittee meetings that received testimony on discussions regarding SSI use among immigrants. Usually, these meetings consisted of witnesses which included experts, government officials, spokespersons for interested groups, officials of the General Accounting Office and members of Congress (Congressional Quarterly 1994).

The approach to analyzing these hearings is through a discussion of the themes and frames that appear throughout the hearings. Moreover, a discussion of the discourse is also part of this analysis. "Discourse analysis of the frames that operate within policy debates and organize implementation strategies is a relatively new approach to policy analysis that.. offers much to our understanding of how power operates in and through the welfare state" (Naples 1997, p. 913). The purposes of this approach is to challenge the assumptions made about older, poor immigrants and to identify the individuals and organizations that play a role in constructing these assumptions. The hearings were examined chronologically to illustrate the development of frames and themes that emerged. The first hearing is in 1994 and the last hearing is in 1996 which culminates in the passage of the 1996 Federal Welfare Reform Law.

- **Supplemental Security Income Fraud Involving Middlemen** (February 24, 1994, Committee on Ways and Means, House)

The first time federal legislators decided to address the issue of non-citizens and SSI use was in 1994. On May 23, 1993, both the Orange County Register and Sacramento Bee's front page contained bold headlines. "HUGE CON GAME BILKS FUNDS FOR BLIND, DISABLED." Orange County Register reporters, Tracy Webber and Kim Christensen, claimed in their investigative report that the nation's entitlement program for blind and disabled people was being "systematically looted by immigrants and con artists who fraudulently help place them on government rolls" (Webber and Christensen 1993, p. A1). Webber and Christensen further report that the Social Security Administration had known about allegations of fraud for five years but had done nothing to "stop the stealing" (Webber and Christensen 1993, p. A1). In response to these stories the chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee ordered an investigation into allegations of fraud in the Supplemental Security Income program.

The Subcommittee on Oversight and the Subcommittee on Human Resources of the Committee on Ways and Means decided to hold joint hearings on fraud and abuse of the SSI program by "middlemen." These hearings were designed to describe the problem, but also the SSA's plan to address the problem through preventing the enrollment of fraudulent claims and stopping the payment of benefits based on these claims. The focus of these investigations were "middlemen" from immigrant communities who coached individuals to feign a disability in order to qualify for Supplemental Security Income. Most of the fraud cases involved claiming a mental

illness. According to these hearings, fraudulent activities were committed by interpreters, doctors, and pharmacists from these communities. The focus of these investigations were disabled legal immigrants, which represented 4% of all SSI recipients at the time. The overarching theme of this hearing was about fraud and abuse and not necessarily about immigrants who needed SSI.

According to the various testimonies, as early as April 1991, the California Bureau of Medi-cal Fraud began to receive large scale information of SSI and Medicaid fraud committed by Southeast Asians in Southern California. SSA Commissioner Shirley Chater and HHS Inspector General June Brown were witnesses. They discussed the scope of this kind of fraud and efforts by SSA and IG to address and resolve fraud in this program. However, key testimonies were investigators from the California Bureau of Medi-cal Fraud and the Orange County Department of Social Services who both testified to local activities of fraud committed by immigrant middlemen.

These hearings set the stage for further discussions about fraud, SSI and immigrant communities. Moreover, federal lawmakers in this hearing received their first impressions about immigrant communities trying to defraud the government via SSI. One investigator mentions that "repeated efforts to educate and assist Southeast Asian refugees with their applications for social programs were being hampered by greedy community opportunists" (Franco, California Bureau of Medi-cal Fraud, Committee on Ways and Means 1994, p. 7). When asked if they - the investigators - felt this type of fraud was widespread among immigrants, Franco, a Medi-cal Fraud investigator, replies by stating:

We only deal with crooks. We deal with these individuals that are going to get something for nothing. I cannot say that some of these individuals would not have normally qualified if they would have gone through the normal process (Franco, California Bureau of Medi-cal Fraud Committee on Ways and Means 1994, p. 57).

Interestingly enough problems of fraud among immigrant middlemen arose out of the inability of SSA to outreach and help non-English speaking immigrants access their programs. According to "John" of the Medi-cal investigations bureau, the hiring of more bilingual staff in SSA offices would eliminate activities of middlemen. Middlemen were used to help translate and interpret for immigrants trying to obtain SSI. In addition, recommendations included the ability to streamline and enhance cooperation between federal and state agencies.

At the same time, congressional member Mel Hancock of Missouri seems to interject and steer the direction of the hearings from not simply a discussion of middlemen fraud but about individual immigrants and refugees intentionally leaving their country to obtain cash assistance in the United States:

What I am curious about is whether this is pretty well known with refugees that are coming into the United States prior to the time they arrive, that this is available. In other words, it being promoted in these countries, where they are met at the airplane or however they get here and they are just being recruited more or less? Is that going on? (Congressman Hancock, Committee on Ways and Means 1994, p. 66).

On the other hand, SSA Commissioner Shirley Chater tries to let congressional members realize that the number of immigrant middlemen committing fraudulent claims is quite low considering the whole SSI program. She states, " the magnitude of the interpreter fraud issue is, in sheer numbers, quite limited...only about 4 percent of all SSI applications are disabled noncitizens and we believe only a small part of that group may

be involved in fraudulent activities” (SSA Commissioner Shirley Chater, Committee on Ways and Means 1994, p. 70). Chater’s recommendations include preventing fraudulent claims from even happening by increasing public outreach efforts to non-English speaking immigrants and to increase the number of bilingual employees. However, she strongly states that non-English speaking individuals should not be penalized because of fraudulent activities of a few individuals. Inspector June Brown also makes similar recommendations about increasing the number of bilingual employees. Chater echoes her earlier comments by again stating that “we do have to be careful that we don’t put into a place a policy or set of procedures that is earmarked for one particular ethnic group” (SSA Commissioner Shirley Chater, Committee on Ways and Means 1994, p. 142). Congressional member Santorum responds by stating “I would just echo the chairman’s remarks that we need to move on these things as quickly as possible. I understand looking at it, but if the fraud is continuing, then we need to move forward on that” (Congressman Santorum, Committee on Ways and Means 1994, p. 142).

- **Supplemental Security Income Modernization Project** (March 1, 1994, Committee on Ways and Means, House)

Two weeks after the hearings on SSI fraud and abuse by immigrant middlemen, hearings began about the Supplemental Security Income program. The SSI Modernization Project was the first comprehensive review of the SSI program since its’ beginnings in 1974. However, the themes that emerged in this hearing were closely connected and tied with earlier perceptions of immigrant use of SSI. In fact, the chairman on the subcommittee on human resources is stated as saying, “in California we

have had more testimony and more witnesses who have testified before this subcommittee that either through the middlemen, or whatever it might be, some of the evidence is suggesting now it is easy to get on disability benefits and SSI in the state of California” (Congressman Ford, Committee on Ways and Means 1994, pg. 137). Moreover, Chairman Ford goes on to discuss how just last week there were joint hearings examining fraud and abuse in the Supplemental Security Income program and how there are criminal investigations underway.

Professor Norman Matloff at the University of California Davis Computer Science Department, a key proponent to deny all federal safety nets to legal immigrants, is called upon to testify on his knowledge of SSI use among immigrants. Matloff is not affiliated with a think tank, nor does he represent the Chinese community. Moreover, Matloff is not trained as a social scientist, but as a computer scientist and statistician. Even though he has no training in the social sciences, he has conducted a qualitative research study with the Chinese immigrant community. He doesn't describe his limitations, but merely says that his study is based on a snowball sample. He doesn't let the members of Congress know that his study is not representative. Nor does he describe how he obtains his data.

However, during these hearings, no other researcher is called upon to discuss immigrants use of SSI as much as Matloff. So Matloff's presentation – despite its' slant – becomes part of this construction of how elderly immigrant welfare recipients are perceived by lawmakers. Moreover, his study of Chinese immigrants is further used by the Heritage Foundation and Republican lawmakers to justify eliminating entitlements for

legal immigrants. In Matloff's testimony, there are several themes that get reiterated later and later in other hearings and cause alarm among lawmakers.

A key theme is that certain immigrants, mostly Chinese, are applying for SSI in epidemic proportions. In fact, he states that 55% of all Chinese immigrant elderly are on SSI. Over and over again he stresses that "word of mouth" about how to access safety nets in the Chinese immigrant community is not only a problem but one that is out-of-control. He states how a best-selling book in China titled, "How to live life in America," details how immigrants can access benefits such as SSI, Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security. Most importantly, he suggests that older immigrants are purposely immigrating to take advantage of this "free money." He suggests that these older immigrants are not poor and are not simply immigrating to reunify with family members, but to take advantage of a generous welfare system. He portrays these Chinese elderly immigrants on SSI as wealthy:

We heard earlier witnesses talk about people who really are desperate, who really are the people who don't know whether to buy food or medicine, that is a tradeoff, they can't buy both. We are not talking about that in this case. We are talking about people who travel internationally. It is typical for them to go back home to Asia once a year. Some of the people I talked to had gone on cruises, Mediterranean cruises. They have been to Europe. They are living comfortable lives. Again, they don't need the money (Norman Matloff, Committee on Ways and Means 1994, p. 139).

In Matloff's testimony, he discusses how the adult children are to blame and that the elderly are "victimized" because their children abandon them because of the availability of federal safety nets. He discusses how he feels access to federal safety nets destroys "traditional Chinese extended family." Moreover, he suggests that these adult children are quite able and have the ability to support their parents:

Their children are generally well off. They are upscale people, professional people. You go to the Silicon Valley, which there are a lot of Chinese immigrant engineers there, it is very, very, very common for both husband and wife to be let's say computer engineers, for their combined income is in the upper 3 to 4 percent nationally, and yet their parents are on SSI (Norman Matloff, Committee on Ways and Means 1994. p. 139).

After Matloff's testimony, the Chair of the Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Human Resources Clay Shaw seems to be in shock of the numbers and anecdotal information that Matloff presents. Like the earlier hearing on immigrant middlemen and Supplemental Security Income, the hearing discussions eventually turn to the discussion of fraud and taxpayer burden:

Mr. Matloff if your testimony is even 20 percent correct, and I am sure it is, and I am sure it is much more than that, we have got massive fraud that Uncle Sam is being duped out of – and the taxpayer is being duped out of lots of money at a time when we look so desperately for dollars to try to pass legislation and we resort to accounting gimmicks and everything else in order to squeeze out a few more bucks. Now we find that there are plans of playing the system. I think this is just horrible (Congressman Shaw, Committee on Ways and Means 1994, p. 156).

Clay Shaw frames the discussion to undeserving individuals - immigrants - who cheat the system and burden the taxpayer. Unfortunately, even though Matloff's testimony is about Chinese elderly immigrants, there is no distinction made between noncitizens who are fraudulent, and those who are not. Blanket statements are made about all noncitizens on SSI: all are dishonest in some way and are therefore not deserving. As a result, the recommendation made in response to Matloff's testimony is to simply cut off all SSI assistance to immigrants:

I think this has been very enlightening hearing, and I think that you have to look further than page 3 of Mr. Matloff's testimony and the graph that he has got there to show that this one of the most incredible things that I have ever seen. And I think we need to pursue this. I think criminality is there, and I think that for aliens to come to our shores and demand welfare payments when we are not adequately

taking care of our own is horrible, I think we need to cut it off. I think for us to continue these payments to noncitizens is outrageous (Congressman Shaw, Committee on Ways and Means 1994, p. 156).

Matloff's response to Clay Shaw's proposal is that the discontinuation would do no harm in the Chinese immigrant community. He states that no one would be on the streets, that no one would be hurt by this law. He suggests that these immigrants have many options like moving back with their adult children and/or returning to their home country. There is no further discussion in these hearings about elderly immigrants who could be hurt from being ineligible for federal safety nets. It is just assumed that elderly immigrants do not need help, and that families would ultimately be responsible for them.

- **Growth of the Supplemental Security Income Program** (March 27, 1995, Committee on Finance, Senate)

About one year later, a hearing devoted to the discussion of the growth in the Supplemental Security Income program is held. On March 27, 1995, the Senate Committee on Finance held a hearing to examine the growth of the SSA Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program for needy aged, blind and disabled persons, including drug addicts undergoing treatment. The hearing discussed reasons and recommendations for responding to the increase in SSI Program Recipients. The recipients reviewed included disabled children, substance abusers and legal immigrants. The main reason for these hearings is that SSI program was under scrutiny because "the program is growing like gangbusters, and unbeknownst to many, serving a population very different than the population originally served" (Committee on Finance 1995).

The major theme that evolves from this hearing is that this problem is explosive and will be an ever-increasing problem unless wheels are in motion to correct some of the problems. Many of the witnesses suggest that elderly immigrants intentionally immigrate to obtain benefits and that the US generous welfare system is a magnet for such immigrants. The type of reasoning becomes part of the framing of this problem and what federal lawmakers ultimately believe and react to. In fact Senator Chafee responds, "It seems to me that as the word gets out, this thing is going to explode even further than it has. Is that right, Mr. Stein?" (Senator Chafee, Committee on Finance 1995, p. 19). Moreover, Senator Chafee frames the problem in terms of what the government needs to do to stop the growth:

But in any event, in listening to this testimony, one of the things I have gotten out of it is that I would predict that the aged – whether they are citizens or non-citizens – on the SSI rolls is going to grow dramatically in the years ahead. That what it shows here already, and I think that is going to continue (Senator Chafee, Committee on Finance 1995, p. 31)

Another theme made most often is that because of their age, older immigrants do not participate, nor contribute to US society. There is no mention that these recipients may actually contribute to society through past work, current work activities, or through informal work like taking care of grandchildren. Rather these elderly recipients are again seen as non-contributors because they enter the US late in their lives, and are therefore seen as individuals who are not deserving, because they have not paid taxes and are being supported by US taxpayers. According to Carolyn Weaver of the American Enterprise Institute this is a problem that needs to be "plugged" and fixed because if not "public support for this program will likely erode if it is seen for what is fast becoming a transfer

program for immigrants who enter the US late in life and make little economic contribution to it” (Carolyn Weaver, Committee on Finance 1995, p. 13).

Some of the themes that do not become part of the framing of this issue include the reasons why immigrants would want to obtain SSI: in order to access Medicaid coverage. In fact, Susan Martin of the US Commission on Immigration Reform suggests that the reason why immigrants get on SSI is to obtain some sort of health coverage:

Families of the elderly immigrants who can afford to cover their living expenses find it more difficult to cover their medical expenses. When immigrants apply for Medicaid, they learn they are also eligible for income support provided by SSI (Susan Martin, Committee on Finance 1995, p. 36).

These themes do not seem to become part of the framing because of the complexity of attaining health insurance for older adults. Rather, the discussion then turns to keeping sponsors accountable. Those testifying feel that the responsibility for the support of immigrants rests firmly with those sponsoring their entry – and not with the US taxpayer. There is some discussion of getting immigrant sponsors to buy health insurance for their aged relative. Yet, committee members are full aware of the exorbitant costs that would be prohibitive for poor immigrants trying to sponsor family members. However, this recommendation is talked about again and again in later hearings. Yet the recommendation always steer towards making the affidavit of support a legally binding document that would close the loophole in the current sponsor deeming policies. Making the affidavit legally binding would establish the legal, financial relationship between sponsors and immigrants. Sponsors would then be responsible for elderly parents basic income, and medical and nursing care, as conditions for permitting immigrants to bring elderly parents.

Another first in this hearing is the discussion of attaching citizenship to eligibility of all federal safety nets. Dan Stein, the key spokesperson for Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), suggests that the logic for citizenship is that it would “strengthen the civic fabric” but also decrease the number of aged relatives who would immigrate for the sole purpose of attaining SSI. Again like in the earlier hearing, the discussion of fraud is linked with earlier discussions:

Nevertheless, news reports have provided accounts of immigrants coached by middlemen to feign mental illness and children coached by parents to fake mental impairments by misbehaving or doing poorly in school to qualify for SSI benefits. (Jane Ross, Committee on Finance 1995, p. 53)

Susan Martin of the US Commission on Immigration Reform suggests that discussion of fraud can significantly erode public confidence in the program’s integrity.

- **Contract with America: Welfare Reform, Part 1** (January 27, 1995, Committee on Ways and Means, House)

The legislative agenda of the 104th Congress House Republicans was an examination of welfare issues known as the Contract with America. The hearings devoted to this issue focused on examining federal and states roles in welfare reform, costs of the entitlement based welfare system, implications of child illegitimacy, rates for the growth of welfare rolls, effectiveness of programs devoted to AFDC recipients and a discussion of recommendations to reduce or eliminate Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and other public assistance benefits for selected groups. Five witnesses representing the General Accounting Office, American Enterprise Institute, Federation for American Immigration Reform and CATO Institute were called upon to discuss the factors

contributing to the growth of the SSI program and the need to restrict eligibility of legal immigrants to public assistance programs. It is interesting to note the type of partisan organizations represented to testify during this hearing.

A discussion of SSI users: disabled children, substance abusers and immigrants evolved as part of the Contract with America. The overarching theme seems to center around individuals who are perceived as non-contributing members of society, and who are on the rolls in crisis proportions. Both Jane Ross of the General Accounting Office and Carolyn Weaver of the American Enterprise Institute testify that the growth of immigrants on SSI is astronomical and needs to be stopped:

If the historical growth rate of legal immigrants on SSI continues, this number could reach 2 million by the year 2000 (Jane Ross, Committee on Ways and Means 1995, p. 422).

Again, the growth is attributed to immigrants who fraudulently apply for the Supplemental Security Income program. At the same time it seems that these claims are more anecdotal -- based on State and Federal investigations of small numbers of identified cases of fraud -- rather than a representative number of cases involving immigrants. So even though the extent of fraud is unknown, these few cases became representative of all immigrants on Supplemental Security Income. Congressional member Harold Ford echoes his thoughts and further substantiates the claim that there are problems with immigrants on SSI that have been heard earlier in other hearings: "We have seen testimony and heard witnesses before Joint Subcommittees on Ways and Means and people who have testified in this Congress" (Congressman Ford, Committee on Ways and Means 1995, p. 475). Moreover, Congressman Clay Shaw tries to frame the discussion of fraud from individuals to organized groups who are learning about the

welfare system prior to immigrating – almost like that there are foreign conspirators working against the US government:

It even appears that this is so organized that much of that starts in the country of the origin before they even get here with regard to gaming the system and the fraud that is in there. It appears that actually is a form of organized crime with the fraud being perpetuated on the Federal Government through fraudulent translators and other people who are fully aware of the right things to say with the applicant sitting there and muttering some words that the counselor doesn't even understand himself or herself (Congressman Shaw, Committee on Ways and Means 1995, p. 444).

So claims of fraud and abuse committed by immigrant recipients on Supplemental Security Income are continually constructed in these hearings by lawmakers, bureaucrats and interest groups.

Dan Stein, the key spokesperson for Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), a proponent to discontinue all public assistance to immigrants, states that immigration should be cost-free to the US taxpayer. His take on the problem seems to echo that of other lawmakers in these committee hearings. Dan Stein stresses that immigrants once arriving in this country plan to bring elderly relatives and other older extended family members who may rely on public assistance. He states that based on the US Census the ability to access welfare is attracting immigrants with low skills, education and income levels. He repeatedly mentions that US taxpayers do not want their tax dollars to go to safety nets for immigrants.

On the contrary, Lawrence Fuchs -- who is an academician from Brandeis University – tries to frame the issue from an alternative perspective. He tries to draw on the American values of justice and compassion to elicit support for his frame of reference:

Do we want to take SSI benefits away from legal immigrants, say a blind 70 year old man who collects no retirement benefits? Here is the problem. Over three-fourths of the elderly legal immigrants receiving SSI do not receive Social Security benefits, compared to one-third of the elderly native-born recipients. But we are not going to say to such persons: Go back to where you came from (Lawrence Fuchs, Committee on Ways and Means 1995, p. 460).

Lawrence Fuchs provides a different discussion on SSI use and immigrants. He frames it quite differently and focuses on immigrant eligibility, rather than a discussion of fraud. He stresses that there should be a distinction between illegal immigrants and legal immigrants in the policy discussion to limit safety nets to legal immigrants. He states that legal immigrants entering this country have played by the rules and shouldn't be dismissed. He stresses that legal immigrants, unlike illegal immigrants, make economic contributions to the US.

In response to the various alternative solutions proposed in these hearings, such as naturalization, he suggests it is unfair since there are individuals who may not be able to pass the test for whatever reason. He strongly suggests that these safety nets need to be available for all who are members of the US community - even if they are not US citizens. In this sense, Fuchs sets himself apart from the other witnesses by discussing what a social community is all about and the responsibilities associated with it. According to Fuchs, everyone is capable of being involved in some freak accident and everyone should be entitled to federal assistance, especially if they have paid taxes and have been an active participant in society:

But it is not fair to say to somebody who is here, and for various reasons, as I discussed in my testimony earlier, simply cannot make it or feels intimidated, feels embarrassed, or cannot take that naturalization test and pass it, it is not fair to say to them that if the legs are cut off from under you, that you are no longer a part of our social community and are not entitled - even though you paid taxes,

even though your children may have volunteered to serve in the Armed Forces, that is not fair (Lawrence Fuchs, Committee on Ways and Means 1995, p. 477).

Fuchs works on an altering frame of immigrants as not simply partakers, but contributors to US society. Moreover, he tries to bring humanity to the debates by stating that if you get sick you should be entitled to a safety net - especially if you have paid into the system. Lawrence Fuchs talks about the contributions of immigrants, and how they are part of the US community, and the responsibility that we have to them.

- **Use of Supplemental Security Income and Other Welfare Programs by Immigrants** (February 6, 1996, Committee on the Judiciary, Senate)

The chairman of this subcommittee, Senator Alan Simpson, a Republican from Wyoming, starts off the hearing by discussing the need for immigration reform and describes his bill which would reduce immigration by 20 percent for five years. The rationale for the reduction in the number of immigrants is that the current entry of immigrants are highly reliant on public assistance, and place a burden on American taxpayers. The public assistance program that Simpson is most concerned with is the Supplemental Security Income program because of the large number of older immigrants relying on this assistance, but there are also concerns that the Social Security system may go “broke” in the year 2029, and the rising number of immigrants on Supplemental Security Income has something to do with it.

The key theme in these hearings is that elderly parents who arrive to be reunited with their adult sons and daughters are a burden on US taxpayers, and that the numbers are increasing, and that something needs to be done to stop the escalating numbers. Those

that testify focused on the long-term dependency of elderly immigrant welfare recipients. A major frame that gets reiterated over and over again in these different hearings is that older immigrants are undeserving because they have not worked in the US, yet they can acquire cash assistance equivalent to a social security check:

And even more so if they have not contributed in any to the system which is supporting them. Doesn't that become a serious problem in the United States to those people who are so worked up about the issue?.. if you come to the United States and you are a parent of 60 or 65 and you have put nothing into Social Security or SSI and suddenly you begin to draw and you the same benefit that a citizen draws? (Senator Alan Simpson, Committee on the Judiciary 1996, p. 47).

Senator Simpson suggests that it is because of this "freeloading" by immigrants that localities with large immigration populations are experiencing anti-immigration policies such as proposition 187. Meanwhile Senator Grassley echoes similar thoughts as Senator Simpson, stating that immigrants are coming into this country to intentionally get on the Supplemental Security Income rolls: "Uncle Sam appears to be an 'uncle sucker' for everybody to drain the economic blood from" (Senator Grassley, Committee on the Judiciary 1996, p. 50).

There is again discussion of immigrants being fraudulent and not paying their taxes as "normal taxpayers." Angelo Doti of the Orange County Social Services Agency describes how many of the immigrant populations in that county work under the table and do not pay taxes and she states that "when we investigate these individuals and find out what they are doing, it is basically money that is going into their pockets" (Angelo Doti, Committee on the Judiciary 1996, p. 51). Although Doti's discussion is about a working population, most of the hearing's discussion on fraud centers around older immigrants. The adult children of these older immigrants are portrayed as well-off. Again Norman

Matloff presents his qualitative research of Chinese elderly immigrants on Supplemental Security Income in California. Once more, Matloff portrays Chinese elderly immigrants as deliberately immigrating to take advantage of welfare benefits. Robert Rector, of the Heritage Foundation, supports Matloff's observations about the unethical behavior of elderly immigrants on Supplemental Security Income: "In short, the U.S. welfare system has already become a form of deluxe retirement home for many elderly from the third world" (Robert Rector, Committee on the Judiciary 1996, p. 109). Rector stresses that elderly immigrants are a burden to US taxpayers and recommends limiting the number of older immigrants to this country:

In sum, I would like to say that immigration should be open to a limited number of persons who wish to come to the United States to work and be self-sufficient and who clearly have the capacity to support themselves. Immigration should not be an avenue of welfare dependence and an avenue of a burden to the US taxpayer. The US taxpayer should not be expected to support the costs, medical or otherwise, of elderly noncitizens coming to this country and I think that we need to make fundamental changes in the system in order to protect the taxpayer (Robert Rector, Committee on the Judiciary 1996, p. 110).

There is also some discussion of resolutions to the problem that would not shut the immigration door to elderly immigrants. Susan Martin, of the US Commission on Immigration Reform, discusses creative ways in which sponsors could incur the costs of taking care of their elderly parents, such as sponsors buying insurance, and therefore US taxpayers not bearing the responsibility. She points out that many immigrants that apply for SSI do so to access medical care by becoming eligible for Medicaid. Senator Kennedy interjects that attaining health insurance for this older population would be difficult since individuals with pre-existing conditions already have difficulties obtaining health insurance. Estimates for the costs of obtaining health insurance for elderly

immigrants were determined to be about \$9,000 a year. Senator Kennedy responds by stating, "If you are able to get it, and it is going to be difficult to get and of course, that is going to favor only those who are wealthy coming in and bringing their parents in" (Senator Kennedy, Committee on the Judiciary 1996, p. 60).

Again, like the hearing before, alternative frames try to get presented. Senator Edward Kennedy attempts to provide a different picture to the issue by putting forth the notion that immigrants do pay their dues and that the focus is about individuals and their families:

I am always interested in listening to those who are prepared to draft permanent resident aliens, send them overseas to get shot and die for this country, and that has happened in this country, and talk about stripping away food stamps for their children or, if they have some disability, another member of the family, cut them out, too....So I think we can all play this card and be funny about it and laugh about it and joke about it, but we are talking about real people and real people's lives, and we are talking about children, we are talking about parents, we are talking about loved ones, we are talking about families (Senator Kennedy, Committee on the Judiciary 1996, p. 58).

The only immigrant representative to speak is Victor Ducouto, a Portuguese immigrant who is a naturalized US citizen, but represents a social service agency for Portuguese immigrants. He, like Senator Kennedy, attempts to provide a different picture of immigrants as those who have contributed by working, but for whatever reason fall on hard times and become in need a safety net. And or immigrate to this country late in life and have low-paying jobs that do not afford them health care or other benefits. He proposes that sponsors have a commitment to the relatives they sponsor. But he states that "the vagaries of life often come up. Someone may get injured. Someone may get

seriously ill. Family problems do come up. In that instance, there ought to be some kind of safety net there” (Victor Ducouto, Committee on the Judiciary 1996, p.116)

- **Welfare Reform** (May 23, 1996, Committee on Ways and Means, House)

Congressman Clay Shaw, Jr. (R-FL), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Human Resources of the Committees on Ways and Mean convenes a hearing on May 23, 1996 to discuss welfare reform and immigrants. According to Shaw, there are four pillars associated with the Republican’s welfare reform plan. The third pillar is focused on immigrants, and states that “if you not an American citizen, you should not automatically get welfare.” At the start of the hearing, Shaw states: “To me, this is common sense, America is and will always be a land of opportunity for immigrants, but no one should come here looking for a handout” (Congressman Shaw, Committee on Ways and Means 1996, p. 6).

Congressman Xavier Becerra (D-CA) is called upon to testify, and attempts to change the sentiments of this committee. He asserts that immigrants pay taxes, defend our country and should be entitled to a safety net. Moreover, immigrants run into tough times, just like US citizens:

..there are occasions when an immigrant happens to be in an accident not of his or her own making, gets hit by a car, or gets hurt on the job, or gets laid off unexpectedly, and there are times when the immigrant, like any US citizen who pay taxes, would like to benefit of being able to turn to the government for help in a temporary circumstance (Congressman Becerra, Committee on Ways and Means 1996, p. 56).

Furthermore, Becerra stresses that local governments will suffer from ending federal entitlements to immigrants. Immigrants pay taxes to the federal treasury, but

ending federal safety nets to immigrants means that local governments and local hospitals will still have to provide services. Yet, these entities will not see the federal tax dollars that these immigrants have contributed. Chairman Shaw interjects that this is not the problem, but that the disproportionate number of immigrants on welfare is the dilemma.

Shaw and Becerra then squabble over the choice of research studies that illustrate their point. Becerra notes that “most studies show that legal immigrants, legal residents, use welfare at a much smaller rate than the citizen population (Congressman Becerra, Committee on Ways and Means 1996, p. 64).” Congressman McCrery replies to Becerra’s point that George Borjas study notes that immigration participation in public assistance programs is much higher than native-born participation rates. Becerra then illustrates that Borjas’ study is of household units and not of individuals, and so all households were counted as being on welfare if one individual in the household was on welfare. Despite Becerra’s interjection, Borjas’ study is cited in this hearing and others.

He explains that the reason for the high numbers of immigrants on SSI is because a lot of immigrants do not have jobs that allow them to have benefits like disability insurance, so if they get hurt or sick they turn to the Supplemental Security Income Program. He continually emphasizes that immigrants, even though they are not US citizens, are part of the social community in the United States and that no distinctions should be made:

Do we, as a country, wish to exclude and completely ban people from access to a service when the only distinction between that person and someone else who is a US citizen is the fact they have not yet reached the point of being sworn in? (Congressman Becerra, Committee on Ways and Means 1996, p. 66).

Becerra even uses his mother, an immigrant, to illustrate his point that excluding immigrants from public services is unfair, especially since they have played by the rules, worked and paid taxes. After Becerra's testimony, Congressman Rangel states that "I think we can find something to recognize equity and still tighten up and find savings someplace else (Congressman Rangel, Committee on Ways and Means 1996, p. 67)." He later states that, "We all believe we should do right, but we have to make a political statement" (Congressman Rangel, Committee on Ways and Means 1996, p. 68).

Later, witnesses who appeared earlier in other hearings, testify once more. Jane Ross of the General Accounting Office discusses the increasing number of noncitizens on SSI, which she attributes to translator fraud and adult children renegeing on their promise to support their aging parents.

Michael Fix of the Urban Institute presents his research findings that immigrants use of welfare is the same rate as native born Americans. He emphasizes that deeming and making affidavits of support enforceable is the best resolution to the problem. Therefore, if a sponsored immigrant applies for federal assistance, the income and resources of the sponsor will be considered available to the immigrant, and this will determine eligibility. Fix does demonstrate that the number of immigrants on SSI is problematic, but points out that many elderly immigrants cannot access Social Security and that SSI represents a bridge to attain Medicaid, and affordable health coverage. He also illustrates that the rising numbers of immigrants on SSI is due to the increasing number of individuals immigrating.

Angelo Doti, Director of Financial Assistance Programs from the Orange County Social Services in California, testifies once again. He discusses that local governments

will be impacted by the transfer of responsibilities. A shift in these responsibilities to local governments would severely impact localities. Fix towards the end of the hearings states that:

The answer is, that in the long run, it is counterproductive to have a segment of the society essentially receiving a lower level of services than natives. Those exclusionary policies, in turn, raise two questions: Are we drawing deeper divisions among our people? And when is it more cost effective to deliver than to withhold services from legal immigrants (Michael Fix, Committee on Ways and Means 1996, p. 198).

Although both Becerra and Fix in these hearings strive to change the framing of these hearings, it seems that Chairman Shaw is not listening and holds onto his preconceived assumptions that were developed in earlier hearings. Besides, Chairman Shaw at the end of this hearing seems to want validation for his reasoning, when he states and asks Jane Ross of the General Accounting Office the following: "I do not want to keep you all beyond this point, is the growth in the SSI program for noncitizens growing at an increasingly accelerated rate? Does it look as though the word is getting out that the system has some problems that can easily be tapped into?" (Congressman Shaw, Committee on Ways and Means 1996, p. 198). Ross replies that the trends of noncitizens on SSI seems to be tapering off. Shaw does not discuss Ross' reply, but adjourns the hearing.

Discussion and Conclusion

Deborah Stone's work on problem definition is applicable to this analyses, as well as Gamson's work on the packaging of frames. According to Stone (1997), problem definition is strategic because "groups, individuals and government agencies deliberately and consciously fashion portrayals so as to promote their favored course of action" (Stone

1997, p. 133). Stone proposes several different ways to define policy problems: symbols, numbers, causes, interests, and decisions. In this case, never-ending, escalating numbers of immigrant SSI recipients gone amok is common throughout all these hearings. Numbers are symbolic of where to draw the line and the escalating numbers are metaphoric for the need to control or limit.

Stone (1997) demonstrates how the symbol making process entails one element representing the totality of all things. In these hearings, there are several examples where this is done. For example, Norman Matloff's qualitative, snow-ball sample study of Chinese elderly becomes representative of all Chinese elderly immigrants, but also that of all elderly immigrants. Moreover, the discussion of translator fraud is also an example of how a whole group of people get labeled for the transgressions of a few. Likewise, utilizing one case to gain support for overturning a policy that benefits the whole.

Stone (1997) further discusses how causal reasoning is also part of defining the problem. Once the cause is known, it is used to "place burdens on one set of people instead of another" (Stone 1997, p. 189). The cause for the escalating numbers of SSI immigrant recipients is blamed on the unscrupulous behavior of elderly immigrants and their adult children. Framing the cause of these increases - due to the unethical behavior of older immigrants - does not garner much public support.

According to Gamson and Modigliani (1987), cultural resonance is about how specific packages of ideas resonate with the large cultural themes. Gamson and Modigliani suggest thinking of these themes as dialectic: there is no theme without a countertheme. For example, in these hearings, the theme that resonates with American culture is self-sufficiency and the work ethic, and not dependency. This theme is echoed

by many of the witnesses and congressional members. Elderly immigrants are framed as non-contributors to the system, and as individuals who have not worked in this country, and are highly dependent on the system to support them. All these themes are antithetical to American cultural values (See Table 1). On the other hand, several witnesses that testified attempted to change the direction of how elderly immigrants were perceived. Likewise, they relied on American culture themes of hard work and playing by the rules like paying taxes and serving in the military if necessary to demonstrate that elderly immigrants are “deserving.” However, these themes were repressed; while the dominant themes of elderly immigrants as “undeserving” of federal means-tested entitlements became prominent.

Table 1
Type of Themes within the
House and Senate Hearings on Supplemental Security Income and Immigrants:
1994-1996

| <u>Themes</u> | Frequency N=6 | Percent % |
|--|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Dominant Themes | | |
| Fraud and Abuse committed by Immigrants | 6 | 28.5 |
| US Taxpayer Burden and Growing Numbers | 5 | 23.8 |
| Older Immigrants do not contribute to US society | 5 | 23.8 |
| 2. Competing Themes | | |
| Keep sponsors accountable | 1 | 4.7 |
| Attach US citizenship to eligibility | 1 | 4.7 |
| 3. Repressed Themes | | |
| Older Immigrants access Medicaid via SSI | 1 | 4.7 |
| Legal immigrants make economic contributions to US | 2 | 9.5 |

According to Brint (1994), policy experts are powerful because they establish the initial framework from whence all policy discussion flows. Those who define the problem are those with power and prestige. An observation about those who are called to testify and their affiliations is that none of the witnesses represent immigrants themselves. The majority of witnesses (35%) (see Table 2) that are called to testify represent the federal government. In particular, Jane Ross, Ph.D. of the General Accounting Office is called upon the most (60%) to testify and discuss the growing numbers of immigrants on SSI. Other government bureaucrats asked to testify include representatives from the Social Security Administration, US Commission on Immigration Reform, and the US Department of Health and Human Services.

After representatives from the federal government, representatives from think tanks are called upon the most (21.4%) to discuss SSI use among immigrants. Carolyn Weaver, Ph.D. of the American Enterprise Institute, Robert Rector of the Heritage Foundation and Michael Fix, J.D. from the Urban Institute were called upon several times to testify on this topic. Again, individuals who are perceived as highly educated scholars are invited to speak.

Next, representatives from the state and county governments represented 17.5%. All of the representatives from local governments were from the state of California. The California Department of Justice Office of the Attorney General, Bureau of Medical Fraud was called to testify three times during the hearings on SSI fraud by immigrant middlemen. While Angelo Doti of the Social Services Agency in Orange County, California was called upon twice to discuss welfare fraud committed by immigrants and their sponsors in Orange County. Academicians is the next category of individuals called

upon to testify through their research on immigrants use of SSI. Norman Matloff of the University of California, Davis is called upon the most (2) to discuss his qualitative study of elderly Chinese immigrants use of Supplemental Security Income.

Table 2
Type of Hearings Witnesses at
House and Senate Hearings on Supplemental Security Income and Immigrants:
1994-1996

| <u>Hearing Witnesses</u> | Frequency N | Percent % |
|---|----------------|--------------|
| Representatives from the Federal Government | 10 | 35.0 |
| Representatives from State/County Governments | 5 | 17.5 |
| Think Tanks | 6 | 21.4 |
| Interest Groups | 2 | 7.0 |
| Academicians | 4 | 14.3 |
| Social Service Provider | 1 | 3.5 |
| TOTAL | 28 | 100.0 |

This findings in this chapter demonstrate how framing is carried out, and the individuals and organizations that are involved in this framing. Throughout these hearings, similar themes reoccur. The overarching theme is that immigrants on SSI fraudulently obtain it even though they don't necessarily need it. The focus starts with younger immigrants trying to obtain through faking a disability to older immigrants purposely immigrating to obtain "free" retirement benefits. Throughout, immigrants are characterized as freeloaders and not contributing to US society. Ultimately, these themes frame immigrants as undeserving of help. Although immigrants are consistently framed in this fashion, there are dissenting voices that try to portray an alternative picture of immigrants as legitimately deserving of a federal safety net.

Chapter 5

Newspaper Analyses

I. Introduction

This chapter explores the relationship between the news media, welfare reform, the Supplemental Security Income program and immigrants. There are two sections to this chapter: news features and news editorials. Both sections examine the coverage in terms of two elements: volume and themes. Volume is the length and amount of coverage by year, while themes focus on the content and context of the coverage. The features section focuses on themes that emerge from these articles, but also “who speaks” and constructs these themes. As a result, themes are analyzed as well as who speaks, but also what is said.

The editorial analyses examines and also measures themes from articles from major US newspapers. Because these articles have a particular opinion on welfare reform and immigrants, they are coded for stances and directionality, as well as for authorship. Both news articles and editorials are examined to provide a perspective on the coverage but also opinions formed by individuals and organizations. Ultimately, this analysis aims to provide a picture of the frames used in the debate on Supplemental Security Income and older immigrants through the analysis of themes in both editorials and feature news articles, and also show who is involved in these constructions.

II. News Article Findings

This analysis consists of a representative sample on media coverage of this topic. Using the Lexis/Nexis database, texts were purposively sampled from the five top US

newspapers in terms of circulation: *USA Today*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Times*, and the *Washington Post*. Stories on SSI utilization and immigrants are examined from as early as 1993. To retrieve relevant stories, Lexis/Nexis was instructed to download stories with the words Supplemental Security Income or SSI and Immigrants or Refugees or Noncitizens. All of these articles were retrieved. The total of 541 articles that were identified were examined in order to include only stories focused on SSI utilization and immigrants. Using a method conducted in previous studies on content analyses (Fan and Norem, 1992), the search filtered through identified articles with at least two mentions of Supplemental Security Income or SSI and Immigrants, Refugees or Noncitizens. The search turned out 145 articles, which is 27% of the total universe of SSI and Immigrants articles.

The universe of coverage of all articles selected using the keywords Supplemental Security Income and immigrants was a total of 541 articles. As table 3 illustrates, coverage on this particular topic seems to be most prominent between 1993 and 1998. The *Los Angeles Times* and *New York Times* carried the most number of stories related to Supplemental Security Income and immigrants and most of this coverage was after the passage of the bill. The coverage seems to be predominantly in these newspapers because they are both located in areas with high immigrant populations.

A majority (89%, n=129) of the articles appear between 1995 and 1997. The year with the highest number of articles is in 1997, with 44.1% (n=64) of the articles appearing at that time. This is interesting since much of the debate was featured in these papers after the passage, meaning that the public was more informed through the national newspaper coverage after the fact.

Table 3

**Number of Articles on Supplemental Security Income
and Immigrants per Newspaper by Year: 1990-1998**

| Newspaper | 1990 | 1991 | 1992 | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | TOTAL | |
|----------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|
| <i>Los Angeles Times</i> | 4 | 0 | 5 | 11 | 14 | 41 | 47 | 94 | 10 | 226 | 41.7% |
| <i>New York Times</i> | 1 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 11 | 15 | 44 | 60 | 4 | 140 | 25.9% |
| <i>Wall Street Journal</i> | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0.03% |
| <i>Washington Post</i> | 0 | 0 | 2 | 7 | 12 | 32 | 26 | 36 | 6 | 121 | 22.4% |
| <i>USA Today</i> | 0 | 0 | 2 | 7 | 12 | 4 | 10 | 13 | 4 | 52 | 9.6% |
| Total | 5 | 0 | 10 | 29 | 49 | 92 | 128 | 204 | 24 | 541 | 100% |

A majority (63.8%) of the coverage on Supplemental Security Income and immigrants occurs in 1996 and subsequently after the passage of the 1996 Federal Welfare Law. When examining by specific newspaper, *The Washington Post* and *USA Today* had more coverage of the topic prior to the passing of the federal welfare reform law. However, both *The New York Times* and *Los Angeles Times* had more coverage of the stories after the bill had become law. When examining where these stories were located, a majority (81.4%) of the stories were located in the first section of the newspaper.

One of the research hypotheses calls for a determination of which individuals had the most influence in shaping and defining policy on Supplemental Security Income. This necessitated an analysis of the names of individuals that journalists would quote and cite in these news articles as experts to provide a perspective to the problem (Herman and

Chomsky 1988). The names of individuals were open-coded based on affiliations and were mutually exclusive. Of the different types of individuals who were quoted most often, politicians were quoted in approximately one third (34%) of the articles, followed by immigrants in approximately one-fourth (25%) of the articles and then 16% by health and social service providers. Government bureaucrats representing federal agencies like the INS, SSA and other such agencies represented about 10% of all quoted individuals in the articles. Although immigrants were quoted one-quarter (25%) of the time, three-quarters (75%) (n=409) of those quoted in the articles were not immigrants; they were professionals in some way whether it be a think tank spokesperson or a health or service provider (See Table 4).

Table 4
Types of Individuals Quoted in Feature Newspaper Articles on Supplemental Security Income and Immigrants from 1993-1998 (N=412)

| Individual | Frequency | Percent |
|------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Attorneys/Judges | 29 | 7.0 |
| Politicians | 140 | 34.0 |
| Immigrants | 103 | 25.0 |
| Academics | 10 | 2.4 |
| Health and Social Service Provider | 66 | 16.0 |
| Government Bureaucrat | 39 | 9.5 |
| Think-Tank | 16 | 3.9 |
| Anti-Immigration Group | 9 | 2.2 |
| Total | 412 | 100.0 |
| Total | 412 | 100.0 |

In addition to quotes appearing in news articles, this content analysis also exposes key dimensions of news on immigrants' use of Supplemental Security Income. When looking at the years 1993-1998, almost one-third (31%) of the features focused on the impact of welfare reform in immigrant communities. This included how immigrant

communities viewed welfare reform, and how advocacy organizations were working together to deal with the impact in communities. Moreover, the theme included how welfare reform prevents low-income immigrants from sponsoring family members to immigrate, and how more and more immigrants feel the pressure to become citizens.

Approximately one-fourth (26%) of the articles focused on the welfare reform law and legislative prospects in terms of information but also discussion regarding constitutionality and the possibility of restorations for certain immigrants. Almost one-fourth (22%) of the news articles were concerned with devolution and the increasing pressures on local and state governments, and on health and social service providers to meet the needs of immigrants without a federal safety net.

Less than one-fifth (16.8%) of the news articles contend that older immigrants are deserving of federal assistance through several different kinds of portrayals of older immigrants. One illustration is of low-income older immigrants as vulnerable, or disabled and unable to pass the citizenship exam. Other depictions are of older immigrants who had played by the rules and worked in this country, only to fall on hard times, and to then rely on assistance. Others are of older immigrants who became ill or sick and became in need of health care, and who qualified for Medicaid through attaining Supplemental Security Income.

Approximately 13.5% of the news articles focused on older immigrants as not deserving of Supplemental Security Income. The main theme that demonstrates that older immigrants are undeserving is that they have not earned this entitlement by contributing through taxes, and that they immigrate late in life to take advantage of the US welfare system. Depictions are of increasing numbers of older immigrants migrating for the sole

purpose of retiring on SSI and becoming a burden to US taxpayers. Another illustration is of adult children who sponsor their aging relatives who then abdicate their responsibility to the US taxpayer, yet these adult children are financially wealthy. (See Table 5).

Table 5

Types of Themes in Feature Newspaper Articles on Supplemental Security Income and Immigrants: 1993-1998

| Theme | Frequency n | Percent % |
|---|------------------------|----------------------|
| Older Immigrants are deserving because: | | |
| Immigrants work and pay taxes | 18 | 4.2 |
| SSI provides access to Medicaid (e.g. LTC) | 5 | 1.2 |
| Older, disabled, limited English speaking, vulnerable population in need of federal safety nets | 48 | 11.2 |
| Governments breach of faith on immigrants | 12 | 2.8 |
| | | |
| Older Immigrants are NOT deserving because: | | |
| Increasing numbers on SSI are a burden to US taxpayers | 19 | 4.4 |
| Don't pay taxes and are purposely immigrating to obtain SSI as a retirement benefit | 22 | 5.1 |
| Have adult children that are financially able to take care of them | 19 | 4.4 |
| | | |
| Concerns with Devolution | | |
| Puts pressure on state and local governments to provide safety nets for older immigrants | 93 | 21.7 |
| Impacts local businesses | 2 | .5 |
| | | |
| Impact on Immigrant Communities | | |
| An assault on immigrant communities | 25 | 5.8 |
| Advocacy organizations reacting and working together because of welfare reform | 26 | 6.1 |
| Prevents poor, low-income immigrants from sponsoring relatives because of income cutoff | 8 | 1.9 |
| Puts pressure on immigrants to become citizens but INS is inefficient | 21 | 4.9 |
| General Information on the law and legislative prospects | 112 | 26.1 |

Table 6

Percentage of Themes in Feature News Articles on Supplemental Security Income and Immigrants Before (1/1/93 - 8/22/96) and After (8/23/96-12/31/98) the Passage of Federal Welfare Reform

| Theme | Before 1/1/93-8/22/96 % | After 8/23/96-12/31/98 % |
|---------------------------------|--|---|
| Immigrants as Deserving | 16.9 | 83.1 |
| Immigrants as Undeserving | 94.8 | 5.2 |
| Impact on Immigrant Communities | 46.3 | 53.8 |
| Concerns with Devolution | 34.7 | 65.3 |
| General Information | 41.1 | 58.9 |

When looking at themes before and after the passage of federal welfare reform, there are some interesting findings (Table 6). Less than fifteen percent of the articles prior to the passage of the bill, are concerned with immigrants as deserving of Supplemental Security Income. On the other hand, after the passage, a majority (83.1%) of the coverage was about immigrants being deserving of federal assistance. Also interesting is that almost all (94.8%) of the coverage of immigrants as undeserving of Supplemental Security Income occurred prior to the passage of the federal welfare reform bill. While articles devoted to devolution were in newspapers more often after the passage of the federal welfare reform bill.

When examining quoted statements by types of individuals, there were several interesting themes that emerged, including (1) statements that older immigrants are deserving; (2) statements serving as technical remarks; (3) statements that older immigrants are not deserving; (4) statements conveying alarmist reactions to the impact at the local level; (5) statements discussing legislative prospects of Supplemental Security

Income and immigrants; (6) statements about the citizenship process; (7) statements in support of welfare reform. It should be noted that these categories were treated as mutually exclusive even though some of the quotes included several different statements

(See Table 5)

- **STATEMENTS THAT IMMIGRANTS ARE DESERVING**

The thematic category includes the largest number of quoted statements, accounting for 29% (n=120) of all quotes (N=412). It is worth noting that about 57% (n=68) of these quotes (N=120) were stated by immigrants themselves. By contrast, 16% of these types of statements were made by politicians who stated that older immigrants were indeed worthy of receiving federal means-tested entitlements. About 59% of the quotes by immigrants were after the passage of the 1996 federal welfare reform law. While 62% of the quotes by health and social service providers stating immigrants deservingness of federal safety nets occurred after the passage of the 1996 federal welfare reform law.

Table 7

**Types of Themes in Quotes by Individuals cited in
News Feature Articles: 1993-1998**

| Types of Themes in Quotes | Individuals | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|------------|--------------|
| | Immigrants | | Professionals | | Total | |
| | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| Older immigrants are deserving | 68 | 66.0 | 52 | 17.0 | 120 | 29.0 |
| Older immigrants are not deserving | 5 | 24.0 | 53 | 9.4 | 54 | 13.0 |
| Technical remarks | 0 | 0.0 | 24 | 8.0 | 24 | 6.0 |
| Alarmist reactions to local crises | 4 | 4.0 | 72 | 23.0 | 76 | 18.0 |
| Legislative Prospects | 0 | 0.0 | 65 | 21.0 | 65 | 16.0 |
| Citizenship Process | 25 | 24.0 | 29 | 9.0 | 54 | 13.0 |
| Support for Welfare Reform | 1 | 1 | 14 | 5.0 | 15 | 4.0 |
| Total | 103 | 25.0 | 309 | 75.0 | 412 | 100.0 |

The following quoted statements drawn from the sample illustrate how politicians commented on immigrants deservingness of federal safety nets:

I think the battle for fairness will be won. Congress has to make sure that the laws are fair and humane and effective. It is wrong and ineffective to throw elderly people, most of them elderly women, on the street. (Representative Sander M. Levin (D-Mich), *The Washington Post*, July 1, 1997, pg. A9).

The following quoted statements are from the study sample and illustrate how immigrants testify to their deservingness of cash assistance:

I never wanted the government to support me, but I have no choice," Hidalgo said. "If they take this away, how do I feed and dress myself? How do I pay the rent? This is making me sick and crazy." (Immigrant, *The Washington Post*, March 21, 1997, pg. D1)

"For us, coming here was a dream. I never imagined America would leave old people without any help," said a tearful Vereta, who hasn't told her mother that she might be losing her benefits. "I try to protect her, I don't tell her what could happen. Even now I do not want to believe it. (Immigrant, April 14, 1997, *The Washington Post*, pg. B5)

- **STATEMENTS THAT IMMIGRANTS ARE UNDESERVING**

Fourteen percent of all quotes were about immigrants not deserving of a federal safety net. The rationale behind these statements were that immigrants were purposely immigrating to attain welfare benefits, and that older immigrants were using Supplemental Security Income as a retirement benefit even though they had not worked in the United States. Most of these quotes were mentioned before the passage of the federal welfare reform bill. Fifty percent (n=29) of all these quotes (N=58) were stated by politicians, followed by government bureaucrats (15.5%), and anti-immigration groups (12.1%). An example of a quote by an anti-immigration group is as follows:

The idea that immigrants can bring in their parents to retire here, to incur expensive medical treatment, is a very troubling trend. We can't allow people to bring their parents here from around the world to live and die at taxpayer expense. (Dan Stein, Executive Director of the Federation for American Immigration Reform, March 17, 1994, *Los Angeles Times*, pg. A1)

The following quote is from a politician describing why immigrants are undeserving of Supplemental Security Income:

But there are limits. SSI will be ended as the pension plan for third world countries. We are not giving on that. (Clay Shaw, March 10, 1997, *New York Times*, pg. A1)

- **ALARMIST STATEMENTS ABOUT IMPACT AT THE LOCAL LEVEL**

Accounting for 18 percent (n=76) of all quoted statements (N=412), this thematic category includes the second largest number of individual quotes. Of these 76 alarmist remarks, 35 statements are made by health and/or social service providers, accounting for more than 33% of these quoted statements. Politicians represented 32.9% (n=25) of these comments. The following quotes were coded as alarmist reactions by health and social service providers to welfare reform and the local impact:

The impact on states with high populations of legal immigrants will be profound. The immigrants will get health care. But it will be the responsibility of local government or, in the case of private hospitals, it will come out of their charity budgets. (Christine C. Burch, the Executive Director of the National Association of Public Hospitals, July 29, 1996, *New York Times*, pg. A1)

Once the president signs this bill, the real crisis will hit...The counties will have virtually no ability to raise tax revenues, but they'll still have to care for these people. It's a real disaster in the making. (Frank Mecca, Executive Director of the California Welfare Directors Association, August 2, 1996, *The Washington Post*, pg. A9)

- **STATEMENTS ABOUT LEGISLATIVE PROSPECTS**

About 16% (n=65) of all quotes were concerning statements about legislative prospects in terms of proposals to restore or dismantle Supplemental Security Income to immigrants. It is interesting that three-fourths (74% or n=48) of these quotes were stated by politicians, followed by attorneys and judges at 9%. The following is a statement by a politician about the legislative process and welfare reform:

We have a great big national debt and an annual deficit that we're trying to address. (Trent Lott (R-Miss), February 2, 1997, *Los Angeles Times*, pg. A18)

- **STATEMENTS ABOUT NATURALIZATION AND CITIZENSHIP PROCESS**

Approximately 13% (n=54) of all quotes were about naturalization and the citizenship process. Most of these quotes (46%) were statements made by immigrants who found the naturalization process difficult and inefficient. Government bureaucrats, most often the INS, were quoted 24% of the time, followed by health and social service providers (20%). The following is an example of a statement made by an immigrant regarding the citizenship process:

I don't know what else to do..I am too old to learn English.. But without English, how could I pass the test? (Immigrant, December 1, 1996, *Los Angeles Times*, pg. A3)

III. News Editorial Findings

In order to be representative of the opinions published in US newspapers, major newspapers listed in the top 50 circulation in Editor & Publisher Year Book were selected as the sampling frame. Lexis-Nexis, an on-line data base, was used to retrieve the

articles. Based on a universe of a 585 total number of articles from 1993-1998 which had at least two mentions of SSI or Supplemental Security Income and at least two mentions of refugees or immigrants or non-citizens, 120 articles were selected. These 120 articles were the universe of editorials, letters and op-eds. Two-thirds (67%) of top US newspapers carried an article on SSI use and immigrants.

Many editorials related to immigrants and SSI use were scattered throughout many major newspapers. The newspapers that seem to publish most of the Letters, op-eds and editorials included the *St. Petersburg Times* (11.7%), *Los Angeles Times* (11.7%), *San Francisco Chronicle* (8.3%), *Orange County Register* (7.5%), and *Sacramento Bee* (6.7%). Major newspapers that did not publish any articles related to SSI use and immigrants, included papers like *Chicago Tribune*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *The Dallas Morning News*, *The Denver Post*, *The Hartford Courant*, *The Indianapolis Star*, *Journal of Commerce*, *The Kansas City Star*, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Wall Street Journal* (See Table 8).

Most of the editorial articles on SSI use by immigrants were in the form of opinion pieces (40.8%), followed by letters (33.3%) and editorials (25.8%) (See Table 9). Opinion pieces were those written by a contributor affiliated with a larger organization like a think tank. Letters to the editor were by individuals, usually with no affiliation. Editorials were those written by the editors of the newspaper. Many of the articles were located in California (36.7%) newspapers, followed by Florida (13.3%) and New York (10.0%). Almost half (44%) of the editorial articles were published after the passage of federal welfare reform in 1997 (See Table 10).

Table 8. Types of Major Newspapers with Editorial Articles on Supplemental Security Income and Immigrants:1993-1998

| Newspaper | Frequency (n) | Percent (%) |
|---|--------------------------|------------------------|
| <i>Los Angeles Times</i> | 14 | 11.7 |
| <i>St. Petersburg Times</i> | 14 | 11.7 |
| <i>San Francisco Chronicle</i> | 10 | 8.3 |
| <i>Orange County Register</i> | 9 | 7.5 |
| <i>Sacramento Bee</i> | 8 | 6.7 |
| <i>Chicago Sun-Times</i> | 6 | 5.0 |
| <i>Newsday</i> | 6 | 5.0 |
| <i>Arizona Republic</i> | 6 | 5.0 |
| <i>Washington Post</i> | 5 | 4.2 |
| <i>The Plain Dealer</i> | 5 | 4.2 |
| <i>Seattle Times</i> | 3 | 2.5 |
| <i>The Buffalo News</i> | 3 | 2.5 |
| <i>Denver Rocky Mountain News</i> | 3 | 2.5 |
| <i>Milwaukee-Journal Sentinel</i> | 3 | 2.5 |
| <i>Houston Chronicle</i> | 3 | 2.5 |
| <i>San Diego Union Tribune</i> | 2 | 1.7 |
| <i>New York Times</i> | 2 | 1.7 |
| <i>St. Louis-Post Dispatch</i> | 2 | 1.7 |
| <i>Star Tribune</i> | 2 | 1.7 |
| <i>Tampa Tribune</i> | 2 | 1.7 |
| <i>Times-Picayune</i> | 2 | 1.7 |
| <i>Detroit News</i> | 2 | 1.7 |
| <i>USA Today</i> | 2 | 1.7 |
| <i>The Sun</i> | 1 | 1.7 |
| <i>Boston Globe</i> | 1 | 1.7 |
| <i>The Daily News</i> | 1 | 1.7 |
| <i>Omaha World Tribune</i> | 1 | 1.7 |
| <i>Baltimore Sun</i> | 1 | 1.7 |
| <i>Boston Herald</i> | 1 | 1.7 |
| <i>Atlanta Journal & Constitution</i> | 1 | 1.7 |

**Table 9. Types of Editorial Articles
on Supplemental Security Income and Immigrants: 1993-1998**

| Article Type | Frequency (n) | Percent (%) |
|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Letters | 40 | 33.3 |
| Editorial | 31 | 25.8 |
| Opinions | 49 | 40.8 |
| Total | 120 | 100.0 |

Table 10. Year Frequencies: 1993-1998

| Year | Frequency (n) | Percent (%) |
|-------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1993 | 6 | 5.0 |
| 1994 | 14 | 11.7 |
| 1995 | 16 | 13.3 |
| 1996 | 25 | 20.8 |
| 1997 | 53 | 44.2 |
| 1998 | 6 | 5.0 |

The editorial pieces were also coded (scored 1-5) for directionality in terms of whether they were in support of safety nets to older immigrants, or opposed. The stances were coded for degrees of agreement or disagreements for limiting safety nets to older immigrants like the following: (1) Strongly disagree that restrictions should be made to limit safety nets to older immigrants, (2) Disagree that restrictions should be made to limit safety nets to older immigrants, (3) Neutral, (4) Agree that restrictions should be made to limit safety nets to older immigrants, (5) Strongly agree that restrictions should be made to limit safety nets to older immigrants. About 49% of the articles were in disagreement that restrictions should be made to limit federal safety nets, compared to 34.2% of the article which were in agreement in terms of restrictions (See Table 11).

Table 11
Types of Stance in Editorial Articles
on Supplemental Security Income and Immigrants:1993-1998

| Stance | Frequency n | Percent % |
|--|------------------------|----------------------|
| Strongly disagree that restrictions should be made to limit safety nets for older immigrants (1) | 42 | 35.0 |
| Disagree that restrictions should be made to limit safety nets for older immigrants (2) | 17 | 14.2 |
| Neutral (3) | 20 | 16.7 |
| Agree that restrictions should be made to limit safety nets for older immigrants (4) | 14 | 11.7 |
| Strongly agree that restrictions should be made to limit safety nets for older immigrants (5) | 27 | 22.5 |

Table 12
Type of editorial piece by year and by mean (stance):1993-1998

| Year | Type of Editorial Articles | | |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| | Letters | Editorials | Op-Ed |
| 1993 | 1.80 | 4.00 | 0.00 |
| 1994 | 2.25 | 2.67 | 2.86 |
| 1995 | 3.00 | 3.83 | 3.17 |
| 1996 | 3.00 | 2.50 | 2.67 |
| 1997 | 3.33 | 2.23 | 2.45 |
| 1998 | 3.50 | 1.50 | 1.00 |
| Total | 2.95 | 2.65 | 2.59 |

When examining the editorials by type and year and mean score, the articles were quite diverse. The mean by all years for letters was 2.95; editorials was 2.65; and op-eds was 2.59. Letters slanted more towards restricting entitlements to older immigrants, especially after the passage of the welfare reform act. Whereas, op-eds and editorials were reverse and were skewed towards disagreeing with restricting federal safety nets to older immigrants (See Table 12).

All the articles were also coded for authorship. The articles were written by individuals or those affiliated with an organization or institution. Individuals were coded either as a US Citizen/ taxpayer, retiree or immigrant. These individuals articulated their views and identified themselves as representing these particular groups. Moreover, those representing organizations identified themselves also in the article. Unsigned articles were assumed to be that representing the newspaper editors. A large percentage of articles were those written by newspaper editors (26.6%), followed by syndicated columnists (22.5%), individuals identifying themselves as US citizens/taxpayers (11.7%), and advocates or social service providers (10.8%) (See Table 13).

Table 13. Types of Authors of Editorial Articles by Mean (Stance) and Number: 1993-1998

| Author | Mean | N |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|----------|
| Individuals | | |
| US citizen/US Taxpayer | 3.71 | 14 |
| Retiree | 4.80 | 5 |
| Immigrant | 2.00 | 6 |
| | | |
| Organizations | | |
| Social Security Administration | 3.00 | 3 |
| Interest Group | 5.00 | 1 |
| Newspaper Columnist | 2.48 | 27 |
| Think Tanks | 3.86 | 7 |
| Advocate/Social Service Providers | 1.23 | 13 |
| Newspaper Editor | 2.72 | 32 |
| Philanthropy/Religious Organizations | 1.33 | 3 |
| Academic Affiliations | 2.50 | 6 |
| Elected Official | 3.00 | 3 |

As shown in Table 14, in these different editorial articles, diverse perspectives were featured. A majority (42.1%) of these articles were slanted towards portraying older

immigrants as not deserving of federal assistance. Most of these editorial articles focus on immigrants who are allegedly purposely immigrating to attain Supplemental Security Income, as some sort of retirement benefit, even though they have not paid taxes or worked in the United States. Other themes in these editorials are 1) that the adult children of these recipients should be held responsible for the care of their aging parent – not US taxpayers, and 2) that increasing numbers of immigrants on SSI are a burden to US taxpayers. There is also a concern that the increasing numbers will also affect the solvency of the Social Security Trust Fund.

On the other side of the spectrum, 26.4% of the editorial articles focused on older immigrants as deserving of federal safety nets. Older immigrants are deserving because they have played by the rules, worked, paid taxes and are not fraudulent. Rather those who rely on Supplemental Security Income are truly needy because they are disabled and frail. They are also limited in English ability, and have difficulties passing a citizenship exam. Moreover, the editorial articles focus on the need of older immigrants for federal assistance because of the need to access health care.

The other themes focused on the intents and consequences of welfare reform. 16.7% of the editorials were concerned with how state and local governments would cope with devolution. The slant in these articles was one of crisis and blame towards federal law makers. Other themes in these articles also included welfare reform's being an assault on immigrants (6.7%), and welfare reform's being not well thought out, and not real reform (6.7%).

Table 14
Types of Themes found in Editorial Articles on
Supplemental Security Income and Immigrants: 1993-1998

| Theme | Frequency n | Percent % |
|---|------------------------|----------------------|
| Older Immigrants are NOT deserving because: | | |
| Increasing numbers on SSI are a burden to US taxpayers | 23 | 7.7 |
| Don't pay taxes and are purposely immigrating to obtain SSI as a retirement benefit | 62 | 20.7 |
| Have adult children that are financially able to take care of them | 30 | 10.0 |
| Increasing numbers on SSI affect solvency of social security system | 11 | 3.7 |
| Older Immigrants are deserving because: | | |
| Immigrants work and pay taxes | 23 | 7.7 |
| Immigrants follow rules and not fraudulent | 6 | 2.0 |
| SSI provides access to Medicaid (e.g. LTC) | 8 | 2.7 |
| Older, disabled, limited English speaking, vulnerable population in need of federal safety nets | 42 | 14.0 |
| Federal Welfare Reform | | |
| Puts pressure on state and local governments to provide safety nets for older immigrants | 44 | 14.7 |
| An assault on immigrants | 20 | 6.7 |
| Not well thought out, not real reform | 20 | 6.7 |
| Puts pressure on immigrants to become citizens but INS is inefficient | 6 | 2.0 |
| Information on the law | 2 | .7 |
| Prevents poor, low-income immigrants from sponsoring relatives because of income cutoff | 2 | .7 |

As shown in Table 15, the themes in editorial type articles change after the passage of federal welfare reform. Again, like in a similar analysis of feature articles, editorial articles (60.3%) claiming that immigrants are undeserving of Supplemental Security Income are more likely to take place prior to the passage of the law. While articles (73.4%) on immigrants deservingness are more likely to be in the press after the

passage of federal welfare reform. Also interesting is that editorials focused on the crises in immigrant communities and with local and state government were more likely again to be seen after the passage of federal welfare reform. However, overall 42% of all editorials were devoted to the proposition that immigrants were undeserving of Supplemental Security Income.

Table 15

Percentage of Themes in Editorial Type Articles on Supplemental Security Income and Immigrants Before (1/1/93 - 8/22/96) and After (8/23/96-12/31/98) the Passage of Federal Welfare Reform

| Theme | Before 1/1/93-8/22/96 % | After 8/23/96-12/31/98 % |
|---------------------------------|--|---|
| Immigrants as Deserving | 26.6 | 73.4 |
| Immigrants as Undeserving | 60.3 | 39.7 |
| Impact on Immigrant Communities | 32.1 | 67.9 |
| Concerns with Devolution | 11.4 | 88.6 |
| Issues around Welfare Reform | 45.5 | 54.5 |

IV. Conclusion

The findings of the feature news articles demonstrate the influence of the press in terms of policy decision making. A key finding in this analysis is that most of the coverage of immigrants usage of Supplemental Security Income prior to August 22, 1996 was negative and justified ending eligibility to immigrants. However, after the passage of the bill, portrayals started to change and low-income elderly immigrants were seen a legitimately in need of Supplemental Security Income. Edelman (1988) suggests that news reports shape policy making. "A political news item is therefore likely to give each reader, viewer, or auditor the impression of a specific meaning that belies its utility as a

catalyst for other ideological projections” (Edelman 1988, p. 91). Edelman (1988) sees that interpretation is part of news creation and dissemination. “Officials, interest groups, and critics anticipate the interpretation of particular audiences, shaping their acts and language so as to elicit a desired response” (Edelman 1988, p. 95). In another words, policy-makers interpret news stories for decision-making purposes and rely on the lay public’s perceptions and interpretations of the news stories.

Another interesting finding from these data is that in both the feature articles and editorial articles are that - immigrants are not the voices that speak - rather it is professionals such as attorneys, judges, politicians, academicians, think tanks, and health and social service providers that do the talking. In his work on labeling and welfare recipients, Gans (1991) finds from his extensive content analysis that there are legitimators that communicate myths of the underclass. He suggests that academic social scientists and funded think tanks are involved in legitimating myths of the underclass. These legitimators are useful in the label-making process. In fact, journalists in their news articles often quote researchers and other credentialed professionals

Besides the academicians and scholars, it is important to understand who else become the primary definers of particular policy problems. In both feature articles and editorial articles, high powered individuals and organizations are quoted most often or are the authors of op-eds and commentaries. According to Brint (1994), professionals, such as attorneys, judges, elected officials, and even health and social service providers, are powerful because they are usually invited to establish the initial framework from whence all policy discussion flows. Those who define the problem are those with power and prestige. “The argument is often based on a sense that, as public policy issues become

more complex, the public become less and less able to make informed decisions” (Brint 1994, p. 130). Therefore, decision-making power rests in the hands of professionals -- because the public is uninformed to the technicalities that only the expert is aware of. Brint (1994) further elaborates how an organization’s influence in federal decision-making is highly stratified by resources, political connections, and reputation. He suggests that only the organizations with the most resources are the key actors in policy making. The findings from this study demonstrate that immigrants are not usually sought after for quotes or invited op-eds or even letters to the editor; rather those defined as “professionals” have more “voice” in the press coverage of immigrants use of Supplemental Security Income.

Chapter 6

Telephone Interviews

I. Introduction

This chapter examines the findings of telephone interviews conducted with national organizations representing aging and Asian American constituencies. The telephone interview protocol is attached (See Appendix C). As described in chapter 3 on methods, respondents were identified from the universe of national Aging and Asian American organizations in the United States in 1998. Domains in the telephone survey include information regarding the organizations themselves and their role in welfare reform, collaborative efforts, perceptions of immigrant welfare recipients, and influence in policy making. Presented in this chapter is descriptive data about the organizations and their responses for each question. Later, data is examined in terms of the research questions and hypotheses.

II. Telephone Interview Findings

The survey findings describe the budgets of each of these national organizations. Next, there is description of the mission of these national organizations. The following section looks at the role of these national organizations in terms of advocacy around the federal welfare reform bill. I examined the importance of the issue to these national organizations before and after the passage of the law. This section focuses on different kinds of advocacy efforts and the best practices involved. The following section examines collaborative efforts made with local organizations, national organizations, national aging organizations, national immigrant organizations and national Asian American organizations. The subsequent section details qualitatively the perceptions that federal

policy makers had of elderly immigrant welfare recipients. Finally, there is a discussion of perceived successes of these organizations with federal policy makers in terms of altering negative perceptions of elderly immigrant welfare recipients, as well as barriers that these organizations faced in terms of being influential.

A. Organizational Information

Fifty-eight organizations were interviewed, however only fifty six organizations when asked, “What is your organizational budget for this current fiscal year?” disclosed their financial status. The large majority (80%) of all organizations reported budgets over \$100,000. However, the large majority (80%) of national Asian American Organizations reported budgets under one million dollars, only 20% had budgets that exceeded that. On the other hand, the majority (67%) of national Aging organizations reported budgets over 1 million dollars (see Table 16). There were no differences between organizations with budgets under 1 million dollars and those over in terms of whether they were involved in advocacy efforts.

TABLE 16

1998 Organizational Budget

| Budget in Dollars | Aging N | Aging % | Asian American N | Asian American % | Total N | Total % |
|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| under \$99,000 | 5 | 16.1 | 6 | 24.0 | 11 | 19.6 |
| \$100,000 - 999,999 | 5 | 16.1 | 14 | 56.0 | 19 | 33.9 |
| \$1 million -9.9 million | 9 | 29.0 | 4 | 16.0 | 13 | 23.2 |
| Over \$10 million | 12 | 38.7 | 1 | 4.0 | 13 | 23.2 |
| Total Respondents | 31 | 100.0 | 25 | 100.0 | 56 | 100.0 |

Question 1: What is your organizational budget for this current fiscal year?

The mission of the various organizations varied considerably. Both national Asian American and national Aging organizations were involved in serving their populations, but also service providers and the general public. The mission of aging organizations included serving the needs of older adults, serving service providers, training and education to members, promoting education, and/or improving the health and well-being of older adults. While national Asian American organizations represented ethnic specific or gender specific organizations, and had mission statements that included serving the Asian American community, serving service providers, leadership development, civil rights/immigrant rights and/or improving the health status of Asian Americans.

B. Organization's Role in Federal Welfare Reform

Almost three-fourths (74.1%) of all organizations were involved in some type of advocacy on the welfare reform and elderly immigrant issue either before and/or after the passage of federal welfare reform. When asked what types of involvement, the top three types of advocacy actions stated most frequently were meeting with public officials (57.7%), building and joining coalitions (53.8%), and letter-writing campaigns (38.5%). Unlike national Aging organizations, Asian American organizations were more likely to be involved in letter-writing campaigns, media work and participating in demonstrations (See Table 17). While national Aging organizations were more likely to meet with public officials, join coalitions and disseminate educational materials.

Later, when respondents were asked an open-ended question, "What type of involvement worked best?" respondents gave several different types of answers. About one-third (37%) of the total respondents mentioned coalition-building as the most

effective form of advocacy. National Aging organizations and national Asian American organizations both cited education and coalition-building as the most effective ways

TABLE 17

**Types of Involvement on Federal Welfare Reform done
by National Aging and Asian American Organizations: 1996-1998**

| Type of Involvement | Total N | Total % | Aging N | Aging % | Asian American N | Asian American % |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Dissemination of Educational Materials | 4 | 15.4 | 2 | 22.2 | 2 | 11.8 |
| Building and Joining Coalitions | 14 | 53.8 | 5 | 55.6 | 9 | 52.9 |
| Meeting w/ public officials | 15 | 57.7 | 6 | 66.7 | 9 | 52.9 |
| Participating in demonstrations | 3 | 11.5 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 17.6 |
| Letter-writing campaigns | 10 | 38.5 | 1 | 11.1 | 9 | 52.9 |
| Media Work | 5 | 19.2 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 29.4 |
| Total Respondents | 26 | 100.0 | 9 | 100.0 | 17 | 100.0 |

Question4b: In what ways was your organization involved?

of influencing law makers and the public. Most of the respondents suggested that not just one organization could be successful alone, but that other types of organizations needed to be involved and this meant expanding coalitions beyond traditional boundaries in order to gain some political influence. One national Asian American advocate states how these types of coalitions worked, and the difficulties associated with working with such a diverse coalition:

Unique partnerships that emerged were temporary and some hopefully long-lasting. The intersection of welfare and immigration were complex. The people who worked in poverty had to learn the whole immigration construct and those working in immigration rights had to learn TANF, SSI and Medicaid. We really needed each other. Some of the cross-over, like disability groups paying more attention to racial ethnic minorities, and on our end understanding how disabled minorities are sometimes worse off. (#211)

However, unlike national Asian American organizations, national Aging organizations mentioned meeting and contacting public officials (25%) and letter writing (18%) as successful forms of advocacy. One national aging advocate states that different types of groups came together to work on this issue, but the work was also about educating each other and reframing the issue.

Traditionally national Aging and Asian American organizations work on the other [different] side of the aisle. But we just needed to find a critical mass in terms of coalition work, and approach it from a certain framing of things... It's a matter of framing the argument (#201).

This respondent articulated the process of coalition-building, but also the need to work together to re-frame how elderly immigrants were perceived by lawmakers.

The involvement that also worked best for advocates was education. Almost two-thirds (63%) of respondents cited educating lawmakers, the public and immigrants themselves as the most effective way of making change. A major way this was done was through putting faces on the issue:

As the law coming to, we put faces to the issue. We had a news conference. We had elders from Laos, Cambodia and put a face on the people... It was more effective as a coalition. There were a lot of Jewish groups, Hispanic and Asian groups, and immigration lawyers were involved. It became an interesting coalition, but it was much more effective (#104).

This is mentioned throughout the interviews by a majority of the respondents that once lawmakers knew who was impacted and when groups became coalesced, lawmakers started to pay attention to this issue and worked towards restorations.

A study question necessitates an understanding of whether there was a difference in terms of importance of the issue to these national organizations before and after August 22, 1996. For national Asian American organizations, the issue was important before and

after the passage of the 1996 of welfare reform bill. However, for national Aging organizations the issue became more important after the passage of the welfare reform bill (See Table 18). In fact, for national Aging organizations there was a +30% change in terms of the level of importance of the issue after the bill had passed.

TABLE 18

Importance of Welfare Reform to Organization Before and After August 22, 1996

| Responses | Aging Before % | Aging After % | % Change | Asian American Before % | Asian American After % | % Change |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| Not important (1, 2) | 61.9% | 31.8% | -30.1% | 5.6% | 0.0% | -5.6% |
| Important (3, 4, 5) | 38.1% | 68.2% | +30.1% | 94.4% | 100% | +5.6% |
| Total Respondents | 100.0 | 100.0 | | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Question 6b: On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not important at all, 2 not very important 3 important, 4 somewhat important, 5 very important, How important was the welfare reform and elderly immigrant issue to your organization after the passage of the 1996 Federal Welfare Reform Law? (Codes 1&2 and Codes 3, 4, 5 were collapsed)

C. Organizational Collaborative Efforts

About two-thirds (65.2%) of all national Asian American groups that worked on welfare reform worked collaboratively with other national immigration groups (See Table 19). However, only (26.1%) of all national Asian American groups worked collaboratively in some way with national Aging groups on the welfare reform issue. More than three-fourths (78.3%) of these groups spent time working with other national Asian American organizations on this issue. In addition, nearly two-thirds (65.2%) worked with local and regional organizations on this issue, especially with local and regional groups in California, New York, Illinois and Minnesota.

Almost three-fourths (72.7%) of all national Aging organizations worked collaboratively with other national aging organizations. More than half (54.5%) of the Aging organizations worked with national immigration organizations, and 31.8% mentioned working collaboratively with national Asian American organizations. Unlike national Asian American organizations, only 36% of national Aging organizations worked with local and regional organizations on welfare reform.

TABLE 19

**National Collaborations made by
National Aging and Asian American Organizations around
Federal Welfare Reform: 1996-1998**

| Responses | Aging N | Aging % | Asian American N | Asian American % | Total N | Total % |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| National Aging Orgs. | 16 | 72.7 | 7 | 33.3 | 23 | 53.5 |
| National Immigrant Orgs | 12 | 54.5 | 16 | 76.2 | 28 | 65.1 |
| National Asian American Organizations | 7 | 31.8 | 19 | 90.5 | 26 | 60.5 |

Question 9. Did you work with national aging groups?

Question 10. Did you work with national immigrant groups?

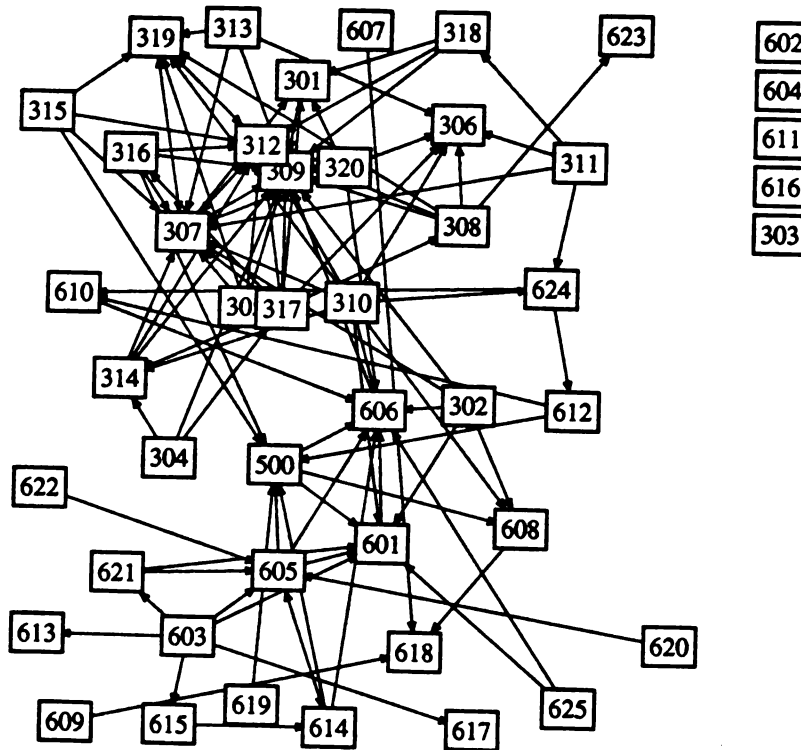
Question 11. Did you work with national Asian American?

In examining collaborations between and among national Aging organizations and Asian American organizations, it is relevant to know if there were relational ties between a select number of organizations. In order to understand the strength of relational ties between and among these organizations, a social network analysis was conducted. Network structure is analyzed using terms such as density, centrality, prestige, mutuality, and role. This analysis is used often to understand the structure of inter-organizational ties. "It goes beyond measurements taken on individuals to analyze data on patterns of

relational ties and to examine how the existence and functioning of such ties are constrained by the social networks in which they are embedded” (Wellman and Wasserman 1998, p. 2).

Figure 2

**Collaborations made between and among
National Asian American¹ and National Aging Organizations²
during the Federal Welfare Reform Debates**



Organization #500 represents a focal player between the aging and Asian American circles. This organization has the most arrows from both types of organization. This organization represents both constituencies, and therefore is well-versed with the

¹ National Asian American Organizations represented numbers 301-321

² National Aging Organizations represented numbers 601-626. One organization represented both aging and Asian American interests and their number was 500.

key players in both arenas. On the other hand, in the national Asian American network, organization #309 has the most arrows and represents an organization involved in civil rights for Asian Americans, and an organization that is normally a key player among national Asian American organizations. Among national Aging organizations, organization #606 has the most arrows, and is an organization in which others turn to for advice and information. This aging organization represents the interests of low-income seniors.

According to Scott (1991), density refers to cohesion existing among organizations, while centralization illustrates how this cohesion is organized around focal points. Density is the percentage of ties actually made out of the total ties and refers to the average tie strength. While network centralization describes how tightly coalesced the network is. When looking at national aging organizations, the network centralization score was 24%. On the other hand, national Asian American organizations exhibited stronger ties among each other on this issue, with a network centralization score of 51%.

In terms of collaborations, between national Asian American organizations and national Aging organizations these scores were much smaller than the collaborations scores that existed within their own networks. (See Figure 2). The network centralization score was 22.2% and the density value was .05, all suggesting that ties between national Asian American organization and national Aging organizations were quite small. However, when one looks at figure 2, there does seem to be some key players in the aging and Asian American networks that assist with collaborations across these two arenas.

D. Perceptions of Elderly Immigrant Welfare Recipients

In addition to the organizational questions on advocacy and organizational capacity, the telephone survey of key informants also consisted of a set of open-ended questions on how immigrant welfare recipients were perceived by federal law makers, and how advocates combated such perceptions. Overwhelmingly, the discussion was about SSI use and immigrants, and the perceptions formed by federal lawmakers were those of immigrants on SSI. In addition, the survey asked respondents if they tried to portray immigrants differently from the policy debates. For example, did they provide an alternative set of perceptions? The following is a discussion of the key themes that emerged from the telephone survey.

Before the passage of the 1996 Federal Welfare Reform Law

Overwhelmingly (100%), both aging and Asian American organizations felt that perceptions of immigrant welfare recipients were negative prior to the passage of welfare reform. Prior to the passage of welfare reform, most federal policy makers thought that large numbers of immigrants were coming to the United States to get on welfare. They felt that all immigrants were abusing the system. Policy makers were raising fraud issues on immigrants' utilization of SSI, and at the same time, not providing a comprehensive understanding of the diverse backgrounds of immigrants. Rather, all immigrants were lumped together as abusing the system.

According to these national advocates, stereotypes abounded about elderly immigrants on Supplemental Security Income and their adult children. Most often the picture being painted was that adult children were walking away from their responsibilities and leaving it up to the US taxpayer to pick up the tab. One national aging advocate describes it well stating that, among federal policy makers, “there were stereotypes that people were coming to the country to get benefits. All the bad stereotypes were mentioned. That’s why it was important to have human stories to combat these stories, otherwise there was a prevailing stereotype that adult children were bringing senior relatives to steal American dollars” (#118). Over and over again, advocates mentioned that these negative stereotypes were prevalent among federal policy makers.

Many of the national Asian American advocates stated that many of these stereotypes were tainted with racism. The focus of [federal welfare reform] was on immigrants from non-European countries. One national Asian American advocate states that he felt Asian immigrants were particularly targeted:

In the early 80s, it was like the welfare queens and now it was like immigrants who were seen as taking advantage of the system. The focus was on Asian immigrants. It was sort of the image of Asian elderly immigrants getting on SSI as soon as possible and yet they have sons and daughter driving around in a Mercedes Benz. It clashed with the model minority image. They thought these immigrants were fraudulent and not deserving (#223).

Among many of the national Asian American advocates, the feeling was that Asian immigrant elderly were particularly targeted during the federal welfare reform hearings. The adult children of these immigrants were painted as financially able, but intentionally scamming the government so their mother or father could attain Supplemental Security Income.

In fact, policy makers perceived that families were petitioning older family members to come to this country for the sole purpose of attaining Supplemental Security Income. One national aging advocate states that immigrants and their families were perceived as individuals who wanted to “sponge off the government and they came off from another country to get on the dole and they bring their huge family to get on the dole. It was similar to the view of lazy mothers with lots of kids who don’t work” (#123). Both aging and Asian American advocates expressed that immigrant families were constructed as “irresponsible” when it came to sponsoring a relative to immigrate. As a result, lawmakers wanted to scale back the number of immigrants arriving under family reunification preferences. One Asian American advocate states:

The conservatives were trying to present a mythology of chain immigration involving relatives bringing in relatives to put them on welfare. Moreover, the conservatives were promoting a nativist agenda. So you have nativism and a mythology of people abusing the system (#207).

Because of federal welfare reform, poor immigrants no longer sponsor family members.

On the other hand, national Asian American advocates suggested that lawmakers seem to welcome proposals to increase the number of immigrants in skilled, educated professions.

According to one national aging advocate, balancing the budget was the motivation for focusing on the eligibility of immigrants to Supplemental Security Income. Due to the politics involved, policy makers did not seek to educate themselves regarding the differences among immigrants. One national aging advocate states:

In many instances there were incorrect perceptions of immigrant populations coming to the US. They didn’t understand the elderly immigrant population, especially the issues of literacy and poor health. All they were looking at was deficit reduction (#119).

Another national aging advocate suggests that differences between young and older immigrants was not examined, but that the assumption about older immigrants was that they were unproductive immigrants:

There was very little differentiation between elderly and young immigrants. There was just a lack of focus individual issues and a tendency to grandstand. My own view is that there is this kind of jingoism and there is a license to express that we have too many people entering this country and that elderly poor people are useless (#109).

Moreover, both national aging and Asian American advocates suggested that the reasons why older immigrants on SSI were targeted was due to the fact that they didn't vote, and moreover, that they would probably not attain US citizenship due to language and cultural problems, and would not be a threat to lawmakers. One national aging advocate states that the perceptions by law makers were that older immigrants on SSI:

... don't have political clout. They are primarily an unproductive member of our community. They are a budgetary drain on local and charitable institutions. They don't speak our language. There are no perceptual change for the positive (#112).

Therefore, it was an easier population on which to target cutbacks because there would be no fear of reprisals. They were not a constituency that politicians thought would affect them at the polls. However, one national Asian American advocate states that "they were counting on the immigrant population not organizing against this and making the presumption that this sector of immigrants wouldn't be able to respond." (#216) What actually transpired, as these interviews demonstrate, were that national organizations became heavily involved in this issue.

After the passage of the 1996 Federal Welfare Reform Law

After the passage of welfare reform, a majority (90%) of advocates suggested that perceptions of elderly immigrant welfare recipients started to change. According to one national Asian American advocate, federal policy makers felt they had gone too far, especially when advocacy organizations and immigrant elders started to voice their opposition to the bill. Moreover, several of the advocates stated that local communities rose to meet the challenges of welfare reform. Several of the national Asian American advocates cited examples of communities increasing pushes to help immigrants become naturalized. Many in different ethnic communities were helping seniors learn English and helping them through the naturalization process. In addition, advocacy groups were collecting horror stories and the implications of welfare reform on low-income older immigrants. Many national advocates stated that Republicans felt they had gone too far and that it was a political and moral liability to have starving legal immigrants. One advocate states:

You saw suicides happening in Asian immigrant community. The picture being painted was distraught individuals and Congress woke up to that. It happened before the Congressional 1996 election, The Republicans were being seen as anti-immigrant and were taking the backlash... The immigrant community realized that these pieces of legislation were driven by Republicans. In turn, immigrants were getting naturalized and were registering Democrats. The Republicans knew in the long run they couldn't afford it (#209).

Another national Asian American advocate insinuates that federal law makers were ignorant of how immigrant communities would respond to this issue:

They realized that you can't just attack immigrants without the response from others who are voters. There is a voting segment of the immigrant population that

will get upset and this voting sector is getting bigger and bigger. So they need to finesse this better than they have in the past (#221).

Advocates mentioned first bringing to the media's attention elderly immigrants who were afraid of losing their financial and medical assistance because of federal welfare reform. Advocates were able to share stories with the press of elderly immigrants vulnerable and legitimately in need of federal assistance. As a result, stories of elders scared and depressed about their potential loss of their SSI checks educated law makers on the consequences of their decision. Moreover, news reports of suicides by elders who feared that they would not be able to survive because they had no other support prompted Congress to re-examine the issue one more time. In addition, stories demonstrated that elderly immigrants on SSI were in need of assistance and that "there was a greater appreciation in that many were in circumstances not under their control. There was a greater political sensitivity towards the elderly and especially the illustration of those cognitively impaired" (#121).

As different groups and institutions were being affected by welfare reform, different groups also started to come together to combat and advocate for those affected by the changes in the law. A broad coalition of different organizations came together. One national Asian American advocate states that:

The congress went too far in terms of cutting SSI benefits and it created this perception of elderly immigrants being kicked out of SNFs and it created an uncomfortable position for legislatures and this created a broader coalition now with aging groups. It sent a backlash. It broadened the coalition and more people became involved in the issue (#214).

Groups that normally did not work together - coalesced and found themselves working to restore lost federal entitlements to immigrants. In addition to coalition-building, timing and context were cited as reasons why national organizations were successful in winning restorations of Supplemental Security Income to immigrants who resided in the US prior to August 22, 1996. One national aging advocate cites that restorations of programs that have been cut or removed by legislation that has already passed is highly unusual:

Usually when you lose.. you lose and it's over. A key reason is that we got a second bite of the apple in a larger budget. It was possible to fund it...Timing and context were important. It was a more hands-on situation. There were people documenting information and handing it off to us and that's why it feels like it became more effective. It was a partnership at both ends. It was combating stereotypes and developing impact information and demonstrating that there were deserving people (#100).

Several advocates felt their efforts were successful in winning restorations for some immigrants, but that this win was attributed to the strength of collaborations made across different sectors.

In addition to public attention brought to this issue, and to the collaborative advocacy that formed, one national Asian American advocate proposes that when the public and policy makers were aware that it was not simply Latino and Asian immigrants affected, public opinion started to change:

After the bill passed, we worked closely with the white ethnic groups because we knew one thing about the US is that it is a racist country. We met with a white House official, and he mentioned that we needed to bring out the white faces. You have to have people see beyond the Asian and Latino elders and so there was a lot of efforts to get the stories of Soviet Jews and the Portuguese and really to get other communities to come forward and not realize that it was simply a yellow and brown people issue (#211).

Many of the national Asian American organizations suspected that race and racism played a role in ending federal means-tested entitlements to immigrants. According to these respondents, non-white immigrants were associated with welfare use and abuse.

E. Organization's Influence

Approximately 63% of the national organizations that were involved in federal advocacy also were involved in challenging or providing an alternative portrayal of elderly immigrants on Supplemental Security Income. When asked how they tried to portray older immigrants, 100% of the respondents from both Aging and Asian American organizations stated that they tried to illustrate that these elders are deserving of entitlements and that there is no difference between citizens and non-citizens when it comes to need. The turning point in their advocacy efforts was after the passage of the bill. Advocates were able to demonstrate that these were individuals who played by the rules - but found themselves in circumstances beyond their control. An Asian American advocate states that:

When people were committing suicide and nursing homes were taking in people and publicly saying they would ship people out when the law would take into effect.. and when there were photos of people in wheelchairs and huge groups of people at the hill.. people started to understand that these people were deserving. They didn't have wealthy kids and they were legitimately poor (#211).

How did advocacy groups go about framing the issue? Advocates discussed how they matter-of-factly presented the implications of the law on low-income elderly immigrants.

One national Asian American advocate states that:

We just told their stories. Did we want the elderly and disabled who didn't speak English without any means of subsistence? We were trying to show the tragic

picture if we didn't restore SSI. We had elderly people speak up for themselves and we compiled stories for lawmakers (#202).

A lot of the time, advocates had to battle the anecdotes and stereotypes that lawmakers heard and held concerning elderly immigrants on Supplemental Security Income:

Perceptions were still the same, but now voices were being heard. The abuse and fraud stuff was anecdotal and not pervasive. Our focus was to battle anecdotes and present realities of refugees and elderly who had no family or sponsors and to talk about the human cost (#223).

Moreover, lawmakers were coming face to face with constituencies that were affected by changes in the law. Lawmakers saw these immigrants who played by the rules, and were not defrauding the government. And for whatever reason, family sponsors had abdicated their responsibilities to the US taxpayer, but there were legitimate reasons for assistance.

In addition, advocates framed the issue from a discussion of strain on local coffers. One national Aging advocate discusses a strategy they used with law makers which included:

.. by talking about the implications at the state and local level and saying what would be the implications for nursing home residents if Medicaid was cut off. Where would they go? What would happen? (#115)

In fact, this was mentioned by several of the respondents that once the issue got away from fraudulent elderly immigrants to that of the financial impact at the local level, law makers started to rethink the issue from a fiscal standpoint.

Another way that advocates helped change perceptions was by involving their clients and members in the political process. One national aging advocate states:

I feel our organization was influential. Some of our residents had the biggest impact. A lady in Boston and a man in his 90s from Russia contacted their

legislators. The grassroots appeal was the strongest. They were nursing home residents. We tried to get our residents involved in the political process in terms of providing them with information (#130).

Several advocates suggested that once elderly immigrants, impacted by federal welfare reform, started to voice their concerns to the press and to federal law makers -- perceptions started to change.

In terms of the barriers that organizations faced in dealing with working on welfare reform issues, some of the respondents discussed how members of Congress were the biggest challenge to changing negative perceptions of older immigrants on welfare. Advocates suggested that Congress was bent on cutting back on immigration and welfare. Even though advocates tried to paint a different picture of older immigrants and the need for a federal safety net, lawmakers seemed to ignore the complexity of the problem. Advocates suggested that the federal budget process and the need to reform welfare provided no other political alternatives.

Both national aging and national Asian American organizations expressed that the lack of organizational capacity - in terms of resources -- was a major barrier in influencing the debate on welfare reform and elderly immigrants. One national Aging advocate states that:

Organizations that have a political base and membership base can move Congress. Welfare reform is driven by stereotypes and emotions, and not facts, and if there are an absence of facts, the only thing you have are political relationships. In the last cycle, the anecdotes worked against us (#123).

Another aging organization spokesperson suggests that it was these anecdotes that prevented their organization from being involved earlier in the debate. Many of the aging groups cited the lack of public interest and support on the issue, as well as common

assumptions on the issue. In fact, nearly one-third (31%) of national aging organizations mentioned this as a factor in terms of barriers to effective advocacy. The leadership had believed some of these anecdotes:

“We had a perception that people who arrive in this country should depend on their families. It took us awhile to get underneath the rhetoric. The first response of our leadership is that the family should be responsible. But we were able to look at individual cases which was the important thing (#100).

Moreover, for aging organizations there was a lack of knowledge about welfare issues. Aging groups were focused on entitlements like Social Security and Medicare. One aging advocate notes that “we weren’t focused on welfare reform because it wasn’t the focus of our constituency, so we didn’t have an expert. So the issue caught us by surprise” (#100). Another national aging advocate suggested that the reason for the lack of information and collaborative advocacy is that “there is no coordinated strategy among progressive groups challenging issues and there is no coordinated budgets and no networks. There is no communication linkage in which we exchange issues. There is no funding for this type of coordinated work (#112).”

Moreover, many of the national Asian American organizations felt that there is a lack of resources to do advocacy and collaborations on this issue. In fact, 44% of the national Asian American organizations cited this as a barrier to effective advocacy. One respondent states, “Resources, Resources. If we had more money and people, we would have a bigger impact (#205).” The lack of resources made it even more difficult to elicit grassroots support and acquire data on welfare and Asian immigrants.

Many national Asian American advocates felt the community was divided on the issue. Asian Americans did not want to recognize that people were on welfare in our

community and it became a class issue in terms of trying to elicit grassroots support. In fact over one-fourth (28%) of the national Asian American organizations felt that lack of unity among the diverse groups prevented successful advocacy efforts on welfare reform.

One representative of a national Asian American organization states:

A lot of people in the Asian community weren't aware of the level of poverty because of the model minority image and the shame factor and people in our own community who had no real sense of the magnitude of this whole thing and difficulties in getting the whole community to understand what was at stake. A lot of people in are community weren't sympathetic to low-income issues. There is a lot of ethnic, class issues in our community, because those hardest hit were those with the least political resources which was the Southeast Asian community (#211).

Asian American themselves were led to believe that they were a model minority and many did not feel comfortable acknowledging that there were people on welfare in our community. Middle-class issues like Affirmative Action and Campaign Finance seemed to galvanize community more than something like welfare reform. Another respondent states, "We have generational factions with our community. With our community, it's hard to have a political identity that is useful. During the welfare reform debates, who did you hear from the Asian American community?" (#222)

Moreover, many second generation advocates suggested that elderly immigrants were not recognized as a voting, powerful, influential constituency. It was even more difficult for these advocates to get their stories told because of their limited English proficiency. "Elderly immigrants are basically viewed as voiceless and powerless. They usually are not to the polls, so it hard to leverage votes" (#209). In addition, there were different views between American born and Asian born on the issue.

III. Conclusions

This telephone survey of 58 respondents produced interesting results as to the role and nature of national advocacy organizations. This study is simply descriptive and describes who was involved and the nature of their involvement. It is interesting to note that the importance of the issue was much more salient with national Asian American organizations prior to the passage, and became more of a priority with national Aging organizations after the passage. Based on the findings of these telephone interviews, this issue was not on the agenda for many national Aging organizations until after the passage of the bill. Moreover, national Asian American organizations were more involved in more grassroots type of advocacy work, such as letter-writing and participating in demonstrations, than national Aging organizations who more likely to be involved in meeting public officials.

According to Zald and McCarthy (1987), the success of a movement is determined by the ability of the organization to mobilize resources. However, the findings of this study demonstrate that an organization's lack of financial resources did not deter an organization from being involved. Organizations with budgets over 1 million dollars did not mean they were automatically involved in advocacy efforts. A majority (80%) of national Asian American organizations had budgets under 1 million dollars, yet a majority of national Asian American organizations felt the issue was important before and after the passage of federal welfare reform.

Traditionally, national organizations usually collaborate with organizations within their own area. However, the far-reaching implications of welfare reform on low-income older immigrants brought together a diverse set of organizations that normally did not

work together. Both national aging and national Asian American organizations collaborated within their own network and to a lesser extent each other. In fact, over and over again, advocates suggested that it was the power of coalitions that helped bring change, and ultimately restorations of Supplemental Security Income to immigrants who were in the US before August 22, 1996. Restorations, of any kind, is no small feat and demonstrates the strength of these collaborations. Knoke (1990) in his work on social networks suggests that what is most critical in any movement “are the pre-existing and emergent networks through which these organizations’ resources and influence communications are pooled, exchanged, and coordinated in struggles to win or resist political change” (Knoke 1990, p. 80).

Through the use of a social network analysis (see figure 2), it is interesting to note who the key players were in this effort. According to Knoke (1990), social movement organization leaders exhibit different levels of involvement. Most leaders are not heavily involved in issues, usually there are a small number of leaders that are involved. “These key players are the nodes that link organizations and individuals within a movement and/or they may provide connections between one entire social movement and another, for example between the antiwar and civil rights movements” (Knoke 1990, p. 79). Although the linkages between the aging and Asian American sector were not strong, there were key players who worked to bridge these two different sectors. The key player in this study was the organization that was able to work in both national aging and Asian American circles.

Not only were national organizations involved collaboratively, they also worked to educate lawmakers, the public and themselves. Through education – issues

automatically got reframed. According to social constructionists, issues are defined and constructed by sponsors. Gamson and Modigliani (1989) suggest that sponsorship is not simply advocacy but also involves packaging to promote a specific frame. Social movement organizations, such as the ones in aging and the Asian American community, were instrumental in the framing process. Through their advocacy work, they reframed issues and got the media to highlight other competing frames not voiced by politicians. They put faces to this policy, and brought voices impacted by the policy to the forefront. These organizations illustrated that older immigrants were indeed deserving of help, and did not have intentions of scamming the government or US taxpayers. These were individuals legitimately poor. In educating the public, they reframed and indeed changed the direction and outcome of this political debate.

Chapter 7

Conclusions

The study was done to understand how elderly immigrants became “undeserving” of federal means tested entitlements, in particular Supplemental Security Income. The concluding chapter attempts to provide a comprehensive understanding of the images and perceptions that emerged through the media and policy hearings of elderly immigrant welfare recipients before, during and after the 1996 federal welfare reform law. This chapter also seeks to provide an analysis of how key activists and organizations contested and challenged these perceptions during this time period. Finally, I will discuss the theoretical, methodological and policy implications of this dissertation.

I. Summary of Results

The expected relationship was that older immigrants would be depicted as “undeserving” of Supplemental Security Income prior to the passage of federal welfare reform. Several themes arose from my analyses of congressional hearings which agreed with this hypothesis. Overall, older immigrants on Supplemental Security Income were framed negatively by the witnesses testifying in congressional hearings held between 1994 and 1996. Over and over again, numbers of never-ending, escalating numbers of immigrant SSI recipients gone amok are heard throughout all these hearings. Older immigrants and their adult children are painted as fraudulent and non-contributing members of society. Although alternative frames do get interjected from time to time, negative frames capture the perceptions of federal law makers.

In the analysis of major US newspapers discussing Supplemental Security Income and immigrants, similar findings were found. When looking at themes before and after the passage of federal welfare reform, the frames of older immigrants on Supplemental Security Income change dramatically. Prior to the passage of the bill, older immigrants were portrayed as undeserving of Supplemental Security Income. Older immigrants on Supplemental Security Income were portrayed as an ever-increasing population that law makers had to stop. While their adult children were depicted as financially able, but being irresponsible in the care of their aging parent by leaving the responsibility to the American citizen taxpayer. On the other hand, after the passage, a majority of the coverage was about immigrants being deserving of federal assistance. The images started to change as the realities of federal welfare reform started to sink in. The press covered distraught and fearful older immigrants afraid of losing their only form of assistance. Suicides were reported. There were stories of older adults trying to learn English to become a naturalized citizen. In the end, the overall picture was that older immigrants on SSI were legitimately poor and had not defrauded the government. A large percentage of stories that occurred after the passage concerned itself with devolution as local politicians and health and service providers vocalized their concerns about the impending crises about to take place.

Findings from the analysis of editorial, commentaries and Letters to the Editor of US major newspapers show that these articles were slanted towards portraying older immigrants as not deserving of federal assistance. Many of these articles depicted older immigrants intentionally immigrating to attain Supplemental Security Income, as some sort of retirement benefit, even though they have not paid taxes or worked in the United

States. Other themes in these editorials are 1) that the adult children of these recipients should be held responsible for the care of their aging parent – not US taxpayers, and 2) that increasing numbers of immigrants on SSI are a burden to US taxpayers. There is also a concern that the increasing numbers will also affect the solvency of the Social Security Trust Fund.

Another hypothesis supported by our findings is that educated professionals were more influential in this debate than immigrants. In both the newspaper analyses and the congressional hearings, the key voices in the debate represent educated professionals. Immigrants, if heard, usually illustrate the realities of federal welfare reform and speak up to demonstrate their deservingness and neediness of Supplemental Security Income. On the other hand, educated professionals such as government bureaucrats, politicians, and scholars speak to delegitimize the legitimate neediness of low-income older immigrants. According to national advocates, the ability to get the voices and stories of older immigrants to the press and federal law makers was pivotal in the debate. Prior to the passage, federal law makers were concerned with reducing the deficit, and older immigrants were an easy target, and they were not necessarily interested in understanding the whole issue. Because of their ignorance, advocates became educators to law makers and to the general public.

A relationship that did not hold true is that the size of an organization's budget did not determine involvement in the debates. An organization with a budget over 1 million dollars was not necessarily involved in advocacy. National Asian American organizations felt the importance of the issue much sooner than national aging organizations, and as a result were involved much earlier in the issue. Both national Asian American and national

Aging organizations were involved in collaborative work amongst each other. Unlike other policy issues, federal welfare reform brought together a network that had not existed before.

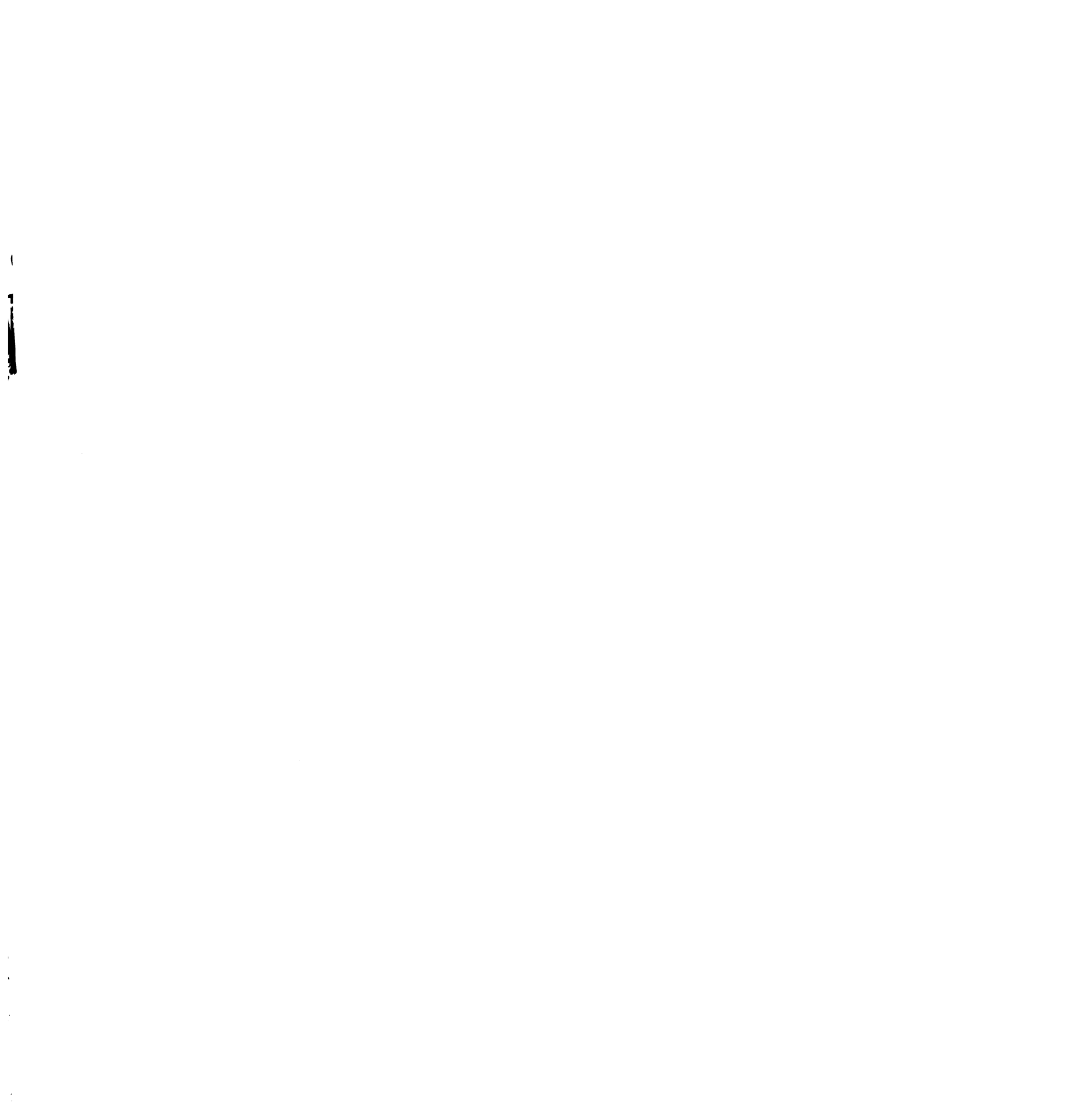
II. Contributions to Theory

The following key themes emerged from the findings, and contribute to theory-building:

Fiscal Crisis: Budget Deficit

Based on the findings from the telephone interviews transcripts of the Congressional hearings, and newspaper analyses, the escalating numbers and unscrupulous behavior of older immigrants on SSI, what has been constructed as creating and exacerbating a fiscal crisis. Past work done by sociologists explain how immigrants and the aged are sometimes constructed as the cause of a fiscal crisis. James O'Connor in his book, The Meaning of Crisis, discusses how the concept of fiscal crisis is a subjective reality, and not necessarily objective. In an attempt to restore long-term profitability, "crisis are the cauldrons in which capital qualitatively restructures itself for economic, social, and political renewal and further accumulation" (O'Connor 1987, p. 94).

The findings of this dissertation add a different dimension to the discussion of fiscal crisis. This dissertation contributes to this perspective by discussing how age, race and ethnicity become part of ideological constructions used to implement policies against older immigrants. Estes (1991) suggests that in order for such constructions to be sustained, images are to be constructed by policymakers, the experts and the media, and



they should appeal to economic principles. Estes illustrates how the aged are seen as taking from the system because of their increased longevity and need for resources. The rationale for cuts to programs that serve the elderly is that it is “robbing the young.” The elderly are perceived as not entitled, but ‘greedy geezers’ who are exhausting the state’s and the younger generations’ resources.

Like Estes work, the findings of this dissertation illustrate a similar framing of older adults taking needed resources from a younger, working, tax-paying population. However, unlike native US elders, older immigrant welfare recipients are considered not entitled because they are seen as not being part of the US community to be taken care by its’ citizens, but as outsiders (not a US citizen) that are trying to take advantage of the Supplemental Security Income program. Rather these older immigrants are seen as taking away resources from other US elders and from a younger, working population concerned about whether Social Security will exist for them. Although SSI payments are not paid out of the Social Security Trust Funds, published Letters to the Editor and even federal law makers have eluded to the fact that older immigrants use of SSI somehow impacts the Social Security Trust Fund. It’s easy to see why older immigrants would be targeted. The US population is aging, and younger immigrants work in unskilled and semiskilled jobs that keep the economy running; but they also pay taxes and much of this goes to supporting Social Security (Wilson 1999). Older immigrants are constructed as dependent, and therefore not contributing to taxes. Ultimately, these aging immigrants are considered a burden, but also a useful scapegoat by politicians, and the public alike, for the crises looming overhead.

Calavita (1996), in her work on proposition 187, further discusses how immigrants can be constructed to be the cause of a fiscal crisis. The targeting of immigrants -- as the cause of budget deficits -- is one symptom of balanced budget conservatism associated with political-economic transformations. In California, the passage of Proposition of 187 - by the majority of voters - was intended to ban undocumented immigrants from most social services including public education, all non-emergency medical care and prenatal clinics. Proposition 187 was symbolic because it blamed illegal immigrants for over-burdening government services and contributing to this fiscal crisis.

Although Calavita demonstrates how symbolic politics is used to blame immigrants for a fiscal crisis, her theoretical discussions does not discuss in detail how racist frames are used to garner support for rollbacks for this particular population. How does the element of color and language, ethnicity and race enter into the discourse on crisis? This is an important area to explore since taxes and government expenditures have become highly politicized, racialized and divided between tax payers and tax recipients and connected to racial divisions: non-whites were constructed as the primary recipients of public assistance (Edsall and Edsall, 1992). This dissertation makes a contribution by examining racist frames used to construct older immigrants as undeserving of Supplemental Security Income,

According to Estes (1983), the crisis designation means a climate of uncertainty and that action will have to take place, and policy actions that do take place are “disproportionately borne by working class and poor people” (Estes 1983, p. 447). From the telephone interview findings, it was apparent that a budget deficit meant that some

sort of action had to take place. Older immigrants on Supplemental Security Income were a vulnerable group that politicians could cutback without fears of reprisal, and without much thought of the far reaching implications of rolling back on this population. The findings, from the telephone interviews, suggest that elected officials felt that immigrants were a non-threatening population that they could focus cuts. A fiscal crisis meant they could take action. In the literature, welfare state cutbacks happen when politicians feel like they can take actions without fears of voter backlash (Pierson 1996). Because governments want to avoid blame for cutbacks, framing the issue as a fiscal crisis provides protection (Pierson 1996).

At the same, the actions of federal law makers produced a crises of its own at the local level that demanded attention. The findings of this dissertation demonstrate how a fiscal crisis can fuel other types of crises at the grassroots level - only to be re-examined once more. After the passage of federal welfare reform, the press reported huge numbers of states and counties facing a fiscal crisis of their own because of the cuts that federal law makers were doing. Moreover, health and service providers facing a crisis of how to continue providing services even though federal tax dollars would no longer pay for such services. While those in immigrant communities were dealing with the impending cuts to cash assistance and the need to naturalize those in the community, but facing barriers and obstacles with an inefficient government bureaucracy: the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS).

Social Movements

This dissertation provides an understanding of how advocates, policy makers and the press are instrumental in constructing policy, but also contesting it. According to

Gamson and Modigliani (1989) issues are defined and constructed by sponsors. Through their advocacy work they can reframe issues and get the media to highlight other competing frames not voiced by politicians. An example of how social movements can change the direction of a policy debate is the passage and repeal of the Medicare Catastrophic Coverage Act (MCCA). The 1988 Medicare Catastrophic Coverage Act (MCCA) was intended to reduce the losses that many elderly face with a catastrophic illness. The act was short-lived, facing repeal just one year after passage. According to Fan and Norem (1992), the media was influential in changing the coverage from relatively positive prior to the passage to largely negative after the passage of the bill. The most pronounced change came in the rhetoric used in the coverage before and after. Prior to the passage, the act was seen as a benefit to elderly. While afterwards, the discussion was around taxes incurred for a benefit that only low-income elderly could access. Fan and Norem (1992) suggest that the shift in media coverage happened because of the mailings of the Conservative Caucus, the Taxpayer Education Lobby, and James Roosevelt's National Committee. "These direct mailings were successful in changing the terms of the debate from benefits to taxes" (Fan and Norem 1992, p. 52). Many elderly persons started to receive the message that the costs of the program outweighed the benefits.

Like the Medicare Catastrophic Act, the federal welfare reform act brought key actors to the center, and these actors in turn, changed the rhetoric of the debate. After the federal welfare reform bill passed, stories of older immigrants committing suicide and becoming destitute caught the presses attention. This was a direct result of national and local advocacy organizations utilizing the press to change the direction of the debate.

Moreover, this act became a catalyst for new working relationships with differing organizations. Unique partnerships emerged as differing organizations came together to battle the ageist and racist rhetoric directed towards older immigrants on Supplemental Security Income. The work of advocates become apparent when Supplemental Security Income became restored through the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 for immigrants who were here prior to August 22, 1997. As one respondent mentioned, it is not often that a policy once passed is re-examined.

Framing Fraud, Abuse and Dependency

This dissertation also contributes to an understanding of how fraud and abuse is used in the framing of welfare recipients. According to Piven and Cloward (1982), major rollbacks occurred under Reagan through the use of rhetoric speculating “fraud” and “malingering,” and the system having no checks and balances, and as a result providing cash assistance to some who were not eligible or using their assistance recklessly. Reagan made claims that this was plundering the state’s resources, and those who were lazy or trying to get rich were stealing from tax payers. Moreover, the moral character of welfare recipients was also under attack.

Herbert Gans (1995) in his book, *The War Against the Poor*, discusses how myths of welfare recipients are constructed to justify cutbacks on the poor. The basis of ideology construction is to condemn the poor. There are two uses for this type of social construction. First, this social construction allows the undeserving poor to be scapegoated for the country’s economic problems. One way this is done is by blaming recipients for the high levels of taxation and the economic crisis.

The second use of this social construction is to label them as “undeserving” because their belief system does not value American virtues of independence, and their high numbers on aid means that this population does not want to assimilate into mainstream America. The 1996 welfare reform law emerged out of this notion of individuality, but also older racist ideologies. Experts studying welfare may cite social and economic factors in dependency, but they also may claim the culture and behavior of the recipient as based on the dissertation findings, older immigrants were constructed as highly dependent, and the availability of Supplemental Security Income was characterized as having a negative impact on cultural family values because it clashed with the American ideals of individualism and individual responsibility. The underlying message is that older immigrants are dependent and because they are “old” there are no hopes of them becoming independent, and that family members must assume all responsibility for the care of their aging parent. Both Fraser and Gordon propose that in order to stop the backlashes that are occurring “an adequate response would need to question our received valuations and definitions of dependence and independence in order to allow new, emancipatory social visions to emerge” (Fraser and Gordon 1994, p. 332).

Anti-Immigrant Sentiments

When looking at US history, anti-immigration sentiments peak during economic downturns, and politicians and labor leaders have historically blamed immigrants for unemployment and downward pressure on wages (Olzak 1992). “When times are bad and there is less to go around, people resist adding to the list of claimants for jobs or governmental services (Citrin et al 1997, p. 876).” In this case, the concerns over scarce resources, like Social Security, concerned many Americans to write letters to the editor

and complain that older immigrants are not deserving of SSI, and that only hard working Americans should be entitled. Many of the letters echoed their concern over the longevity of the Social Security Trust Fund. Even though SSI do not come from these funds, the picture being painted is that older immigrants on SSI are depleting scarce resources needed for “deserving” Americans.

Shanahan and Olzak (1999) propose that large numbers of immigrants do not alarm Americans, rather the diversity of immigrants creates tensions and competition for resources like jobs, housing and governmental benefits. They argue that the diversity of immigration constructs boundaries between whites and nonwhites. They cite the federal welfare reform act and English only referendums as symptomatic of hostility directed towards immigrants. They suggest it is not the large numbers of immigrants that causes apprehension, but the increasing diversity of these immigrants who mostly comprise of non-whites. They suggest competition for scarce resources make race and ethnicity more salient markers in all forms of interactions. “Questions (and political debates) about who is and who is not "American" become more numerous and more contentious. Sometimes this debate spills over into the street, as mob attacks seek to identify those who are "others" and "not deserving of citizenship (Shanahan and Olzak 1999, 41).” Although not directly articulated in the debates, race and ethnicity were salient markers in these debates. The federal welfare debates included a discussion of who was a member of American society, and who was not. Several national Asian American organizations cited how race was an important marker in terms of how politicians viewed who was deserving of welfare. One national Asian American advocate suggests that the tide started to turn once white elderly immigrant faces were pictured in the press. The American public

started to realize that it was not just non-white (e.g. Asian and Latino) elders, but also white (e.g. Russian and Portuguese) elders.

Who Speaks?

This dissertation also makes a contribution by illustrating that populations most affected by a cutback are not necessarily the ones defining, constructing and deciding the policies that affect them. Nancy Fraser (1989) proposes that in policymaking certain discourses are “officially sanctioned and authorized,” while others are unheard, disqualified and discounted. Needs talk becomes a site of struggle between those in subordinated and dominant groups. “Dominant groups articulate need interpretations intended to exclude, defuse and/or co-opt counterinterpretations” (Fraser 1989, p. 166). Welfare state backlashes emerge from how “needs” are interpreted and those involved in this discourse contest or validate this discourse. Schram (1996) sees that there is a certain exclusivity in language and actors involved in setting current welfare policies. Because of this exclusivity, new ways of examining things are not even a possibility, and as a result not benefiting those who need it most.

When looking at the congressional hearings, and newspaper analyses, these data clearly show that immigrants did not have the power to initially frame the debate, rather government bureaucrats, politicians and academicians played a much more influential role. Moreover, those doing the speaking represent a particular point of view. *In The Aging Enterprise*, Estes (1979) writes that “the less the knowledge base is empirically proven, the greater the influence of social and political factors in the interpretation and

acceptance of data as knowledge” (Estes 1979, p. 6). In this case, professionals with credentials presented anecdotal evidence to construct older immigrants as “unworthy” of federal assistance.

III. Implications for Policy

Although this dissertation focused on the constructions of deservingness in the federal welfare debates, this policy has major implications on local counties and states and for immigrant families. Prior to federal welfare reform, SSI provided a monthly check to low-income aged or disabled individuals, regardless of citizenship status. Although the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 restored Supplemental Security Income to immigrants who were here prior to August 22, 1996, immigrants who have arrived after August 22, 1996 do not have access to a federal safety net.

A. Current Legislation

Currently, immigrants are not eligible for Supplemental Security Income program. After their fifth year, they can access SSI if they become a US citizen (See Table 20). However, if they need emergency assistance during their first five years, their sponsors’ income will be counted with their income to determine eligibility. Due to changes in the law, sponsors must now show proof that they have an income level, at or above 125 percent of the Federal poverty level, in order to sponsor a family member to come to the United States. If sponsors do not provide basic support to new immigrants, they may be sued by the sponsored immigrants and by the agencies for the amount of benefits

provided to sponsored immigrants (United States Immigration and Naturalization Service 1999).

Table 20
Overview of Federal Welfare Program
Eligibility for Immigrants

| Federal Program | Immigrants | |
|--|---|---|
| | Pre-Reform (entered US before August 22, 1996)¹ | New (entered US on or after August 22, 1996) |
| Medicaid: Medical assistance to needy individuals who meet federal and state eligibility criteria | Benefits continued for those receiving SSI. | No benefits available for first five years, then at state's option. |
| SSI: Cash assistance to needy blind, disabled or aged individuals who meet federal eligibility criteria | Benefits continued for those receiving SSI and those who may become disabled in the future. | No benefits until citizenship. |
| Food Stamps: Food assistance to individuals who meet federal eligibility criteria | No benefits available until citizenship. | No benefits available until citizenship. |

Source: General Accounting Office, 1998.

President Clinton in his budget for the fiscal year 2000 proposes to make legal immigrants who have arrived after August 22, 1996, and been in this country for at least five years, and who become later disabled eligible for SSI and Medicaid. Since new immigrants are ineligible from receiving SSI benefits until they become citizens, immigrants may become eligible for General Assistance. General Assistance is one of the largest local programs providing aide to the needy. General Assistance benefits are

much lower than SSI benefits. In California, the monthly GA benefit is from \$212 to \$345/month, while SSI monthly benefits averaged \$530 per month (General Accounting Office 1998).

B. Policy Implications on Immigrant Families

In defending the cuts targeted at immigrants in the federal welfare bill, federal law makers have contended that immigrants should depend on their families -- not the government — for support. Sponsored immigrants come to the United States under the category of family reunification programs, designed to unite separated families. However, family sponsors can die or become ill, and therefore having a family sponsor does not assure assistance.

As entitlements for immigrants are either completely eliminated or reduced greatly, immigrant families face challenges ahead. "Government will cease to be the first place families turn to when in trouble.. Families will become more accountable to each other," states Eloise Anderson, director of the California Department of Social Services. "I believe that sponsors of immigrants should be held accountable for taking care of their own," states Anderson. Based on the findings from the newspaper analyses, telephone interviews and congressional hearings, the major assumptions held by policy makers and politicians prior to the passage of the bill is that many of these immigrant elderly have adult children that are capable and able to take care for them. However, this may not necessarily be true since many non-citizen aged SSI recipients traditionally do not live

¹ This table represents the restoration of benefits to pre-welfare reform immigrants as a result of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997.

with their children. According to the Census Population Survey, the majority of SSI recipients live in 1-2 person households.

Although many immigrant cultures emphasize respect and care for elders, migration to a western, industrialized nation deeply affects relations with aging parents and adult sons and daughters. Adult sons' and daughters' concerns about financially surviving in a new country may cause stress and strain within the family. In fact, current research shows that assistance to elderly family members is associated with not only level of acculturation, but the level of income of adult sons and daughters.

Stereotypes about Asian immigrant families abound. Asian immigrant families are assumed to have greater respect for elders and to feel more greater obligation to aging parents (Osako 1976). Past research on Asian American families indicates that there is a high level of intergenerational co-residence. Kamo and Zhou (1994) write that Chinese American and Japanese American elderly parents live more often with their adult sons and daughters than their white counterparts. Kamo and Zhou (1994) state that co-residence among the Chinese and Japanese is highly correlated with filial responsibility. On the other hand, Ishii-Kuntz (1997) states that this characterization is much too simplistic to be explained solely by the concept of filial obligation. She also states that it would be a great leap to conclude that "Asian American elderly need little outside support because of their children's sense of filial obligation" (Ishii-Kuntz, 1997; 23). Rather, Ishii-Kuntz's research findings illustrate that support to an elderly parent is highly influenced by the adult child's financial resources. Moreover, Ishii-Kuntz (1997) found that filial obligation alone is not a significant predictor of adult children's support for their parents. She stresses the importance of not simply looking at cultural values, but

examining the effects of economic and social factors on adult children's support for their parents.

On the other hand, Kim, Hurh and Kim (1993) examine how culture and relations with elders change because of adult children's need to financially survive in this country. Kim, Hurh, and Kim (1993) discuss how two factors affect relations with aging parents and adult sons and daughters: 1) change in the family-kinship system of immigrants and 2) their experiences of ethnic attachment and Americanization. Kim, Hurh and Kim (1993) explain that as newcomers to a new country -- financial survival is essential. The employment of Korean immigrant wives in the US changes drastically the family kinship system, in which a daughter-in-law is solely responsible for the care of her aging in-laws. They found a majority of the adult children had separate residences from their aging parents, and that when children are overburdened with their own adult roles, they may become insensitive to the needs of their aging parents, who may need help with transportation, financial help, health care and shopping.

Although their research is based in Great Britain, Walker and Ahmad's (1994) research has relevance to the US and aging and social policy. They write that stereotypes about ethnic families, in particular that they have a special capacity to "look after their own," facilitates an expectation that they will make up for deficits in health and social services provision. These assumptions were problematic and these stereotypical expectations put pressures on immigrant families. Although this study was based in Great Britain, similar assumptions about immigrant elderly and their families exist in the US. In fact, the welfare reform act assumed that immigrant families would assist elderly members cut off from federal assistance.

Another policy implication of this law is the changing demographics of immigration. Prior to federal welfare reform, there was no income test for sponsors. Because of federal welfare reform, poor and working-class immigrants who would like to sponsor family members will be unable to do so. The law requires immigrants sponsoring family members to the United States make at least 125 percent of the poverty level, or \$19,500 for a family of four (Dugger 1997). In 1994, 3 out of 10 sponsors had incomes below this standard (Dugger 1997). Many low-income immigrant families now do not have the luxury to bring over a family member, like a spouse or child. Research demonstrates that 40 percent of immigrant families and 26 percent of American families would not make enough to sponsor an immigrant under the criteria (Dugger 1997). These new requirements will dramatically change the composition of new immigrants.

IV. Future Directions

This dissertation primarily focused on the constructions of deservingness found in among activists and advocates, policy makers and the media. In order to develop this area further, the findings from this data could be triangulated with public opinion research. This study did not focus on public opinion, welfare reform and immigrants, but this is a potential area for future study. There have been several polls done over the last ten years measuring the public's attitudes towards immigrants. Future directions of this dissertation would examine the changing public opinion towards immigrants. For example, a Gallup/Newsweek poll in 1993, reported that 59% of those Americans surveyed felt that many immigrants wind up on welfare and raise taxes for Americans (Gillespe 1999). In

the same poll, 62% of those Americans surveyed felt that immigrants take the jobs of US workers (Gillespe 1999). These sentiments reflect the reality for many US workers. US workers have suffered a decline in real wages over the last 20 years. Quality industrial jobs have moved to low-wage, anti-union areas and to other countries such as Mexico, Singapore and other nations.

As we enter the millenium, unemployment rates are at its' lowest and the US economy continues to flourish, immigrants now are no longer considered a threat and problem to the US. In February of 1999, a Gall-up poll found that 42 percent of respondents feel that immigration benefits the nation. The poll clearly shows a drop in anti-immigrant feeling since 1993, when 64 percent of those polled felt that immigrants hurt the economy (Gillespe 1999). Anti-immigrant feeling peaked in the middle of the 1990s and now seems to be on the wane. Moreover, there is change in public opinions of immigrants printed in the press. A USA Today editorial (July 6, 1999) title reads, "Immigrant bashing quietly fades." It suggests that with a strong economy and the recent increases in naturalized voters, anti-immigration legislation has faded. The editorial points out that when the nation faces economic uncertainty, such as the recession of the early 1990s, anti-immigration legislation also increases. Immigrants are no longer a cause for concern. While those supporting anti-immigration legislation faced a backlash of their own, since many immigrants are now becoming naturalized and becoming voters. Poll data has been important to the current Clinton Administration in terms of policy actions (Gimpel and Edwards 1999). Future directions would chronicle this change in public attitude, but also the change of attitudes found among elected public officials.

Another area for future research is to study and document the informal and formal contributions that older immigrants make to society. Federal law makers were concerned that many older immigrants entered the US in their retirement years, only to be dependent on SSI. However, a majority (50%) of older immigrants arrived in the United States in their 40s and 50s and about a small percentage did arrive after the age 65. (Freidland et al. 1998). Further research would be both quantitative and qualitative. Interviews with older immigrants and their families would be useful to document the unseen contributions they do make. For example, older immigrants may come to this country to take care of grandchildren which enables their adult sons and daughter to continue working and paying taxes. Most research on older immigrants documents their dependency, whether it be their health care needs or needs for cash assistance. Further research would present a more comprehensive picture of elderly immigrants, and illustrate the unseen contributions they make to families and US society.

References

- Abramovitz, M. 1988. Regulating the lives of women. Boston: Southend Press.
- Achenbaum, W. Andrew. 1983. Shades of gray : old age, American values, and Federal policies since 1920. Boston : Little, Brown.
- Alford, R. 1975. Health care politics; ideological and interest group barriers to reform. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Altheide, D. 1996. Qualitative media analysis. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage University Press.
- Ashford, D. 1991. Bringing the welfare state back in. Comparative Politics. April, 353-371.
- Babbie, E. 1989. The practice of social research. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Pub. Co.
- Bader, J. B. 1996. Taking the initiative: leadership agendas in Congress and the "contract" with America.. Washington, D.C. : Georgetown University Press.
- Bell, W. 1965. Aid to Dependent Children. New York: Columbia Press.
- Bennet, J. 1997. Clinton proposes \$1.69 trillion budget for 1998. New York Times. February 7.
- Bennett, D. 1988. The party of fear: From nativism movements to the new right in American history. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.
- Blaustein, A. 1982. The American promise. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.
- Bonacich, E. 1972. A theory of ethnic antagonism: The split labor market. American Sociological Review. 37:547-559.
- Bowman, K. 1994. The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research: The public perspective. Public Opinions and Demographic Report. 5(2): 97.
- Brimelow, P. 1997. Alien nation. New York: Random House.
- Brint, S. 1994. In an age of experts. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Burstein, P. and M. Bricher. 1997. Problem definition and public policy: Congressional committees confront work, family, and gender, 1945-1990. Social Forces. 75(4):135-169.
- Burstein, P. 1991. Policy domains: organization, culture, and policy outcomes. Annual Review of Sociology. 17 (Annual):327-352.

Burstein, P.; M. Bricher; and R. Einwohner. 1995. Policy alternatives and political change: work, family, and gender on the congressional agenda, 1945-1990. American Sociological Review. 60(1):67-85.

Calavita, K. 1996. The new politics of immigration: "Balanced budget conservatism" and the symbolism of proposition 187. Social Problems. 43(3):284-305.

California Department of Social services. 1996. Fact Sheet: Federal Welfare Reform Bill (HR 3734): Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payment (SSI/SSP). Sacramento: California Department of Social Services.

California Legislative Analysts Office (a). 1996. Federal Welfare Reform (HR 3734): Fiscal Effect on California. Sacramento: Legislative Analysts Office. August 20. <http://www.lao.ca.gov>.

California Legislative Analysts Office (b). 1996. A look at general assistance in the context of welfare reform. Sacramento: Legislative Analysts Office. October 10. <http://www.lao.ca.gov>.

California Legislative Analysts Office (c). 1996. California update: Welfare reform's immigrant restrictions county costs probably less than expected. October. <http://www.lao.ca.gov>.

Carlson, A. C. 1989. The rhetoric of the Know-Nothing Party: nativism as a response to the rhetorical situation. (American Party). Southern Communication Journal. 54(4): 364-385.

Carpenter, A. and C. Provorse and Editors of the World Almanac. 1993. The World almanac of the U.S.A.. Mahwah, NJ : Funk & Wagnalls.

Chock, P.. 1995. Ambiguity in policy discourse: Congressional talk about immigration. Policy Sciences. 28:165-184.

Citron, J., D. Green, C. Muste, and C. Wong. 1997. Public Opinion toward immigration reform: The role of economic motivations. The Journal of Politics. 59(3):858-881.

Clinton, B. Proclamation 6892 - Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month. 1996. Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents. 32(19):798.

Collins, R. 1975. Conflict sociology. New York: Academic Press.

Congressional Quarterly. 1994. CQ's pocket guide to the language of congress. Washington DC: Congressional Quarterly.

Cook, F.L. and E. Barrett. 1992. Support for the American welfare state. New York: Columbia University Press.

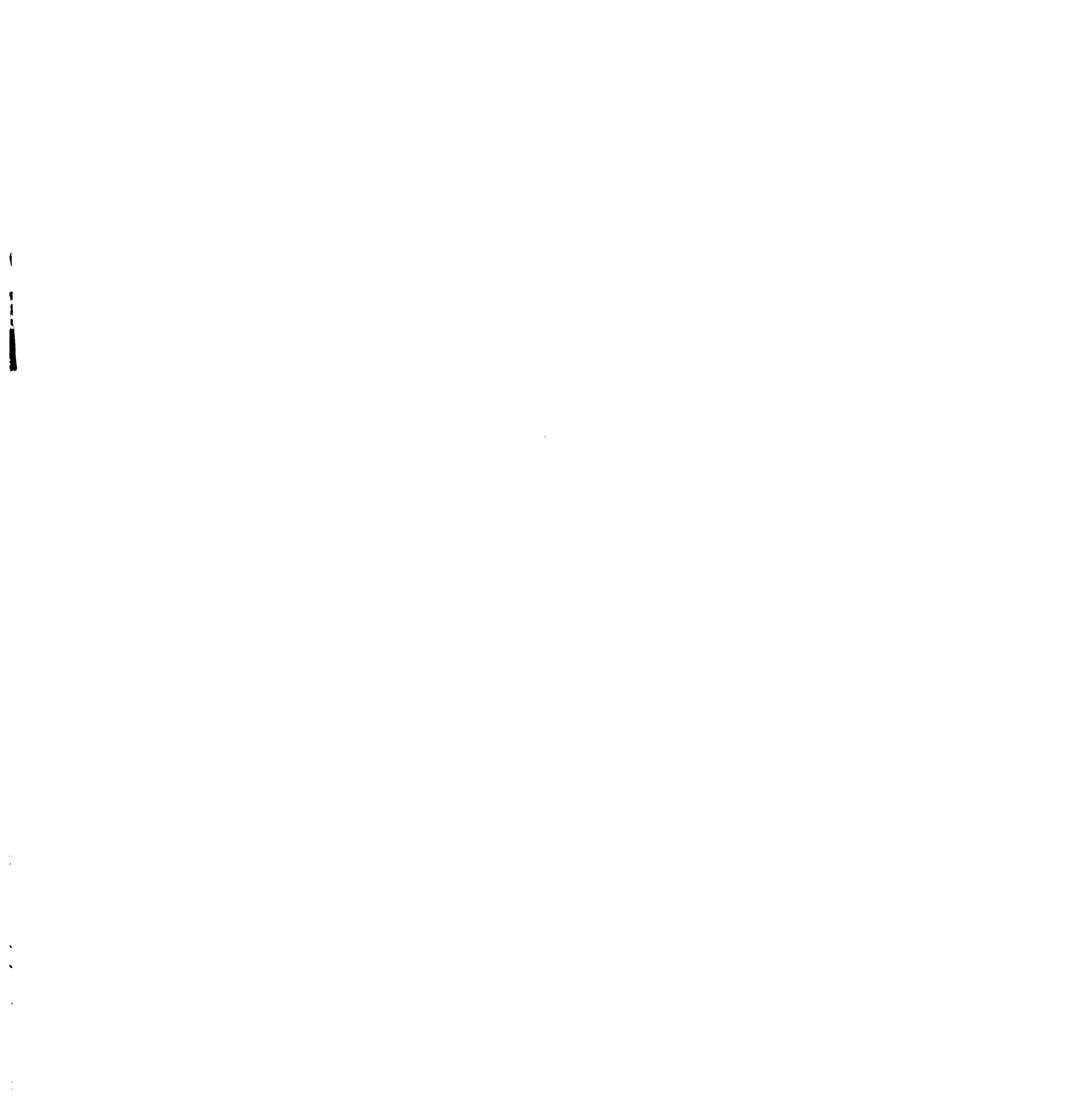
- Domhoff, G. W..1978. Who really rules? New Brunswick, N.J. : Transaction Books.
- Dugger, C. 1997. Immigrant study finds income limit bar to uniting families. The New York Times. March 16.
- Edelman, M. 1971. Politics as symbolic action. New York: Academic Press.
- Edelman, M. 1988. Constructing the political spectacle. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Edsall, T. And Edsall, M. 1992. Chain reaction: The impact of race, rights and taxes on American politics. New York: Norton.
- Esping-Andersen, G. 1990. Three worlds of welfare capitalism. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University.
- Estes, C.L. J.B. Wood and Associates. 1988. Organizational and community responses to Medicare policy. Final Report. Volumes I, II and III. San Francisco, CA: Institute for Health and Aging, University of California.
- Estes, C.L., J.B. Wood, P.J. Fox, P.R. Lee, and C.W. Mahoney. 1986. Public policy, the private nonprofit sector and the delivery of community based long-term care services for the elderly. Final Report. San Francisco, CA: Institute for Health and Aging, University of California.
- Estes, C. 1979. The aging enterprise. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Estes, C. 1982. Austerity and aging in the US: 1980 and beyond. International Journal of Health Services. 12(4):573-583.
- Estes, C. 1983. Social Security: The social construction of a crisis. Millbank Memorial Fund Quarterly. 61(3): 445-461.
- Estes, C. 1984. Political economy, health and aging. Boston: Little Brown.
- Estes, C. 1991. The Reagan legacy: Privatization, the welfare state, and aging in the 1990s. In J. Myles and J. Quadagno (Eds.) State, labor markets, and the future of old age policy. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Faist, T. 1995. Ethnicization and racialization of welfare-state politics in Germany and the USA. Ethnic and Racial Studies. 18(2):219-250.
- Fan, D. P. and L. Norem. 1992. The Media and the Fate of the Medicare Catastrophic Extension Act. Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law. 17(1):39-70.

- Fan, D. P. and R. H. Prisuta. 1996. Press Coverage of Medicare Late 1995. Washington DC: AARP.
- Field, G.L., J. Higley, and M. Brown. 1990. A new elite framework for political sociology. Revue europeene des sciences sociales. 28:149-182.
- Fitzgerald, K. 1997. The face of the nation: Immigration, the state and national identity. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.
- Fong, E. 1991. Immigration, ethnicity and conflict: The California Chinese, 1849-1882. Sociological Inquiry. 61(4):471-490.
- Fowler, F. 1984. Survey research methods. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Fraser, N. and L. Gordon. 1994. A genealogy of 'dependency': Tracing a keyword of the US welfare state. Signs. 19(2):309-336.
- Fraser, N. 1989. Talking about needs: Interpretive contests as political Conflicts in welfare-state societies. Ethics. 99(January):291-313.
- Friedland, R. and V. Pankaj. 1997. Welfare reform and elderly legal immigrants. Palo Alto: Kaiser Foundation.
- Gamson, W. A. and A. Modigliani. 1989. Media discourse and public opinion on nuclear power: A constructionist approach. American Journal of Sociology. 95(1):1-37.
- Gamson, W. A. and K. E. Lasch. 1983. The political culture of social welfare policy. In S.E. Spiro and E. Yuchtman-Yaar (Eds.) Evaluating the welfare state: Social and political perspectives. New York: Academic Press.
- Gamson, W. A., D. Croceteau, W. Hoynes and T. Sasson. 1991. Media images and the social construction of reality. Annual Review of Sociology. 18:373-93.
- Gans, H. 1995. The war against the poor: The underclass and anti-poverty policy. New York: Basic Books.
- Gilens, M. 1995. Racial attitudes and opposition to welfare. Journal of Politics. 57(4):994-1014.
- Gillespe, M. 1999. Poll release: U.S. public changing views on immigration. Princeton: Gallup Organization. <http://www.gallup.com/poll/releases/pr990316.asp>.
- Gimpel, J.G. and J.R. Edwards. 1999. The congressional politics of immigration reform. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

- Glenn, E. N. 1985. Racial ethnic women's labor. Review of Radical Political Economy. 17:3.
- Glenn, E. N. 1992. From servitude to service work. Signs. 18:1.
- Goffman, E. 1974. Frame Analysis. New York: Harper and Row.
- Goode, E. and N. Ben-Yehuda. 1994. Moral panics: The social construction of deviance. Cambridge: Blackwell.
- Gordon, L. 1994. Pitied but not entitled. New York: Free Press.
- Gordon, M. 1964. Assimilation in American life: The role of race, religion, and national origins. New York: Oxford University Press..
- Harris, N. 1995. The new untouchables: Immigration and the new world workers. London: Penguin Books.
- Herman, E. S. and N. Chomsky. 1988. Manufacturing consent. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Hertog, J. and D. P. Fan. 1995. The impact of press coverage on social beliefs. Communication Research. 22(5):545-574.
- Hilgartner, S. and C. Bosk. 1988. The rise and fall of social problems: A public arenas model. American Journal of Sociology. 94(1):53-78.
- Himelfarb, R. 1995. Catastrophic politics: The rise and fall of the Medicare Catastrophic Coverage Act of 1988. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University.
- Holsti, O. 1969. Content analysis for the social sciences and the humanities. Menlo Park: Addison-Wesley.
- Ishii-Kuntz, M. 1997. Intergenerational relationships Among Chinese, Japanese and Korean Americans. Family Relations. 46:23-32.
- Jacobs, L. and R. Shapiro. 1995. The news media's coverage of Social Security. Report for the National Academy of Social Insurance and the Andrus Foundation.
- Jenkins, J. C. 1987. Nonprofit organizations and policy advocacy. In W.W. Powell (Ed.) The nonprofit sector: A research handbook. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Kamo, Y. and M. Zhou. 1994. Living arrangements of elderly Chinese and Japanese in the United States. Journal of Marriage and the Family. 56:544-558.

- Kim, K., W. M. Hurh and S. Kim. 1993. Generation differences in Korean immigrants' life conditions in the United States. Sociological Perspectives. 36(2):257-270.
- Kingdon, J. W. 1995. Agendas, alternatives and public policies. New York: Harper Collins.
- Knoke, D. 1994. Networks of elite structure and decision making. In S. Wasserman and J. Galaskiewicz (Eds) Advances in social network analysis. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Knoke, D. 1990. Political networks: The structural perspective. New York : Cambridge University Press.
- Krippendorff, K. 1980. Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Linkins, K., G. Yoo, and C. Estes. 1997. Anticipatory effects of welfare reform: A view from the grassroots. Paper presented at the annual Gerontological Society of America Meetings, Cincinnati, Ohio.
- Lockery, S. A. 1991. Family and social supports: Caregiving among racial and ethnic minority elders. Generations. 15(4):58-62.
- Lynn, L. 1998. The view from the cellar: Reflections on the incrementalist house of anti-poverty. Poverty Research News. Winter.
- McCauley, T. 1990. Nativism and social closure: A comparison of four social movements. International Journal of Comparative Sociology. 31(1-2): 86-93.
- McCombs, M.E. and D.L. Shaw. 1972. The agenda-setting function of mass media. Public Opinion Quarterly. 36:176-187.
- McGarry, K. 1996. Factors determining participation of the elderly in supplemental security income. Journal of Human Resources. 31(6): 331.
- Miller, J. 1994. Immigration, the press and the new racism. Media Studies Journal. 8(3).
- Mink, G. 1995. The wages of motherhood: Inequality in the welfare state, 1917-1942. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.
- Mishra, R. 1994. The welfare state in crisis. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Myles, J. 1989. Old age and the welfare state. Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas.

- Naples, N. 1997. The "new consensus" on the gendered "social contract": The 1987-1988 US congressional hearings on welfare reform. Signs. 22(4):907-945.
- Neuman, L. W. 1991. Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches. New York: Allyn and Bacon.
- O'Neill, M. 1989. Responsive management in the nonprofit sector. In V. Hodgkinson, R.W. Lyman and Associates (Eds) The future of the nonprofit sector: Challenges, changes and policy considerations. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- O'Connor, J. 1987. The meaning of crisis. New York: Blackwell.
- Offe, C. 1984. Contradictions of the welfare state. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Olzak, S. 1992. The dynamics of ethnic competition and conflict. Stanford, Calif. : Stanford University Press.
- Oplinger, J. 1990. The politics of demonology : the European witchcraze and the massn production of deviance. University Press ; London : Associated University Presses.
- Osako, M. 1976. Intergenerational relations as an aspect of assimilation: The case of Japanese Americans. Sociological Inquiry. 46:67-72.
- Page, S. 1997. Poll: Fear of immigration eases. USA Today. November 25.
- Pampel, F. and Williamson, J. 1989. Age, class, politics and the welfare state. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Pampel, F. C. 1998. Aging, social inequality and public policy. Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press.
- Parrott, T.; L. Kennedy and C. Scott. 1998. Noncitizens and the Supplemental Security Income program. Social Security Bulletin. 61(4):3-31.
- Pear, R. 1997. Legal immigrants to benefit via budget agreement. The New York Times, July 30.
- Pierson, P. 1996. The new politics of the welfare state. World Politics. 48(2):143-176.
- Piven, F. and R. Cloward. 1982. The new class war. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Piven, F. and R. Cloward. 1993. Regulating the poor: The functions of public welfare. New York: Random House.



- Piven, F. and R. Cloward. 1979. Poor people's movement: Why they succeed, how they fail. New York: Pantheon.
- Portes, A. and R. Rumbaut. 1996. Immigrant America: A portrait. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Quadagno, J. 1994. The color of welfare. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Quadagno, J. 1996. Race and American social policy. National Forum. 76, 3, summer, 35-38.
- Riffe, D., S. Lacy and F. Fico. 1998. Analyzing media messages: Using quantitative content analysis in research. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
- Rochefort, D. and R. Cobb. 1993. Problem definition, agenda access, and policy choice. Policy Studies Journal. 21(1): 56-73.
- Rochefort, D. and R. Cobb. 1994. The politics of problem definition: Shaping the policy agenda. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas.
- Schneider, A. and H. Ingram. 1993. Social construction of target populations: Implications for politics and policy. American Political Science Review. 87(2):334-347.
- Schram, S. 1995. Words of welfare. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Scott, J. 1991. Social network analysis : a handbook. Newbury Park, Calif. : Sage Publications.
- Shanahan, S. and S. Olzak. 1993. The effects of immigrant diversity and ethnic competition on collective conflict in urban America: an assessment of two moments of mass migration, 1869-1924 and 1965-1993. Journal of American Ethnic History. 18(3):40-42.
- Skinner, J. H. 1991. Entitlements: What do they mean? Generations. Fall/Winter
- Skocpol, T. 1992. Protecting soliders and mothers: The political origins of social policy in the United States. London: Cambridge University Press.
- Skocpol, T. 1979. States and social revolutions. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Smith, M. And B. Tarallo. 1995. Proposition 187: Global trend or local narrative? International Journal of Urban and Regional Research. 19(4): 664-676.

Snow, D. and R.D. Benford. 1988. Ideology, frame resonance, and participant mobilization. In B. Klandermans (Eds) From Structure to Action: Comparing Social Movement Research across Cultures. Greenwich, Conn: JAI.

Social Security Administration. 1996. Social Security : Supplemental Security Income for noncitizens. Baltimore, Md. : Social Security Administration.

Stefancic, J. 1997. Funding the nativist agenda. In J. Perea (Ed.) Immigrants Out: The new nativism and the anti-immigrant impulse in the US. New York: NYU press.

Stone, D. 1997. Policy paradox: The art of political decision-making. New York: WW Norton and Company.

U.S. Bureau of the Census. 1996 Census Population Survey - Annual Demographic Survey (March Supplement). Washington DC: Government Printing Office.

U.S. General Accounting Office. 1995. Supplemental Security Income: Growth and changes in recipient population call for reexamining program. GAO/HEHS-95-137. Washington DC : U.S. Government Printing Office

U.S. General Accounting Office. 1995. Welfare Reform: Implications of proposals on legal immigrants' benefits. GAO/HEHS-95-58. Washington DC : U.S. Government Printing Office

U.S. General Accounting Office. 1996. Supplemental Security Income: Noncitizens have been a major source of caseload growth. GAO/HEHS-96-88. Washington DC : U.S. Government Printing Office

U.S. General Accounting Office. 1998. Welfare Reform: Many states continue some federal or state benefits for immigrants. GAO/HEHS-98-132. Washington DC : U.S. Government Printing Office.

U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Oversight. 1994. Supplemental Security Income fraud involving middlemen. Washington DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Human Resources. 1994. Supplemental Security Income Modernization Project.

U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Ways and Means. 1995. Contract With America-Welfare Reform, Part 1 of 2. Washington DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Ways and Means. Subcommittee on Human Resources. 1996. Welfare reform. Washington DC: U.S. Government .Printing Office.

U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service. 1999. Immigration services and benefits. <http://www.ins.usdoj.gov>.

U.S. Senate, Committee on Finance. 1995. Growth of the Supplemental Security Income Program: Washington DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

U.S. Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Immigration. 1996. The use of Supplemental Security Income and other welfare programs by immigrants. Washington DC : U.S. Government Printing Office.

USA Today. 1999. Immigrant bashing quietly fades. USA Today. July 6.

Van Dijk, T. A. 1993. Elite discourse and racism. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Walker, R. And Ahmad W. 1994. Asian and Black elders and community care: A survey of care providers. New-Community. 20(4):635-646.

Wasserman, S. 1994. Social network analysis: Methods and applications. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Weber, R. P. 1990. Basic content analysis. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage University Press.

Weber, T. and Christensen, K. 1993. Huge con game bilks funds for blind, disabled. Sacramento Bee. May 23.

Weber, T. 1993. U.S. to probe O.C. disabilities fraud; Refugee Rip-Off: 2-pronged investigation begins into Social Security schemes detailed in Register stories. Orange County Register. July 2.

Weir, M., A. Orloff, and T. Skocpol. 1988. The politics of social policy. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Welch, M. 1997. Primary definitions of crime and moral panic. Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency. 34(4):474-494.

Wellman, B. and S. Wasserman. 1998. Social networks. In A. Kazdin (Ed.) Encyclopedia of Psychology. New York: American Psychological Association and Oxford University Press.

Wilensky, H. 1975. The welfare state and equality: Structural and ideological roots of public expenditures. Berkeley: University of California Press

Wilson, T. D. 1999. Anti-immigrant sentiment and the process of settlement among Mexican immigrants to the United States: Reflections on the current wave of Mexican Immigrant bashing. Review of Radical Political Economies. 31(2):1-26.

Wimmer, A. 1997. Explaining xenophobia and racism: A critical review of current recent approaches. Ethnic and Racial Studies. 20(1): 17-41.

Wolfsfeld, G. 1997. Media and political conflict. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Yoo, G., J. Co, and D. Jang. (1997). Welfare reform and immigrants: A survey of community based service providers and advocates in California. Asian Pacific Islander American Health Forum. Unpublished report.

Zald, M. N. and J. McCarthy. 1987. Social movements in an organizational society : collected essays. New Brunswick, N.J. : Transaction Books.

APPENDIX A

TELEPHONE SCRIPT #1

Hello, is this _____? My name is Grace Yoo, I am a doctoral candidate at the University of California, San Francisco in the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences studying the formation of the 1996 federal welfare reform law. I am calling you because of your influence in the federal welfare reform and immigration debates. I am trying to look at the role of national aging and national Asian American organizations in these debates.

The telephone interview should last no more than 30 minutes. The questions will revolve around the following domains: perceptions of immigrant welfare recipients, the nature and role of these actors in influencing perceptions of immigrant welfare recipients, other influential people involved in the debate, and implications of the welfare reform law in immigrant communities. Moreover, you should be assured of complete confidentiality in the participation of this study. Results will be presented aggregated form so respondents' names will not be used, but general categories by occupations will be used to describe respondents.

Are you willing to be part of my study? What is a convenient day and time? What is your mailing address. A confirmation letter will be sent to you in the mail. Thanks again. I look forward to talking to you.

APPENDIX B

Date

Name

FAX #:

Dear Name:

Thank you for agreeing to be part of my study. As I mentioned, I am a doctoral candidate at the University of California, San Francisco in the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences. My dissertation is a socio-historical study of the 1996 federal welfare reform law and its' implications on immigrants. You were selected to be a part of this study because of your influence in this law.

The telephone interview will take place **Date and Time** and should last no more than 40 minutes. The questions will revolve around the following domains: perceptions (e.g. media, policy level, community) of immigrant welfare recipients, the role of collaborations and coalition-building on this issue, and your organizations role in the debates.

Your answers will be kept confidential. Results will be presented in aggregated form so respondents' names will not be used, but general categories by organizational type will be used to describe respondents. If you have further questions or concerns about this study, you may leave a message for me at (415)248-2658 or my faculty advisor, Dr. Carroll Estes at (415)476-3236. You may also call the University of California, San Francisco Committee on Human Research at (415)476-1814. Thanks again for your participation in this telephone interview.

Sincerely,

Grace Yoo, MPH
Doctoral Candidate
Email address: gracey@itsa.ucsf.edu

Appendix C

University of California, San Francisco

FEDERAL WELFARE REFORM AND ELDERLY IMMIGRANTS: *THE ROLE OF NATIONAL ASIAN AMERICAN ORGANIZATIONS*

Thanks for agreeing to be part of my study on federal welfare reform and immigrants. You can be assured of complete confidentiality of this telephone interview. All information will be analyzed in the aggregate so no individual respondents will be identified. This study is being done to better understand the role of key actors and organizations involved in the debate and their role in shaping and influencing welfare reform policy for elderly immigrants. This interview should last approximately 30 minutes and all answers will be typed on a computer screen.

Is this OK? Do you have any questions before we begin?

ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

1. What is your organization's budget for the current fiscal year?
2. What is your organizational mission?
3. Who is your constituency?

ORGANIZATIONS' ROLE IN WELFARE REFORM

4. Was your organization involved in federal advocacy around the welfare reform and elderly immigrant issue?
 - a. *How about local, state or regional advocacy?*
 - b. *If yes, in what ways was your organization involved?*
 - c. *What type of involvement worked best (most effective)?*

5. What was your organization's stance towards welfare reform and immigrants?

a. Specifically to the elderly immigrant issue?

b. Did this stance change over time? If so, how?

6. On a scale of 1 to 5, with

- 1 being not important at all
- 2 not very important
- 3 important
- 4 somewhat important
- 5 very important

*a. How important was the welfare reform and elderly immigrant issue to your organization **before** the passage of the 1996 Federal Welfare Reform Law?*

*b. How important was the welfare reform and elderly immigrant issue to your organization **after** the passage of the 1996 Federal Welfare Reform Law?*

7. What were the three biggest issues and challenges facing your organization and organizations like yours in terms of working on welfare reform and elderly immigrant issues?

1

2

3

ORGANIZATION'S COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

8. Did you work with other national, regional or local organizations on this issue?
Is so, which ones?

a. If so, which ones?

b. What did you do?

c. Why those ones?

9. Which national aging group did you work with?

a. What did you do?

10. Which national immigrant groups did you work with?

a. What did you do?

b. Why those ones?

11. Which national Asian American groups did you work with?

a. What did you do?

b. Why those ones?

ORGANIZATIONS' INFLUENCE

12. What did you feel were the prevailing perceptions of immigrant welfare recipients among federal policy makers...

a. Before welfare reform (before 1994)?

b. During welfare reform (during 1996)?

c. After welfare reform (after 1996)?

d. Did this vary by age or gender or SES or by ethnicity or immigrant status?

*e. Which entitlement used by immigrants was most under attack?
Can choose more than one...*

- a. AFDC
- b. SSI
- c. Food stamps
- d. Medicaid
- e. None of the above

13. How did your organization portray elderly immigrant welfare recipients?

a. Did you feel your organization was influential in anyway in changing perceptions?

14. Who else was influential in the federal reform and elderly immigrant debate?
Why?

Thank you for your participation in this telephone survey. If you have further questions about this study, feel free to call or email me. Thanks again for your time.

Grace Yoo, MPH
Doctoral Candidate, Sociology
University of California, San Francisco
Voicemail: 415-248-2658 FAX 415-476-6552
gracey@itsa.ucsf.edu

APPENDIX D

NEWS EDITORIAL ARTICLE CODESHEET

| | |
|--|---|
| ID Number | |
| Newspaper | |
| Date | |
| When | 1=Before Welfare Reform, 2= After Welfare Reform |
| Length | |
| Type of article | 1=Letters to Editor, 2=Editorials, 3=Commentaries, 4=Other |
| Stance | <p>1= Strongly disagree that restrictions should be made to limit safety nets for older immigrants</p> <p>2=Disagree that restrictions should be made to limit safety nets for older immigrants</p> <p>3=Neutral</p> <p>4=Agree that restrictions should be made to limit safety nets for older immigrants</p> <p>5=Strongly agree that restrictions should be made to limit safety nets for older immigrants</p> |
| Author of article | |
| | |
| | |
| Themes found within the article | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

APPENDIX E

NEWSPAPER ARTICLE CODE BOOK

| Type of Individuals Quoted |
|--------------------------------------|
| 1=Attorneys/Judges |
| 2=Politicians |
| 3=Immigrants |
| 4=Academicians |
| 5=Health and Social Service Provider |
| 6=Government Bureaucrat |
| 7=Think-Tank |
| 8=Anti-Immigration Group |

| Types of Themes found within Newspaper Articles |
|--|
| 10= Older Immigrants are deserving because: |
| 11=Immigrants work and pay taxes |
| 12=SSI provides access to Medicaid (e.g. LTC) |
| 13=Older, disabled, limited English speaking, vulnerable population in need of federal safety nets |
| 14=Governments breach of faith on immigrants |
| |
| 20=Older Immigrants are NOT deserving because: |
| 21=Increasing numbers on SSI are a burden to US taxpayers |
| 22=Don't pay taxes and are purposely immigrating to obtain SSI as a retirement benefit |
| 23=Have adult children that are financially able to take care of them |
| |
| 30=Concerns with Devolution |
| 31=Puts pressure on state and local governments to provide safety nets for older immigrants |
| 32=Impacts local businesses |
| |
| 40=Impact on Immigrant Communities |
| 41=An assault on immigrant communities |
| 42=Advocacy organizations reacting and working together because of welfare reform |
| 43=Prevents poor, low-income immigrants from sponsoring relatives because of income cutoff |
| 44=Puts pressure on immigrants to become citizens but INS is inefficient |
| 50=General Information on the law and legislative prospects |

APPENDIX E

NEWSPAPER OP-ED ARTICLES CODEBOOK

| Stance found within op-ed, letter to editor or commentary |
|---|
| 1= Strongly disagree that restrictions should be made to limit safety nets for older immigrants |
| 2=Disagree that restrictions should be made to limit safety nets for older immigrants |
| 3=Neutral |
| 4=Agree that restrictions should be made to limit safety nets for older immigrants |
| 5=Strongly agree that restrictions should be made to limit safety nets for older immigrants |

| Types of Authors of Editorial Articles |
|---|
| 10=Individuals |
| 11=US citizen/US Taxpayer |
| 12=Retiree |
| 13=Immigrant |
| |
| 20=Organizations |
| 21=Social Security Administration |
| 22=Interest Group |
| 23=Newspaper Columnist |
| 24=Think Tanks |
| 25=Advocate/Social Service Providers |
| 26=Newspaper Editor |
| 27=Philanthropy/Religious Organizations |
| 28=Academic Affiliations |
| 29=Elected Official |

APPENDIX E

| |
|--|
| Type of Themes found in Editorial Articles |
| 10=Older Immigrants are NOT deserving because: |
| 11=Increasing numbers on SSI are a burden to US taxpayers |
| 12=Don't pay taxes and are purposely immigrating to obtain SSI as a retirement benefit |
| 13=Have adult children that are financially able to take care of them |
| 14=Increasing numbers on SSI affect solvency of social security system |
| 20=Older Immigrants are deserving because: |
| 21=Immigrants work and pay taxes |
| 22=Immigrants follow rules and not fraudulent |
| 23=SSI provides access to Medicaid (e.g. LTC) |
| 24=Older, disabled, limited English speaking, vulnerable population in need of federal safety nets |
| 30=Federal Welfare Reform |
| 31=Puts pressure on state and local governments to provide safety nets for older immigrants |
| 32=An assault on immigrants |
| 33=Not well thought out, not real reform |
| 34=Puts pressure on immigrants to become citizens but INS is inefficient |
| 35=Information on the law |
| 36=Prevents poor, low-income immigrants from sponsoring relatives because of income cutoff |



For reference

Not to be taken
from the room.

7063798



3 1378 00706 3798



