

Diverse Interest Group Coalitions and Social Welfare Policy in the United States

by

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**To my parents,
Paul and Suzanne Phinney**

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List of Abbreviations

ACLU	The American Civil Liberties Union
AFDC	Aid to Families with Dependent Children
CBPP	The Center for Budget and Policy Priorities
CDF	The Children's Defense Fund
CETF	The Child Exclusion Task Force
CLASP	The Center for Law and Social Policy
CHN	The Coalition on Human Needs
NGA	National Governors' Association
NOW	The National Organization for Women
PRA	The Personal Responsibility Act
PRWORA	The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996
TANF	Temporary Aid for Needy Families
SSI	Supplemental Security Income

Chapter 1

Interest Groups and Social Policy in the United States

American legislators are unlikely champions of the poor. As reelection-seekers, legislators have few incentives to devote their scarce time, labor, and resources to constituents who can neither promise electoral rewards nor threaten electoral punishment. Yet interest organizations are active in lobbying legislators on behalf of low-income populations. And despite the fact that they have few resources to exchange for favorable legislative action, organizational advocates for the poor sometimes emerge from legislative battles victorious. Why does this occur? How and under what conditions do advocates for the poor gain influence in national and state legislative settings?

In this dissertation, I develop a theory of diverse coalition formation by interest groups to explain one way that organizational advocates for the poor achieve influence in legislative settings. Building on literature on lobbying, information, and influence in Congress, I theorize that although advocates have limited funding and small membership bases, they can gain influence by building diverse coalitions with other interest groups. In building diverse coalitions, advocates can provide legislators with different *types* of informational resources – for example, when a group with substantive expertise partners with an organization with a large membership base, as well as a wider range of the *same type* of informational resource – for example, when groups with different areas of substantive expertise work together. Because coalition building is costly, it can convince

legislators that the information being provided by the interest groups is credible. Diverse coalitions can therefore help advocates influence legislative outcomes.

To test my theory, I analyze interest group advocacy, diverse coalition formation, and legislative outcomes at both national and state levels preceding and following the enactment of Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996. Popularly known as *welfare reform*, this act fundamentally changed the program of cash benefits to needy families in the United States. Among other changes, the act eliminated the individual entitlement to cash benefits and devolved considerable program authority to the state level.

The PRWORA provides a unique opportunity to test the predictions of my theory. At the federal level, the breadth and significance of the proposed changes to the 60-year old welfare program activated a large number of organizational advocates for the poor, who were for the most part opposed to the federal legislation. At the state level, the federal legislation required each state government to submit plans defining the revised programmatic and funding structure of the state's welfare program to the federal government. These plans were passed through the state legislature, virtually guaranteeing some form of lobbying by anti-poverty advocates in the legislative arena as they sought to modify what they perceived to be punitive provisions of the new law. In addition, interest groups in every state had similar incentives to participate as they knew that a welfare reform bill with a particular set of provisions would come before the state legislature. Analyzing the behavior of interest groups during this time can provide insight into the strategies that anti-poverty advocates use to further the interests of the

poor, and the relative impact that these strategies have on legislative outcomes both at the national level and across states.

In this introductory chapter, I provide an overview of my theory of diverse coalitions, and outline the methods used to test the theory. I also present key findings, and offer an overview of each chapter. I begin by introducing the theoretical and empirical questions that underlie my dissertation project.

Poverty, Political Participation and Social Policy

Low-income populations face multiple barriers to political participation. Formal barriers restrict the voting rights of non-naturalized immigrants and institutionalized populations, and ex-offenders in some states. Many low-income people also experience informal barriers that interfere with their ability and motivation to participate. For example, poor populations often lack the time, money, and civic skills that enable individuals to become involved in political organizations, contribute to political candidates and campaigns, and participate in elections. Many are also isolated from networks of political engagement, and are less likely to report belief in their political efficacy (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995). As a result, the poor are less likely to vote, contact public officials, engage in protests or demonstrations, or become involved in political campaigns (Verba, Schlozman, Brady and Nie 1993, 305).

This is relevant for social policymaking in several ways. First, legislators are held accountable for their actions through the electoral system. Elected officials have strong incentives to place greater importance on the preferences of constituents who contribute

time, money, and votes in future elections (Arnold 1990; Fenno 1978; Mayhew 1974). If low-income populations do not participate, they are less able to punish or reward legislators for addressing their concerns in policy. It is also true that legislators simply have more information on the preferences of politically active constituents because these individuals are more likely to make their opinions known through voting, time and monetary contributions, and personal communications.

Second, politically active populations differ from other constituents with respect to their individual characteristics as well as their policy preferences (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Verba et al. 1993, 1995). This means that the preferences that legislators take into account when making social policy differ from the preferences of poor populations:

“Those whose preferences and needs become visible to policymakers through their activity are unrepresentative of those who are more quiescent in ways that are of great political significance: although similar in their attitudes, they differ in their personal circumstances and dependence upon government benefits, in their priorities for government action, and in what they say when they get involved” (Verba, Schlozman, Brady, and Nie 1993: 314).

When the poor do not participate, or when legislators disregard the policy preferences of the low-income population, social policy is not likely to reflect their preferences. This is important because the poor tend to have different policy preferences than higher-income populations.

Yet this does not mean that the voices and concerns of the poor are entirely absent in the policymaking process. This is because low-income populations are often represented in legislative settings by interest organizations, or groups that seek public or private ends through political action (Berry and Arons 2003; Hays 2001; Imig 1996; Schlozman and Tierney 1986). There are many different types of organizations that

advocate on behalf of the poor – including public interest law firms, intergovernmental organizations and federal agencies, research institutions, citizen groups, and nonprofit organizations (Hays 2001; Imig 1997). Most individuals within these organizations are not poor but rather share an interest in expanding anti-poverty programs for either ideological or professional reasons.

For the majority of these organizations, the obstacles to legislative representation are acute. Research institutions and government actors lack an active membership and thus have fewer electoral resources to exchange for favorable political attention (Salisbury 1984). Nonprofits regularly interact with disadvantaged populations, but most do not engage in extensive lobbying for fear of losing their tax-exempt status (Berry and Arons 2003). Social welfare organizations and public interest groups also have fewer monetary resources than other types of organizations, relying heavily on individual dues, gifts, or donations (Berry 1977; Scholzman and Tierney 1986).

These characteristics have implications for the lobbying behavior of advocates for the poor. Advocates have strong incentives to pursue strategies of influence that do not rely on the monetary or electoral resources of any individual organization, but rather utilize advocates' extensive informational resources.

A Theory of Diverse Coalitions and Legislative Influence

I theorize that advocates build diverse coalitions in order to diversify and add credibility to the information that they provide to legislators. Coalitions that are diverse with respect to the organizational type, policy domain, or ideology of member organizations can provide legislators with a broader range of information. In addition,

diverse collaboration can offer evidence that information being provided is credible. Political scientists have argued that when interest groups engage in costly lobbying, they offer a signal to legislators that the information that are providing is credible (Ainsworth 1993; Austen-Smith and Wright 1991, 1994; Kollman 1998). Because diverse coalition building is costly in terms of resources, policy positions, reputation, and lost opportunity, it provides evidence that the information provided by the coalition is credible. In providing both more information and credible information, diverse coalition building can lead to legislative influence.

This theory produces a set of testable implications. First, the theory predicts that anti-poverty advocates will engage in diverse coalition building as a strategy of legislative influence. Second, the theory predicts that diverse coalitions will result in favorable policies for the poor. To refine the predictions of the theory, I develop a formal theoretic model in which two interest groups – an anti-poverty advocacy group and a group opposed to generous social welfare programs – compete for a median legislator's vote. The model shows that anti-poverty advocates will gain influence when they view an issue as salient and when potential partners view an issue as salient. When these two conditions are met, advocates will build diverse coalitions when political conflict is high and when opponents of social welfare programs control the legislature.

Research Design

I pursue a multi-method research design, employing formal-theoretic models, statistical models, and case studies, to better understand the research hypotheses. A multi-method approach allows me to isolate and test mechanisms of influence that would not be

identified through a single methodology. The formal-theoretic model, presented in Chapter 4, is used to refine the predictions of my theory. Research suggests that the costs and anticipated benefits of coalition building vary alongside features of the political context, such as the strength of opponents, level of political conflict, and partisan control of the legislature (Heaney 2004; Hojnacki 1998; Hula 1999). The goal of the model is to identify *how* such contextual features impact collaborative behavior and influence. This is important, in part, because the project uses cross-state comparisons to test the empirical predictions of the theory. If coalition formation is affected by contextual features that vary at the state level, such factors are important to take into account.

In the empirical chapters, I focus on coalition formation and influence at the national and state levels preceding and following the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996 (i.e. welfare reform). At the national level, I use existing case studies, hearings testimony, and media reports to document diverse coalition building by anti-poverty advocates took place in the two years preceding the passage of the PWRORA. The goal in this chapter is not to write a new history of the federal welfare reform, as many excellent case studies have already been written (Haskins 2004; Hecllo 2001; Weaver 2000; Winston 2002). Rather, the goal is to use existing primary and secondary sources to focus attention on the collaborative behavior of anti-poverty advocates during this period.

The state-level analysis is divided into two parts: a quantitative analysis of all states and a qualitative analysis of 15 states. For the quantitative analysis, I estimate a series of logistic regressions to analyze the relationship between the characteristics of a state's interest group population and welfare policy adoption, for all states. These tests

use data compiled from a wide range of sources, including existing studies of state policy decisions following the PRWORA (Blank and Schmidt 2001; Pavetti and Bloom 2001; Soss *et al.* 2001), public databases of state-level policies and characteristics (Urban Institute Welfare Rules Database, University of Kentucky Poverty Research Center), and a dataset of interest group registrations at the state level (Gray and Lowery 2000).

For the qualitative analysis, I explore diverse coalition formation at the state level by reviewing case studies of state-level welfare policy choices, including Heaney (2004), Winston (2002), and the Urban Institute's *Assessing the New Federalism Case Studies* (1998), and newspaper articles about advocacy group activity at the state level. The case studies either focused on interest group advocacy at the state level during welfare reform, or provided an overview of the political context of state welfare policy making following the PRWORA. Because all authors interviewed the key organizational participants in each state, these case studies help me to identify whether diverse coalitions existed and were active at the state level prior to, or formed in response to the welfare reform. To provide additional information on the organizational actors involved in welfare reform at the state level, I reviewed newspaper articles from each state during the two years following the PRWORA's enactment, during which time most states passed their welfare reform legislation.

Key Findings

The empirical tests provide support for the hypothesis that organizational advocates for the poor build diverse coalitions as a strategy of legislative influence. At both national and state levels, advocates built coalitions in an attempt to prevent

legislators from adopting policies that would severely restrict or eliminate supports for welfare recipients and their children. The vast majority of collaborative efforts were informal, and diversified either the types of resources that advocates could bring to the policy debate (for example, substantive and electoral resources), or diversified a single type of resources (for example, technical information about the likely impact of a policy from a variety of perspectives). Ideological diversity was less prevalent than diversity with respect to an organization's type or policy domain.

At the national level, diverse coalitions emerged on a set of policies known as “child exclusion” policies, which would prevent welfare payments on behalf of children born to teen mothers, additional payments to mothers currently receiving welfare, or children whose paternity had not been established. At the state level, collaborative efforts were more broadly focused on preventing legislators from enacting the strictest policy instruments. At the very least, diverse coalition building appears to require that advocacy groups have experience and centrality in a policy network. Other features of the political context – for example, a high level of political conflict and Republican control of the legislature – seem to be sufficient but not necessary conditions for diverse coalition formation.

There is limited evidence that diverse coalition building influenced legislative outcomes during welfare reform – at least for anti-poverty advocates. For example, although diverse coalitions formed at the national level on a set of issues known as “child exclusion” issues, the current tests do not indicate that such coalitions caused legislators to enact more lenient policies (see Chapter 5). However, diverse coalition building did seem to yield influence for intergovernmental groups and socially conservative groups.

In addition, particularly at the state level, coalitions that were diverse with respect to organizational type, policy domain, and region, but less so with respect to ideology, seemed to function more to provide technical information to legislators interested in the substantive impact of policies (see Chapter 6).

These findings suggest that diverse coalition building is an important strategy for organizational advocates that lack monetary and electoral resources. However, like many lobbying strategies, its relationship to legislative influence is ambiguous. Future empirical tests are necessary to address measurement issues that may have affected the ability of some of these tests to assess actual influence.

Overview of Chapters

In Chapter 2, I situate this puzzle within the literature on interest group lobbying and influence in Congress. I argue that while interest groups are the primary means through which politically disadvantaged populations such as the poor find their interests represented in government, advocates for the poor are disadvantaged with respect to many of the resources that facilitate access and influence in legislative settings – namely, money and votes. Consequently, organizational advocates for the poor utilize strategies of influence that do not rely on the monetary or electoral resources of any single organization, as well as strategies that make use of organizations’ extensive informational resources.

In this chapter, I introduce the types of interest groups that are active on poverty-related policy issues, and explore how interest groups gain access and influence in American legislatures, focusing specifically on the way in which interest groups persuade

legislators to adopt group-friendly positions through the strategic use of information. I provide an overview of the types of information that interest groups provide, the strategies that interest groups use to convey information to legislators, and introduce coalition building as a strategy for credibly conveying information to legislators.

Chapter 3 presents my theory of diverse coalition building and legislative influence among organizational advocates for the poor. In this chapter, I explore how coalitions provide legislators with electoral, policy, and political information. I argue that coalitions that are diverse with respect to the organizational type, issue domain, or ideology of coalition partners are capable of providing more information to legislators, and thus may be more likely to gain influence in legislative settings. Diverse collaboration can offer legislators different *types* of informational resources— for example, when a group with substantive expertise (policy information) collaborates with an organization with a large membership base (electoral information). Diverse partnerships can also provide a wider range of the *same type* of information, for example, when organizations with different areas of substantive expertise work together (policy information). Diverse coalitions are costly to build, and consequently will be unlikely to form unless all partners view the policy issue as salient. As a result, diverse coalitions indicate that the information being provided by interest groups is credible. Two hypotheses emerge from the theory presented in Chapter 3: advocates for the poor will try to build diverse coalitions, and diverse coalitions will yield legislative influence.

In Chapter 4, I employ formal theoretic modeling to refine these predictions. I model the process of coalition building and influence as a signaling game with three players: an anti-poverty advocacy group, an “opposition” group opposed to any

additional programs for the poor, and a median legislator. My model predicts that an anti-poverty advocate can gain influence in two ways: by bargaining with opposing interest groups, or by building a diverse coalition with other advocates. An advocacy group's decision to bargain or build a diverse coalition is affected by the level of political conflict and partisan control of the government. When political conflict is low and Democrats are in the majority, the model predicts that advocates will be more likely to gain influence through bargaining with opponents of social programs. When political conflict is high and Republicans are in the majority, advocates will be more likely to gain influence through building diverse coalitions.

In chapters five and six, I test the predictions of the theory using the federal welfare reform of the mid-1990s as my empirical example. As mentioned previously, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity and Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA), or welfare reform, ended a 60-year guarantee of cash assistance by replacing the entitlement program Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) with the block grant program Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). TANF differed from its predecessor in that benefits were time-limited and made conditional on participation in employment-related activities. The policy also contained provisions designed to discourage out-of-wedlock childbirth and teen pregnancy. Many programmatic decisions were devolved from the national to state level, and states were granted significant discretion over a wide range of issues, including work incentives, generosity of benefits, program time limits, and sanctions for non-compliant behavior.

In the fifth chapter, I analyze interest group activity at the national level to provide empirical support for two predictions of the theory: that anti-poverty advocates

build coalitions that are diverse with respect to the informational resources of partner organizations, and that diverse coalitions help organizational actors influence legislative outcomes. The data show that anti-poverty advocates engaged in diverse coalition building as a strategy of legislative influence during welfare reform, and that most collaborative efforts were informal rather than formal. While the evidence is somewhat weak for the hypothesis that diverse coalitions lead to more generous outcomes for the poor, the data show that organizations that were opposed to generous social policies also engaged in diverse collaboration as a strategy of legislative influence, and that these collaborative efforts were associated with legislative influence.

In the sixth chapter, I test the empirical implications of the theoretical model at the state level. First, to explore the hypothesis that generous policy outcomes are more likely in states where strong advocates, or those capable of building diverse coalitions, are more likely, I examine whether the presence of advocacy groups and partners was associated with the adoption of three types of welfare policies: welfare-to-work policies, child exclusion policies, and strict welfare policies. The data provide very little support for the hypothesis that the strength of anti-poverty advocates was associated with favorable policy outcomes for the poor. However, it is unclear whether the lack of an association is due to a lack of actual influence, or to measurement issues. Second, using a subset of 15 states, I explore how diverse coalition formation at the state level varied with features of the state political context, including the professionalism of the state legislature, partisan control, and number of anti-poverty advocates. In these states, coalitional behavior was most likely in states with characteristics similar to the federal level. However, the lack of a strong association between features of the political context

and coalition formation suggests that organizational, rather than contextual, characteristics may be more important determinants of collaborative activity.

In the final chapter, I situate my findings within the context of recent research on interest group lobbying and influence in the United States. I propose future lines of inquiry based on the formal theoretic model and findings from the project.

Conclusion

This dissertation contributes to research on interest group advocacy and social policymaking. While social policy scholars have examined differences in policies across states, few systematically evaluate the role of interest and advocacy groups in contributing to differences in policy adoption across states. Existing research on state variation in social policy tends to emphasize broad associations between the social, economic, and political characteristics of a state, and the types of policies adopted. Yet research on policy adoption at the national level lends support to the argument that special interests are powerful players in policy decisions, and the lack of attention paid to the influence of special interests in state policymaking represents a significant gap in the social policy literature.

Additionally, existing theories of legislative decision-making fail to adequately explain how and why legislators make decisions on social welfare policy issues. While it is well-established that legislators respond to politically active constituents, they also sometimes vote to increase benefits to disadvantaged populations. By focusing on the process through which disadvantaged populations achieve representation, this project can

help scholars understand the conditions under which legislators vote in favor of policies distributing benefits to individuals who cannot influence their chances of reelection.

Finally, a key contribution of this theory to the interest group literature is to illuminate the ways in which properties other than the size of an interest group coalition generate opportunities for political access and influence. Viewing coalition building through the lens of information helps provide a basis for understanding how the diversity of a coalition - either in conjunction with, or irrespective of its size - can translate into political power in legislative settings.

Chapter 2

Interest Group Advocacy and Influence on Behalf of the Poor

In the previous chapter, I introduced the fundamental empirical issue that my dissertation addresses. Because the poor are unable or unlikely to vote, they cannot hold representatives accountable for failing to address their concerns. Legislators thus have little to gain by voting in favor of programs that benefit the poor, particularly when those programs face organized opposition and when the intended recipients are widely viewed as undeserving of public benefits (Mayhew 1974). And yet programs for the poor *are* enacted by legislatures at both national and state levels – sometimes even in the face of strong opposition. Why does this occur? How and under what conditions do the poor achieve representation and influence in American legislative settings?

In this chapter, I situate this puzzle within the literature on interest group lobbying and influence in Congress. Interest groups are the primary means through which politically disadvantaged populations such as the poor find their interests represented in government. And yet interest groups that represent the poor are disadvantaged with respect to many of the resources that facilitate access and influence in legislative settings. Consequently, organizational advocates for the poor utilize strategies of influence that do not rely on the electoral or monetary resources of any single organization, as well as

strategies that make use of organizations' extensive informational – rather than monetary or electoral - resources.

I begin the chapter by introducing the types of interest groups that are active on poverty-related policy issues. In the second section, I review how interest groups gain access and influence in American legislatures, focusing specifically on how interest groups attempt to persuade legislators to adopt group-friendly positions through the strategic use of information. In the third section, I provide an overview of the strategies that interest groups use to convey information to legislators. The fourth section introduces coalition building as a strategy for credibly conveying information to legislators, and the fifth section concludes.

Who Represents the Poor?

The interests of the poor are represented by many different types of interest organizations, which are groups that seek public or private ends through political action (Berry and Arons 2003; Hays 2001; Imig 1996; Schlozman and Tierney 1986).¹ In legislative settings, representation by interest organizations is critical because low-income populations have few opportunities to signal their interests to their elected representatives. Advocacy on behalf of such populations is also distinct: organizational advocates for the poor typically have few monetary or electoral resources at their disposal

¹ Definitions of *interest group* vary widely. For some scholars, an interest group is defined by the voluntary and unpaid nature of joint activity. For other scholars, an interest group is defined not by the characteristics of association, but rather by a shared characteristic among members (for example, a shared demographic characteristic or political belief) that has consequences for political behavior. Most definitions in political science require some degree of formal organization, but beyond this requirement there are many different definitions. For example, some definitions of interest group refer only to organizations whose members include individuals or other organizations (Walker 1991), while others incorporate organizations without formal members, such as institutions (Gray and Lowery 1996; Heinz et al. 1993; Schlozman and Tierney 1986; see Baumgartner and Leech 1998 (especially pages 25-30) for a review).

for influencing legislators, and some face real or perceived legal constraints on their lobbying behavior (Berry and Arons 2003). Advocates also make up a relatively small percentage of national and state pressure communities, defined as communities of organizational actors seeking to influence policymaking.

Political scientists generally classify interest groups by their membership structure or the type of interest they represent. Some organizations have individuals or groups as members (referred to as membership groups and associations, respectively), while others have no formal membership structure (referred to as institutional actors). Interest groups are mobilized around a wide range of interests – some related to a shared professional or demographic characteristic of group members, others related to broader public concerns. Both classifications are useful for thinking about the types of organizations that represent the poor, the lobbying strategies that these organizations use to gain influence, and their relative success in securing favorable legislative outcomes.

Advocacy groups are among the most active in lobbying on behalf of the poor. Advocacy groups are membership-based organizations that seek selective benefits for individuals who are unable to represent their own interests, including the poor, children, non-naturalized immigrants, and institutionalized populations (Schlozman and Tierney 1986).² Most scholars view advocacy groups as a type of citizen group, which is a membership group mobilized around an interest other than the vocation or profession of its members (Berry 2000; Imig 1999; Schlozman and Tierney 1986).³ In practice, these

² This definition essentially combines Schlozman and Tierney's (1986) definitions of advocacy group and social welfare organization (45-48).

³ Definitions of advocacy groups and citizen groups also vary. Imig (1999) includes institutional actors in his definition of advocacy group. Schlozman and Tierney (1986) define citizen groups as organizations that pursue non-material and non-vocational benefits, while Berry (1999) defines citizen groups as organizations pursuing material or non-material and non-vocational benefit. The definition employed here

types of groups are often indistinguishable from one another: for example, the National Coalition for the Homeless can alternatively be described as an advocacy group for the homeless or a citizen group seeking to end the problem of homelessness for society as a whole. Advocacy groups and citizen groups are an extremely small percentage of the interest group community, representing less than 7 percent of all interest groups registered to lobby in Washington in the 1990s.⁴

Groups that represent low-income individuals – or anti-poverty advocacy groups – are an even smaller percentage of the pressure community.⁵ This fact may seem surprising given the size of advocates’ potential membership base. For example, while over 10 percent of American families were poor in the early 1980s, advocacy groups representing the poor constituted less than 1 percent of all Washington interest organizations during this time (Schlozman and Tierney 1986). The under-representation of anti-poverty advocacy groups is due in part to the fact that interest group mobilization requires resources that many poor populations lack. “Membership in organizations,” Schlozman and Tierney (1986, 61-62) note, “makes specific demands of a material nature that many other forms of political participation do not. These demands might pose a

is most similar to Berry’s (1999) in that it does not restrict citizen groups to those pursuing non-material benefits.

⁴ Because there are so many definitions of advocacy groups and citizen groups, it is difficult to arrive at a precise estimate of their presence in national or state pressure communities. This approximation is based on Baumgartner and Leech’s (2001) tally of the number of ‘nonprofit and citizen groups’ present in lobbying registration rolls in the late 1990s, and Berry’s (1999) discussion of the decline of citizen groups in the decades following Schlozman and Tierney’s (1986) survey of interest groups. Baumgartner and Leech (2001) find that ‘nonprofits and citizen groups’ represented 7 percent of all Washington-based interest organizations in 1997, and Berry (1999) argues that the percentage of citizen groups in Washington had decreased from Schlozman and Tierney’s (1986) estimate of 7 percent by the 1990s.

⁵ Although anti-poverty advocacy groups are underrepresented in the pressure community, some research suggests that the number of groups mobilized around poverty-related policy issues is increasing. For example, Gray and Lowery found that the number of nonprofits registered to lobby at the state level on the issue of “welfare” increased by over 200 percent from 1980 to 1997. Yet despite this increase, advocacy groups still represent an extremely small percentage of national and state pressure communities.

particular barrier to lower-status citizens.” In addition, the diversity of low-income populations hinders the development of a sense of shared identity, which can facilitate political mobilization. As Imig (1999, 2) argues:

“The diversity of low-income Americans helps to explain the historical paucity of political action by the poor. To act as a group, poor people would need to see themselves as undergoing a common plight-yet they have little or nor opportunity to recognize the shared aspects of their condition.”

For these reasons, the poor are underrepresented in the interest community.

Fortunately, the interests of the poor are also represented by non-membership organizations such as public interest law firms, research institutions, public charities, and intergovernmental actors. Public interest law firms are organizations that pursue non-vocational interests but emphasize legal strategies for influencing policy outcomes, and research institutions are groups that seek to influence policy through the creation and dissemination of research (Schlozman and Tierney 1986). These institutional actors lack the resources that derive from a large and politically active membership base, but many have significant financial resources from federal funding, foundation grants, and donations (Imig 1999; Weaver 1989). Like advocacy and citizen groups, public interest law firms and research institutions are a relatively small percentage of the pressure community, although the number of such organizations – particularly conservative organizations – active on poverty-related policy issues has increased in recent decades (Rich and Weaver 1998; Schlozman and Tierney 1986; Weaver 1989).⁶

⁶ It is difficult to gauge the prevalence of research institutions and public interest law firms relative to other types of interest groups because few scholars separate these types of organizations from other institutional actors. In general, institutional actors are a small percentage of all interest groups: in 1996, institutional actors (such as hospitals, universities, etc) represented less than 10 percent of all Washington-based interest groups (Baumgartner and Leech 2001).

Public charities and intergovernmental groups are institutions that are active on the issue of poverty but are frequently overlooked in the interest group scholarship. Most scholars do not classify public charities – also referred to by their IRS designation as “nonprofit 501c3 organizations” – as interest groups, in part because these groups “are almost always founded for some purpose other than advocacy in the policymaking process” (Berry and Arons 2003: 24). Nonprofit 501c3 organizations are also legally prohibited from contributing to political campaigns and lobbying national and state legislators – two activities that most scholars would consider essential activities of interest groups.⁷ Despite these restrictions, many public charities “act like” interest groups in their interactions with government officials, especially at state and local levels. Additionally, a small number of public charities are “H-electors” – a legal designation that allows them to ignore the limits on legislative lobbying (Berry and Arons 2003). For this reason, Berry and Arons (2003) argue that public charities should be classified as interest groups:

“Nonprofits “speak for,” “act for,” and “look after the interests” of those they are concerned about. And if an organization speaks for, acts for, or looks after the interests of constituents when it interacts with government, it is, by any definition of political science, an interest group” (Berry and Arons 2003: 30-31).

Thus although nonprofit actors encounter unique restrictions on their ability to lobby in legislative settings, I classify them as interest organizations in this analysis.

Over the past several decades, intergovernmental organizations have become increasingly active on the issue of poverty (Imig 1999; Weaver 2001). Intergovernmental

⁷ Because public charities provide services to needy populations, they receive special tax exemptions that allow them to receive tax-deductible donations. In exchange, public charities are prohibited from legislative lobbying. Technically, nonprofit 501c3 organizations are prohibited from “substantial” lobbying of national and state legislators, but the IRS has never explicitly defined this term. These organizations have the option of becoming “H-electors” – a designation that essentially allows them to ignore the limits on legislative lobbying. Few 501c3 organizations become H-electors (Berry and Arons 2003).

organizations are groups that represent subnational governments – such as cities, counties, and states, and groups of government officials – such as governors, mayors, or county welfare directors. Their presence on this issue has been attributed to an increase in the number of social welfare programs created at the national level but administered by state and local governments (Cammisa 1995). Although some social welfare programs were devolved to lower levels of government in the 1990s, many remain tied to policymaking at the national level, and intergovernmental organizations provide a vehicle through which state and local officials can voice their interests to national policymakers. Intergovernmental organizations are fairly common in the pressure community. In the mid-1990s, subnational governments and intergovernmental organizations represented approximately 16 percent of those registered to lobby at the national level (Baumgartner and Leech 2001) and research suggests that intergovernmental groups are similarly prevalent in state-level pressure communities (Nownes and Freeman 1998). While many scholars do not classify intergovernmental organizations as interest groups, this distinction is somewhat arbitrary:

“[Intergovernmental organizations] have so many affinities to private organizations that the boundary between these public sector organizations and the private ones ordinarily subsumed under organized interest politics is often very fuzzy” (Schlozman and Tierney 1986: 56).

Particularly in the domain of social welfare policy, intergovernmental actors are an important organizational presence.

Finally, labor unions, which are groups organized for collective bargaining purposes, and professional organizations, which are organizations that represent the interests of individuals in a particular profession, frequently partner with advocacy groups and institutional actors to pursue policies that further the interests of the poor

(Imig 1999; Nownes 2006; Schlozman and Tierney 1986). For example, during the federal welfare reform of the mid-1990s, unions such as the AFL-CIO, American Postal Workers Union, United Farm Workers of America, and Service Employee International Union sponsored joint advertisements with anti-poverty advocates in support of policies that would maintain cash benefits for needy families (New York Times August 8, 1995). Because they are not mobilized around the issue of poverty, the extent to which these organizations will ally with anti-poverty advocates is mediated by their own organizational needs and those of their membership base. Labor unions and professional organizations must first and foremost consider the interests of their members. Only after those interests are addressed will they consider allying with organizations in other issue areas.⁸

To summarize, poverty-related policy issues draw many types of organizational actors into play. Institutional actors such as public interest law firms, research institutions, public charities, and intergovernmental organizations are among the most active, along with advocacy groups and citizen groups. Many of these groups are underrepresented in the pressure community, particularly given the size of their potential membership base and the magnitude of the social problems they seek to address. Many are also disadvantaged with respect to the resources that facilitate political influence, such as money and votes.

How then do organizational advocates for the poor achieve influence in legislative settings? To answer this question, it is necessary to review existing research on interest

⁸ For example, during the Reagan administration, labor unions – traditional allies of the poor – were unable to assist advocacy groups in lobbying against government cuts to poverty-related programs. Imig (1999) argues: “Assaults on labor meant fewer grants and organizational support from labor to poor people’s groups and forced labor’s own lobbying efforts inward, that is, toward their own concerns rather than toward the poor” (13).

group influence in Congress. The next section briefly reviews this literature, focusing specifically on the way in which interest groups attempt to gain influence by through their strategic use of information.

How Interest Groups Influence Legislators: Information and Persuasion in Congress

Interest group scholars disagree about the precise mechanisms of group influence in Congress (see Baumgartner and Leech 1998 and Hall and Deardorff 2006 for reviews).⁹ Some scholars argue that interest groups and legislators trade campaign contributions for votes, and that lobbying is essentially an exchange relationship (Snyder 1992; McCarty and Rothenberg 1996). Others understand lobbying as a form of persuasion, emphasizing the strategic transmission of information from interest group to legislator (Ainsworth 1993; Austen-Smith and Wright 1991, 1994; Kollman 1998), or subsidy, in which a lobbyist subsidizes the resources of legislators with similar policy goals (Hall and Deardorff 2006).

My theory characterizes lobbying as a form of persuasion in which interest groups use information, rather than campaign contributions, to persuade legislators to adopt group-friendly positions. Conceptualizing lobbying as persuasion is appropriate for two

⁹ Baumgartner and Leech (1998) argue that despite decades of thoughtful and systematic research, scholars have failed to identify how and when groups gain influence. Several factors lead to a lack of progress in the area of interest group influence in Congress. First, scholars conceive of influence occurring in several different ways (Hall and Deardorff 2007). Second, underlying divergent theoretical perspectives is a lack of shared vocabulary for terms such as *interest*, *interest group*, *membership*, *lobbying*, and *influence*. Third, even within a given theoretical perspective, empirical analyses yield inconsistent findings. For example, some studies find strong evidence that contributions from political action committees (PACs) are associated with favorable roll-call votes and/or increased involvement on legislation behind the scenes (in committee hearings, for example) (Hall and Wayman 1990). Some find limited or conditional evidence of influence, and still others fail to find evidence of any influence at all (see Smith 1995). Finally, but perhaps most importantly, influence is often unobservable, making the measurement of influence a notoriously difficult task (Bachrach and Maratz 1962; Dahl 1957; Salisbury 1994; see Baumgartner and Leech 1998 for a review).

reasons. First, nearly all legislators have strong incentives to legislate *against* the interests of the poor. Low-income populations have low levels of political participation, and legislators have little to gain by distributing benefits away from politically powerful groups and toward politically disadvantaged groups. Consequently, lobbying on behalf of the poor often involves an attempt to change the preferences of legislators – typically by persuading legislators to adopt group-friendly positions.

Second, characterizing lobbying as persuasion highlights the important role of information, rather than campaign contributions, in social welfare policymaking. Advocates for the poor have few monetary resources to exchange for favorable political activity and some are legally prohibited from contributing to political campaigns. As a result, these organizations rely disproportionately on informational resources to gain access and influence in Congress (Berry and Arons 2003; Schlozman and Tierney 1986).

Information as a Mechanism of Influence

“Of all the resources that an interest group can offer policymakers, information is the most specialized. It is not a commodity, but, rather, is endlessly varied, highly differentiated in quality, and constantly in demand. As such, it is a way that [an interest group] can distinguish itself from the pack, drawing the attention of the government officials it wants to cultivate” (Berry and Arons 2003:145).

Theories of persuasion view information as the central mechanism of influence in legislative settings. Legislators have extensive informational needs, but neither the time nor the resources to develop expertise on every political issue. In contrast, interest organizations possess information about the direction and intensity of constituents’ policy preferences (electoral information), substantive information about the relationship between policy instruments and desired outcomes (policy information), and political

information about the policy preferences and likely behavior of other political actors (political information).¹⁰ As a result, legislators rely on interest organizations as a low-cost source of information (Ainsworth 1993; Austin-Smith and Banks 2002; Austen-Smith and Wright 1992, 1994; Esterling 2004; Hansen 1991; Kollman 1998; Lohmann 1993; Potters and Van Winden 1992).¹¹

As introduced above, there are three types of information used to influence legislators. Electoral information reveals the shape and electoral relevance of constituents' policy preferences (Arnold 1990; Esterling 2004).¹² Although most Americans will never receive benefits such as cash welfare, food subsidies, or housing vouchers, many have strong beliefs about policies that provide benefits to low-income populations (Feldman and Zaller 1992; Gilens 1999; Hochschild 1981). Legislators must consider both the direction and salience of these beliefs before taking action on poverty-related issues. Salience refers to the importance that constituents place on their preferences, and helps legislators determine the likelihood that these preferences will impact voting behavior. This attribute is more difficult for legislators to assess than direction, because salience can change rapidly in response to a crisis or disaster, media coverage of a new problem, or skilled use of an issue by an electoral candidate (Kollman

¹⁰ These three categories are adapted from the work of Arnold (1990), Esterling (2004), Hall and Deardorff (2006), Krehbiel (1992), and Schlozman and Tierney (1986). While most scholars separate technical (or policy) information from electoral information, some bundle electoral and political information together under the single heading of *electoral or political information*.

¹¹ Interest groups are only one source of information for legislators, who also receive information from other members of Congress, political parties, Congressional staff, and the media. Interest groups compete with these other actors for the attention of legislators. Hansen (1991) argues that legislators will grant access to interest groups when interest groups provide information more effectively and efficiently than other actors, and when legislators expect particular groups, issues, and circumstances to recur.

¹² Beliefs about policy instruments are referred to as policy preferences, while beliefs about policy outcomes are referred to as outcome preferences. On many issues, the latter are more developed and defined than the former (Arnold 1990). For example, an individual may believe that the government should reduce air pollution (an outcome preference) without having a strong preference for which strategies are enacted to do so. Policies related to poverty frequently evoke both policy and outcome preferences, and as a result legislators must be concerned with both (Feldman and Zaller 1992; Hochschild 1981).

1998). However, as representatives of various groups of constituents, interest organizations possess ‘channels of communication’ with constituents, and are able to assess the direction and salience of their members’ policy preferences with relative ease and efficiency (Goldstein 1999; Hansen 1991; Kollman 1998).

Policy information is substantive information about a policy problem, instrument, or outcome, as well as information about the hypothesized relationship between the problem, instrument, and outcome (called the *causal framework*). Although some scholars contend that legislators care little about policy information, research shows that technical policy expertise is associated with greater access to legislators in Congress (Esterling 2004). Esterling (2004, 83) argues that: “because Congress wants to avoid unintended consequences, such as a disastrous or unusually divisive policy, it wants to learn about the causal framework [of the policy] to illuminate the likely consequences of the intervention....” Policy information helps legislators choose policies that have a high likelihood of success while avoiding policies with uncertain or undesirable outcomes. Interest organizations with technical policy expertise can help legislators by synthesizing the state of current research for interested legislators, offering policy analysis and recommendations, and drafting legislation. Many interest organizations invest substantial resources in developing policy expertise, and survey and interview data indicate that most believe that such expertise helps them gain political access and influence (Esterling 2004; Kersh 2007; Schlozman and Tierney 1986).

Political information reveals the preferences and anticipated behavior of relevant political actors. Political information helps legislators assess how a particular issue will move through the legislature, as well as the likelihood of policy passage. Interest groups,

as specialists, have a strong sense of the preferences and likely actions of other actors operating within their policy domain. As a result, legislators look to interest groups to provide information about the alignment of support and opposition to a proposed policy, the level and strength of consensus, and the anticipated tactics of opponents (Kingdon 1989; Schlozman and Tierney 1986).

The relative value of each type of information varies with the policy under consideration. On some issues, the causal relationship between the policy instrument and outcome may be irrelevant – the intended policy outcome may be so popular or unpopular that legislators feel compelled to vote for or against it. For example, Congress passed what Arnold (1990) refers to as a *politically-compelling* policy when it enacted the Authorization for Use of Military Force (Public Law 107-40) a week after the September 11th terrorist attacks. The resolution authorized the President of the United States “to use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001.” The popularity of the intended outcomes – punishing those responsible for the September 11th attacks and preventing future terrorist attacks – virtually guaranteed near unanimous legislative support. In contrast, legislators may seek substantive information on issues that are technical, complex, and have the capacity to generate gains for society as a whole, such as policies to control acid rain, improve public education, and control health care delivery costs (Esterling 2004).

The Credibility of Information

It is clear that legislators value the information that interest groups possess, whether electoral, substantive, or political. However, whether organizational actors can use their informational resources to gain legislative access and influence depends on the credibility of information being provided. Credibility refers to the extent to which legislators believe the information that interest groups provide. Organizational influence is enhanced when legislators believe interest group arguments that constituents' policy preferences will influence voting decisions (electoral information), that policy instruments will result in a particular outcome (policy information), and that a particular policy will move smoothly through the legislature (political information).

Because credibility is important, interest groups devote considerable time and resources to demonstrating the accuracy of the information they are providing and establishing a reputation for trustworthiness. Organizations demonstrate the accuracy of information by specializing in narrow policy areas, or providing information that effectively and routinely promotes the electoral or policy goals of members of Congress (Hansen 1991). Groups also supplement the informational resources they provide with actual evidence of electoral salience or policy accuracy, for example, by mobilizing constituents to send letters to Congress or engaging in protests or demonstrations (Goldstein 1999; Kollman 1991). Developing a reputation for being trustworthy is also important (Esterling 2004; Hansen 1991; Kersh 2007): over 80 percent of respondents in Schlozman and Tierney's (1986, 104) study reported "a reputation for being credible and trustworthy" as their most important organizational resource.

Legislators can also prevent interest groups from exploiting their informational advantages by manipulating the costs associated with lobbying (Ainsworth 1993). In his 1993 article “Regulating Lobbyists and Interest Group Influence,” Ainsworth argues that interest groups have incentives to misrepresent information to legislators – for example, by overstating the salience of constituents’ policy preferences, or manipulating policy research to indicate support for their favored policy instrument. If lobbying is costless, organizations have nothing to lose by misrepresenting information. However, as the following paragraph will show, if there is a cost to lobbying, organizations seeking to misrepresent information will be deterred from lobbying, while organizations presenting credible information will not be deterred from lobbying. Because only one type of group lobbies, legislators can be assured that the information they receive is credible (Ainsworth 1993).

For Ainsworth, the group with credible information is the only group that lobbies because the relative benefits of lobbying differ for organizations providing credible and non-credible information. Specifically, a group seeking to misrepresent information will lose more than it gains by lobbying even if the legislators adopts the group’s position, while an organization that provides accurate information will gain more than it loses by lobbying. This stems from the fact that the payoff of a policy ‘win’ differs for each type of organization: for the organization with credible information, the payoff is greater than the cost of lobbying, while for the organization with non-credible information, the payoff is less than the cost of lobbying.

Using the framework introduced by Ainsworth’s model, it is also possible to see that legislators can gain credible information if the costs of lobbying (rather than the

payoff) differ for each type of organization. Consider two interest groups: the first represents a constituency that strongly opposes a policy allowing marijuana use for medical purposes and will punish a legislator for voting in favor of such a policy, and the second represents a constituency that opposes the policy, but this policy preference is not salient enough to impact members' voting behavior. Because the policy is salient to the first organization, this group can mobilize its members to send letters to a legislator or engage in demonstrations that signal its opposition to medical marijuana policies. It is costly for the first group to mobilize its members, but because the policy preferences are salient, the costs are not prohibitive. It is considerably more costly, however, for the second group to mobilize its members. Because the policy preferences of the second group's members are not salient enough to impact voting behavior, it is unlikely that they are salient enough to compel members to contact legislators or protest. Therefore, the second group must invest more resources in order to convince its members to contact legislators, or engage in protests. If the costs to lobby are greater than the benefits of policy victory, then the second group will be deterred from lobbying, and the legislator can be assured that the information is credible. This aspect of a costly lobbying model will become an important element of the formal theoretic model presented in the fourth chapter.

This section has argued that interest group influence on poverty-related policy issues is best conceptualized as a form of persuasion in which organizational advocates for the poor use information to convince legislators to adopt group-friendly positions. It has reviewed the various types of information that legislators value, and introduced a model for understanding when legislators will view the information provided by interest

groups as credible. The following section explores interest group strategies for providing information to legislators, and introduces coalition-building as a strategy of credible information transmission.

The Strategies and Tactics of Interest Group Influence

Interest organizations have three general strategies for influencing legislative outcomes: inside lobbying, outside lobbying, and coalition-building. Inside lobbying refers to groups' attempts to influence legislative outcomes through the direct provision of money or information to legislators, and outside lobbying refers to their efforts to indirectly influence outcomes by mobilizing constituents and public opinion (Gais and Walker 1991; Kollman 1998; Schlozman and Tierney 1986).¹³ Within inside and outside lobbying strategies, interest groups have an array of lobbying tactics – some of which can be viewed as being part of an inside *or* an outside strategy. For example, many organizations use inside lobbying tactics such as testifying at Congressional hearings or contributing money to political campaigns. Others employ outside lobbying tactics by publicly endorsing political candidates or mobilizing group members in support of candidates and issues. Most groups use a combination of techniques, although inside lobbying tactics are more prevalent among business, trade, and professional organizations, as well as groups with close ties to government, while outside lobbying tactics are more commonly employed by labor unions and citizen groups (Berry and Arons 2003; Gais and Walker 1991; Kollman 1998).

¹³ According to Baumgartner and Leech (1998): “Tactics describe the individual external activities in which groups engage: meeting with legislators, filing suit, or mounting an advertising campaign. Strategies involve some particular combination of tactics and imply a mechanism by which influence is believed to be achieved. Strategies are combinations of tactics used in particular situations” (Baumgartner and Leech 1993: 162; see also Milbrath 1963).

Previous scholarship tends not to categorize coalition building as a strategy of legislative influence, focusing instead on coalition-building as a strategy of organizational maintenance (Kollman 1998) or coalitions as a type of interest group (Schlozman and Tierney 1986). Yet it makes sense to conceptualize coalition-building as a lobbying strategy distinct from inside and outside strategies, for several reasons.

First, while collaborative behavior surely has other functions – for example, to facilitate networking or monitor political developments, interest group leaders clearly believe that coalition-building is an important strategy for achieving desired outcomes in Congress. As Charls Walker, the ‘dean of the Washington lobbyists’ wrote: “Coalitions are the most important factor in getting a bill through Congress” (Walker 1998, as quoted in Hula 1999, 32). Studies of interest group leaders consistently indicate their belief in the efficacy of coalitions. For example, over three-quarters of group leaders in one study agreed with the statement: “Coalitions are the way to be effective in politics” (Hula 1999: 32-33).

Second, existing research suggests that coalition building is associated with particular characteristics of groups and policy environments, indicating that organizational actors engage in collaborative activity strategically to secure gains in particular policy environments (Heaney 2004; Hojnacki 1997; Hula 1999). For example, groups work together when opposition groups are perceived to be strong and when policy debates are broad (Hojnacki 1997).

Third, the fact that much of the scholarship of interest group influence does not conceptualize coalition building as a strategy of influence may simply reflect that widespread use of this strategy is a relatively recent phenomenon. Over the past several

decades, institutional changes including the growth of interest communities and the expansion and decentralization of government have greatly increased the opportunities and incentives for interest groups to collaborate (Hula 1999). In nearly every policy domain, the pool of potential allies has expanded. While creating opportunities for collaboration, this expansion has the additional paradoxical effect of giving any one group less power in the political system (Salisbury 1990; Hula 1999). Coalitions provide a vehicle through which organizations with similar policy goals can exhibit political strength and demonstrate consensus in a political system in which policymakers can effectively choose which interests to listen to and which to ignore (Hula 1999; Mahoney 2007). Joint activity also allows groups to pool the resources necessary for gaining access to an increasingly decentralized political agenda (Hojnacki 1998; Hula 1999, 27-30; Mahoney 2007). For example, a coalition lobbying on a particular bill can reach a larger number of political actors than can an organization working alone. ‘Spreading the workload’ in this manner is particularly important in a political system characterized by multiple points of political access (Hula 1999, 27).

Thus while coalition-building may have been primarily a strategy of organizational maintenance several decades ago, it is increasingly being used as a strategy of political influence today (Baumgarnter, Berry, Hojnacki, Kimball, and Leech 2009). This is true at both national and state levels. As Thomas and Hrebener (2004, 112) argue: “Increasingly these days, the view of state lobbying efforts as being conducted by individual groups is misleading. Coalitions of groups and particularly ad hoc issue coalitions are increasingly important.”

Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed existing research on interest group lobbying and influence in legislative settings, focusing specifically on interest groups that advocate on behalf of the poor – who they are, how they lobby, and how they gain influence on behalf of poor constituents. It has introduced coalition-building as a strategy of political influence, arguing that policy coalitions are increasingly employed by interest groups to gain influence in a dense and decentralized political system.

The next chapter elaborates on this topic by exploring the conditions and consequences of coalition building in legislative settings. In the domain of social welfare policy, coalitions allow relatively resource-deprived organizations to pool the resources necessary for gaining access and influence in legislative settings. Perhaps more importantly, coalitions provide a vehicle for credibly conveying information to legislators skeptical of enacting programs for America's least advantaged.

Chapter 3

Diverse Coalitions and Legislative Influence

This chapter presents a theory of diverse coalition building and legislative influence by organizational advocates for the poor. As discussed in the previous chapter, interest groups that advocate for the poor have limited financial and electoral resources. Many membership-based advocacy groups have small budgets, relying heavily on individual dues, gifts, and donations. Financial constraints limit their ability to engage in all forms of lobbying. Many institutional advocates for the poor, such as research organizations and intergovernmental actors, are similarly disadvantaged because they lack a formal membership base and thus have few voters to call upon when attempting to influence legislative decisions. Public charities face legal restrictions on legislative lobbying and political campaign contributions. And although professional organizations and labor unions sometimes represent the interests of the poor in legislative settings, these groups are organized for a purpose other than anti-poverty advocacy. Consequently, the organizational resources that are devoted to lobbying on poverty-related policy issues are limited.

These characteristics lead advocates to pursue strategies of legislative influence that do not rely on the monetary or electoral resources of any single organization. In this chapter, I argue that to mitigate their resource disadvantage, advocates for the poor turn to diverse coalition building as a strategy of legislative influence. Diverse coalitions help

organizations gain influence because they are capable of providing a wider range of informational resources to representatives wary of the consequences of legislating in support of social welfare programs. In addition, because they are costly to form, diverse coalitions are more likely to convince legislators that the information being provided is credible.

The chapter proceeds as follows. The first section provides an overview of coalition building in interest group communities. The second section examines the informational role of coalitions, arguing that formal and ad-hoc policy coalitions can provide credible electoral, policy, and political information to legislators. The third section explores how the diversity of a coalition impacts both the costs of collaboration and the likely influence of the coalition. The fourth section outlines when coalitions are likely to be utilized as a strategy of legislative influence. The fifth section presents the empirical implications of the theory, and the final section concludes.

Interest Group Coalitions

Coalitions are common in the interest group community. Nearly all groups engage in some type of informal networking, and formal participation in coalitions is common (Baumgartner, Berry, Hojnacki, Kimball, and Leech 2009; Heaney 2004; Hojnacki 1998; Hula 1999; Mahoney 2007; Schlozman and Tierney 1986). Coalitions vary with respect to their structure and political purpose. Some coalitions have a formal structure and are organized around long-standing issues. In one recent study, formal coalitions represented approximately 7 percent of a nationally representative sample of interest organizations (Baumgartner *et al.* 2009). Others are highly informal, organized

for a short period of time around a discrete issue or policy fight. Within coalitions, participants have varying degrees of interest and engagement. For example, collaboration is often initiated by resource-rich organizations willing to pay the high costs of coalition formation and maintenance to achieve broad policy success. Other participants may simply be specialists who join coalitions to shape specific provisions of a policy, or to secure non-policy benefits such as information and symbolic benefits (Hula 1999).

Interest organizations participate in coalitions for a variety of reasons: to provide opportunities for networking and social engagement, to obtain information at low costs, to signal activity to group members, and to pursue common policy goals. My dissertation focuses on *policy coalitions*, which are “groups of organizations united behind a symbiotic set of legislative or regulatory goals” (Hula 1999: 22). Research suggests that interest organizations have increasingly turned to policy coalitions as a strategy of influence as the size and scope of the interest community has expanded (Baumgartner *et al.* 2009). Policy coalitions also tend to form in particular political contexts: collaborative behavior is much more prominent when political conflict is high, organizational opponents are strong, and issues are broad (Hojnacki 1998).

Much of the existing work on coalitions and legislative influence assumes the political power of a coalition derives exclusively from its size. However, size is not the only important property of coalitions (Hinkley 1978). Viewing coalition building as information transmission helps illuminate how other properties of coalitions generate opportunities for coalitions to gain political access and influence. The following section describes how coalitions provide legislators with electoral, policy, and political

information, and provides for a basis for understanding how the diversity of a coalition, either in conjunction with, or irrespective of its size, can translate into political power in legislative settings.

The Informational Role of Coalitions

As discussed in the previous chapter, interest groups have three general strategies for influencing Congress: inside lobbying; outside lobbying; and coalition building. Prior research indicates that inside and outside lobbying tactics convey information, even if they do not actually change a legislator's preference or the outcome of a floor vote (Esterling 2004; Goldstein 1999; Kollman 1998). For example, by talking with a legislator or testifying at a hearing, an interest organization makes its preferences known and reveals substantive information about the policy under consideration (Esterling 2004). Similarly, mobilizing constituents at the grassroots level provides information about the direction and salience of constituents' policy beliefs (Kollman 1998). Because these lobbying efforts are costly, legislators also gain insight into the credibility of the information being provided (Ainsworth 1993; Austin-Smith and Banks 2002; Austin-Smith and Wright 1992, 1994; Grossman and Helpman 2001; Lohmann 1993; Potters and Van Winden 1992).

In much the same way, policy coalitions provide information about the shape of public opinion (electoral information), the policies under consideration (policy information), and the alignment of support and opposition across interested actors (political information). Because coalitions are costly to form, coalition-building also provides evidence that the information offered by coalition members is credible.

With respect to electoral information, policy coalitions indicate the direction and intensity of policy preferences across multiple interested actors. In doing so, they can reduce legislators' uncertainty about the electoral consequences of legislative action. For example, coalitions indicate that many groups support (or oppose) an issue and will notice a legislator's decision on that issue. This is important because a legislator rarely relies on just one group of constituents to remain in office (Fenno 1978). In addition, "broad coalitions create an aura of legitimacy" (Hula 1999, 29), generating 'electoral cover' for a legislator should she make an unpopular decision. If a legislator can point to widespread support for her decision, she will be better able to defend herself against challengers who seek to use that decision against her in the next election.

Coalitions also provide information about the substantive effects of a policy. The experiences and expertise of multiple groups can help policymakers better evaluate the causal framework of a policy intervention (Esterling 2004). Legislators may be more likely to believe that a particular policy instrument will produce a specific outcome if multiple outside actors agree that the outcome will result from the instrument. In addition, different interest groups possess information about different aspects of a policy intervention – for example, research organizations are skilled at summarizing and drawing inferences from existing research, but advocacy organizations may be better able to speak to the immediate needs of the poor or the implementation of a program. When multiple actors agree that a policy instrument will (or will not) yield a particular outcome, legislators' uncertainty about the substantive impact of legislative action is reduced.

Finally, coalitions provide political intelligence about the ease of moving a policy through the legislature. Coalitions indicate whether a legislative subsidy exists. Interest

groups acting collaboratively can in effect “subsidize” legislators’ activities by forging agreement across actors, thereby minimizing the work that a legislator must do to move a policy through the legislature (Hall and Deardorff 2006). In contentious areas with many different types of interest groups, a coalition may signal a particularly large subsidy. Coalitions also provide information about the level of consensus once a policy reaches the floor. This is important because legislators’ choices in Congress are based to some extent on the perceived level of conflict and consensus surrounding a particular policy issue (Kingdon 1989). When possible, legislators seek to avoid issues that will become entangled in controversy on the floor. Because consensus is more likely to result in policy passage, interested actors have an incentive to pursue strategies that signal high consensus and low conflict.

Diverse Coalitions as Costly Lobbying

Because coalitions are costly to build, they also indicate that the electoral, substantive, and political intelligence offered to legislators is credible. With respect to resources such as time and money, coalition founders must provide the initial capital and labor to organize and host a coalition, provide administrative support, and direct its early activities. Participants must also devote resources to gathering information on the preferences and likely activities of potential allies and opponents, and to ongoing coordination and maintenance efforts (Hula 1999; Loomis 1986).

An organization may also incur policy costs if collaboration requires it to deviate from its preferred policy position in order to facilitate collaboration. For example, a liberal advocacy group may have to moderate its position in order to collaborate with a

centrist group. Collaborating also entails substantial opportunity costs. In an increasingly crowded interest group environment, competition creates incentives for groups to develop distinctive identities and occupy specific policy niches. An organization that cultivates a unique identity gains a ‘marketable good’ to exchange for legislative access and influence (Browne 1990). In collaborating with other groups, an organization trades an opportunity to differentiate itself for a chance at increased policy influence.

Finally, organizations that collaborate with one another may face reputational costs. An organization’s reputation is among its most important resources, and groups may damage their reputations by collaborating with other actors (Schlozman and Tierney 1986), particularly as the diversity of the collaboration increases. For example, a nonpartisan research organization may damage its reputation for being nonpartisan if it allies with a liberal or conservative advocacy group. Similarly, a liberal child advocacy organization may alienate its membership base if it collaborates with a conservative “family values” group.

Coalition building is therefore costly – in terms of resources, policy positions, lost opportunity, and reputation. These costs are greater when coalition members are diverse, either with respect to organizational type, issue focus, or ideology. Diversity in organizational type can increase costs because different types of organizational actors face different constraints with respect to lobbying activities. For example, membership organizations are constrained by the policy preferences of their membership base, while institutional actors are not so constrained. Citizen groups that receive funding primarily through membership dues are often inclined to pursue highly visible and often confrontational outside strategies to demonstrate activity and effectiveness to their

members (Gais and Walker 1991). In contrast, institutional actors – particularly those that interact with government officials or receive government funding – tend to prefer inside strategies. For example, Gais and Walker (1991, 106) argue that for nonprofits:

“...the desires of their members to protect their professional standing and the requirements of organizational maintenance arising from their close association with federal agencies encourage groups with members from the nonprofit sector to avoid controversy and seek influence through inside political strategies.”

Intergovernmental actors and nonprofits that are funded by government sources tend to have close relationships with officials in government and consequently are less likely to employ confrontational outside strategies. Because different types of organizations encounter different constraints on their lobbying activities, it may be more difficult for them to agree on a lobbying strategy, and hence more costly for them to engage in collaborative behavior.

Second, organizations focused in different policy domains or with different ideologies are less likely to have what Hula refers to as *intergroup links* or *group interlock*, both of which facilitate coalition building (Hula 1999). Intergroup links refer to the connections that develop when staff members move from one organization to another, while group interlock results when one person works simultaneously for two organizations (Hula 1999, 55). Such links facilitate the flow of information about organizational preferences, strategy, and resources. In doing so, they lower the informational and resource costs of coalition building. Because organizations focused in different policy areas have fewer intergroup connections, the costs of coalition building are likely to be greater. In addition, such groups are less likely to have a history of shared collaborative behavior, which is a predictor of future collaboration (Heaney 2004).

Furthermore, organizations with different specializations or ideologies prioritize issues differently. For example, two advocacy groups for the homeless are likely to agree that homelessness is an important problem, that certain policy instruments should be utilized to address this problem, and that organizational resources should be spent on lobbying on issues related to homelessness. It is more difficult (and hence more costly) to convince a child health organization to expend resources to lobby on this issue because the organization is focused on a broad range of health-related policy issues, which may or may not be related to homelessness.

In addition, organizations that have different and opposing preferences risk alienating their membership base by collaborating on an issue on which their preferences are aligned. Perhaps for this reason, organizations that are similar with respect to ideology and organizational type are most likely to identify as allies and coalition partners across a wide range of policy domains (Hula 1999; Salisbury et al. 1987).

Diverse Coalitions and Legislative Influence

Although diverse coalition building is costly, there are reasons to suspect that it is likely to result in more legislative influence than either independent lobbying or non-diverse collaboration. First, diverse collaboration can bring more resources to the table, including monetary, electoral, substantive, and political resources. As Baumgartner and colleagues (2009, 205) argue: "...[C]onstructing a successful team implies recruiting players who have complementary, not duplicative, skills." While Baumgartner and colleagues view collaboration in terms of what collaboration brings to organizations, the implicit message is that such collaboration can be powerful because it provides more of

what legislators need and want. From a legislator's perspective, coalitions that can provide monetary and informational resources may reduce uncertainty more than a group with only one of these resources.

In addition to providing different resources, diverse collaboration can also provide a wider array of informational resources on a particular topic. With respect to substantive information, if organizations' technical expertise derives from different sources, diversity can reveal the support for the causal framework of a policy intervention from a wider range of perspectives. For example, when a nonpartisan research organization, nonprofit service provider, and advocacy group collaborate, this alliance may indicate that research supports the causal framework implicit in the policy instrument, that the policy will be implemented as intended, and that the policy is providing a support that a vulnerable population needs. In addition, two groups can be more informative than one when the groups are natural opponents. This is very similar to Krehbiel's (1991, 84) heterogeneity principle in Congressional committees, which posits that "specialists from opposite sides of a policy spectrum are collectively more informative than specialists from only one side of a spectrum."

Diversifying electoral resources is important because legislators rarely rely on a single group for electoral support. While adding membership organizations to a coalition does increase the size of (potential) electoral support for a policy, the diversity of the membership organizations is an important factor. For example, a coalition of labor and business organizations may reduce electoral uncertainty more than a coalition of labor or business alone in a district where both types of organizations are key players. Similarly, with respect to Congress as a whole, diversifying the electoral resources behind a

particular policy position is important because legislators respond to different constituencies, and membership organizations have ties to different districts.

Diverse collaboration can also yield greater influence than independent lobbying or non-diverse collaboration because it offers a strong signal that the information being provided is credible. Because the costs of collaboration among organizations that differ with respect to organizational type, issue focus, or ideology are so great, diverse coalition building is unlikely to occur unless the issue is salient to coalition founders. At the same time, even if the issue is salient to a founder, the costs of diverse coalition building are likely to be prohibitive unless the issue is also salient to coalition partners.

Salience refers to the importance that an organization's members place on an issue. When an issue is salient, the relative advantages of a policy 'win' will likely exceed the costs associated with building a coalition. In the context of electoral information, salience refers to the extent to which constituents' policy preferences will actually impact their voting behavior. Policy preferences are salient to constituents if they impact voting decisions, but are not salient if they do not impact voting decisions. With respect to substantive and political information, salience refers to the value that organizations place on technical information or a policy victory, whether or not this directly impacts the electoral fortunes of legislators. For example, a piece of technical information may be salient to research organizations if there is overwhelming evidence that a particular policy instrument will produce a favorable policy outcome – such as decline in acid rain, or an overall gain in students' educational achievement.

Recall that an important element of Ainsworth's model of costly lobbying is that organizations that misrepresent information will lose more than they gain by lobbying.

For Ainsworth, this loss is captured in the value of the policy victory, which differs for the two types of organizations (credible and non-credible). However, the ability of organizations to collaborate depends not only on the salience of the issue to the coalition founder, but also the salience of the issue to potential partners. It is possible that even when an issue is salient to an advocate (or when the value of a policy victory is great), it will be unable to build a diverse coalition because it has no other organizations with which to partner. This can be captured in the *costs* of coalition building to the founder (as opposed to simply the payoff).

Thus diverse collaboration provides evidence of salience to a coalition founder and salience to coalition partners. If an issue is unimportant to a coalition founder, the value of the policy victory will not exceed the cost of diverse coalition building, and the founder will not build a coalition. At the same time, if an issue is unimportant to coalition partners, the costs of coalition building will be prohibitive, and the founder will not build a coalition. In this way, a legislator can be assured that when she sees a diverse coalition, the issue is salient to the range of partners involved. In other words, a diverse coalition provides evidence of credibility.

Finally, it is important to note that this theory builds primarily on a body of formal work that views costly lobbying as facilitating information transmission between interest groups and legislators (Ainsworth 1993; Austin-Smith and Banks 2002; Austin-Smith and Wright 1992, 1994; Lohmann 1993; Potters and Van Winden 1992; see Grossman and Helpman 2001 for a review). In this work, scholars hypothesize that interest groups' engagement in costly lobbying can, under certain conditions, provide information to legislators about the true state of the world. My theory is most similar to

theories that focus on endogenous cost lobbying, in which the costs of lobbying are not fixed but rather vary according to preferences and effort level of organizational actors. This theoretical orientation is appropriate for thinking about diverse coalition building due to my focus on the varying costs associated with forming a coalition across diverse actors.

However, it is clear from both the theoretical and empirical analysis (presented in subsequent chapters) that an important aspect of diverse coalition building and legislative influence is that diversity itself can provide important information to legislators, absent any formal collaborative activity. This insight draws from a separate body of research, focusing on heterogeneous signals and legislative influence (Gilligan and Krehbiel 1989; Krehbiel 1992). While the theoretical focus in this dissertation is on endogenous cost lobbying, future iterations of the theory will more explicitly incorporate work on heterogeneous signals. These future extensions are described in greater detail in my concluding chapter.

Choosing a Lobbying Strategy

Interest organizations have several strategies at their disposal for providing information to legislators and gaining legislative influence. How does an organization decide which strategies and tactics to employ? Perhaps more importantly for this project, when will an organization decide to build coalitions? This section explores the factors affecting an interest group's choice of lobbying strategy, focusing specifically on factors that create incentives for advocates for the poor to engage in coalition building.

An interest group's decision of how to lobby is first and foremost associated with its organizational resources. As Schlozman and Tierney (1986) argue: "Perhaps the most important factor affecting an organization's strategic choice of lobbying techniques is its resources" (161). Groups with ample financial resources – such as corporations and trade associations – have the ability to pursue a range of inside lobbying tactics, such as hiring multiple lobbyists, maintaining offices in Washington DC, and contributing to political campaigns. Groups with significant electoral resources have the ability to employ outside tactics, such as encouraging members to contact legislators or engaging in media campaigns.

As discussed previously, organizations that advocate for the poor are relatively resource-poor – particularly with respect to monetary and electoral resources. This makes them more likely to rely on informational resources, and to pursue strategies that do not rely on the resources of any single organization. In addition, because many organizational advocates have close ties to government officials (either because they receive federal funding or administer government programs), they are more likely to pursue less confrontational, inside strategies (Gais and Walker 1991).

In addition to organizational resources, lobbying strategies are strongly shaped by contextual factors including the level of conflict in the issue environment and the scope of the issue under consideration (Gais and Walker 1991; Hojnacki 1997; Mahoney and Baumgartner 2004). In general, political conflict tends to increase all forms of lobbying (Gais and Walker 1991). With respect to coalition building, organizations are more likely to collaborate with one another on issues that are salient and broad in scope (Hojnacki 1997; Mahoney and Baumgartner 2004). Some research shows that contextual factors

are far more important than organizational factors in determining coalition activity (Mahoney 2007). This suggests that organizational advocates for the poor will engage in coalition building only in particular issue environments: when conflict is high and the scope of the issue is broad.

Coalition formation is also related to features of the interest group community, specifically the strength of political opponents and the salience of the issue to potential coalition partners. Coalitions are more likely to form when political opponents are perceived to be strong – a group’s assessment of their opponents is more strongly associated with the decision to pursue collaborative activities than are their assessments of Congress (Hojnacki 1998). Strong opponents are also likely to encourage coalition building that is diverse with respect to resources such as money, electoral support, and information, as organizations will seek to mobilize a broader range of resources in order to fight a strong opponent. In addition, as the theory above suggests, diverse coalition formation is related to the salience of the issue among potential organizational allies.

Empirical Implications of the Theory of Diverse Coalitions

This theory yields two empirical implications: (1) advocates for the poor will build diverse coalitions, under some conditions, and (2) diverse coalitions will have a greater likelihood of achieving legislative influence.

First, because advocates for the poor are disadvantaged with respect to the resources that facilitate influence in Congress, they will pursue diverse coalition building as a strategy of legislative influence. This strategy will be more common in policy environments in which political conflict is high and issue scope is broad. As the fifth

chapter will show, these characteristics were present during the welfare reform debates of the mid-1990s, making welfare reform an appropriate object of empirical study.

In addition, diverse coalitions will only form when advocates and their (potential) partners view an issue as salient. When this occurs, the theory posits that advocates will build coalitions that are diverse with respect to the informational resources that advocates can provide to legislators. Because diversity is an important factor, coalitions will actively signal this diversity to legislators, rather than the coalition's size alone.

It is important to note that diversity is, to some extent, in the eye of the beholder. For example, a Republican legislator viewing a coalition of liberal advocates, research organizations, and service providers may see a coalition of "usual suspects" while a Democrat interested in the effect of a policy on low-income populations may see diverse support for the argument that the policy will yield favorable outcomes. To systematize 'diversity,' I focus on the following types of diverse alliances – those that are diverse with respect to organizational type (namely, institutional actors and membership organizations), those that are diverse with respect to their primary policy domain, and those that are diverse with respect to liberal and conservative ideology.

The second implication is that diverse coalitions will be associated with legislative influence. This means that when diverse coalitions form, organizational advocates for the poor will be more likely to achieve influence in the form of increased legislative attention to an issue, committee support, floor votes, and ultimately, policy passage. It is important to note that within the interest group literature, influence has been and continues to be extremely difficult to measure. Baumgartner and Leech (1998) argue that despite decades of research, interest group scholars have yet to find systematic

evidence of interest group influence. Some scholars find limited or conditional evidence of influence, and still others fail to find evidence of any influence at all (see also Smith 1995). Underlying the discrepancy in research findings is the fact that influence is often unobservable, making its measurement a notoriously difficult task (see Baumgartner and Leech 1998 for a review).

I address these difficulties in several ways. First, I examine a range of policy decisions across a single issue and across states to increase the number of observations in my sample. Much of the evidence of interest group influence comes from analyses of single cases (Smith 1995). Focusing on multiple issues within welfare reform, across multiple states, allows me to test whether relationships between diverse coalitions and policy decisions are systematic. Second, I explore examples of relatively small policy ‘wins’ – for example, the adoption of a policy in the House but its defeat in the Senate, or the revival of a policy reform bill in Congress. These instances of influence may provide greater evidence of interest group influence. Finally, I focus in part on the conditions of diverse coalition building. If groups engage in such behavior systematically in certain settings, this suggests that they have some expectation that such a behavior will lead to influence in that setting over other types of behavior.

Conclusion

This chapter has theorized that organizations turn to diverse coalition building as a strategy of influence in legislative settings. Diverse coalitions provide a wide range of information, and the diversity of coalition partners signals to legislators that the information being provided is credible. As a result, diverse coalitions are likely to be

associated with legislative influence. The next chapter uses formal theoretic modeling to predict the conditions under which diverse coalitions will form and gain influence in legislative settings.

Chapter 4

A Formal Theoretic Model of Coalitions and Legislative Influence

In the previous chapter, I hypothesized that organizational advocates for the poor gain influence in legislative settings by providing electoral, policy, and political information to address legislators' uncertainty about the consequences of supporting social welfare programs. To diversify the range of information they can provide to legislators, and to signal that the information is credible, anti-poverty advocates build diverse coalitions. In this chapter, I develop a formal theoretic model to predict the conditions of diverse coalition formation and legislative influence. The goal is to identify how features of the political context, including the presence of opposing interest groups, level of political conflict, and partisan control of government, impact collaborative behavior and influence. This is important, in part, because my dissertation uses cross-state comparisons to test the empirical predictions of the theory. If coalition formation is affected by contextual features that vary at the state level, such factors are important to take into account.

I model the process of coalition building and influence as a signaling game with three players: an anti-poverty advocacy group, an "opposition" group opposed to generous programs for the poor, and a median legislator. My model predicts that an anti-poverty advocate gains influence in one of two ways: by bargaining with an opposition group or by building a diverse coalition with other advocates. Both types of

collaboration require that an opposition group perceive an advocacy group as being strong, which means it is capable of building a diverse coalition with other advocates. The value of bargaining and the costs of lobbying – operationalized in my empirical chapters as the level of political conflict and the partisan control of government, respectively – affect whether an advocacy group bargains with an opposition group or builds a coalition with other advocates. When political conflict is low and Democrats control the legislature, the model predicts that advocates will gain influence through bargaining with opponents of social programs. When political conflict is high and Republicans control the legislature, advocates will gain influence by building diverse coalitions.

I begin the chapter by justifying my use of formal methods to analyze antipoverty advocacy and legislative influence. Second, I introduce and explain my signaling model. In the third section, I identify a solution that has strong behavioral implications. The fourth section describes the empirical predictions of the model, and introduces hypotheses to be tested in the empirical chapters of my dissertation.

A Signaling Model of Legislative Influence

In the interest group literature, empirical and anecdotal data suggest that special interests influence legislative processes and outcomes, yet scholars have struggled to identify how and when this influence occurs. A relatively recent body of research uses formal-theoretic methods to better understand the mechanisms and conditions of interest group influence (Ainsworth 1993; Austen-Smith and Wright 1992, 1994; Denzau and Munger 1986; Hall and Deardorff 2006; Helpman and Persson 2001; Mitchell and

Munger 1991; Persson and Tabellini 2000; see van Winden 2003 for a review).

Theoretical models require considerable abstraction, but allow scholars to simplify complex relationships by isolating key interactions and mechanisms of influence.

Formal-theoretic methods thus provide a strong foundation for building coherent theory about the conditions of interest group influence (Mitchell and Munger 1991; Baumgartner and Leech 1998).

Signaling models are particularly useful for analyzing lobbying as an attempt to use information to persuade legislators because they highlight informational asymmetries between groups and legislators (Banks 1991; Smith 1995). Information is asymmetric in legislative settings when organizational actors possess information that legislators lack. In a typical signaling game, a legislator is modeled as having incomplete information about the electoral, substantive, or political consequences of a policy decision, while an interest organization is modeled as having private information in one or more of these areas. The assumption that interest groups and legislators have different preferences over outcomes creates incentives for groups to misrepresent their information to legislators. For instance, an interest group such as the AARP has an incentive to overstate the extent to which its members support a policy if doing so will result in greater legislative attention and enactment of the AARP's favored policy. Legislators, however, have little to gain (and often much to lose) by enacting a policy if it is not actually important to the AARP's membership base, will produce unintended impacts, or will generate divisive or contentious debates among other interested actors. The question for the legislator is whether, and under what conditions, to believe the AARP. Political scientists use signaling models to identify the conditions under which lobbying can credibly convey

information despite incentives for interest groups to misrepresent their informational resources.

Like many formal theoretic models of interest group lobbying and legislative influence, my model characterizes information between an interest organization and median legislator as asymmetric. In my model, an anti-poverty advocate must persuade a median legislator to reject a policy that reduces or eliminates a program for the poor.¹⁴ The anti-poverty advocate has information that the proposed policy change will produce more harm than good. The legislator does not want to enact a policy that will produce negative outcomes, but will only reject the policy if the advocate can provide credible evidence of future harm to the legislator. Advocates signal credibility by building diverse coalitions.

I build upon existing models by introducing informational asymmetries between organizational actors on opposing sides of a policy issue. While opposing interest groups may have more information than legislators about the preferences, resources, and likely activities of their opponents, this information is not necessarily complete. For instance, the National Right to Life Committee (NRTLCL) may have a strong sense of the issues that will lead Planned Parenthood to devote resources to lobbying, but informational asymmetries between the two groups are still likely to exist. The NRTLCL does not necessarily know how much Planned Parenthood intends to spend on lobbying on a particular issue, whether it will pursue inside or outside lobbying strategies, and who it

¹⁴ This setup means that the model depicts a situation in which advocates are in a defensive position, as protectors of the status quo. This is an appropriate setup for analyzing the relative success of anti-poverty advocates in legislative settings over the last several decades, which were characterized by decreasing federal involvement in many areas of social welfare policy. It is important to note that the strategies and relative success of advocates are likely to differ when advocates are proposing rather than defending the status quo. As a result, the predictions and implications of the model are intended to apply only to situations in which advocates are defending existing policies, rather than proposing policy change.

intends to target in lobbying efforts. These informational asymmetries are likely to be particularly pronounced with respect to collaborative efforts. Although the NRTCL may know the policy preferences of Planned Parenthood, it is unlikely to know the policy preferences of the Planned Parenthood's potential allies, particularly if the allies differ with respect to policy domain or ideology. If interest groups opposed to social welfare programs think that advocacy groups are capable of building a diverse coalition and winning a policy battle, they may act strategically to prevent coalition formation. My model explicitly takes this possibility into account.

A Formal-Theoretic Model of Coalition-Building and Legislative Influence

This section presents my formal-theoretic model. As introduced above, I model the process of diverse coalition building and legislative decision making as a signaling game with three players: an anti-poverty advocacy group, an opposition group, and a median legislator. The game begins when the opposition group, named for its opposition to social welfare programs, proposes a policy that will reduce government benefits to the poor. The advocacy group does not want the policy change, but lacks the resources to defeat the opposition group alone. The advocacy group must therefore decide whether to build a diverse coalition to defeat the opposition's policy proposal.

There are two types of advocacy groups in the model: strong and weak. I simplify the model by assuming that both types of advocacy groups value a policy 'win' (i.e. the issue is salient to both types), but that they exist in different environments. The strong advocacy group exists in an environment in which other interest groups (potential partners) view the issue as salient; the weak advocacy group exists in an environment in

which no other interest groups view the issue as salient. When the issue is salient to partners, the strong type can build a diverse coalition to defeat the opposition's proposed policy change. The weak advocacy group would like to build a diverse coalition, but because no partners view the issue as salient, it is too costly to do so.

The opposition does not know the advocacy group's true type (or does not know whether potential partners view the issue as salient), but generally prefers to interact differently with strong and weak types. The opposition prefers to bargain with a strong advocate because if it does not, the advocate can defeat the opposition's policy by building a coalition. The opposition prefers not to bargain with a weak advocate because this type cannot defeat the opposition by building a diverse coalition. Because the advocacy group's true type is hidden from the opposition, the opposition will bargain with the advocacy group if it believes it to be a strong type, but will simply oppose the advocacy group if it believes it to be a weak type.

The median legislator, motivated by reelection, prefers to adopt the opposition group's policy change unless advocates can provide credible information that the policy would result in more harm than good. The only way that an advocate can provide credible information that will lead the median legislator to reject the policy is by building a diverse coalition. A diverse coalition forms when advocates and opponents bargain or when an advocacy organization successfully builds a coalition with other advocates. Recall from the previous section that diverse coalitions provide credible information by signaling that organizations of different types, specializations, ideologies, and preferences view an issue as salient. When advocates and opponents bargain, they form a temporary policy coalition that is diverse with respect to the partners' original preferences. When an

advocacy organization builds a coalition to challenge opponent's proposed policy change, coalition partners are similar in preference, but diverse with respect to group type, policy domain, or ideology. Diverse collaboration is costly, but because the issue is salient to coalition partners, the expected payoff exceeds the costs, making coalition building worthwhile. An organization's ability to pay a cost to collaborate with diverse actors convinces a legislator that both the advocate and the partners view the issue as salient. Thus legislators will accept the policy of a diverse coalition.

The key outcomes are as follows. If advocates do not challenge opponents, then the legislator simply accepts the opposition's policy proposal (a). If the opposition believes that it is dealing with a strong type advocacy group, then advocates and opponents will bargain and compromise on a new policy and the legislator will accept that policy (b). If the opposition believes that it is dealing with a weak type advocacy group, it will not bargain and the advocacy group will decide whether to lobby independently against the opposition group (c) or whether to build a diverse coalition (d). Following (c), the legislator will accept the opposition's proposal and the advocacy group will lose. Following (d), the legislator will reject the opposition's proposal and the advocacy group will succeed.

The Players

Table 4.1 provides an overview of the key variables and their descriptions. The advocacy group is labeled G_i , the opposition group is labeled OG , and the median legislator is labeled L_M . The advocacy group is one of two types: strong or weak (labeled G_i , where $i \in \{W, S\}$). The advocacy group's type reflects the environment in which the

advocacy group operates: a strong type exists in an environment in which other organizational actors view a policy as salient, while a weak type exists in an environment in which no other actors view the issue as salient.

The policy outcomes are represented by x_j , where $j \in \{sq, o, b\}$. The policy x_{sq} refers to the status quo policy, x_o refers to the opposition's proposed policy, and x_b refers to the policy achieved through bargaining. An advocacy group's utility is determined by the value that it places on the legislative (or policy) outcome α_{AG} ; the costs of lobbying independently γ_{AG} ; the costs of building a coalition building c_i , where $i \in \{W, S\}$; the value of bargaining β_{AG} ; and the future loss of not engaging in legislative battle f . Of the three policy outcomes, the advocacy group places the highest value on the status quo policy x_{sq} , and the lowest value on the opposition's proposed policy change x_o . For the advocacy group: $x_o < x_b < x_{sq}$.

An important decision for the advocacy group is whether to signal to the opposition group that it will invest resources in building a coalition to contest the proposed reduction in social welfare benefits. Building a coalition is costly for both weak and strong types because groups must invest resources in organizing and maintaining a coalition and gathering information on potential coalition partners. However, the strong type pays a smaller cost to build a coalition (c_S) because there is already strong resistance to the opposition's proposed policy change. The weak type pays a large cost to build a coalition (c_W) because no other actors strongly oppose the policy change. For a weak type to build a diverse coalition, it would have to devote considerably more resources to convincing partners to engage in political activity. The cost of coalition building for the weak type is greater than the value of a policy win,

while the cost for the strong type is less than the value of a policy win. Lobbying alone without building a coalition is also costly (γ_{AG}), but requires fewer resources than coalition building. Thus for G_i : $\gamma_{AG} < c_S < \alpha_{AG} < c_W$.

Advocacy organizations lose standing within the pressure community if they do not lobby against the opposition's proposal. This loss is represented by f because the loss occurs in the future. In lobbying to preserve benefits to the poor, advocates demonstrate that the organization is actively engaged in political activity on behalf of the poor. For membership organizations, such activity is important for maintaining the support of current members and attracting new members. Lobbying can also attract funding, and can help organizations build relationships with like-minded groups and legislators. By abstaining from legislative activity, the advocacy group loses the future benefits that accrue from bargaining, collaborating, or lobbying.

The utility of the opposition group (OG) is a function of the policy choice x_j , where $j \in \{sq, b, o\}$, the value of bargaining β_{OG} ; and the costs of lobbying γ_{OG} . OG places a value of α_{OG} on the policy change (policy x_o), a value of β_{OG} on the policy achieved through bargaining with the advocacy group (policy x_b), and a value of 0 on the status quo (policy x_{sq}). Thus for OG : $x_{sq} < x_b < x_o$. As for the advocacy group, the costs of lobbying are represented by γ_{OG} .

Absent coalition building by anti-poverty advocates, the median legislator (L_M) derives electoral benefits from supporting the proposed policy change. Her payoff is either 1 or 0. If she supports the opposition's proposed change and the opposition is unopposed by the advocacy group, then she gains the support of the opposition in the next election. If the opposition and advocates bargain and agree on a policy and she

accepts the policy, then she also gains the future support of the opposition. However, when there is credible evidence that the opposition's policy will result in more harm than good (or the advocacy group is a strong type), then the legislator will lose more than she gains by supporting the policy change. Thus the legislator receives a payoff of 1 when she accepts the policy change and the opposition is either unopposed, has bargained, or is facing a weak advocacy group. When the opposition is facing a strong advocacy group and the advocacy group builds a coalition, the legislator receives a payoff of 0 when accepting the policy and 1 when rejecting the policy.

The Game

The extensive form of the game is shown in Figure 4.1. In this figure, the advocacy groups' decision nodes are striped vertically, the opposition's nodes are striped horizontally, and the legislator's decision nodes are spotted. The initial and terminal nodes are solid black. The vertical dashed lines at the opposition's decision nodes and legislator's decision nodes indicate that these actors do not know the advocacy group's true type. The game begins after the opposition group proposes a change to an existing policy – for example, by proposing to reduce cash benefits to low-income families.

(1) Stage 1: Signaling

In the first stage, chance (or “nature”) selects the strong advocacy group G_S with probability (p) and the weak advocacy group G_W with probability ($1 - p$). All players know the initial probability distribution, but only the advocacy group knows whether it is a strong or weak type. Upon viewing its type, the advocacy group decides whether to

signal to the opposition OG that it will build an ad-hoc policy coalition to lobby against the opposition's proposed policy change. Signaling at this stage is costless and takes the form of an unobserved communication between the two interest groups. If an advocacy group decides not to signal, then the game ends, the legislator accepts the proposal, and the opposition group achieves its preferred outcome.

(2) Stage 2: Bargaining

Upon viewing the advocacy group's decision to signal, OG updates its beliefs regarding the advocacy group's type, and decides whether to enter into a bargaining game with the advocacy group or challenge the advocacy group by lobbying for its preferred policy in the legislature. If OG chooses to bargain with the advocacy group, then the two agree on a policy x_b that is somewhere between the two groups' ideal points. Bargaining assures a payoff of β_m for both groups because the legislator L_M 's dominant strategy is to accept the policy achieved through bargaining, regardless of the advocacy group's type. If OG decides to lobby at cost γ_{AG} , then the game moves to the next stage.

(3) Stage 3: Lobbying and Coalition-Building

If OG chooses to lobby independently for its proposed policy x_o , the advocacy group must decide whether to build a coalition to lobby against the opposition at cost c_i , or to lobby independently against the opposition group at cost γ_{AG} . The cost of building a coalition for the strong advocate is c_S and the cost of building a coalition for the weak advocate is c_W , where $c_S < \alpha_{AG} < c_W$. If the weak advocacy group builds a coalition, it will receive a payoff of $(0 - c_W)$ if the legislator accepts the opposition's policy proposal

and a payoff of $(\alpha_{AG} - c_W)$ if the legislator rejects the opposition's proposal. If the weak type lobbies independently, it receives a payoff of $(0 - \gamma_{AG})$ if the legislator accepts the proposal and a payoff of $(\alpha_{AG} - \gamma_{AG})$ if the legislator rejects the proposal. The strong advocacy group will receive a payoff of $(0 - \gamma_{AG})$ if it lobbies independently and the legislator accepts the proposal, a payoff of $(\alpha_{AG} - \gamma_{AG})$ if the legislator rejects the proposal, a payoff of $(0 - c_S)$ if it builds a coalition and the legislator accepts the proposal, and a payoff of $(\alpha_{AG} - c_S)$ if it builds a coalition and the legislator rejects the proposal.

(4) Stage 4: Policy Decision

If advocacy and opposition groups bargain or engage in a legislative battle, then the median legislator (L_M) decides whether to accept or reject the proposed policy change (labeled policy x_j). L_M is adopting the opposition's preferred position if she accepts policy x_o and the advocacy group's preferred position if she rejects the policy. Following bargaining, L_M 's dominant strategy is to accept the policy achieved via bargaining regardless of the advocacy group's type. If the opposition and advocacy group do not bargain but rather engage in legislative battle, then the legislator chooses whether to accept or reject policy x_o . The advocacy group's actions in this stage of the model reveal its true type to the legislator. If the legislator encounters a diverse coalition, she knows that the information being provided by the advocacy group is credible, and will reject the proposal of the opposition. *This is the only circumstance in which the legislator will reject the opposition's proposal.* If the legislator encounters an advocacy group lobbying independently, then she will accept the opposition's policy change x_o .

Description of Equilibrium Results

The equilibrium concept used in this game is perfect Bayesian equilibrium. Perfect Bayesian equilibrium consists of a set of strategies and beliefs that satisfy the following conditions: (1) at an information set, a player has a belief about which node in the information has been reached; (2) players' strategies are sequentially rational given their beliefs; (3) beliefs are determined by Bayes' rule and the players' equilibrium strategies at the information sets on the equilibrium path, and (4) off the equilibrium path where possible (Gibbons 1992: 173-190). This equilibrium concept permits players with incomplete information to update their beliefs about other players' types based on their previous behavior in the game. An important implication for this game is that the median legislator is able to update her beliefs about the advocacy group's type based on behaviors that occur prior to her decision node.

Although multiple equilibria are possible, I identify a semi-pooling equilibrium that has strong behavioral implications (Banks 1991). This equilibrium identifies the conditions under which coalitions form and convey information to legislators – specifically, when both advocacy groups signal to the opposition group, the opposition sometimes opposes and sometimes bargains, the strong advocacy group builds a coalition but the weak advocacy group does not, and the legislator rejects the policy change opposed by a diverse coalition but accepts the policy change when a diverse coalition does not form.

The conditions for this equilibrium are as follows. First, for the advocacy group, the future losses of abstaining from signaling exceed the costs of lobbying alone, or $f > \gamma_{AG}$. This ensures that both advocacy group types will signal. Second, for the advocacy

group, $c_S < \alpha_{AG} < c_W$, and third, $(\alpha_{AG} - c_W) < (0 - \gamma_{AG})$. The second condition means that the strong type advocacy group will build a diverse coalition because the anticipated benefits of a policy win exceed the costs of coalition building. The second and third conditions together mean that the weak type advocacy group will not build a diverse coalition because the costs of coalition building even in the presence of a policy win are less than the value of losing the policy battle and lobbying alone. The fourth condition is that the opposition group will oppose only when the expected value of opposing exceeds the value of bargaining, or when $\beta_{OG} < \alpha_{OG} (1 - q) - \gamma_{OG}$. The opposition will bargain when the $\beta_{OG} > \alpha_{OG} (1 - q) - \gamma_{OG}$. I elaborate on each of these conditions below.

The first condition makes it optimal for both advocacy group types to signal because the anticipated benefits of signaling – even for the weak type – exceed the certain benefits of not signaling, or $(0 - f) < (0 - \gamma_{AG})$. Put another way, both advocacy group types can receive a greater payoff from signaling, regardless of the outcome. For the strong type, if *OG* chooses to bargain, the strong type will receive a payoff of β_{AG} ; if *OG* chooses to oppose, the strong type will build a coalition and will receive a payoff of $\alpha_{AG} - c_S$. For the weak type, signaling will yield a payoff of greater than zero if *OG* chooses to bargain. This will occur only when *OG* believes that the benefits of bargaining exceed the benefits of engaging in legislative battle. If *OG* opposes, the weak type will lobby independently and will receive a payoff of $0 - \gamma_{AG}$. Because $f > \gamma_{AG}$, this payoff is still greater than the payoff that the weak type receives by abstaining.

The second and third conditions ensure that the strong advocate will build a diverse coalition while the weak advocate will not. If an opposition group opposes, the optimal strategies for strong and weak advocacy groups differ because the costs of

coalition building for each type differ. For G_S , the costs of coalition building are less than α_{AG} , which means that the group will receive a payoff greater than 0 if the legislator rejects the opposition's policy proposal (thereby deciding in favor of the advocacy group). For G_W , the costs of coalition building are greater than α_{AG} , meaning that the group will receive a payoff less than 0 *even if the legislator rejects the opposition's proposal and decides in favor of the advocacy group*. It is these differential costs that prevent the weak type from building a diverse coalition, and offer a signal to the legislator that the information provided by the advocacy group is credible. The high costs of coalition building for the weak advocacy group deter it from building a coalition that will misrepresent the true extent of resistance to the opposition's policy proposal. The costs of coalition building for the strong advocacy group are lower, allowing it to build a coalition that provides credible evidence to the legislator that she will lose more than she gains by enacting the opposition's proposal.

The fourth condition identifies when an opposition group will bargain and when it will oppose. To understand when the opposition group will oppose rather than bargain, consider how the opposition group's payoff changes as the costs of lobbying (γ_{OG}), value of bargaining (β_{OG}), and probability of a strong type advocacy group (q) change. Figure 4.2 shows the relationship between OG 's payoffs and the value of lobbying γ_{OG} , bargaining β_{OG} and q . In this figure, the payoff to the opposition group is shown on the y-axis, while the probability of a strong type advocacy group (q) is shown on the x-axis. The costs of lobbying are shown in two different ways – as small (γ_{OG1}) and large (γ_{OG2}). Similarly, the payoff from bargaining is shown as high (β_{OG1}) and low (β_{OG2}).

This figure shows that when the costs of lobbying for the opposition are small (γ_{OG}) and the payoff from bargaining is high (β_{OG}), OG 's strategy depends on its beliefs about the advocacy group's type. In this scenario, OG always prefers to bargain with a strong advocacy group and oppose a weak advocacy group. When q equals 1 (or when the advocacy group is a strong type) and OG bargains, it will receive a payoff of β_{OG} . If OG opposes, the strong type advocacy group will build a coalition and the legislator will reject the policy proposal, yielding a payoff of $0 - \gamma_{OG}$ to OG . Because $0 - \gamma_{OG}$ is less than β_{OG} , OG 's best option is to bargain with a strong type. The opposition prefers to oppose a weak type because a weak type cannot build a coalition. When q equals 0 (or when the advocacy group is a weak type), the payoff when OG opposes is $\alpha_{OG} - \gamma_{OG}$, which the figure shows is greater than the payoff from bargaining (β_{OG}).

However, because it does not know the advocacy group's true type, OG 's strategy depends on its beliefs about the advocacy group's type. For example, assume that the value of bargaining β_{OG} is equal to one-fourth the value of lobbying and winning, or $\beta_{OG} = .25(\alpha_{OG} - \gamma_{OG})$. This is roughly equivalent to the position of β_{OG} in Figure 2. When the probability that OG is dealing with a strong group is less than 75 percent (or $q < 0.75$), OG prefers to oppose because the payoff of opposing exceeds the payoff of bargaining. As the figure shows, the solid diagonal line is greater than β_{OG} for all values of $q < 0.75$. As the probability that OG is dealing with a strong advocacy group increases above .75, OG prefers to bargain rather than oppose, because the payoff of bargaining is greater than the payoff of opposing. Therefore, when q is less than 0.75 OG 's optimal strategy is to oppose rather than bargain; when q is greater than 0.75, OG 's best strategy is to bargain. Formally, OG will bargain when $\beta_{OG} > \alpha_{OG}(1 - q) - \gamma_{OG}$ and

oppose when $\beta_{OG} < \alpha_{OG}(1 - q) - \gamma_{OG}$. When the value of bargaining remains at β_{OG1} and the costs of lobbying increase from γ_{OG1} to γ_{OG2} (or as the diagonal line moves down), *OG* becomes less likely to oppose and more likely to bargain for lower values of q . When the costs of lobbying are γ_{OG2} , *OG*'s opposes roughly half of the time (when $q < 0.5$) and bargains half of the time (when $q > 0.5$).

The opposition group's strategy also depends on the relative value of bargaining. Figure 2 shows how *OG*'s optimal strategy changes as the value of bargaining moves from β_{OG1} to β_{OG2} . As the value of bargaining decreases, the opposition group becomes less likely to bargain and more likely to oppose, even when it believes it is dealing with a strong type. Whenever the value of bargaining β is less than the value of a policy win after lobbying independently for all values of q , the opposition will choose to oppose rather than bargain.

Empirical Predictions of the Theoretical Model

The model yields two types of behavioral implications. The first implication is outcome-oriented and produces hypotheses regarding the conditions under which Congressional representatives legislate in favor of anti-poverty advocates. The second implications are process-oriented, generating predictions for how opposing interest groups interact in different environmental contexts.

First, the outcome-oriented hypothesis is called the *Diverse Coalitions Hypothesis*. This hypothesis predicts that advocates will gain influence – either through bargaining or coalition building – when the advocacy group is perceived as being a “strong” type. Advocacy groups are perceived as being strong types when the issue is

salient to advocates and to partners. When an issue is salient, it means that an advocacy group (or the advocacy group's membership base) values an issue. When the issue is not salient to coalition partners, partners are not willing to expend their own resources to collaborate with the advocacy group, and it is not possible for the advocacy group to convince them to do so. In this situation, the costs of collaboration effectively preclude the advocacy group from building a diverse coalition. When advocates are perceived as being strong, they will gain influence, but the process of influence will vary based on the costs of legislative battle and the relative value of bargaining

Second, the model produces a set of process-oriented implications, which I call the *Advocacy Coalition Hypothesis* and the *Strange Bedfellows Hypothesis*. The *Advocacy Coalition Hypothesis* predicts that diverse coalition building by anti-poverty groups will occur when advocates are "strong" types, when the costs of legislative battle are low for the opposition group, and the value of bargaining is low. Figure 2 shows that when the costs of lobbying are low and the value of bargaining is low, opposition groups receive a higher payoff from opposing even when advocates are perceived as being capable of winning the policy battle. Thus, provided that an issue is salient to an advocacy group and salient to potential partners, diverse coalitions will be more likely to form when costs are low and bargaining yields a minimal reward

The *Strange Bedfellows Hypothesis* predicts that when advocates are perceived as being "strong" types, bargaining between advocates and opponents will be more likely when the costs of legislative battle are high. As the costs of engaging in legislative battle increase from low to high, opposition groups will prefer the certain outcome of bargaining over the potential policy loss and certain resource loss associated with

opposing. When the costs of lobbying are great enough, opponents will prefer bargaining over opposing regardless of the advocacy group's type. This is particularly true when the value of bargaining is high. This implies that when the costs of legislative battle are high for the opposition group, coalitions between anti-poverty groups will rarely form because opponents of social welfare programs will preempt coalition building by advocacy groups through bargaining.

The costs of lobbying refer to the amount that an opposition group must spend to convince the legislative body to enact its preferred policy. In the empirical chapters of my dissertation, these costs are operationalized as the partisan control of the legislature. I assume that the Democratic Party generally favors more generous programs for the poor, while the Republican Party generally favors fewer and less costly programs for the poor. As the percentage of Democrats increases, it becomes increasingly costly for opponents of social programs to convince legislators to adopt policies that would restrict or eliminate social welfare benefits. Because it is so costly, opponents receive a greater payoff by preempting coalition building and bargaining with advocates. Thus, when the percentage of Democrats in the legislature is high, diverse coalitions will be less likely to form, even when advocates are strong. When the percentage of Republicans in the legislature is high and advocates are strong, diverse coalitions will be more likely to form.

The value of bargaining refers to the value placed on a compromise policy less the costs of forging agreement between opposing interest groups. This is operationalized as the level of political conflict. When political conflict is high, opposition groups are likely to experience low gains and encounter high costs when bargaining with anti-poverty

advocates. However, when political conflict is low, opposition groups may experience a large payoff from bargaining because the costs of forging agreement are low relative to the value of a compromise policy. This implies that when the political conflict is high, and advocates are strong, diverse coalitions will be more likely to form

Conclusion

This chapter has utilized formal theoretic modeling to identify the conditions of diverse coalition formation and legislative influence. Together, the conditions imply that diverse coalitions will be more likely to form when “strong” advocates exist, when there are fewer Democrats in the legislature, and when political conflict is high. However, advocates will gain influence whenever they are perceived as being “strong” – which means that advocates consider an issue to be salient, and partners consider an issue to be salient. In the next two chapters, I test these implications using data from the federal welfare reform of 1996.

Table 4.1. Variables and Definitions

<i>Players</i>				G_W : Weak Type Advocate G_S : Strong Type Advocate
Advocacy Group	G_i where $i \in \{W, S\}$			
Opposition Group	OG			
Median Legislator	L_M			
<i>Outcomes</i>				
Policy Outcomes	x_j where $j \in \{SQ, O, B\}$			X_{SQ} : Status Quo Policy X_O : Opposition's Policy X_B : Bargaining Policy
Value of Policy 'Win'	α_m where $m \in \{OG, AG\}$			α_{AG} : Value of policy 'win' to advocacy group α_{OG} : Value of policy 'win' to opposition group
Value of Bargaining	β_m where $m \in \{OG, AG\}$			β_{AG} : Value of bargaining to advocacy group β_{OG} : Value of bargaining to opposition group
<i>Costs</i>				
Future costs to advocacy group		f		
Costs of lobbying	γ_m where $m \in \{OG, AG\}$			γ_{AG} : Costs of lobbying to advocacy group γ_{OG} : Costs of lobbying to opposition group
Costs of diverse coalition building to advocacy group	c_i where $i \in \{W, S\}$			c_W : Costs of coalition building for weak type c_S : Costs of coalition building for strong type

Figure 4.1. Extensive Form Representation of Signaling Model

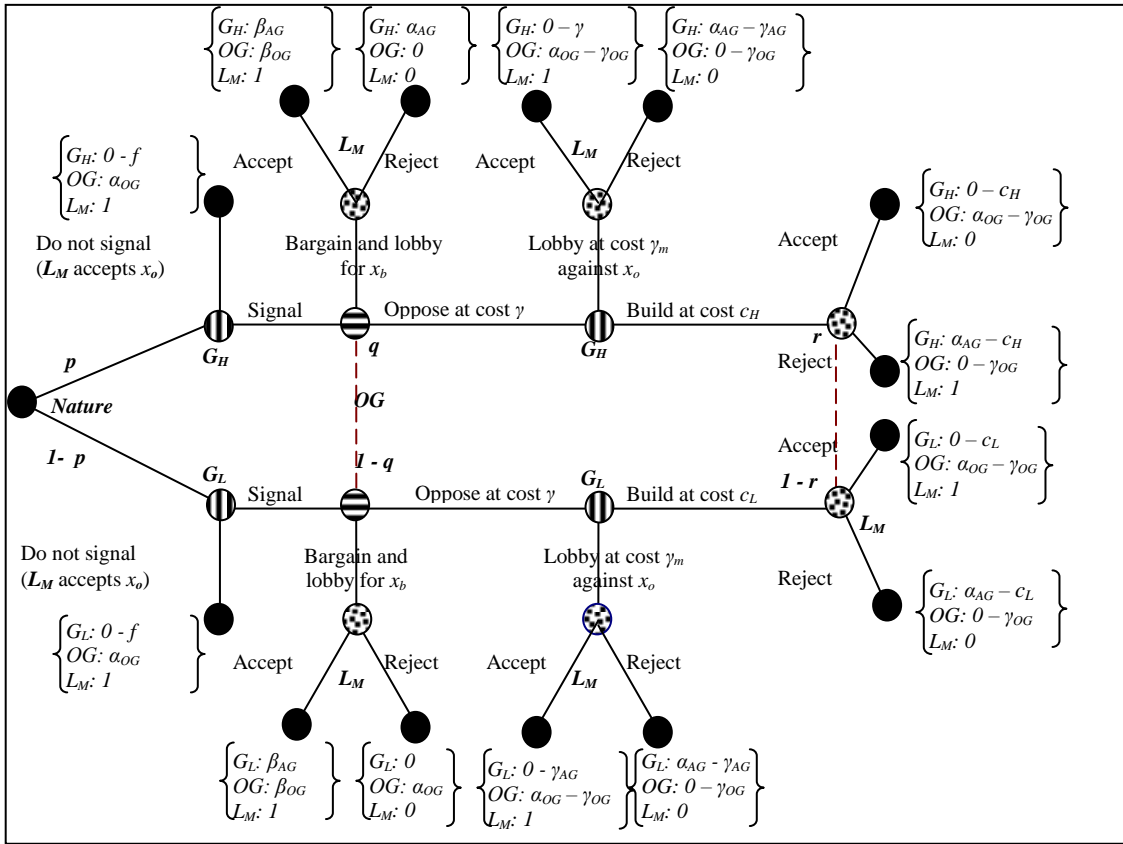
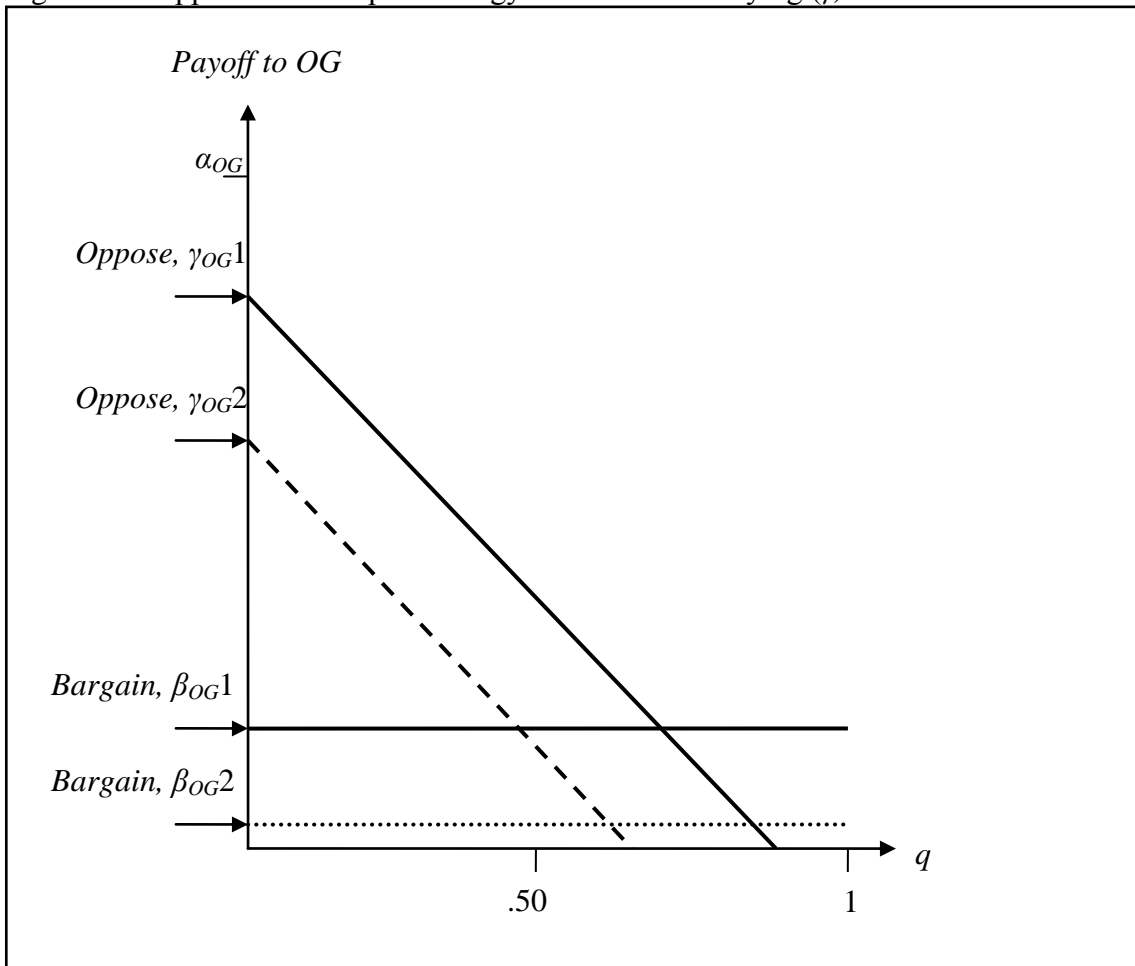


Figure 4.2. Opposition Group's Strategy as Costs of Lobbying (γ) Increase



Chapter 5

Interest Groups, Diverse Collaboration and the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996

This chapter explores collaborative behavior among national interest organizations in the years preceding the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity and Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), or welfare reform. The PRWORA, enacted in 1996 after two presidential vetoes, ended a 60-year guarantee of cash assistance to needy families by replacing the entitlement program Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) with the block grant program Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). TANF differed from its predecessor in that benefits were time-limited and made conditional on employment-related activities. Many programmatic decisions were devolved from the national to state level, and states were granted significant discretion over a wide range of issues, including work incentives, generosity of benefits, program time limits, and sanctions for non-compliant behavior.

In the two years preceding the PRWORA's passage, the breadth of proposed changes to the welfare program activated a large number of interest organizations at national and state levels. Anti-poverty advocates lobbied in favor of reforms that would maintain the safety net for poor families, conservative organizations sought to make welfare benefits time-limited and conditional on reproductive behavior, and intergovernmental groups lobbied for increased control over welfare programs.

In this chapter, I provide empirical support for the hypothesis that anti-poverty advocates engage in diverse coalition building as a strategy of legislative influence. I use case studies, media reports, and hearings testimony to examine the partnerships that formed in the years preceding the passage of PRWORA, both among anti-poverty advocates and among those that opposed existing welfare programs. I find that anti-poverty advocates, as well as conservative organizations and intergovernmental groups, engaged in diverse collaboration in an attempt to influence policymaking. Most partnerships were informal rather than formal, and diverse collaboration was sometimes, but not always, associated with legislative influence.

I show that organizational actors engaged in coalition building that was diverse with respect to the *informational* resources that advocates could provide to legislators. During welfare reform, collaboration diversified the *types* of informational resources organizations provided to legislators – for example, when a group with substantive expertise (policy information) collaborated with an organization with a large membership base (electoral information). Diverse partnerships also functioned to provide a wider range of the *same type* of informational resource, for example, when organizations with different areas of substantive expertise worked together (policy information). In both instances, the resources of one organization complemented, rather than simply augmented, the resources of its partner organization.

The theory predicts that because it is costly for organizations that differ from one another to work together, collaboration signals that the information being provided is credible. Thus, diverse coalitions are more likely to be associated with legislative influence. In this chapter, I show that although advocates were described as influential

during welfare reform, the data provide very little evidence that diverse partnerships in particular helped antipoverty advocates gain influence. The fact that groups engaged in a wide array of strategies makes it difficult to prove that diverse partnerships alone were the cause of their influence. However, an analysis of the collaborative strategies of social conservatives and intergovernmental groups provides additional evidence that diverse collaboration can help organizational actors achieve influence.

The chapter proceeds as follows. In the first section, I review the history of the welfare program in order to frame the policy changes proposed in the early 1990s. The next section provides an overview of the organizational actors that were involved in lobbying at the national level. The third section offers evidence of informal and formal collaborative efforts among anti-poverty advocates, focusing on the extent to which collaboration diversified the informational resources of advocates. In the fourth section, I examine the relationship between diverse collaboration and legislative outcomes and in the fifth section, I provide evidence of diverse partnerships and legislative influence among other groups involved in welfare reform – namely, social conservatives and intergovernmental groups. The final section offers a summary and conclusion.

Setting the Stage for the PRWORA: Welfare Policymaking Prior to the 1990s

Many scholars have written about the history of the welfare program in the United States (Danziger 2001; Hecllo 2001; Katz 1989, 2001; Patterson 1994; Trattner 1994; Weaver 2000). In this section, I briefly review this history in order to contextualize the changes proposed by President Clinton and the Republican Party in the early 1990s.

For nearly 60 years, cash benefits were provided to needy families through the program Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC).¹⁵ AFDC originated in the Social Security Act of 1935, having developed out of a series of state-level pension programs that were designed to provide destitute families (typically widows) with a cash benefit that would allow children to remain with their mothers and prevent them from being moved into orphanages or foster care. From its inception, the structure of the program was such that national and state governments shared the cost of the program, while states retained broad discretion over components such as eligibility, benefit levels, and program administration.¹⁶

The first major reforms to AFDC occurred in the early 1960s as part of the Great Society reforms, a set of domestic social policy reforms that aimed, among other things, to eradicate poverty and racial injustice. Early changes to AFDC were fairly liberal and oriented towards extending welfare eligibility, raising benefit levels, and providing services to help needy families transition out of poverty. New programs sought to fight poverty by providing educational, employment, and training opportunities to low-income populations in order to improve their labor market prospects (Danziger 2001). To address disparities in program eligibility across states, a series of court decisions struck down state-level requirements that essentially disqualified blacks from participation in AFDC, and in doing so changed the structure of the program from one that entitled *states*

¹⁵ The program was originally called Aid to Dependent Children, or ADC. In the 1960s, the name was changed to Aid to Families with Dependent Children, or AFDC.

¹⁶ Technically, AFDC was a state entitlement program, meaning that states were entitled to federal funds that were not subject to the annual appropriations process in Congress, and that funding for AFDC could not be decreased without significant effort on the part of Congress.

to federal funding for the program, to one that entitled *individuals* to cash benefits through AFDC (Weaver 2000).¹⁷

The liberalizing reforms of the 1960s contributed to an increase in the size and cost of the AFDC program. The welfare caseload grew from 3 million in 1960 to 10.2 million in 1971, with program costs increasing from \$1 billion to \$6.2 billion (Weaver 2000). Policymakers grew increasingly uncomfortable with rising caseloads, costs, and low levels of work activity among program participants. In 1967, Congress attempted to arrest the growth of AFDC by enacting policies aimed at moving recipients into the labor market, employing a combination of policy tools that both liberalized AFDC and imposed new work requirements.¹⁸ In the late 1960s and 1970s, Nixon and Carter sought to enact reforms that would bolster work activity while providing a minimum welfare benefit or income guarantee, but the policies were never enacted (CQ Press 1989).¹⁹

By the 1980s, the era of liberalizing welfare was over and focus had shifted to from reducing poverty to reducing welfare caseloads and costs (Danziger 2001). The Reagan administration achieved some caseload reduction by enacting changes to AFDC that restricted eligibility and removed many working recipients from the welfare rolls. In 1998, Congress enacted the Family Support Act (FSA), a bipartisan act that expanded

¹⁷ Prior to the 1960s, many states set requirements that essentially disqualified certain groups (notably blacks) from participation in AFDC. Although states were subsequently required to provide benefits to all individuals that qualified under state law, other programmatic components such as benefit levels varied widely across states.

¹⁸ For example, recipients were permitted to keep a portion of earned income without a reduction in benefits (known as the earnings disregard), but were also required to register for employment and training activities under the Work Incentives Program, or WIN. These policies were for the most part unsuccessful in increasing work activity among program participants, in part because many of the work requirements lacked adequate enforcement mechanisms.

¹⁹ Nixon's Family Assistance Plan (FAP) would have imposed a minimum income guarantee alongside work requirements for women with older children, but the legislation failed in the Senate in 1970. Similarly, Carter's proposed Program for Better Jobs and Income (PBJI) of 1977 would have provided an income guarantee to welfare recipients and created public service jobs for those unable to find employment, but the proposal was never enacted, largely due to its cost.

AFDC while increasing work requirements. The FSA, which represented a compromise between liberals and conservatives, expanded the safety net by extending benefits for 2-parent families, instituting child care and Medicaid for families transitioning off of welfare, while requiring states to enact employment and training programs for welfare recipients under the new Job Opportunity and Basic Skills Training Program (JOBS), and imposing work requirements and sanctions for non-compliance with program rules (CQ Press 1989).

The early 1990s witnessed renewed interest in reforming the welfare program after Bill Clinton promised to “end welfare as we know it” in his presidential campaign. Clinton’s welfare reform proposal consisted of a time-limited welfare program that would offer employment supports to program participants while requiring work activity and imposing time limits on benefit receipt, and was to the right of most Democratic proposals. Once in office, however, the administration’s efforts to reform welfare took a back seat to its focus on health care, and a welfare reform bill was not introduced until the summer of 1994. At this time neither party had strong incentives to push the bill forward so close to the November elections and Clinton’s welfare reform bill died in committee (DeParle 1994; Haskins 2006; Weaver 2000).

The Personal Responsibility Act (PRA)

In the fall of 1994, Republicans swept into power at both national and state levels, becoming the majority in both houses of Congress for the first time in 40 years. At the national level, the party gained 52 seats in the House and 8 seats in the Senate. At the state level, Republicans assumed control of 31 gubernatorial seats and a plurality of state

legislatures (Balz 1994; Balz and Brownstein 1996). This victory fundamentally changed the course of welfare policymaking, as policies that had been unlikely under unified Democratic control became a possibility once Republicans gained the majority in Congress (Haskins 2006).

Like Clinton, the Republican Party had made electoral commitments to reform welfare, albeit in a more conservative direction. Republican candidates had campaigned under the “Contract with America,” a list of 10 policies that candidates pledged to enact if elected to power. Third on the list was the Personal Responsibility Act (PRA), which aimed to:

“Discourage illegitimacy and teen pregnancy by prohibiting welfare to minor mothers and denying increased AFDC for additional children while on welfare, cut spending for welfare programs, and enact a tough two-years-and-out provision with work requirements to promote individual responsibility” (Contract with America, 1994).

The PRA reflected the belief, held by many conservatives, that upward trends in marital dissolution, out-of-wedlock childbirth, and teen pregnancy were the result on an overly permissive social welfare state. Reforming welfare was seen as a key component in halting the moral decay of America (Mead 1968, 1992; Murray 1984).

Table 5.1 describes several key provisions of the Personal Responsibility Act as it was introduced in the 104th House (CQ Press 1997; Weaver 2000). With respect to program structure, the bill sought to end the individual entitlement to cash benefits by converting AFDC into a block grant program in which grants to states were capped to avoid spending increases. The bill also included provisions to convert social welfare programs such as Child Support Enforcement, the Child Supplemental Security Income, and food and nutrition programs, into block grant programs, thereby ending the

individual entitlement to such benefits. These programmatic changes were opposed by anti-poverty advocates, but were favored by conservative organizations and some intergovernmental actors, in part because block grants would permit increased discretion and flexibility over social programs.

The legislation incorporated provisions that were important to conservatives by prohibiting the payment of additional benefits to children born to mothers currently receiving AFDC (called the family cap), prohibiting states from paying cash benefits on behalf of children born to unmarried mothers under the age of 18 (called the teen-mother exclusion), and requiring states to establish paternity before paying benefits on behalf of needy children. With respect to work requirements, the policy required welfare recipients who had been receiving benefits for 2 years to work at least 35 hours per week in order to continue participating in the program, and required that states move 2 percent of their welfare caseload into work programs by 1996 and 50 percent by 2003, or risk financial penalties. Benefits would be time-limited at 5 years, and states were allowed to enact policies that would terminate benefits at 24 months. Finally, alongside these changes in program structure, program entry, and activities requirements, the bill proposed to eliminate eligibility of legal immigrants for 60 means-tested programs, require drug testing as a condition of receiving benefits, and impose stricter rules governing admission into the child SSI program (Weaver 2000).

The Republican Congressional victory put organizational advocates for the poor in a very difficult position. Republican leaders were committed to enacting a large number of conservative reforms, many of which represented fundamental shifts in American social policy. Additionally, for the first time in nearly forty years, advocates

lacked access to legislators in key leadership positions in Congress, and few had membership bases that they could mobilize to influence newly-appointed Republican leaders (Toner 1995). Finally, in opposing conservative proposals, advocates were in the difficult position of appearing to defend a set of welfare policies that most Americans disliked, as well as cash benefits for a population that many viewed as ‘undeserving’ of government support (Gilens 1999).

Organizational Involvement in the 104th Congress

Despite these disadvantages, a wide array of organizational actors attempted to influence welfare policymaking during the 104th Congress (1995-1996). Table 5.2 shows the extent of participation by different types of interest organizations during the House and Senate hearings on welfare reform during the 104th Congress. This table categorizes all organizational actors that testified or submitted written testimony during Congressional committee hearings that occurred between January 1995 and August 1996, when the PRWORA was signed into law. While Congressional hearings do not provide a complete picture of all the groups that lobbied during welfare reform, they do offer a snapshot of some of the major organizational actors. This table excludes individuals testifying on behalf of national governmental representatives, Congressional officials, and individuals with no obvious organizational affiliation.²⁰

In total, nearly 300 interest organizations and individuals were involved in Congressional hearings on welfare reform. Over 24 percent of participants were advocacy groups organized around issues related to vulnerable populations, such as the Center for Law and Social Policy, the Children’s Defense Fund, and the Coalition on Human Needs.

²⁰ Witness lists are drawn from hearings data and Winston (2002).

Intergovernmental organizations were almost as numerous, representing nearly 23 percent of those testifying. Sixteen percent of those testifying were nonprofit service providers such as the United Way and Catholic Charities, and 15 percent were experts from university settings and research organizations. Approximately 7 percent represented for-profit companies and business groups, 5 percent represented traditional values groups like the Eagle Forum, and 5 percent represented professional organizations such as the American Medical Association. Unions represented only 2 percent of organizations that testified.

Figure 5.1 shows that advocacy groups were mobilized around several different issues. Organizations focused on poverty-related issues were 28 percent of all advocacy groups, while child advocacy groups were 17 percent. These two categories include some of the most prominent organizational advocates for the poor, including the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP), the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) and the Children's Defense Fund (CDF). Groups mobilized around issues related to underrepresented minorities, such as the National Council of La Raza, constituted approximately 22 percent of advocacy groups, while women's organizations like the National Organization of Women were approximately 14 percent. An additional 14 percent were mobilized around issues related to health and disability, and 6 percent represented other vulnerable populations or social policy issues.

Although relatively few organizational actors were mobilized specifically around the issue of poverty and child wellbeing, a number of these were well-funded, had been central players in the social welfare policy domain for many years, and were relatively well-positioned to influence policymaking. In particular, the Center for Budget and

Policy Priorities (CBPP), the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), and the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) had a strong history of advocacy on welfare-related issues (Haskins 2004; Weaver 2000; Winston 2002). The CBPP and CLASP are research organizations that were founded in the early 1980s and late 1960s, respectively, and had budgets of approximately \$4 million and \$1.24 million in 1995, respectively. The CDF developed in the early 1970s from a coalition of groups brought together by Marian Wright Edelman and in 1995, had a budget of \$15 million (Weaver 2000). The operating budgets of these organizations are nowhere near as large as organizations like the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, which in the late 1990s spent \$17 million on lobbying in a single year (Center for Responsive Politics, 1998), but neither do they indicate organizations operating on 'shoe-string' budgets or only tangentially engaged in the policy process. These organizations had actively participated in the most recent rounds of welfare reform, and both the CBPP and CLASP were well-respected by members of both political parties (Haskins 2006; Winston 2002). The CDF also had close ties to the Clinton administration: Hillary Clinton had been a former chair of the CDF, and Marion Wright Edelman, CDF's founder, was a close friend (DeParle 1994; Price 1993).

Diverse Collaboration among Advocates for the Poor during the 104th Congress

This section explores the extent to which organizational advocates for the poor turned to coalitional strategies in an effort to exert greater legislative influence. Case studies and media reports show that advocates collaborated with one another as a strategy of legislative influence on many of the issues within welfare reform. Much of the collaboration was informal in nature, and occurred between organizations that were

similar ideologically, but differed with respect to the substantive or electoral resources they could provide to legislators. Some instances of collaboration appeared to diversify the *types* of informational resources that advocates could offer to legislators – for example, when institutional advocates with technical policy expertise worked with membership organizations with large membership bases. In other instances, diversity functioned to provide a broader array of the same type of information – for example, when two research organizations with different areas of specialization worked together.

Informal Collaboration

During welfare reform, the vast majority of collaborative efforts were informal. Many of these were designed to diversify either the substantive *or* the electoral resources that advocates could offer to legislators. For example, the Children’s Defense Fund (CDF), the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP), and the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), three of the leading organizational advocates for the poor, collaborated frequently in an effort to widen the range of substantive information they could provide to legislators. In discussing the organization’s collaborative efforts with CDF and CLASP, for example, an official from CBPP noted:

“We work most closely with CLASP. Our styles are most similar. We have a very close working relationship with CDF, but our approaches are somewhat different. ... [W]e divide up. [The CDF] clearly has an expertise on child care and child support which we don’t have. It would be the same thing with CLASP: they have child support. We have an expertise with food programs that they don’t have. With the [Earned Income Tax Credit] we obviously are the lead group in town...” (Official from the CBPP, as quoted in Weaver 2000, 203).

While similar with respect to their liberal ideology, the CBPP, CLASP, and CDF had different areas of substantive expertise. In collaborating, the organizations were able to

provide legislators with a wider range of substantive information, which was important given the breadth of the Republican's social policy agenda. Much of this collaboration occurred behind the scenes, in an effort not to alienate allies in the Clinton administration (DeParle 1994).

Other instances of informal collaboration were quite public, designed to diversify the electoral resources that advocates could offer to legislators. For example, in early 1995, a national research organization called Children Now partnered with the Coalition for America's Children, a bipartisan group of over 300 children's organizations, to produce a "Contract with America's Children." The Contract, mirrored after the Republican's Contract with America and signed by over 100 mainstream children's organizations, listed a set of ten principles that Congressmen were asked to honor when legislating on issues such as welfare reform. Copies of the Contract were distributed to each Congressional office, while advocates organized a rally on the capital steps, urging leaders to sign the document (DeParle 1994; Stepp 1995).

Similarly, on June 1, 1996 in Washington DC, the Children's Defense Fund organized a rally called "Stand for Children," designed to focus public attention on the needs of America's children. The event, designed to be non-partisan and non-political in order to attract a wider range of partners, was attended by over 200,000 people and endorsed by over 3,000 organizations, including parents' organizations and child advocates, educators, unions, religious organizations, and service providers (Weiner 1996; Wetzstein 1996; Vobejda 1996).²¹

²¹ Stand for Children later developed into a formal, diverse partnership of advocacy organizations devoted to the elevating the needs of children in public and political discourse and policy.

Anti-poverty advocates also cosponsored advertisements against social policy cuts with partners that were similar ideologically, but differed with respect to their type and policy domain. Figures 5.2 and 5.3 show advertisements displayed in the New York Times in 1995. The first, titled “The Contract with America: How much will all this cost our kids,” was sponsored by a relatively prominent set of groups, including the National Education Association and National Parenting Association, Children’s Defense Fund and Center for Law and Social Policy, Child Welfare League of America, Center for Law and Social Policy, and Food Research and Action Center (New York Times, 1995a).²² These organizations were leaders in different areas of poverty and child well being. Some groups, like the National Education Association, boasted an extensive membership base – the organization had over 2 million member in 1995 (Ornstein, Levin, and Gutek 2010). Other groups had considerable substantive expertise, often deriving from different sources. For example, the Center for Law and Social Policy’s expertise derived from research activities, while the expertise of the Child Welfare League of America, a partnership of private and nonprofit service agencies, resulted from on-the-ground service experience.

Figure 5.3 shows a similar advertisement run in the New York Times on August 8, 1995, describing “Why every woman in American should beware of welfare cuts” (New York Times, 1995b). In this instance, a small number of anti-poverty organizations were joined by an array of women’s organizations, such as the National Organization of

²² The ad’s co-sponsors included the National Education Association, the Coalition for America’s Children, the Children’s Defense Fund, the National Association of Child Advocates, the Child Welfare League of America, the National Parenting Association, Children Now, the National Black Child Development Institute, the Center for Law and Social Policy, the Child Care Action Campaign, the Food Research and Action Center, the Children’s Partnership, Statewide Youth Advocacy, and the Citizens’ Committee for Children in New York.

Women and Center for Women Policy Studies, and labor unions, such as the AFL-CIO and the National Health and Human Service Employees Union.²³ The women's organizations had electoral and substantive resources in a different, although overlapping, policy domain than antipoverty advocates, while labor unions had extensive electoral resources. This is one of the few examples of collaboration between anti-poverty organizations and labor unions, which were focused on opposing cuts to Medicare and Medicaid (Weaver 2000).

Formal Collaboration

Although most collaborative efforts were informal, both ad-hoc and formal policy coalitions lobbied against cuts to welfare programs. Perhaps the most unusual partnerships occurred between anti-poverty advocates, liberal citizen groups, pro-life, and religious organizations on child exclusion policies. Child exclusion policies denied welfare benefits to a child if the mother was under the age of 18 (referred to as the "teen mother exclusion"), gave birth while receiving welfare for a different child (referred to as the "family cap"), or failed to establish paternity for the child. These provisions – particularly the teen mother exclusion and family cap – were favored by conservatives as a way to "de-incentivize" out-of-wedlock childbirth and teen pregnancy by restricting

²³ The full list of co-sponsors is: 1199 National Health and Human Service Employees Union, National Association of Social Workers, Coalition of Labor Union Women, Catholics for a Free Choice, American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO, Welfare Reform Network of New York, Ms. Foundation for Women, Feminist Majority, Wider Opportunities for Women/Women and Poverty Project, Communications Workers of America, Democratic Socialists of America, Women's Actions for New Directions (WAND), National Committee of Pay Equity, United Farm Workers of America, Center for Women Policy Studies, National Council for Research on Women, National Jobs for all Coalition, National Coalition for the Homeless, and NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund. Readers were encouraged to send donations to the Women's Committee of One Hundred, an organization founded the previous year by a group of scholars, activists, elected officials, and other professional to "defend women's security."

access to cash benefits. However, they were opposed by liberal advocates who argued that such policies would increase the extent of child poverty.

Both ad-hoc and formal policy coalitions were active on child exclusion issues. For instance, the Child Exclusion Task Force was an ad-hoc policy coalition organized to prevent the adoption of the family cap, teen mother exclusion, and paternity establishment requirement. Headed by the National Organization of Women (NOW) and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the Task Force was composed of nearly 100 organizations. Its membership consisted of research organizations such as the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) and the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), pro-life groups such as Feminists for Life, and a variety of (primarily liberal) religious organizations. The Task Force testified several times in committee hearings during the 104th Congress, lobbied legislators and administration officials, and sponsored media events with advocates, pro-life organizations, and religious groups such as Catholic Charities USA (US House of Representatives 1995; US Newswire 1995; Weaver 2000).

Formal coalitions such as the Coalition on Human Needs (CHN) were also active on child exclusion issues. The CHN is group of organizations engaged in the study and provision of services for low-income and vulnerable populations, including research organizations, services providers, religious organizations, and advocacy groups.²⁴ During welfare reform, the CHN adopted formal positions on only two sets of issues, one of which was child exclusion issues. This is significant because the organization could have adopted policy positions on a large number of issues – child care, food/nutrition programs, immigrant provisions, and drug/alcohol testing, for example. The fact that the

²⁴ Interesting, the CHN began as an ad-hoc policy coalition founded in response to President Reagan's efforts to consolidate funding for human needs programs into block grants in the early 1980s.

CHN restricted its opposition to a select set of policies signaled that coalition members actually were united in their opposition. The organization demonstrated its opposition to these policies by testifying in committee hearings and lobbying allies in Congress (US House of Representatives 1995; Winston 2002).

These examples provide evidence that advocates for the poor collaborated with an array of partners. To the extent that these lobbying efforts were costly, such collaboration also offered evidence of the credibility of the electoral, policy, and political information being provided. It is important to note that the costs of collaboration vary by activity. For example, co-sponsorship of an advertisement may cost less than mobilizing members to contact Congressional officials or attend a rally. However, the costs associated with activities such as media advertisements, or cosigning a document, should not be dismissed, particularly for the organizations leading the collaborative efforts. As discussed in the previous chapters, nearly all collaborative activity entails opportunity costs. At a minimum, such activities require organizations to trade opportunities to differentiate and distinguish themselves for opportunities for enhanced influence via collaborative behavior. In addition, in many instances (such as demonstrations), partnerships require organizations to allocate time and resources away from other issues that may be more important to the organization's membership base. Thus, despite the fact that some of the collaborative efforts did not result in actual coalition formation, the activities still may have provided credible information about the electoral and substantive implications of legislating against the interests of the poor during welfare reform.

The Importance of Diversity

For all types of collaborative behavior, diversity was held to be an important feature. For example, Marian Wright Edelman, president of the Children's Defense Fund (CDF), emphasized the diversity of participants in her description of the Stand For Children March, noting that participants were “coming to stand together across race and class and age and region and faith...” (Wetzstein 1996), and suggesting that the CDF viewed the variety of participants as one of its primary strengths. Similarly, the Child Exclusion Task Force’s media advisory announcing a joint press briefing with the American Civil Liberties Union, National Organization of Women, Feminists for Life, and Catholic Charities highlighted the ideological diversity among participants by stating that: “Despite intense disagreement over reproductive rights issues, both pro-choice and pro-life groups are united in opposition to child exclusion proposals (US Newswire 1995).

Hearings data also indicate that the formal and ad-hoc policy coalitions believed their diversity in particular (as opposed to simply their size) to be an important quality to signal to legislators. For example, the Child Exclusion Task Force, in its first line of written testimony to Members of Congress, stated: “As national, state and local organizations with a diversity of views on many issues, we are united in our efforts to promote the health and welfare of America’s children” (U.S. House of Representatives 1995, 1625-1626). This is noteworthy because the Task Force says nothing about the size of the coalition, or the size of its extended membership base, but rather focuses exclusively on the diversity of viewpoints united behind a particular set of reforms.

Similarly, Jennifer Vasiloff, Executive Director of the Coalition on Human Needs, immediately identifies her organization as:

“...an alliance of over 100 national organizations working together to promote public policies which address the needs of low-income Americans. The coalition’s members include civil rights, religious, labor and professional organizations and those concerned with the well-being of children, women, the elderly and people with disabilities” (US House of Representatives 1995, 1065).

In this statement, Vasiloff emphasizes the diversity within the group, rather than its size alone. Although the speaker notes that the group contains over one hundred organizations, members of Congress have no way of knowing how many constituents these organizations represent.

This introduction is in stark contrast to that of membership organizations like the Service Employees International Union, in which the witness introduces himself as: “the director of the Public Sector Division of the 1.1 million member Service Employees International Union” (US House of Representatives Committee on Ways and Means 1995, 1119). In contrast to the testimony of the SEIU, in which the witness immediately draws attention to the *size* of the organization, the testimony of the Task Force and CHN indicates that the coalitions felt that their *diversity* was an important characteristic to signal to legislators.

Additionally, both the Contract with America’s Children and the Stand for Children rally were explicitly designed to engage a more diverse range of participants by downplaying partisan and political elements of the events. The wording of the Contract was intentionally broad, designed to appeal to a wide range of individuals and organizations. For example, legislators promised “to consider children's needs and well-being, first and foremost, in evaluating health and welfare reforms, or any other national

policy” and “to promise to help working families stay out of poverty” (Children Now 1994). Similarly, the nonpartisan character of the Stand for Children rally was advertised as one of its key strengths, and no political officials were invited to speak (Weiner 1996). This suggests that anti-poverty advocates were not simply interested in building support for their policies among other anti-poverty advocates, but rather were interested in diversifying the types of organizations with which they could ally.

The efforts of child poverty advocates in particular reflected, in part, a larger effort by child advocates to increase their legislative influence by partnering with groups engaged in different aspects of child wellbeing. Fragmentation among children’s groups was noted as hindering the effectiveness of child advocates in Congress (State Legislative Leaders Foundation 1995; Vobejda 1996). Arnold Fege, director of governmental relations at the National Parent Teaching Association (PTA), argued that child advocates historically found their influence limited because each advocate lobbied exclusively for a “narrow piece of the child” – for example, advocates interested in education lobbied only on education bills while child health advocates participated only in health-related legislation.

To augment its influence, the PTA and other organizations were attempting to engage other organizations in a “whole-child approach” to lobbying by collaborating with groups interested in a range of issues related to children (Stepp 1995). During welfare reform, this collaboration often took the form of outside lobbying, as child advocates engaged in partnerships designed to diversify and augment public support for policies that put children first. Advocates did not simply aim to ally with other welfare and child poverty advocates, but rather sought partnerships with a wide range of organizations

engaged in numerous issue areas. In the language of the theory, collaborative efforts by child advocates functioned to diversify the electoral resources that advocates could use to influence legislators.

The Impact of Diverse Collaboration

Diverse collaboration – both informal and formal – can be seen as helping anti-poverty advocates in two ways. First, partnerships between anti-poverty advocates, right-to-life groups, and religious organizations can be seen as diversifying the types of informational resources that organizations offered to legislators. In this instance, the right-to-life and religious organizations supplemented the substantive information that advocates could provide to legislators with electoral information. Whereas most anti-poverty groups lacked members, many of the right-to-life groups and religious organizations had state and local chapters and strong grass-roots membership. For example, in the mid-1990s, slightly less than a quarter of the population identified as Catholic (U.S. Census Bureau, 1996), and both the Catholic Conference and the National Right to Life committee, the country's largest pro-life organization, had an organizational presence in nearly half of all states (Gray and Lowery2001). The participation of organizations like the National Right-to-Life Foundation and the Catholic Church signaled to legislators that in supporting policies like the family cap, they risked alienating these organizations and their constituents.

Collaboration also signaled the salience of the issue; because right-to-life and religious organizations were willing to collaborate with anti-poverty advocates, legislators could be assured that deterrence policies were in fact salient to these

organizations. In other words, the costly collaboration provided information about the credibility of the substantive and electoral information being provided.

Second, diverse collaboration can be seen as diversifying a single type of resource. In the case of formal coalitions like the CHN, the fact that diverse actors were united in their opposition to child exclusion policies provided a broader range of substantive support for advocates' argument that such policies would lead to an increase in child poverty without addressing growing rates of teen pregnancy or out-of-wedlock childbirth. This is because organizations engaged in different aspects of social policy have informational resources that stem from their different experiences with an issue. An organization like the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, for example, could attest to the fact that research did not support the conclusion that child exclusion policies would decrease teen pregnancy and illegitimacy. In contrast, organizations like the United Way could offer information deriving from its 'on-the-ground' experience providing services to the poor. The fact that a variety of organizations with different vantage points were united in their opposition to policies like the family cap provided substantive support for the idea that these policies would result in more harm than good. The collaboration on the issue – in the form of an organizational policy statement from a diverse set of organizations – signaled that the substantive information being provided was credible.

But did this collaboration have an actual impact on policy decisions? Although the PRWORA undoubtedly reflected a conservative approach to welfare reform, it is clear that advocates for the poor achieved important policy victories. Table 5.3 shows how a set of policies evolved from the Republican's Personal Responsibility Act proposals to the policies enacted under the PRWORA. In this table, the first column

describes the policy, the second column shows the policy as it existed under AFDC, the third column describes the policy changes proposed by the Personal Responsibility Act (PRA), and the final column shows the policy as enacted by the PRWORA (CQ Press 1997; Weaver 2000).

This table shows that proponents of entitlement programs achieved important victories with respect to the structure of welfare programs. The Personal Responsibility Act (PRA) proposed structural changes to the child protection program, which provided federal dollars on behalf of abused and neglected children, the child Supplemental Security Income program, which provided benefits to disabled children and their families, and several child nutrition programs (such as the school lunch program). Most of these programs were open-ended entitlements, meaning the federal expenditures on such programs were not capped but rather rose with the number of children in need. The PRA proposed to change the structure of these programs – and in some cases, consolidate multiple programs – into a series of block grants that would be capped to control spending. Spending caps did not necessarily mean that needy children would not receive benefits, but it did imply that abused, disabled, or hungry children *could* be denied benefits if expenditures exceeded spending limits.

Although Republicans attempted to convert several child welfare programs from entitlement programs into capped block grant programs, the final column of Table 5.3 shows that many of the proposed structural changes were not enacted. AFDC was converted into a block grant structure, but the proposed structural changes to child protection programs were dropped, and the child SSI program remained an entitlement program, although eligibility rules for the program were tightened. The PRWORA did

not convert nutrition programs into block grants although it did restrict the eligibility of some participants for Food Stamps and reduced average benefit levels.²⁵ In addition, although AFDC was converted into a block grant program and individual entitlement eliminated, PRWORA instituted a “maintenance of effort” provision that required states to maintain 80 percent of their historic spending levels or lose federal TANF funds – a provision that was absent from the House bill, but present in the Senate bill as well as in the PRWORA. The maintenance of effort provision was designed to ensure that states did not significantly reduce their welfare spending (CQ Press 1997; Haskins 2004; Weaver 2000).

With respect to child exclusion policies, the PRA explicitly prohibited states from paying benefits on behalf of children born to mothers currently receiving welfare and whose paternity had not been established, and prohibited cash benefits on behalf of children whose mothers gave birth before age 18. The child exclusion policies included in the PRWORA were less stringent than those proposed by the Personal Responsibility Act. The PRWORA included the family cap and teen mother exclusion at state option only, meaning that states were allowed but not required to enact these policies. Paternity establishment policies were also eased: the PRWORA did not eliminate benefits for children whose paternity was not established but rather imposed a benefit reduction on behalf of children whose parents were not cooperating in establishing paternity (CQ Press 1997).

The second panel of Table 5.3 shows that advocates achieved fewer victories on work-related policies. As described earlier, work requirements under AFDC were

²⁵ Though not noted in the table, child care programs were also consolidated and converted into a block grant program.

relatively lenient – only a small percentage of welfare recipients had to engage in work activities, and no hard time limits existed. The PRA imposed stiff work requirements on single parents within two years of benefit receipt, required states to move escalating percentages of their caseloads into work activities, and instituted a five-year time limit on the receipt of welfare benefits. Under the PRWORA, adult recipients were required to work within two years of receiving benefits, states had to meet escalating work participation rate requirements, and states were prohibited from using federal TANF funds to provide benefits after a five year period, although up to 20 percent of a state's caseload could receive an exemption (CQ Press 1997).

Advocates therefore achieved some important victories. The next chapter will examine some of the policy issues that were devolved to the state level, such as the family cap and work requirements. However, it is far from clear that the victories were the result of diverse collaboration. This is, in part, because advocates engaged in many different types of lobbying in the two years between the Republican electoral victory and the passage of the PRWORA. For example, the CBPP and CLASP muted their criticism of some issues in order to secure access to Republican legislators (Haskins 2004; Weaver 2000; Winston 2002). Advocates also focused attention on lobbying administration officials, rather than Republican legislators (Vobejda 1996). Groups such as MDRC, a national social policy research organization with expertise on welfare, chose not to engage in diverse collaboration, relying instead on their reputations for nonpartisan affiliation and objective research. A wide array of organizations, and many well-respected scholars, also lobbied independently or provided information in committee hearings (Haskins 2004; US House of Representatives 1995).

A closer examination of child exclusion policies provides no additional support for the idea that diverse coalitions led to increased legislative influence. As noted previously, formal, ad-hoc diverse coalitions only formed on child exclusion issues. The family cap and teen mother exclusion policies were mandatory in the House bill on welfare reform, but amendments requiring states to enact these policies failed to pass in the Senate. In both chambers, Democratic legislators were united in their opposition to these policies. In the Senate, a group of Republicans joined Democrats in opposing policies that would deny benefits to teenage mothers or women who had an additional child while on welfare (Haskins 2004; Wetzstein 1995).

Did diverse collaboration lead to the defeat of child exclusion policies in the Senate? Some participants attributed legislative outcomes on these issues to the activities of anti-poverty advocates. For example, Ron Haskins, chief Republican staffer for the Subcommittee on Human Resources of the House Ways and Means Committee during the 104th Congress, argued that: "...[T]hese votes [to defeat]...the Faircloth [teen mother exclusion] and Domenici [family cap] amendments represented a hard-fought and all-too-rare victory for the child advocacy groups" (Haskins 2004, 220). Haskins, at least partially, attributes the defeat of the family cap and teen mother exclusion amendments to the work of the advocacy organizations.

However, while advocates may have played a role in influencing the Senate outcomes, there is limited evidence that it was diverse collaboration that led to this influence. Using data on interest group registrations at the state level,²⁶ I examined whether Republicans who voted against the family cap in the Senate were any more

²⁶ This data consists of a list of all interest organizations registered to lobby at the state level in 1997, and is described in greater detail in the following chapter.

likely to be from states in which the National Organization of Women, American Civil Liberties Union, Catholic Conference, or National Right to Life Committee had an organizational presence, relative to other Republican senators.²⁷ If they were, this would provide initial support for the hypothesis that diverse coalition partners influenced legislative outcomes on child exclusion issues. However, I found no indication that Republican senators who opposed family caps and teen mother exclusions were any more likely to be from states in which one or more of these groups had an organizational presence. In addition, media reports indicate that child exclusion policies were defeated in the Senate because moderate Republicans, rather than Republicans with a strong tie to religious or pro-life constituencies, voted against them (Havemann and Vodegda 1995; Wetzstein 1995).

Thus while it is clear that advocates engage in diverse coalition building as a strategy of influence, there is limited evidence that diverse coalitions actually impact legislative outcomes. Part of the difficulty in establishing influence is the fact that advocates engaged in a wide range of lobbying strategies in the two years preceding welfare reform. My concluding chapter will discuss next steps in testing the relationship between diverse coalitions and policy outcomes at the national level.

Diverse Collaboration and Legislative Influence by Other Organizational Actors

While the chapter was intended to focus on the activities of anti-poverty advocates, an analysis of diverse collaboration by intergovernmental organizations and socially conservative groups does provide support for the hypothesis that diverse

²⁷ The Child Exclusion Task Force was headed by the National Organization of Women and the American Civil Liberties Union. The Catholic Church and National Right to Life Committee collaborated informally with the Child Exclusion Task Force, although these organizations were not members of the Task Force.

coalitions help organizations gain influence over legislative policy outcomes. The goal of this section is to show how intergovernmental actors and social conservatives, in diversifying their coalitions, were able to gain increased influence over the legislative process and outcomes.

As noted in previous sections, intergovernmental groups were active participants in welfare reform. Groups such as the National Governors Association (NGA) provided legislators with information about the substantive and political consequences of enacting various policy instruments (Haskins 2004; Hecl 2001). Many states had experimented with new welfare programs by applying for welfare waivers, which allowed states to adapt their welfare programs in state-specific ways. Intergovernmental groups thus had information about how such policy instruments impacted individual outcomes, caseloads, and budgets, and how welfare policy changes affected the electoral fortunes of governors and state legislators. In addition, the National Governors Association, under the leadership of Governor Bill Clinton of Arkansas and Governor Michael Castle of Delaware, had been key participants in the most recent round of welfare reform (Rovner 1988).

For the most part, governors were united in their support of policies that would transfer more authority to the state level. Early in 1995, however, the National Governors' Association (NGA) was unable to reach a bipartisan consensus regarding the transition of welfare from an entitlement to a block grant program. The organization's bylaws required a supermajority to adopt formal, organizational policy positions. While the 30 Republican governors were united in their support of a block grant structure, Democratic governors were wary of such a policy, and the NGA was unable to muster the

3/4 vote necessary for adopting an organizational policy position (Pear 1995). Because they could not come to agreement, Congress interacted primarily with the Republican Governors' Association and three key Republican governors –John Engler of Michigan, Tommy Thompson of Wisconsin and William Weld of Massachusetts (Haskins 2006; Katz 1995).

After Clinton's second veto of welfare reform in early 1996, the status of the welfare reform was uncertain: "[W]hen President Clinton vetoed the welfare reform bill for the second time on January 9, 1996, it was undeniable that the bill had been deeply wounded, perhaps fatally" (Haskins 2006, 268). Although they had previously been unable to reach an agreement, the NGA was able to reach a bipartisan consensus on welfare reform at their meeting on February 6, 1996. Agreed to by all 50 governors, the NGA's agreement introduced slight modifications to the bill that Clinton had vetoed. The agreement preserved a block grant structure but relaxed some of the work requirement and illegitimacy provisions, while adding more federal dollars for child care (Haskins 2006; Rubin 1996).

This agreement was widely perceived as reviving welfare reform (Fitzgerald 1996; Haskins 2006; Weaver 2000). According to one Congressional aide: "What the governors did is being perceived around here as providing enormous tail wind to push for a deal" (Katz 1996). In this instance, the actions of the National Governors Association can be seen as an effort to influence policymaking by diversifying a coalition. The addition of Democratic support provided information to legislators that their efforts to resurrect welfare reform would likely have a different outcome. As Haskins (2006, 271) noted: "How could Clinton refuse a bill that was endorsed by every Democratic

governor?” In addition, although it may seem obvious that a bipartisan coalition will gain more influence, an important point is that it was not legislators who built this bipartisan coalition, but rather an organizational actor that diversified its coalition in order to gain more influence over the legislative process. In forging agreement between Democratic and Republican governors, the NGA provided key political information to legislators that their efforts to revive welfare reform would likely be rewarded by with Clinton’s signature. In doing so, the NGA gained influence over the legislative process.

Informal alliances between conservative research organizations and membership groups also provided critical resources to each side, allowing conservative groups to gain greater influence over legislative outcomes. Proponents of conservative welfare reform included research organizations like the Heritage Foundation and the American Enterprise Institute, and membership organizations such as the Christian Coalition, the Family Research Council, the Eagle Forum, and the Traditional Values Coalition. Both sets of organizations argued that AFDC perpetuated problems including illegitimacy, teen pregnancy, and a retreat from traditional family values (see Mead 1968, 1992; Murray 1984). These groups supported tough reforms that would eliminate benefits to individuals that engaged in ‘problematic’ behaviors, with many of the membership organizations prioritizing such policies over those focused on program costs or employment (Haskins 2004).

For these groups, the substantive resources of research organizations complemented the electoral resources of the membership organizations. Membership organizations like the Christian coalition lacked substantive expertise in the area of welfare. Unlike some of the most prominent liberal anti-poverty advocates, these

organizations focused on a large number of issues and had relatively limited staff in Washington. As a result, their knowledge of welfare was narrow (Weaver 2000). However, policy intellectuals like Robert Rector of the Heritage Foundation and Charles Murray of the American Enterprise Institute had extensive knowledge of the welfare program and were able to offer recommendations for reform. Their work in the 1980s and 1990s had “brought unprecedented credibility and political appeal to Republicans as potential architects of welfare policy” (Hecklo 2001, 182). Rector, in particular, “knew how to harness data to make his case with intuitive appeal and the strong appearance of validity” (Winston, 90) and was cited as an active participant in the 104th Congress (Haskins 2004).

What the membership organizations lacked in substantive expertise, they made up for in electoral resources. These groups had access to newly-appointed Republican legislators following their impressive turnout in the 1994 elections (Hecklo 2001; Witham 1994). The Christian Coalition, for example, distributed 33 million voter guides prior to the 1994 election and claimed a membership of over 1.5 million in 1995 (Mathis 1994; Witham 1994). Alliances with intellectuals provided membership organizations with substantive arguments to support their policy beliefs. Politically active groups “could explain why the criticisms [of existing welfare policy] were more than just tight-fisted hostility to poor people, why in fact the existing AFDC system was an unmitigated disaster for families, women, and children” (Hecklo 181-182). Together, policy intellectuals and social conservative groups were able to keep pressure on legislators to include illegitimacy-related provisions in the final welfare bill. Although the family cap and teen mother exclusion were ultimately included at state option only, conservative

groups succeeded in securing funding for states that reduced abortion, and convincing legislators to make illegitimacy the focal point of the bill (Haskins 2004; CQ Press 1997).

These two examples provide evidence of organizational actors gaining influence in legislative settings by diversifying the informational resources of their coalition. In the case of the governors, the National Governors Association was able to reach a bipartisan consensus, thus diversifying its coalition with respect to ideology, and providing legislators with key political information about how a revived welfare bill would travel through Congress. Social conservatives were able to combine informational resources – electoral and substantive – to gain increased influence over legislators. Those with electoral resources were able to utilize grass roots membership to keep pressure on legislators, but also used the substantive information provided by policy intellectuals. The policy intellectuals in turn were able to maintain pressure on legislators to enact their favored policies by employing the electoral resources of membership organizations.

Conclusion

This analysis provides support for the hypothesis that advocates engage in diverse collaboration as a strategy of legislative influence. During welfare reform, diverse collaboration sometimes functioned to provide multiple types of information, and other times functioned to provide a wider range of the same type of informational resource. In addition, diverse collaboration appeared to be an important signaling device even when the collaboration was largely informal. The Child Exclusion Task Force, for example, included a range of welfare and women's organizations, religious organizations, and pro-life organizations, but did not include the Catholic Conference or the National Right to

Life Committee. However, these groups were repeatedly described by participants, media reports, and in existing case studies as working closely with anti-poverty advocates to prevent the adoption of child exclusion policies. Their collaboration is further evident in the joint sponsorship of media events at the national level, and in partnerships that developed to challenge state policies in court. Thus it appears that there are several ways that advocates can signal diverse collaboration, whether or not this collaboration results in the actual formation of coalitions.

There is limited evidence to support the hypothesis that diverse coalitions help antipoverty advocates achieve legislative influence, although an analysis of coalitions among intergovernmental groups and socially conservative organizations provides some support for this idea. However, two points are important to note. First, the fact that most collaborative efforts are informal suggests that some instances of collaboration during welfare reform may have been unobserved in this study. Second, advocates faced considerable constraints in their efforts to build diverse coalitions during welfare reform. The sheer breadth of the Republicans' policy proposals meant that many potential allies were engaged in fighting legislative battles of greater concern to their members.

In addition, advocates often found themselves opposing intergovernmental actors. As a staff member of one advocacy group noted: "An important aspect of our strategy was to have some governors on our side, hopefully from both parties. We knew it would not be easy, but it was more than that. It didn't happen" (As quoted in Winston 2002). Welfare was also an unpopular policy, making advocates less able to find partners with whom to ally. Thus it is possible that while diverse coalition building was an important strategy of advocates, during welfare reform, formal, ad-hoc coalitions tended to form

less frequently – and consequently, gained less influence – than they would have in other situations.

Table 5.1. Personal Responsibility Act Policies

<p><i>Program Structure</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Converts AFDC into capped block grants and allows states to opt out of AFDC program and receive fixed block grant funds.• Converts other social programs, including Child Protection Program, Child Supplemental Security Insurance, child nutrition programs, and child care programs from entitlement programs into capped block grant programs. <p><i>Program Entry Issues</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prohibits payment of additional benefits for children born to mothers while receiving AFDC in most circumstances.• Prohibits states from paying cash benefits on behalf of children born to unmarried mothers who gave birth before age 18 but continued Medicaid.• Requires paternity to be established before benefits paid for children; states required to establish paternity for children in 90 percent of AFDC cases <p><i>Activities Requirements & Program Exit Issues</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Imposes minimum 35 hrs/wk requirements on single parent recipients who have received cash benefits for at least two years• Requires states to move 2 percent of caseload into work program by 1996, rising to 50 percent by 2003• Five-year limit on receipt of benefits

Table 5.2. Organizational Involvement During Welfare Reform Hearings, 1995/1996

<u>Type</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Anti-poverty Advocates	66	24.2
Intergovernmental	62	22.7
Nonprofit service providers	44	16.1
Experts/Research Organizations	42	15.4
For-profit companies and business groups	19	7.0
“Traditional values” groups	14	5.1
Professional associations	14	5.1
Unions	5	1.8
Miscellaneous	7	2.6
Total	273	100

This excludes national governmental representatives Congressional officials and individuals with no obvious organizational affiliation.

Figure 5.1. Advocacy Groups, By Issue Area

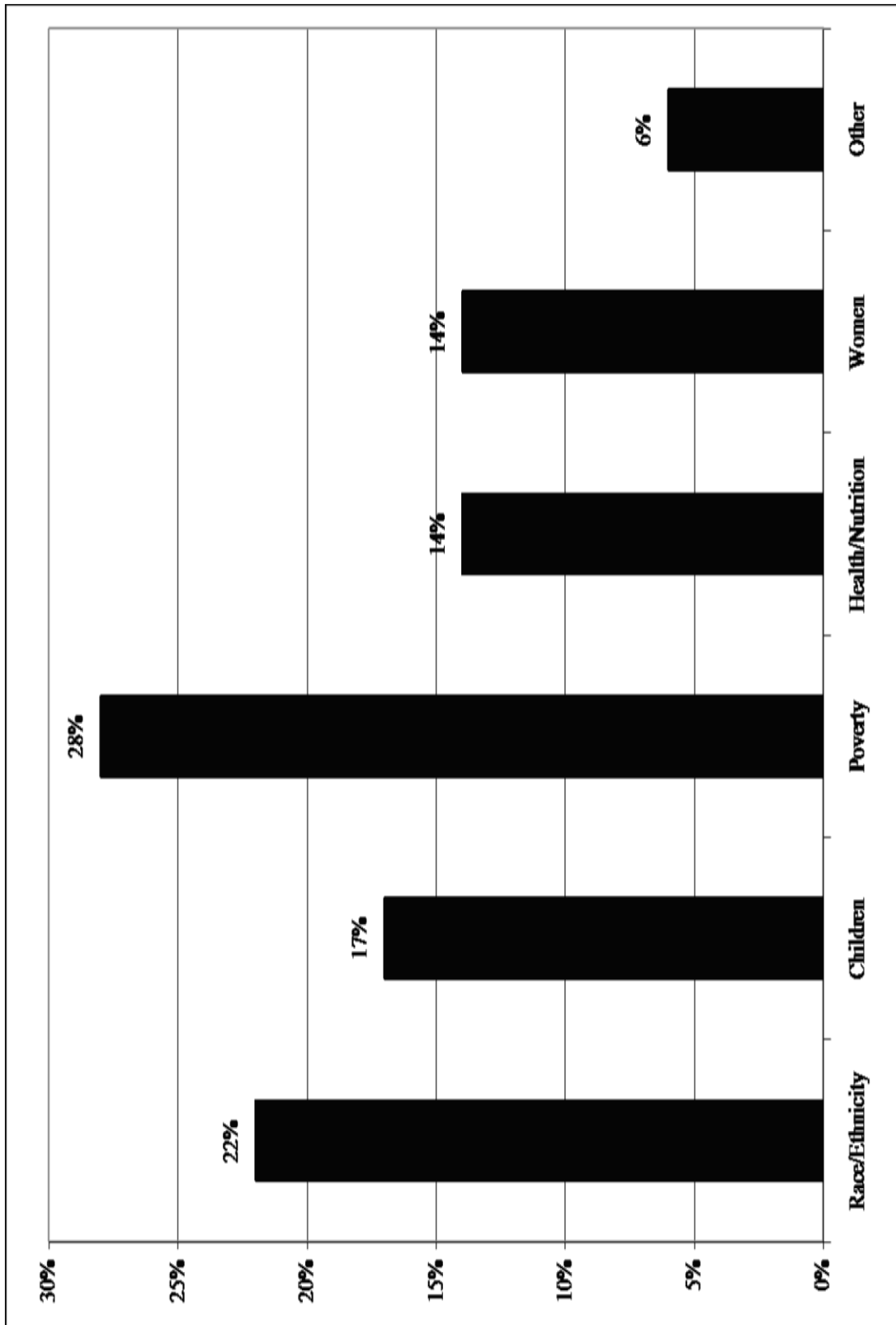


Figure 5.2. New York Times Advertisement, April 27, 1995

"The Contract With America"

HOW MUCH WILL ALL THIS COST OUR KIDS?

The "Contract With America" could change the lives of every child in every family in America.

It could dictate who is fed and who goes hungry, who has health care, who loses their home, who gets a chance to learn, and who is denied hope of a better life.

By changing the lives of children today, the "Contract With America" alters the course of our nation for the next fifty years.

Yet few Americans, let alone the freshmen members of Congress rushing to vote on its complex provisions, have examined how much the "Contract" will cost our children—over the next five years and in the century to come.

What Does A Detailed Review Of The "Contract" Reveal?

• Funds for drug education in our schools will be cut. So will student aid and college loans. Funds to upgrade schools and train teachers will also drop.



The Urgent Need to Improve Child Support Collections

Half of all children born in the past decade will spend some portion of their childhood in a single-parent household. Child support—the financial contribution required by law from the parent who does not live with the children—is the key to their financial security. But the current system for collecting child support is obsolete and overloaded. Today, U.S. children are owed more than \$34 billion in unpaid child support.

There is bi-partisan interest in child support reform and proposals to improve the current system. One promising approach would transfer responsibility for child support to the Internal Revenue Service. IRS enforcement would allow most child support to be collected through income withholding, just as taxes are paid. IRS enforcement of child support would also send a strong message: the abandonment of children will no longer be tolerated.

to work, even the mothers of toddlers being forced off welfare, will no longer know if safe, affordable care is available.

No longer will there be any national promise that your child will have a chance to learn.

• Neglected and brutalized children will not be protected as they are now.

Three million children were reported abused and neglected last year, but foster care, adoption and child abuse prevention programs will lose billions in support.

• Child care will be slashed by 20% — meaning one out of five children now waiting for care won't find it. Health and safety standards will be left for states to rewrite. Mothers with no choice but



What the "Contract With America" Will Mean To New York's Kids

Total Five Year Losses for New York: \$8.6 Billion

Federal Cuts Over Five Years Will Mean:

- 21,600 New York children will lose child care
- \$373 million in federal funds for children's nutrition programs will be lost
- 438,000 New York children will be denied income support
- Childhood disability programs will lose \$1.4 billion in federal funds
- Abused and neglected children will lose \$420 million in federal funds

Source: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

* Since children are more likely to be living in poverty than workers or the retired elderly, they benefit most from income support programs. If the "Contract" were fully in force today, more than half of the nine million destitute children in America would not be eligible for income support. Where will they go in the future? How will they live?

* No longer guaranteeing children help based on need, the "Contract" instead guarantees drastic losses for children in years to come.

The block grants (straight cash grants to states) that would replace federal children's programs have a history of drying up. Waiting lists for family services have grown longer since 1981 because many block grants have lost 50% of their value.

Congress is also considering proposals



to cut taxes for families making over \$200,000 by \$50 billion—a tax cut which will be paid for largely by the "Contract" cuts in children's programs.

So How Much Will All This Cost Our Children?

In round numbers, the "Contract" would cost America's children \$46 billion in school lunches, college grants, food stamps, rent assistance and foster placements.

But can it really be measured in dollars and cents? What is the lifetime cost of hunger, homelessness, deprivation and violence? The price of poverty is staggering. And in the long run, everyone pays.

Kids Can't Vote

It's time for responsible adults to speak out. Reforms in social programs are needed. Our children need better schools, enough food, health care and jobs that pay their parents enough to support a family. But we owe it to ourselves and to our children not to rush proposals through Congress that would move us in the wrong direction and permanently dismantle critical family services.

The Senate is now considering what the House of Representatives has done. What they decide will affect our children for the rest of their lives. Call Senator Alfonse D'Amato at (212) 947-7390 and Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan at (212) 661-5150 today. To learn more about protecting the future of our children call 1(800) CHILD-44.



Congress aims to redesign American society in six months or less. One mistake and millions of children will pay for the rest of their lives. That's why the following organizations ask you to join them in telling Congress to slow down for the sake of our children.

- National Education Association
- Coalition for America's Children
- Children's Defense Fund
- National Association of Child Advocates
- Child Welfare League of America
- National Parenting Association
- Children Now
- National Black Child Development Institute
- Center for Law and Social Policy
- Child Care Action Campaign
- Food Research and Action Center
- The Children's Partnership
- Statewide Youth Advocacy
- Citizens' Committee for Children, New York



TELL CONGRESS TO SLOW DOWN

Figure 5.3. New York Times Advertisement, August 8, 1995

Why every woman in America should beware of welfare cuts.

Welfare is the ultimate security policy for every woman in America. Like accident or life insurance, you hope you'll never need it. But for yourself and your family, sisters, daughters and friends, you need to know it's there. Without it, we have no real escape from brutal relationships or any protection in a job market hostile to women with children. Why is Congress trying to take it away?

Imagine the worst. You're laid off from your job. You lose your health insurance. Your marriage falls apart. Your young children need child care. And you have no family close enough to help.

This is the kind of thing that "happens to someone else." Someone we like to think is "different." And to underline the difference, we usually figure the woman is somehow at fault.

"Why did she have kids if she can't support them?" we ask.

"What's the matter with her?"

But, at heart, we know how uncomfortably close we are, ourselves, to being without support, without savings. All it takes is a few strokes of hard luck. Hard luck so common, it strikes millions of women with children every year. Women with no job security, in unstable or abusive relationships, with nowhere to turn but welfare (see stories at right).

Would you let your employer take away your health insurance? Would you let the government cancel your social security? Of course not. But the public program that benefits struggling women most—Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC)—is now considered fair game in Washington. And women are supposed to be quiet about it.

What myths underlie the attack on welfare?

The welfare "reform" proposal in Congress is based on myths about women and about welfare.

Even the phrase describing the bill—the "Personal Responsibility Act," taken from Newt Gingrich's Contract with America—exploits these myths.

It implies that impoverished women with children, unlike people who get VA benefits or retirees on Social Security, are responsible for their own troubles and need a whack from a morality paddle to get back in line.

This is not only insulting, but dangerous.

Those who want to cut welfare assume the American job market is hungry for untrained, unskilled workers. It's not. Mothers shooed off welfare will not find jobs waiting. And even if a mother finds a job available, chances are it won't pay a living wage that's enough to cover child care, let alone include health insurance.

Everybody agrees that the current welfare system is flawed. But these reckless and irresponsible cuts do nothing to fix anything. They only make it harder for a woman raising her children to recover from life's hard knocks—which today's system, even with all its flaws, actually manages to do.

That's why we say that welfare isn't supporting failure. In most cases, it's enabling success.

The fact that most women who must resort to welfare find a way out within two years by their own efforts, while keeping their children fed and clothed, says a great deal about them. It certainly demonstrates their "personal responsibility." And it should make the rest of us ask why they're being maligned, threatened and lectured.

How defending poor women protects us all.

The assault on poor women aims to divide American women, leaving all of us more vulnerable than ever.

Legislation now pending in Congress would end Aid to Families with Dependent Children and critical nutrition programs.

It would free states to reduce their own level of support for below the poverty line.

Most inexcusable of all, it would allow the richest society on Earth to break its most fundamental pledge to women:

That if the worst happens, a woman can keep her children with her, with food on the table and a roof over their heads.

These punitive provisions leave no offsetting benefits.

They won't save money, speed women into jobs, improve health care, or provide more child care. They won't do anything but complete the humiliation of women who have no other choice and jeopardize the well-being of our poorest children.

No American woman has anything to gain from this so-called "welfare reform." Each one of us has everything to lose. That's why we ask you to act quickly.

President Clinton must stop this attack on women's security. Mail the coupon to us, and we'll speed it along with thousands of others in the White House. And call or write your Senators and Representatives today.

This fight is for all of us. Make sure help is there when women need it most.

Does welfare support failure or enable success? Two true stories.

JULIE WESTWOOD, married for twenty years, had five kids, a house, a savings account. Then a serious car accident and divorce left her with nothing but a \$400 check from AFDC and \$250 a month in food stamps.

"I would wake up at 4 A.M., get all my dresses, and my Whataburger bills had to be paid, one for the children, go to school for eight hours, come home, do the laundry, meals, housecleaning, wash the kids' heads—and study late into the night after they fell asleep. In spite of all the trauma, homelessness, and illness, I graduated with a B.A. this year.

"Things are going to change for us."

GLORIA NELSON raised her children on AFDC for two years until she could leave home with family and work two manual jobs to survive.

"The scariest part about getting off welfare was not having health insurance for the kids. I'd have to go to the emergency room an hour away and then AFDC usually wait four hours more."

Working for the past 26 years, she remembers her AFDC experience vividly. "It infuriates me to hear the politicians talking about kicking mothers off welfare without skills, without education, without medical insurance, without family support, what are these women supposed to do?"



A typical woman on welfare is in her late 20's, has two kids, and needs help for two years. Surprised?

10 facts most Americans don't know about welfare.

- Only 8% of welfare mothers are teenagers. Less than 3% of poor families are headed by women younger than 19.
- The typical welfare family includes a mother and two children, about the same as the average American family.
- Welfare mothers on average receive \$367 a month. Even with food stamps worth \$295, this is still 31% below the poverty line for a family of three. Benefits have lost about a third of their value since 1979.
- Welfare to single mothers makes up just 1% of the federal budget—3% if food stamps are included.
- Thirty-eight percent of AFDC parents are white, 37% are African-American, and 18% are Latino.
- Over 70% of women applying for welfare receive benefits for less than two years; only 8% remain over eight years.
- More than 60% of AFDC families have a child younger than six, forty percent have a child younger than two.
- Full-time, year-round work at minimum wage puts a woman and two children \$3,000 below the poverty line with no health care coverage.
- Unemployment has steadily increased since World War II while unemployment benefits have decreased.
- Carefully conducted research has found that AFDC benefits do not influence a new-married mother's decision to have a child; nor do they influence mothers already on welfare to have additional children.

Stop the attack on women's security!

PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON
The White House

Dear President Clinton:

The so-called "Welfare Reform" bill removes the only assistance women have that they will always be able to provide for their children. Use your pen to stop it now!

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____

Send my urgent message to President Clinton immediately.

If I see, I want these women to learn how much is at stake. If enclosing my contribution to your vital re-election campaign: \$25 ___ \$50 ___ \$100 ___ \$150 ___ \$200 ___ or _____ (check/please use only for absolute need)

If I can't contribute in cash, please convey my signed protest to President Clinton.

PHONE _____
CITY _____

For immediate effect in Washington, please mail this coupon to:
Women's Committee of One Hundred
750 First Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002 (202) 336-8346
The Women's Committee of One Hundred represents a new combination of informed women—including professors, scholars, activists, elected officials, professionals and artists—pledged to defend women's security.

A war against poor women is a war against all women.

This ad was co-sponsored by 1500 National Health and Human Services Employees Union, National Association of Social Workers, Coalition for a Free Choice American Postal Workers Union, AFSCME, National Education Association of New York, NY, Association for Women, Family and Economic Policy, National Women's Health and Family Project, General Federation of Women's Clubs, National Council of American-Soviet Friendship, National Council for Women, National Council for the Research on Women, National Jobs for All Coalition, National Coalition for the Unemployed, NYW Legal Defense and Education Fund, A Voice of NYW Legal Defense and Education Fund's latest financial report is available from the New York Department of State Office of Economic Regulation, Albany, NY 12241.

Table 5.3. Transformation of Select Issues within Welfare Reform

Issue	Previous law	Personal Responsibility Act	PRWORA (1996)
<i>Program Structure</i>			
Entitlement	AFDC was an open-ended entitlement to states, and indirectly to recipients	Converts AFDC into a capped block grant; allows states to opt out of AFDC program and receive fixed block grant funds; no state maintenance of effort requirement	States legally entitled to funds based on formula in federal block; individuals have no legal entitlement to benefits. States must maintain 80 percent of their historic state fund spending levels or face loss of federal funds.
Status of AFDC	Child Protection, Disability, Food/Nutrition programs were entitlement programs.	Convert Child Protection, Child Care, and Food/Nutrition Programs into capped block grants.	No programs were converted from entitlement to block grant programs. Eligibility criteria for child disability programs tightened. Some cuts to existing food programs.
<i>Child Exclusion Policies</i>	No provision	Prohibits payment of additional benefits for children born to mothers while receiving AFDC in most circumstances	States allowed but not required to impose family caps.
Family Caps	No provision	Prohibits states from paying cash benefits on behalf of children born to unmarried mothers who gave birth before age 18 (continues Medicaid)	States allowed but not required to deny cash assistance to unmarried teen mothers.
Restrictions on benefits to teen mothers	No provision	Paternity must be established before benefits paid for children; states required to establish paternity for children in 90 percent of AFDC cases	Parents who refuse to cooperate in paternity establishment must have benefit reduced by at least 25 percent and may have benefit terminated entirely; state can exempt parents from cuts.
E Establishing paternity for children born out of wedlock	Applicant has to cooperate in establishing paternity for children born out of wedlock		

Table 5.3. Transformation of Select Issues within Welfare Reform, continued

Issue	Previous law	Personal Responsibility Act	PRWORA (1996)
<i>Welfare-to-work Policies</i>			
Individual work requirements	Parent with no child under age three had to participate in JOBS; parents of children under age six exempt unless child care guaranteed and participation limited to 20 hours a week	Imposes minimum 35 hrs/wk requirements on single parent recipients who have received cash benefits for at least two years	Adult recipients required to engage in work after two years of receiving AFDC/TANF.
Work participation rate requirement (for single-parent families)	20 percent of nonexempt caseload had to participate in JOBS in FY 1995	Requires states to move 2 percent of caseload into work program by 1996, rising to 50 percent by 2003	States are required to meet escalating work participation rate requirements, with escalating penalties for states that fail to meet work participation rates and performance bonuses for successful states.
Hard time limits	No provision	Five-year (60 month) limit on receipt of benefits	Five-year lifetime (60 month) limit on receiving benefits with shorter time limits permitted at state discretion (up to 20 percent of state's caseload may receive exemption)

Chapter 6

Interest Groups, Diverse Coalitions, and Legislative Influence at the State Level

In the previous chapter, I used data from the national level to show that anti-poverty advocates build diverse coalitions as a strategy of legislative influence, and that diverse coalitions are sometimes, but not always, associated with legislative influence. In this chapter, I analyze the formation and influence of diverse coalitions across the 50 states. I take advantage of cross-state variation to test two predictions of the formal theoretic model. To test the Diverse Coalitions Hypothesis, I use a series of logistic regressions to determine whether the presence of advocacy groups and partners was associated with the adoption of three types of welfare policies: child exclusion policies, strong welfare-to-work policies, and strict policies. To test the Advocacy Coalitions Hypothesis, I analyze how diverse coalition formation at the state level varied with the strength of anti-poverty advocates, partisan control of the government, level of political conflict within a subset of 15 states.

To preview the key findings, I find little support for the hypothesis that states with strong advocates were more likely to enact generous policies for the poor, controlling for other economic, social, and political characteristics of the state. However, it is not clear whether the absence of a significant finding is due to variable measurement issues, or due to the fact that diverse coalitions, when they form, are not influential. The analysis of 15 states confirms that diverse collaboration did occur in some states, but often seemed to

function more to provide information to legislators interested in the consequences of various policy issues. Future tests are necessary to provide a more rigorous test of the theoretical model.

I begin the chapter by describing the data sources used to examine state-level interest communities and policy outcomes. The subsequent section provides an overview of the policy issues that were devolved to the state level following the enactment of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. The remaining sections present my empirical tests. First, I provide an overview of interest group communities at the state level. Next, I present the quantitative tests of the Diverse Coalitions Hypothesis, followed by the qualitative tests of the Advocacy Coalitions Hypothesis. The final section concludes.

Description of Data Collection and Method

The cross-state comparisons employ data compiled from a wide range of sources, including existing studies of state policy decisions following the PRWORA (Blank and Schmidt 2001; Pavetti and Bloom 2001; Soss *et al.* 2001); public databases of state-level characteristics and welfare policies (the Urban Institute Welfare Rules Database and University of Kentucky Poverty Research Center); and a dataset of interest group registrations at the state level (Gray and Lowery 2001). Measures of state-level policy outcomes are constructed from two sets of sources: the Urban Institute's Welfare Rules Database (WRD) and existing studies of state policy decisions. The Urban Institute's WRD is a detailed database of AFDC/TANF rules for each state for each year from 1996-2008. These rules were compiled from caseworker manuals in each state, and reviewed

by state administrators for accuracy. I used the WRD to generate measures of family cap policy adoption and to provide supplementary information about state employment policies. To maintain consistency with other scholarly work in this field, I use measures of employment-related policies that have been used by other scholars in published work. Specifically, I use Soss and colleagues' measure of work requirements (2001), Blank and Schmidt's measure of benefit generosity and earnings disregards (2001), and Pavetti and Bloom's measure of sanction and time limit policies (2001).²⁸

I explore diverse coalition formation at the state level by reviewing case studies of state welfare policy choices (Heaney 2004; Winston 2002; the Urban Institute 1998) and newspaper articles about welfare reform at the state level. The case studies that I review either focused on interest group advocacy during welfare reform (Heaney 2004; Winston 2002), or provided an overview of the political context of welfare policy making following the enactment of the PRWORA (Urban Institute). Heaney (2004) explores interest group involvement in welfare reform in Wisconsin, while Winston (2002) examines organizational involvement in Maryland, Texas, and North Dakota. The Urban Institute's *Assessing the New Federalism* project includes a series of case studies on the income support and social services following welfare reform across 13 states: Alabama, California, Colorado, Florida, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, New

²⁸ Soss and colleagues' (2001) work requirement variable is coded as 1 if a state requirement work earlier than the federal governments' requirement of 24 months and 0 otherwise. Blank and Schmidt's (2001) measures of benefit generosity and earnings disregard code a variable as 'low' if the maximum state benefit/disregard was less than \$100 below the median state benefit/disregard, 'medium' if the maximum benefit/disregard was within \$100 of the median state benefit/disregard, and 'high' if the maximum benefit/disregard was greater than \$100 of the median benefit/disregard. Pavetti and Bloom's (2001) sanction variable codes a state as 'lenient' if it imposed only a partial benefits reduction and did not impose a 100 percent sanction on Food Stamp benefits, 'strict' if it imposed immediate sanctions that revoked the entire cash benefit, and 'medium' otherwise. Pavetti and Bloom's (2001) time limit measure codes a state as 'lenient' if a state used state funds to extend TANF benefits beyond 60 months, 'medium' if a state enacted the federally-prescribed 60 month benefit, and 'strict' if the state adopted shorter time limits.

Jersey, New York, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin. In developing the case studies, all authors interviewed the primary organizational participants in each state. It seems reasonable to suspect that if diverse coalitions formed and were active at the state level, these case studies would identify them. To provide additional information on the organizational actors involved in welfare reform at the state level, I reviewed newspaper articles from each state from January 1, 1995 and January 1, 1999, during which time most states passed their welfare reform legislation.

State Policy Choices under the PRWORA

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) ushered forth a wide range of changes at the state level. The 60-year old entitlement program Aid to Families with Dependent Children was replaced by the block grant program Temporary Aid to Needy Families, or TANF. Under TANF, cash benefits were made conditional on employment activities and time-limited. The program also granted states increased discretion over a wide range of programmatic issues, including generosity of benefits, stringency of work requirements, and sanctions for non-compliant behavior (Blank and Haskins 2001; Danziger 2001; Haskins 2006; Rowe 1999; Soss et al. 2001; Weaver 2000).

The programmatic issues over which states had discretion can be grouped into three categories that roughly correspond to the formal goals of TANF block grant: (1) provide assistance to poor families; (2) end the dependence of poor families on government benefits by encouraging employment and marriage; and (3) reduce the incidence of child birth out of marriage (Gais et al. 2001). Table 6.1 provides a brief

description of select programmatic issues falling within each of these categories, as well as the frequency of strict, moderate, and lenient policy adopt across the 50 states.

The first goal of the TANF program was to provide assistance to needy families with children. To this end, states provided cash benefits to households falling below a predetermined, state-specific income threshold. Cash benefit levels typically differed according to the income level and size of a household, and varied widely across states. For example, in 1999 the maximum monthly benefit under TANF for a family of three with no income ranged from a low of \$120 in Mississippi to a high of \$923 in Alaska (Rowe 2000). Table 6.1 shows that most states had moderate or high generosity with respect to the value of the TANF benefit, meaning that the maximum benefit was either within \$100 of the median state benefit (medium) or greater than \$100 of the median state benefit (high). Nine states were characterized as having low benefit generosity, meaning that the maximum benefit was less than \$100 below the median state benefit (Blank and Schmidt 2001).²⁹

Second, the program aimed to reduce needy families' reliance on cash benefits by encouraging employment. This was accomplished through a series of policies that imposed activities requirements on TANF recipients (for example, employment activities), sanctions for noncompliance with activities requirements, and time limits for the receipt of benefits. With respect to activities requirements, federal law requires that all adult recipients engage in work activities after two years of receiving benefits, but states were permitted to demand work from recipients at an earlier point. As shown in

²⁹ Because my dependent variables are summary measures, I employ the relative generosity of the benefit in 1999, rather than the change in the generosity of the benefit before and after the enactment of PRWORA. I use summary measures because these may be better able to capture compromises between generous and strict policies.

Table 6.1, half of all states adopted a work requirement stricter than the federal standard, or required work before 24 months of receiving TANF benefits (Soss et al. 2001).

When a TANF recipient does not comply with activities requirements, states are required to impose a benefit reduction – or sanction – until that family meets the requirement. States vary in the stringency of sanctioning policies – for example, some state policies punish noncompliant behavior in areas other than employment, or impose sanctions that affect Food Stamp or Medicaid coverage. The most lenient sanctioning policies impose only a partial benefits reduction and do not impose a 100 percent sanction on Food Stamp benefits, while the strictest sanctioning policies impose immediate sanctions that revoke the entire cash benefit (Pavetti and Bloom 2001). Twenty-five states adopted the strictest sanctions, in which the sanction was imposed immediately and impacted Food Stamp and Medicaid benefits; thirteen states had moderate sanctions in which gradual full family sanctions did not affect other benefits; and 12 states had lenient sanctions. In addition to sanctions, benefits are time-limited at sixty months for the majority of TANF recipients. States are permitted to set earlier time limits, but may not use federal TANF funds to provide cash benefits beyond sixty months (although they may use state funds to do so). Following the PRWORA’s passage, the majority of states enacted moderate time limits, which mirrored the federal standard of sixty months. Seventeen states adopted shorter time limits, and 9 states used state funds to extend TANF benefits beyond sixty months (Pavetti and Bloom 2001).

Finally, many states increased incentives for recipients to engage in work activities through the use of earnings disregards, which essentially disregard a share of earnings when calculating a household’s eligibility for welfare benefits. Prior to

PRWORA, the earnings disregard was 33 percent, which translated into a benefit reduction of 67 cents for every additional dollar earned (Blank and Schmidt 2001).³⁰ Following PRWORA, most states expanded this initial earnings disregard, with considerable variation across states (Matsudaira and Blank 2008). Table 6.1 shows that by 1999, 19 states had enacted a policy of low generosity, meaning that the amount that was disregarded for a single mother working full time at \$6/hour was less than \$100 below the median state disregard. Fourteen states had a medium generosity policy (disregarded earnings within \$100 of median disregard) and 17 states had a high generosity policy (disregarded earnings above \$100 of median disregard) (Blank and Schmidt 2001).

The third goal of TANF was to reduce the extent of out-of-wedlock childbearing by altering the costs and benefits associated with having children out of marriage and/or at a young age. The family cap prohibits additional benefits to children born to mothers who are currently receiving welfare benefits, while policies targeting teen mothers prevent unmarried mothers under a certain age (typically 18) from receiving benefits. These policies were included in PRWORA only at state option, meaning that states were allowed but not required to adopt the policies. By 1999, 21 states had enacted a family cap policy but no states precluded teen mothers from receiving welfare benefits; the latter is therefore excluded from Table 5.1 (Rowe 2000).

Table 6.2 shows the correlations between the policies described above. All policies are coded on either a 1-3 (time limits, sanctions, earnings disregards, and benefit generosity) or a 0-1 scale (work requirements and family caps), with higher values

³⁰ This earnings disregard applied during the first year of benefit receipt, after which time benefits were reduced 1 dollar for every dollar earned. Under AFDC, 30 dollars were automatically disregarded every month and some child care and work costs were exempted (Blank and Schmidt 2001).

indicating more stringent policies. As the table shows, most states adopted “packages” of lenient and strict policies, with few states adopting either all lenient or all strict policies. The highest correlations are between strict time limit and sanctioning policies (0.414) and earnings disregards and benefit generosity (0.37), suggesting that these policy choices tended to cluster together across states. However, most correlations are quite low – of the 15 correlations, 11 are below 0.30.

Interest Group Advocacy at the State Level

The central independent variables measure the strength of anti-poverty advocates across states. To create these variables, I use Gray and Lowery’s dataset of interest group registrations in 1997 (Gray and Lowery 1996, 2001). Gray and Lowery collected lists of all organizations registered to lobby at the state level in 1975, 1980, 1990, and 1997. In 1997, these lists were created from lobbying registration rolls provided by each state. The lists include organizations that were registered to lobby at the state level (or organizations on whose behalf individual lobbyists were registered to lobby), but exclude governmental actors. In the dataset, each organization is included only once, even if multiple lobbyists were registered to lobby on their behalf, and organizations are coded according to economic sector (small business, health, education, etc.) and organizational structure (membership, association, or institution). For each organization, there is also an indicator of whether the group was also registered to lobby in 1990.

Table 6.3 illustrates variation in the size, strength, and diversity of interest group communities across the 50 states in 1997. In this table, Column 1 shows the total number of interest group registrations per state in 1997. Nearly 34,000 organizations were

registered to lobby at the state level during this year. The average number of registrations per state was 690, and ranged from a low of 192 in Hawaii to a high of 2,118 in California. Columns 2-4 show the number of interest groups registered to lobby on issues including welfare, women, civil rights, and other public interest issues. These numbers are designed to provide an estimate of the relative size and strength of anti-poverty advocates and their potential coalition partners. Column 6 shows the strength of state interest groups in the early 1990s – measured as the ratio of the number of interest groups to the state’s gross state product (Gray and Lowery 2001). This measure captures the average state dollars behind each organization.³¹

As shown in this table, the vast majority of state interest groups were not registered to lobby on social welfare policy issues. On average, 26 groups were registered to lobby on welfare issues in each state (4 percent), 6 on women’s issues (1 percent), 4 on civil rights issues (0.5 percent), and 10 on public interest issues (1.5 percent).³² Although the relative prevalence of such organizations varies considerably across states, it is clear from these data that such organizations comprise a small percentage of pressure communities. Summing across all four categories, an average of 7 percent of groups lobbied on welfare, public interest issues, civil rights, or women’s issues; in only three states did the percent registered to lobby on any of these issues exceed 10 percent.³³

³¹ This measure is used as a measure of ‘density’ in Gray and Lowery’s work. High density states have many organizations relative to the size of the state’s economy (or low ratio values), while low density states have few organizations relative to the economy (or high ratio values).

³² The largest economic sectors represented in the data are health and manufacturing: 13 percent of all organizations were registered to lobby on health (88 groups on average), while 12 percent were registered to lobby on manufacturing (79 groups on average).

³³ It is important to note that data on interest group registrations understate the actual number of groups lobbying on social policy issues at the state level. There are many organizations that ‘act like’ interest groups in the sense that they provide information to legislators, often in an effort to influence policy, but do not consider themselves to be interest groups. Nonprofit 501c3 organizations – or public charities –

The Diverse Coalitions Hypothesis

The first tests analyze the relationship between the presence of advocacy groups and their partners and policy outcomes, focusing on the following question: were states in which advocates were “strong” types more likely to enact generous policies for the poor? The Diverse Coalitions Hypothesis predicts that generous policies for the poor will be more likely in states where strong advocates are more likely. Strong advocates are those that consider an issue to be salient, and exist in an environment in which potential partners consider an issue to be salient. For this set of tests, I employ three measures of state welfare policy choices, shown in Table 6.4. The first dependent variable equals one if a state adopted a family cap policy, and zero otherwise. The second and third dependent variables are summary measures of employment-related policies. I created summary measures, rather than testing each employment policy individually, because summary measures will be better able to show tradeoffs or compromises made across policy issues between those that supported and opposed generous welfare policies.

The second dependent variable measures the enactment of policies that would facilitate welfare recipients’ transition from welfare into work, rather than simply impose harsh penalties for noncompliance with program rules. This variable equals 3 if a state enacted the strongest “package” of employment policies – low benefit generosity, high earnings disregards, strict sanctions, and short time-limits; 1 if a state enacted the weakest package of employment policies – high benefit generosity, low earnings disregards, lenient sanctions and long time limits; and 2 if a state enacted a mixed package of policies. The third dependent variable captures the enactment of the strictest sanctions,

provide services to disadvantaged populations but are legally prohibited from lobbying state and federal legislators. These organizations were likely to be active during welfare reform.

time limits, and work requirements. For this variable, each state is given one point for each strict policy adoption, and the variable ranges from zero (for states that enacted no strict employment policies) to three (for states that enacted the strictest sanctions, time limits, and work requirements).

The independent variables are shown in Table 6.5. The central independent variables measure the strength of state anti-poverty advocates in 1997. Recall that strong advocates are those that view an issue as salient *and* exist in environments in which potential partners view an issue as salient. The measure of the strength of anti-poverty advocates thus has two parts: the salience of an issue to advocacy groups and the salience of an issue to potential partners.

Because of the difficulty of gauging salience for each state-level organization registered to lobby on welfare-related issues, I assume that if anti-poverty advocates existed at the state level, then they viewed the issue as salient. A review of interest group activity at the national level, and of existing case studies of welfare reform at the state level, provides support for this assumption (see Heaney 2004; Weaver 2000; Winston 2002). Case studies indicate that the changes to the welfare program were so great, and the consequences of such policy changes so uncertain, that advocates for the poor were strongly committed to lobbying against such changes. Advocates claimed that policies that restricted or eliminated benefits while imposing stricter work requirements would lead more need families into poverty – particularly in states where when few jobs were available. If legislators enacted more lenient time limits, sanctioning policies, and work requirements, or more generous earnings disregards and benefits, outcomes such as material hardship, hunger, and destitution could be minimized. Given the severity of

these outcomes, it seems reasonable to assume that welfare reform was a salient issue to anti-poverty advocates.

As a result of this assumption, the measure of advocacy group strength that I use is actually a measure of the *presence* of anti-poverty advocates and potential partners at the state level. To measure the presence of anti-poverty advocates, I identify all organizations registered to lobby on “welfare” issues in 1997. In states with higher values, low-income populations have more representation through a greater number of advocates; in states with lower values, the poor have less representation.³⁴

I measure the presence of potential partners in two different ways, based on the analysis of welfare reform at the national level. For child exclusion issues (family cap), the national-level analysis indicates that the key partners for anti-poverty advocates were the National Organization of Women, the American Civil Liberties Union, Catholic Charities and the Catholic Church. The National Right to Life Committee was also active in opposing child exclusion policies, though its collaboration with anti-poverty advocates was much more informal. Each of these organizations had branches at the state level.

Thus when the state’s adoption of a family cap is the dependent variable, the presence of

³⁴ I developed several measures of the presence of anti-poverty advocates at the state level, but ultimately concluded that the number of welfare groups was the best measure of the presence of advocates at the state level. For example, I created a variable measuring the percent of advocates in the interest group community by dividing the number of advocates by the total number of interest groups, a variable measuring the number of advocates relative to the size of the poor population by dividing the number of advocates by the number of poor people in a state, and a variable measuring the number of welfare advocates relative to the size of the welfare caseload. I also created a measure of the number of nonprofit organizations in a state using IRS records. I compared all measures to a variable that coded for whether a state contained a (non-governmental) interest group that testified or submitted testimony during the federal welfare reform hearings. State-level interest groups that participated in the federal hearings clearly viewed the issue as salient, and thus this measure may provide a window into states with “strong” type advocates. The following states contained interest organizations that participated in the federal hearings: CA, TX, MI, IL, OH, PA, MN, OK, MA, NY, NJ, WA, MD, SC. The number of welfare groups in a state correlated the most strongly with the measure of state group participation at the federal level (roughly .60), and all other measures were either not correlated or related in a negative direction with the federal measure. As a result, I decided that while the number of welfare groups in a state is not an ideal measure, it is the best way to assess the presence of advocates at the state level using these data.

diverse partners is measured as a scale in which each state receives 1 point for each of the four groups registered at the state level. States with higher values had more potential partners that viewed the issue as salient, and in these states, advocates were more likely to be perceived as being strong types.

On employment-related issues, the national analysis is much less precise about the organizations likely to act as diverse partners for anti-poverty advocates. Diverse coalitions did not form on employment-related issues at the national level, in part because many potential partners were busy lobbying in other areas. However, the analysis of hearings data presented in the previous chapter does offer some guidance as to which groups were likely to act as partners at the state level. The hearings testimony shows that in addition to anti-poverty organizations, groups mobilized around issues related to race/ethnicity, children, health/nutrition, and women participated in welfare reform debates (see Figure 5.1 in Chapter 5).

The data of interest group registrations provide classifications that roughly mirror several of these categories. For example, the data classify organizations registered to lobby on civil rights, women's issues, and groups registered to lobby on other public interest issues. To measure the presence of these actors in each state, I include the total number of organizations in each of the three categories. The hypothesis is that in states with a larger number of potential partners, anti-poverty advocates were more likely to be perceived as "strong" types. In tests of employment-related policy outcomes, both measures of interest group strength are coded on the same scale, with larger numbers indicating a great number of organizational actors. Because the theory posits that the

influence of anti-poverty organizations depends on their joint, rather than individual, presence, I include an interaction term for advocates and potential partners.

Research identifies four additional mechanisms of influence on state-level social policy decisions: government pressure, racial politics, policy-specific problem indicators, and budgetary politics (Soss et al. 2001; Fellowes and Rowe 2004; Kingdon 1995). First, government pressure should be associated with welfare policy choices. Specifically, restrictive policies should be less likely in states that are more liberal or states that are more generous to low-income populations in areas other than welfare. I use Berry et al.'s (1998) measure of government ideology to measure state liberalism. This measure estimates the ideological position of five key sets of actors (governors, and the two major party delegations in each Congressional house),³⁵ and then aggregates these positions based on the relative power of each actor in the state (see Berry et al. 1998). Because higher values indicate more liberal governments, this variable should be negatively associated with strict policies. To measure the state's generosity to low-income populations in non-welfare social policy areas, I use the state's percentage of uninsured children. States with a larger percentage of uninsured children have less generous programs for disadvantaged individuals, and may have been more likely to enact restrictive policies under TANF. Thus, the percentage of uninsured children should be positively associated with strict policy choices.

Second, previous scholarship has shown racial politics to be strongly associated with welfare policy choices. Particularly for family cap policies, research shows that states with a larger percentage of minority recipients were significantly more likely to adopt restrictive welfare policies (Soss et al. 2001). Soss and colleagues (2008) argue

³⁵ The ideological positions are based on the partisan identification of each actor (see Berry et al. 1998).

that when race is salient in policy debates, policymakers turn to racial group reputations to assess policy instruments and outcomes. In the case of welfare, some viewed racial minorities who received welfare as having motivational or behavioral deficiencies that led them to prefer and become dependent on welfare (Gilens 1999). This theory holds policymakers from states with larger minority representation on welfare caseloads were more likely to view themselves as enacting policies for people who faced behavioral or motivational barriers to economic self-sufficiency (as opposed to structural difficulties) and were thus more likely to enact strict measures (Soss, Fording, and Schram 2008).

Third, welfare policy decisions should vary according to the severity of the policy problem in each state. During the welfare reform debates, one key indicator of problem severity was the unmarried birth rate (Soss et al. 2001). Welfare was viewed by many as encouraging dependence on government benefits, teen pregnancy, and out-of-wedlock childbirth. If state policy choices are an attempt to discourage such ‘deviant’ behavior, then higher unmarried birth rates within a state may be associated with the adoption of restrictive policies such as the family cap. Fourth, a state’s economic wellbeing is likely to be related to the adoption of social welfare programs because better economic conditions free up money for such programs. Case studies suggest that states with tighter budgets were more likely to propose and enact strict policies that would move women quickly off the welfare rolls (Winston 2002). Economic wellbeing is measured as the gross state product in 1996.

Two controls are also included in each model, including the professionalism of the state legislature and the earliest year in which a state received a waiver allowing it to change its welfare program. These measures are included to control for the state’s

propensity to deviate from the federal welfare rules. Under the PRWORA, states were permitted but not required to enact policies that differed from the federal standards. Representatives in professionalized legislatures spend more days in session, and have more staff and larger salaries, allowing legislators more time and ability to develop policies (Squire 2007). Organizations may be more likely to lobby in states that had the capacity to propose and enact state-specific welfare policies. The second control measures the state's propensity to innovate in welfare policy, and is measured as the earliest year in which a state applied for and received a welfare waiver allowing it to change its welfare program. States that innovated in earlier years may have been more likely to enact policy changes under the PRWORA.

Results

Table 6.6 shows the results of a logistic regression of a state adoption of a family cap on the set of independent variables. If states with strong advocates were more likely to enact strict policies, the coefficient on the interaction term between advocates and partners should be negative and statistically significant. This table shows no support for the Diverse Coalitions Hypothesis. Both the number of advocates and the number of diverse coalition partners are positively and significantly related to the adoption of a family cap, but the interaction term, while in the expected direction, is not significant. This suggests that states with either advocates *or* partners were more likely to enact a family cap, but states with both advocates *and* partners were no less likely to do so. The results indicate that states with a higher concentration of racial minorities on the welfare caseload, and states with less generous social policies, were more likely to enact family

cap policies. In addition, states with a higher rate of births to unmarried women were less likely to adopt family caps. These findings are generally consistent with other work on state social policy adoption following the PRWORA (Soss et al.2001; Fellowes and Rowe 2004).

The positive and significant relationship between the presence of advocates or partners and the adoption of family caps is not entirely inconsistent with the model, but it is somewhat surprising. Why were states with strong advocates or strong partners (but not both) *more* likely to enact a family cap?

One possibility is that the variable used to proxy for the strength of welfare advocates is actually measuring the strength of both liberal and conservative welfare organizations. Conservative, pro-family groups were extremely engaged in welfare reform at the national level – particularly after Republicans took control of Congress in 1994. Organizations including the Christian Coalition, the Family Research Council, and the Traditional Values Coalition supported policies that would end long-term dependence on government benefits and end out-of-wedlock childbirth and teen pregnancy (Weaver 2000). Many of these organizations had strong state and local branches, which increased their leverage with Republican legislators at the national level.

To assess this possibility, I looked at the names of all organizations registered to lobby on welfare issues in 1997. There is some indication that a few of these organizations were actually conservative organizations, and therefore likely *opposed* generous government benefits for the poor. For example, the Family Forum, a research organization affiliated with the conservative organization Focus on the Family, was registered to lobby on welfare in two states. However, I could find few other

conservative family values organizations. Most groups registered on the issue of welfare seemed to be traditional advocacy groups for the poor, and were therefore likely supportive of generous programs for the poor. In addition, Winston's (2002) analysis of organizational involvement in three states provides no evidence that conservative groups were involved in state-level welfare reform.

An alternative possibility is that advocates and coalition partners were more likely to mobilize in states where they knew they would be at a disadvantage – for example, in those states where strong welfare advocates were unlikely to exist. As noted in the previous chapter, welfare reform entered the political agenda during Clinton's 1992 presidential campaign. Advocates had several years to mobilize at the state level before welfare policy decisions were actually devolved to the state level. The positive and significant relationship between advocates, partners, and strict policy outcomes therefore would reflect the mobilization of groups in the years leading to the passage of the PRWORA.

To assess this possibility, I examined the percentage increase in welfare organizations and coalition partners between 1990 and 1997. The dataset of interest group registrations records whether a group registered in 1997 was also registered in 1990. The data show that there was considerable growth in the advocacy community over this period. Of the 1,276 organizations registered to lobby on the issue of welfare in 1997, only 342 had also been registered in 1990 (results not shown). The percentage increase in welfare organizations varied considerably across states: Rhode Island's and South Dakota's populations increased the least – from 6 to 12 organizations, while Oklahoma's population increased the most – from 1 to 22 organizations. A simple t-test

provides evidence that welfare organizations were more likely to mobilize in states that ended up enacting the strictest welfare policies. For example, the percentage increase in welfare organizations was greater in states that enacted family cap policies (500 percent versus 300 percent increase, $p < .10$).

Because the two measures of interest groups are potentially endogenous to the policy outcomes, I reran the regression using measures that restricted the set of advocates and partners to those groups that were also registered at the state level in 1990. While these measures do not capture the entire universe of groups registered to lobby in 1990, they do eliminate groups that mobilized in response to President Clinton's bid to "End welfare as we know it," or in response to the Republican's "Contract with America." It is possible that groups that were registered in 1990 were also more likely to be central players in the social policy domain, which is one factor related to successful coalition building (Heaney 2004; Hojnacki 1997). Table 6.7 shows that when the measures from 1990 are used, the significant association between advocacy groups, partners, and family cap adoption disappears. In fact, in this test, the only significant relationship that remains is the positive association between the percent of minorities on the AFDC caseload and the adoption of family cap policies.

Table 6.8 shows the regression of strict "packages" of employment policies on the set of independent variables. The first column presents coefficients and standard errors for the ordered logistic regression of strong welfare-to-work policies on the set of independent variables, while the second column presents the results for the ordered logistic regression of strict policy adoption. These regressions differ from the previous regressions in that diverse coalition partners are measured as the total number of groups

registered to lobby on women's issues, civil rights issues, or other public interest issues. To address potential endogeneity issues, I use the interest group measures from 1990 rather than 1997. In addition, the "problem indicator" variable (percent illegitimate births) has been removed because the "problem" being addressed by employment policies was low employment rates, rather than out-of-wedlock childbirth. These results provide no additional support for the hypothesis that anti-poverty advocates, either alone or in combination with diverse coalition partners, influenced policy outcomes. The table shows that government ideology is a significant predictor of the strictest 'package' of welfare policies – states with more liberal governments were less likely to adopt the strictest sanctions, time limits, and work requirements. As with the previous regressions, percent minority on the AFDC caseloads is significantly associated with policy adoption. Regressions showing each policy individually are shown in Appendix A.

Discussion

Together, these tests provide little support for the hypothesis that the strength of the advocacy community – as measured by the ability of advocates to build diverse coalitions – is associated with more generous programs for the poor. What explains this lack of a finding?

One set of possibilities relates to the measurement of key concepts. For the dependent variables, I transformed continuous measures of policy adoption into dichotomous measures to maintain consistency with previous research in this area, and to allow for the creation of composite policy adoption variables. However, the dichotomous measures obscure some of the actual variation in state policy adoption. For example, the

‘work requirement’ variable measures whether welfare recipients were required engage in employment activities earlier than the federal requirement of 24 months. Some states enacted strict policies by requiring recipients to work within 6 months or 12 months of benefit receipt. Other states mandated work at a later point, such as 48 months. A dichotomous variable treats all states that enacted a requirement less than 24 months the equally, and all states that adopted the federal requirement of 24 months *or* enacted a more lenient requirement equally.

In collapsing the categories, the dichotomous measure loses some of the actual variation in policy adoption that would be available in a continuous measure. It may be that states with strong advocates were less likely to enact the strictest policies (for example, a 6 month work requirement) and more likely to enact the most generous policies (for example, a 48 month work requirement), but that other political, social, or economic factors were more important in determining whether a state simply deviated from the federal standard by adopting a requirement of less than 24 months. If this were the case, then a continuous measure of policy adoption would be more likely than the dichotomous measure to pick up the influence of advocates. While I do not explore continuous measures of policy adoption in this chapter, I plan to do so in the future. My next steps in this area are outlined in Chapter 7.

With respect to the independent variables, it may be that the central independent variables of interest do not provide an adequate measure of the diversity of real or potential advocacy group coalitions. The current independent variables measure state-level advocacy group strength as the *presence* of organizational actors likely to oppose strict policy adoption. For example, for family cap policy adoption, the independent

variables are measured as (1) the number of welfare groups in a state in 1990 (*welfare organizations*), and (2) the total number of potential partners in 1990, of the following: NOW, ACLU, the Catholic Conference, and Right-to-Life Committee (*partner organizations*). States with a large number of welfare organizations and a large number of partner organizations are measured as having “strong” advocates, meaning that advocates would have been able to build coalitions because diverse organizations existed at the state level.

While these measures provided a starting point for testing the relationship between diverse interest group support and policy adoption, they may not go far enough in measuring the actual involvement of diverse actors, or the diversity of support behind a particular policy. For example, while a state like California had both a large number of actors and all four of the potential partners (NOW, ACLU, Catholic Conference, and the Right-to-Life Committee), it is not clear whether any of these state-level branches organizations were active during welfare reform, or whether the activity of the partners diversified the support that advocates could bring to the policy debate.

For example, if the California branch of the ACLU actively opposed the family cap policy, but the NOW, Catholic Conference, and Right-to-Life Committee did not, this would not necessarily increase the diversity of opposition to the family cap policy, because the ACLU and anti-poverty organizations have similar types of informational resources. Furthermore, because the ACLU and anti-poverty organizations have a history of working together, the costs of collaboration are lower and thus any partnerships between the ACLU and anti-poverty organizations would be less likely to signal credibility (through the costliness of collaborative activity).

In contrast, if the California Right-to-Life Committee actively opposed a family cap and the other organizations did not, this would diversify opposition to the policy because anti-poverty organizations and the Right-to-Life Committee have different types of informational resources (policy and electoral). In addition, this would increase the costs of lobbying because the two organizations do not have a history of working together, and thus would provide greater evidence of credibility.

The current independent variable would code both cases similarly, despite the fact that the first example would not diversify information and would provide less evidence of credibility than the second example, which would both diversify information and provide evidence of credibility.

Due to these measurement issues, it is not possible to wholly reject the hypothesis that the diversity of real or potential advocacy group coalitions influenced welfare policy outcomes at the state level. While it is possible that advocacy groups did not collaborate at the state level as they did at the national level, or that even despite collaboration, state policy decisions during welfare reform were influenced by other factors, issues related to the measurement of dependent and key independent variables raise questions involving the validity of the current quantitative tests. The concluding chapter of my dissertation provides an overview of next steps on the project that may help sort out these questions. Before proceeding to the conclusion, however, I examine diverse coalition building in a subset of 15 states to explore the process-oriented hypotheses, and to help provide additional insight into why there is no finding for the outcome-oriented hypothesis.

The Advocacy Coalitions Hypothesis

In this section, I analyze diverse coalition building across 15 states in the years immediately preceding and following the enactment of the PWORA. The Advocacy Coalitions Hypothesis predicts that advocacy coalitions will be more likely in states with strong advocates, Republican control of the legislature, and high political conflict. Table 6.9 presents information on interest group strength, partisan control of the legislature, and level of political conflict, for the following states: Maryland, Texas, North Dakota, Alabama, California, Colorado, Florida, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, New Jersey, New York, Washington, and Wisconsin. In this table, the first column shows the number of welfare advocates registered to lobby in 1997 while the second shows the number of groups registered to lobby on women's issues, civil rights issues, and public interest issues in 1997. The third column indicates whether Republicans were the majority in either one or both houses of Congress, while the fourth summarizes the level of political conflict surrounding welfare reform in the state.³⁶ The fifth column indicates whether a diverse coalition formed, and the final column shows whether a diverse coalition already existed and was cited as a key participant in welfare reform, for those states in which diverse coalitions did not form in response to welfare reform. In this table, states are listed in order of decreasing professionalism of the state legislature. Shaded boxes represent instances of diverse coalition formation.

There is limited evidence of diverse coalition formation at the state level, particularly with respect to ideological diversity. Ad-hoc, diverse collaborative activities

³⁶ To provide a rough estimate of the level of political conflict in each state, I searched for all newspaper articles containing the words "welfare reform" and the state's name, for the leading newspaper in each state. States are coded as high political conflict if the number of newspaper articles was above the mean number of articles for the subset of 15 states, and coded as low political conflict if the number was below the mean.

were evident in only four of the states (New York, Wisconsin, Texas, and Minnesota). For example, in New York, a ‘strange bedfellows’ coalition of anti-poverty advocates and Fortune 500 companies created a state welfare reform proposal to circulate to legislators in anticipation of welfare reform at the national level. The authors of the proposal included the United Jewish Appeal-Federation of Jewish Philanthropies, Business Council of New York States, United Way of New York State, and the State Communities Aid Association (Dao 1995; Stashenko 1995). In 1997, a similar set of organizational actors joined together to write a statement urging the state to increase spending to help welfare recipients find jobs. This coalition consisted of groups including the Business Council of New York State, the National Federation of Independent Business, and the State Association of Counties, as well as the League of Women Voters, the State Communities Aid Association, the New York State Child Care Coordinating Council, and the Citizen’s Committee for Children of New York (Perez-Pena 1997).

In Wisconsin, advocates for the poor formed a diverse coalition called the "Policy Group on Welfare Reform." This coalition included organizations such as the Lutheran Office for Public Policy, Church Women United, Center for Public Representation, League of Women Voters of Wisconsin, National Association of Social Workers of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the Wisconsin National Organization for Women and the Wisconsin Women's Network. Among other activities, the statewide coalition of advocates met to assess ways to influence welfare reform (including exploring alliances with business and government groups) and publicize opposition to Wisconsin’s welfare program in 1995 (Dresang 1995; Heaney 2004; Renard 1995).

There were several instances of diverse coalition formation in Minnesota. For example, a group of religious organizations came together to form the Interfaith Campaign for Welfare Reform. The Minnesota Council of Churches and the Minnesota Council on Foundations, the Council of Nonprofits organized to spearhead efforts to deal with welfare reform policies, while nonprofit organizations from across the state formed a group called Affirmative Options for Welfare Reform. In addition, the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits and the Children's Defense Fund formed a partnership to address issues raised by changes in federal-state relations (Inskip 1996). In Texas, there was only one example of diverse coalition formation. A prominent state advocacy group called the Center Public Policy Priorities (CPPP) organized an ad-hoc policy coalition of advocates, nonprofit providers, and government participants to monitor and influence the direction of welfare reform. Coalition partners included anti-poverty groups and service providers alongside groups like the National Association of Social Workers, the AFL-CIO, ACORN, and the NAACP (Winston 2002).

States that witnessed coalition formation had several characteristics that mirrored the federal level. With the exception of Wisconsin, these states had a large number of advocates and partners. Minnesota had the largest number of advocates and partners, in both 1997 and 1990. Both New York and Minnesota had 22 advocacy groups registered to lobby on welfare in both 1990 and 1997, far above the average of 7 groups across all states. New York, Wisconsin, and Texas had legislatures that were either divided in terms of partisan power or exclusively within the hands of Republicans, and had above-average professionalism scores. The states were split with respect to level of political conflict: New York and Wisconsin had extremely high levels of political conflict, while

Texas and Minnesota had low levels. Thus there is some support for the Advocacy Coalitions Hypothesis: states with the largest number of anti-poverty organizations (New York and Minnesota) and highest level of political conflict (New York and Wisconsin) witnessed the formation of diverse coalitions. There was also some association between partisan control of government and diverse coalition formation.

Clearly, though, the presence of strong advocates, Republican control of the legislature, and a high level of political conflict does not automatically lead to diverse coalition formation. For example, diverse coalitions did not form in Florida and Washington – states in which advocates existed, Republicans controlled the legislature, and conflict was high. Other states with strong advocates, high conflict, and divided control of government (between the legislative and executive branches) also did not witness the formation of diverse coalitions (such as California and Massachusetts).

One characteristic that all diverse coalition states had in common was the presence of at least one non-governmental advocacy group that had been a central player in social welfare policymaking for many years. In Texas, this group was the Center for Public Policy Priorities, or CPPP (Gamboa 1997; Winston 2002). The Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, founded in the late 1800s, cited as a key participant in welfare reform, was active in the “Policy Group on Welfare Reform” (Mead 2004; Rinard 1995). Minnesota had several organizations that had emerged in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, including the Urban Coalition (1968), Jobs Now (1982), and the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits (1987) (Inskip 1996). In New York, the State Communities Aid Association, founded in the late 1800s and the United Way of New York State were regularly referenced as important players in welfare reform (Dao 1995; Perez-Pena 1997;

Shashenko 1995). This suggests that a necessary but not sufficient condition for diverse coalition formation is the presence of an advocacy group with experience, and a strong reputation for involvement in state-level social policymaking.

In addition, despite the fact that diverse coalitions only emerged in only four states, existing coalitions were described as key participants in several states. These coalitions were often diverse with respect to type of organizational members, region (all were state-wide), and to a limited extent, policy domain, but did not tend to differ with respect to ideology. For example, the Michigan League of Human Services, an advocacy group with organizational members in the business, labor, religious, and human services policy domain, was one of the only advocacy groups mentioned in newspaper articles about Michigan's welfare reform policies. In Alabama and Maryland, formal coalitions were also described as active in welfare reform. In Alabama, for instance, one of the key participants was a state-wide coalition of close to 100 religious, civic, and social groups, called Alabama Arise (Clark et al. 1998). In Maryland, Welfare Advocates, a coalition of over 400 state and local advocacy and service organizations, was active in welfare reform hearings and other legislative lobbying (Winston 2002).

Media reports and case studies suggest that while formal and ad-hoc coalitions did not necessarily change legislative outcomes, they were often consulted for informational purposes. For example, Alabama Arise was one of several advocacy groups invited to participate in Governor Fob James Jr.'s Commission on Welfare Reform, charged with developed a welfare reform plan for the state (Clark et al. 1998). Though at the local rather, the Seattle Ad Hoc Welfare Reform Committee brought together local businesses, community, and advocacy groups to address issues related to welfare reform in Seattle

(Long et al. 1998). This provides support for the hypothesis that state-level advocacy groups gain influence by addressing the informational needs of like-minded legislators.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I examined two key implications of the theoretical model: that advocacy group strength is associated with policy outcomes (the Diverse Coalitions Hypothesis), and that diverse coalitions are more likely to form when advocates are strong, political conflict is high, and Republicans control the legislature. I found little support for the first hypothesis, and limited support for the second hypothesis.

The analysis suggests that state-level advocates do sometimes turn to diverse coalitions as a mechanism of political influence. A necessary condition for coalition formation is the presence of an advocate with experience and centrality in a policy network; all states in which diverse coalitions formed had at least one advocacy group that had been a central player in the social welfare policy domain for several years. In addition, while diverse coalition formation in response to welfare reform was relatively rare, many states had preexisting diverse coalition of advocates that seemed to function in primarily an informational role.

The qualitative analysis of 15 states shows that collaborative behavior across diverse organizational actors does occur at the state level. Thus, it is unlikely that the absence of a significant finding in the quantitative tests is due to the fact that diverse collaboration does not occur at the state level. It is of course possible that the quantitative tests find no significant relationship because diverse interest group collaboration is not an important determinant of state policy choices. However, further

tests are necessary to test whether the lack of a significant relationship between diverse interest group collaboration and policy adoption stems from the fact that the proposed mechanism of interest group influence is incorrect, or because the key dependent and independent variables do not accurately measure the underlying concepts. The next chapter will outline my next steps in this regard.

Table 6.1. Description of Policy Goals and Prevalence of Strict, Moderate, and Lenient Policies under TANF by 1999

	<i>Lenient/ High</i>	<i>Moderate/ Medium</i>	<i>Strict/ Low</i>
TANF Goal #1: Provide Benefits to Needy Families			
Value of Cash Benefit States are permitted to set cash benefit level.	N=12	N=29	N=9
TANF Goal #2: Discourage Dependence on Government Benefits/Encourage Employment			
Work Requirement Federal law requires adult recipients to engage in work after 2 years of receiving TANF. States may require recipients to work before 2 years.	25		25
Sanctions Federal law requires state to reduce benefits if recipient does not comply with work and child support requirements in TANF. States may adopt stricter sanctions than federal requirement – for example, by immediately eliminating full family benefit for failure to comply with program requirements.	12	13	25
Time Limits States are not permitted to use federal funds to provide assistance for more than 60 months. States may enact shorter lifetime limits, develop intermittent time limits that restrict benefits for a period of time, and/or use state money to fund benefits beyond 60 months.	9	24	17
Earnings Disregard Amount of earnings that are ‘disregarded’ in benefit computation. Technically, the inverse of the rate at which benefits are reduced as earnings increase. States are permitted to set earnings disregard level.	17	14	19
TANF Goal #3: Reduce Incidence of Child Birth Out of Marriage	<i>No (Lenient)</i>	<i>Yes (Strict)</i>	
Family Caps Prevents benefits from increasing if additional child is born to mother currently on assistance. States are permitted but not required to enact family cap.	29		21

Table 6.2. Correlations between Policy Measures across States

	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)
(A) Work requirements	1.000				
(B) Time limits	0.228	1.000			
(C) Sanctions	0.024	0.414	1.000		
(D) Earnings disregards	-0.047	0.056	0.273	1.000	
(E) Benefit generosity	-0.093	0.330	0.332	0.370	1.000
(F) Family caps	0.122	0.210	0.274	0.199	0.205

Table 6.3. Characteristics of State Interest Group Communities

	Number of Groups Registered to Lobby On:					State Dollars per Interest Group
	Total Number (1)	Welfare Issues (2)	Women's Issues (3)	Civil Rights (4)	Public Interest (4)	(5)
Average	690	26	6	4	10	\$158
Std. Dev.	436	16.2	3.6	4.0	6.5	\$106
Min	192	5	1	0	1	\$28
State	Hawaii	Alabama Hawaii Wyoming	Delaware Hawaii N.Jersey	Arkansas Iowa Miss. N.Jersey S.Carolina	S.Dakota	Wyoming
Max State	2118 California	75 Illinois	19 Minn.	17 California	32 California	\$517 California

Table 6.4. Dependent Variables for Tests of Diverse Coalitions Hypothesis

Family Cap (0, 1)

21 states enacted a family cap

Strength of Welfare-to-Work Policies (1, 2, 3)

9 states enacted strict sanctions, short time limits, low benefits, high disregards (3)

14 states enacted lenient sanctions, long time limits, high benefits, low disregards (1)

27 states enacted mixed set of strict and lenient policies (2)

Strict Policy Adoption (0, 1, 2, 3)

7 states enacted strictest sanctions, time limits, and work requirements (3)

15 states enacted 2 of 3 strictest policies (2)

16 states enacted 1 of 3 strictest policies (1)

12 states enacted no strict policies (0)

Table 6.5. Description and Mean Values, Independent Variables

<u>Strength of Anti-Poverty Advocates</u>		<u>Mean</u>
Presence of Anti-Poverty Advocates	Total number of interest groups registered to lobby on welfare issues in 1997	25.5
Presence of Diverse Coalition Partners	<i>Family Cap Policy:</i> Number of diverse partners in each state in 1997, of the following 4 groups: (1) National Organization for Women, (2) American Civil Liberties Union, (3) Catholic Conference, (4) National Right to Life Committee	2.0
	<i>Other Welfare Policies:</i> Total number of organizations in each state registered to lobby on women's issues, civil rights issues, or public interest issues, in 1997	20.4
<u>Government Pressure</u>		
Liberalism of State Government	Ideological score for each state government on 0 to 100 scale, with higher values indicating greater liberalism (1996)	40.2
Lack of Generosity of State Government in Non-Welfare Areas	Percent of uninsured children, 1996	9.1%
Budgetary Capacity	Gross State Product, 1996 (millions of dollars)	\$160,215
Lack of Innovation in Welfare Policy	Earliest year that state was granted a welfare waiver (19xx-1997)	1988
<u>Racial Politics</u>		
Percent of AFDC Caseload Minority	Proportion of state's AFDC caseload that was African American or Hispanic in 1996	43.0%
<u>Policy Problem Indicators</u>		
Unmarried Birth Rate	Percentage of births born to unmarried women in 1996	31.2%
<u>Other Control Variables</u>		
Size of State Interest Group Population	Total number of interest groups registered to lobby in 1997	690
Professionalism of State Legislature, 1996		18.2

Table 6.6. Logistic Regression Results, Adoption of Family Cap Policy by 1999

Anti-Poverty Advocates, 1997	0.193*
	(0.109)
Diverse Coalition Partners, 1997	1.391*
	(0.839)
Interaction, Advocates*Partners	-0.041
	(0.034)
Problem Indicator, 1996	-0.251*
	(0.130)
Percent Minority on AFDC Caseload, 1996	0.089***
	(0.032)
Liberalism of State Government, 1996	-0.014
	(0.020)
Lack of Generosity in Social Policy, 1996	0.348**
	(0.166)
Lack of Innovation in Welfare Policy	0.042
	(0.076)
Budgetary Capacity, 1996	0.000
	0.000
Professionalism of State Legislature, 1996	-2.653
	(5.400)
Size of Interest Group Population, 1997	-0.008**
	(0.003)
Constant	1.518
	(6.484)
Observations	50

Standard errors in parentheses
 *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 6.7. Logistic Regression Results, Adoption of Family Cap Policy by 1999, using Interest Group Measures from 1990

Anti-Poverty Advocates, 1990	-0.047 (0.192)
Diverse Coalition Partners, 1990	0.090 (0.747)
Interaction, Advocates*Partners	0.027 (0.090)
Problem Indicator, 1996	-0.148 (0.104)
Percent Minority on AFDC Caseload, 1996	0.056*** (0.021)
Liberalism of State Government, 1996	0.000 (0.016)
Lack of Generosity in Social Policy, 1996	0.194 (0.139)
Lack of Innovation in Welfare Policy	0.011 (0.066)
Budgetary Capacity, 1996	4.25e-06 (4.62e-06)
Professionalism of State Legislature, 1996	-0.993 (4.807)
Size of Interest Group Population, 1997	-0.003 (0.002)
Constant	0.432 (5.807)
Observations	50

Standard errors in parentheses
 *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 6.8. Ordered Logistic Regression Results, Employment Policies in 1999

	Welfare-to-Work Policies	Strict Employment Policies
Anti-Poverty Advocates, 1990	-0.193 (0.162)	0.152 (0.128)
Diverse Coalition Partners, 1990	-0.073 (0.158)	-0.135 (0.143)
Interaction, Advocates*Partners	0.018 (0.014)	0.0003 (0.009)
Liberalism of State Government, 1996	0.018 (0.011)	-0.025** (0.011)
Lack of Generosity in Social Policy, 1996	-0.010 (0.102)	0.039 (0.085)
Lack of Innovation in Welfare Policy	0.022 (0.048)	-0.022 (0.048)
Percent Minority on AFDC Caseload, 1996	-0.028** (0.014)	0.022* (0.013)
Budgetary Capacity, 1996	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)
Size of State Interest Group Population, 1997	0.001 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)
Professionalism of State Legislature, 1996	2.543 (3.819)	0.421 (3.435)
Intercept 1	1.038 (4.603)	-3.922 (4.433)
Intercept 2	3.922 (4.644)	-2.176 (4.415)
Intercept 3		-0.471 (4.419)
Observations	50	50

Standard errors in parentheses
 *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 6.9. Strength of Advocates, Partisan Control of the State Legislature, and Evidence of Coalition Building in 15 States

State	# Adv (1)	# Part. (2)	Pol. Conf. (3)	Republican/ Divided Legislature (4)	Diverse Coalition Formation? (5)	Formal Coalition? (6)
California	53	56	High	No	No	No
Michigan	37	25	NA ³⁷	Yes	No	Yes
New York	56	36	High	Yes	Yes	NA
Wisconsin	22	18	High	Yes	Yes	NA
New Jersey	23	11	High	Yes	No	No
Mass.	49	24	High	No	No	Yes
Florida	30	16	High	Yes	No	No
Texas	36	36	Low	Yes	Yes	NA
Washington	42	30	High	Yes	No	Yes
Maryland	19	16	Low	No	No	Yes
Minnesota	67	57	Low	No	Yes	NA
Colorado	27	20	Low	Yes	No	No
Mississippi	13	25	Low	No	No	No
Alabama	5	12	High	No	No	Yes
North Dakota	24	15	Low	Yes	No	No

³⁷ Unfortunately, I was unable to access state newspapers in Michigan for the specified period (January 1, 1995 – January 1, 1999) because online library resources for the University of Michigan do not include access to state newspapers for this period (surprisingly). Information regarding diverse coalition formation was gathered from national newspaper sources.

Appendix A. Logistic Regression Results, Component Employment Policies in 1999

	Low Earnings Disregards	Low Benefit Generosity	Strict Sanctions	Short Time Limits	Strict Work Requirements
Anti-Poverty Advocates, 1990	-0.117 (0.139)	0.239 (0.267)	-0.215 (0.190)	0.084 (0.141)	0.703** (0.278)
Diverse Coalition Partners, 1990	0.043 (0.139)	-0.184 (0.247)	-0.054 (0.172)	-0.087 (0.138)	-0.188 (0.213)
Interaction, Advocates*Partners	0.002 (0.009)	-0.028 (0.030)	-0.000 (0.015)	-0.001 (0.010)	-0.009 (0.020)
Liberalism of State Government, 1996	-0.005 (0.011)	-0.011 (0.016)	-0.037** (0.014)	-0.000 (0.011)	-0.043** (0.019)
Lack of Generosity in Social Policy, 1996	0.010 (0.085)	0.311** (0.136)	-0.129 (0.091)	0.007 (0.099)	0.351** (0.159)
Lack of Innovation in Welfare Policy	0.003 (0.045)	0.002 (0.067)	-0.118** (0.057)	0.012 (0.046)	-0.092 (0.069)
Percent Minority on AFDC Caseload, 1996	0.013 (0.013)	0.061*** (0.021)	0.055*** (0.018)	0.029** (0.014)	-0.016 (0.019)
Budgetary Capacity, 1996	-2.57e-06 (4.03e-06)	3.34e-06 (6.04e-06)	-6.71e-06 (4.67e-06)	-3.49e-06 (4.45e-06)	-2.08e-06 (5.23e-06)
Size of State Interest Group Population, 1997	0.000 (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)	-0.000 (0.002)	0.000 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)
Professionalism of State Legislature, 1996	-1.704 (3.605)	-13.92** (5.831)	5.714 (5.433)	-3.970 (3.793)	-2.378 (5.434)
Intercept 1	-0.561 (4.209)	1.157 (6.309)	-12.66** (5.516)	-0.410 (4.347)	8.651 (6.583)
Intercept 2	0.722 (4.210)	7.178 (6.456)	-10.92** (5.426)	2.099 (4.355)	
Observations	50	50	50	50	50

Standard errors in parentheses: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10

Chapter 7 Conclusion

This dissertation has attempted to answer the following questions: (1) Do advocates for the poor build diverse coalitions as a strategy of legislative influence? (2) If so, under what conditions do they build diverse coalitions? (3) Are diverse coalitions associated with legislative influence? Some of these questions have been answered, but future tests are necessary to provide a more rigorous test of the theory. In this chapter, I provide a review and discussion of the key findings from the empirical analysis, and outline my next steps on the project.

Review and Discussion of Key Findings

Diverse Coalition Building as a Strategy of Political Influence

The empirical analysis provides support for the first question. Advocates for the poor sought to build diverse coalitions as a strategy of legislative influence during welfare reform. These coalitions were almost never about increasing the monetary resources of a coalition, and were only sometimes about increasing the electoral resources of a coalition. Rather, partnerships were about diversifying the informational resources that a group of actors could offer a lawmaker. Sometimes, coalitions diversified the type of resource being provided – for example, when a group with a large number of members collaborated with a group with substantive expertise. Other times,

coalitions diversified the range of a single type of resource – for example, when a group with expertise in one policy area worked with a group with expertise in another policy area. In both cases, the partnerships utilized the different capabilities and specialties of the each member organization. Collaboration was not simply about increasing the *size* of support or opposition to a policy, but was rather about bringing different types of resources to bear on a policy debate.

During welfare reform, diverse coalitions varied in their level of formality. Informal collaboration was far more pervasive than formal cooperation. At both national and state levels, organizations frequently worked together to share information and coordinate lobbying strategies. Most of the time, these informal partnerships led to joint sponsorship of media ads or demonstrations, or coordination of strategies behind the scenes. Less often, these partnerships resulted in the formation of formal, diverse coalitions. In addition, organizations sometimes attempted to build formal, diverse coalitions, but did not succeed.

While diverse collaboration was not the only strategy used to gain influence, the fact that groups on all sides of the policy debate engaged (or, at least, tried to engage) in diverse coalition building provides support for the hypothesis that such strategies are an important and underexplored strategy of political influence. Future research on lobbying, coalition building, and legislative influence ought to more explicitly take into account organizational strategies for diversifying – rather than simply augmenting – lobbying resources through partnerships with other groups.

In addition, the fact that a great deal of diverse collaboration was informal in nature suggests that the heterogeneity of support or opposition to a policy – rather than

simply the costliness of the lobbying effort – may be an important factor underlying political influence. Informal collaboration surely costs less than formal coalition building. When organizations work together informally, the diversity of their voices may help them gain influence even if collaboration is not very costly. As mentioned in the third chapter, this insight builds on a body of research that views heterogeneous signals (rather than the costs of lobbying) as a mechanism of influence in legislative settings. Future iterations of my theory will more explicitly take into account these two distinct mechanisms of influence (costly lobbying versus heterogeneous signaling).

Conditions for Diverse Coalition Building

With respect to the second question, when coalitions did form during welfare reform, a necessary condition for diverse coalition building was the presence of an advocacy group with a history of central involvement in a policy domain. All advocates that built coalitions at national and state levels were key players in the social welfare policy domain, and had been for many years. These advocates may have had a greater number of contacts at other organizations, which would likely aid in collaborative processes. They also may have been respected by potential partners, which would also help them collaborate.

The empirical tests illustrate that other features of the political context were not necessary conditions for diverse coalition formation. Among these were the level of political conflict and the partisan control of the legislature. At the national level – where strong advocates existed and Republicans controlled the legislature – diverse coalitions formed on child exclusion issues, which were some of the most contentious issues within

welfare reform. However, formal, diverse coalitions did not emerge on program structure (i.e. entitlement) issues, also an area of high conflict. At the state level, there is evidence of diverse coalition formation in some states that witnessed high conflict and were under Republican control, but not others. Thus each of these conditions, independent of the other, seems to provide a sufficient condition for diverse coalition formation in states in which there existed a group that was a central player in the advocacy group community. But none of the contextual factors appeared necessary.

Together with the findings discussed in the previous section, this suggests that a greater distinction be drawn between trying to build a diverse coalition (whether informal or formal) and actually succeeding. The primacy of organizational factors (specifically, an organization's history of involvement in a policy community) over contextual factors (such as partisan control of government and level of conflict) may have to do with the fact that only organizations who had been central players in a policy community actually succeeded in building coalitions. Or, alternatively, it may be the case that contextual factors are not systematically related to whether an interest group tries to partner and/or succeeds in partnering with diverse organizations. In either case, the current project is unable to sort out these two hypotheses because it assumes that when organizations try to build coalitions, they succeed. This suggests that the second question is better posed as a series of questions: Under what conditions do advocates for the poor *attempt to build* diverse coalitions? Under what conditions do they succeed?

Diverse Coalitions and Legislative Influence

With respect to the third question, there is limited evidence of interest group influence – in the sense of an organization persuading legislators to change their policy preferences – through diverse coalition building. The fifth chapter finds that at the national level, participants attributed some policy successes to the work of anti-poverty advocates (Haskins 2006; Weaver 2000; Winston 2002). Some of these policy successes were on child exclusion issues, the only issues on which formal coalitions formed. However, for these instances of success, it is difficult to isolate the influence of diverse coalitions because advocates for the poor engaged in such a wide array of lobbying strategies. For example, on child exclusion issues, many respect social scientists – from both the left and the right – argued against policies like the family cap in hearings testimony (Haskins 2006). It is difficult to say whether it was the expertise of a large number of scholars, or the efforts of a diverse coalition, that ultimately led to the removal of mandated child exclusion policies in the PRWORA. At the state level, there is little support for the idea that advocacy groups, in building diverse coalition, influenced policy outcomes.

While not inconsistent with a large body of literature that finds little to no influence of interest group lobbying on policy adoption (see Baumgartner and Leech 1998, Baumgartner and colleagues 2009, and Smith 1995 for reviews), the current analysis does not allow me to wholly reject the hypothesis that diverse coalition building (or the potential for diverse coalition building) influences policy adoption, particularly at the state level. This is because the variables used to measure state policy adoption, interest group strength, and diverse policy support may be inadequate proxies for the

underlying concepts. Future research is necessary to provide a more rigorous test of the theoretical model.

Next Steps and Future Research

My next steps in this project are as follows. As discussed above, several modifications to the theoretical model are necessary. First, the next iteration of the theory will draw a greater distinction between costly lobbying as a mechanism of influence and heterogeneous signaling as a mechanism of influence. While both mechanisms may be at play when diverse groups collaborate, it is necessary to separate these ideas at a theoretical level in order to develop better empirical tests of the theory. For example, a test of the costly lobbying hypothesis would focus on actual instances of formal diverse coalition formation, while a test of the heterogeneous signaling hypothesis would focus on the diversity of support or opposition to a policy, rather than actual coalition formation. Second, the next version of the theory will separate attempts to build diverse coalitions from actual instances of diverse coalition formation in order to derive better predictions regarding the conditions of diverse coalition formation and influence.

Revisions to the state-level empirical tests will focus on obtaining better measures for state policy adoption, the presence of organizational advocates for the poor, and the diversity of support or opposition to welfare policies. As discussed in the previous chapter, I will utilize continuous as well as dichotomous measures of state policy adoption to determine whether continuous measures are better able to capture relationships between interest groups and policy choices. I also intend to use variables that measure legislative votes, in addition to final policy decisions.

I plan to revise the state-level interest group measures in the following ways. First, using the 15-state analysis, I will compare the lists of ‘welfare’ organizations from Gray and Lowery’s data to the groups mentioned in newspaper reports and existing case studies to better gauge the extent to which the Gray and Lowery data capture interest group involvement in welfare policy debates. Second, I will gather additional data to determine whether any of the diverse partners were actually active during welfare reform (by taking a position, lobbying independently, or working collaboratively with anti-poverty advocates). This will allow me to determine (a) whether diverse collaboration across the hypothesized partners actually existed, and (b) whether diverse support or opposition behind particular policies actually existed.

At the national level, I plan to draw out case comparisons of advocacy group activity across the issues within welfare reform (focusing on child exclusion policies, entitlement issues, and work policies), and explore in greater detail collaborative activity among intergovernmental and conservative organizations. With respect to the case comparisons, the current analysis focused almost exclusively on issues in which diverse collaboration occurred. However, paying greater attention to the issues on which diverse partnerships did not form may provide greater insight into the factors that shaped coalitional activity as well as the influence of such coalitions.

Additionally, as discussed in Chapter 5, I was surprised by the level of collaborative activity among intergovernmental and conservative groups – in part because existing research on interest group advocacy during welfare reform focuses almost exclusively on the activities of *liberal* advocacy groups. However, it is clear that both organizational actors from all sides of the policy debate engaged in diverse collaboration.

Furthermore, the diverse partnerships that formed within the National Governors' Association, for example, provide support for a central aspect of my theory: that interest groups, in diversifying the resources they can offer to legislators, can gain greater influence over the legislative process.

Conclusion

To return to the question that motivated this project: How do advocates for the poor achieve influence in legislative settings? This analysis reveals that advocates employ many different types of strategies. Sometimes, advocates moderate their positions so as to gain access to legislators normally opposed to their viewpoints. Other times, they develop expertise in particular substantive areas and cultivate reputations for credibility. Still other times, they turn to coalition building in order to diversify the resources they can bring to bear in the policy battle. Whether an advocate chooses the last strategy depends somewhat on the context. Advocates need partners with whom they can ally. But the choice of strategy also depends somewhat on the organization itself: groups with a history of involvement in a policy network are much more likely to form diverse coalitions.

This project shows that diverse collaboration, whether formal or informal, is an important strategy for many types of interest organizations. I began this project with the assumption that because organizational advocates for the poor had few resources with which to influence legislators, they would be more likely to engage in diverse coalition building. However, the case study of welfare reform at the national level revealed that organizational actors with ample political resources also engaged in diverse

collaboration. This suggests that formal and informal diverse collaboration is an important area for future study within the interest group literature.

While revisions to the theory and empirical tests are necessary, future research is also warranted because existing state-level research on interest group influence on welfare policy adoption across states fails to consider *any* relationship between organizational advocates for the poor and state policy adoption (see Soss et al. 2001, Fellowes and Rowe 2004), despite the fact that qualitative work in this area attests to the importance of such organizational actors (Winston 2002). While this dissertation represents only a first step in assessing the relationship between advocacy group influence and state social policy adoption, research that more explicitly considers the role of organizational advocates for the poor can make an important contribution to this literature. Thinking through better ways to measure the presence and strength of organizational advocates for the poor, in addition to the diversity of support/opposition to various policies within welfare reform, represents an important next step in this research.

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