

Neocontradictions: The Politics and Ideology
of American Welfare State Decline

by

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Abstract

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This study historically investigates the circumstances – economic, political, and ideological – out of which the American political culture would shift to the right and become hostile to welfare. It is in part a genealogy of contemporary welfare reform discourse, which is comprised by the synthesis of varied and contradictory components of conservative philosophy about family, work, responsibility, and the role of government. This study also contextualizes that discourse within the development of a conservative politico-ideological apparatus. Today’s conservative movement in the United States is the fusion of other sub-strands of conservatism and has successfully defined the parameters of acceptable discourse around the issue of welfare. It has developed a large pool of resources, become adept in the arena of activist and electoral politics, built a vast infrastructure for the production and deployment of ideas, and established a resilient presence in the everyday lives of Americans. Therefore a study of the erosion of the American welfare state must trace the development of these ideas and the means by which they became policy orthodoxy.

Argued here is that the conservative movement’s success in affecting welfare reform can be attributed to two factors. Firstly, it can be attributed to the consolidation

and organization of libertarian and traditionalist conservatism and to the mastery of ideological production by a conservative politico-ideological apparatus or policy planning network. Secondly, it can be attributed to the emergence of varied conservative ideas on work, family, equality, and personal responsibility as a new policy consensus which was itself a consequence of important transformations in social and economic conditions. The post-war conservative movement has been dynamic and has managed its own ideological tensions by continually refining its argument and perfecting its methods of framing issues. It has contributed to altering the political culture in relation to the welfare state and related issues. The subjection of welfare state programs to ongoing critique has enabled the social safety net to become vulnerable to reforms which have gradually altered them to be more consistent with the shifting requirements of the economic system and elite preferences.

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I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Ernest and Mary Barany. Unfortunately, they were unable to see my completion of the dissertation and ultimately of the doctoral program, but I will always carry their love and my memories of them with me through my personal and professional life. Their recollections of wars, depression, work, and family and their stories of their parents' immigration from Italy and Hungary in part oriented me toward being a student of society and inclined toward the field of sociology. They are deeply missed.

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PART I

-Chapter 1: Introduction-

Neocontradictions

“Neocontradictions” is a term meant to provocatively highlight the ideological contradictions and political struggles which became apparent in the development of the conservative movement in the United States, in many ways embodied by the politics and scholarly work of the neoconservatives. These contradictions, along with some commonalities, were evident in the disparate conservative literature and commentary on the topics of equality, distributive justice, work, and economic and political liberty. The term is also meant to signify that this study is a development upon the observations of systems theorists who have observed that the welfare state is a contradictory and dynamic part of late capitalist society, especially the in the work of James O’Connor, Jürgen Habermas, Ian Gough, and Claus Offe. The term is an explicit reference to Offe’s collection of essays titled, *Contradictions of the Welfare State*. As the conservative attack on welfare, which spanned decades, brought about the end of welfare entitlement in the US, different circumstances have exposed new contradictions of the American welfare state.

Framing the Debate: From Under-serving to “Undeserving”

“If you can work, you’ve got to go to work,” said Bill Clinton in October 1991 when he accepted his party’s nomination for president (Clinton 1992:645). Also part of

this “new covenant,” he declared, was “ending welfare as we know it” (Clinton 1992:645). In 1996, President Clinton authorized the first major regressive legislative change to welfare in the United States since the enactment of the New Deal, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA). During the presidential administrations of Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush, it would have been hard to imagine that such a regressive shift in domestic anti-poverty policy would soon occur during the presidency of a so called moderate Democrat. Sixteen years prior, in the fall of 1975, Irving Kristol signaled a warning to the corporate elite in an influential essay against “elitist” liberal reforms. He cautioned that to ward off the total appropriation “of their decision-making powers” by the state, “they must create a constituency...which will candidly intervene in the ‘political game’ of interest group politics” (Kristol 1975:228). This call to arms would be heeded. What follows is an investigation into the circumstances – economic, political, and ideological – out of which the American political culture would shift to the right and become hostile to welfare.¹ In order to develop an understanding of how welfare programs came to be seen as the problem rather than as a solution in addressing pervasive poverty and inequality in the United States it is imperative to trace the genealogy of how a set of ideas (the synthesis of which would come constitute the contemporary conservative movement) about family, work, responsibility, and the role of government came to be prominent. Today’s conservative movement in the United States is the fusion of other sub-strands of

¹ It should be noted here that the term “welfare” will be used in this study to refer mainly to cash transfers and other “entitlement” programs for the poor (e.g. AFDC). While it is not intended to refer to all programs which might be considered welfare state programs, it may be possible that some of the analysis which follows can apply to numerous other such programs and even the role of government generally.

conservatism and has successfully defined the parameters of acceptable discourse around the issue of welfare. It has developed a large pool of resources, become adept in the arena of activist and electoral politics, built a vast infrastructure for the production and deployment of ideas, and established a resilient presence in the everyday lives of Americans (Lakoff 2002; Post 1998). Therefore a study of the erosion of the American welfare state must trace the development of these ideas and the means by which they became situated as axiomatic.

For this reason, this dissertation investigates the rise of the intellectual conservative movement in the United States and its effective ideological campaign to win the hearts and minds of much of the country and to penetrate the arena of politics. Of particular interest then will be the erosion of the American welfare state and the end of it “as we know it” in the context of the rise of this movement. I ask the following research question: How did a relatively scattered, disorganized, and divided conservative movement come together and successfully influence (I argue significantly) the parameters of acceptable dialogue around the American welfare state? This includes for example the change in focus from structural economic concerns to those of behavioral pathology (a contribution of the early neoconservatives in their critique of welfare) and the reframing of welfare economically in terms consistent with the prerogatives of American business. Integral to understanding this process is the following set of sub-questions. What were the predominant strands of conservative thought, the synthesis of which came to constitute these parameters (i.e. conservative ideology on welfare)? How were these ideas put into political practice around the issue of welfare? What were the

circumstances within which these ideas were able to take hold, giving rise to the Welfare Reform Act of 1996? I argue that the success of this movement in rolling back welfare state programs can be attributed to two factors. Firstly, through the consolidation and organization of different components of conservative thought (mainly classical liberalism² and traditionalism) and the mastery of ideological production to accomplish its objectives. The fusion of libertarian and traditionalist/ religious conservatism has been an integral feature of the contemporary conservative movement's success in not just constructing an aura of apparent consensus on the surface of its deep seated, historically rooted contradictions but also its prolific ability to shape discourse and through structuring ideology (Crawford 1980; Gottfried 1987; Lind 1996; Williams 1997). Secondly, these ideas took hold because of important transformations in social and economic conditions. Amidst changing economic and social factors, the post-war conservative movement has been dynamic and has managed its own ideological tensions by continually refining its argument and perfecting its methods of framing issues (Lakoff 2002; Smith 1991).

The neoconservatives have been at the heart of the critique of welfare from the mid-1960s and were essential in reframing anti-welfare discourse. They helped transform the vernacular of policy analysis critical of welfare state programs from a

² Given the usage of the term "libertarian" to describe this position in the US, the study will conform to this terminological convention. The most recent variant of libertarian thought is commonly referred to as neoliberalism. It's renaissance gained prominence around the time that Margaret Thatcher became Prime Minister of England (1979-1990) and also with the presidency of Ronald Reagan (1981-1988) in the United States. Thatcher worked closely with Keith Joseph to start the Centre for Policy Studies, which was a think tank heavily influenced by the ideas of economists Milton Friedman, Friedrich von Hayek, and Ludwig von Mises, all of whom were major influences on neoliberalism. It has operated under the rubric of "Thatcherism" and "supply-side" economics.

largely economic language rooted in a *laissez-faire* individualist political philosophy to a clinical and managerial critique which emphasized individual behavior deficiencies and “family disorganization.” The neoconservative label had been first used to describe a particular set of ex-Trotskyites and ex-liberals, especially the writing and activism of Sydney Hook, Irving Kristol, Daniel Bell, Nathan Glazer, and Daniel Patrick Moynihan among others.³ The early or proto-neoconservatives were ex-radicals and liberals who had expressed “a mood and a fashion rather than a deeply felt political stance” (Coser [1973] 1974:4). As Coser ([1973] 1974) described them, “They are liberals who got cold feet in the late 1960s. ... They have now made it, and having made it they are concerned with the maintenance of an order that has been good to them.” However, the term has come to be used as a general expression for a reactionary defense of the social order and to describe a political position which advocates a foreign policy based on imperialism, a negative position toward the welfare state, and a desire for the restoration of traditional or “family values” (Bronner 2004). This definition of neoconservatism is consistent with that of this study, but will be further elaborated as a complex and variable set of ideas (depending on who is expressing them and for what) – an amalgamation of other conservative ideas which became salient at a particular historical juncture. The erosion of the American welfare state was just one outcome of this convergence.

Considering the principal, contradictory elements of conservatism in general requires a careful analysis of the historically determined social relations in which they

³ For a comprehensive discussion of this group and the early popular use of the term, see Steinfels 1979 in the bibliography.

were developed as reactions. Historically, *laissez-faire* libertarianism was a reaction to traditional conservatism, their conflict embodied in the tension between the philosophy of the Enlightenment (with its privileging of individual rights and freedoms against arbitrary power) and what Max Weber called traditional authority (Clark 1991; Weber [1919] 1958; [1899] 1978). Though these two factions of conservative thought created a lasting and successful political coalition, these two positions are essentially incompatible. Friedrich von Hayek (1969), whose *The Road to Serfdom* is cited by leading conservative scholars as a chief inspiration and is credited by many as the text which helped initiate the reincarnation of libertarian ideas in the United States, expressed his wariness of coalescing with traditionalist conservatives and wrote of the lack of harmony between libertarianism and traditionalism. In particular, he was leery of traditionalist conservatism's paternalism and authoritarian tendencies, but he understood that a coalescence with this strand of conservative thought would be strategically advantageous (von Hayek 1969). To clarify, traditionalist conservatism during the post war years in the US was often anti-democratic and was characterized by a fear of the body politic. In brief, for the traditionalists, morality should be the guiding principle of government, and government had an important role to play in regulating personal moral conduct. The key political questions in this camp are religious and moral (Brennan 1995, 2003, Nash 1998). Libertarianism also had some strains of disparagement toward the masses (e.g. the later writings of Albert Jay Nock, and Ludwig von Mises), but its rhetoric fiercely emphasized individual liberty and anti-statism. For this wing of conservatism, the key political questions are economic. As philosophical individualists, they champion *laissez-*

faire economics, private liberty, limited government and anti-collectivism as the cornerstones of a free society. These tenets amount to what Karl Polanyi would come to describe as the stark utopia of the self-adjusted market (Polanyi 2001).

With a conservative movement whose various factions did not quite see eye-to-eye on fundamental issues, it would be reasonable to presume the same about its view toward social welfare programs. In fact, there were divisions within the dominant strands of conservative thought, and even within the business community through the late 1960s, regarding the responsibility of the state to provide a safety net for its most needy and the extent to which it should continue to placate organized labor. Of course no movement consists of a complete consensus on any one issue, but opposition to “collectivism” in the form of global communism and the welfare state would come to be an important issue in the US on which the individual factions of conservatism would reach common ground. It would also be reasonable to consider the welfare state (like all social phenomena) as a complex whole composed of multiple contradictory parts (Abramovitz 1996; Gough 1979; Marcuse 1964; Offe 1987). The contradictory role of the welfare state has been cited often. From the perspective of capital, while the welfare state provides guaranteed incomes and other provisions for the least fortunate outside the context of the labor market and seemingly obstructs labor discipline, it also helps mitigate the malignant effects of capitalism and thus is important for its legitimation and thus continuation. Put another way, and from the perspective of the individual, while welfare state programs provide social services such as health care, social security, social wages, education and

training, and housing, they also represent the regulation of private activities by the state (Abramovitz 1996; Gough 1979; Marcuse 1964; Offe 1987).

A project which is looking at a dynamic political and ideological movement disseminating ideas about intricate and conflicting economic, social, and political processes must address the work and contributions of earlier and influential proponents. Structural economic conditions are paramount, but the relentless ideological production by the conservative intellectual movement and its embattled, last stand disposition (illustrated in Kristol's quote) was instrumental in its ascendance. While the politics and ideology of free-market and traditionalist conservatism are contradictory, they are also consistent in some ways. Conservative historian George H. Nash (1995) observes that among many of the figures in each faction, there is an emphasis on the power of ideas in driving human history and on absolutism and universality. He argues that a possible explanation for this emphasis is the lack of popularity of conservative ideas in American society during the time leading up to the New Deal and through World War II. Therefore a belief in the power of ideas was necessary "in the face of an often hostile environment" (Nash 1998:28).

We see universalist and absolutist themes expressed in the otherwise divergent thinkers, Richard M. Weaver and Hayek's mentor and teacher, Ludwig von Mises. For example, both of them substantively privileged private property as a metaphysical right. While the metaphysical order proposed by these thinkers varied, they argued for a fixed and unconditional system of principles. Weaver's book, *Ideas Have Consequences*, first published in 1948, "in the opinion of many [became] 'the *fons et origo*' of the

contemporary conservative movement” (Nash 1998:33). Representing an early, postwar traditionalist view and emphasizing a fierce absolutism regarding moral principles, he regarded nominalism and relativism as liberal ideas which were responsible for nothing short of the decline of the West (Weaver [1948] 1984). Private property was “the last metaphysical right remaining to us,” language was to be saved and purified from nominalistic semantics, and redistribution was akin to the tyranny of “the proposal that every man should be king” (Weaver [1948] 1984:148, 43). The libertarians were also quite doctrinaire. Their unbending conceptualization of economic laws and awe of market processes comprised nothing less than a metaphysical framework. Hayek’s framework was slightly less severe than that of his Austrian School predecessors, Carl Menger and Ludwig von Mises, but he shared their belief in universal market laws. Mises (1984:19), in a critique of historicism, illustrates his unconditional and in fact trans-historical view of economic laws as universal and immutable.

The Austrian economists unconditionally rejected the logical relativism implied in the teachings of the Prussian Historical School. As against the declarations of Schmoller and his followers, they maintained that there is a body of economic theorems that are valid for all human action irrespective of time and place, the national and racial characteristics of the actors, and their religious, philosophical, and ethical ideologies.

Among these economic theorems is the assumption that meddling with the market, e.g. through welfare state programs, represents the pathway to socialism. In addition, he

argued that incentives to work and save are removed when people are given a social wage. The giving of benefits to the most needy, for von Mises, simply reproduced further pauperism and dependence (Mises 1962a, 1981).

The libertarian renaissance did not enjoy immediate popularity during the postwar period, neither was it the outcome of the expression of a set of monolithic ideas. There was much disagreement among its leading intellectuals, demonstrated by the, at times, dramatically contrastive ideas of Friedrich von Hayek, Henry Hazlitt, and Murray Rothbard. However, its synthesis with components of traditionalist conservatism and later the ideas of a group of anti-communist ex-radicals who were brought into the fold (conservative luminaries like Frank Meyer and James Burnham, and later Daniel Bell and Irving Kristol) would later help come to shape thinking about work, family, and public versus private obligation. These narratives would later comprise part of the ruling ideology of how poverty is considered generally and is addressed on a policy level. It is this historico-ideological conjuncture by which the rightward shift in America's political culture would be facilitated and constituted. However, prior to this shift was a period when the ideas of limited government and unregulated markets would fall on many deaf ears. But in the late 1940s and early 1950s, periodicals like *Human Events*, the *American Mercury*, and especially *The Freeman* provided for libertarians "a regular forum for hitherto dispersed writers" (Nash 1998:22). *The Freeman's* reappearance in October of 1952 (which was originally founded by Albert Jay Nock in the 1920s and had undergone a series of incarnations up to that point) suggested that the shortage of libertarian ideas by mid century was coming to an end (Nash 1998).

The cold war and the current of anti- and ex-communists into the conservative fold and the influence of anti-communism was effective in resolving some of the tensions inherent in the conservative movement. These included the contradiction between traditional hierarchy and individual liberty, between the isolationism of the old libertarian right and the call for intervention internationally to combat the perceived threat of global communism, and between rhetoric of limited government and the large, coercive military industrial complex necessary to protect the US from the Soviet Empire (Nash 1998). Since the Soviet Union represented a godless society dominated by central planning, it made for a convenient boogeyman for all facets of the conservative cause. Varying levels of optimism caused some dissent among conservative intellectuals in terms of how to deal with this perceived threat, but there was little disagreement that the threat was real. A perceived immanent threat is often useful at generating consensus. Buckley's ambivalence regarding the clashing objectives of the conservative movement is informative in this respect. Nash (1998:112) observed that in the first half of a 1952 essay, Buckley made references critical of the "Leviathan State," and in the latter half of the same essay, he concedes that acquiescence to big government would be required to defeat the "menace to our freedom" that the Soviet Union represented.

This rough consensus was further solidified through the founding of *National Review (NR)* magazine largely through the efforts of Buckley and William Rusher. It would be difficult to overstate Buckley's influence among conservatives from this period onward. Brad Miner's (1996:38) *Concise Conservative Encyclopedia* calls him "the most admired and influential conservative of the last fifty years." Buckley, and other

conservatives, saw the movement as disorganized and in need of direction and unity. Despite signs that the left was moving toward the center and losing focus (e.g. the end of the New Deal era, successful presidential campaign of Eisenhower, and growing cold war anti-communism among “liberals”) Buckley’s fusionist conservatism was quarrelsome and aggressive. He saw a need to create a journal to counter the numerous periodicals on the left at that time. He did not want this new publication to simply appeal to the base with clichés but rather to also resonate with scholars and intellectuals (Nash 1998). *NR* was launched in November of 1955, and this was a defining moment for the conservative movement as we know it. This move by Buckley was not simply for the purpose of creating a platform from which the left could be attacked but to unite a fractious American conservatism (Brennan 1995, Nash 1998). Traditionalists, libertarians, and anti-communists were all represented on the masthead and contributed regularly to its pages. In his 1984 book, *The Rise of the Right*, William Rusher (Buckley’s long-time associate and publisher of *NR* from 1957-1988) praised Buckley as “history’s answer” to the question of who could unite the right, the man “who...could bring the prickly components of the right together and induce it to speak with a single voice” (Goodman 1984: ¶8).

As the 1950s came to an end, fear-based narratives and behavioral explanations for poverty were acquiring analytic credibility from the work of the proto-neoconservative critics of social programs in the 1960s and were gaining political momentum through the corresponding softening of the ideological and political left that their ascendance reflected. Politically, the largely grassroots conservative base which

supported the Barry Goldwater movement, along with the great popularity of his book, *The Conscience of a Conservative*, helped to further discredit social welfare programs. This predominantly white base was discomforted and resentful from gains made through the direct action politics of the civil rights and black freedom struggles. The political potential of this group, wary of the economic, social, and political, changes that were taking place, was well expressed by Nixon's reference to them as a "silent majority" during a time of progressive political movements and social upheaval. The efforts of this conservative cultural formation during a time more notorious for the activities of the countercultural left would prove to be important for future conservative political achievements and victories.

Goldwater published *Conscience of a Conservative* in 1960, and was able to reinvigorate the conservative movement politically. By the 1960 GOP convention, he became the New Right's political leader. According to Brennan (1995:140):

"Through the efforts of ... Goldwater and William F. Buckley, Jr., conservatism shed some of its stodgy, old-fashioned character and became more sophisticated, attractive, and dynamic. Right-wingers of the 1960s came across as educated, resolute individuals, not as lunatics."

The book advocated a fiercely aggressive foreign policy strategy drumming up fear of the global communist menace represented by the Soviet Union. The power of unions was portrayed by Goldwater as an infringement on the rights of individual workers to make decisions for themselves. He viewed the labor movement as a form of socialism and as a

short step away from communism, and he felt that employers should not be encumbered with the demands of organized workers (Goldwater 1960; Brennan 2003). Goldwater (1960) mainly presented welfare programs in a manner consistent with the libertarian critiques being published in *Human Events* and *National Review*. However, the success and broad distribution of his book opened-up to the public conservative and free-market ideas about social spending and taxes. The conservative political movement was now being represented by an activist politician who appealed to a conservative grassroots base, taking the Old Right's message and incorporating a moral facet and compelling justification for increased militarism (Brennan 1995, 2003). Goldwater (1960:10) explicitly rejected that conservatism focused only on economic theory and argued that it "puts material things in their proper place." Goldwater helped invigorate a conservative base and was the Republican candidate for president in 1964, but he lost by a landslide to Lyndon Johnson. However, the grassroots support which had been activated by the Goldwater movement would continue its activities to the benefit of the American conservative movement and would help pave the way for the election of Ronald Reagan, the movement's next political leader, to the office of president (Brennan 1995; Dallek 2004).

While Reagan converted to conservatism in the 1940s, he was not alone in this transformation. The disenchantment with New Deal programs and disdain of Soviet communism abroad and political radicalism at home also seemed to influence intellectuals in some unexpected circles years later. Quoting *Newsweek*, Steinfels (1979:4) identifies as "'neoconservative' academics, many...refugees from the liberal

left, including Daniel Bell, Nathan Glazer, Irving Kristol, ...and Daniel P. Moynihan of New York.” All were regular contributors to *Commentary*, in whose pages a full-scale attack was levied against the left by the late 1960s. In Oscar Lewis’ *Five Families: Mexican Case Studies in the Culture of Poverty*, published in 1959, he developed the term “culture of poverty” to describe a means by which poor folks adapt to and cope with adverse material conditions (Lewis 1969). The culture of poverty was constructed to illustrate not just economic hardship but also “a way of life” for those living in adverse material conditions (Katz 1993; Lewis 1969:188). As “both an adaptation and reaction of the poor to their marginal position in a class stratified highly individuated, capitalistic society,” Lewis has defended his concept and never intended for it to place the responsibility of poverty “on the character of the poor,” nor for it to reinvigorate the old distinction between “worthy” and “unworthy” poor (Lewis 1969:199). However, the concept was appropriated by others who had more conservative motivations (Katz 1993:12-13). “The Negro Family,” better known simply as the “Moynihan Report,” was published in 1965, five years after *Conscience of a Conservative*, at which time Moynihan was a young assistant secretary of labor to President Lyndon Johnson. The report reiterated the conservative warnings of the dangers of welfare provisions and extracted the elements of Lewis’ framework which emphasized behavioral pathology (Katz 1993). In the report Moynihan didn’t use the term culture of poverty, but his term “tangle of pathology” evoked the same meaning (Moynihan 1967). He suggests that welfare dependency creates further family instability which will lead to further welfare dependency. The report contained numerous data which portrayed high rates of divorce,

“illegitimacy,” and female headed families as deficiencies of the black family (Moynihan 1967; Williams 1997). While he dedicates some token passages to structural economic conditions (e.g. disproportionately low wages and high unemployment among African Americans due to discrimination) he was specifically focused on a particular statistic which showed that Aid to [Families with] Dependent Children (AFDC [now TANF]) continued to increase after 1960, despite the fact that unemployment was decreasing” (Moynihan 1967; Steinberg 1994; The Moynihan Report).

Critics of the Moynihan report illustrated how his, and others’, use of the “culture of poverty” concept had important implications on reforms to poor relief by moving the focus within policy analysis from racial discrimination and economic exclusion to the deficiencies of the black poor themselves (Katz 1993; Steinberg 1994). Reinforcing a blame-the-victim model to explain poverty and inequality while discounting race and racism helped bolster attitudes which viewed communities, which had historically faced injustice, as rife with cultural and behavioral deficiencies. The scope and influence of Kristol, Moynihan, Glazer, *et al.* would come to be quite vast. By the late 1960s and early 1970s, this group of intellectuals had focused much attention, energy, and print to a mildly conservative but unrelenting interrogation of progressive and radical political causes including the women’s movement, the ecology movement, the movement for civil liberties, the radical student movements, communism, and the welfare system (Steinfels 1979). The editor of *Commentary* at this time, Norman Podhoretz was described by the *Wall Street Journal* as “a most improbable conservative” because of his leftist background (Steinfels 1979:48). This was characteristic of several of these scholars. The

conversion of these ex-lefties gained the notice of Buckley and *NR*. In March 1971, an *NR* headline urged these new conservatives to “Come on In, the Water’s Fine” (*National Review* 1971:249).

The shift to the right of the political and cultural landscape in the United States, reflected by the change in how poverty and personal and public responsibility were dominantly conceptualized, imagined, and discussed, gained momentum the late 1960s. As the economic crises of the 1970s were developing, the liberal commitment to progressive tax policy and government spending on social programs was losing its credibility and a conservative framework for considering and addressing antipoverty policy had begun to implant itself into the public consciousness. The government’s role in providing for those in need, especially through what is commonly referred to as welfare, had become increasingly less popular and would become significantly diminished because of a change in perceptions, and, as had been observed by Moynihan (1968a) by the end of 1968, it was not because of the high cost or ineffectiveness of such programs in addressing income disparities and raising household incomes. Poverty rates in the United States decreased dramatically with the implementation of more generous welfare provisions under the War on Poverty in the 1960s, where at the time of its implementation, the causes of poverty were still largely seen as environmental (Burtless and Smeeding 2002; Danziger and Haveman 2001; Primus 1996; Scholz and Levine 2001). As programs have slowly been cut back, poverty rates have gradually increased.

The United States, unlike most advanced capitalist countries, has not maintained a strong welfare state. Of such nations, only Japan spends less of a percentage of its Gross

Domestic Product (GDP) on cash and non-cash social expenditures (Smeeding, Rainwater, and Burtless 2002). A study focusing on the nineteen richest nations showed that the United States had the highest poverty rates measured at 40 percent of the median adjusted disposable person income (ADPI) for individuals (Smeeding, Rainwater, and Burtless 2002). Rather than taking American exceptionalism for granted, a fundamental premise of this study is that dominant narratives about welfare have been developed in a particular context; it is not simply a product of the frontier ethic, that Americans appreciate hard work, or that everyone knows welfare produces idleness and malaise. These attitudes were reinforced by the work of intellectuals who had, in varying degrees of intensity, been critiquing welfare programs and by organizations dedicated to advancing conservative causes. In the chapters which follow, the study attempts to sketch the manner in which anti-welfare themes have been produced, expanded, refined, and disseminated. Weaving narratives about the virtues of unregulated markets and “small government” with existing ideological and cultural patterns like nationalism, presumed white superiority, the moral work ethic, and patriarchy makes them sound like good traditional American common sense. Such ideological and cultural patterns are more easily exploited in socioeconomic conditions where people feel less secure. The fairly abrupt increase in African American populations in Northeastern and Midwestern industrial cities along with detrimental socioeconomic changes which were taking place in the US made working and middle class Americans much more susceptible to such ideology. As inflation increased, earnings began to decline, unemployment started increasing – overall, as economic conditions were reducing feelings of material security

and well-being, the fear of falling to the lower class or worse yet becoming destitute likely made people “more protective and conservative” (Edsall 1984; Aronowitz, Esposito, Di Fazio, and Yard 1998:58). Such feelings associated less to social and political factors which were the result of elite political influence, e.g. increased involvement in the Vietnam War, the increase in income inequality due to the liberalization and expansion of world markets and decentralization of industrial and banking capital, the export of industrial jobs and the increase in lower paying service sector positions, the push towards privatization, the collapse of Bretton Woods system, or the oil crisis of 1973, they were more likely associated with welfare cheats and ineffective government programs (Harvey 1994; Panitch 1994; Quiggin 1995; Harvey 2005). These changes which have enhanced elite position have been discussed by social scientists at length, but the position here is that these changes shifted the ground beneath, making conservative narratives more compelling through exploiting white fear, working class insecurity, and the ideologies of the moral work ethic, and male superiority while portraying welfare programs as too generous, unmanageable, invalid, and wrought with fraud. Those who utilize public assistance have been represented as being sexually irresponsible, predominately black or Latino, work averse, on the rolls for extended periods of time, largely abusers of the system, and welfare “dependent.” These portrayals, though not reflected in actuality, have come to be regarded uncritically as true.

While the influence of conservative ideas on welfare (and in general) was expanding in a measured way, the movement did not grow to prominence until the 1970s. Reagan’s political development as a public figure and the influence of the burgeoning

network of conservative think tanks and their growing impact on US politics, especially through the presidency of Reagan, which Williams (1997) calls the “think tank presidency,” helped elevate neoconservative ideas on welfare state programs to that of a dominant ideology. In 1962, Reagan did not subscribe to the most extreme of the anti-communist conspiracy theories being promulgated by some right-wing activists, but he did see social liberals as being weak on communism and responsible for ushering in a welfare bureaucracy which was a sure path to a socialist nightmare (Dallek 2004). His rise and ultimate presidential victory in 1980 would help solidify the arrival of American conservatism as a political force and a reigning ideology around multiple policy areas, not the least of which was the welfare state. Irving Kristol, the so called godfather of neoconservatism continued to address “corporate leaders and foundation heads on the necessity of taking steps to defend capitalism against the left by explicitly funding right-wing theorizing and activism” (Green 2004: ¶4). Among several policy issues important for the business community would be the rollback of welfare state programs as an effort to relieve the social and political restraints that had been imposed on capital.

The early 1970s saw the beginning of the mobilization of the corporate elite through efforts to expand lobbying capabilities, e.g. the fortification of the US Chamber of Commerce, the forming of the Business Roundtable (BR), and the relocation of the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) from New York to Washington, DC, “to increase its presence in the nation’s capital” (Akard 1992; Jacobs 1998; NAM 2007:¶3). The clout of these organizations would prove to be great, as they played pivotal roles in influencing significant legislative outcomes related to labor and taxation in the late 1970s

and early 1980s (Akard 1992; Jacobs 1998). While the NAM held back on the attack on welfare through the early 1990s, the Chamber, after some controversy and a change in leadership, embraced and advocated deregulation and cuts in government programs (Post 1998). By the late 1970s the proliferation of conservative think tanks was underway (Akard 1992; Burris 1992; Edsall 1984; Peschek 1987; Smith 1991). The Heritage Foundation (HF) and the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) were remarkably significant with respect to the welfare debate. The HF was founded in 1973, and its journal, *Policy Review*, became a popular venue in which unions, welfare programs, and the minimum wage saw their share of criticism (Williams 1997). The HF would, however, reach the height of its influence in the 1980s, beginning with the publication of the one thousand-page volume, *Mandate for Leadership* (published in 1980) (Peschek 1987; Smith 1991; Post 1995).

These initiatives and publications embodied Reagan's policy approach toward AFDC. The *Mandate* was distributed to Reagan insiders as a "blueprint for grabbing the government by its frayed New Deal lapels and shaking out 48 years of liberal policies," and was presented to the Reagan transition team just after the 1980 election (Smith 1991: 195). Between 1978 and 1981, the AEI rapidly grew in influence to challenge the more moderate Brookings Institution (BI), Washington DC's then leading think tank, after having nearly \$60 million raised and a board of directors which included executives from Chase Manhattan, Standard Oil, Hewlett-Packard, and Citicorp (Peschek 1987; Post 1995; Smith 1991). On the committee which oversaw this fund raising project was Kristol himself along with Reginald Jones, then the chairman of General Electric, and

Thomas Murphy, the former chairman of General Motors (Peschek 1987; Smith 1991). During Reagan's presidency, numerous AEI associates had high-level positions within the administration with over thirty AEI fellows/ scholars and officials having served in senior administration posts (Peschek 1987; Smith 1991). The pro-capital, anti-poor agenda of the "think tank presidency" was comprehensive. The Reagan administration had successfully reversed progressive tax and spending programs. The new paradigm which was replacing the approach since the New Deal, was a commitment to slash spending for government programs and to increase the availability of capital for private speculation and investment (Edsall 1984). The underlying premise, which was omnipresent in the critiques of welfare and calls for reform coming out of the conservative lobby and think tanks, was to reinstate incentives for the poor to work in low-paying jobs and accumulate savings. Entitlements should be reserved for the "deserving" poor and not extended to those who were "undeserving (Murray [1984] 1994:16). This required removing incentives to not just take any job (welfare provisions which were too abundant) and to curb what Murray referred to as the "unintended rewards" of welfare programs (unwanted behaviors like drug addiction, crime, or unemployability) which were reinforced by the programs themselves by either "increasing the rewards or by reducing the penalties" (Murray [1984] 1994:213). However, the presumption was that the best way to reinforce the right behaviors among the affluent was to increase their revenue to promote both social and economic investment, implying that they were motivated through different means than the poor (Edsall 1984).

The Reagan administration served a consolidation function not unlike Buckley years before (Nash 1998). By the late 1980s, conservative publications and research institutions were flourishing, with 288 conservative public policy organizations being reported by the HF's first *Directory of Public Policy Organizations* (Nash 1998; Peschek 1987; Smith 1991). Empowering the transition from disseminated ideas to achieving a decisive gain in the pursuit of political and cultural influence was the intensified "collaboration between conservative intellectuals and like minded politicians" (Nash 1998:335). The analysis coming out of the network of public policy organizations helped to further shift the focus of poverty and inequality research and of the general debate on welfare to matters of personal behavior and moral choices rather than regressive modifications to structural features of the economy. The notion that welfare was not a social remedy, but rather encouraged everything from crime and poverty to family disorganization was reinforced. Welfare represented an economic obstruction resulting from the actions of misguided, liberal bureaucrats and government officials in matters best left to market forces. It was also portrayed as an undeserving handout enabling all kinds of depraved conduct. One solution to this "problem" was to decentralize programs and allow states to initiate demonstration programs with the encouragement of waivers from federal requirements in the administration of AFDC (Rector 1987; Wiseman 1993). State initiatives have often been the drive behind nationwide reforms to the federal welfare system. Reagan's alterations to welfare provisions during the early 1980s mirrored components of the California Welfare Reform Act from a decade before. State welfare-to-work programs promoted by Reagan were significant in the enactment of the

Family Support Act (FSA) of 1988 (Wiseman 1993). Among the “innovations” permitted through the waivers was allowing states to cancel the eligibility of welfare recipients who previously had qualified for welfare under state law (Wiseman 1993). Moynihan was the FSA’s sponsor, and he continued to convey a logic consistent with that of the culture of poverty perspective of his 1965 report on the black family. He asserted in 1990 during a debate on the FSA in the senate that the “problems [of poor children] do not reside in nature, nor yet are they fundamentally economic. Our problems derive from behavior” (quoted in Fineman [1991] 1997:90). Reflecting on the aftermath of the FSA (40 percent cuts in AFDC from 1967-1992) in a 1992 article, he states that “the focus is on behavior modification. This concept is central to welfare reform, whose main objective, after all, is to modify recipient behavior so as to encourage self-sufficiency” (Moynihan 1992:6).

The FSA coincided with the HF calling for “Real Welfare Reform” and their release of *Issues '88: A Platform for America* (Butler 1988; Williams 1997). The emphasis on culture and behavior, which was initiated by early neoconservative policy analysts like Glazer and Moynihan (expressed, for example, through Moynihan’s “tangle of pathology” concept) would be developed and would make a clear impression on later conservative policy makers. In March 1992, George H. W. Bush’s Secretary of Health and Human Services, Dr. Louis Sullivan, gave a talk at the HF, where he directly quoted Moynihan from his 1990 FSA debate and proceeded to blame the plight of poor children on single parent-headed families and welfare “dependency” (Sullivan 1992). President Bush would continue the waiver strategy, allowing states to bypass federal regulations in

the administration of AFDC. These themes epitomized the continued welfare policy strategy of the Bush Whitehouse. In his January 1992 State of the Union Address, he reinforced the themes of behavioral causes of poverty and welfare dependence (Bush 1992). By the end of the George H. W. Bush presidency, there were waivers either approved or pending for 17 states with varied initiatives, but in general they paid more attention to encouraging and enforcing work (Wiseman 1993). Others included the elimination of AFDC benefits for additional children for families already receiving benefits, benefit reductions, and marriage incentives, all of which would be elements of the 1996 legislation (Wiseman 1993).

It was less for academic tracts for which the right was known in the 1980s and 1990s but rather an “applied conservatism” which had helped transform American attitudes on numerous issues (Nash 1998:337). The right's view of poverty's causes and the pathology of “welfare taking” in perpetuating it had become widespread and part of the zeitgeist. Murray helped bolster this public support through an extensive anti-welfare media campaign. In a well-known editorial in the *Wall Street Journal*, he claimed that illegitimacy in the Black community was epidemic and was due in part by generous welfare benefits (Murray 1993). Along with Kristol and fellow HF pundits William Bennet and Robert Rector, he had made multiple appearances on TV and talk radio. When a republican majority won back the House in 1994 (the first time since the 1950s), talk of welfare reform was abuzz. The “election manifesto” known as the “Contract with America” and the election of Newt Gingrich as Speaker saw regressive welfare reform at the top of the conservative legislative agenda (Nash 1998:336). Jeffrey Gayner

(1995:¶14) had bragged during an HF lecture that “the ideas in the contract emerged from extensive interaction between...conservative Congressmen and the emergence of an extensive network of conservative think tanks, such as the Heritage Foundation.” The HF developed another issues handbook, Issues '94, “that provided specific legislative and policy recommendations for conservative candidates for Congress; many of these recommendations worked their way into detailed provisions of the ‘Contract With America’” (Gayner 1995;¶16; Gingrich, Armey, and the House Republicans 1994).

The Republican takeover of the House had been enthusiastically awaited by the network of conservative and pro-capital think tanks and lobbying groups. Hopes for massive welfare reform were openly declared. At the end of an article in *Fortune*, the results of a poll of 113 heads of trade associations were included. There was overwhelming support for reforming long-term welfare entitlements as a top fiscal priority (Dowd and Marmon 1994). When asked which initiatives might pass in the 104th Congress for 1995, nearly two thirds declared that the welfare system would be reformed; only 2 percent said “tax hikes for upper-income earners” would pass (Dowd and Marmon 1994:6-7). Members of conservative think tanks and lobbying groups were optimistic about the portent of major rollbacks to existing welfare provisions, and were predictive in terms of what Congressional initiatives lie ahead. The tenor of the those surveyed and the euphoric response by the authors were indications that open season had been declared on AFDC.

Intellectual and political alliances along with a vital and skillful network of research and lobbying organizations created a powerful system of conservative influence.

Rector became a prominent “expert” in the mainstream press on the issue of welfare. In 1996, the year the reform bill was passed, “he was cited in media outlets an average of more than 15 times a month” (Ackerman 1999: ¶1). In misleading testimony before Congress, he overstated the amount spent on welfare since the beginning of the War on Poverty. He claimed that \$5.3 trillion had been spent, but 70 percent of the figure classified by him as “welfare” went to households that were not even receiving AFDC (Ackerman 1999). Though his accounting was deceptive, his claim reverberated through the press. Also, many of the reforms proposed by Murray are now key features of the bill. These include the use of teenage mother bans, family caps, and block grants to distribute funds to the states, giving states more autonomy in how benefits are administered; his hope was that some states would cease providing benefits altogether and that others may impose strict time limits (Post 1998). Another policy expert with influence, AEI scholar Douglas Besharov, advocated giving states the ability to remove entitlement rights from individuals in need. He argued that states should be given the ability to experiment with time limits and to incorporate into capped federal block grants all social welfare programs (including Food Stamps and Medicaid) (Post 1998). The AEI’s efforts were quite successful and the 1996 legislation adheres to key elements of the proposals of conservative policy scholars like Murray and Besharov (Post 1998). In a published polemic between David Ellwood and Frances Fox Piven regarding the 1996 welfare reform legislation, Piven discussed how Besharov boasted at an AEI meeting about the Clinton administration’s welfare reform victory. In the meeting, he bragged about how the massive numbers of state waiver requests were “welfare on the cheap,”

showing how not increasing expenditures for child care or spending “a penny for job training” resulted in a “revolutionary” consequence: an “end to personal entitlement” (Ellwood and Piven 1996: ¶2). Though some thought it was too timid, the 1996 welfare reform bill was a great success for the contemporary conservative movement. This study takes the 1996 Welfare Reform Bill as the culmination of a long ideological and political effort by the right and as a victory for the right, not on the grounds that government shrunk (it did not), but rather because aspects of government which contributed to maintaining a higher minimum living standard for those most in need had been modified to the advantage of capital by making welfare less attractive and consequently encouraging wage work, enlarging the pool of low-wage workers, reducing the bargaining power of workers, and intensifying labor discipline while reinforcing racial stereotypes and traditional, heteronormative conventions.

Clinton came through on his campaign promise, and AFDC had ended as an entitlement. The increasing ferocity of the critique on entitlements by particular intellectuals and the efforts of policy planning organizations in redefining how public relief, family, and personal responsibility are imagined ushered in a welfare reform bill which ended AFDC as an entitlement, gave states more flexibility in experimenting with their own reforms (including the option to completely eliminate AFDC and other programs), imposed time limits on receiving benefits, and allotted \$50 million per year for abstinence education (Post 1998). Such a drastic and regressive change in anti-poverty policy could take place because the field of opinion on welfare policy grew increasingly hostile to what had come to represent “welfare” as it had been gradually and

for many years redefined and reconceptualized. In these ideological and political conditions, the process of program development is under a higher degree of critical scrutiny and expansions of welfare state programs must always be justified, by definition and by virtue of their already being ethically suspect. It is this which constitutes the neocontradiction of welfare in the US but increasingly elsewhere too. While welfare programs continue to be indispensable for capitalism, the welfare state's existence is that of an embattled and frail "historical freak between organized capitalism and socialism," to use Marcuse's ([1964] 1991:52) words. This characterization presents the welfare state as an antinomy between control and freedom, but in the thirty-two years between the writing of that passage and the enactment of PRWORA, conditions have made the welfare system especially vulnerable to reforms which diminish its role in liberating its participants from wage work and economic coercion and which enhance the welfare state's control function. Put another way, with welfare entitlements (and recipients) increasingly stigmatized, a scanted social wage and a system of taxation and welfare which favors capital and the affluent is now sufficient to achieve the level of legitimacy required for the system to avert crisis.

Part I of this study consists of this introduction and Chapter 2. In Chapter 2, I review the relevant theory and literature and more thoroughly discuss the study's methodology and research design. Part II consists of Chapters 3 and 4 and covers some of the contemporary philosophical origins of both American libertarianism and traditionalist conservatism and documents the circumstances in which today's conservative intellectual movement originated. Part III contains Chapters 5 and 6 and

discusses the emergence of the intellectuals who came to be known as the neoconservatives, their contribution to the critique of welfare, and the economic and social conditions which fostered resentment toward the left, racial minorities (especially African Americans), and welfare programs. Part IV comprises Chapters 7 and 8 and describes the populist conservatism from below which mobilized around the political campaigns of Barry Goldwater, tracks the political mobilization of sectors of the American business elite around policy issues like labor, taxation, and welfare programs, and covers the emergence of the supply-side economic doctrine which further legitimized tax giveaways for the wealthy and cutting government programs. It also describes the presidential victory of Reagan, the connections between the Reagan administration and the policy planning network, and tracks the political development of the 1996 welfare reform bill by reviewing the literature of policy experts who had been critiquing entitlements and who were frequently cited in the media during the period leading up to the legislation. Finally, Chapters 9 and 10 in Part V offer analysis of the solidification of different conservative philosophies which encapsulated welfare reform discourse leading up to the 1996 legislation, the mastering of ideological production by the policy planning groups plus conclusions about the findings of the study and the socioeconomic impact and legacy of PRWORA. The conclusion will also consider the implications of a well funded, efficient mechanism for the production of conservative, elite, pro-capital ideology for the US political culture, especially in the context of policies designed to address poverty.

-Chapter 2: Theory, Literature, and Methodology-

Given the objective of this study, it is necessary to identify and historically situate dominant themes in texts such as policy statements, literature, press releases, political addresses, and congressional testimony which address welfare and its concomitant social forms where relevant (e.g. work, family, personal responsibility, sexual behavior, women's roles, race, etc.). The concept of ideology features prominently in my theoretical framework, especially the consideration of how it grips the "minds of the masses" becoming a "material force" (Hall [1986] 2005:27). Therefore ideology is not identified as something simply derived from material economic forces but simultaneously constitutive and derivative of them. It is seen as possessing a material basis in reality but a reality already impregnated by ideology. To elaborate in a way consistent with Bourdieu's framework, I show how a set of institutionalized, social arrangements established a set of rules which would inscribe agents across levels of habitual demarcation – i.e. how dominant ideological forms ultimately structure the practical activity of both elite and non-elite agents. In particular, I focus on the mechanisms which construct particular narratives and the narratives themselves, and the agents more closely analyzed in the study are those interlinked within the policy planning network. I choose not to get bogged down in a lengthy discussion of terminology, especially regarding the terms ideology and hegemony. Rather I follow Antonio Gramsci's differentiation of these terms in his essay, "The Modern Prince." Hegemony here implies the successful

application and transition, “of previously germinated ideologies” into a situation where they “come into confrontation and conflict, until one of them or a combination of them “tends to prevail” (effectively overdetermines¹) and “propagates itself throughout the society”(Gramsci [1971] 2005:181). Thus, the study ascertains how both elites and non-elites have contributed to an ideological formation which favors a behavioral focus on the origins of poverty, highlights a distinction between the so called deserving and undeserving poor, and demonizes policy strategies for addressing poverty which set out to establish a social wage and provide a safety net beyond the absolute minimum needed to survive. I do this in the chapters which follow. This chapter will continue with an overview of the work of theorists who have shed important light on the process by which ideology is structured, dispersed, absorbed, and reproduced and who best inform my own theoretical framework. Also in this chapter, I offer a review of some of the work on elite policy planning and mobilization and of select literature on American welfare state decline. Finally, a brief statement on the study’s methodology will be found at the chapter’s end.

Theory and Literature

There are a few different considerations of which it is important to be mindful when tackling the problem of showing that seemingly antagonistic intellectual traditions became united and mobilized to set the agenda for addressing poverty in the United

¹ This, of course, is Althusser’s term, which he borrowed from elsewhere. Althusser says that he can only think of Gramsci as the one who followed up on Marx and Engels’ investigations of the specific elements of the superstructure (Althusser 1971).

States and how they did so. This is the primary consideration (research question) from which I begin this study, which I regard as part of a larger tradition of social inquiry which sets out to understand how power legitimates and reproduces itself in contemporary capitalist societies (using the decline of the American welfare state as a case study). Firstly, it is important to understand which elements of conservative thought converged and came to constitute contemporary American conservatism as well as how they rose to prominence to become largely unchallenged orthodoxy. Secondly, the mechanisms by which these ideas were dispersed and how ideology works must be outlined. Finally, the corresponding conditions which contributed to the “sticking” of these ideas in the popular consciousness must be considered.

A key component to this study is to historically drive to the core of anti-welfare ideology by interpreting the texts of intellectuals and political functionaries whose objective it was to diminish poor relief, reinforce the moral work ethic, and, in some cases, reinforce traditional values (however they defined them). I approach the study epistemologically *via* the critical interpretive tradition of some of the key theorists associated with the Institute for Social Research at the University of Frankfurt, or the “Frankfurt School” as it is popularly called, specifically Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse, and especially that of Theodor Adorno. While there are impressive and complex developments which emerged later and in response to the work of these intellectuals and which address concepts such as hegemony, ideology, grand narratives, *et al.* as impediments for the development of critical, political consciousness in the larger society, many were anticipated by and expressed in ways as thorough and sophisticated

(if not more so) in the critical theory of Adorno and the Frankfurt School. Foucault's quote comes to mind: "If I had known about the Frankfurt School in time, I would have saved a great deal of work. I would not have said a certain amount of nonsense and would not have taken so many false trails trying not to get lost, when the Frankfurt School cleared the way" (quoted in Wiggershaus, 1998: 4). This critical interpretive framework and method made its way to the "western Marxist" tradition *via* a synthesis of various ideas, not least of which came from Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Sigmund Freud.

Weber describes his own method explicitly as interpretive. His term *verstehen*, which is listed in virtually every Introduction to Sociology textbook, is a valuable hermeneutic tool and has been translated as "subjectively understandable" and "interpretation in subjective terms" (Weber [1899] 1978:57²). In the first pages of the first chapter in *Economy and Society*, he tells us that sociology is a science which is interested in the "interpretive understanding of social action and thereby with a causal explanation of its course and consequences" (Weber [1899] 1978:4). Interpretation is central to Weber's methodology and relies upon meaning, but meaning for Weber is not to be considered to express something objectively correct in the metaphysical sense. Expressed one way, it is the clarification of a concrete case with a particular actor or group of actors or of a theoretically conceived ideal type (Weber [1899] 1978). It is rational social action which is Weber's fundamental point of empirical inquiry and is what makes sociology as a science possible. Interpretation for Weber is scientific because the social act is representative of empirically observable social phenomena,

² From Parsons footnotes in *Economy and Society*.

“insofar as the acting individual attaches a subjective meaning to his behavior” (Weber [1899] 1978:4). To reiterate the point made by Adorno (2000a) in his introductory lectures in sociology, Weber certainly is not talking about psychological interpretation here, but rather he limits the term (interpretation) to describe means-end relationships which are empirically extractable in subjective action. This is the core of his concept of *verstehen* and of Weber’s brand of sociology in general.

So for Weber, pure types of rational, means-end oriented action (e.g. those which are characterized by purposeful rationality and value rationality) are observable to the social scientist and are contrasted with types of irrational action which he regards “as factors of deviation from a conceptually pure type of rational action” (Giddens 1972; Weber [1899] 1978:6). Based on this typology, rational considerations become separate from moral ones (Giddens 1972). Critical theory sees this type of interpretation as rooted in the positivist project and views means-end rationality in general as the reduction of reason to a mere instrument rendering social subjects down to their social functions (Adorno 1997; Adorno 2000a; Horkheimer 1972; Horkheimer 1974; Horkheimer 2002; Horkheimer and Adorno 2001; Marcuse 1969). Also, it opposes the downgrading of ethics as separate from rationality (science) and its relegation to the realm of the individual subject (Adorno 1997; Adorno 2000a; Horkheimer 1972; Horkheimer 1974; Horkheimer 2002; Horkheimer and Adorno 2001; Marcuse 1969). Further, this is attributed to positivism’s tendency to see complicated social processes as inanimate and dehumanized things. This line of reasoning in Weber removes the possibility of (social) scientific theory or empirical knowledge that entails ethical determinations, or judgments

of value, outside of considering the empirically observed values held by social actors in pursuit of specified, rationally determined ends. This formalization of reason in Weber (lamented to an extent by Weber himself) is regarded in the critical theory of the Frankfurt School as contributing to the standardization of all social life – and thus represents a Huxley style negative utopia (Horkheimer 1974).

Therefore, the conceptual tools of understanding (*verstehen*) and interpretation were reapplied by critical theory's main figures but in ways more thorough and encompassing. They were used to examine the relationship between texts and social actors *per* mental structures. For complex material produced through what Adorno (along with Max Horkheimer) called the culture industry, the methods, or as Horkheimer said, "all the tricks used," of generating a non-critical consensus can be understood only by introducing a qualitative component to the analysis (Adorno 2000a:87; Horkheimer and Adorno 2001). This process of inquiry is one which immerses itself in the cultural material of the mass culture's particular details and extracts its social content (Adorno 2000a). This study's methodology is consistent with this prescription by Adorno, in that understanding complex social content can only be realized through analysis of a text's "immanent structure" (Adorno 2000a:88). While means-end rationality provided Weber with a tool to apply an empiricism to his interpretive analysis, it nonetheless presents itself as an unrealistic, ideal construction, "since the great majority of the so-called 'social action' of human beings are carried out not in relation to some imagined social goal but more-or-less as reflex actions" (Adorno 2000a:107). This pattern of cultural practices assuming autonomous characteristics constituted by the non-reflexive repetitive

actions of social subjects (and thus with a dulled/ muted subjectivity) is necessary for understanding how ideology functions in late capitalist society. Horkheimer and Adorno's analysis of Weber is consistent in that they identify in his deeply subjectivistic framework a mode of thought which fails to allow for social actors to acknowledge the substantiality of one end from another or to discern the contradictions between the subjective meaning behind social actions and the objective meaning of those actions (Adorno 2000a; Horkheimer 1974). For example, Democratic industrial workers and members of labor union families who voted in 1980 for Ronald Reagan may have subjectively done so as a vote against "welfare cheats" and high taxes, but the objective reality of such a vote was one which enabled a policy of redistribution to the advantage of the affluent. Only considering the means-end rationality or subjective origin of such votes ignores the substantive contradiction between it and the objective meaning of the outcome as it relates to social and economic reality.

As stated above, the critical negative treatment of ideology utilized in this study derives from Marx. Ideology is a process where internal contradictions of social phenomena are naturalized and disengaged from their historical and contextual milieus. The social phenomena are detached conceptually from the historical conditions with which they are intimately intertwined and presented as synchronic, non-dynamic entities which are embedded in nature. This contingent "natural order" appears fixed and unchangeable, and is reinforced as such in much social science and philosophy. Hence Adorno's (1968:82; 2005:50) indictments that psychoanalysis petrifies unfreedom as a social scientific given, that "Rationalizations are the scars of reason in a state of

unreason,” or that “The whole is the false.” However, ideology should not be thought of simply as false consciousness cloaking the real with a misleading and untruthful façade. Rather, it is a surface representation of a set of objective conditions themselves constitutive of an inverted reality (Larrain 1979; Larrain 1983; Žižek 1999). Consider, also, Adorno’s (1972:198³; 1973:145) assertions that “Ideologies in the proper sense become false only by their relationship to the existing reality,” or that “A contradiction in reality, it is a contradiction against reality.” Social reality for this study is not treated as fixed and non-dynamic, but as contradictory and fluid. Such an order and its derivative ideologies encompass a truth in their untruth. That is, reality as it is presented must be decoded and re-situated in its proper historical context.

As stated, the critique of ideology approach was expanded through Marx, particularly in his discussion of Feuerbach’s work on religion. Feuerbach accepts the basic tenet that the notion that God made man is an inversion of the truth (that in fact it is man who made God). Whereas Feuerbach accepts this simply as philosophical alienation or illusion, for Marx the inversion is an expression of the contradictions and sufferings of the real world (Larrain 1979; Larrain 1983). It is on a similar basis that I present the constellation of ideological productions related to welfare. For example, on one hand, capitalism is portrayed in terms of immutable laws and as an ideal type in the Weberian sense of the term. This comes across in language which praises efficiency and justice by means of an ideology of *laissez-faire* individualism and unrestricted markets. Collective

³ This quote is found in *Aspects of Sociology*. While Horkheimer and Adorno credit the Authorship of the book to “the Institute for Social Research as a whole” in the Preface, several sources identify Adorno as the sole author of some of the essays, especially “Sociology of Art and Music” and “Ideology” – e.g. Jay 1984 and Farrell 1989.

bargaining, a social wage, or taxation for the purposes of progressive redistribution, therefore, come to embody obstructions which stifle individual hard work and competitive ambition on the part of the poor, working, and middle class. Among the more affluent and for capital, they limit entrepreneurial drive and investment. On the other hand, a large state is required to secure international investments militarily, quell social unrest, and enforce “good” behavior both economically and through the coercive use of a police force, all financed through tax revenue. The most recent wave of “bailouts” reinforcing the “too big to fail” doctrine has highlighted some of the contradictions inherent in these relationships. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996 ultimately was framed in terms of a breakdown of enforcement and discipline regarding the behavior of the poor especially in terms of work and employment but also of family organization and reproductive behavior (Murray 1984; Mead 2009). The conservative retrenchment in relation to the welfare consensus corresponded to regressive redistribution and greater inequality in terms of wealth and income and very slow income growth among the most poor compared to the more affluent (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, and Mills 2004; US Bureau of the Census 2008a). All this despite claims that ending entitlement and enforcing work would create better conditions at the bottom. Framed in economic terms, those conditions constitute a system of just inequality, that is to say of hierarchy based on the myth of meritocracy and thus appearing “natural.” The claimed historical origins of neoliberalism, those of the Enlightenment, the struggle against traditional authority, and *laissez-faire* individualism have allowed it to appear committed to a framework of equality given its expressed

stance against hierarchy which corresponds to inherited rank. Such ideology is not treated in the study as merely manipulative, illusory, or deceptive, but expressive of an exploitive reality with which it is intimately bound.

Returning to Marx's articulation of the constitutive character of ideology, a cruder expression of it can be found in the "Meaning of Human Requirements" of the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. While he does not explicitly clarify the real-world origin of ideology here, the parallel to the contemporary debate on welfare reform and the current conventional wisdom with regard to work, thrift, and sexual austerity (especially among the poor) is glaring in a passage about the morally ascetic character of the science of political economy. Marx ([1927]⁴ 1978:95) contended that the

science of marvelous industry is simultaneously the science of *asceticism*, and its true ideal is the *ascetic* but *extortionate* miser and the *ascetic* but *productive* slave. Its moral ideal is the *worker* who takes part of his wages to the savings-bank, and it has even found ready-made an abject *art* in which to clothe this its pet idea: they have presented it, bathed in sentimentality, on the stage. Thus political economy – despite its worldly and wanton appearance – is a true moral science, the most moral of all the sciences. Self-denial, the denial of life and of all human needs, is its cardinal doctrine.

⁴ Marx's *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, while composed by Marx in 1844 as the title suggests, was only first published in 1927. This Russian version of the manuscript was incomplete and the first complete edition would be published in German in 1932. The passage cited in the text above is excerpted from Robert C. Tucker's *The Marx-Engels Reader*, the full citation of which can be found in the References section.

The theoretical relevance of this passage on the contemporary poverty and welfare debate is striking. Since contemporary *laissez-faire* rhetoric is framed in terms of personal liberty, the pathway to material salvation (if you are poor) is still promised through self-restraint and self-imposed toil and it is delivered by means of the “voluntary” relationship between worker and employer. The continued asceticism and moralism of the social sciences in their dealings with economic matters, especially in the incarnation known as policy analysis or policy studies, has been especially evident in the work of those intellectuals who have had the greatest impact in reshaping the debate about poverty, work, family, and welfare. The synthesis of the contradictory expressions of both liberty and restraint have their present-day manifestation in the ideology of the moral work ethic. In the “Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right*: Introduction,” Marx ([1844] 1978:53[author’s italics]) articulates the fundamental structure of ideology, again through an analysis of religious myth.

But man is no abstract being squatting outside the world. Man is *the human world*, the state, society. This state, this society, produce religion which is an *inverted world consciousness*, because they are an *inverted world*.

Horkheimer’s remarks on the dynamic, concrete foundation of ideology in relation to science and methodology are informative. In “Traditional and Critical Theory,” he argues that the intention of critical theorists is to not accept the framework of traditional (scientific) theory which accepts the origin of objective facts and the “practical application of the conceptual system by which it grasps the facts,” as “external to the theoretical

thinking itself” (Horkheimer 2002:208). The objective of critical activity is not simply to eliminate these practices, but sees them as

necessarily connected with the way in which the social structure is organized. ...[This analysis] is suspicious of the very categories of better, useful, appropriate, productive and valuable, as these are understood in the present order, and refuses to take them as nonscientific presuppositions about which one can do nothing (Horkheimer 2002:207).

If the objective character of reality is conceptualized as interrelated to the process of perception and existent as something which is historically contingent, then reality loses its reified character (Horkheimer 2002:209).

The thought of Georg Lukács and Antonio Gramsci, especially their explication of the concepts of reification, ideology, and hegemony, was seminal for the development of western Marxism and one of its chief concerns: the study of how ideas come to be dominant in societies. Both devised their conceptual bases in the attempt to address the diminishment of the revolutionary potential in modern capitalist societies, and both began their imaginative undertakings before the core thinkers of the Frankfurt school. Lukács and Gramsci were also major influences for them. Lukács and Gramsci, along with Karl Korsch, have been described as the “first phase” or “founding fathers” of western Marxism (Arato 1997:5; Holub 1999:39). The overlap of the thought of Lukács and Gramsci is quite astonishing given the unlikelihood that they were well versed in one another’s work. While there is speculation that they may have met in Vienna in the early

1920s and a brief mention of Lukács in the work of Gramsci, Gramsci confirmed that in fact he only had superficial knowledge of Lukács' theories (Holub 1999). The influence of Weber's ideas in the work of the Frankfurt School is best expressed *via* Lukács' investigation into the reified social relations and consciousness which he found prevalent in capitalist society. Weber himself was somewhat ambivalent towards capitalism. This was clearly expressed in his description of "technical and economic conditions of machine production" creating social relations like that of an "iron cage" and capitalism's welcoming of a bureaucracy more perfected by "dehumanization" and the elimination of "purely personal, irrational, and emotional elements" like love and hatred which "escape calculation" (Weber [1899] 1958: 215-216; Weber [1930] 1992:123). However, in spite of this grim view of technical rationality in capitalism, he saw the socialist and communist political platforms of his day as naïve ideologies (Gerth and Mills 1958). He identified the belief by socialists and conservatives that it was possible to escape from the iron cage as false and intellectually immature (Giddens 1972).

Lukács saw Weber's means-end rationality and his acceptance of the coercive, exploitive conditions under capitalism as symptomatic of modern capitalism itself and indicative of the tendency for bourgeois thought to open up "an irrational chasm between the subject and object of knowledge" (Lukács 2000:157). Lukács argued that commodity fetishism is the "central, structural problem of the capitalist society in all its aspects" (Lukács 2000:83). His development of the concept of reification was his theoretical offering in response to the question posed in the beginning of his essay, "Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat" (found in *History and Class Consciousness: Studies*

in *Marxist Dialectics*, which is considered by some to be the founding text for western Marxism). In it Lukács asked, “How far is commodity exchange together with its structural consequences able to influence the *total* outer and inner life of society?” (Lukács 2000:84 [author’s italics]). In capitalism’s earlier phase, he argued that the “personal nature of economic relations was still understood clearly on occasion” (Lukács 2000:86). However, with economic relations having become more sophisticated, complex, and less direct, it has become rare that society’s members are able to breach the “veil of reification” (Lukács 2000:86). For Lukács, reification described the tendency of not seeing phenomena as processes but rather perceiving reality as something that just happens to be, interpreting facts as isolated and ossified (Lukács 2000). An important feature of Lukács’ development of the concept of reification is that it represents a type of social domination where society’s members are controlled through their very own seemingly voluntary actions. Objectively, the proletariat seem unable to change their situation through their own activity, and subjectively, social activity becomes estranged from social actors themselves and becomes commodified (Lukács 2000). His essays in *History and Class Consciousness* represent a departure from the vulgar Marxism of his day and an anticipation of the rich critique which would develop through the work of the Frankfurt School under the direction of Max Horkheimer. Lukács explored the relationship between consciousness and the continued reproduction of bourgeois reality in a manner less burdened by economic and class reductionism. However, Lukács stops just short of saying that the realization of class consciousness for the proletariat is

inevitable, which has evoked accusations of an idealist and Hegelian reading of Marx⁵. Lukács' (2000:72, 171 [author's italics]) remarks – that the proletariat “*always aspires toward the truth*, even in its ‘false’ consciousness and in its substantive errors” and that even as dominant ideological forms “embrace the whole of society,” the proletariat, “driven by the specific dialectics of its class situation” will “emerge as a class” – have not been borne out by history and appear to constitute a position of false hope.

Compared to Lukács, Gramsci's work represents less of a coherent social scientific project. Rather, his main ideas are found scattered through his political journalism and his grand work, *The Prison Notebooks*, which was written during his incarceration in a Fascist jail, in dreadfully brutal conditions, with minimal access to resources, and under the watchful eye of prison censors (Marks 1968; Hall [1986] 2005; Hoare and Smith 2005). That being said, Hall ([1986] 2005:411) is correct in assessing that “[Gramsci's] work is, precisely of a ‘sophisticating’ kind. He works, broadly, within the marxist (sic) paradigm. However, he has extensively revised, renovated and sophisticated many aspects of that theoretical framework to make it more relevant to contemporary social relations in the twentieth century.” It is in this context that we find the bulk of his written work and elaboration of concepts quite relevant to later critical Marxists. In one place, Gramsci [1971] 2005:12) described hegemony as the ability of the dominant group in civil society to exercise its power over subaltern groups because of

⁵ See Althusser [1965] 2005, pp. 113-114, 114n. in *For Marx*. New York: Verso. In this work, Althusser argued that “*the theory of the specific effectivity of the superstructures and other ‘circumstances’ largely remains to be elaborated*” [Althusser's italics]. He identified in the work of Lukács and Gramsci attempts to follow this project, but Lukács to him was “tainted by a guilty Hegelianism.” On the other hand Gramsci, specifically his concept of hegemony, is more a more “original” and “remarkable” solution to this problem.

the prestige enjoyed by the dominant group by virtue of its “position and function in the world of production.” Thus, the dominant group becomes capable of generating the “spontaneous consent” of the “great masses of the population” (Gramsci [1971] 2005:12).

In another passage, he described ideology “in its highest sense” (Gramsci [1971] 2005:328). Here Gramsci portrays a more pervasive and ominous form of social domination existing in all aspects of lived experience. Ideology is described here as

any conception of the world, any philosophy which has become a cultural movement, a ‘religion’, a ‘faith’, any that has produced a form of practical activity or will in which the philosophy is contained as an implicit theoretical ‘premise’. One might say ‘ideology’ here, but on condition that the word is used in its highest sense of a conception of the world that is implicitly manifest in art, in law, in economic activity and in all manifestations of individual and collective life. This problem is that of preserving the ideological unity of the entire social bloc which that ideology serves to cement and to unify. (Gramsci [1971] 2005:328).

This latter elaboration is closer to the mark for this study, but like Lukács, Gramsci does not detail how such ideas are deployed nor how they actually become dominant. Later theorists influenced by the western Marxist tradition would be more specific along these lines. It should be noted, as Hall ([1986] 2005) and Williams (1977) have pointed out, that hegemony is never permanent or fixed, and neither is ideology

completely comprehensive and stable. These structures are historically specific and temporary, and under constant revision, modification, alteration, and pressure by those resisting and challenging them from without (Hall [1986] 2005; Williams 1977).

Gramsci addressed this to an extent too. He argued that unlike in Russia where “the State was everything... in the West there was a proper relation between State and civil society” (Gramsci [1971] 2005:238). This state, however, was “only an outer ditch, behind which there stood a powerful system of fortresses and earthworks” (Gramsci [1971] 2005:238).

Gramsci seemed to be, in part, referring to this network of channels and fortifications symbolically and as code for the complex and “unprecedented concentration of hegemony” in Western European societies. Therefore, unlike in Russia, what was needed was a “war of position,” which was not “in reality, constituted simply by the actual trenches, but by the whole organizational and industrial system” (Gramsci [1971] 2005:234). It is against this constantly reconstituting and shifting “reinforcement of the hegemonic ‘positions’ of the dominant group that the “concepts of counter-hegemony and alternative hegemony” must be considered as “real and persistent elements of practice” and of resistance (Gramsci [1971] 2005:239; Williams 1977:112-113).

Building upon Marx’s explication mentioned earlier, Adorno (1973) pointed out that simply identifying ideology with false consciousness not only discounts material conditions but contributes to and justifies domination through delusion. In late capitalist societies, pressure against ideological domination may be exerted, but the system as it exists has perfected the process of modifying and altering itself in order to survive. The process is identified as a serious impediment for the ability of social consciousness to

become consistent with critical reasoning. For Adorno and Horkheimer, this was explained as a function of the all encompassing culture industry, and for Marcuse, that of a mechanical apparatus producing technological rationality and one-dimensional thought (Horkheimer and Adorno 2001; Marcuse 1991; Marcuse 1997). Reiterating ideology's function as more than false consciousness, Adorno argued that it "is no longer objective spirit, ...as crystallized blindly and anonymously out of the social process, but rather is tailored scientifically to fit the society. That is the case with the products of the culture industry, film, magazines, illustrated newspapers, radio, television, and the best-seller literature" (Adorno 1973:200). Again, ideology is thus not the mask of false consciousness, but "that which exists itself. ...[It is] no longer a veil, but the threatening face of the world" (Adorno 1973:202).

Adorno and Horkheimer bleakly see as an outcome of the culture industry social relations ordered in a manner consistent with the structure of the commodity form and as incorporating into the system anything potentially dissident. This has evoked numerous criticisms of their work. One is that they espouse an excessive pessimism and present a vision of society absent of any modality allowing for its radical transformation through the development of revolutionary consciousness. In the preface to his *Theory of the Novel*, Lukács (1971:22) identified the grim diagnoses of Adorno and other members of the "German Intelligentsia" as taking up "residence in the 'Grand Hotel Abyss' ...on the edge of an abyss, of nothingness, of absurdity." Lukács (1971:22) likens this type of analysis to "artistic entertainments" suggesting that such "contemplation" is impotent and self-indulgent. Following denouncements from the Communist Party, Lukács would

eventually make an effort to recant his *History and Class Consciousness* as subjectivist and even defended undemocratic features of the early Soviet Union. Confronted with the dogma of the party leadership and its distortion of dialectical thought, Lukács withdrew into greater specialization of Marxist aesthetics and literary theory (Žižek 2000). This demonstration of intellectual servility led the Frankfurt School to distance itself from organized party politics and roused Adorno to write that Lukács had mistook the “clatter of his chains” as the triumphant march forth of the Hegelian world spirit (quoted in Žižek 2000:112). Karl Popper and Hans Albert levy a similar criticism in their published polemics with Adorno *et al.* which appear in *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology*. In this collection of essays, Popper assails the work of the Frankfurt school as unintelligible and dismally pessimistic. He says of Adorno and other “famous leaders of German sociology” that they espouse in their own thought and writing and encourage in the work of their students a “cult of un-understandability, the cult of impressive and high-sounding language” (Popper 1976:294). He states further that, “The genuine and general feeling of dissatisfaction which is manifest in their hostility to the society in which they live is, I think, a reflection of their unconscious dissatisfaction of the sterility of their own activities” (Popper 1976:296).

The Frankfurt School’s theoretical foundations and methodology which took social phenomena as dynamic and contradictory and investigated the social world in the context of the tension between essence and appearance, universal and particular, and abstract and concrete, has also been a target of criticism. Hans Albert (1976) referred to the concept of society advanced by critical theory as the insignificant reflection that

everything is connected to everything else. In response, Adorno emphasized that what effectively binds society's members together is the relationship of exchange, the process of which being the "underlying social fact through which socialization first comes about" (Adorno 2000a:31). It is the presumed thing-like character superimposed onto the products exchanged which provides the basis of the concept of the commodity fetish and one of the essential features of capitalism which is called into question by the critical negative conception of ideology. Despite this approach's applicability for understanding how existing conditions in late capitalism are justified and thus reproduced, Albert (1976:175) argued that the degree that such a model could provide a methodological benefit required more than simply "verbal exhortations of totality."

The concept of ideology has not been one on which there is wide agreement in terms of what it is, how it works, or if it remains (or ever was) relevant as a concept at all. Such reservations have been expressed by critics from divergent camps. In the 1950s and early 1960s, early neoconservatives like Seymour Martin Lipset, Edward Shils, and Daniel Bell were arguing that postindustrial society had experienced a diminishing of, even an end to, revolutionary ideology and politics (Lipset 1985). Bell ([1960] 1988) in his book *The End of Ideology* argued that liberal capitalism had worked out the crucial difficulties of political participation, and he identified as ideologists all those who want to live at the extreme and castigate the common man for settling with an unheroic, day-to-day routine of living. Bell ([1960] 1988) saw the efforts of the New Left, especially student activists, as futile because young radical intellectuals were lacking an enemy at a historical moment which had seen the finish of radical ideology. Fukuyama (1992)

follows this end of (revolutionary) ideology reasoning and argues that the direction of history has led to its own end: economic development under liberal capitalism and the rationalization of the world. His argument is that a system of free-markets has triumphed over centrally planned economies because they best fulfill the demands of human desires (Fukuyama 1992). While Fukuyama (1992:31) may be correct that liberal capitalism is the only system with a “coherent ideology” and “widespread legitimacy” in the West, he does not address how that legitimacy and ideology may perhaps themselves be obstructive of a system more fair and just. Appearing to exist in another universe, Fukuyama (1992:291) assumes a sort of welfare consensus but rationalizes continuing disparities and the unraveling social compact as the US being disinclined “to take on a paternalistic role,” asserting that “the basic social welfare legislation of the New Deal has been accepted by conservatives, and has proved largely invulnerable to rollback.” He states that what emerges from such “equalizing processes” is a “middle-class society” where persisting inequality “can be attributable to the natural inequality of talents” (Fukuyama 1992: 291).

Apprehension about the term, ideology, has also been expressed by writers on the left concerned about the reproduction of power and generation of public consensus. Abercrombie and Turner (1978; 1994) and Abercrombie, Hill, and Turner (1980) argue that the subordinate classes in late capitalism do not adopt the dominant ideology in any straightforward way, but rather dominant ideas have a greater impact on the dominant classes. They refer to Habermas, Marcuse, Miliband, and Poulantzas as Marxist proponents of the dominant ideology with whom they disagree. They however

acknowledge that as media become more efficient, complex, and diffuse, their “argument has to be expressed less forcefully” (Abercrombie and Turner 1978:161). Still, they maintain that the general basis of their argument continues to hold. The dominant ideology of late capitalism, they assert, “is thus at best an uneven and uneasy amalgam of assumptions about private property and about the importance of state intervention in economic life” (Abercrombie and Turner 1978:163). While Abercrombie and Turner are correct in analyzing the effect of the dominant ideology on the dominant classes, and they maintain “that the dominant ideology is best seen as securing the coherence of the dominant class,” they assert that this is relatively unimportant in late capitalism (Abercrombie and Turner 1978:164). They admit that their argument gives credence to the end of ideology thesis put forth by Bell and other neoconservatives as well as to the argument that late capitalism permits a reasonable platform for a plurality of beliefs and opinions. Bell’s and Abercrombie and Turner’s theses are not adequate in explaining the current social formation and the important features of today’s ideological practice around welfare in the US. Their line of thought fails to explain the increased coherence of the capitalist class over the last three decades (what Harvey 2005 has recently called the reconstitution of class power) and its mobilization around key issues like welfare, especially in the US. Writing in the early stages of the ascendance of Thatcherism in the United Kingdom, Abercrombie and Turner argued that increased elite class cohesion and a possible lessened significance of ideology expressed in the welfare consensus among the elite significantly challenge the thesis of a dominant ideology being exerted on the subordinate classes. On the contrary, history would come to show that under Thatcher

the welfare consensus in the UK would be partially dissolved. The concept of a dominant ideology is more applicable in the US, since the process of unraveling the welfare consensus and tacit post-war agreement between labor and capital would begin even earlier. Attitudes which approved of “the availability of opportunity, individualistic expectations for achievement, and acceptance of unequal distribution of societal rewards” came to constitute a dominant ideology which would take hold in the States in a way it never would in the UK (Kleugel and Smith 1986:11).

Bourdieu has tended to be apprehensive of the term, stating that he is inclined “to avoid the word ‘ideology’ because...it has very often been misused or used in a vague manner” (Bourdieu and Eagleton 1994:266). He explained that he preferred the concepts, “symbolic violence,” “symbolic power,” or “symbolic domination” to minimize the misuse of the term (Bourdieu and Eagleton 1994:266). Bourdieu identified his own project as one where he attempts to place emphasis on practices and mechanisms as opposed to consciousness and representation. He had accused Marxist intellectuals as suffering from a sort of “scholastic-bias” where problems were seen as solvable by achieving the correct consciousness (Bourdieu and Eagleton 1994:270). He associated this tendency and use of the term, ideology, with Althusser and considered it aristocratic (Bourdieu and Eagleton 1994).

Althusser’s (1971) own development of the concept of ideology is that it operates as an eternal and unconscious characteristic of social practice. Ideology for Althusser works by transforming individuals into subjects through a process of interpellation. Since for him ideology is eternal, “ideology has always-already interpellated individuals as

subjects, which amounts to making it clear that individuals are always-already interpellated by ideology as subjects” (Althusser 1971:175-176). This description of ideology presents it as a rigid structure in which resistance is virtually impossible. Also, ideology in this sense becomes reified as a mechanism at work without the subject’s knowledge of its existence. Using Althusser’s theory in terms of political ideology, Laclau (1977) formulates a counterpoint to Marxist theory heavily influenced by economic (class) reductionism. The theory of interpellation in particular sheds light on how ideological elements in society operate which are not related to class. He identifies that fascism, rather than the expression of the most conservative and reactionary ideological elements of the dominant class, was one possible outcome of synthesizing popular democratic themes into political discourse (Laclau 1977). As classes struggle on both the level of the economic and of “the people,” the identity of the people can play a more dominant role in determining social outcomes; in the case of fascism, it did (Laclau 1977). This is pertinent in understanding the eventual appropriation of radical, freedom movement discourse by neoconservative functionaries, ideologues, and intellectuals. Habermas (1981) also noted this; in defense of modernist appeals for social programs and promoting democracy, he describes the neoconservative dilemma as having to develop a means to reinstate the moral work ethic and reform the current model to a system where individualist competition is rewarded. Of concern for him was the neoconservative use of revolutionary and liberation rhetoric. Observing a curious inversion, Habermas (1981) explains that it is within this rhetoric that programs which mitigate the social

consequences of capitalism (e.g. welfare state provisions) are successfully presented as fascist and obstructive of freedom.

Later, Laclau (1983; 1996) and Laclau and Mouffe (2001) would offer a insightful critique of the critique of ideology, one which partly informs this study. It is argued in these texts that ideology must be understood, not as a misperception of a positive essence but rather a failure to recognize the instability of the category of positivity (Laclau 1983). In explaining the characteristics of hegemony in society, Laclau and Mouffe (2001:7) explain that their exposition of the concept is not one where it is “endowed from the beginning with full positivity.” They argue that it alludes “to an absent totality, and to the diverse attempts at recomposition and rearticulation which, in overcoming this original absence, made it possible for struggles to be given a meaning and for historical forces to be endowed with full positivity (Laclau and Mouffe 2001:7). Approaching a Derridian formulation, Laclau (1983) argues that the concept of ideology can be maintained only by inverting its usual content. The traditional false-consciousness meaning of ideology does not hold because of the presumed true or non-distorted object which was being presented falsely. This logic creates the critique of ideology as having as its basis an extra-ideological set of assumptions and thus becoming elevated as an “ideological operation *par excellence*” (Laclau 1996: ¶14). More accurately, such analysis should be part of a “critique of the ‘naturalization of meaning’ and of the ‘essentialization of the social’” (Laclau 1983:24). Through such an analysis, ideology would be regarded as the non-recognition “of the impossibility of any ultimate suture. It would also consist of those discursive forms through which a society tries to institute

itself as such on the basis of closure, of the fixation of meaning, of the non-recognition of the infinite play of differences” (1983:24).

Echoing Laclau, Mouffe, and Bourdieu, Žižek expresses a similar concern about the notion of ideology. In his introduction to *Mapping Ideology*, he presents the problematic that the critique of ideology assumes a “privileged place,” that allows a “subject-agent to perceive the very hidden mechanism that regulates social visibility and non-visibility” (Žižek 1994:3). He then rhetorically asks whether this is not itself “the most obvious case of ideology” (Žižek 1994:3). However, Žižek (1994:4) asserts that one can be sure that when something is identified as “ideological *par excellence*,” such an inversion is itself ideology. This is a clear reference to Laclau and Mouffe. Žižek’s development of the concept of ideology is enlightening. For instance, he contends that a political statement can be objectively true but be completely ideological (Žižek 1989, 1994). For example, applied to this study, some of the neoconservative claims about the behavior of the poor may be demonstrably factual, but they are nonetheless an expression of a structural and systematic requirement for the system’s continuation. While there may be fraud and abuse to an extent in the administration and receipt of social provisions, ethically and theoretically it does not necessarily have bearing on the consequences of such provisions in reducing income inequality or the number of people who fall below the poverty line. In response to Laclau and Mouffe, Žižek (2006:266) comments that their framework connotes its own essentialist and utopian point: one where “political battles would be fought without remainders of ‘essentialism,’ all sides fully accepting the radically contingent character of their endeavors and the irreducible character of social

antagonisms.” In addition to essentializing historically situated social patterns, Žižek (1994:4) says too that ideology can be the opposite process, i.e. it can be the ascription of external contingency to something which is the result of an inner necessity. He uses the example of the tension between the ideological practice of attributing personal responsibility to a criminal act while concealing the historico-discursive context for the act and attributing cause to circumstances to the point of relieving the individual subject of his/ her own responsibility or subjectivity (Žižek 1994:5). Žižek (1994:5 [author’s italics]) asks, “are... speaking subjects not always-already *engaged* in recounting the circumstances that predetermine the space of our activity?” This is helpful in clarifying Habermas’ concept of legitimation. While the dynamics of capitalist production are portrayed as impeded by market obstructions like welfare state programs, is not the welfare state itself part of the inner necessity of late capitalism? Put another way, capitalism’s survival is part of its own internal logic. By placing emphasis on its own dynamic characteristics (less obstructions, flexibilized labor, etc.) welfare receiving subjects are an already constituted feature (albeit a demonized one) of a system which on the surface appears to be attempting to eliminate them. We can then infer that the welfare poor are maligned but are required as a transgressive category; they are permitted to exist, but with minimal interference to the process of accumulation.

In *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, Žižek (1989, 1994) contends that ideology is not illusory. He identifies Marx’s statement from *Capital* as the elementary definition for ideology: “They do not know it, but they are doing it” (Žižek 1989:28). Presumed here is a distance between consciousness and reality and a “constitutive naïveté” (Žižek

1989:28). However, by way of Peter Sloterdijk's thesis that the main mode of ideological reproduction is cynical, Žižek (1989:29) reformulates Marx's statement to apply to late capitalist society's cynical subjects: "They know very well what they are doing, but still, they are doing it." He identifies this paradoxical process as "enlightened false consciousness" (Žižek 1989:29). This formulation of the concept of ideology can be applied to Marx's concept of the commodity fetish. People know full well that there is no mystical quality to the money they obtain and use to purchase commodities. However, "they are *acting*" as though money "in its material reality, is the immediate embodiment of wealth as such (Žižek 1989:31 [author's italics]). They are fetishists in practice, not in theory" (Žižek 1989:31). Incorporating Lacanian psychoanalysis with Marx, Žižek develops this explanation of ideology further. Instead of ideology being a false, dreamlike delusion that is used to hide an insufferable reality, it functions to "offer us the social reality itself as an escape from some traumatic, real kernel" (Žižek 1989:45). Here ideology has hold of us when we no longer feel the distance between it and reality, when we see facts contradictory to it and they start to operate as arguments supporting it (Žižek 1989).

Žižek shares with Bourdieu the emphasis on the role of external practice in the orienting and structuring of social behavior. Both have discussed the influence of Pascal in this respect (Bourdieu 2000, Žižek 1989). Bourdieu has critiqued Althusser's theory of ideology and formulated a framework where "the main mechanism of domination operates not through a process of indoctrinating false consciousness but through the unconscious manipulation of the body" (Bourdieu and Eagleton 1994:269). Citing

Pascal, Bourdieu (2000:168) explains that “custom makes all authority,” and he describes the social order as one comprised of bodies. “An order takes effect only through the person who executes it,” and this is not necessarily by virtue of conscious action on the part of the actor (Bourdieu 2000:168). Symbolic force, especially that of an order, is a type of power carried out on bodies, but not through repressive measures. This is done “as if by magic” because of “previously constituted dispositions” (Bourdieu 2000:169). Also drawing on Pascal, Žižek (1989) explains that to follow custom is to believe without knowing it. Like with the Pascalian wager regarding belief in God, when social actors submit themselves to ideological ritual, belief will follow on its own (Žižek 1989). Again, as stated above, social actors are fetishists *in practice*. Perhaps what is most significant about the Pascalian wager as a metaphor of ideology’s structure is not that it is a rationalist exercise to justify religious belief and practice, but that it accepts the existence of God despite the authoritarianism and malevolence required of Him for the game to work. In other words, the system may be unjust, exploitive, and aristocratic in its structure, but ideology dictates that by playing along we have nothing to lose.

The analyses of more contemporary theorists on hegemony and ideology (e.g. Laclau, Mouffe, Bourdieu, Žižek) were anticipated by key figures of the Frankfurt School, especially Adorno. One example is the critique of the critique of ideology. This critique expressed above in Laclau, Mouffe, and Žižek is also expressed in no uncertain terms in Horkheimer and Adorno’s essay “The Concept of Enlightenment,” which precedes the work of the more contemporary theorists by more than thirty years. Horkheimer and Adorno (1972) argue that just as Enlightenment set out to dispel old

myths, myths realized Enlightenment *via* the latter's expression through positivism. By the same logic, Adorno comments that through the critique of ideology it has been forgotten "that the doctrine of ideology itself belongs to the movement of history" (Adorno 1972:183). Seeing false consciousness as the mechanism for the reproduction of social relations is for Adorno (1972:184) part of the "vulgar doctrine of ideology." This vulgar doctrine ignores the concrete conditions of society and validates delusion as a natural law, thus itself becoming ideology (Adorno 1972). This is what Adorno (2000b) meant when he argued that the negation of negation does not produce its reversal. He argued that it is not possible to assume that the result of the negation of the negation will be positive (Adorno 2000b). Such logic leads to another identity resulting from such negation, "a new delusion, a projection of consequential logic...upon the absolute" (Adorno 2000b:160). However, decades before Žižek, Adorno warned that the other extreme results in its own type of essential logic, that abstract refutations of unity (of the One in favor of total emphasis on the Many) would be to withdraw into a different type of mythology (Adorno 2000b). A second example is Žižek and Bourdieu's focus on unconscious bodily actions and social practice in explaining the reproduction of social relations. Removing the idealist component from Weber's analysis of rationally oriented action (explained in more detail above), Adorno (2000a) is compelled to observe that much action is devoid of such rationally directed motivation. These "reflex actions" as he called them are in part related to subjective aims but they take place "within a network of drives and impulses [and] psychologically expressive actions" which tinge their social relevance (Adorno 2000a:107). Žižek's insightful analysis of cynicism as a component

of ideology in late capitalism is related to this and is a useful third example of an important development in the analysis of the concept of ideology which was previously commented on by Adorno (and Horkheimer). Žižek argues that people engage in social practices fully aware of the inconsistency between ideology and social reality, however they carry on anyway. He illustrates this to show that the traditional critique of ideology no longer holds and indicates Adorno's drawing of the same conclusion. Žižek was referring to Adorno's analysis of totalitarian ideology to illustrate that he had identified that we exist in "the so-called 'post-ideological' world" earlier than many other writers (Žižek 1989:30). However, Adorno (with Horkheimer) anticipates the notion of cynical subjects significantly before his analysis of totalitarian ideology, in his analysis of the culture industry. Consider the following passage from "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception."

The most intimate reactions of human beings have been so thoroughly reified that the idea of anything specific to themselves now persists only as an utterly abstract notion: personality scarcely signifies anything more than shining white teeth and freedom from body odor and emotions. The triumph of advertising in the culture industry is that consumers feel compelled to buy and use its products *even though they see through them* (Adorno and Horkheimer 1972:167 [my italics]).

I do not proceed with the assumption that one dominant ideology monolithically and completely subsumes all of society's thought and controls and organizes all

information expressed through media in the US. In fact, news media are plentiful and disparate (and sometimes independent). Even within media controlled *via* large corporations it is occasionally apparent that the narratives transmitted are contradictory and dissenting. All this being said, some ideas become more dominant than others, and some of these come to influence the way other narratives and ideologies are consumed and reproduced by the general public. Further, ideologies are mediated through the economic and social position and experiential practices of social actors. An important tension is expressed effectively in Abercrombie and Turner (1978) and Abercrombie, Hill, and Turner (1980), one between two seemingly opposing theories of the dominant ideology. Each have been expressed in different places by Marx. One proposes that each class “forms its own system of belief in accordance with its own particular interests which will be basically at variance with those of other classes” (Abercrombie and Turner 1978:151). The other proposes that all classes are influenced by a “system of belief imposed by the dominant class” (Abercrombie and Turner 1978:151). The argument made in this study synthesizes these two theories as an effort to understand that micro- and macro-level social processes exist simultaneously and are both inter-connected.

Experiential practice and social position mediate ideology, dominant or otherwise. So the same dominant ideology which constitutes the “ruling ideas” of the epoch, influence those in different social positions differently based on numerous factors – e.g. where they live, the family in which they were raised, the material conditions in which they were brought up, as well as, their current standard of living, the type of education they received, their gender and sexual orientation, their racial background, etc. For

example, the ideology of the moral work ethic may divide organized laborers from informal workers and/ or the welfare poor by way of the distinction between worthy and unworthy poor and may contribute to a sense of hopelessness and low self-worth in the latter. Both of these groups are responding to the same ideology, but this ideology is mediated by the different material conditions and identity affiliations from which social actors are oriented. From the perspective of class privilege, some sectors of the elite conclude that poverty is exaggerated, the poor in the US really have a high standard of living compared to other advanced societies, and that those who do not work refuse jobs which are adequate and in abundance. These narratives fulfill a variety of functions, and for the dominant classes they help legitimate the existing normative order in which they enjoy great rewards and privileges (Gans 1995). For members of subordinate classes able to upwardly socially mobilize – i.e. “work their way up” – these narratives highlight their own achievements and seemingly weaken critiques of the system by virtue of the valorized few who “worked hard” and “made it.” If they can do it, can’t everyone? A contemporary film like *The Pursuit of Happiness* (Muccino 2006) contains compelling and even moving content about someone who has overcome adversity and achieved material success, but in the current social order, such a text reinforces the ideologies of meritocracy and the moral work ethic. The subtle weaving of these themes into everyday life has helped contribute to the constitution of the existing political culture in which social entitlements are often considered suspect without their provisions being fully understood nor poverty in the US being fully comprehended.

A helpful body of work on the conservative intellectual tradition has been produced by conservatives. Two examples of this, each quite different from the other, are Nash (1998) and Russell Kirk (2001). Nash's excellent, remarkably thorough, and expansive work covers the leading intellectuals in both the traditionalist and libertarian wings of the conservative movement, giving primacy mostly to the power of ideas in the shaping of history. He sees these thinkers as an embattled, courageous group who were able to achieve the impossible. In a bibliographical essay he locates his work as fundamentally objective and in opposition to "critical secondary sources" (Nash 1998:442). He argues that critical secondary sources (written by modern liberals) tend to share "two important assumptions: that the postwar Right was in some sense illegitimate, and that the true American consensus was fundamentally liberal" (Nash 1998:442). Kirk contributed an important series of essays about British and American conservative thinkers (2001). Unlike Nash, Kirk unabashedly and explicitly is writing under no illusion of historical objectivity and openly from a conservative viewpoint. Influenced early by the writings of the libertarians, Hayek and von Mises, Kirk embodied the combination of old and New Right ideas. While he calls for a belief in a moral, universal order empowered by religion, he also writes that local liberties and individual property rights must be protected at all costs (Kirk 2001). Kirk certainly leaned toward the traditionalist camp having considered the *laissez-faire* individualist perspective of the libertarians as inadequate for the organization and functioning of the society.

Some of the literature attributes the ensuing move to the right in the US as a backlash caused by white, working class resentment toward civil rights, rising crime, the

perceived diminishment of neighborhood safety, anti-war rallies, and race riots. Included in this category is Edsall and Edsall (1992), Michael W. Flamm (2003), Dan T. Carter (2000), and Matthew Dallek (2004). Steinfels (1979:4) situated the shift to the right in the US in the context of the thought and accomplishments of a new “party of intellectuals” which came to upstage liberal social thinkers, the neoconservatives. Among those he discusses are Irving Kristol, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, and Daniel Bell. He highlighted the leftist origins of this group who came to respond to “New Left radicalism” in a reactionary and aggressive manner and saw the neoconservatives as a potential threat to democracy and an incredibly effective force at countering the left critique of ideology (Steinfels 1979:45). Steinfels offered an argument about the rise of the right intellectual movement not as an angry sudden “backlash,” as some of the literature does, but rather in terms of the influence of a group of socially liberal thinkers whose points of view would slowly evolve into a new type of conservatism. While Brennan (1995, 2003) acknowledged the effects of a white backlash in the rise of the New Right, she attributed the shift to the right in the US political culture to the grassroots base that was assembled around the Goldwater campaigns which remained in place after he withdrew from the political scene. Though the 1964 presidential race against Lyndon B. Johnson was a big defeat, Goldwaterites learned much from the campaign (Brennan 1995, 2003). The ideas presented and the foundations which were built could be further developed in years to come. She argued that the race was a “baptism by fire” which showed conservatives what could be accomplished outside traditional channels;

“although Goldwater was thoroughly defeated, conservatism was not” (Brennan 1995:103).

Mills (1958) argued that the economic elite had disproportionate power compared to mere politicians. He observed that the decisions of a few shape the social conditions in which a great number of members of society find themselves (Mills 1958). This has led to a growth in the power of an elite, whose world view compared to that of others would accumulate disproportionate influence. Mills (1958) stated that the economy, which was once a scatter of smaller economic units is now dominated by the influence of large corporations. This new economy is “at once a permanent-war economy and a private-corporation economy” (Mills 1958:33). Mills (1958:33) observed that it is no longer the politician, “but the corporation executive [who] is ...more likely to sit with the military to answer the question: what is to be done?” Following Mills, some writers identify the ascendancy of pro-capital ideology in the context of the formation of a unified and class-conscious set of groups as instrumental in the rightward shift in the political culture on certain policy issues. These studies often concentrate on think tanks and lobbying groups and emphasize the decline of the labor movement and discuss welfare only incidentally. Patrick Akard (1992) and David Jacobs (1998) looked historically at the lobbying behavior of corporate political action committees (PACs) and used specific case studies to illustrate how their efforts have affected both popular discourse and legislation regarding labor and the welfare state in the US. In “Corporate Mobilization and Political Power: The Transformation of US Economic Policy in the 1970s” Akard explained that there had been a retreat from the Fordist position previously in use by capital to placate

labor between the finish of World War II and the end of the 1960s. This period (the 1970s to the very early 1980s) saw the fortification and unified efforts of the business lobby to weaken organized labor and the welfare state. One aspect of the transformation of the United States' economy between 1974 and 1981 was the mobilization by prominent business leaders and lobbying groups representing all sectors of capital to carry out a "unified, class-conscious policy offensive" (Akard 1992:597). Jacobs (1998) pointed out that groups like the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) and the Business Roundtable (BR) had played a crucial role in weakening the position of labor and portraying the American welfare state as authoritarian. He quotes Alfred Cleveland from a 1948 Harvard Business Review article who noted the following about the NAM:

The branding of social security as totalitarian when it was first proposed, the wartime barrage of propaganda creating the impression that the government and labor were using the emergency as a means of furthering their own antidemocratic ends...offer further evidence of the narrow base from which the Association has operated... . The extreme conservatism of the NAM...is reason for real alarm (quoted in Jacobs 1988:¶19).

Commenting on the BR, he showed that it was formed by three smaller organizations with an anti-labor agenda.

Other works observe this retrenchment in terms of a reconstitution of class power. Like Akard and Jacobs, some researchers have explained that the resurgence of conservatism and the offensive of capital against public life is an effort to increase

profits, which had been temporarily restrained by the tacit agreement between capital and labor through the 1960s. Examples of this position include J. Craig Jenkins and Teri Shumate (1985), Joseph G. Peschek (1987), Thomas Ferguson and Joel Rogers (1986), Michael Useem (1983), and David Vogel (1989). This literature sees efforts by capital to roll back the social compact as a response to a squeeze on profits caused by increased worker militancy in the 1960s which reduced productivity and hiked up wages.

Domhoff (1990), Piven and Cloward (1985, [1971] 1993), and Aronowitz (2003) have attested to both elite class cohesion and waning social militancy to clarify the shift to the political right in the US. Domhoff (1990) sees himself in a larger tradition along with C. Wright Mills, Floyd Hunter, and those identified by Mills as the plain Marxists. He has argued explicitly against the structural Marxism of Poulantzas, the state autonomy theory he associates with Skocpol, and pluralist theory which he ascribes to writers like Dahl. Relying greatly on Mills, Domhoff set out to show that there is indeed a power elite, they do rule, and it does matter who rules. He also has drawn heavily upon Michael Mann's analysis, assuming no social system and no social totality, arguing instead that there are four overlapping socio-spatial networks: (1) the ideology network – sacred authority (religion), (2) the economic network – institutions concerned with satisfying material needs, (3) the military network, and (4) the political network. Domhoff (1990) argued that absent of a feudal background and any dangerous rival at the border, there is a solid case to be made that leaders from the economic network – the American capitalist class – are in a position of dominance, especially compared to economic elites in Europe. He drew on Mills' assertion that the small size of US state in the nineteenth century

meant that there were strong corporations before there was a large national government. The Wagner Act, which Domhoff (1990) argued was the only huge victory for labor in twentieth century, was possible only because elites were split, the economy was in trouble, and the working class was united. The current situation is rooted in the historical dominance of the state by economic elites and the fragmentation of worker opposition.

Piven and Cloward emphasize the historical expansion and contraction of welfare state programs. In *Regulating the Poor* ([1971] 1993) they argue that US relief rolls expanded in the 1960s to absorb a laboring population made superfluous by agricultural modernization. However, as the rolls grew, pressure for reforms also mounted. While the government came to the aid of the unemployed, there was a strong opposition to pure relief (Piven and Cloward [1971] 1993). This thesis is directly opposed to social liberal theories that the expansion of relief is the result of a humanitarian, idealistic concern for the well-being of the populace. Rather poor relief, argued Piven and Cloward ([1971] 1993), fulfills two functions: to expand of relief to maintain civil order and to contract relief to enforce the work ethic. Their analysis of the AFDC program from 1940 to 1960, leading up to the 60s expansion of programs, is seen as a contraction phase of the relief cycle which started in the late 1930s. After political crises subsided, the program was supportive of the functions of the relief system to enforce work, especially low-wage work. The 1960's expansion was in part due to the combination of black political power movements and other socially based movements. Piven and Cloward ([1982] 1985) in *The New Class War* confirmed that as the protest movements of the 1960s waned, it helped create circumstances where the Reagan welfare cuts of the early 1980s could

ensue. They argued that the Reagan cuts confirm the *Regulating the Poor* thesis, representing an effort to complete the restriction phase of the cycle. Their argument accounts for the class-conscious effort by capitalists in the late 1970s and early 1980s to enhance their objective position given the lesser degree of social disruption and protest to maintain and enlarge profits.

Like Piven and Cloward, Post (1998) focused on the role of capital in the decline of the US welfare state, but covered the period up to the 1996 Welfare Reform Bill. He mainly investigated the role of moderate- and ultra-conservative think-tanks in the ongoing assault against welfare in the US, focusing on the US Chamber of Commerce to illustrate the role of lobbying organizations. Post (1998:1) argued that the attack on welfare is seen by many observers (like Piven and Cloward) “in the context of declining profits and diminished working class and popular militancy.” He quoted Piven and Cloward to illustrate the importance of such a study.

There has not been... ‘...analysis of the stakes of different groups and classes in the welfare state or of the mobilization of business groups against the welfare state... A class-conflict perspective has fallen out of fashion and out of favor, and this at the very historical moment when the welfare state is embattled by class forces’ (Post 1998:1-2).

Post emphasized the significant role played by research and lobbying institutions particularly the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), the Heritage Foundation (HF), the US Chamber of Commerce, and the Brookings Institution in enabling conditions to

become favorable for the ending of welfare entitlements through the 1996 welfare reform bill.

Many theorists have focused on the important ways (for good or ill) welfare state programs have had an effect on the social position of women. Abramovitz (1996) argued that due to the acceptance of the family ethic, the preoccupation with the work ethic, and the lack of interest in the power of women, a critical analysis of the relationship between women and the welfare state was greatly needed. The welfare state consistently favors the conventional family model. The colonial ethic situated women in both home and economic production (Abramovitz 1996). However, after the industrial revolution, explained Abramovitz (1996), women's roles were increasingly geared towards consumption. She argued that because programs have favored women who accept traditional roles, a new deserving-undeserving dichotomy which accounts for gender roles can better be understood (Abramovitz 1996). Along the lines of Schram, Abramovitz (1996) called for policies which do not privilege women in conventional home and family roles, because unless this ideology is purged, it will be reproduced. An important contradiction of the welfare state is that although it supports the interest of capital and patriarchal power, it can also support the political and economic power of women (Abramovitz 1996). Describing herself as a socialist feminist, Abramovitz (1996) considered society's gender division as co-equal with its class divisions and central to her analysis of the political economy. Accordingly, she noted that including patriarchy complicates the otherwise useful analyses of O'Connor and Gough. From this perspective, the welfare state operates to uphold patriarchy and to enforce female

subordination in both the spheres of production and reproduction, encoding deeply in social welfare policy the ideology of women's roles (Abramovitz 1996).

Piven (1996) discussed the tradition in the feminist literature to express hostility towards the state with terms like social patriarchy and public patriarchy. She observes the irony that while many female intellectuals think of the state in this way, women active in the feminist movement have increasingly turned to the state as an area for political organization and influence. This antipathy by intellectuals, according to Piven, is wrong given that there are contradictory outcomes of state involvement – on the one hand greater autonomy and power, but on the other it can be a mechanism for surveillance and control. Piven (1996) also included a brief discussion of ideology which includes Durkheim, Marx, and Marxist structuralists. She sees the renewed interest in Gramsci, particularly Hobsbawm's work on peasant movements as an appropriate point of reference for looking at the shift in women's roles in the US. Like peasants in his work, women developed ideas that reflected their lived experience within the subsistence economy of the patriarchal family and that described and justified that experience. Thus family values and maternity were celebrated. It was out of these relations that women developed a "moral economy of domesticity" (Piven 1996:186). Observing that welfare state programs make women a little less insecure and powerless, with women often working in and running them, Piven (1996) rejected the argument that the state has replaced men as a primary patriarch. While the breakdown of the traditional family stripped women of old resources, it freed women to use other ones. The possibility of electoral participation became realized and the complex of program administration

included many women in positions of leadership (Piven 1996). Piven (1996) argued that this outcome represents a form of empowerment and has helped create social solidarities among women both within and across class lines.

Theorists of social policy like Fraser (1989), Fraser and Gordon (1994), Schneider and Ingram (1993, 2005), and Schram (1993, 1996, 2000a; 2000b) offer discursive analyses of welfare policy which account for the construction of taken for granted categories *via* welfare state practices. This approach also takes into account how welfare state programs, though often the result of the activism of the welfare rights movement and efforts of well-intentioned reformers, can be part of the problem they are designed to address. For these theorists, this is not the foundation of an argument against increasing assistance to poor mothers but rather an interrogation of discursive practices, e.g. those which assume the inferiority of female-headed families or take for granted the tendency of welfare to create dependence. Schram (1993) argued that while modernist perspectives offer a framework where the problems of the poor can be attributed to their concrete conditions and illustrate how current policy strategies deflect blame toward individuals, postmodern perspectives better show how policy is itself constitutive of the grim reality it sets out to address.

Fraser (1989) highlighted the false notions on which the provision of welfare benefits are premised. For example she observed that the ideal family (a male breadwinner, his homemaker wife, and their children), to which the welfare household was presented as an aberration, only existed in fewer than 15 percent of US households at that time (Fraser 1989). She also suggested that “needs talk” operated as a “medium for

making and contesting of political claims” (Fraser 1989:161). With women’s political struggle, boundaries delineating the categories of economic, political, and private (domestic) open themselves up to contestation. However, bureaucratic and managerial discourses take place in more rigidly defined conditions and in ways consistent with the reigning ideology in terms of what falls under the categories of economic, political, and domestic (Fraser 1989). Fraser and Gordon (1994) considered a term commonly used in such discourse – “dependency” – and subjected it to similar interrogation. In welfare policy discourse, it is used as an ideological term. It’s usage in the age of industrial capitalism was constructed in opposition to the inferior categories of pauper, slave or colonial native, and housewife (Fraser and Gordon 1994). So the normative category of independent white workingman was premised on the economic and social subordination of his wife and contrasted with the degraded representations of dependent men – those of paupers dependent on poor relief and racist images of black men unable to dominate “their women” (Fraser and Gordon 1994). They argued that the term has come to be associated with pathology in postindustrial clinical discourses (e.g. those of medicine, social work, and psychology) with a strong correlation to the feminine (Fraser and Gordon 1994). Schneider and Ingram (1993, 2005) described a social construction of “target populations.” Different types of target populations are constructed from the interaction of (positive and negative) social constructions with political power (1993, 2005). The characterization of target populations “are normative and evaluative, portraying groups in positive or negative terms through symbolic language, metaphors, and stories” (Schneider and Ingram 1993). The social construction of target populations

strongly influence both the policy agenda and attributes of policy, since they influence public officials as well as the general public (Schneider and Ingram 1993). The long-term consequences for what Schneider and Ingram (2005) called the social construction of deservedness include how benefits and burdens are distributed in society. This often proves to be divisive as privileged groups resist political efforts by previously disadvantaged groups to reconstruct themselves as more deserving and policy makers exploit the trepidation of those privileged groups for political gain (Schneider and Ingram 2005).

Sanford Schram (1993, 1996, 2000a; 2000b) has offered an analysis of welfare policy discourse which accounts for the construction of identity *via* welfare state practices. Put another way, he favors an approach which addresses how “the practices of the welfare state are actually constitutive forces, contributing to the conditions of poverty” (1993:253). While it is important to reveal the wrongly construed emphasis on individual behavior by the dominant paradigm, Schram (1993, 1996) argued that postmodern policy analysis sets out to destabilize dominant distinctions like independent-dependent, contract-charity, family-promiscuity, etc. Clinton’s decision to regressively reform welfare grew out of research written in an economic-therapeutic-managerial discourse with a bias of focusing attention on behavior of the poor and even rooting that behavior in pathology (Schram 1996; Schram 2000a; 2000b). Schram (2000a:82) asserted that ultimately, Clinton’s welfare reform “helped accelerate the tendency to construct welfare dependency as an illness.” Welfare discourse has thus been successfully diverted from the sphere of the economic and into that of the medical.

Rather than structurally affected and in need of material resources, one is in need of treatment for personal problems so that their reliance on public assistance may be reduced (Schram 2000a). Given what has been called the feminization of poverty, poor women with children continue to be consigned to the margins of society while welfare policy discourse tends to naturalize (create as an ideology) the heterosexual, monogamous, two-parent family household (Schram 1993; 1996; 2000a; 2000b).

Policy analysis does not have to be “postmodernist” in order to interrogate naturalized categories reinforced by policy strategies or to be reflexively conscious that welfare state policies can themselves constitute further problems or even have the opposite outcome from what was (at least on the level of discourse) openly intended. Historically, the libertarian argument that expanding welfare state programs creates a more totalitarian state complex which monitors, controls, and reduces to dependency its citizens, and more contemporarily the “nanny state” critique applied by latter day *laissez-fairists* has its counterpart in the work of scholars on the left who are mindful that welfare state programs can act as mechanisms of social control in the lives of poor women. This function of the US welfare state is demonstrated by (1) the rationale for women’s poverty as caused by their individual behavior, (2) moralistic, clinical, and economic scrutiny of their reproductive and sexual behaviors, and (3) work requirements for TANF benefits.

Methods

The study is an empirically and theoretically informed analysis looking at the ideological practice, which is situated historically in terms of its determination, of the

groups and intellectuals which would ultimately shape welfare state discourse and policy in the US. The rightward shift of the American political culture to one which is hostile toward welfare is the consequence of this ideological struggle and also of the transformation of important features of global capitalism and thus structural economic conditions within the US. Given, as Althusser ([1965] 2005) confirmed, that ideology is an important part of objective reality, ideological struggles are intertwined within those of classes and rooted in the material reality of the society in which they take place. The material world exists prior to and independently from our historically and socially produced perceptions of it. However, this world is filtered through ideological systems which are constitutive of inputs from political, economic, and military elites as well as non-elite sources (like particular individual activists or interest groups). It is also mediated by socialization *via* family, peers, and members of communities. Although these networks consist of “always-already interpellated individuals as subjects,” these “subjects” are often involved in ongoing efforts at critical self-awareness, and at times collective expressions of political agency (Althusser 1971:175). The material constitution of this world, while shaping political and cultural practices are also continuously affected by them. Neither of these spheres are static nor mutually exclusive. As political and social conditions are always changing, so too are the best equipped agents both guiding and responding to that change.

While the functioning of ideology in late capitalist society is well clarified by Althusser, Bourdieu, Žižek, Laclau and Mouffe, and other more contemporary thinkers, the framework of Adorno and his Frankfurt school colleagues predominantly motivates

the theoretical and methodological basis of this study. Ideology here is addressed through a critical negative lens and is used to describe phenomena which are historically contingent but seemingly appear fixed, embedded in nature, and transhistorical. Social actors' beliefs will not be taken for granted as psychological structures nor will social consensus on issues of work, family, and personal responsibility be reified as "practical" or "good common sense." Attempted here is the breaking apart of such tightly bound ideological forms for the purpose of observation and critique. The study incorporates an historical method which is largely qualitative and will chiefly cover the span beginning with the period just after World War II to the 1996 welfare reform bill. It will be necessary, however, to examine some of the kernels of conservative thought and the circumstances around which they came together prior to the war. This research is case oriented and focuses on specific historical processes longitudinally, that is the focus is on the United States and the series of events contributing to the shift in its political culture in relation to the welfare state. I analyze how the expansion and composition of the conservative intellectual movement and its methods of ideological deployment converged with particular structural economic features in the United States. It is through the conjunction of these circumstances that a political climate emerged that deeply problematized welfare on politically conservative grounds. The sources analyzed in the study include archived papers, journal articles, congressional transcripts, newspaper articles, and occasional sound bites and popular culture references pertaining to what we call welfare and which have come to construct our "common sense" in relation to it. One interview was conducted. I spoke with Lawrence Mead, a professor of politics and a

visiting scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. Professor Mead was active in the public dialogue in the years leading up to the 1996 Welfare Reform Bill. Analogous to Riesman, Glazer, and Denney's ([1950] 1953) qualifying statement in their preface to *The Lonely Crowd*, the use of this interview and the textual readings incorporated in the study are not meant to represent the entire genealogy or enormous range of contemporary conservative thought about the welfare state, but rather to serve as a foundation of illustrative data for the purpose of organizing and interpreting the effort to shape American public opinion on the topic.

Macro-level historical forces are investigated through a micrological study of the texts mentioned above. That is, the particularities of the texts studied are located within their larger, macro-level historical contexts. When elucidating complex historical processes this way, there is always the risk of inferring more from examined relationships between historical events and narratives than is perhaps substantiated. This study's author has tried to bear this risk in mind by employing a hermeneutic understanding of micro- and macro-level social processes. This is not at all to assume that there is a seamless unification between the two. On the contrary, the contradictory, yet mutually constitutive relation between these two realms of sociality reflects the nature of the social world itself. Instead, apparently unified realities will be held up to a critical magnifying glass in order that their constituent and contradictory particularities may be better understood and contextualized.

PART II – Contending Conservatisms: Locating Commonalities

-Chapter 3: The Old Right-

Introduction

The old, *laissez-faire* right (what would come to be known in the United States as libertarianism), would ultimately become integrated into fusionist conservatism. While eschewing political and philosophical positions which would support the need for centralized power and a large state in the interwar period, many of its proponents would join those who saw the Soviet Union as a global threat, against which the “free world” needed to be protected. Traditionalist conservatism, as stated in the Introduction, was often hostile toward the notion of mass democracy, and hierarchy in society was not regarded as the result of an economy whose functions are best left unobstructed, but rather the vestige of a better time and glorious, quasi-feudal past. Religious and moral considerations were the guiding principles for this wing of conservatism. Fusionist conservatism, incorporated principles from both of these movements, and would eventually constitute what would become the “New Right” and what is now simply American conservatism. The neoconservative label was first applied to a particular group of ex-progressive intellectuals who moved to the right and would eventually reject the radical student movements and the emerging New Left in the 1950s and 1960s. While neoconservatism in some ways has remained distinct from the contemporary American right, its style and *modus operandi* would be absorbed into the larger conservative movement and make it more engaging and palatable to the general public. Its legacy and

influence on the larger movement – the reinforcement of a neo-imperialist foreign policy, an ongoing attack on the social safety net, and an austere and puritanical position on morality and family – helped construct the ideology of American welfare state decline. American conservatism is a philosophical and political mongrel. The significance of its politico-philosophical synthesis, as it relates to social and economic policy, is perhaps best understood in terms of its consequences. The rhetoric of *laissez-faire* economics would become reduced to a semantic instrument to justify the preservation and escalation of social and economic hierarchy. Its rhetoric would include the anti-New Dealism of the American Old Right, which would develop into the contemporary dominant ideologies regarding government assistance, those regarding the moral work ethic, privileging marriage and the two-parent nuclear family, emphasizing meritocracy, questioning the sexual behavior of poor women, and assuming the superiority of whiteness and maleness.

Nash (1998:118) saw this landscape of contending conservatisms as “divergent tendencies” consisting of

three loosely related groups: traditionalists or new conservatives, appalled by the erosion of values and the emergence of a secular, rootless, mass society; libertarians, apprehensive about the threat of the State to private enterprise and individualism; and disillusioned ex-radicals and their allies, alarmed by international Communism.

While American conservatism consisted of diverging tendencies, and the different groups were only loosely related, the ex-radicals were brought into the conservative fold along

varying stages of it's own transformation, and they helped determine its direction. By the early 1950s, the various strands of conservative thought were not mutually exclusive:

Traditionalists and libertarians were usually anti-Communist, while ex-Communists generally endorsed free-market capitalism and Western traditions. Nevertheless, the impulses that comprised the developing conservative movement were clearly diverse (Nash 1998:118).

The need for consolidation and some sort of consensus would become apparent, and the iconic conservative, William F. Buckley set out to do just that. The formation of *National Review (NR)* would become quite effective in this endeavor. The common cause against “collectivism” would greatly support the uniting, though not always amiably, of these diverging tendencies of the right. Collectivism represented to the libertarians or *laissez-faire* individualists a tendency towards central planning and increased government control creating conditions for the gradual decline of individual liberty and thus ultimately totalitarianism. To the traditionalist conservatives, it represented a concerted and combined effort through an ideology of modernist rationalism and relativism to do away with an older, wiser, and hierarchical social order which would also in due course result in totalitarianism. For the more hard line tendencies in each camp, Nazism, Stalinism, and New Dealism were regarded as different forms of the same species of collectivist political formation. Accordingly, government efforts toward redistribution, were vehemently opposed.

The Virtue of Anarchic Markets

The years leading up to the enactment of the New Deal and especially the involvement of the US in World War II were not exactly fertile times for free-market ideas and for what is commonly called the Old Right in the US. The authority of Keynesianism was widely accepted, and according to a Roper poll for *Fortune* Magazine, over two-thirds of the population seemed to not view government intervention in the economy negatively and supported government provisions for subsistence for those with no other means (Erskine 1975). The Old Right comprised the American right from the mid 1930s to approximately the mid 1950s. The early thought and literature of the laissez-fairists during this period focused on the crisis of an emerging totalitarianism in democratic societies. This emergence was explained in large part by growing bureaucracies and increased restrictions on individual freedom, both created by the increasingly centralized power of well meaning government planners. Its rhetoric was radically anti-establishment but at times unabashedly elitist, eliciting the label Tory anarchism by later adherents and analysts. Later, post-war libertarian material, that which would become increasingly influential, began to give up much of its radical character and gradually intertwined itself with those traditionalist principals to which it had previously been opposed. It retained the rhetoric of crisis and urgency, but philosophical absolutes became a point of emphasis. For example, the notion of the self-regulating market was attributed to the very laws of nature, and advocates of central planning were indicted as relativists who oppose nature itself and deny moral standards. Perhaps most importantly, much emphasis was also placed on the role of ideas in the

shaping of history, thus the best response to the threat of collectivism was through a war of ideas. Many of these themes have parallels in the literature of the traditionalists, as will be seen later. In many ways, the Old Right was originally a critical reaction to an even older right, the conservatism of early nineteenth century Europe. Its philosophical premise, which exists today in the conservative movement largely as ideology, was anti-statist and anti-big government. The Old Right was an early twentieth century expression of irreverence to the idea of absolute power exercised through traditional authority. It regarded New Deal legislation as an expression of the state imposing its will on the masses. During its time, the Old Right had struggled and slowly been defeated by what it saw as the drive towards liberal statism through the enactment of the New Deal and America's involvement in the Second World War and the Cold War. Libertarianism was hardly the philosophy of idle theorists during these years. While things were grim for the *laissez-faire* Old Right, it had postured itself as a feisty underdog in a battle against a liberal, corporate, leviathan state which was collecting and consolidating power.

Rothbard (1980; 2007) and Nash (1998) present the Old Right as an embattled group whose ranks either faded away, ultimately joined the neoconservatives in their anti-communist crusade, or held on to their individualist and isolationist position in relative obscurity come World War II and beyond. Given the importance placed on the role of ideas in shaping reality, the eventual convergence of free-market intellectuals which took place at the Mont Pelerin conference in Switzerland in 1947 did so on the premise that western civilization was in danger and that the only way to prevent its collapse was through a war of ideas. The Old Right would make concessions

philosophically and strategically with traditionalist conservatism which allowed some libertarian positions to come to fruition, but it mostly opened itself up to co-optation and had its principles reduced to rhetoric for use as a political instrument. The early free-marketers and individualists, like Albert Jay Nock and H.L. Mencken, didn't regard themselves as conservatives in the 1920s but later joined anti-New Deal conservatives like Hoover in opposition to the Social Security Act (Rothbard 1980; Rothbard 2007). Though always anti-egalitarian, *laissez-faire* individualists like Mencken and Nock had allied themselves with progressives and socialists against the League of Nations, big business, and repressive government control of personal moral behavior. Mencken had founded the *American Mercury* in 1924 with George Jean Nathan, and he explained that the paper's editors would not make any claims of any one "sovereign balm" which would cure the world of its problems (Mencken 1924:27). While it served as a forum for a variety of oppositional views, including those against war and imperialism, it was a sort of bastion of ideas supporting a market system free from interference from the state. In the first issue, he notes that the common belief in easy class mobility in the American system was simply myth. While he saw this ideology for what it was, "the American national religion," he also expressed that the notion that "the interests of landlord and tenant, hangman and condemned, cat and rat are identical" is some of the "worst nonsense prevailing" (Mencken 1924:28). It is not that the market was portrayed idealistically as a mechanism that would fulfill all of society's needs, but rather one which would preserve natural inequalities and distribute resources based on natural faculties. Zoologist and social Darwinist H.M. Parshley (1924:226) wrote in an early issue that the "teaching of

modern biology is ...diametrically opposed to the abolition of free competition, as implied, for instance, in giving undue assistance to the weak at the expense of the strong or in maintaining uniform wages for variable workmen.” Another article described the division of labor in capitalism, its hierarchical structure, and system of unequal rewards as a system that works. It explained that “while it may not be fit for Paradise, it is certainly good enough for this earth. ...Its weaknesses are mainly the weaknesses of *Homo sapiens*” (Dreher 1925: 411).

Nock co-founded and edited *The Freeman*, along with Francis Neilson, from 1920-1924. Nock considered himself an individualist and radical, writing in the tradition of Herbert Spencer. While *The Freeman* also provided a venue for a variety of writers who were oppositionists and considered leftists in the American political context, Nock (1920) described himself and the magazine as friends of the capitalist. Many of the weekly’s contributors hailed the benefits of a system where the capitalist and worker were co-partners, not adversaries, in the realm of production (Nock 1920). However, he was opposed to big business and warned that not all capitalists should be regarded as monopolists, for it is “the monopolist who is the real enemy of both capital and labor” (Nock 1920:368). Nock argued that competition, not the struggles of labor unions, should determine wages as per the laws of the market and that the duty of the radical is to recognize that monopoly, not a need for arbitrary redistribution, is the true root of social problems (Nock 1920). At this period of his writing, he identified conservatism (in the form of traditional authority) as deeply problematic, seeing among the leadership of Soviet Russia the same conservative features as those in the American state which

assisted monopolists in amassing their great fortunes. In his first column of the *American Mercury* after Mencken had resigned editorship, Nock had identified the New Deal as a continuation of prohibition and government aid to big business (Rothbard 2007). In addition, he argued that the issue of relief is one for which no society is solvent enough to work out. He reflects in his *Journal of Forgotten Days* that “no country was ever yet rich enough to feed all its idle people, nor is ours” (Nock 1948:61). In this work, he laments that the only political debate on the New Deal at that time was not about its legitimacy, but rather quibbling over who will be fortunate enough to operate the levers of power in administering it (Nock 1948). What became a perfunctory and omnipresent aspect of American social life, Nock (1948) saw the New Deal as an extension of the tyranny of state power, and along with fascism, Nazism, and Stalinism, it was part of the same tendency of centralized power to act as an impediment to individual liberty. In his memoirs, Nock (1943:167) wondered how many “plain people” in the US “would know that Communism, the New Deal, Fascism, Nazism are merely so many trade names for collectivist Statism, like the trade names for tooth-pastes which are all exactly alike except for the flavouring [sic].”

The landscape of interests which would eventually come to be called the conservative movement was divided, embittered, and had undergone a series of chaotic realignments and consolidations leading up to the Second World War. While the ideology of government control seemed goliath and ubiquitous, its own internal contradictions would prove to determine the course of free-market ideas. Realignments and regroupings among the free-marketers had come out a range of strategic

considerations, acts of desperation, and feelings of despondency and betrayal. Against the New Deal, many *laissez-faire* individualists felt that there was no choice but to join “the conservatives, monopolists, Hooverites, etc., whom they had previously despised” (Rothbard 1980; 2007:25). Consider Nock’s comments on Hoover’s anti-New Deal book, *The Challenge to Liberty*: “Think of a book on such a subject, by such a man! It makes one wonder how many people in this country would read a treatise on liberty, written by a disinterested hand” (Nock 1948:33). The joining of former leftist allies to the New Deal coalition, such as the support by the American Communist Party during the Popular Front period, left many *laissez-faire* individualists feeling astonished and resentful. As critics of US intervention in the war, charges were made by former collaborators turned supporters of the war effort that the isolationism of the *laissez-fairists* was reactionary and akin to fascism. Thus, many early libertarians found themselves forming a coalition with strange bedfellows, the conservative Republicans, who in their view were partly responsible for creating the conditions in which the New Deal became possible (Rothbard 1980; 2007).

In the early post war period, libertarians were scattered, unorganized, and were speaking about the dangers of collectivism during a time when Americans were optimistic and confident that the New Deal had been instrumental in raising the living standard of destitute citizens during the hardest of times. Its early proponents were isolationists, despite the United States’ involvement in World War II and the war’s role in salvaging the economy. As a consensus was emerging around the New Deal and Roosevelt’s drive to war was ensuing, the American political and ideological spectrum

was restructured. Opponents of the war who were previously on the left found themselves castigated as reactionaries and anti-Semites (Rothbard 1980; Rothbard 2007). Many of the *laissez-faire* individualists, such as Mencken, Nock, and Nock's protégé, Frank Chodorov, had been diminished in their access to getting their ideas out. Mencken had withdrawn from political commentary and Nock and Mencken were no longer writing for the *American Mercury* after the paper lost its libertarian and isolationist editor in 1939 (Rothbard 2007). Chodorov was terminated as director of the Henry George School in New York for maintaining anti-war views. Anti-war progressives found political allies among the conservative, isolationist Mid-Western *laissez-faire* Republicans. Many who were not before would come to consider themselves conservative after being chastised as such for so long. The American Communist Party's support of the war, except for the period of the Stalin-Hitler Pact, and their charges against isolationists (both conservative and non-conservative) as "conscious fascists" helped stoke a resentment which would later help push many who were leaning toward the left towards the anti-communists right (Rothbard 2007:41). This period had ushered in US intervention in a bloody foreign war, an economy with more domestic regulation, a stronger American state, and millions of military draftees, resulting in the alienation of those on the right who considered themselves isolationists and classical liberals (Nash 1998). It was a bleak time for the libertarians in this period, and from their perspective, the old New Deal left was in its heyday. However, there were still stirrings within the Old Right, the ideas from which would later gain momentum once fused with traditionalist conservative philosophy.

Friedrich von Hayek's *Road to Serfdom*, published in 1944, was extremely popular in its day and was influential for many important future figures in the American conservative movement. Along with von Mises' less popular *Bureaucracy*, *Road to Serfdom* was a major inspiration for future *NR* columnist Russell Kirk (Nash 1998). While Kirk's views were solidly isolationist and individualist through World War II, like Buckley, he would later become a leader of the intellectual New Right and disavow many of the basic libertarian principles. It also was instrumental in converting many former socialists to individualism/ capitalism. Among them were John Chamberlain, a leading leftist writer in the 1930s, and Frank Meyer, who became one of the many ex-communists that became virulent proponents of anti-communism (Nash 1998; Rothbard 2007). Both would become central figures at *NR*. While Chodorov, Rothbard, and other staunch *laissez-faire* individualists felt that Hayek's book was reformist and did not go far enough, *Reader's Digest* had condensed the book for its readership and the *Hearst Papers* published it as a serial (Nash 1998, Rothbard 2007).

The American release of Hayek's book was a monumental event in the resurgence of classical liberalism in the US. It both appealed to and offended many. The book became regular assigned reading on America's college campuses and, in von Mises' words, "within a few weeks the small book became a best seller and was translated into all civilized languages" (Mises 1962a: ¶11). The book raised more than a few eyebrows, and its popularity in America shocked Hayek himself. According to Nash (1998:6) the criticism from the liberal consensus in the US could have been caused in part by the fact that the idea of a "new kind of rationally constructed society" had still seemed novel for

many Americans, and to criticize the New Deal project was to criticize something nearly sacred. On the other hand, its positive resonance with many Americans could have been because the New Deal consensus had never fully solidified (Nash 1998). Either way, to Hayek and his followers, this rationally constructed society was an illusion. It was not the aim of central planning or socialism which he took issue with, but the means by which its aims are sought out. Hayek writes that since “it may...seem unfair to use the term ‘socialism’ to describe its methods rather than its aims...it is probably preferable to describe the methods which can be used for a great variety of ends as collectivism and to regard socialism as a species of that genus” (Hayek 1969:33). Therefore, “collectivism” describes market interventions and planning in general. For Hayek, collectivism represented nothing less than the suppression of freedom. The nuances and differing objectives between the different varieties were not important to him:

The various kinds of collectivism, communism, fascism, etc., differ among themselves in the nature of the goal toward which they want to direct the efforts of society. But they all differ from [classical] liberalism and individualism in wanting to organize the whole of society and all its resources for this unitary end and in refusing to recognize autonomous spheres in which the ends of the individuals are supreme. In short, *they are totalitarian* in the true sense of this new word which we have adopted to describe the unexpected but nevertheless inseparable manifestations of what in theory we call collectivism (Hayek 1969:56 [my italics]).

Hayek's book and its dramatic reception put some wind in the sails of the Old Right, whose ideas at that time were less than popular. The *laissez-faire*, Old Right tended to regard the workings of the market and Adam Smith's concept of the invisible hand as sacrosanct principles with applications not just within the realm of economics but in society as well. A year after *Road to Serfdom*, von Hayek would elaborate the belief that economic principles are themselves rooted in nature, and are applicable beyond the economic realm. He argued with regard to the price system that it was the "economic calculus" which coordinates the "separate actions of different people in the same way as subjective values help the individual to co-ordinate the parts of his plan" (Hayek 1945:¶20). In order for its real function to be understood, the price system must be regarded as a means of information transmission (Hayek 1945). As a product of knowledge and its processes often operating beyond the level of consciousness, his argument situates the price mechanism within human nature itself (Hayek 1945). Reminiscent to George Herbert Mead's concept of self imposed social control by the individual *via* taking the role of the other, Hayek (1945a:¶23) argues that

the problem is precisely how to extend the span of our utilization of resources beyond the span of the control of any one mind; and therefore, how to dispense with the need of conscious control, and how to provide inducements which will make the individuals do the desirable things without anyone having to tell them what to do.

Though von Mises' had been Chief Economic Advisor to the Austrian Government in the 1920s and his business cycle theory had been adopted by many of the

younger English economists in the early 1930s to explain the American Great Depression, his work had become largely forgotten by the late 1930s amidst the Keynesian revolution. (Rothbard N.d.; 2007). He did not make the splash that Hayek had, but nonetheless, for the Old Right, his great efforts were part of a small upsurge in libertarian thought. His *Omnipotent Government* was published in 1944 (along with his book, *Bureaucracy*), and was being read at Columbia University at that time as a counter-position to Franz Neumann's *Behemoth* (Rothbard 2007). National Socialism, argued von Mises (1944), was a by-product and modification of central planning and socialism. Conversely, Neumann (1963) held that adequate legal restrictions were not enacted by the German state and therefore the growth of monopolies went on unfettered. Neumann (1963) concluded that National Socialism was thus a totalitarian variant of monopoly capitalism. Consistent with Hayek's prognosis, von Mises (1944:53) writes that "every step which leads from capitalism towards planning is necessarily a step nearer to absolutism and dictatorship."

Mises' nearly 1000 page tome, *Human Action*, was published in 1949 and was received by many in the movement as a sort of "capitalist manifesto" (Nash 1998:9). While Karl Polanyi (2001) argued that the advent of machines and mechanized production gave rise to the ideology of the self-regulating market, in *Human Action* von Mises saw the process as the reverse. He argued that the technological achievements leading to the industrial revolution had been the consequence of the efforts of the *laissez-faire* economic theorists (Mises 1949). The Marxian identification of *laissez-faire* principals as part of the "ideological superstructure" of the capitalist mode of production

and its assumption that the improvement of the engines of production were simply contemporaneous with the doctrine of the free-market were viewed by von Mises (1949:9) as myths. Also in his analysis, he credits the “*laissez-faire* methods of the past” with the advent of the shorter workday and the higher standard of living of US workers compared to those of other societies, methods which refrained from interfering with capitalism’s “evolution” (Mises 1949:741). Government and reformers were not identified as the historical thrust for these social transformations, and like Hayek, he attached the blame for the emergence of “aggressive nationalism” on collectivism and central planning (Mises 1949:819). Central planning can only result from the despotic consolidation of power and thus promotes the emergence of conflicts “for which no peaceful solution can be found,” since such peaceful resolutions are only possible through a world government constituted by absolute free trade and free-markets (Mises 1949:819-820). The utopianism of von Mises’ framework becomes especially evident in his apologia for imperialism and his description of social conditions in a society where capitalism is left unfettered. He argued that “it is false to blame the European powers for the poverty of the masses in their colonial empires. In investing capital, the foreign rulers did all they could for an improvement in material well-being” (Mises 1949:832). Rather, he explains, it is the fault of the colonized who are not willing to leave traditional beliefs behind and accept the capitalism which is being offered to them. To be fair, von Mises (1949) assumed that these societies will struggle for their independence, but his assumption that European colonizers were engaging in nation building efforts is at best naïve. In envisioning a society with “unhampered capitalism,” he foresees that there

would no longer be a question of poverty as it exists in “backwards” nations; such a capitalist utopia would create a society in which “there are no able-bodied paupers” (Mises 1949:832). Throughout *Human Action*, von Mises discounts what he views as myth e.g. Marxism, metaphysical superstition, and social scientific methodologies which claim to result in complete understanding. While any methodological claim of ultimate knowledge is immediately false, his views of unhampered capitalism as a “logically incontestable procedure” is itself pure metaphysics (Mises 1949:239).

The pressures of war further isolated and split libertarian scholars, not just in terms of their views towards government involvement in foreign wars but also in terms of their proximity to each other. The war had left classical liberalism in a feeble and disorganized state. There was a need to regroup and organize a political strategy. By 1945, von Hayek would begin to advocate for and plan the formation of an international organization to meet annually to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas for like-minded libertarian scholars. The effort would prove to be fruitful, but was predicated on contradictory principles. While heavy on rhetoric which warned of the evils of collectivism/ central planning, nuances of the program continued to move away from an unadulterated *laissez-faire*, unregulated market position. The Acton-Tocqueville Society was the name proposed by von Hayek, but after objections by von Mises during the group’s first meeting, they took the name of the spa where the meeting took place, Mont Pelerin (Hazlitt 2004). Hayek (Hayek Papers, HI, Box 61, 1945, Folder 8), in an August 1945 memorandum, explained his partiality to Lord Acton and Alexis de Tocqueville’s political philosophies, for which he identifies a “kinship” with the “ideas of Edmund

Burke.” In Burke, we find an early modern expression of the attempt to reconcile classical conservative and classical liberal ideals in response to the brutality of the French Revolution, i.e. an acknowledged significance for individual freedom and liberty but also deference and respect toward the old, hierarchical, order (Burke [1790] 1986). As he wrote, “... They may do what they please: We ought to see what it will please them to do before we risque [sic] congratulations” (Burke [1790] 1986:91). Hayek (Hayek Papers, HI, Box 61, 1945 Folder 8) was careful to indicate that he did not want to apply Burke’s philosophy as a whole, but rather his “wisdom purged of its excrescences [sic] and developed in the light of the experience of the last century.” Just which aspects he intended to retain and which to discard as excrescences is not totally clear, but Hayek’s intention of using political philosophers with an intellectual heritage in the thought of Burke for the namesake of his new organization is not insignificant. While the Acton-Tocqueville Society name was disposed of, its choice by von Hayek, especially that of Acton is revealing. He saw in this work the elevation of “Burkean philosophy to the highest point it has yet reached” (Hayek Papers, HI, Box 69, 1946, Folder 9). This is a significant, although contradictory, gesture of readiness to accept “legitimate” government authority and perhaps even recognition of a traditional or even religious socio-political formation. We find in the work of Acton the predominance of the “collective will” or “free will of the collective people” over “every man’s free will” (Acton [1922] 2005:24, 94). In God and in His will, Acton ([1922] 2005:24) identified a “will superior to the collective will of man,” which was made known by the ancients. Ultimately, he resolves that Christ’s words during his last visit to the temple three days

prior to his crucifixion – “Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s,” – was a symbolic “repudiation of absolutism” and an “inauguration of freedom” (Acton [1922] 2005:29). Thus we have a christening of sorts of civil governance as the source of its legitimacy. This is not to cast Acton as a conservative (in the classical sense), but rather to highlight elements of what would become the ideology of neoliberalism which disclose its inner contradictions. Rothbard’s (2007) articulation of this contradiction is informative. Remembering a debate he had while in graduate school with liberal friends, Rothbard (2007:74) acknowledged a valid challenge made to his *laissez-faire* position:

They: What is the legitimate basis for your *laissez-faire* government, for this political entity confined solely to defending person and property?

[Rothbard]: Well, the people get together and decide to establish such a government.

They: But if “the people” can do that, why can’t they do exactly the same thing and get together to choose a government that will build steel plants, dams, etc.?

I realized in a flash that their logic was impeccable, that *laissez-faire* was logically untenable, and that either I had to become a liberal, or move onward into anarchism.

In calling for the formation of his proposed organization, von Hayek exhibited a calamitous and urgent tone. Hayek (Hayek Papers, HI, Box 61, 1945, Folder 8) argued

that civilization was in danger and that there was an urgent need for a common effort to reconsider

our moral and political values and to sort out those which must in all circumstances be preserved and never sacrificed or endangered for some other ‘advances’, and a deliberate effort to make people aware of the values which they take for granted as the air they breathe and which may yet be endangered if no deliberate effort is made to preserve them.

In terms of organizational structure, von Hayek had in mind the carrying out of the task of providing “channels and facilities of communication, of bringing together the people whose common outlook and interests make fruitful collaboration possible” (Hayek Papers, HI, Box 61, 1945, Folder 8). These same points were highlighted at an October 1946 speech von Hayek would give at Stanford University. He warned of the “serious dangers on the path on which we are moving,” that if nothing was done the “gradual advance of totalitarian control” would not be prevented (Hayek Papers, HI, Box 69, 1946, Folder 9). Democratic countries were in some ways in more jeopardy than the “ex-belligerent countries” because the libertarian intellectuals from the formerly totalitarian societies understood the mechanism by which totalitarian regimentation emerged (Hayek Papers, HI, Box 69, 1946, Folder 9). Americans, he argued, felt falsely secure from the “horrors of totalitarian government,” and that the commonly held opinion was the same in Europe prior to the rise of fascism (Hayek Papers, HI, Box 69, 1946, Folder 9). For von Hayek, a state of opinion which reflected a hopefulness that the government had an

important role to play in ensuring a minimal standard of living was evoking government control for a desirable outcome but was “bound to lead us into a system where the government controls everything” (Hayek Papers, HI, Box 69, 1946, Folder 9). In an effort to vilify the New Deal and government planning during the same speech, he quoted Rexford Tugwell and generalized that what “American ‘planners’ have in store for you” is Soviet-style totalitarianism (Hayek Papers, HI, Box 69, 1946, Folder 9). But as the “American would-be-dictators” were not taken seriously as a threat, he advocated for a collaborative, international effort including intellectuals from those countries where momentum toward totalitarianism was more intense and had gone farther (Hayek Papers, HI, Box 69, 1946, Folder 9). Thus he announced his intention of forming an organization “half-way between a scholarly association and a political society” with its “most urgent task” of bringing together intellectuals who have taken on the common undertaking of “elaborating a workable philosophy for a free society” (Hayek Papers, HI, Box 69, 1946, Folder 9).

From April 1-April 10, 1947, a group of classical liberal intellectuals, revolving around von Hayek and including von Mises and Milton Friedman, convened in the Swiss Alps to exchange ideas and attempt to collectively strengthen the position of their movement (Nash 1998; Hazlitt 2004; Harvey 2005). The Mont Pelerin Society had convened its first meeting. On the ropes and weak compared to Keynesian state-based interventionist economics, the laissez-fairists met in an atmosphere of crisis and gloom. In the two years leading up to that first meeting, von Hayek spelled out early the measures which needed to be taken for him and his colleagues to fulfill their mission.

Although he claimed the group would refrain from propagandizing or affiliating itself with any particular party, he said of the Mont Pelerin Society, “It’s aim must remain directed towards creating a state of public opinion in which the desirable will be possible rather than at finding out what is possible in the existing state of opinion” (Hayek Papers, HI, Box 61, 1945, Folder 8). He stated that the task of the society could well be considered “educational,” since the effort would be “to cultivate and to spread beliefs which would have to achieve wide support if the sort of world most people want is to become a possibility” (Hayek Papers, HI, Box 61, 1945, Folder 8). After all, this is how the statist and central planners, in his view, had successfully created the prevailing state of affairs during this time, i.e. how the “new philosophy of government... [had] penetrated every-day thinking” (Hayek Papers, HI, Box 69, 1946, Folder 9). Thus, when the “intellectual struggle to develop” free-market ideas comes to a halt, the battle has been lost; “a stationary creed is a dying creed” (Hayek Papers, HI, Box 69, 1946, Folder 9). The economists, philosophers, historians, and other figures that had joined von Hayek in the Swiss Alps agreed on the following statement of aims:

The central values of civilization are in danger. Over large stretches of the earth’s surface the essential conditions of human dignity and freedom have already disappeared. In others they are under constant menace from the development of current tendencies of policy. The position of the individual and the voluntary group are progressively undermined by extensions of arbitrary power. Even that most precious possession of Western Man, freedom of

thought and expression, is threatened by the spread of creeds which, claiming the privilege of tolerance when in the position of a minority, seek only to establish a position of power in which they can suppress and obliterate all views but their own.

The group holds that these developments have been fostered by the growth of a view of history which denies all absolute moral standards and by the growth of theories which question the desirability of the rule of law. It holds further that they have been fostered by a decline of belief in private property and the competitive market; for without the diffused power and initiative associated with these institutions it is difficult to imagine a society in which freedom may be effectively preserved (Hayek Papers, HI, Box 71, 1947, Folder 3).

Before listing the matters the Mont Pelerin Society would chiefly address, the statement read that an “essentially ideological movement” is threatening civilization and it “must be met by intellectual argument and the reassertion of valid ideals” (Hayek Papers, HI, Box 71, 1947, Folder 3). In a statement made during the conference, von Hayek (Hayek Papers, HI, Box 61, 1947, Folder 10) indicted the teaching and interpretation of history during the previous two generations with the crime of spreading “essentially anti-[classical] liberal conceptions of human affairs” (Hayek Papers, HI, Box 61, 1947 Folder 10). He argued that this teaching of history had incorrectly attributed

social change with historical advancement even when the transformations taking place were impeding of liberty (Hayek Papers, HI, Box 61, 1947, Folder 10). Further, it denied all moral standards by way of historical relativism, emphasized social movements instead of individual achievement in explaining historical transformation, and highlighted historical necessity rather than the power of ideas in shaping the future (Hayek Papers, HI, Box 61, 1947, Folder 10). The crisis faced by the libertarians was perceived as an ideological one, and the model for engagement provided by the Mont Pelerin Society would come to influence others who would go on to create similar organizations, including the conservative, pro-capital think tanks which would come to heavily influence policy decisions in the US around various issues, including welfare. The *laissez-faire* rhetoric of the libertarians would come to be effective in attacking the social, philosophical, and economic bases on which the welfare states of the United Kingdom and especially the US had been constructed.

Many important figures would follow von Hayek's prescriptions and turn to utopian intellectualism and the power of ideas instead of politics (Blundell 2003). At von Hayek's advice, Leonard E. Read founded the Foundation for Economic Excellence (FEE) in 1946. The FEE would serve as a central forum around which libertarians would be attracted and brought into the movement (Rothbard 2007). It was Cornell economist, F.A. Harper, who had led the first group of libertarian economists at the FEE (Rothbard 2007). Read had assured Harper that the foundation would serve as a research institute or think tank for advanced libertarian scholarship (Rothbard 2007). Harper was particularly open to mentoring newcomers to the libertarian movement and to the FEE. The

foundation offered to those on its mailing list (28,712 people by the summer of 1952 and roughly 50,000 by the late 1950s and beyond) a growing assortment of libertarian literature (Nash 1998). Its staff included von Mises, and Read was in regular correspondence with and advised by von Hayek, Ayn Rand, and other advocates of *laissez-faire*, classical liberal thought. The FEE provided libertarians with a forum and sanctuary during a low point for *laissez-faire* ideas. Highlighting the absolutism in the philosophical framework of free-market ideology, Read would write what would become an iconic essay, which would later be used by Milton Friedman in his television show and Book, *Free to Choose*. In this 1958 pamphlet, Read gives us an example of true *laissez-faire* piety – a Genesis narrative of a commodity, the pencil. He writes that the reader should “have faith that free men and women will respond to the Invisible Hand. This faith will be confirmed. I, Pencil, seemingly simple though I am, offer the miracle of my creation as testimony that this is a practical faith, as practical as the sun, the rain, a cedar tree, the good earth” (Read 1958:9). Interestingly, at the time he wrote his pamphlet about the pencil, he would have conceded some of his more militant *laissez-faire* tenets. In 1954, he would write a booklet which created a stir at the FEE among the radical free-marketers which to many of the foundation’s members put him back in the “pro-government camp” and out of the camp of the anarcho-capitalists (Rothbard 2007). The organization’s strict libertarian orientation would change with the rising current of the fusionist line within the emerging New Right.

Harold Luhnnow, nephew of William Volker, succeeded his uncle as head of his wholesale company and the William Volker Fund in 1944 (Blundell 2003; Rothbard

2007). He too would take von Hayek's advice, orienting the Volker Fund in the direction of supporting and promoting *laissez-faire* scholarship after his uncle's death in 1947. In addition to this, the Volker Fund would help some of the more prolific but marginalized libertarian scholars to find posts at American universities (Nash 1998; Blundell 2003; Rothbard 2007). Mises was offered a visiting professorship post at New York University's business school, and Luhnnow arranged for Hayek a professorship at the Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago (Rothbard 2007). The activities of the Volker Fund contributed to the formation and activities of institutions with corresponding aims, including the Intercollegiate Society of Individualists (ISI), which was founded by Chodorov and later renamed the Intercollegiate Studies Institute, and the FEE (Blundell 2003; Rothbard 2007). Chodorov never wavered from his Nockian individualism, but his successor at the ISI had brought the organization into traditionalist conservative territory (hence the name change) (Rothbard 2007). Old Right groups were increasing the distance between themselves and the true libertarianism, what Rothbard (2007:78) and others began to call "anarcho-capitalism." In the case of the FEE's retreat from its strict *laissez-faire* individualist position, Harper would resign and join the staff of the Volker Fund.

Sir Antony Fisher of England read the condensed version of Hayek's book in *Reader's Digest* and was deeply influenced as well (Blundell 2003). Fisher was a pilot during World War II, and after the war he felt that the fight against totalitarianism had yet to be finished. Hayek's view that totalitarianism was merely a step further from the embrace of socialist ideas and reforms resonated with Fisher. In 1945, he sought out von

Hayek at the London School of Economics where he was teaching at the time, and asked his advice about what he could do. Fisher's daughter recounts that "Hayek said to him, 'Don't go in to politics. You have to alter public opinion. It'll take a long time. You do it through the intellectuals, the second-hand dealers in ideas'" (Hillman and Jordan 2006). In 1952, Fisher would visit Harper at the FEE in United States, among other things learn about the factory farming of chickens, and amass a fortune in the UK as the "British Frank Perdue" (Blundell 2003:41). The means and resources were acquired for Fisher to enter the struggle in the arena of ideas and opinion, and in 1955, he would found the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) in London. This would prove to be an important launch pad from which numerous ideas and other think-tanks would spring, including several institutes in the US, making Fisher a full-time "think-tank entrepreneur" (Blundell 2003:19). This undertaking would prove to be successful, so much so that a 2006 BBC documentary on the political and ideological roots of Thatcherism begins with the narration, "It all began with chickens, lots of chickens" (Hillman and Jordan 2006). In a 1985 video, Fisher identifies the source of Britain's economic woes after World War II as not the cost of two major wars and the loss of a productive empire, as was commonly argued; rather, the "major cause of Britain's economic decline... was the famous welfare state" (Atlas Economic Research Foundation 1985). Following von Hayek's counsel to produce ideas instead of enter politics, the IEA and its allied planning organizations set out to make the case for a "sound economy amongst intellectuals, that is teachers, students, and the media, [otherwise] there would be little hope of anyone's achieving anything as a politician" (Atlas Economic Research Foundation 1985). In the same

video, Fisher outlined the strategy of the IEA and other organizations modeled on its structure. The strategy began with the production of publications on an assortment of economic issues – rent control, nationalization of industry, agricultural subsidies, tariffs, inflation, social security, and welfare among others. They are produced

regardless of the political feasibility. The publication is then promoted in universities, in the press, through seminars, on radio and television until its concepts are well dispersed. Its influence can be immediate among students who are reading free-market economics for the first time. These are potential journalists, commentators, teachers, and future policy makers (Atlas Economic Research Foundation 1985).

Fisher goes on to boast that at that time, there were 19 institutes in 12 countries modeled on the IEA, including the Pacific Institute in San Francisco, California, the Frasier Institute in British Columbia, Canada, and the Manhattan Institute in New York City (Atlas Economic Research Foundation 1985). Thatcher would write a letter to Fisher giving the IEA credit for “creating the climate of opinion which made our victory possible,” and Ralph Harris, the IEA’s general director, was given a seat in the House of Lords as a reward (Blundell 2003:26).

Fisher recalls von Hayek encouraging him to “make those policies politically possible which otherwise to practical people appear to be politically impossible. And we can only do this by first establishing the case among the intellectuals” (Atlas Economic Research Foundation 1985). How does one make classical liberal, free-market economic

ideology appear feasible to practical people? In addition to attacking rival ideas through a substantial ideological effort, von Hayek proposed a more inclusive stature from within the free-market movement and stressed the necessity to cooperate with scholars who espouse views which may be less rigorous than those of “good liberals in the old sense” or who are even conservative in the classical sense (Hayek Papers, HI, Box 61, 1947, Folder 10). Illustrative in this respect is a comment in von Hayek’s introduction to *The Road to Serfdom*, and its prescience in acknowledging the need for compromise by libertarians in relation to their cooperation with traditionalist conservatives. Though he highlighted the lack of harmony between these two political groupings, von Hayek (1969:xi) openly noted that

in the struggle against the believers in the all-powerful state the true [classical] liberal must sometimes make common cause with the conservative, and in some circumstances, as in contemporary Britain, he has hardly any other way of actively working for his ideals. But true [classical] liberalism is still distinct from conservatism [sic], and there is danger in the two being confused.

While the book prompted some libertarian scholars to criticize that it was conciliatory and not rigidly *laissez-faire*, it was perhaps this feature of the book that ultimately made it so popularly appealing and effective. Chodorov complained that he was let down, and even von Mises, von Hayek’s mentor, implicitly criticized the contradictory position of *Road to Serfdom*. He did not agree with von Hayek’s conceptual acceptance of the state playing a role in economic planning. Mises commented that planning by the state for

competition and the planning of each person or household to determine its own fate should remain a significant distinction (Mises 1947; Mises 1962b). He staunchly asserted that in such proposals, advocates of even limited planning offer the following, “Let *us* raise wage rates, let *us* lower profits, let *us* curtail the salaries of executives” (Mises 1947:11; Mises 1962b). However, provocatively, he asserted that the “*us* ultimately refers to the police” (Mises 1947:11; Mises 1962b). Those who propose such projects, complains von Mises (1947:11; 1962b), naively claim that they are “planning for freedom.” Despite his misgivings, von Mises was more enthusiastic about the book’s virtues, impact, and success than its logical inconsistencies. In correspondence to a colleague, he explained, “The positive [statist] program developed by Hayek matters little when compared with these virtues of his book. However, it is a very comforting fact that your friends were shrewd enough to see the contradictions in this program” (quoted in Hülsmann 2007:843). Rothbard (1992) lamented that von Hayek’s work attracted more scholarly attention than did von Mises. He argued that unlike von Mises, “Hayek was unable to recognize people’s understanding of the significance of *laissez-faire* economics in terms of the flourishing and survival of human society or of rejecting forcible interferences of the free market system” (Rothbard 1992). Further, he contended that von Hayek’s thought was muddled, inconsistent, and contradictory, and that the style of *Road to Serfdom* was brutally Germanic and not as readable as von Mises’ work. These criticisms aside, both von Mises and Rothbard were in awe of von Hayek’s success.

There was a willingness of von Hayek to collaborate with those who were believers in traditional social hierarchy and opponents of individual liberty. Thinkers like

Mencken, Nock, Chodorov, and Rothbard were not only opposed to state power, but were in opposition to any type of political or legislative efforts based on traditional authority, morality, or religion. While Nock's personal feelings on the topic of faith were ambivalent, Mencken was a staunch atheist (Nock 1943; Mencken [1930] 2006). In a 1945 book review of George Bernard Shaw's *Everybody's Political What's What*, Nock finds a positive note in Shaw's work, one he wishes was evident in the work of alleged anti-statist writers such as von Hayek. He writes that Shaw "does not make the slightest concession to anybody. ...It is either "eighteen-carat collectivist statism, by God, or nothing" (Nock 1945). Nock continued,

One wishes our anti-Statist writers had that much intrepid faith in their principles and as clear knowledge of what their principles are. ... What completely vitiates Mr. Hayek's work, Mr. Eric Johnston's, and a whole shoal of others, is that they concede a small and strictly limited measure of State intervention — a sort of five-percent Statism. Apparently, like Mr. Shaw, these writers never heard of the Law of Parsimony, and have no idea of what it can do. If they had even considered the history of this country's twenty-five years' experience under the Income Tax Amendment, they would begin to see the reason why their notion is as absurd as the notion of a small and strictly limited implantation of tuberculosis, syphilis, or cancer. There is no such shuffling

nonsense about Mr. Shaw's work, and the sooner anti-Statist writers take example by him, the better (Nock 1945).

So despite the warnings and trepidation of many of his free-market, *laissez-faire* contemporaries, von Hayek began a direction of advocacy and coordination around the formation of the Mont Pelerin Society which revealed an urgent readiness to make concessions. To von Hayek, libertarian intellectuals who followed Shaw's example of unwavering allegiance to their doctrine need not apply. In his address to the first Mont Pelerin Society conference, von Hayek told the participants that while such staunch classical liberals were admirable in their convictions, they were not of much use for the group's purposes (Hayek Papers, HI, Box 61, 1947, Folder 10). He went on to tell those in attendance, "What we need are people who have faced the arguments from the other side, who have struggled with them and fought themselves through to a position from which they can both critically meet the objection against it and justify their views" (Hayek Papers, HI, Box 61, 1947, Folder 10). In the search for a representative and universal statement of "true liberal principles," von Hayek (Hayek Papers, HI, Box 69, 1946, Folder 9) explained that he had considered Mill's *On Liberty*, but was made to hesitate because of Mill's and other nineteenth century liberals' hostility toward religion. This hostility was counter productive in that it had driven many "true friends of liberty" from libertarianism (Hayek Papers, HI, Box 69, 1946, Folder 9). Approaching the theoretical territory of traditional Tory conservatism, he attributed this hostility by *laissez-faire* scholars towards religion to an "aggressive rationalism" which rejected all values whose utility could not "be demonstrated by individual reason" and which relied

on science to determine “what is” and “what ought to be” (Hayek Papers, HI, Box 61, 1947, Folder 10). Hayek (Hayek Papers, HI, Box 61, 1947, Folder 10) went on to explain the influence of this rationalism with Hegelianism and positivism. This, he continued, has created an “intellectual hubris” which is opposed to “the essence of true liberalism ... which treats with respect those spontaneous social forces through which the individual creates things greater than he knows” (Hayek Papers, HI, Box 61, 1947, Folder 10). This aggressive rationalism, von Hayek (Hayek Papers, HI, Box 61, 1947, Folder 10) argued, created the gulf separating religious people from the libertarian movement, and unless the breach “can be healed there is no hope for a revival of liberal forces.” While Rothbard and von Mises expressed unease at such assertions, von Hayek moved forward with their ultimate approval since libertarian principles would be advanced, even though it was through a neo-Burkean *laissez-faire* theoretical framework. As the Old Right would fade into the late 1950s and the New Right came in to its own, libertarian intellectuals from Chodorov to von Hayek would find themselves in intellectual confrontations with many of the features and notables of the budding fusionist conservative current.

The conciliatory posture exhibited by von Hayek was a sign of things to come. By the time Leonard Read of the FEE had written his liturgical passages about the pencil, free-market, and good earth, he had already backpedaled from the *laissez-faire* zeal of the FEE’s borderline free-market anarchism. At times, the strength with which one rhetorically professes their faith often increases as their belief in the doctrine being professed diminishes. By the time Read wrote these words, many in the FEE circle had come to see him as a sort of government-supporting “sellout,” again signaling an

emerging free-market ideology which was more surface than substantive, one which came to define things to come. Hayek's (1969:xi) concerns over an alliance with traditionalist conservatism, given its "paternalistic, nationalistic, and power-adoring tendencies," and his lamentations that this form of conservatism is often closer to socialism, would ultimately bear out in what came to be called fusionism: the position to be taken up by Buckley, Rusher, Kirk, Meyer, and others at *NR* and regarded as a necessary fusion between advocating for both liberty, individualism, and a small state on the one hand and order, anti-communism, and a massive military industrial complex on the other. In *Road to Serfdom*, Hayek conceded that in order for the advocates of libertarianism to make gains, a political alliance with traditionalist conservatism is sometimes necessary. But the changes which would take place in the approaching circumstances would eventually bring about much dissatisfaction and a sort of purging of libertarians and other discomfiting "extremists" (Rothbard 1980). Hindsight is always 20/20. In 1960, von Hayek (2003:180) would write a postscript in his *Constitution of Liberty* titled "Why I am Not a Conservative," where he warned of the "danger" of conditions which bring "defenders of liberty" and conservatives together. After a careful explication of how libertarianism and conservatism differ, he specifically cited the latter's embracing of authority and coercion as well as its reluctance for change as weaknesses which tend "to harm any cause it allies itself with" (Hayek 2003:186).

This occurrence of fusionism would prove to be important for the later political success of the conservative movement, the elevation of Barry Goldwater to the status of a grassroots and populist conservative icon, and the capturing of the Republican Party by

the right. While many purist libertarian beliefs were cast aside and isolationist, “extremist” libertarians were expelled from the conservative movement (*via* Buckley, Kirk, *et al.* and *NR*), a libertarian façade was maintained in the form of neoliberalism. The ideology of neoliberalism presented state intervention in domestic economic affairs as impinging on liberty and was reinforced through both fusionist conservatism and neoconservatism alike. Free-market rhetoric was used selectively and inconsistently to support the subtly rigid and hierarchical American class structure and protect the traditional social institutions which would be faced with broad cultural and political opposition in the 1960s.

-Chapter 4: Traditionalism and the New Right-

Introduction

Hayek and his post-war cohort of libertarians had offered an explanation of collectivism and government intervention to explain totalitarianism and the carnage and destruction of the war. They offered an analysis which saw the New Deal and government planning in the American economy as part of the same species as the totalitarianism which emerged in Spain, Italy, Germany, and the Soviet Union. The remedy for this situation offered was a largely unregulated system of capitalism. In an attempt to make sense of the same dismal circumstances, the traditionalist wing of the conservative movement, also scattered and disorganized just after the war, had mainly argued that it was the loss of traditional and moral principles which had had created these dismal conditions. The post war expression of traditionalist or so called “new conservatism” in the United States was explicitly incensed by the notion of mass democracy and was suspicious of the common multitude. A vivid example of this was William F. Buckley’s 1959 work, *Up from Liberalism*. Revealingly, the proposed 1963 follow-up was to be titled *The Revolt against the Masses* (Nash 1998). In the earlier work, he had called the liberal commitment to democracy “obsessive” and “fetishistic” and called for a rescuing of the old conservatism which had become enfeebled but still viable (Buckley 1959:119). However, classical conservatism was to be redirected in a manner which was relevant to the existing conditions (Buckley 1959). Buckley (1959)

emphatically declared his obedience to God and his ancestors alone while rebuking the whims of popular democracy expressed through the mechanism of voting. This was a further divergence from the *laissez-faire* right which rejected not just the authority of the state, but made its historical bones rejecting the traditional authority of monarch and church.

The Virtue of Order

Social ills for traditionalist conservatism were the result of a loss of tradition and the emergence of progressive ideals which failed to recognize an absolute moral or social order. Government was regarded as having a significant role to play in ensuring that moral and religious ideals were preserved. With a conception of social organization as that of a natural order, an unequal society was not a natural outgrowth of free-market principles, but ordained by a higher power. Early post-war traditionalism not only disparaged popular democracy, but libertarian principles as well. For example, in *Ideas Have Consequences*, Richard M. Weaver ([1948]1984) expressed that efforts toward either equality of opportunity or equality of result are futile. He noted that there was a fundamental contradiction in the democratic concept, namely between collectivism and individual freedom.

It is generally assumed that the erasing of all distinctions will usher in the reign of pure democracy. But the inability of pure democracy to stand for something intelligible leaves it merely a verbal deception. If it promises equality before the law, it does no

more than empires and monarchies have done and cannot use this as a ground to assert superiority. If it promises equality of condition, it promises injustice, because one law for the ox and the lion is tyranny (Weaver [1948] 1984:44).

Based on this paradox, he discarded the democratic concept on economic, political, and social grounds. Weaver argued that even in elections, the electorate chooses the “best man” for the job, and thus hierarchy and inequality are structured into such a system (Weaver [1948] 1984). True democracy, wrote Weaver, would only be possible if representatives were chosen randomly, and in such an instance society would “flourish wild, unshaped by anything superior to itself” (Weaver [1948] 1984:44).

The emphasis on hierarchy, an organic order, and universal values has manifested, in various ways in the philosophy of the traditionalist conservatives, a resentment for mass democracy and for any type of progressive social agenda which sets out to address social and economic inequality in any way. This is not because the laws of the market were regarded as sacred and immutable, but rather because a system of unequal stations was considered a vestige of a superior, age-old manner of doing things and, for some classical conservative thinkers, was regarded as divinely determined. Like the libertarians, the traditionalist conservatives placed great emphasis on the power of ideas to change circumstances. With respect to the traditionalists, Nash (1998:49) argued, an explanation which made ideas the principal engines of history was an explanation which offered hope. Perhaps it is harder to battle the direction of events if one thinks that the impersonal

weight of industrialism or secularism or urbanization is bearing down on the present. Perhaps it is easier to resist one's age if 'only' ideas and not 'forces' seem to be the foe.

The literature of this group tended express opposition to economic rationality (in either its socialist or *laissez-faire* variant). It also argued against relativism or nominalism, egalitarianism, scientism (expressed variably as positivism, rationalism, or empiricism), mass democracy, and secularism. The traditionalists were inclined toward traditional social structure, an absolute concept of values and transcendental order, hierarchy, the merging of science and subjective values, and religious piety.

While intellectual attacks against empiricism and positivism were far from unprecedented, Duke University political scientist John H. Hallowell had sparked a controversial epistemological debate among American political scientists with the publication of his 1944 article, "Politics and Ethics." He asserted that implicit in positivism's retreat from examining the metaphysical and ethical presuppositions inherent in socio-political thought and action is a "nihilism closely akin to, if not identical with, the gospel of cynicism and despair that produced the mentality of fascism" (Hallowell 1944:653). In this article, he complained that American political scientists were becoming "increasingly positivistic" and approaching the science of politics "with a 'scientific' detachment divorced from all ethical considerations" (Hallowell 1944:641). While "Politics and Ethics" and subsequent polemics with William F. Whyte and others in the pages of the *American Political Science Review* had garnered much attention, his

overarching framework is better outlined in his dissertation, later published in 1943 as *The Decline of Liberalism as an Ideology*.

The apprehension toward mass secular democracy by traditionalist conservatism and its interpretation of its inner contradictions are well articulated in Hallowell's ([1943] 2007) major work. What he argued for here was a sort of classically liberal, *laissez-faire* situation where the invisible hand guiding it is that of God. The use of the term, liberal would be used in its classical, libertarian sense but also as its own epithet, used by Hallowell to critique liberalism along moral and religious grounds. While liberalism was not automatically considered objectionable, its own intrinsic inconsistencies would require members of liberal societies to practice self-restraint, only possible by means of a traditional and objective moral order orienting conduct (Hallowell [1943] 1971). While he was analyzing German liberal institutions, Hallowell generally attributed the emergence of fascism to the abandonment of spiritual and metaphysical universals. This argument would be echoed by numerous writers in the traditionalist camp. Hallowell ([1943]2007:IX) had argued that German liberal institutions had collapsed with the rise of National Socialism because liberalism had become "decadent" and reached a stage of "inner degeneration." Liberalism had transformed itself from an integral type towards a form of positivism, subjectivism, and historicism rooted in neo-Kantian and neo-Hegelian philosophy and towards collectivism in politics (Hallowell 1971). "Integral liberalism," as he called it, concerned itself with individual liberty but also emphasized an objective moral order (Hallowell 1971). He argued that with the penetration of positivism into all spheres of thought, liberals and scientists had come to deny anything spiritual and reject

ultimate and absolute values (Hallowell 1971). He argued that by its own logic, liberalism is brought to “either of two conclusions: to make the sovereign absolute (tyranny) or to make the individual absolute (anarchy)” (Hallowell 1971:11). Informally corresponding to this division, two possible alternative views of reality were identified: materialism and pragmatism. Materialism, he argued, tends to attribute “whatever happens in the world” as the consequence “of the composition of natural forces” (Hallowell 1971:88). Pragmatism reduces categories like “truth” and “good” to relative concepts and fails to offer an objective yardstick with which to measure what is right and wrong (Hallowell 1971:89-90). This theory of knowledge makes reality relative to the observer, creating an emphasis on relativism and subjectivism. In other words, individuals are either subject to the tyranny of historically determined social structures or the anarchy of an anomic subjectivism. Hallowell argued that the resultant set of conditions made possible the declaration of a Nazi Rector of Heidelberg University during a public speech that objectivity “interpreted as a pretension to the absolutism of scientific perception, as the pretension for existence apart from living foundation” will be rejected as arrogance and self-deception; truth “will reveal itself to us according as our character is, and will be measured by the needs of our life” (quoted in Hallowell 1971:89-90). The core of Hallowell’s argument was that the means to reconstruct liberal society was through a religious and theological basis.

Also researching the conditions of the failure of liberal institutions and the rise of German fascism was Austrian émigré Eric Voegelin. Voegelin was declared an enemy by the Nazis when he argued that the Reich was a force of evil and identified it as proof

that societies can be based on murder and hatred (Cooper 1999). He fled Austria and arrived in the United States in the late 1930s. He would ultimately end up at Louisiana State University. While on their faculty, he would come across Hallowell's book and gave it a very favorable review. Voegelin's (1944:109) criticism of the book was that Hallowell overstated the viability of liberalism as a philosophy, that is the integral liberalism of the seventeenth century described in the work was presented as "a bit more integral than it actually was." Because of this, he argued, the disintegration of integral liberalism seemed more sinister than it actually was (Voegelin 1944). He claimed that the process began much earlier, as Locke had already considered the concept of natural law as the initial part of a system which culminated in the justification of a social and legal order which was morally neutral (Voegelin 1944). Aside from this, Voegelin (1944:109) was pleased that Hallowell constructed his position on the work of theologians, such as Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich, because it illustrated an understanding that an analysis of political principles had to be oriented by a "solid and well-reasoned religious position." He identified as the greatest attribute of the work the recognition that liberalism's inner contradictions led to its decline, i.e. from its "inconsistencies" which "had their roots in the faultiness of its religious and metaphysical basis (Voegelin 1944:109). Voegelin agreed that liberal, democratic society is only viable with the development of a more stable religious and metaphysical foundation, which gives substance to its principle tenets.

In a 1941 article, he attributed the National Socialist revolution to Germany's peculiar socio-political structure, one where the Weimar constitution was adopted by a

nation without the “historically settled” democratic temperament of other nations (Voegelin 1941:161). The political structure of the German masses was based on the philosophy of the nineteenth century which “largely had lost contact with the Christian principles of respect for the individual and [was] predominately collectivist” (Voegelin 1941:162). Voegelin (1941:163-4) says that the “breakdown” in 1918 and its effects on the formation of a viable, liberal democratic state must be understood in terms of four destructive factors: (1) the destruction of the monarchy and therefore its standards of personal conduct, (2) the elimination of the army and of compulsory military service, as armies are also vehicles of socialization to proper values, (3) the introduction of a democratic constitution which permitted “anti-democratic masses” to gain power legally, and (4) the ruining of the conservative German ruling class by economic inflation. These factors express that the introduction of formal democracy absent of the proper traditional social institutions and structures of authority created perilous political conditions, a consequence of which was the rise of National Socialism. In 1941, he argued that the implications of the rise of National Socialism had yet to be fully determined and will be debated for years to come. Not recognizing the growth of a rabble of uncivilized Germans created a set of conditions in which National Socialism had “brought to the top a stratum of German society which has never been touched by the German civilizational evolution” and which had “an almost pure medieval pre-Christian attitude” (Voegelin 1941:164). He also noted that the 50 percent population growth in Germany from 1870-1910 was mostly in this “social danger zone” and was represented primarily by people not adequately integrated into the German national community (Voegelin 1941:164).

Voegelin (1941:165) noted that it was probably beyond doubt that a serious rupture in the “civilizational tradition” for Germany would occur.

Voegelin would publish *The New Science of Politics* in 1952. Nash (1998:42) calls the work “one of the most important books by postwar intellectuals of the Right.” This work asserts that political science and civilization are in a state of decline and argues that its restoration is possible and necessary (Voegelin 1987). The book is one of several brilliant critiques of modern capitalist society and positivism’s tendency toward scientific reductionism written by traditionalist conservatives. However, the tendency in these critiques is to argue for new programmes and ideas for the reinstatement of old social structures rooted in custom, traditional social institutions, and metaphysical and absolute principles. Voegelin is also concerned with the effects of positivism on science, which he does not see merely as mechanical, detached observation. He acknowledges that the positivist “movement as a whole” is far too expansive and complex to cite “generalizations without careful and extensive qualifications” (Voegelin 1987:11). That being said, he identified a particular problem in need of broader understanding: the historical tendency which made “political science (and the social sciences in general) ‘objective’”, made it value-free, and rendered it into mere methodological exercise (Voegelin 1987:11). Regardless of the great concern in the social sciences over the ability to establish facts and causality through methodology and analysis, and the relegation of social phenomena to the status of things, Voegelin (1987:13) saw the process of reducing the “historical and political sciences into a morass of relativism” as unpreventable. Gnosticism, he argued, was the great historic heresy of Christianity, but a

contemporary variant lived on which he identified as the “essence of modernity” (Voegelin 1987: 126).

Scientism (by way of Comte and positivism), he argued, is representative of “one of the strongest Gnostic movements in Western society” (Voegelin 1987:127). In terms of political philosophy, Gnosticism’s modern variant appears as the “incipient formation of a Western civil theology,” or an “immanentization of the Christian eschaton” (Voegelin 1987:163). This would become a catch-phrase of sorts for American conservatives. Moralist and early proponent of the fatherhood movement, David Blankenhorn (2000), recalls a high school friend and fellow conservative who received a package from Buckley in response to a letter. Enclosed was a button which read, “Don’t Immanentize the Eschaton.” What Voegelin (1987) meant by this phrase was the tendency in Western thought to conceptualize the transformation from a religious otherworldly disposition to a this-worldly materialist orientation as a pathway to progress. He argued that this historical pattern must be clearly understood, else the “political development from medieval immanentism through humanism, enlightenment, progressivism, liberalism, positivism, into Marxism will be obscured” (Voegelin 1987:125). Voegelin (1987) warned that the limit to which civilization can simultaneously advance along the trajectory of positivist-scientism and decline in terms of its spiritual and metaphysical heritage is the achievement of totalitarianism. The “end form of progressive civilization” is this totalitarianism, which he defines as the “existential rule of Gnostic activists” (Voegelin 1987:132).

Richard Weaver's *Ideas Have Consequences* was quite influential, was greatly admired by Kirk and Buckley, and was the text that Meyer cited as being an inspiration for his joining the political right (Nash 1998). Weaver would also come to be a regular contributor to *National Review (NR)*. A member of the American Socialist party after graduating college, by the end of the 1930s, Weaver discovered and was gradually converted to the conservative, southern Agrarian movement, which he saw as an "unorthodox defense of orthodoxy" (Nash 1998:31). While the traditionalist critique of rationalist scientism and unrestrained capital shares affinities with analysis by some leftist intellectuals, there are actually striking similarities between Weaver's analysis and that of the leading members of the Frankfurt School (Adorno, Horkheimer, and Marcuse). For each, similar conditions were observed and identified as problematic. The same evidence was used to support each of their conclusions, and the conclusions derived were even similar, but with drastically different interpretations. It almost seems hard to believe that Weaver did not at least browse through Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* before writing *Ideas Have Consequences*. Like Adorno, Weaver was disparaging toward modern science's conquest of nature. He wrote that having been taught that redemption lies within the process of dominating nature, "man expects his heaven to be spatial and temporal" (Weaver [1948] 1984:113). Also, as information is mediated through a vast complex of media which presents a simplified vision of the world, man "expects redemption to be easy of attainment" (Weaver [1948] 1984:113). Economic/ technical rationality was observed by Weaver *via* the metaphysic of progress and expressed through his analysis of the "economic man, whose destiny is mere

activity” (Weaver [1948] 1984:51). This metaphysic “calls only for magnitude and number” and is a system of “quantitative comparison” which breaks down the existing order with the intention of promoting equality (Weaver [1948] 1984:51). He argued that an ideology of collectivism based on a philosophical materialism produced a new system which destroyed the old, one where old distinctions based on tradition were replaced by new ones which emerged “around capacities to consume” (Weaver [1948] 1984:37). Weaver([1948] 1984:92) expressed that for those who are in positions of power, this problem of “fragmentation” and “disintegration” becomes patently evident – i.e. how can they now “persuade to communal activity people who no longer have the same ideas about the most fundamental things.” Mirroring Horkheimer and Adorno’s analysis of the culture industry, Weaver([1948] 1984:93) argued that the “vested interests of our age... have constructed a wonderful machine” which he called the “Great Stereopticon.”

It is the function of this machine to project selected pictures of life in the hope that what is seen will be imitated. All of us of the West who are within the long reach of technology are sitting in the audience. We are told the time to laugh and the time to cry, and signs are not wanting that the audience grows ever more responsive to its cues (Weaver [1948] 1984:93).

He identified this apparatus’ three parts: “the press, the motion picture, and the radio” (Weaver [1948] 1984:94). Both Weaver([1948] 1984:104) and Adorno (1997) found jazz a debased form of culture and the former considered the radio in particular as an effective “monopoly of communication” which turned “whole populations into mute

recipients of authoritative edicts.” In an especially Adornian tone, Weaver([1948] 1984:104) warned,

A national radio hookup is like the loud-speaker system of a battleship or a factory, from which the post of command can transmit orders to every part. If we grant the assumptions of the materialists that society must conform to the developments of science, we may as well prepare ourselves for the monolithic state.

However, it was not that there was manipulation or distortion of information that Weaver took issue with, but rather it was not the right interpretation. He argued that it was just as much under control as the information taught by “medieval religionists” but was lacking in “moral inspiration” (Weaver [1948] 1984:94). In short, the liberals were in the post of command. While Adorno (*et al.*) was concerned with the rise of authoritarianism, Weaver was worried that the wrong type of authority was laying claim to social legitimacy. Unlike Horkheimer and Adorno’s critique, Weaver saw a traditional moral order as legitimate, and the Great Stereopticon was a mechanism of distortion, obscuring a set of universal truths. The work of the Frankfurt School rejected metaphysics, and saw the mechanism of distortion and its resultant ideology as itself dialectically connected to the material reality it represented. While it was false, it was the product of a false reality. From the perspective of his linguistic background, Weaver([1948] 1984:104) seems to creep toward describing a proto-postmodern condition when he assesses this mechanism as one which has the “power to make the entire environment rhetorical.” Reflecting on the Great Stereopticon’s propensity to render reality into a system of signs, he concedes

that his own efforts are to bring about a commonality of moral aims, not necessarily to bring about a more pure state of freedom. By virtue of its structure, the Great Stereopticon turns truth into “fragmentation,” “disharmony,” and “nonbeing,” and its consequences are the degradation of civilization and the assertion of brutality and cynicism (Weaver [1948] 1984:104).

Traditionalist conservatism regarded the concept of equality and the ideology of “equalitarianism” as the result of various forms of modern political philosophy which rejected the more virtuous systems where hierarchy and inequality were considered immanent to society itself. Weaver([1948] 1984:41) called equalitarianism “the most insidious idea employed to break down society” and “fatal to the harmony of the world.” It is not an overstatement to say that the very idea of equality for Weaver was antithetical to the social as such. As society is dependent on the “recovery of true knowledge,” and, Weaver([1948] 1984:35) argued, for society to be “understood, it must have structure,” he concluded that the natural structure of society must be hierarchical. As sustenance and privilege correspond to a hierarchy of functions, Weaver([1948] 1984) saw society as inevitably unequal (Weaver [1948] 1984). Traditional social hierarchies for Weaver mirror those of the family, and with family ties come a sense of obligation and fraternity. The removal of this hierarchy resulted in social confusion, boredom, and a debased pursuit of diversion and comfort. In his framework, order was intrinsic to human relationships, and equality was thus a “disorganizing concept” (Weaver [1948] 1984:42). Weaver([1948] 1984:42) warned that inevitably, when the “disorganizing heresy” of equality is imposed, traditional social organization can no longer be depended on as a

source of “congeniality,” that is “the feeling of having been ‘born together.’” The resultant conditions are such that there is increased bitterness, envy, and hostility, since one cannot attribute their station to forces beyond their control but rather must understand their position in terms of their own merit (Weaver [1948] 1984). In short, they would only have themselves to blame. Therefore, any effort to remove all distinctions would not create a condition of pure democracy, but echoing the criticisms of the libertarians, such efforts lead governments to despotism (Weaver [1948] 1984). He asserted that

The claim to political equality was... supplemented by the demand for economic democracy, which was to give substance to the ideal of the levelers. Nothing but a despotism could enforce anything so unrealistic, and this explains why modern governments dedicated to this program have become, under one guise and another, despotic (Weaver [1948] 1984:44).

Equality of both outcome and condition were a form of tyranny for Weaver. Even the notion of equality of opportunity, at least rhetorically supported by most contemporary mainstream conservatives, was conceptually flawed in his view. He argued that the trend in democracy to argue for a type of economic organization which aimed to provide opportunities for everyone’s advancement still recognized superiority and presumed a hierarchical outcome based on natural talent (Weaver [1948] 1984). To Weaver([1948] 1984:45), this represented “democracy not as an end but as a means.” The problem he identified with this variant of democracy was that it encompassed a demand for conformity fostered by envy which was paradoxically the outgrowth of competition

(Weaver [1948] 1984). Weaver([1948] 1984) asserted that people will simply become divided along the lines of ability and preference and a new but different aristocratic structure will impose itself on society, one based on the wrong principles. This rationale for democracy, in his view, still acknowledged distinction and hierarchy, and it revealed a contradiction of democratic ideology which was ignored by most modern liberals.

Weaver([1948] 1984:135) considered the New Deal as part of the tendency toward surveillance and the formation of a “monolithic police state” because of its “special investigations of the income-tax payments of individuals and groups” considered in opposition of it. He regarded private property as the “last domain of privacy” and as the only sanctuary from this development; in resistance to the “omnipotent state” property must be regarded as a “metaphysical right” (Weaver [1948] 1984:134-5). To Weaver([1948] 1984:113) urban dwellers, the target of the welfare state, have “not been made to see the relationship between effort and reward.” The Great Stereopticon prevented them from understanding this and fostered in them a “spoiled-child psychology” (Weaver [1948] 1984:113). “False propagandists” have told them that they can have anything, but Weaver([1948] 1984:113) kindly says that “as of the heathen” the urban dweller had never been given the opportunity for proper salvation.

The New Right: A Band of Political Frankensteins

The influence of the ex- and anti-communists created an atmosphere where intellectuals espousing *laissez-faire* individualist principles either became or were open to joining those who were described by Nock (1943:314) as being “eloquent about liberty as

affecting some special interest to them, but who were authoritarian as the College of Cardinals on other matters.” In considering the status of American statism in the 1940s, Nock reflected on the tendency of British classical liberals since 1860 to support the enactment of piecemeal social legislations, each one extending state power bit-by-bit. By this course of action, classical liberals were “manifestly going dead against their traditional principles” (Nock 1943:124). Also, by looking back at the situation in nineteenth century Britain, Nock in a way peered into the political future of intellectual conservatism in twentieth century America: “They had abandoned the principle of voluntary social cooperation and embraced the old line Tory principle of enforced cooperation” (Nock 1943:124). By doing so, they had made “themselves into a band of political Frankensteins” (Nock 1943:124). Prior to the emergence of Buckley as the leader of the intellectual New Right, Russell Kirk and his publication of *The Conservative Mind* in 1953 helped lead the direction for this new political formation. While he held classical liberal beliefs through the Second World War, Kirk would eventually become hostile toward *laissez-faire*, free-market, isolationist ideas (Nash 1998; Rothbard 2007). The book had an unexpectedly favorable response and was an important milestone in the unification and popularization of conservatives and their ideas. In the 1986 forward to *The Conservative Mind*, Kirk ([1953] 2001:xv) borrowed a phrase from Santayana to describe the purpose that the book would come to fulfill: that of “the voice of a dispossessed and forlorn orthodoxy.” In many ways, this phrase described with accuracy both the libertarian and traditionalist wings of the movement in the early 1950s. Looking back on the release of the book, Kirk (2001:xv) stated that it did not

simply offer its readers “conservative ideology,” given that “the conservative abhors all forms of ideology.” “Anathema to the conservative” are all “*a priori* designs” to perfect human nature or forms of “political religion” which guarantee heaven-on-earth for true believers (Kirk 2001:xv). While Kirk argued that a metaphysical conception of “terrestrial paradise” was not viable, his line of argument was consistent with other traditionalists who argued exactly that (Kirk 2001:xv). Illustrating, perhaps, a feature of the New Right which helped it become so resilient and a leading ideological and political force, Kirk (2001:8) informed us that conservatives have taken from Burke “a talent for re-expressing their convictions to fit the time.” Hesitant to reduce American conservatism into a “few pretentious phrases,” Kirk (2001:7-8) identified six canons of conservative thought.

(1) Belief in a transcendent order, or body of natural law.

...Political problems, at bottom are religious and moral problems.

(2) Affection for the proliferating variety and mystery of human existence, as opposed to the narrowing uniformity, egalitarianism, and utilitarian aims of most radical systems.

(3) Conviction that civilized society requires orders and classes, as against the notion of a ‘classless society.’

(4) Persuasion that freedom and property are closely linked: Separate property from private possession and Leviathan becomes master of all.

(5) Faith in prescription and distrust of ‘sophisters, calculators, and economists’ who would reconstruct society upon abstract designs.

(6) Recognition that change may not be salutary reform (Kirk 2001:9).

Like Weaver, he argued that egalitarianism (or equalitarianism as it was sometimes called), along with other liberal principles, was among the most significant attacks on the American social order (Kirk 2001). Through Burke and like Leo Strauss, Kirk (2001:57) argued against the “abstract ‘natural right’” position of Locke and Rousseau, advocating (and paraphrasing from Burke) “obedience to a natural order” (Kirk 2001:57). Only the “collective wisdom of the species” could save society “from the anarchy of ‘the rights of man’ and the presumption of ‘reason’” (Kirk 2001:57). Adhering to the concept of natural right, to Kirk, was “tinkering with the heritage of humanity” and obstructive of “the operation of true natural law” (Kirk 2001:57). Following this logic through, Kirk goes on to locate efforts of leveling and promoting equality as both unnatural and in violation of preexisting more virtuous conventions. Given this, and drawing again on Burke, he explained that neither social nor political equality should be regarded as inclusive of the “*real* rights of man” (Kirk 2001:58). Rather, he argued, the opposite is true: “Hierarchy and aristocracy are the natural, the original, framework of human life” (Kirk 2001:58). Kirk (2001:59) thus concluded that efforts by the state to promote equality and to “obliterate order and class” were rooted in the liberal tendency of

egalitarianism. Programs of social leveling amounted to “defacing God’s design for man’s real nature” (Kirk 2001:59).

Burke’s rebuking of the French revolutionaries, and his thought in general, has been a common conceptual starting point for many on the right. Hayek too saw a variant of Burkean conservatism as a suitable resolution between libertarianism and traditionalism. This resolution is carried to a logical consequence in Kirk and Buckley’s fusionism with its reverence for class structure and aristocracy as well as markets. Chodorov, Meyer, and other laissez-fairists who advocated individual liberty as a chief concern were held in contempt by Kirk, even though they shared a contempt for state efforts to promote equality. A Burkean theme he emphasized was that society’s members must be accustomed to and worthy of political liberty. The French revolutionaries in overthrowing their feudal system and monarchy “began ill” because they rebuked their ancestors and “their standard of virtue and wisdom” (Burke [1790] 1986:122). If they had moved forward but still kept ancient principles intact, they could have illustrated that freedom was reconcilable when well disciplined and consistent with the law (Burke [1790] 1986:124) To show that “a universal constitution of civilized peoples” was implicit in Burke’s work, Kirk (2001:17) quoted a passage which he felt highlighted some of the more important conservative tenets. It’s worth quoting here, for it articulates the conservative ambivalence toward substantive, individual liberty as well as the pursuit of equality and justice through deliberate political intervention. Burke ([1790] 1986:124) writes that if the French revolutionary leaders had followed a more noble course for reform, they

would have had a free constitution [and] ...a protected, satisfied, laborious, and obedient people, taught to seek and to recognize the happiness that is to be found by virtue in all conditions; in which consists the true moral equality of man kind, and not in that monstrous fiction, which by inspiring false ideas and vain expectations into men destined to travel in the obscure walk of laborious life, serves only to aggravate and embitter that real inequality, which it never can remove; and which the order of civil life establishes as much for the benefit of those whom it must leave in an humble state, as those whom it is able to exalt to a condition more splendid, but not more happy.

Advocated here is a reverence for the past as well as a legitimate recognition of equality only in the form of moral equality of each in God's judgment. By way of Burke, Kirk clearly expresses that in nature humans are unequal in body and mind. Societies which are subject to programs of leveling were presented as deprived of "diversity and individuality" (Kirk 2001:58). Such circumstances represent a regression to a state of severe and totalitarian inequality, "that of one master, or a handful of masters, and a people of slaves" (Kirk 2001:58). Articulating an aristocratic critique of the modern liberal order, collectivism, and egalitarianism, Kirk (2001:208) reflected on Tocqueville, who was "prepared to pronounce with authority upon human and social nature" and was prepared to "surrender much to the new democracy." Tocqueville, explains Kirk (2001:208), attempted to prevent democracy from opposing changes initiated through

Providence and thus destroying itself. The threat to democratic society was articulated less as the inevitable regression into anarchy or tyranny, but rather “a tyranny of mediocrity, a standardization of mind and spirit and condition enforced by the central government” (Kirk 2001:2008).

McCarthyism and anti-communism presented a common focal point on which libertarian and traditionalist conservatives could focus their opposition, that of the Soviet menace abroad and collectivism through state planning in the domestic economy. Buckley and *NR* would join together a group of writers with broadly differing conservative perspectives. Buckley himself had a foot in both the libertarian and classical traditions of conservatism. This is evident given his varied intellectual influences. He was influenced by Nock directly, as Nock frequently visited the Buckleys at their home in Connecticut (Nash 1998). He also notes in the “Introduction to the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Edition” of *God and Man at Yale* that he was indebted especially to both the assistance of Frank Chodorov, “the gentle, elderly anarchist and disciple of Albert Jay Nock” and Willmoore Kendall, a Yale political scientist and opponent to the notion of protecting the civil liberties and rights of political minorities (Buckley 2002:xxi). This philosophical tension, one honoring and respecting the rights of the individual at all costs and the other that of the social order against underrepresented but possibly threatening groups, came to represent a point of contention within the fusionist *NR* and within the new conservative movement as a whole. That he embraced both libertarian and traditionalist principles is evident in a well known passage in the original preface, which he later claimed was written by Kendall and that he “let

pass” (Buckley 2002:xxxii). Said Buckley (2002:lxvi): “I myself believe that the duel between Christianity and atheism is the most important in the world. I further believe that the struggle between individualism and collectivism is the same struggle reproduced on another level.” It is this transition to and emphasis on Christian morality that would inspire Rothbard (1980:27) to comment that the right had been transformed into a “global theocratic crusade.” Buckley’s influences would become more characteristically statist and traditionalist as the anti communist Whittaker Chambers, Kendall, and Kirk became prominent voices at *NR*.

The collapse of the McCarthy movement in 1954 was an indicator that there was a lack of a coherent and supporting organization for conservatism. Also absent were links between leaders either in academic circles, journals of opinion, or grassroots organizations. Kirk who had come to enjoy a notoriety which was not insignificant, was at odds with the “radicals” and “ossified Benthamites” who espoused rigidly free-market principles (Buckley Papers, Kirk to Buckley, September 1, 1955). Free-marketer isolationists like Ernest T. Wier of the National Steel Corporation, Garet Garrett, and Rothbard (2007) saw this ire and support for militarist strategies in addressing communism as hypocritical. Kirk and Buckley saw the need for a publication to fill the perceived lack of conservative perspectives in academia and in the media. Buckley explicitly wanted to create a unified, conservative, intellectual coalition. Henry Regnery, publisher of Nock’s *Journal of Forgotten Days* and Buckley’s rant against secularism and collectivism at Yale, wrote in a letter to a colleague that as long as the left controls “the means of communication, they don’t have to worry too much about a slight set-back in

Washington. If we want to do anything, we must work on the level of ideas” (quoted in Nash 1998:129). Kirk would ultimately publish the journal *Modern Age: A Conservative Review* in 1957. *Modern Age* was largely a traditionalist venture and was only published quarterly. While it did have two economists on its editorial board, it was hardly a representative cross section of the disparate field of ideological conservatism. However, Buckley (with Kirk as a reluctant contributor at first) would create *NR* with the express political purpose of bringing together opposing elements of the right and providing a venue where they could work out their differences (at least for common political and ideological objectives) (Navasky 2008).

The mortar which came to adhere many diverse ideological warriors together, such as Chodorov the anarchist, Kendall the self-titled majority-rule democrat, and former Trotskyite James Burnham, was anti-communism abroad and anti-New Dealism at home. To earn the conservative movement legitimacy, Buckley had to (at least strategically) move from the fierce conservatism of his father as well as exclude the extremists, such as the John Birchers, radical libertarians, and Ayn Rand objectivist-atheists (Navasky 2008). Frank Meyer and Frank Chodorov were present and contributed articles on occasion (Meyer more than Chodorov), but more importantly they provided an air of economic authority to the weekly’s treatment of economic matters, especially in the early years of the magazine. Rothbard (2007) states emphatically that Buckley’s libertarian rhetoric was phony and merely a surface presentation of *laissez-faire* credibility. This was a plausible evaluation and would seem to bear out as libertarian voices were marginalized at *NR* in favor of statist, interventionist advocacy against the

perceived global communist crisis. Debate during the cold war over the need for outright military action against the Soviets versus an isolationist position was taking place in the pages of *Faith and Freedom* and *The Freeman* in 1954 and 1955 (Nash 1998; Rothbard 2007). By this time, the *Freeman* was no longer a bi-weekly and was now published out of the FEE as a monthly under the editorship of Chodorov. Rothbard had debated anti-communist William Henry Chamberlin in *Faith and Freedom*, and Chodorov squared off with ex- and ultimately anti- communist William Schlamm in *The Freeman*. Schlamm, along with other ex-lefties turned ideological cold warriors, would greatly contribute to the shaping of the content and administration of *NR* and help contribute to the anti-communist discourse which oriented American conservatism (Nash 1998). Revealing early his concern over a divided conservative movement and sentiments along lines partial to pro-statism and interventionism, Buckley wrote in a letter to the *Freeman* a year before the founding of *National Review* that the “Schlamm-Chodorov controversy was healthy” (Buckley Papers, Buckley to the *Freeman*, December 1, 1954). That being said, he admitted to having recently referred to it “as ‘the issue that will ultimately separate us [conservatives]’” (Buckley Papers, Buckley to the *Freeman*, December 1, 1954). Despite sharing Chodorov’s pessimism about “domesticating the state after the war is over,” Buckley felt that there would at least be a “fighting chance in a future war against the state,” but he did not see that same possibility for “a fighting chance to save ourselves from Soviet tyranny if we pursue Eisenhower’s foreign policy – or Chodorov’s” (Buckley Papers, Buckley to the *Freeman*, December 1, 1954). Buckley continued, “I side with Willi Schlamm and number myself, dejectedly, among those who favor a carefully

planned showdown, and who are prepared to go to war to frustrate Communist designs” (Buckley Papers, Buckley to the *Freeman*, December 1, 1954).

NR was a great coming together of ex- and anti-communists and a group of Catholics made up of both older European “monarchists and authoritarians” and a younger wing of Catholic Americans which included Buckley (Rothbard 2007:159-160). While initially Chodorov and Meyer were exceptions to this characterization, Chodorov would come to contribute less as mentor to Buckley and to the journal and Meyer’s sensibilities would slowly change with him ultimately converting to Catholicism on his deathbed. Interestingly two other *NR* figures would also become Catholic converts, Kendall and Buckley’s brother-in-law and former college roommate, Brent Bozell (Rothbard 2007). Rothbard (2007) notes that conspicuously absent from the journal’s staff were American Protestants who had been the heart of the old American, *laissez-faire* right. Hazlitt also occasionally contributed to *NR* and identified himself as a libertarian, but he too would come to support the hard-line anti-soviet foreign policy of the magazine. Kirk’s popular book, which was an influential source for the reassertion and recovery of the new conservative philosophy, was also instrumental for bringing the term, “conservative,” into acceptance. Prior to this, it was a “smear word” used by the left (Rothbard 2007:165). *The Conservative Mind* was also able to establish a pantheon of conservative heroes and provided a set of intellectual idols around which the conservative movement was able to come together and transform itself. However, as described above, this collection of minds mostly included and treated favorably sympathizers of order and

aristocracy. It was absent of or treated harshly conservative thinkers who were atheists, rationalists, or anarchists.

As *The Freeman* would eventually depart from its founding purpose, the journal was re-formed in October 1950 as a bi-weekly to provide a venue for an Austrian School perspective on economic policy (Hülsmann 2007). While anti-communism was a unifying theme at *The Freeman*, there was much disagreement about its strategic role and of the editorial direction in which the publication should proceed (*Time Magazine* 1953; Hülsmann 2007). Initial financing came from a large donation from Herbert Hoover and sizable loans from DuPont's vice president, Jasper E. Crane and J. Howard Pew from the Sun Oil Corporation, then a major supporter of Old Right endeavors (Hülsmann 2007; Rothbard 2007). Three editors were at the helm of the fortnightly – John Chamberlain who served as *The Freeman's* president, Hazlitt who became vice president, and Suzanne La Follette (*Time Magazine* 1953; Hülsmann 2007). A split would soon reveal itself among the active members of *The Freeman's* leadership over the degree to which anti-communism would characterize the mission of the publication. As stated before, there was also a split within libertarianism in general over the issue of interventionism-versus-isolationism in foreign affairs. Hazlitt and von Mises tended to see communism as a species of statism. While Hazlitt considered the communist threat a real one, and saw the appeasement by the West of Soviet pressure, even in the face of nuclear devastation, as mistaken and in fact more dangerous than acting with military force, he did not see the magazine's role as a platform for the global communist crusade (Hazlitt [1964] 1994). Mises (2005) believed that the Soviet Union was barbaric but also that their ideology was

more dangerous than their artillery. Nonetheless, he felt that the Russians should be free to act as they pleased in their own society, and the “civilized” nations of the west should not ban or censor literature which came out the Soviet empire (Mises 2005:117). Despite their differing positions, Hazlitt and Mises agreed that the journal’s crucial mission should be to educate the public at large about free-market economics. In contrast, Chamberlain and La Follette saw anti-communism as “the essence of their mission” (Hülsmann 2007:906). They thought the magazine should be aggressive in its support of and attack on particular people and political parties and candidates (Hülsmann 2007). In a letter to Chamberlain, Hazlitt criticized his counterpart’s wanting the magazine to have “crusading zeal, ...wit, satire and editorial bite” on the grounds that “one man’s crusading zeal is merely another man’s vehemence; ...on man’s ‘editorial bite’ merely another’s vituperation” (quoted in Hülsmann 2007:910). Neither did Hazlitt want a journal which treated McCarthy as a sacred figure (Time Magazine 1953).

Because of these differences and after a staffing reorganization at *The Freeman*, Hazlitt would resign in October 1952 (Hülsmann 2007). However, von Mises and Pew’s disappointment with Chamberlain and La Follette would set off a nasty and personal struggle, and Hazlitt’s eventual election by the board to editor-in-chief of the journal, prompted the immediate resignations of Chamberlain and La Follette. (Time Magazine 1953; Hülsmann 2007). Nevertheless, Chamberlain and La Follette would become editors at the soon-to-appear *National Review*, La Follette from the first issue. After much financial trouble and being on the verge of collapse, Hazlitt would become discouraged and *The Freeman* would be taken over by the FEE. Chodorov would move

the offices of the ISI to the FEE to fill in as editor of the *Freeman* in the summer of 1954 (Rothbard 2007). The formation of the ISI the year before was made possible by a \$1,000 grant from Pew. At this time, the FEE, ISI, and the *Freeman* were still largely libertarian. Initially, Buckley tried to merge his forthcoming magazine with *The Freeman*. The proposed merger would be rejected, and Buckley would write to Pew that while he respected the decision not to endorse his and Read's proposal for combination, he was disturbed that Pew had "expressed total ignorance of *National Review*" during their meeting (Buckley Papers, Buckley to Pew, November 3, 1955). Anticipating the diplomacy role he would play among conservatives at *NR*, Buckley cordially asked for input on the first issue and included in the letter the sentiment that what mattered was the fight in which he, Pew, and other conservatives were engaging, each in his or her own way (Buckley Papers, Buckley to Pew, November 3, 1955).

The circumstances leading up to the formation of the magazine and publication of the first issue of *National Review* are perhaps best described as an uncertain whirlwind of personalities and ideas coming into clash and conflict with each other with Buckley playing the part of arbitrator, diplomat, and peacekeeper. The situation entailing Kirk's recruitment to the journal is an informative example. Kirk was especially uneasy with the mixture of ideas and writers, especially those with a more libertarian orientation. While Buckley was trying to cultivate interest in Kirk to be an editor of the journal, or at least a contributor, Kirk wrote that during academic conferences he had been left without support while "waging ... battles on the frontier" at his own expense against "a great wave of 'liberal' execration" which had been directed at him (Buckley Papers, Kirk to

Buckley, July 13, 1955). While engaging in this struggle against liberalism, he complained that it was “amusing” to be “knifed in the back” by other figures who were to be major contributors and associates at the magazine, like the free-marketers, Frank Meyer and Frank Chodorov. Kirk identified as friend and intellectual kin James Burnham, William Schlamm, Willmoore Kendall, and Richard Weaver, whom he said agreed with him that they should not be burdened with the “oppressive endorsement of the Supreme Soviet of Libertarianism, the kiss of death” (Buckley Papers, Kirk to Buckley, September 1, 1955). Kirk told Buckley that he could not be an editor of *NR*. Claiming that either Chodorov or Meyer had sent an “anti-Kirk *Freeman*” to his “advisors” at the then titled *Conservative Review* (an early incarnation of *Modern Age*), Kirk expressed that he could therefore “not very well associate [himself] as an editor with a magazine in which Meyer’s and Chodorov’s work will be published, even though they will not be editors thereof” (Buckley Papers, Kirk to Buckley, September 1, 1955). In response to Kirk’s complaints, Buckley playfully (and skillfully) mocked his friend’s not owning a record player, saying that he could not imagine life without a “good hi fidelity phonograph” as it reveals an attitude which is “doctrinaire about the industrial revolution” (Buckley Paper, Buckley to Kirk, September 14, 1955). Buckley then informed Kirk that he will be listed only as a contributor and expressed hope that he can seek Kirk’s “esteemed opinion” from time to time on editorial matters (Buckley Papers, Buckley to Kirk, September 14, 1955). Finally, he also lamented that there was much bitterness in Kirk’s letters, far more than Chodorov and Meyer felt toward him. A week after the first issue, Kirk wrote Buckley that he should not have included him on the

masthead as “associate and contributor,” as it had caused him “trouble” and was “bothersome and embarrassing” (Buckley Papers, Kirk to Buckley, November 29, 1955). However, thanking Buckley for the good intentions, he says that if taken off the masthead, he “may manage to endure appearing between the same covers with Chodorov and Meyer” and that he “won’t be cheek by jowl with them in the masthead” (Buckley Papers, Kirk to Buckley, November 29, 1955). Buckley agreed to take his name off the masthead after only four issues, and informed Kirk that it will cause him some embarrassment. However, Kirk continued to contribute numerous articles and the regular column, “From the Academy.” The conflict with Meyer would nevertheless continue, prompting Buckley to assure him that neither Meyer nor the Volker Fund were operating under the aim of “undermining the influence of one Russell Kirk” (Buckley Papers, Buckley to Kirk, April 6, 1956). With the mission of creating a unified conservative coalition, Buckley maintained a semblance of stability and order at *NR*.

The first issue of *National Review* ultimately appeared on November 19, 1955. The early years of the journal treated the New Deal and the welfare state in language and terms consistent with free-market individualism. The first several volumes also vehemently defended McCarthy and the activities of the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC). Material in *NR* which described its objective solidly identified it as creating an ideological counterpoint to the left-liberal, opinion making establishment. In the “Publisher’s Statement” in the first issue, Buckley highlighted this mission.

The launching of a conservative weekly journal of opinion in a country widely assumed to be a bastion of conservatism at first glance looks like a work of supererogation, rather like publishing a royalist weekly within the walls of Buckingham Palace. It is not that, of course; if NATIONAL REVIEW is superfluous, it is so for very different reasons: It stands athwart history, yelling Stop, at a time when no one is inclined to do so, or to have much patience with those who so urge it (Buckley 1955:5 [author's capitalization]).

Carrying the ball in the name of ideas, Buckley, like the libertarians in von Hayek's Mont Pelerin group, considered ideas the principal weapons for the campaign to influence the political culture. Secondary were historical forces and supporting conditions as emphasized in Buckley's assertion that "Did not NATIONAL REVIEW exist, no one would have invented it" (Buckley 1955:5 [author's capitalization]). He also asserted that the gains made by relativism and historicism have been effective exactly because their imprint on the "American soul are not so easily evident" and because "ideas rule the world [and thus] the ideologues, having won over the intellectual class, simply walked in and started to run things" (Buckley 1955:5). They had identified the enemy, and it was "Liberalism" with a capital "L." In the first two issues of *NR*, in his regular column, "The Liberal Line..." Kendall identified the Liberal boogeyman in a text box at the bottom of the page. It read, "The Editors of National Review Believe:" and was followed by five points. In short, he stated that the leading opinion makers in the US share a

liberal point of view and indoctrinate the public with it through the use of propaganda; he asserted that conservatives were at odds with a “huge propaganda machine engaged in a major, sustained assault upon the sanity and upon the prudence and the morality of the American people” (Kendall 1955:22). *National Review’s* mission was to monitor and critique the messages put forth through the “Liberal propaganda machine” (Kendall 1955:22). In an article about the first five years of *NR*, Chamberlain (1960a:1) described the “new journalism” as a “whole new journalism of ideas.” Chamberlain (1960a:2) explained that while mild-tempered, the magazine’s editors and contributors are not so earnest to believe that the political culture “can be changed by fiat.” It is “written by fighters who know they are in for a war that will still be raging when the torch – and the weapon – have passed to other hands” (Chamberlain 1960a:2).

While the inaugural statement for the journal contained mostly abstractions about the power of ideas and discussed domestic economics in individualist terms, *NR* would spend more of its energy on matters of foreign policy and the global anti-communist crusade. The first years of the magazine discussed the New Deal and the welfare state in terms similar to the libertarians, not yet with an emphasis on personal morality, the decline of the family, and the sexual and reproductive behavior of poor women. Rather, it utilized a rhetoric of preserving individual liberty by combating collectivism and statism. In some cases, as with Frank Meyer *per* Chambers and McCarthy, the American welfare state was directly associated with the global communist conspiracy. An early article described the “dedicated New Dealer” as one “applying the shining principle that what was bad for General Motors was good for the country” (Minot 1955:13). In the

regular opening comments (titled “The Week”) of the April 25, 1956 issue, the magazine protested that the Republican administration of Eisenhower seemed to have forsaken the sound economic principles of many of its party’s forbears. The piece criticized that the administration wanted to increase the government’s role in education, housing, healthcare, and several other areas (*National Review* 1956c). While acknowledging that how one evaluates this fact depends on one’s position, the position of the magazine was made clear: “It depends, as NATIONAL REVIEW would say, on how highly you value freedom” (*National Review* 1956c [author’s capitalization]). In another article, Social Security is described as a “tyranny of the majority,” given that the deductions from the income earner are involuntary (Phillips 1956:12). For Meyer, a system of poor relief represented not only collectivism and an imposition on individual liberty, but the liberal welfare state was presented as administered and controlled in part by communists who had infiltrated the government. Meyer (1958) warned that liberalism and communism have the common aim of socialism and merely different means of attaining it. He drew upon Chambers’ assertion that the New Deal was a revolution in the direction of socialism under the guise of liberalism. He felt that McCarthy was defeated for precisely this reason, that he revealed the “socialist equivalence” of the two political positions bringing the “accumulated weight of entrenched Liberalism” down on him (Meyer 1956:566). He presented New Deal bureaucrats as being either credulous and sincere liberals who were easily manipulated and only partially understood what they were doing and manipulative communists who knew exactly what was going on and thus were in a better position for scheming (Meyer 1958).

While there may have been conservatives of varied traditions listed among the editors, contributors, and associates of *NR*, the libertarians, with the exception of Chodorov, rejected the Old Right principle of isolationism in foreign policy matters. Chodorov only contributed articles during the first years on occasion and offerings of featured libertarian writers like the Austrians Wilhelm Röpke and von Mises or American Old Rightists like Rothbard were also infrequent. The magazine touted the *laissez-faire* line right along with fiercely interventionist and militarist demands and apologia for McCarthy's persecution of individuals whose ideas were perceived as dangerous. In fact, Buckley and the magazine were ardently pro McCarthy, justified his methods for investigating suspected communists, and tended to portray the political ruin of the Senator from Wisconsin and his ultimate censure in the US Senate as unwarranted and unjust. In an exchange of letters Daniel Bell wrote to Buckley criticizing that associates of his who collaborated with apologists for McCarthy represented a compromise with cultural freedom (Buckley Papers, Bell to Buckley, June 30, 1955). In response, Buckley wrote that "one is on firmer grounds when resisting communism if one consistently resists efforts by the state, whether or not democratically sanctioned, to beat dissidents into submission, whether by anti-civil rights legislation or tax legislation" (Buckley Papers, Buckley to Bell, July 14, 1955). The libertarian rhetoric of anti-statism tended to be used without hesitation to support the stifling of individual freedom when it was regarded as threatening, even if it entailed the use of the state to craft laws, enact tariffs, or wage war to that end. Buckley then, continuing along this line of one-sided logic, accused Bell of not respecting his cultural freedom to support McCarthy (Buckley

Papers, Buckley to Bell, July 14, 1955). The opposition to Soviet communism or nothing standpoint by *National Review* was remarkable. McCarthy himself wrote a review of Dean Acheson's book *A Democrat Looks at His Party*. Here, McCarthy says of "the worst Secretary of State in American history" that his book is an attempt at an apology for the inadequacy with which communists who had infiltrated the US government were handled (McCarthy 1955). He claimed the book emphasized the brains of the Truman Administration's foreign policy rather than its accomplishments since its policy resulted in the loss of life of 400 million people, of diplomatic initiative, and of a war to the communists (McCarthy 1955). He concluded the review by saying that Acheson's book failed to mention the "Red" who is not immediately dangerous, i.e. not a spy or saboteur, "but whose mission it is to influence and, where possible, make policy" (McCarthy 1955). In "The Week" of the February 29, 1956 issue, *NR* defended the McCarthy movement against German-American theologian Paul J. Tillich's characterization of it as "potentially Fascist." McCarthyism, as opposed to Nazism, was justified as "a carefully delimited movement backing the efforts of a man to enforce a reasonable program of internal security" (*National Review* 1956a:7). The magazine also assailed Jacob Javits of New York for his "retroactive vindictiveness" against McCarthy. Javits was then running for a US Senate seat and said he would vote against McCarthy's becoming chairman of the Senate's Investigating Committee on the grounds that his censure in the Senate had surely precluded him from eligibility (*National Review* 1956d:4). In December 1956, *NR* reported that they were "happy to note" that reports of Senator McCarthy's political demise were exaggerated (*National Review* 1956e:4). However, two years later Meyer

would acknowledge McCarthy's "political execution by the Watkins Committee," which had begun its investigation in 1954 (Meyer 1958:57). Meyer (1958:57) attributed a "reasonable objectivity" to his own analysis since a few years had passed since McCarthy's censure and a year since his death. He assessed the treatment of the Senator by liberal scholars and media figures as the "treason of the intellectuals," for they failed to see the "essential truth McCarthyism had represented" (Meyer 1958:565, 566). To Meyer, the essential truth expressed through McCarthyism amounted to a metaphysical assertion of socialism's absence of validity. Presuming an equivalence of aims for liberalism and communism and taking for granted the falsehood of a rationalist view which assesses social patterns based on historical contingency rather than presuming an "intrinsic virtue or authority" to "inherited value," Meyer (1958:566) rendered liberalism "unfit for the leadership of a free society."

Though Buckley and *National Review* sought to refine the image of conservatism and exclude aspects of the movement which were regarded as less palatable, the rhetoric remained indignant, fierce, and uncompromising. The liberal left, on the other hand, was representing itself more placidly and increasingly in a manner consistent with Arthur Schlesinger Jr.'s ([1949] 1988) "vital center" prescriptions. This political concept consisted of a call for democracy through a politics of accommodation against totalitarianism and included a prescription for an acceptable conservatism. This "responsible conservatism" did not reject the welfare state nor did it unreasonably cling to a romantic vision of an aristocratic past. However, while liberalism was wavering and extending its hand in the name of compromise, the conservatives were anything but

conciliatory. The term, vital center, was developed in Schlesinger's 1949 (1988) book by the same title. *The Vital Center* signaled a shift in rhetoric and focus for liberals. While liberals like Schlesinger and Bell were moving rightward, many conservatives were suspicious and contentious in relation to the vital center position. *NR* criticized the Americans for Democratic Action (ADA), an organization of which Schlesinger was a cofounder, for its condemnation of Senator McCarthy (*National Review* 1956b). Despite an ADA affiliate's overturning a decision to have Alger Hiss give a talk at Swarthmore College, the magazine chided the organization as the "McCarthyite wing in the great new political spectrum fashioned by apostles of the Vital Center" (*National Review* 1956b). Some conservatives saw this move to the center by the left and the expectation of members of the right to become "respectable" as a divisive ploy to divide the conservative movement. Liberals like Schlesinger, Bell, historian Richard Hofstadter, and sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset among others were moving in the conservative direction. Considering Hofstadter's (and perhaps his own) shift rightward, Bell remembers that its motivation was a fusion of "nascent fear of popular action with the rise of authoritarian regimes in the thirties" (quoted in Brown 2003). While some of the (ex-)liberals and (ex-)progressives stumbling their way into conservative terrain still accepted the New Deal, writers like Kristol and Moynihan would become prominent and vocal critics of welfare state programs. Most commentators solidly in the conservative encampment were largely rejecting the New Deal and the welfare state on the grounds that it represented an oppressive extension of state power over the individual.

Generally, conservatives in the traditionalist camp opposed programs of “leveling” and egalitarian policy objectives on aristocratic philosophical grounds. The articles in *National Review* and other conservative magazines of opinion which had adopted a “fusionist” orientation were critiquing government efforts to address poverty on the anti-statist basis of the *laissez-faire* framework. In the 1960s, it would be disgruntled political figures like Newburgh City Manager Joseph Mitchell who would first publicly attack the welfare poor on moralist grounds and call their behavior into question in order to garner public support. *NR* and *Human Events* would parrot such complaints. However, in the 1960s, it was intellectuals who self-identified as liberal who would give social scientific credibility to an analysis of poverty and a critique of welfare programs which highlighted individual behavior – the “liberals” who emerged as the group of intellectuals to first acquire the neoconservative moniker.

PART III – The Appearance of the Neocons

-Chapter 5: Fertile Fields for Ideology in the 1960s-

Introduction

The success of ideological practice and its related productions, persistent as they were in the attack on welfare state programs, only make sense when understanding the transformations which were taking place in the related economic and social conditions. Welfare reform discourse which highlighted the actions of “militant” welfare rights demonstrators, the “dependency” of long-term recipients, and the supposed behavioral deficiencies of the poor were able to take hold and create a new consensus amid changing social and economic conditions which created social and economic insecurity. After all, the libertarians and traditionalist conservatives were unyielding and persistent in their attacks on the welfare state since the 1930s, but it was only in the late 1960s that these ideas began to acquire traction on a large scale. They did so in no small part because of the emergence of magazines and journals that were producing conservative ideas and analysis on a wide range of issues, including welfare policy. Additionally, it corresponded to important social and economic changes which were taking place through the decade which anticipated the downturn of the 1970s and which elevated the level of social and economic insecurity among the middle and working class. It also corresponded to the “explosion” in the welfare rolls. Where in the previous decade, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) rolls rose by only 110,000 families (17

percent), from December 1960 to February 1969, roughly 800,000 families were added to the program (a 107 percent increase) (Piven and Cloward [1971] 1993).

Politically, the formation and efforts of a largely grassroots conservative base during this period, which became especially organized and active during Barry Goldwater's political campaigns, helped build a conservative political foundation on which future political and intellectual figures would acquire status and come to positions of power and influence. The issues they would address, such as persistent reliance on AFDC due to chronic poverty and the apparent increase in the proportion of children being born to unmarried parents were presented through language which constructed the poor as behaviorally deficient. Terms such as "dependency" and "illegitimacy" would enter the public consciousness and welfare reform discourse focused increasingly on behavior instead of structural economic causes of persistent poverty as the 1960s progressed. The proto-neoconservative writers, researchers, and academics, some of whom worked in government agencies or played advisory roles to elected officials, were devoting more and more attention, energy, and print to these concerns.

The grassroots organizations and popular conservative base became effectively organized into an operational and efficient political network (Brennan 1995). This base included many whites who were resentful of gains made by the civil rights and black freedom struggles and who were distressed by the methods of direct action politics occasionally (but notoriously) employed by them. Sweeping federal actions like enforcing the integration of schools were seen as giving in to the pressure of riotous and unruly urban black activists. Beaten by a huge margin in the 1964 Presidential Election,

Senator Barry Goldwater did carry (aside from his home state of Arizona) only the deep south states, where his vote against the Civil Rights Act and opposition to federally imposed segregation gave him clout among racially conservative whites (Brennan 1995; Mendelberg 2001). The political potential of this conservative grassroots formation, wary of social and political changes which were taking place and nostalgic for what they viewed as a more wholesome and morally decent time, was well expressed by Nixon's referring to them as a "silent majority" during a period of progressive political movements and social upheaval. Cultural conservatism and conservative activism in this era are thus often historically overlooked, given the more infamous activism on behalf of civil rights and by the countercultural left, but was important for conservative political achievements and victories, which would become more apparent in years to come. This chapter attempts to illustrate that attitudes toward welfare were shifting, a process which was contingent upon aspects of social life which themselves were in a state of transformation.

The Silent Majority and the Quiet Depression

The "silent majority" moniker used by President Nixon to describe and inspire the quiet, conservative, and ordinary person, representing a neglected majority, suspicious of the social and political transformations which were unfolding and sentimental for the simplicity and innocence of days past (perhaps one of the oldest forms of ideology) is informative. It soundly described a persona which was not iconic in the 1960s, and thus "silent," but was emblematic of many dedicated and driven rank and file conservatives,

the gradual and somewhat unnoticed organization of which supplied much needed power to the movement. They would ultimately form a network of grassroots organizations which contributed to the political mobilization of conservative ideas (Brennan 1995). The term also captured the mood of many less vocal, regular Americans, who felt disempowered and overlooked and who were not part of what Nixon considered “a vocal minority” who were intent on asserting their radical agenda and subverting democracy (Nixon 1969; Brennan 1995). Also in the 1960s, negatively portrayed and racially divisive coverage of welfare in the media was becoming more typical. Anti-welfare rhetoric would especially resonate with the so called silent majority, whom Daniel Bell ([1962] 2008:24) referred to as “the dispossessed” and was thus more likely to become ideology. This helped direct policy concerns toward individual behavior at a time when economic and social conditions were such that people felt increasingly insecure in terms of personal and material stability and safety. Bell ([1962] 2008:24) explained that the “structural changes in society” in one sense threaten the “‘old’ middle class,” i.e. the skilled professional, who resented taxes and regulation. Although, the greater indicator of the “group that feels most anxious – since life-styles and values provide the emotional fuel of beliefs and actions – is the strain of Protestant fundamentalism, of nativist nationalism, and of good-and-evil moralism” (Bell [1962] 2008:24). In other words, the silent majority was articulating their frustration and resentment through a patchwork of libertarian and traditionalist concepts and language. Encouraging this national mood then were changes perceived as threatening to traditional social institutions as well as to economic well-being, changes which were taking shape in the 1960s and which preceded

the more infamous destabilizing crises of inflation, unemployment, and wages which occurred with greater ferocity in the early 1970s. This anxiety was especially manifest in relation to the shifting structure of the American family and perceptions of unruly college students and unreasonable demands being made by both black and white “militants” around issues which included equality and welfare rights. An atmosphere of fear and exasperation in mainstream America ripe for exploitation was emerging. Issues related to the economy, residential displacement, demographic changes, and the transforming American family structure by the late 1960s was successfully framed in terms of individual behavior and work ethic, ethnic and racial identity, declining sexual morality and loss of tradition, and family disorganization. As Scott (2007) observed, the ideological premise of two amendments to AFDC in the 1960s, the first in 1962 and the second in 1967, comprise conceptual and legislative historical strategies, demarcating an important period of historical transformation for American welfare state politics. The 1962 Social Security Administration amendments to what was then Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) (and which changed the name of the program to AFDC) were passed with the purpose of expanding benefits to the truly needy, encouraging the movement of recipients of relief into the labor force, and giving greater control to the states over their own programs. The measure was within the political structure of the New Deal to the extent that program expansion was intended and concerns over racial equality were either ignored or suppressed. However, it also represented the beginning of a departure from that structure with the Kennedy Administration’s maneuvering against greater national control and the implementation of the idea that the welfare poor needed to be

rehabilitated through vocational training (Shapiro, Kumar, and Jacobs 2000; Spitzer 2007). The 1967 amendments were a decisive break with the New Deal regime and were passed with race as a core (and strategic) component of American welfare politics and with the intention of halting the growth of the AFDC rolls (Spitzer 2007). Moynihan (1968a:3 [author's italics]) noted that race was an explicit concern "inasmuch as no effort was made to conceal" that the provisions in the amendments "were designed to halt the rise in *Negro* dependence on the AFDC program."

In the 1960s, the composition of the AFDC rolls and program was in a process of transition which corresponded to changes in family structure for both white and non-white families and the displacement of the black workforce and the African American population in general. Critics of welfare state programs would exploit this volatile social and political atmosphere and successfully correlate the "crisis in welfare," largely caused by increased pressures from demographic and workforce shifts, to the behavior of AFDC mothers (Moynihan 1968a:3; Abramovitz 1996). The AFDC program would grow rapidly during the 1960s – more than 100 percent between 1960 and 1969 (Moynihan 1968a; Piven and Cloward [1971] 1993). The heteronormative vision of a traditional nuclear family, with a contented, full-time female homemaker and a loyal, male breadwinner flourished in the 1950s, even if the reality behind this façade reflected a starkly different situation. From 1940 to 1955, the fertility rate increased and the divorce rate declined overall in the 1950s (Reese 2005). Also, black families were increasingly moving from southern agricultural centers, displaced by advances in farm automation, to the industrial metropolitan areas of the Northeast and Midwest (Moynihan 1968a; Jones

1973; Piven and Cloward [1971] 1993). In the 1960s, fertility rates continued to increase for both white and black women, but black rates were doing so more rapidly. Of African Americans who remained in the South, more than half lived in cities by the early 1970s (Jones 1973). While the African American population more than doubled from 1910-1966, the black urban population increased from 2.6 million to 14.8 million – a five-fold increase (Jones 1973). The black population between these years outside of the South saw an eleven-fold increase – from 880,000 to 9.7 million (Jones 1973). In addition to ongoing population growth after the Second World War, deviations from the normative American family structure, that is from the 1950s ideal, would become more apparent in the 1960s. The divorce rate, the proportion of families headed by women, and the rate of births outside of marriage all increased through this decade and contributed to the growth in the number of women eligible for AFDC (Moynihan ([1965] 1967, Abramovitz 1996). This relatively sudden restructuring of socioeconomic, population, and family patterns would precipitate a major shift in how people thought of the program. The greater likelihood that black men and women were discriminated against and economically marginalized and the increased likelihood that black mothers were unmarried, lived in poverty, or were unemployed increased the number of black women who qualified for welfare benefits (Abramovitz 1996). As Mimi Abramovitz (1996:320) observed,

the mid-twentieth-century assault [on AFDC] reflected the program's declining ability to discipline work and family life according to the traditional rules, that is, to mediate the conflicting demand for women's home and market labor, to assure the

reproduction and maintenance of the labor force, and to sustain patriarchal arrangements under new and more complex conditions.

Noticing these changes, and making use of them to argue for regressive measures in restructuring the program, Moynihan (1968a) illustrated that in 1948, only 29 percent of ADC families were black while by 1961, that statistic would increase to 44 percent. “The AFDC program responded by changing, almost abruptly, from a widow’s program to what in certain important respects became a Negro program” (Moynihan 1968a:13). The impact these changes had on public perceptions of welfare were detrimental to its legitimacy and increased the stigmatization of AFDC mothers. Also, it ostensibly represented a break in a chief function of the welfare state. Abramovitz (1996:319-320) noted that the increased costs and demographic shifts in the welfare rolls from white widows to women of color weakened the capacity of the ADC program to exclude women regarded as undeserving. “Once women seen as out of role came to dominate the caseload, racism and sexism made it more difficult to distinguish among women as ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’ of aid based on their compliance with the family ethic” (Abramovitz 1996:320). This would in essence challenge the credibility of the entire program.

Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward ([1971] 1993:123) demonstrated in their groundbreaking book, *Regulating the Poor*, that “public relief arrangements are initiated or expanded to cope with serious threats to civil order.” These expansions themselves constitute a crisis and then, once the apparent threats subside, pressure to restructure the system follows “in the name of reform” (Piven and Cloward [1971]

1993:343). The expansion of welfare state provisions in the 1960s was an effort by the system to adjust to the black, largely agricultural workforce which was displaced and moving north (Piven and Cloward [1971] 1993). As programs were expanded to manage a population which was very much in a socially and economically turbulent state, demands for reform increased (Piven and Cloward [1971] 1993). This systems-based framework is very effective at explaining the imperatives of welfare state expansion in terms of meeting the needs of the economic system and ensuring its survival. As Habermas (1975) observed, in order to avert crises (i.e. unresolved steering problems or problems of control), institutions make the adjustments perceived as necessary to fulfill the demands of the economic system. However, the political system must overcome problems of securing deference and obedience from the general population (Habermas 1975). Herein lies the necessity of ideological practice, which enables the system to overcome possible crises of legitimation, i.e. failures to succeed “in maintaining the requisite level of mass loyalty while steering imperatives... are carried through” (Habermas 1975:46). As has been pointed out, historically the administration of AFDC differed among localities “to accommodate local economic interest” and to appropriately fit the “varying labor requirements of local economic enterprises” (Piven and Cloward [1971] 1993:126). There is no doubt that the interests of capital have been protected, but also welfare state programs have been organized to uphold the structures of both gender and racial hierarchy (Abramovitz 1996). The ideological support for this mechanism has thus tended to be structured and interwoven with already existing ideology.

A sort of historical pilot case illustrating the public's intolerance of welfare's perceived contribution to promoting female sexual immorality and to disrupting the structure of the traditional family was the notorious controversy in 1961 in Newburgh, New York. This case also gravely illustrated the intensity of white anxiety over growing black populations in the North. It should also be noted that less than a year before this, the governor of Louisiana had cut twenty-three thousand (mostly African American) children from the AFDC rolls (Levenstein 2000). The criteria and rationale for the cuts had been that homes with families where children had been born outside of marriage after receiving AFDC benefits were deemed unsuitable (Levenstein 2000). Ultimately the Louisiana cuts, publicly framed as hurting "innocent children," were repealed by the federal government (Levenstein 2000:11). However, in Newburgh the City Manager Joseph Mitchell had blamed the city's unemployment and economic and industrial decline on the increase in its African American population (Levenstein 2000). Unlike the Louisiana case which was framed in terms of "starving babies," Mitchell had claimed that Newburgh's black welfare mothers were being subsidized for their promiscuity, framing the AFDC program as "unwed mother aid" (Levenstein 2000:11). Mitchell's proposed "thirteen-point plan" included capping aid for women who had additional "illegitimate" children, time limits for able-bodied recipients, and work requirements – familiar features of contemporary discourse on welfare reform (Levenstein 2000:17). The attitudes of the public would gradually follow which was reflected in opinion polls through the mid 1960s. It was this issue, widely covered in the print and broadcast media, that in many ways launched the contemporary welfare debate in the familiar terms now widely

employed – those of promoting work, the traditional family, and personal responsibility. The controversy garnered much publicity for welfare, with most of the press expressing widespread public support of Mitchell's plan (Levenstein 2000). According to the *New York Times* Index, the *Times* dedicated more stories to welfare in that year than in the years before or after, until the surge in 1967 (discussed below), when provisions were amended to AFDC to encourage work and limit the program's expansion.

There was a sudden increase in the incidence of coverage of welfare programs in broadcast and print media in 1967 and 1968 (*New York Times* Index 1959-1980; Vanderbilt Television News Archive 1968-1980). A review of the *New York Times* Index shows that the number of articles under the subject, "welfare" published in the *Times* surged from 278 in 1966 up to 826 in 1968. This increase continued steadily over the next several years, with the number of articles increasing to 1,176 in 1971 (*New York Times* Index 1959-1980). This means that between 1960 and 1966, the number of *Times* articles each year on welfare averaged 288 compared to an average of 922 articles per year between 1967 and 1973 (*New York Times* Index 1959-1980). There were more broadcast news stories in 1969 on the major news networks than each of the other four years, but only with modest decreases each year between 1969 and 1972 (Vanderbilt Television News Archive 1968-1980). However, there was an apparent explosion in broadcast news stories in 1969 (based on the analogous data comparing 1968 and 1969) (Vanderbilt Television News Archive 1968-1980). The increase in stories from the

period, August-December 1968 to August-December 1969¹ is staggering, with a rise from 22 to 135 respectively (or by 514 percent!) (Vanderbilt Television News Archive 1959-1980).

The demographic transformations already mentioned along with other significant trends which were developing at the time and which impacted how the issues surrounding relief and deservedness were interpreted were intensified by the growing frequency of media coverage of welfare. Images of race were used to frame specific aspects of welfare in either negative or neutral/ positive connotations. Martin Gilens (1999) observed popular news magazines' portrayals of welfare programs and the apparent use of race in constructing an evaluative tone for the reader. After 1960, photos illustrating impoverished blacks were being used at a higher rate than the true proportion of blacks among the poor, and beginning in 1965 at an even higher proportion. He observed that the first spike in reporting on poverty was in 1960, which coincided with the Kennedy-Johnson War on Poverty. During this time, though images of blacks were used disproportionately, white images were widely used as well (Gilens 1999). By 1964, the year that the Economic Opportunity Act was signed, the proportion of images of blacks and whites roughly reflected the true proportion in the general population (Gilens 1999). In the next year, however, photographs showing African Americans were used disproportionately, and the tone of the articles had conspicuously changed. From 1967 through 1992, blacks averaged 57 percent of the poor people pictured in these three magazines – about twice the true proportion of blacks among the nation's poor (Gilens

¹ Only data for the months August through December for each year were compared because the archive only began maintaining such data in August 1968.

1999). Content of the articles was also increasingly critical, and blacks were used to illustrate inefficiency, welfare abuse, and waste in programs (Gilens 1999). Images of whites were used for more neutral representations. In topics for which there is usually more public sympathy (old-age assistance, hunger, and medical care), photographs of whites were more likely to be featured (Gilens 1999). Topics which garner little sympathy (the underclass, urban problems, and welfare fraud) typically used visuals depicting the black poor. For example, between 1950 and 1992, not one article in these three periodicals used an image of an African American when discussing old-age assistance and 100 percent of the articles pictured blacks when discussing the underclass (Gilens 1999). The same tendency was found when compared to broadcast news stories, with a moderately large correlation (Gilens 1999). Television news tended to exaggerate the number of African Americans among the poor to a larger extent than did news magazines (Gilens 1999). For select periods, the largest proportion of blacks represented among the poor in television broadcasts was observed in 1968, the year before the sudden increase in the number of broadcast news programs covering welfare on major networks (Gilens 1999). Gilens had not observed the programming in 1969, but if the content was consistent with that of the previous year, the public was suddenly inundated by a flurry of television accounts of poverty and welfare which depicted blacks negatively.

Regarding traditional measures of economic well-being, the story of the 1960s and 1970s tends to be told in terms of a boom period just after World War II, especially in terms of wage growth, which continued until 1973 (Levy 1998; Burtless and Smeeding 2002; Mead 2009). Rising inflation rates had historically been kept in check *via* phases

of economic recession. The 1958-1960 recession was enough to reduce inflation to below 1 percent and by the early to mid 1960s, the Kennedy-Johnson policies of Keynesian stimulation steadily reduced unemployment, with the rate dropping to 4.4 percent in 1965 (Levy 1998). Even though unemployment began to climb in 1970, United States census data show that median family income improved through 1972 when, adjusted for inflation, it was greater than it had been in 1969 (Levy 1998; Burtless and Smeeding 2002). Income inequality is generally shown to have been high during the 1920s, with the richest 5 percent of American families having received about 30 percent of all family income (Levy 1998). Inequality would begin to decline toward the end of the Great Depression, with the income share of the richest 5 percent of families falling to 17.5 percent in 1947 and to 15.6 percent in 1969 (Levy 1998). According to US Census data, inequality was more or less stable through the mid 1970s, and then steadily crept upward until in 1996 the income share for the richest 5 percent of all families was 20.3 percent, greater than it had been in 1947 (Levy 1998; Burtless and Smeeding 2002). Frank Levy (1998:38) refers to the period from 1973-1980 as a “quiet depression.” Median family incomes leveled off, and unemployment continued to climb (US Bureau of the Census 2008b; Bureau of Labor Statistics). Gini ratios from US Census Bureau (2008c) data, which is the standard measure for gauging the extent of income inequality, show that the increase in the disparity of American incomes became more rapid and substantial through these years as well.

Yet, despite the evidence of the conventional measures of economic well-being, there is evidence which suggest somewhat of a different picture of the health of the

economy of the late 1960s, one in which the solid material grounding which preceded the economic crisis of the 1970s began to come undone earlier than is often recognized. It may be more appropriate to think of the late 1960s as the beginning of the quiet depression, that is to say a kind of muffled rumble before the seismic economic shifts which would ensue in the next decade. Vulnerability to anti-welfare ideology, delivered in large part through racially coded and negatively framed media coverage, was likely heightened as income growth began to slow and the failure of the system to control poverty became more evident. Slower declines in the poverty rate among African Americans relative to the general population and whites, rising inflation, and the continued rise in income concentration for the rich (by some measures) along with greater concerns over black militancy created fertile fields in which ideology depicting welfare programs and the poor negatively and simplistically could take root. While there certainly was a large amount of public discontent being voiced through the movements of the day, there were many who were clutching on to the tatters in the effort to keep the social order from unraveling. This is not to say that the trends observed here are always correlated historically to the greater likelihood of an emergence of a dominant ideology. They are not. But their conjuncture for this particular historical circumstance, that is the constellation of specific features of the period, had contributed to the early stages of the formation of a political culture which became hostile toward government relief for poor mothers, who made for a comparatively easy target for the public's ire. With the help of liberalism's refusal to advocate for means of subsistence which are less commodified even though subject to state control, and their defense of existing economic

arrangements, the problems of poverty and anti-poverty policy were presented in a manner which located in the behavior of the poor the cause of poverty and the emergent welfare “crisis.” The growing legitimization crisis associated with worsening material conditions was averted partly by expanding benefits and partly by deflecting blame onto the poor. This constructed a symbol of public disdain as well as a mechanism of social control. It did so along the ideological lines of patriarchy and middle class, white racial affirmation by using the welfare poor as a pariah class, who represented the embodiment of the consequences of deviating from the existing productive and reproductive norms.

By the end of the decade, point for point, black poverty would appear to be decreasing more rapidly than white poverty. For example from 1966 to 1968, black poverty rates decreased by 6.4 points (from 65.3 percent to 58.9) (US Bureau of the Census 2008d). That was more than five times the reduction for whites in absolute terms. However, expressed as a proportion of total poverty, the total decline for blacks was less than 10 percent, while white poverty came down 11.5 percent (US Bureau of the Census 2008d). That does not seem like a large margin of difference, but the years prior to this period must be considered and put in context. The post-war era, except during recessions, is typically regarded as a period of economic progress and expansion, with wages increasing, poverty lessening, and unemployment rates staying relatively low. However, the alleviation of poverty during this period of prosperity was not experienced to the same extent and in the same way by all groups. From 1959 to 1969, poverty rates for the overall population shrank an astonishing 46.0 percent and 47.5 percent for whites in particular, while black poverty only fell 17.6 percent (US Bureau of the Census

2008d). While poverty among African Americans was mitigated during this period, their historic wage inequality and economic exploitation in the American labor market persisted.

This is significant given the American ethic of identifying material well-being as an indicator of personal virtue and worth and the further growing stigma associated with receiving welfare benefits. While gini coefficients of US Census data only show income concentration and inequality as increasing in the 1970s, other measures and alternative income data indicate a different trend. The same US Census data, when expressed in term of shares of income reveal that inequality increased consistently from 1967 to 1980 (Jones Jr. and Weinberg 2000). This was true of households at the 95th percentile compared to those at the 20th, as well as those at the 95th percentile to the mean. Conceptualized in these terms, wage inequality began to increase (and continued to do so) beginning in 1967. Beginning in the late 1960s, the most affluent households (those with income at the 95th percentile) had amassed larger shares of income while the share of those at the bottom quintile (income at the 20th percentile) had remained virtually unchanged in comparison (Jones Jr. and Weinberg 2000).

There has been more than some controversy about how income should be defined. Public discourse on poverty and inequality has relied on pre-tax, post-transfer income based on the Current Population Survey (CPS) data of the US Census Bureau, on which the information above has also been based. The Social Security Administration (SSA) data on earnings is a pre-tax and pre-transfer measure, so it excludes Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance benefits from work-generated income. A recent National

Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) study of employment earnings from commerce and industry workers, a group representing workers historically covered by Social Security since its inception in 1937 and capturing about 70 percent of American employees, looked at this SSA data historically (Kopszuk, Saez, and Song 2007). Pre-transfer income among commerce and industry workers is informative, and like percentile ratios of CPS data, it also provides a narrative about the history of US income inequality and material well-being inconsistent with what is represented by pre-tax, post-transfer income data, what is commonly regarded as the basic definition for income. Returning to the American identification of virtue with material security, social actors' develop their own identities and perceptions of self-worth within this context. The usefulness of the SSA data becomes apparent on two levels. First, whether people think of themselves as rich, poor, middle class, working class, etc., as far as it depends on their income, they do so regardless of how income is supplemented (probably with the exception of the very rich who often have numerous income streams stemming from multiple business ventures or investments). So if we want to gauge perceptions of well-being and economic stability, it would be useful to do so in the same conceptual realm in which individual social subjects do so. Second, that morality and integrity correspond with the notions of self-sufficiency and work in the US is not a secret. Sharing the data from the NBER study historically sheds light on the material reality of workers with annual income earnings above one-fourth of one year's minimum wage for full-time employment in 2004 (\$2,575) (Kopszuk *et al.* 2007). The sample can thus be thought of historically and theoretically as those who have traditionally been juxtaposed with

individuals regarded as morally deficient, lazy, or undeserving of public relief, in other words, the “shiftless” and “lazy” who “don’t work for a living.” The median earnings of the commerce and industry workers in the NBER study began to level off in the mid 1960s as opposed to what is suggested by the CPS data for the total population, which show income increasing through the early 1970s (Kopszuk *et al.* 2007). Inequality among these workers has continuously increased since 1953 (Kopszuk *et al.* 2007). The share of income among those who might be regarded as working, lower, lower-middle and middle class² has also steadily declined since 1953 (Kopszuk *et al.* 2007). The share of income earned by what may be considered upper-middle class³ workers was stable through the 1950s and early 1960s, but began to fall after the mid 1960s (Kopszuk *et al.* 2007). The earnings share for the upper-income group⁴ showed significant increases. There is a steady increase in the share of income falling between the 95th and 99th percentiles, while the share of the richest 1% more than doubles from the mid 1960s to 2000 (from 6-14 percent) (Kopszuk *et al.* 2007). Among the commercial and industrial workers in the study, inequality and wage reductions began earlier than is generally measured in the CPS data for the general population. Their wages flattened out beginning in the mid 1960s and inequality grew through the entire decade. Percentile ratios of the CPS data only show overall increases in inequality beginning in the late 1960s.

² Income share falling between 0.0 and 60th percentile.

³ Income share falling between the 60th and 80th percentiles.

⁴ Income falling between the 95th and 99th percentiles and in the top (100th) percentile.

Inflation began to increase, as discussed, in the mid 1960s as well. The increase in inflation indicated (based on 2005 as a reference year) in 1966 was 3 percent, twice as high as it had been since 1959 (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 2005). Inflation became quite high, running at 5.5 percent in 1969 and 5.8 percent in 1970, the highest it would be until the “supply shock” inflation of 1973 onward. The 1960s dollar squeeze from inflation caused by increased military involvement in Vietnam by the US, the flattening out of wages for many US workers, and greater concentration of income for the rich had presaged in the 1960s the coming economic troubles of the following decade and onward.

What do Opinion Surveys Tell Us?

Relying on survey data to make substantive historical claims about complex political and social phenomena runs the risk of inferring a conclusive outcome when none exists. As Mills (1953:x) warned, efforts at rigid quantification “break down truth and falsity into such fine particles that we cannot tell the difference between them.” However, survey data, situated in their proper context and with careful critical qualifications can present a piece of a narrative which provides a better understanding of how attitudes and opinions are structured and informed. Intrinsic to the shifting social and economic reality discussed in the previous section was the context in which the politics of the welfare state were presented and interpreted. It is comparatively uncomplicated to track the themes and narratives about poverty, public relief, and individual worthiness which appeared increasingly in the 1960s and draw a parallel

between them and the field of common sense as it pertained to these matters.

Investigating and correlating the social, political, and economic patterns observed to actual opinions or public perceptions in relation to welfare, poverty, and work during the period under consideration is much more complicated. Gallup poll data have their limitations, as do survey techniques in general. However, survey data on welfare programs and poverty do tell a story and can be tracked over time if survey items are consistently structured and offered year-to-year on administered surveys. The Gallup poll replicated some questions each year, enabling the building of time series for particular survey items (Smith 1985). The Most Important Problem (MIP) item as it appears on the Gallup Poll has appeared on surveys since 1935 (Smith 1985). As Smith (1985) notes, the time series allows for the analysis of long-term trends in public opinion as well as short-term consequences to specific events. The MIP question on the Gallup poll is constructed as an open-ended question, with the respondent asked to identify what he/ she sees as the most important problem facing the country/ nation today. A detrimental consequence of this configuration of the MIP question is that even during times when welfare may have been regarded quite unfavorably by much of the population, the capturing of the public's attention by, say, rising gas prices in 1973, would have understated the level of public discontent expressed about welfare programs. So, with the tendency of a few big events to monopolize public perceptions, rates at which welfare was identified on this item tended to be limited, never representing more than 5.25 percent of respondents on a particular survey (Roper Center Public Opinion

Archives 1959-1980). That being said, there was variation over time which corresponded to important socioeconomic trends.

Noticeable intervals where welfare was identified as the most important problem seemed to follow periods where median incomes⁵ had either slowed in growth or decreased in real dollars. During the periods 1961-1962, 1970-1971, and 1974-1977 there was a visible rise in responses on the Gallup poll which identified welfare as the most important problem (see Figure 1) (Roper Center Public Opinion Archives 1959-1980). The increase from 1961-1962 directly followed a period where median incomes for commerce and industry workers remained flat (negligible increase) and the latter two periods correspondingly followed intervals where median incomes had diminished. As incomes were steadily rising between 1962 and 1967, welfare had not been identified as the most important problem facing the nation. It is probable that welfare was identified in 1960, 1961, and 1962 in part because of the success of Goldwater and his 1960 best selling book, *The Conscience of a Conservative* and the highly publicized controversies which took place in Louisiana and Newburgh, New York.

Income and poverty are intrinsically related, so too are poverty and inflation. As US involvement in Vietnam increased in 1965, the Johnson Administration chose to increase deficit spending rather than raise taxes for an unpopular war (Levy 1998). The short-run consequences of this option was a stimulated economy with faster economic growth and lower unemployment rates, but it set the course for persistent inflation. This

⁵ “Median incomes” indicates median pre-transfer and pre-tax incomes for commerce and industry workers from the Social Security Administration data. The Data are available from Kopszuk *et al.* 2007 (see References).

created a war expenditure bubble in which increasing inflation did not exert its usual detrimental effect on adjusted wages and thus did not increase poverty rates (Levy 1998; US Bureau of the Census 2008d; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 2005). Family poverty decreased somewhat rapidly from 1965 to 1969 and inflation steadily increased during that time (see Figure 2). However, from 1969 to 1980, the poverty rate was correlated to inflation in a fairly symmetrical relationship (US Bureau of the Census 2008d). From 1969-1970, increasing inflation precipitated an increase in poverty, while the period between 1970 and 1972 saw reductions in inflation correspond to greater reductions in poverty for those years (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 2005; US Bureau of the Census 2008d). This symmetrical relationship would continue, putting traditional economic understanding back on its feet. Measuring fluctuating poverty this way permits the understanding of periods where the system has failed to reduce poverty and the corresponding occurrences where welfare was considered an important problem among the populace, as a function of inflation (see Figure 3). Welfare was more likely considered an important problem following years where the system had either seen smaller reductions in the poverty rate or poverty had worsened. There was no reduction in the poverty rate between 1960 and 1961, and during the following year welfare was identified as the most important problem by a modest number of respondents. Toward the latter 1960s, welfare was considered an important problem in 1968, following a relatively small reduction in poverty, 3.4 percent in 1967 from 15.1 percent in 1966 (US Bureau of the Census 2008d). Accordingly, welfare was more likely identified as the most important problem from 1968 to 1970,

from 0.5 percent to 1.5 percent, but increased appreciably to just below 5.0 percent in 1971, the year after poverty increased for the first time in over a decade (Roper Center Public Opinion Archives 1959-1980; US Bureau of the Census 2008d). Poverty would again remain unchanged between 1973 and 1974 and would increase in 1975, from 8.8 percent in 1974 to 9.7 percent in 1975, representing over a 10 percent increase in poverty that year (US Bureau of the Census 2008d). This was the largest increase in poverty and thus the largest failure of the system to reduce poverty during the period observed until 1980. Following the same pattern, welfare was identified as the most important problem at a significantly higher rate, from a meager .29 percent in 1974 to nearly 3 percent in 1976 and over 5 percent in 1977 (Roper Center Public Opinion Archives 1959-1980; US Bureau of the Census 2008d).

The frequency of print and broadcast reports on welfare seemed to correspond to the likelihood of welfare being identified as an important problem between 1959 and 1980. No accounting of the effect of media on the political culture can be completely exhaustive or show a direct relationship to opinion. The quantity of print media reports, as reflected by the frequency of articles under the subject category of welfare in the *New York Times*, appeared to be more concurrent to the incidence of respondents identifying welfare as the most important problem in the 1960-1962 and 1968-1973 intervals (see Figure 4) (*New York Times* Index 1959-1980; Roper Center Public Opinion Archives 1959-1980). From 1975 to 1979, the identification of welfare as the most important problem appears to have been more consistent with the distribution of broadcast news programs on the topic (see Figure 5) (Roper Center Public Opinion Archives 1959-1980;

Vanderbilt Television News Archive 1968-1980). This is possibly explainable in light of the moderate decline in readership of daily newspapers during this time, from 80.8 percent in 1964 to 68.5 percent in 1977/1978 and the corresponding increase in television viewing hours per home per day and the increase in the number of TV sets per household during the same time interval (Newspaper Association of America 2004; Television Bureau of Advertising 2008). This being said, there does seem to be a correspondence of welfare being considered a serious problem by the public and the frequency of media representations. While not a complete review of all representations of welfare in media between these years, it is an informative snapshot providing context to the environment in which values on this topic were formed.

As stated, survey methods are not without serious problems. While providing the advantage of making available trend data over time on public attitudes on welfare the most important problem question on the Gallup poll has its deficiencies. The structure of the survey item likely understated negative public attitudes toward welfare state programs. Modest rates of respondents identifying welfare as the MIP plausibly revealed larger waves of ideological opposition to it, not unlike the tips of icebergs indicating massive structures under the surface of the water obscuring their true magnitude. As in icy seas, at times the tips are not even visible. While there were intervals with low or no responses naming welfare as the most important problem, it certainly does not mean that it was by and large regarded favorably by the public or that negative attitudes of welfare were not pervasive. Surveys which addressed welfare directly are informative in this respect. When respondents were given preset choices reflecting either a favorable or

unfavorable opinion of welfare programs their responses seemed to indicate a negative shift in public attitudes as the decade progressed (see Figure 6). A similar proportion of respondents expressed that “too much was spent on welfare” in 1961 and 1964 at 19 and 20 percent respectively (Roper Center Public Opinion Archives 1959-1980). It should be noted that 1964 was a year when no respondents identified welfare as the most important problem (Roper Center Public Opinion Archives 1959-1980). In 1966 and 1969, the proportion of respondents reflecting a negative attitude toward welfare programs was more than double that of 1961 and 1964. The questions had slightly different phrasing and showed 44 and 45 percent expressing an unfavorable opinion of welfare respectively (Roper Center Public Opinion Archives 1959-1980). The latter year, 1969, followed a year with a surge in both print and broadcast media coverage on the topic (*New York Times* Index 1959-1980; Vanderbilt Television News Archive 1968-1980). The 1964 poll featured in Figure 6 also revealed massive public espousal of the moral work ethic and suspicion of the ethical faculties of those on relief (Roper Center Public Opinion Archives 1959-1980). When asked if they favor or oppose specific reform plans, 83.8 percent favored reforming welfare so that all men who are physically able must work and 75.6 percent favored capping the benefits of large families at the level which would be earned at available wages (Roper Center Public Opinion Archives 1959-1980). Another open ended question on the same survey inquired about overall feelings toward welfare and relief programs; 21.7 percent expressed that some recipients take advantage of the program and that it should only be available to those who truly need it (Roper Center Public Opinion Archives 1959-1980). A small proportion, 5.5 percent, reported that it

destroys initiative, it breeds laziness, and more recipients should go out and work (Roper Center Public Opinion Archives 1959-1980). In an August 1965 Gallup poll, nearly 8 percent identified among problems of the Democratic Party its supposed leanings toward socialism/ ultra-liberalism, support for welfare, and radicalism (Roper Center Public Opinion Archives 1959-1980). While this number seems small, it is somewhat astonishing that 1 in 12 respondents would attribute such a platform to the Democratic Party, given that the year before it had nominated the incumbent Lyndon Johnson, a Democrat known for his conservatism, to run against Barry Goldwater in the presidential election. Perhaps the harsh conservative rhetoric coming out of the Goldwater campaign and the fusionist and grassroots conservatives who supported him were making an imprint on the public consciousness.

Not only do these survey trends construct a historical context for changing values on welfare through the 1960s, but observing the way study designers grouped the responses to the most important problem question over time demonstrated the changing climate in which attitudes toward the issue were formed. Respondents who identified welfare as the MIP in the early 1960s represented a very small proportion of respondents and were likely influenced by some well known and greatly publicized incidents which politicized and framed the issue in terms of race, moral values, and the work ethic. Surveyors grouped the welfare response with Social Security and poverty, making it unclear whether those seeing it as the most important problem facing the country did so because they problematized welfare itself and its beneficiaries as undeserving or saw welfare programs as stingy and inadequate and were sympathetic toward recipients. As

the right to relief was increasingly challenged through the decade by policy analysts and elected officials, the welfare responses were grouped within categories inclusive of other negative responses – those which indicated phenomena widely considered detrimental to society. To clarify, it can safely be assumed that responses that identified juvenile delinquency as the most important problem did not reflect that the public felt there was not enough delinquency but rather that there was too much. Responses of social security or aid to the elderly or disabled indicated that respondents felt not enough was being done for those populations. As the decade progressed, welfare undoubtedly acquired a negative connotation when identified as the MIP. Consider that 35 percent of survey-takers responded to an item in 1961 that not enough is spent on welfare for the poor compared to 18 percent in 1964, even though the two years were statistically the same in terms of responses that too much was being spent (Roper Center Public Opinion Archives 1959-1980). On a few surveys in 1967 and 1968, the welfare MIP response was grouped with responses identifying big government as the most important problem. Ultimately, welfare framed as “too much welfare” was grouped as its own category, solidifying it as a problem unto itself.

Anti-welfare ideology would come to take hold as the 1960s advanced. The consequences which would be so important were not that a general consensus had formed in opposition to welfare but a more consistent idea structure pertaining to welfare had emerged across groups within the population (Bennett 1973). Many had written that the 1950s had signaled the decline of severe ideological polarities (see discussion of the “end of ideology thesis,” the vital center, and the proto-neoconservatives in the next chapter).

However, attitudes on welfare would become more polarized in the 1960s, specifically in 1964 and 1968, indicating that there was less of a consensus than in the decade before (Converse 1964; Bennett 1973). In fact, Bennett (1973:559) found that the consistency of public attitudes on the issue were as “tightly constrained” in the mid- and late- 1960s as they were for congressional elites in the late 1950s, indicating that the public was developing more “coherent,” “well thought out,” and “firmly held” beliefs on the topic than in the previous decade (Bennett 1973:549). Those with the greatest and least education held the most consistent views in the two years analyzed by Bennett (1973) in the 1960s. Relatively consistent attitudes were also found among those with low-, moderate-, and high-interest in public affairs, with more coherence of ideas among the low-interest and high-interest groups in 1968. When looking at people with varying levels of “opinion leadership,” Bennett (1973:567) categorized subjects into two groups, the “silent majority” or “inarticulates” and “opinion leaders” or the “articulate minority.” There are glaring conceptual and typological problems here. However, those aside, his results were informative. While Bennett’s (1973:567) “silent majority” grouping showed slightly less consistency than that of the “opinion leader” group, consistency was not “totally lacking” among the silent majority. This group demonstrated more consistency of ideas than the entire cross section in a comparable 1958 analysis and nearly as much as the “congressional elite” in the earlier study (Converse 1964; Bennett 1973:566). It appears the “inarticulates” comprising the silent majority in the 1960s were more articulate and engaged socially and politically than is often recognized (Bennett 1973:566-567). This coherence of ideas among the divergent groups in his study was

accounted for by Bennett *via* the Goldwater campaign and his appeal to populist elements of American society. This is certainly correct, but the gradual reframing of the issues along racial, ethnic, and cultural themes by conservative as well as so called liberal social and cultural critics and policy intellectuals plus the reverberation of these themes through the society *via* an increasing number of broadcast and print media representations must be considered as well.

The shifting values discussed above on welfare and related public issues through the 1960s have been presented here, in terms of both their material and ideological situatedness. The data do not represent causal or one-to-one relationships among variables. Rising inflation and poverty rates as well as the leveling out and decline in earnings among commerce and industry workers contributed economic conditions in which feelings of material security and well-being were reduced. In such conditions, ideology becomes affixed to everyday thoughts and practices. This insecurity and uncertainty about the future was well articulated in a 1969 *LIFE* article outlining the results of a *LIFE* Harris Poll exploring public perceptions about rising inflation and the end of the “affluent society” (McGinniss 1969:20). It described a “bitterness” expressed by 63 percent of respondents that “until something is done, ...there will be continued deep resentment of a system which leaves most families with a gnawing fear that a lifetime of work will lead only to an impoverished old age” (McGinniss 1969:25). This was at a time when according to CPS data, wage growth was continuing steadily (Levy 1998; Burtless and Smeeding 2002). Both capturing and, to an extent, contributing to the

ire of the silent majority and the pressure felt from the demographic, economic, and social changes taking place, the article explained that

What emerges most starkly from the poll, in Harris' words, is 'a portrait of a silent, unblack, unurban, unaffluent America in seething revolt.' Moreover, the heart of that potential revolt is also the heart of 'Nixon country': skilled wage-earners and the property-owning middle-income groups – white, respectable, suburban and small town. They are convinced that big business and the rich are getting away with murder in exploiting tax loopholes and subsidies. Many people are equally convinced that the poor are boondoggling on relief payments. In both cases they feel the middle class is bearing the brunt of others' greed or laziness (McGinniss 1969:20).

One of the most pernicious ideologies to surface from these circumstances was that which created an object of blame in the form of the alleged shiftless and lazy welfare poor. In the passage above, the welfare poor were ascribed as the cause for the burgeoning economic crisis along with the corporate elite. While 70 percent of the participants of the LIFE Harris Poll identified the cost of the war in Vietnam as a cause of the rising inflation rates, 51 percent identified union wage demands and 40 percent attributed welfare and relief payments to climbing inflation (McGinniss 1969). In years to come, capital would prevail over its temporary crisis of legitimacy and advocate strongly for regressive reforms in relief payments to the poor, while welfare taking would

increasingly become stigmatized. In the early 1960s, conservative criticisms of the welfare state still generally followed libertarian reasoning and saw the expanded role of government in ensuring the economic well-being of its citizens as a despotic extension of its powers over individual liberty. The consequences of welfare programs on individual behavior, morality, and ambition were touched on only peripherally. These themes and the coded references and indictments of culture and the supposed pathology of the black family would arise in the literature of liberal policy analysts. Many former progressives and leftists comprised this liberal conglomeration and they, their ideas, and the politics they advocated would ultimately emerge as the early incarnation of neoconservatism. Their hostile response to the more progressive demands of the civil rights movement and emphasis on behavioral features of poverty cohered with many who had fit the silent majority profile and further solidified the individual as the main bearer of responsibility for the level of material well-being in which he or she lived. Some of the key themes and leading ideas of this group's literature are presented in the following chapter.

-Chapter 6: “Mugged by Reality”-

Introduction

In a *National Review* article appearing in the fall of 1959, John Chamberlain wrote:

Today we are at the beginning of another murky era, which differs from that of the fifties in that it does not promise civil war. There will be overblown battles about civil rights that will halt progress in civil rights. There will be quarrels about who should pay for schools and roads, the locality or the federal government. Meanwhile, nobody will quite know what “liberalism” is. This gives the conservative and the libertarian their chance: as federal politics becomes a teeter-totter affair, the conservative and the libertarian can go about their business of building voluntary associations to solve their problems (Chamberlain 1959:392).

As self-proclaimed liberals were moving in the direction of a “mild” conservatism, it did in fact become a murky era for progressivism where the meaning and politics of liberalism were ambiguous and increasingly less intelligible. The forming of an outright and open conservative coalition of varying figures and organizations with diverse ideas is significant in the historical development of contemporary conservative ideology as it relates to the role of government in alleviating poverty, inequality, and related issues.

The softening of mainstream liberalism and its ultimate integration of many conservative ideas concerning these matters is perhaps more important in this respect.

It was self-described liberals who had become “deradicalized” and had composed the original intellectual formation which was known as neoconservatism, though most of these intellectuals continued (and in some cases still continue) to describe themselves as liberal (Steinfels 1979; Kristol 1995). Prior to addressing the welfare state in a manner sure to contribute to the sully of its social and political credibility, this group was posturing itself in an adversarial way against the radical student movement and New Left. In a familiar process of intellectual and political metamorphosis, many were themselves former socialists, Trotskyites, and Marxists of varying sorts who would become disenchanted and in a position of fierce opposition to international and domestic communism. Norman Podhoretz (1968:289), who would take over as editor of *Commentary* in 1960, stated that “In the early fifties, the two main intellectual organs of the hard anti-Communism which had its roots on the Left rather than the Right were *Commentary* and the *New Leader*.” The hard anti-Communism of this soft liberalism and its hostility towards radicalism and dissensus politics of all sorts would soon translate itself in to an analysis of the welfare state which would evaluate programs in term of their consistency with institutional imperatives. Some, like the community action programs implemented in the War on Poverty, would be criticized as socially disruptive or as exacerbating perceived social and political crises in the late 1960s. The concern about the social and cultural effects of welfare state provisions, which were enhanced in the early 1960s during the second explosion in US poor relief policy, became expressed more

prominently in the second half of that decade. Prior to that, a broad coalition of advocates, welfare professionals, both private and public, and activists consisting of the poor and non-poor had helped to frame the issue of poverty and public assistance in an environmental and family context (Piven and Cloward [1971] 1993; Danziger and Haveman 2002; Mittlestadt 2005). As the story goes, the controversial Michael Harrington book, *The Other America*, and the poverty witnessed by John F. Kennedy during his campaign tour inspired the presidential candidate to do something about it. To a considerable extent, even though support would decline through the decade, the public seemed supportive of existing benefits and even willing to see programs expanded. In 1961, over two thirds of those who responded to a Gallup poll item, that welfare expenditures were either “about right” or “not enough,” with 33 percent responding “not enough.” (Roper Center Public Opinion Archives 1959-1980). Support for welfare would decline somewhat by 1964, with just over half of respondents replying that expenditures were “about right” or “not enough,” with 18 percent responding “not enough” (Roper Center Public Opinion Archives 1959-1980).

The Economic Opportunity Act was signed into effect in 1964 which represented the execution of the Johnson Administration’s declaration of War on Poverty. Into the late 1950s and through the 1960s, narratives exploiting patriarchal, white fear and explanations for poverty which emphasized personal, moral behavior were emerging. This was especially so in the work of intellectuals like Daniel Patrick Moynihan and others who reinforced the “culture of poverty” argument. By the late 1960s, such narratives began to acquire academic credibility. This was in part because the welfare

rolls had been shifting demographically and AFDC had been visibly transformed from a program for white widows to one for women of color and unwed mothers (Moynihan 1968a; Abramovitz 1996). Policy analysis was increasingly averse to social activism and geared toward highlighting behavioral attributes of the poor, which contributed to the enactment of welfare legislation which was disciplinary and oriented towards encouraging work (Moynihan 1968a; Abramovitz 1996).

In the early 1960s, access to government aid was regarded by many as necessary given the ebb and flow of the market as well as its failure to ensure subsistence for all, even when the economy was booming. The beginning of the decade saw the reaffirmation of the idea that with the right elements, government policy could make a difference in reducing poverty in America (Danziger and Haveman, 2002). In fact, poverty in America decreased sharply with the implementation of expanded welfare state programs under the War on Poverty (Burtless and Smeeding 2002; Scholz and Levine 2002; Danziger and Haveman 2002). However, concern was growing about AFDC, and the Social Security Amendments in 1967 would have provisions attached which Moynihan (1968a) called the “first purposively punitive welfare legislation in the history of the American national government” and arguably “the first deliberate anti-civil rights measure of the present era.” Its regressiveness notwithstanding, he and many of his contemporaries regarded the measure as prudent since it addressed the supposed behavioral problems of poor mothers, encouraged work, and brought attention to the growing “crisis in the American welfare system” (Moynihan [1965] 1967; Moynihan 1968a:4). The desertion of liberalism by the early neocons and the weakening of the

ideological and political left helped further ingrain and broaden the power of conservative ideas in intellectual and political discourse on welfare state policy.

A “Mild” Conservatism

The mid-century, liberal politics of compromise and appeasement were well articulated and anticipated in Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.’s concept of the “vital center,” which came to accurately characterize the mainstream left in American politics. It’s embracing of anti-communism and denouncement of radical popular movements weakened the American left and helped destabilize liberal opposition to the new fusionist conservatism. This movement of the left toward the (center-) right opened the way for the embracing of many conservative principles by so called American liberals. The effects of this transformation extended far ahead through history and its legacy had become evident with the signing of the Welfare Reform Bill in 1996. Bob Dole allegedly complained that Clinton was stealing his issues during the 1996 presidential campaign; these measures advocated by Clinton included toughening criminal justice policy, cutting taxes, and rolling back welfare (Holian 2004). The tempering of politically tolerable progressive discourse, or the construction of the “vital center” concept, is crucial for any discussion of the American political culture in general and as it pertains to the welfare state. This concept was an early expression of political surrender for progressivism out of which the end of ideology position was later developed by Daniel Bell, *et al.* Schlesinger took for granted a New Deal-style pragmatic liberalism and called for continued compromise between conservatives and radicals (Schlesinger, Jr. ([1949]

1988). After the Second World War, he argued that “Americans began to rediscover the great tradition of liberalism... the tradition of a reasonable responsibility about politics and a moderate pessimism about man” (Schlesinger, Jr. ([1949] 1988:165). With the threat of communism, which he equated to a Stalinist, totalitarian dictatorship, the sensible New Dealer is juxtaposed with the short-sighted “doughface progressive” (Schlesinger, Jr. ([1949] 1988:160). The New Dealer was a “doer” who understood that man is far from perfect while the doughface was a “wailer” whose naïveté often led him or her to being “the willing accomplice of Communism” (Schlesinger, Jr. ([1949] 1988:160). Political compromise required “a sense of humility” to preserve “democratic politics” (Schlesinger ([1949] 1988:174). This arrangement required that the conservative does not “identify a particular *status quo* with the survival of civilization” and that the radical recognize that his or her opposition is often self-indulgent and dogmatic (Schlesinger, Jr. ([1949] 1988:174). “Compromise” he asserted, “is the strategy of democracy” (Schlesinger, Jr. ([1949] 1988:174).

Schlesinger (1998:184) argued that much more can be done to ensure “essential standards” in “education, housing, and medical care,” as had already been done for unemployment insurance and Social Security. On the other hand, he argued that “the state must *not* place its main reliance on a static program of welfare subsidies” and “nor should it put much stock in the interminable enterprise of government regulation” (Schlesinger, Jr. ([1949] 1988:184 [author’s italics]). This argument for a provision of measured guarantees of the public good and preservation of competition and free enterprise along with calls for the toning down of rhetoric among progressives, not to

mention radicals, exposes its own naïveté. The “vital center” argument entailed a fetish of political centrism, which would become so prominent in years-to-come. Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR) has accurately referred to a “centrist ideology” with regard to the media (Cohen 1989). The essential feature of this fetish is the presumption of a fixed political and ideological center and that those at the political table, both reformers and representatives of capital, are equally bound by its parameters. However, with one side having greater power in defining or constructing this center, shifts in the political climate can take place less conspicuously. Even if there is an awareness that the political climate and field of public opinion is changing, transformed principles and beliefs which come to constitute the ruling ideology acquire an edifice of moderateness and thus they are presumed stable and correct, i.e. “centrist,” “balanced,” or “moderate.” They come to compose their own objective being and rightness by virtue of their location in the political center and perceived independence from the conditions in which they are constructed.

Schlesinger’s vital center and his disparagement of radicalism anticipated the neoconservatism of political figures like Moynihan and members of the group known as the New York Intellectuals who had steadily retreated from their social and intellectual progressivism. This group included writers like Bell, Irving Kristol, and Nathan Glazer. The vital center position for anti-poverty policy articulated a necessity for limited government provisions but shied away from any type of substantial social wage or income guarantee. *The New American Right*, a collection of essays edited by Bell and published in 1955 was expressly anti-populist and pro-consensus. It was revised and

updated in 1963 as *The Radical Right*. In addition to Bell, Glazer, and Seymour Martin Lipset, contributors included Talcott Parsons and Peter Viereck. The proto-neoconservative members of the New York group (most of whom continued to regard themselves as liberals) were specifically active in journals like *Commentary*, *The Public Interest*, and the *New York Review of Books* and would eventually reject political populism and cultural radicalism. The New Left, welfare rights movement, radical student movement, and black freedom movement all became targets for its weak kneed, authority-adoring, conservative liberal indignation. For example, support for the students at Berkeley who rebelled against the school's administration was presented by Glazer (1965a:¶3) as the result of a "disturbed and frightened" faculty; welfare rights advocates were cast by Moynihan (1968a:20) as instigating a "crisis to bring down the whole system" to an "apocalyptic and purifying ruin;" and Kristol (1968) lamented that the concept of democracy as popular participation through political methods of direct action was an ideology propagated by the New Left. While describing his own perspective of social change and democracy, poet and author George P. Elliott (1970) accurately captured the character of this liberalism teetering on the brink of Aristocratic and reactionary politics. Contemptuously he condemned "self-proclaimed revolutionists" who "provoke from authority" violence and tyranny, describing himself as a "conservative liberal," who still believes in "representative democracy enough to accept our oligarchical version of it" (Elliott 1970:72).

Prominent arguments in the work of these early neoconservatives included the contention that the left tended to overstate the extent of injustice, inequality, and racism,

the privileging of the traditional family and other established social institutions, and the critique of the New Left/ radicalism. In addition, the espousal of the culture of poverty thesis, an uneasiness with equality of result as a civil rights and welfare state policy objective, and an emphasis on the concept of welfare dependency highlighted the liberal departure from understanding social position and hierarchy in terms of class and interest group politics; increasingly it relied on analysis which was centered on culture and behavior. In short, a tradition of social criticism emerged that sought to redirect attention and culpability from concerns with regard to oppression, social conflict, and poverty back on to what they considered idealistic and irresponsible social activism, disorganized communities, family instability, cultural barriers to motivation, and individual dependency. A soft progressivism was maintained. Members of this group scorned McCarthy as an enemy of cultural freedom, opposed the Vietnam war, and rhetorically defended the philosophical foundations of the New Deal. However, they tended to advocate a participation in democracy and social programs which was moderate and not too adversarial. Advocacy for methods of politics or particular causes which were too far beyond the *status quo* or too inconsistent with white, middle class values was often regarded as self indulgent, short-sighted, naïve, or ideological. Criticisms of welfare state programs, of the welfare rights movement, and of the so called “negro problem,” while containing an air of “being honest about race,” was often itself suffused with white racial guilt and anxiety. This constituted a fetish of tepid politics which dictated that the center was the place to be. While being its own form of ideology, this trend in political and social analysis was touted as “knowing-what-one-is-talking-about” (Bell and Kristol

1965:4). Anything seen as too far on the fringe was portrayed with a tendency to “preconceive reality” or propose “prefabricated interpretations of existing social realities” (Bell and Kristol 1965:4). While Bell and Kristol (1965) claimed to want to avoid such gaffes, this group tended to simply replace what they regarded as the prefabricated interpretations of radicalism with their own ideological framework. Moynihan (1969:4), fearful of what would result from the challenging of traditional social institutions by the various radical movements, warned that the majority of Americans sense the emergence of an authoritarian society “and they fear it.” In an almost hysterical tone, he continued,

Concern for personal safety on the part of city dwellers has become a live *political* fact, while the reappearance – what, praise God, did we do to bring this upon ourselves? – of a Stalinoid rhetoric of apocalyptic abuse on the left, and its echoes on the right, have created a public atmosphere of anxiety and portent that would seem to have touched us all (Moynihan 1969:4 [author’s italics]).

As many of the proto-neoconservatives made the gradual political and intellectual transformation from left to right or, as Glazer (1970:74) described it, going from being a “mild radical” to a “mild conservative,” their level of public exposure and influence was expanding. Moynihan (1968b:20) noted that the War on Poverty in the early 1960s – “rather like the war in Vietnam – was pre-eminently the work of intellectuals – specifically those liberal, policy-oriented intellectuals who gathered in Washington.” President Kennedy was an important figure in allowing intellectuals to play greater role

in shaping public policy (Moynihan 1968b). Moynihan (1968b:20) observed that “beyond these essentially political influences, there arose at the same time an element of intellectual influence, deriving from the world of little magazines and large universities of the kind that abound on the Eastern seaboard.” In just what ways their intellectual contributions and political efforts shaped the “intellectual atmosphere” is well described by Steinfels (1979:6).

Daniel Bell writes a book, and a syndicated columnist appropriates its theses for his Bicentennial musings. Irving Kristol derides a ‘new class’ of liberal intellectuals for its snobbish attitude toward a business civilization, and Mobil Oil incorporates this idea in its public relations advertising. Alexander Bickel, Yale Law School professor, writes an article on the failure of school integration in the North, and a White House aide refers to it twice in a 1970 memo to Nixon arguing that ‘the second era of Re-Construction is over; the ship of integration is going down; it is not our ship... and we ought not to be aboard’ (Steinfels 1979:6).

Similarly, the sentiment that welfare state programs have failed tended to migrate from proto-neoconservative policy analysis and social commentary to the speeches of elected officials and syndicated columns of intellectuals with an ideological platform (Steinfels 1979).

The chief target for the proto-neocons was the New Left. *Commentary* had published the work of numerous writers of various political orientations, but by 1960,

Norman Podhoretz would take over as editor and launch “a frontal assault against the New Left, the counterculture, and all their pomps and works” (Steinfels 1979:5). Key liberal figures were moving toward the right but were expressly critical of what they deemed “the radical right” or the “pseudo-conservative revolt” (Hofstadter [1955] 2008:75). However, the shift in the right’s image and the burgeoning neoconservatism of Bell, Trilling, Glazer, *et al.* became visible in the mood and style of numerous articles in liberal journals of opinion. While the 1955 edition of Bell’s (2008 [1955]:71, 73) *The New American Right* viewed McCarthyism as one of the “ugly excesses” of new social divisions “created by status anxieties of new middle-class groups,” compromise and consensus were celebrated as “the saving glory” of politics in the US. Despite this celebration (and ideology) of consensus, the essays in the book implicitly warn of the tendency for the conversion of issues into ideologies (Bell [1955] 2008). While these liberals were taking much care to not be “ideological” or “excessive,” the consciously ideological right was able to transform the Republican Party into a decisively conservative party and the conservative intellectual movement into one which seemed less outdated and more dynamic and sophisticated. The preface to the 1963 edition of Bell’s collection warned that though McCarthyism was a passing phenomenon, “the deeper-running social currents of a turbulent mid-century America” were a point of significant concern (Bell [1955] 2008:lxxviii). In 1967 *National Review* (which was unwaveringly and unapologetically pro McCarthy) noticed the conservative leanings of these so called liberals. M. Stanton Evans (1967:6) observed that several figures associated with the left, like Bell and Glazer, were “expressing their disenchantment with

the doctrine of centralizing authority” and directing criticism “at specific failures of the welfare state.” He observed “the emergence of an expanding body of liberal criticism skeptical of big government, hostile to bureaucracy, and unhappy about the way federal welfare schemes have been developing” (Evans 1967:6). One might wonder if Bell’s consensus was partially realized when Evans (1967:6) euphorically informed *National Review* readers that “the new consensus, cutting across ideological lines” is among “philosophical conservatives and disgruntled liberals, and the common theme is a concern for the autonomy and integrity of the individual in combat with the leviathan.” He continued that liberals like Lionel Trilling and Daniel Bell had come to criticize “various aspects of the big-government welfare ethic” and saw “that centralized power is dangerous to freedom” (Evans 1967:6).

The chorus of proto-neoconservative voices coming to prominence emanated from prestigious universities and journals of opinion. They were uncomfortable with the actions of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and Campus Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) at Berkeley in 1964. The emerging neoconservatives felt personally affronted by the Student’s Afro-American Society (SAS) and Students for Democratic Society (SDS) activities at Columbia in 1967.irate welfare mothers who were organized by the Poverty Rights Action Center and the National Welfare Rights Organization, who indignantly staged a wait-in during a September 1967 Senate Finance Committee hearing where they were seemingly snubbed, were seen as carrying out an extreme response to well-meaning and benevolent legislators. This wavering liberalism was an establishment liberalism, fearful that the challenges

confronted by the establishment could effectively and radically restructure the institutions of traditional power in which they had benefited (Coser [1973] 1974). This (proto-neoconservative) liberalism was a distinctly white, American liberalism and desperately tried to shed its critical orientation in favor of an unwavering and rosy perception of institutions, power, and authority. It grappled with and pondered the so called Negro problem, urban poverty, democracy, and social change, and increasingly came to feel betrayed and let down by movements for racial and social justice. The literature often patronizingly discounted the efforts of blacks, progressives, and radicals, and at times did so in a self-conscious and guilt-stricken tone and style. As stated, *Commentary* was an important and early source for such sentiment. Both symbolically and sometimes through actual biographic recollections, references were often made to personal disappointment and feelings of betrayal with an almost “How can they do this to us?” attitude, an attitude which would inevitably make an impression on a fearful and anxious white America. This articulated betrayal at times even revealed an overt fear and traumatized consciousness – a sort of theory of society informed by post-traumatic stress. Kristol once famously quipped that a neoconservative is a liberal who had been “mugged by reality” (quoted in Lichtman 2008:284). In an infamous essay titled “My Negro Problem and Ours,” Podhoretz (1963:97), after recounting several instances where he had been assaulted by and made afraid of black youths in Brooklyn during his childhood, warned of the “writers and intellectuals and artists who romanticize Negroes and pander to them, assuming a guilt that is not properly theirs.” He expressed puzzlement at

white liberals who permit Negroes to blackmail them into adopting a double standard of moral judgment, and who lend themselves – again assuming the responsibility for crimes they never committed – to cunning and contemptuous exploitation by Negroes they employ or try to befriend (Podhoretz 1963:97).

Aaron Wildavsky (1968:3) correctly described their mood and *raison d'être*.

Torn between a nagging guilt and a secret desire to turn on their black tormentors, white liberals have become spectators watching with frozen horror as their integrationist ideals and favorite public programs disintegrate amidst violent black rebellion. How did the maddening situation come about? What can be done about it?

Wildavsky (1968:6) critiqued “reward and blackmail theories” for racial upheaval and riots, that is to say that outbursts in black communities were continuing because they were rewarded through the introduction of new government programs. Such theories, he argued, were too crude, and he suggested that a more complex explanation was required. However, he did not stop short of making a similar assertion regarding the actions and analyses of the New Left. While he acknowledged that the goal of integration and possibility of Americans “emerging as a single people” would be hampered by “mass repression,” he accused the New Left of “capitulation to lawless behavior” and “hunger for humiliation” (Wildavsky 1968:16). This, Wildavsky (1968:16) argued, only succeeded “in demeaning everyone.”

A Politics for the Lackluster and Melancholy

The approach to politics elaborated and advocated was moderate, pragmatic, and based on compromise and consensus. This orientation informed their critique of the social movements for equality and of legal protections of individual rights as well as their understanding of the field in which competing political and economic interests contended and of the demands made by those engaged in direct political struggle. The overall tone was that times were changing, the threat from communists, radicals, etc. was real, and American society was really not as terrible as the opposition was claiming. Karl E. Meyer (1958:461) described the political scene in the late 1950s as one where the November 1958 election returns signaled a transition to a “new collective personality in American politics” which was “most readily apparent in the Democratic Party.” It represented no less than a new style of politics and leadership, embodied by the likes of Senators Edmund Muskie and John F. Kennedy. Politicians with this style Meyer (1958:462) referred to as “Smooth Dealers” as opposed to “the bold insurgent” and “old-style indignant” New Dealer. While saying that the term, “Smooth Deal” is not intended to be “altogether pejorative,” one does not find a solid endorsement of the archetypal and decisively liberal New Dealer in this article (Meyer 1958:462). His description of the new “prudent” liberal was pejorative only so far as he described new liberals as composed with a temper of “stoic resignation” in an environment where politics were “lackluster” and “melancholy” (Meyer 1958:462). However, his enthusiasm for the new liberals is much less contained. Remarking on their good qualities, he says that they “tend to be more fair-minded, better educated, less hysterical, more aware of the

limitations of political reform, and more culturally civilized” (Meyer 1958:462).

Illustrated here is the emergent liberal political temperament and intellectual disposition which expressed itself in a measured, moderate, and conservative way.

In a 1957 book review, Kristol condemned sociology itself as intimately connected to various nineteenth-century movements for equality and criticizes that the authors under review are “Marxists despite themselves” by virtue of their “effort to be ‘sociological.’” Kristol (1957:358) argued that leftist ideology had by that time ingrained itself so deeply into the discipline, that the “meliorist and leveling impulse... has remained dominant.” It was argued that this tendency had led to an adversarial and critical orientation which ranged from sociology’s “*a priori* anthropological skepticism toward institutions of one’s own society” to its building of “critical momentum” and generating “around itself a full-blown climate of radical dissent” (Kristol 1957:358). Kristol (1957) excoriated one author for identifying as ideology both the conservative vision of a natural aristocracy and belief in natural hierarchy, as well as the Soviet government’s assertion that it had created a class-free society. Apparently, only Soviet propaganda qualified as such. To substantiate his assertion, he refers to Kingsley Davis’¹ concern that “It almost seems as if the facts of human inequality are too unpleasant to the social scientist, so that he loses his objectivity or his courage” (Kristol 1957:360).

Formerly an “avowed young Marxist,” Sydney Hook (1987:81; Gordon 1998) traveled to the Soviet Union in 1929 despite Stalin’s atrocities already being well established. He was an enthusiastic supporter of communism, and wrote to his parents

¹ Along with Wilbert E. Moore, Davis (1945) developed what came to be known as the “Davis and Moore Thesis” which, among other things, argued for the “universal necessity” of social inequality.

while in Russia that “just mingling with the people” had allowed him to “tap the veins of enthusiasm that run deep under the surface of things” (quoted in Gordon 1998:¶6).

However, like many of the “New York intellectuals,” he would become a fervent anti-communist. After World War II, he dispensed his services on behalf of the Cold War and the fight against communism. In his autobiography, Hook (1987:313) proudly noted that while President Truman referred to Stalin as “good old Joe,” and more Americans were seeing the Soviet Union as a “‘gallant democratic ally’ only the Social-Democratic weekly, *The New Leader*... continued its lonely fight for the truth.” In the *New York Times Magazine*, in July 1950, Hook wrote an article, the main thesis of which would be published as a book in 1953 under the title, *Heresy, Yes Conspiracy, No*, distinguishing “realistic liberalism” from “ritualistic liberalism.” A review of the book in *Commentary* described it and Hook as “sensitive to the best values in democracy, and intelligently alert to the contemporary issues which define the problems of the day” (Fitch 1953:86). The thesis he developed here and the “best values” to which he was sensitive amounted to little more than a philosophical justification for the branding of the ideas of those affiliated with the Communist Party (CP) as ethically reprehensible merely by association. He defended the right of individuals to espouse unpopular ideas, which he referred to as “heresy” (Hook 1950:¶8; 1953:22). This term he juxtaposed with “conspiracy,” which sets out to accomplish its objectives “outside the rules of the game” by undermining “the conditions which are required in order that doctrines may freely compete for acceptance,” and thus “conspiracies can not be tolerated” (Hook 1950: ¶9; 1953:22). A realistic liberalism must “defend freedom of ideas against those of agents

and apologists of Communist totalitarianism” who “resort to conspiratorial methods of anonymity and other techniques of fifth columnists” (Hook 1950: ¶35; 1953:35). Hook (1950; 1957) accused ritualistic liberals of considering the communist movement as just another set of unpopular ideas (or heresies) which should be protected as free speech. He argued that they carried their claims to the extreme, where the anti-communist assertions of Hook (1950:¶24; 1953:31) and others were seen as a “hysteria much more dangerous than Communist expansion from without and infiltration from within.” In the field of education, Hook argued that the protection of the right to academic freedom did not apply to teachers who were part of the communist movement. A person’s association with the Communist Party was enough to “disqualify” his or her ideas as worthy of protection against agencies seeking to impose orthodoxy, presumably as long as those agencies were under an ideological banner different from that of communism (Hook 1950: ¶30; 1953:34). Hook justified this by virtue of a person’s “declaration of intention, as evidenced by official statements of his party, to practice educational fraud” (Hook 1950:¶30; 1953:34).

The advocacy of protecting democratic institutions from “Communist infiltration” through undemocratic measures was revisited in a 1957 *Commentary* article by Hook (1957:51) comparing the liberalism of Justice Felix Frankfurter to that of legal scholar, Zechariah Chaffe. Though certain actions committed by possible communist insurgents may not be illegal, they may remain “highly undesirable” (Hook 1957:51). Unlike usual due process, the objective for a viable “security program... is to prevent these activities from taking place, not to punish those guilty *after* they have taken place (Hook 1957:51

[author's italics]). He applauded Frankfurter's "old-fashioned" liberalism as opposed to that of Chaffe's, which "radiates a breezy confidence" that makes those who differ in opinion "suspect in their devotion to freedom" (Hook 1957:50). Hook described Frankfurter's liberalism as disciplined and impartial, which made him an expert interpreter of the law. Along these lines, he argued that the occasional necessity "to abridge a particular freedom in order to safeguard the entire complex of freedoms on which the democratic way of life rests" might be necessary (Hook 1957:49). This was justifiably illustrated in Frankfurter's upholding of the provisions of the Smith Act in the *Dennis v. United States* case in 1951 (Hook 1957:49). He explained that there was a conflict between the excessive restriction of what he called "the strategic freedoms" (i.e. that of press, speech, assembly, etc.) and "legitimate concern for the security of our system of freedom" (Hook 1957:49). Rather than specifying that individual political freedom was necessary for fulfillment, self determination, or free cultural and political engagement and association, he emphasized it as a political-economic category. He explained that it is upon such liberty that the "functioning of the free market in commodities depends," thus prioritizing the system of commodity exchange and conceptualizing the liberty of the individual in terms of consumption over that of political or social engagement (Hook 1957:49). He argued that Chafee's defense of free speech in virtually all cases, is noble and "magnificent," but mainly in its rhetoric. Hook wrote,

We are living in an age one of whose paradoxical features is that in the abstract everyone is in favor of free speech, just as everyone is in favor of democracy. No longer is there honest opposition to free

speech as a principle, or to democracy as a form of government. In the case of totalitarians like Communists and fascists, this defense of free speech, or claim to be democratic on occasion, is largely dishonest, and consciously so (Hook 1957:50).

It is based on this that Hook (1957:54) defended Harvard University's "magnificent record in defense of academic freedom" when the university declared that they "...would regard present membership in the Communist Party by a member of our Faculty as a grave misconduct, justifying removal." Much of Hook's (1957:50) work had become dedicated to proffering fuel to fear drummed up from years of red baiting and anti-communist harangues which had become commonplace in American media and cultural criticism.

The "end of ideology" thesis, briefly discussed in the literature review, has been developed by Daniel Bell, Edward Shils, and Seymour Martin Lipset among others. Bell's *The End of Ideology* appeared in 1960, but contained essays written over the previous 10 years. Bell ([1960] 1988:13-14) explained its premise as an avowed opposition to the "falsity of simplification" of radical (mainly leftist) critiques of American society and politics. The end of ideology thesis identified the effort to view the American political arena in terms of elite power and class interests as no longer feasible (Bell 1988). This was a corollary of Lipset's concept of "status politics," which predominated over class politics during periods of prosperity, and Hofstadter's explanation of McCarthyism in terms of status anxiety (Hofstadter [1955] 2008:84; Lipset [1955] 2008:308). Firmly assuming that US society is an egalitarian one where

social position is not fixed, Bell ([1960] 1988:119) proposed that “the acquisition of status becomes all-important, and the threats to one’s status anxiety-provoking.” Power in the United States, he explained, had become diffuse, and increasingly one’s status and technical skill in the more and more socially and technologically complex society provided “the bases from which power is wielded” (Bell [1960] 1988; [1962] 2008:21)

With the politics of class division and interest group struggle becoming supposedly less relevant, the efforts of the latter day radical had become pointless and ideological to Bell and his proto-neoconservative cohorts. They had regarded the welfare consensus in the US, and what they saw as a pluralistic field of competing interests and expanded opportunities, as a shining example of what Glazer later described as “the good society” (Glazer 1963a:226). Debating the end of ideology position in the pages of *Commentary*, Bell (1964:64) argued that “the egalitarian and socially mobile society which the ‘free-floating intellectuals’ associated with the Marxist tradition have been calling for during the last hundred years has finally emerged in the form of our cumbersome, bureaucratic mass society, and has in turn engulfed the heretics.” His view of American capitalism could be described as consistent with the ideology of pluralism, specifically one disputing notions of concentrated power on the part of elites. Bell sees the system as self-correcting. He acknowledged that it is certainly a business society. However, it is one with a “general acceptance of corporate capitalism, modified by union power and checked by government control, [where] the deals and interest group trading proceeds” (Bell [1960] 1988:109). Often drawing on Weber and ever pragmatic, Bell is a guardian of the politics of compromise. He sees various radical movements as akin to

secular religions or comprising a “total ideology,” rather than based on rational motives (Bell [1960] 1988:399-400). When status politics are more prominent, there is a greater tendency for political debate to become polarized and ideological (Bell [1960] 1988). He warned that such conflicts can only damage society, but Bell ([1960] 1988:121) assured his readers that “it has been one of the glories of the United States that politics has always been a pragmatic give-and-take rather than a series of wars-to-the-death.” Thus democracy in the US is reflected by the bargaining of “legitimate groups” in the “search for consensus” (Bell [1960] 1988:121). Of course the interests of the communist was not considered by Bell ([1960] 1988) as legitimate, and, following Hook, he sees the communist movement not as a genuine dissenting group but as conspiratorial and failing to play by the rules. Similarly, he argued that communism was detrimental to democracy, occasionally warranting society’s acting against it (Bell [1960] 1988).

While discussing the woes of governing New York City, Glazer (1961:192) argued that the way to cut through the stifling bureaucracy in the city, and everywhere in American politics for that matter, was the need for “disruptors of the organizations, men who can batter the bureaucracies and make them respond to the real problems.” Sounding like a radical proposition, and at this point, he may still have self-identified as a “mild radical,” he was not calling upon community leaders and activists to shake things up through sit-ins, demonstrations, or other direct action strategies, but rather for people to follow the example of the elected officials and administrators who played a reformer role in politics. He was calling for imagination and originality by both Democrats and Republicans, wealthy property owners and labor leaders (Glazer 1961). In other words,

disruption was tolerable and even regarded as necessary by those who play a traditional role in the established channels through which such struggles take place, those who will disturb the usual running of things but not make lofty and “unreasonable” demands to overhaul them.

Two years later in *Commentary*, Glazer (1963:226) addressed the notion of the “good society.” He felt that the days when radicals and progressive liberals had an understanding of what terms like “progress” and “justice” meant and who had sought to create “a society in which all men could finally live together contentedly, creatively, and as brothers” were over (Glazer 1963:226). The major movements for change, communism, socialism, anti-colonialism, and the American labor movement, had contributed a great deal to the breaking down of this understanding, ushering in a temperament of anti-ideology and skepticism (Glazer 1963). Implicitly, he lumped himself in with these political and intellectual movements which destabilized conventional notions of political progress, and thought that while conceivably it was better to have a greater understanding of the complexity of these issues, the efforts to address the issues may have become hampered as a result. While seeming like a moment of critical self-reflection, he goes on to point out that the real obstruction to working out the problems of housing, urban poverty, unemployment, and failing schools, as well as the growing social malaise in an increasingly technological society, was the radicals who were busy making demands for the *best* society (Glazer 1963:63 [author’s italics]). While he considered himself among those who “joined in the new spirit of social enthusiasm” where these issues could be addressed without the bias of one or another

ideology, he argued that the radicals continued to be enemies of the good at the detriment of losing a realistic perspective of social arrangements that were adequate (Glazer 1963a). In defense of his friend, Seymour Martin Lipset, Glazer (1963b) rebuked a negative reviewer of Lipset's book, *First New Nation*. He argued that many radicals in the US find American society "so impossible they can barely stand looking at it to find out what is going on" (Glazer 1963b:¶3). He was in disbelief that the reviewer, Jason Epstein, could truly be concerned about constraints on equality of opportunity or the right to privacy (Glazer 1963b). To Glazer (1963b), Epstein is just one more radical observer who found things such a complete failure that he attacked those trying to make moderate improvements and treated them with disgust. What such critics are truly upset about, he claims, is that "here we have opportunity, and it turns out life is awful; we have privacy, and it turns out just as bad. The question becomes, why is it so bad for us? From this point of view, anyone who finds this country even a relative success must be writing gibberish" (Glazer 1963b:¶4). Glazer then alluded to Epstein being akin to a spoiled child rebelling against his parents. This analogy appeared more than a few times in the early neoconservative critique of the radical social movements and New Left. Critics who employed too harsh a set of criteria for success or who failed to give in to the impulse of saying things aren't so bad or could be worse were regarded as spoiled, unreasonably militant, or ideological. Though there was a declared opposition to all ideology, be it conservative, liberal, or radical, it was clear who the neoconservatives were essentially targeting (Bell and Kristol 1965).

The early neoconservatives were suspicious and defensive about the New Left's tendency to question and challenge existing institutions. There was a desire to clutch on to bits of the existing system which were regarded as preventative for the descent of late industrial society into chaos, and many of these intellectuals had a stake in the workings of the institutions which were being challenged and opposed. Wholesale criticism of and opposition to the system was resented. This was well demonstrated by the response of many of these intellectuals to the campus protests of the 1960s, often with the temperament of a let down parent, whose children were acting out despite their privileged and nurturing upbringing. Lipset (1965), Glazer (1965b), and others contextualized the student protest movement at Berkeley in 1964 in a manner not unlike antediluvian analyses of juvenile delinquency or criminal deviance. While the editors, Lipset and Sheldon Wolin, disclaimed that it was not their purpose to either assign blame or commend the students involved, they identified among the "obvious characteristics" displayed by the new generation of students a "preoccupation with protest" and (depending on one's perspective) a highly or overly developed "sensitivity to social abuses" (Lipset and Wolin 1965:xii). Lipset depicted the participation in and espousal of radical politics by the students as "an outgrowth of elements specific to the situation and environment of university life, disposing students toward deviant behavior" (Lipset 1965:3). The anxiety of leaving the security of one's family and not knowing what lies in store in terms of career and marriage (especially for students in liberal arts programs which do not easily lead to a career) was identified as a "major source of tensions which fosters the availability of young people for organized 'deviance'" (Lipset 1965:5).

Glazer's response to the movement was a combination of anxiety on the side of the university and system, plus worry on behalf of the students themselves (Lipset 1965). He argued that they were being short-sighted in that they neglected to understand how the university's power to regulate their activity was for their own good (Lipset 1965). The issue, argued Glazer, was not free speech or the university's unfair restrictions on student political activity on campus (Lipset 1965). This was how the issue was framed by the students and supporters. Rather, the problem lay in the unfair demands by students "that any political action whatever should be permitted without any step being taken by the university against any person or organization as a result" (Glazer 1965b:301). Glazer wrote that "we must be disturbed and concerned" that the underlying causes of the campus protests may likely not be resolved: that (1) students may continue their disruptive political tactics or intensify them and extend their application to influencing the academic operations of the university, and (2) that the community may pull its support from the students and the university if the intensity of their actions continue to have consequences in the community which are regarded as unfavorable (Glazer 1965b:302).

Diana Trilling, ardent anti-communist and literary critic had responded in a similar manner to the student protests in the 1960s. The motives and demands of the younger activists were discredited as having "no political ideas, only hostile stances on the part of the insurrectionary students, adversary postures in life and particularly in relation to life in America" (Trilling [1964] 1977:56). In reference to the Columbia student uprising in 1968, the University was described by her as her "husband's

university” which not unlike one’s in-laws, one marries into it “much as one once married into one’s husband’s family” (Trilling [1964] 1977:78, 99). The actions of the students were treated as an attack on an institution as hallowed as the family itself, and the behavior of the students toward administration and faculty as insolence and betrayal against paternal authority (Trilling [1964] 1977). In contrast to the black student occupation of Hamilton Hall, she regarded the more privileged white protesters as “cosseted middle-class boys” who played “violent games” and who felt no need to consider the consequences of their actions (Trilling [1964] 1977:115-116). The SDS-led student demonstrators were behaving badly, and as opposed to their black revolutionary counterparts, did not have a legitimate ground for revolutionary feeling (Trilling [1964] 1977). She resented that “campus ‘fathers’” were being called to task for not protecting their student-children (Trilling [1964] 1977:121). A student, who had been captured in widely publicized photographs during the occupation of the university president’s office, sitting in the president’s chair, propping his feet on his desk, and smoking his cigars, had called for Trilling’s husband, literary critic and Columbia professor, Lionel Trilling, to have done more in protecting him against the police (Trilling [1964] 1977:121). This type of appeal by the student body was regarded by her as “the wail of a child coming out of tantrum” (Trilling [1964] 1977:121). In contrast, the experience of the faculty was depicted by her in terms of “personal, moral, and intellectual offense” suffered by them at the hands of the students in the uprising. “Pain” and “loneliness” due to the “rejection of our university teachers by the students to whom they have given their devotion,” she claimed, was bound to be dismissed in the way that the scorn and rejection of enlightened

and loving parents by their children was increasingly being dismissed at that time (Trilling [1964] 1977:131).

Most disturbing to the proto-neoconservatives was that the political radicalism demonstrated in the student uprisings represented the rejection of their brand of moderate liberalism. The student protests were a revolt against an increasingly prudent and conciliatory liberal ethos which was appropriating substance and style from the right. Trilling also identified liberalism's failures as a catalyst for the unrest on the college campuses in the 1960s, but places the bulk of the blame with the New Left. She portrays the New Left as having deliberately set out to upset any kind of political consensus that had been built "among Democrats, left-wing Republicans, liberals, and radicals" (Trilling [1964] 1977:127). She contended, "For many among the educated classes, the right aspect of responsibility has for long been centrist moderation, a cautious mature deliberation in the implementing of social ideals; it has been difficult to envisage responsibility in any other way than this, which is the liberal way" (Trilling [1964] 1977:133). The student protests were against liberalism, and she warned that if liberalism failed to resist the New Left and foolishly identified its interests as those of the "contemporary revolution, it will have a major responsibility for the triumph of reaction in this country" (Trilling [1964] 1977:129).

Glazer's candidness about his own political conversion is helpful in terms of understanding the liberal-to-neoconservative metamorphosis. In several places, and in an open and personal way, he discussed the motive, incentive, and animus behind his political and intellectual migration. Glazer even confessed that on some level it bothered

him. He commented that he and others had gone from being radical or liberal to being “relatively conservative” in their older years, what he would later refer to as being a “mild conservative” (Glazer 1968:31; Glazer 1970:74). In a written rebuke of the New Left, he admitted suspicion of those intent on fixing society by “mobilizing the power of all the disadvantaged groups among us.” He confessed that it aroused in him a “skepticism in the face of so much passion and indeed accomplishment” which he often found troubling (Glazer 1968:31). The dimension of the New Left critique of society which particularly concerned him, i.e. where he “felt the pinch,” was its contention that society’s problems did not lie merely in the institutions of capitalism but in all “fixed and formal institutions” (Glazer 1968:32). By extension, he argued that the New Left naively assumed that humans are good by nature but are corrupted by institutions (Glazer 1968). Thus, with an analysis that sees society as so dreadfully amiss, the answer is to release human kind’s spontaneity either through revolution or constant pressure through direct action methods (Glazer 1968). Glazer saw three major flaws with this vision of social and political liberation. The first was the assumption that the necessary struggles to be waged were in the realm of power and between interest groups (Glazer 1968). Glazer (1968) saw this realm of conflict as greatly diminished in significance, and he asserted that it was being replaced by more complex problems which were often technical in nature. The next flaw Glazer (1968) observed with this reasoning was that social problems were becoming more complex because industrial societies are becoming increasingly dynamic. The third flaw with the New Left’s prescriptions for solving society’s problems was its prospect for more freedom and spontaneity (Glazer 1968). As

the problems of society were becoming more complex, Glazer (1968) argued that more organization will be required, contrary to the demands of the New Left for a system not constituted by technical rationality or approaching total administration (Glazer 1968). These assertions by Glazer are revealing. While they seem to be realistic and practical, they represent a case for the system as it currently operates. Despite the dynamism of social and cultural life, the necessary political acts to be carried out are administrative and technical in nature. The assumption he was making was that the society was relatively just and good that it needed only fine tuning from time to time to increase technical efficiency. Glazer wanted to maintain social institutions despite their flaws and despite the demands of activists who were demanding changes thought to make social equality and justice a possibility. The argument in favor of the *status quo* and to preserve existing institutions was premised on anxiety and uncertainty regarding which alternatives would be chosen to take their place. The maintenance of “fixed and formal” institutions was recommended as they were already constructed to grapple with the problems being faced (Glazer 1968:32). As solutions in technically advanced societies were never final, Glazer (1968:35) argued that there was “no alternative to the bureaucracies, administrators, and experts.” Thus the hopes for a radically transformed society, and even simply a more liberal one, were considered unrealistic. Though, Glazer did see a role for the New Left to play. The proper spirit of radicalism should politely tap the establishment on the shoulder and ask it to pay attention to some problems which seem to have fallen beyond its scope. However, he maintained that radicalism was no

longer a “great sword of vengeance and correction which goes to the source of the distress and cuts it out” (Glazer 1968:39).

Like Bell and others, Glazer had described the cause of his deradicalization as being rooted in a dynamic and complex reality which was beyond the scope and understanding of what was being proposed by the radicals of the 1960s. Berkeley had made Glazer apprehensive of what he saw as a “casual attack on existing institutions without considering what would replace them and whether it would mark any improvement” (Glazer 1970:75). During a stint in the Housing and Home Finance Administration, he developed a respect and admiration for the workers within the bureaucracies. Bell ([1962] 2008) and Glazer (1970) conceded that while current institutions, with increasing levels of specialization and bureaucratization contributed to increased surveillance and control, it also improved the standard of living, e.g. food, housing, and other services. Bell (1972) discounted the demands in radical populist politics for equality of result as rooted, not in fairness, but anti-elitism, the impulse not being justice, but rather that of *ressentiment*. Bell (1972:65) objected that radicals resented authority, an “authority represented in the superior competence of individuals.” When the potential for radical change and politics was at its greatest, this group of intellectuals had retreated to the side of authority and power out of fear of what would be left of the world as they knew it when replaced *via* radical prescriptions. Bell illustrated the orientation quite well when offering a definition for authority in the early 1970s at the service of the concept (and ideology) of meritocracy. “Authority is competence based upon skill, learning, talent, artistry, or some similar attribute. Inevitably it leads to

distinctions between those who are superior and those who are not. A meritocracy is made up of those who have earned their authority” (Bell 1972:66).

Politicizing Welfare

For the neoconservative critics of the welfare state, extending the civil rights movement’s demands for opportunity and equal rights to equality of condition or result was identified as short-sighted and profoundly flawed logically. This would extend to an attack on the efforts to mobilize the welfare poor and to employ the public relief system as a vehicle to realize the progressive aim of direct political action and participation. The expansion of the rolls and efforts to empower the poor politically would come to constitute a social crisis framed in racial and patriarchal terms. Politicizing welfare required characterizing it on the basis of myth, appealing to white anxiety and fear, and representing the problems associated with it as the result of individual, familial, and cultural pathology. Prior to Podhoretz taking over as its editor, an insightful essay appeared in *Commentary*. Michael Harrington (1959) perceptively identified some prevailing myths in the United States about poverty. Harrington (1959:19) wrote:

A fair statement of a current myth about poverty in the United States would probably go something like this: the poor are a small, rapidly declining group; they have achieved a substantial measure of protection as a result of the reforms of the New Deal; insofar as they exist, they are mostly non-whites and rural Southerners; and

as industrial productivity continues to rise, they will entirely disappear.

He went on to discuss that in the US, many continue to live below reasonable standards and that among the 50 million who do, they are predominately an urban, white population (Harrington 1959). While corporate profits tripled between 1940 and 1957 from gains in productivity, poverty had not been suppressed and the poverty rate increased in 1957 and 1958 (Harrington 1959). The economic booms during World War II and the Korean War had not substantially affected the poor, and those who were poor already were the first to lose their jobs from the recession of 1958 (Harrington 1959). His analysis was prescient because the assumptions and criticisms of welfare state programs were in a period of transition among intellectuals concerned with addressing poverty, and they were shifting based on the myths Harrington outlined, although the welfare poor were principally imagined as an urban, non-white population by the mid-1960s as displaced racial and ethnic minority populations were increasingly moving to industrial urban centers in the Midwest and Northeast. Harrington (1959:24) argued that it was with a mistaken optimism that a viable policy strategy for widespread prosperity should be hinged on the premise that the conduct of individuals and classes on one hand and government policy on the other “are consistent with one another and mutually reinforcing.” Also, he suggested that it would be misguided to assume that a comprehensive and successful anti-poverty program can be based on values consistent with the liberal middle class. While the middle class were active and supportive of poor relief prior to the war, he observed that it had seemed to no longer be concerned with

poverty in the years after (Harrington 1959). He hypothesized that as many members of the liberal middle class had upwardly mobilized from lower income levels during the war, many had become “more interested in protecting and enhancing their position than in broad social reforms” (Harrington 1959:27). Harrington’s observations are enlightening, and constituted a warning of sorts which would be mostly unnoticed by those constructing the narratives of poverty and anti-poverty policy which would come to dominate the public consciousness on these matters. Critiques of the demands advocated through the social movements for the poor and for expanding welfare entitlements would tend to reinforce the myths Harrington outlined and would increasingly be found in the pages of “little magazines”² like *Commentary* and later *The Public Interest* (Trilling [1950]2008:97).

Bell and Kristol had founded *The Public Interest* in 1965, and it challenged the tenets of progressive liberalism and the perceived egalitarian impulse of the social sciences. Kristol (1976:17) once identified as a common thread linking neoconservatives “their dislike of the ‘counter-culture.’” He would ask friends of his to contribute articles, people whom he felt were also “upset by the frothy ideological climate of the mid-1960s” (Kristol 1995:29). In the first article in the opening issue of *The Public Interest*, Bell and Kristol (1965:4) say that with the occasional exception, the magazine will avoid the “glittering generalities” of ideological essays, the kind enjoyed by the “adolescent mind.”

² The term is from Lionel Trilling’s chapter, “The Function of the Little Magazine,” in *The Liberal Imagination* which was first published in 1950. He was describing the “victory” of the *Partisan Review*’s survival through its first decade and its mission to bridge the gap between important literature and the “educated class” (Trilling [1950] 2008:97). He advocated that the little magazine could reinvigorate a literary movement of social and cultural criticism not seen since the 1920s and like in the 19th century, serious ideas could again be “heard and considered” (Trilling [1950] 2008:96).

They complained that “Unfortunately, there are always more adolescent minds than adolescents around” (Bell and Kristol 1965:4). Promoting “American political credos” and “sacred American beliefs,” like equality of opportunity and individualism (themselves forms of pervasive ideology) was commonplace. (Raab 1966:46, 47). Despite their ideological basis, these notions were taken for granted and were the foundations upon which these scholars composed their arguments.

An article in the Spring 1966 issue by Earl Raab (1966:47), a high school friend of Kristol, challenged the achievements of the War on Poverty, which in addition to expanding economic opportunity, had been a “kind of sociological surprise ball.” It argued that it operated under the premise of equality of opportunity and the assumption that it would address general poverty. However the anti-poverty program proceeded “to engage in a complicated series of maneuvers [sic] that astonish and consternate the literal-minded” (Raab 1966:47). The essay suggested that the War on Poverty was an essential part of the “Negro revolution, of the direct action demonstrations and anarchic ghetto restlessness” (Raab 1966:47). The result was an anti-poverty program which targeted an urban, black population, even though they were only a portion of the country’s poor, and the article further warned that “the American Negro is not... going to be satisfied with mere equality of opportunity. What he demands is something like an equality of achievement” (Raab 1966:47). What’s more, it was cautioned that the community action program component of the War on Poverty legitimated militancy, as it was organized to open up access to participation by underprivileged members of minority communities in the administration of the programs themselves. However, the demands of

“anti-poverty militants, ...the Negro and Spanish-speaking activists left over from the civil rights movement,” were expanded, and they were organizing members of the community to communicate and implement “their needs and desires in all arenas of public life” (Raab 1966:51-52). This was not to be taken pejoratively or feared, because the pattern of program design and implementation was seen as turning into “old fashioned ward politics” and possibly “traditional centers of political power” and not into “mass proletarian movements” (Raab 1966:54-55). What is interesting about this article and a feature of several of these works is a perspective and technique which does not cast the subject matter explicitly in favorable or unfavorable terms. They tend to maintain an “objective” and “non-ideological” exterior but subtly insert terms sure to rouse bitter sentiments in their readers, especially their white readers. Terms like “sociological surprise ball” and “anti-poverty militants,” and inferring that the efforts of such militants made certain that “the slum Negro... is the special target of the anti-poverty program” despite being “only 30 percent of the poor,” can be regarded as free of ideology only in a Bizzaro world.

The Public Interest was launched the same year the Moynihan report was released and Moynihan was an occasional contributor through the 1960s. While different variations of Oscar Lewis’ concept of the culture of poverty was appropriated by proto-neoconservative policy analysts, he had not intended it to be used as a means for placing the blame for poverty on the poor themselves. The term was introduced in *Five Families: Mexican Case Studies in the Culture of Poverty* in 1959. Lewis ([1959] 1975) was trying to articulate the common ways in which the poor adapt to, cope with, and address

poverty. Contrary to the way the concept was appropriated by those with more conservative motivations, he was identifying a dynamic set of factors which cut “across regional, rural-urban, and even national boundaries” (Lewis [1968] 1969:2). Lewis developed the concept with an emphasis on factors which function to help people manage and adapt to larger problematic structural forces. He presented the culture of poverty in terms of cultural responses to common problems which constitute their own rationality, even if in contrast to dominant culture values. For example, the higher proportion of out-of-wedlock births among those with a culture of poverty was contextualized by Lewis as a response to the reality that marriage was restrictive and disempowering for women. He argued, “Women feel that consensual union gives them a better break; it gives them some of the freedom and flexibility that men have. By not giving the fathers of their children legal status as husbands, the women have a stronger claim on their children if they decide to leave their men” (Lewis [1968] 1969:190). It is this perspective, that of attempting to understand the logical basis of a cultural group looking from the inside out and in relation to the contrasting values of the often repressive dominant culture that makes it different from the uses employed by Moynihan at that time and critics of the welfare state like Robert Rector and Charles Murray in years to come. To be fair, Lewis also studied the culture of poverty in terms of the “nature of the family” and the “character structure of the individual” (Lewis [1968] 1969:191). This led him to contextualizing behavioral patterns within the culture of poverty with observations like the initiation into sex at an early age, the abandonment of wives and children by men at a relatively high rate, and feelings of helplessness and marginality which reinforced repressive characteristics of the

larger culture and made the concept ripe for misuse (Lewis [1968] 1969). In a collection of essays edited by Moynihan, Lewis ([1968] 1969) stated that integration into larger social institutions like jail, the army, or welfare does not by itself automatically reduce features of the culture of poverty. Identifying welfare state benefits which were inadequate and not comprehensive enough as a reason for the coping strategies which comprise the culture of poverty, he wrote, “In the case of a relief system that barely keeps people alive, both the basic poverty and the sense of hopelessness are perpetuated rather than eliminated” (Lewis [1968] 1969:189). It is precisely the opposite inference, that benefits were too generous and therefore encouraged a permissive and deviant culture of poverty, which would constitute the misuse of the concept by the proto-neoconservatives and become such an important feature of later welfare reform discourse.

“The Negro Family,” the Moynihan report’s actual title, provided a moral dimension to the critique of the welfare state. It culled from Lewis’ culture of poverty framework elements which underscored behavioral patterns among America’s poor that were considered out of synch with white, middle class values. This contributed to revitalizing old, stigmatizing distinctions, like worthy and unworthy, for the poor. While he did not use the term, culture of poverty verbatim, he described these behavior patterns for black Americans as a “tangle of pathology” (Moynihan [1965] 1967). This was by no means the first application of the culture of poverty concept to describe the cycle of urban poverty in the US. The Council of Economic Advisors, in their planning and deliberating for Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, conceptualized the problem of poverty as a “life cycle” in which one of the stages was “cultural and environmental obstacles to

motivation” (Moynihan 1966:4 [author’s italics]). The problem emerged as one of “family structure” and “welfare dependency,” and Moynihan ([1965] 1967:i, 14), building on the observations of the Council, suggested that this dependency contributed to further family instability which led to more welfare dependency. The report cited “illegitimacy,” divorce, and single motherhood as pathological cultural patterns demonstrated by black families (Moynihan [1965] 1967).

Lewis’ theoretical orientation implicitly and explicitly assessed traits of the dominant culture critically, e.g. the identification of pervasive alienation and repressed sensuality and spontaneity among the middle class. While Lewis did problematize family and individual behavior in the culture of poverty to a greater extent, he did not do so out of context. Lewis ([1968] 1969:188) argued that it tends to flourish in societies where, among other things, the values of the dominant class stress the “accumulation of wealth and property, the possibility of upward mobility, and thrift” and explained “low economic status as the result of personal inadequacy or inferiority.” In contrast, Moynihan ([1965] 1967:30) only touched on larger social forces like the legacy and effects of black slavery and low employment rates, and he emphasized that the “center of the tangle of pathology” was the “weakness of the family structure.” He argued that, “In essence, the Negro community has been forced into a matriarchal structure which, because it is so out of line with the rest of the American society, seriously retards the progress of the group as a whole” (Moynihan [1965] 1967:29). This, Moynihan ([1965] 1967:30) contended, was “the principal source of most of the aberrant, inadequate, or anti-social behavior that did not establish, but now serves to perpetuate the cycle of poverty and deprivation.” He

highlighted a particular statistic in the report, that in 1960, for the first time, the number of Aid to Dependent Children cases (ADC), continued to increase despite the fact that unemployment decreased (Moynihan [1965] 1967). Also, even as employment and ADC cases increased, “nonwhite illegitimacy” seemed to increase and the portion of “ever-married” black women either divorced or separated from their husbands had remained relatively unchanged (Moynihan [1965] 1967:9). Moynihan interpreted from this data that the problem with the program was that it partially constituted the cycle of dependency, rather than emphasizing its function in terms of deficient financial support and inadequate scope of services. While rhetorically acknowledging that the problem was complex and required “one general strategy,” he concluded that “a national effort towards the problems of Negro Americans must be directed towards the question of family structure” (Moynihan [1965] 1967:47). He determined that the dimension of the issue of poverty most important were those related to the culture of the poor themselves. Without considering how his own framing of the issue and considerable influence contributed to public attitudes toward AFDC, a few years after the report was released, Moynihan (1968:4) would describe the “crisis in welfare” as one where the “escalating violence” and “mounting dependency” in American cities was leading to a situation where “a massive withdrawal of support for programs to eliminate poverty” was taking place. Pointing out that AFDC had surpassed Old Age Assistance as the most costly federal welfare program, he stated that it “had become perhaps the leading conundrum of American domestic policy” (Moynihan 1968:4-5).

Contextualizing black poverty in this way, as part of a complex jumble of behavioral pathology, helped to sustain the social stigma associated with poor black communities. Moynihan ([1965] 1967:29-30) warned that the “pathology of the disturbed group” also presented a danger to middle class black children who live near or in slums in that they too may get “drawn into it.” By incautiously identifying the cycle and culture of poverty with welfare, Moynihan ([1965] 1967:29-30) also helped reinforce the stigma connected with receiving AFDC and other benefits. Perhaps seeing, like Lewis ([1968] 1969:192) did, a “great potential for revolutionary protest” in the culture of poverty of poor African American neighborhoods, the proto-neoconservative reaction ranged from cautious and skeptical to anxious and fearful, especially regarding the organizing efforts of the welfare rights movement by non-white militants (Podhoretz 1963; Raab 1966; Moynihan 1966; Glazer 1968; Moynihan 1968a). Moynihan (1969:3) would come to conclude that the social unrest which was taking place arose from “a crisis of authority.” He bemoaned that “institutions that shaped conduct and behavior in the past” were “being challenged or, worse, ignored (Moynihan 1969:3-4). Citing Nisbet and inadvertently defining the conditions of hegemonic control, he explained that authority is consensual and not coercive. Moynihan (1969:4 [author’s italics]) continued, “When authority systems collapse, they are replaced by power systems that *are* coercive. While not explicitly linking the two, he seemed to suggest that the demands for equality of result over simply that of opportunity was related to the emergence of a coercive system of power. At the heart of the crises Moynihan was describing was the loss of authority, be it through the emergence of the female-headed family signaling decline of the

authority of men over women and children or Community Action Programs indicating the decline of the authority of traditional agency representatives and bureaucrats over ghetto residents and city dwellers.

Community Action Programs especially did not sit well with the emerging neoconservatives. Kristol (1995:29), in an effort to express just how “frothy” the political climate was in the mid-1960s, wrote that “The centerpiece of the War on Poverty was the sociological fantasy that if one gave political power to the poor, by sponsoring ‘community action,’ they would then lift themselves out of poverty at the expense of the rich and powerful.” Prior to his 1969 book, *Maximum Feasible Misunderstanding*, which outlined what Moynihan saw as the failures of the War on Poverty, especially the Community Action Programs, he published several articles to the same effect in *The Public Interest*. In a Fall 1966 *Public Interest* piece, he wrote an article highlighting what he saw as the ambiguity of interests built into anti-poverty programs, which highlighted gaps between existing agencies and the populations they were intended to serve (Moynihan 1966). Moynihan’s (1966) analysis of the War on Poverty was written from a perspective somewhere between an agency manager and a worried guardian of the current social order, and in the essay he asked the following questions: Was it supposed to make or prevent trouble? Should it have hired and involved or been dominated by the poor? Should it improve race relations or enhance racial pride? He argued that with disruption and conflict being among the outcomes of community action programs, they created and fostered distrust among the welfare poor and more settled working class groups as well as between militant community organizers

and their constituents and agency administrators (Moynihan 1966). While Moynihan (1966) acknowledged that the program facilitated the involvement of the poor in service administration, gave them more of a say, and promoted self-determination, he criticized that the program fostered resentment by administrators. Those most active in it were branded as troublemakers.

Following this same line of reasoning, two years later Moynihan wrote about “The Crisis in Welfare.” As already noted, he acknowledged that the provisions to the Social Security Amendments of 1967 were anti-civil rights and punitive but ceded that the move was “probably a useful one” given the “mounting crises in the American welfare system” (Moynihan 1968:4). Pressure would be put on AFDC mothers to work for benefits and the measure was openly designed to address what was considered black welfare dependence (Moynihan 1968). Moynihan’s objective was to improve and reform the welfare system, but what would come to pass as reform would be regressive and, as he stated in his advocate persona, punitive. In a seeming about face, he argued that what made reforms so difficult was that the system worked so well (Moynihan 1968). For one, he stated that it is hard to imagine a government program with equal importance (Moynihan 1968). He was also clear that neither was it a fiscal issue that was at the heart of the crisis, pointing out that at the time, as a percentage of GNP, social welfare expenditures were reasonably low when compared with other western societies (Moynihan 1968). Finally, he cautioned that a drastic change in the system would be disruptive and costly on multiple levels (Moynihan 1968). In a moment of critical aptitude, Moynihan (1968) even acknowledged that “most industrial democracies would

consider” the burgeoning pressure to reform the American approach to unemployment and poverty “profoundly short-sighted and potentially disastrous.”

As was often the case in his writing on welfare and poverty, this Moynihan, the liberal advocate for the underprivileged, fades away, and the Moynihan wrought with racial anxiety, panic, and fear rears his head. Regarding which strategies would be effective, he argued that eliminating “dependency” would require an “imposition of uniformities of behavior” which, while against the American individualist ethic, would be necessary for reform (Moynihan 1968:10). This would come to be a core component in the new paternalism approach to welfare reform, which had greatly left its discursive imprint in the 1996 Welfare Reform Bill in 1996. Moynihan (1968:10-11) noted that at the time, behavioral enforcement was also contrary with the demands of “minority group spokesmen,” who had protested the restrictions on individual freedom imposed by the US welfare system. However, he then relieved his liberal conscience by rationalizing that the American poor “enjoy a quite unprecedented de facto freedom to abandon their children in the certain knowledge that society will care for them” (Moynihan (1968:10-11). While the tacit acceptance by capital of the welfare state was beginning to break down and with elites increasingly seeing entitlements as foiling labor discipline, Moynihan (1968:6-7) warned that “the likelihood, is that those who wish – and wish with good reason – for radical change will dominate the discussion and set an agenda so extreme that in the end little if anything will happen.” Moynihan revealed his conflicted way of thinking on the process of reform again. He contextualized increasing hostility to welfare in terms of demographic and economic changes (outlined in the previous chapter) and recognized

that the negative perceptions are based on paternalism and racism (Moynihan 1968). Also, he commented correctly that the conditions in which black families live and struggle are indicative of a system which is unjust (Moynihan 1968). Though, changing tack again, he identified dependency as at the heart of the crisis and, like in the infamous Moynihan Report, he cited the increase in “illegitimacy” to support his claim. Also, he noted that while injustice is a reality for black families, the conditions they face provide fuel for claims that the families in the grip of such conditions are worthless (Moynihan 1968). While such attitudes “may be based on nothing more than race prejudice,” Moynihan (1968:18) argued that “it would be greatly mistaken to suppose that it is derived solely or even largely from racial considerations.”

Absolving himself and his cohorts of any responsibility in contributing to the growingly hostile political environment for welfare, Moynihan saw the controversy around welfare, in part, as the result of efforts by radical professors and the New Left student movements. These advocates, he argued, were using welfare as a political weapon (Moynihan 1968). The policy analysis approach illustrated above by Moynihan was a sort of trademark for the proto-neoconservatives. The dictum was: on the one hand, people need help, but on the other, those receiving relief are behaviorally deficient or are represented by activists who lack expertise and understanding and are too militant. While Moynihan (1968) interrogates in a namesake fashion the ideologies of racism and patriarchy, he uses those very ideologies to make his case. Senator Russell Long, “the man in charge of the legislation involved,” was defended by Moynihan (1968:21), despite his bigoted and patriarchal assertions about the appropriate role for poor women.

Notorious and racist references to welfare rights mothers were blamed on the mothers themselves and the radical anti-poverty activists politically mobilizing them (Moynihan 1968). He declared that “in truth their tactics have invited such racial slurs” (Moynihan 1968:21). This was consistent with the tangle of pathology argument, which implied, and this premise underpins the entire early neoconservative framework, that people should just play the game politically and adopt preferable cultural characteristics without asserting any kind of collective political agency. For the neoconservatives, if potentially threatening groups do go the route of self-conscious collective political action, the bases and results must always be ideological.

The “vital center” would travel far in the conceptual geography toward a politics opposed to a social wage for poor mothers as an entitlement. So much so that welfare reform had become a forgone conclusion in the late 1990s. In the introduction to the 1997 edition of *The Vital Center: The Politics of Freedom* (and the year after the passing of the Welfare Reform Bill), Schlesinger (1998) did not even mention welfare and mentions the New Deal only in passing. The explicit acceptance of welfare state programs, both by the public and by much of the business community, is no longer a characteristic of a politics of a responsible conservatism, vital center, or any type of viable liberalism. Most of the figures on the right who became prominent in shaping the direction in which the movement would grow were not at all receptive to calls for a more responsible (or liberal) conservatism. Some even interpreted calls for a more moderate, respectable conservatism as a liberal ploy to divide conservative ranks (Nash 1998). With the steering rightward of the American left and the intellectual right’s eventual

consolidation and vitalization, hostility toward welfare would become normalized and the neoconservative perspective on public assistance would become a feature of a moderate political position. The politics of promoting enhancements of social programs for the poor, let alone a social wage external to private labor markets, has migrated beyond the boundaries of the vital center and therefore beyond the acceptable parameters of political consideration.

PART IV – Mobilizing a Movement and Constructing the Welfare Poor

-Chapter 7: Elite Mobilization-

There should be no hesitation to attack the Naders, the Marcuses and others who openly seek destruction of the system. There should not be the slightest hesitation to press vigorously in all political arenas for support of the enterprise system. Nor should there be reluctance to penalize politically those who oppose it.

-Lewis F. Powell, Jr. ([1971] 2004:¶99)

Introduction

From the early 1960s and into the 1980s, the conservative attack on welfare would change its rhetorical objective from attacking “Socialism-through-Welfarism” to addressing “destructive social behavior” *via* “requiring welfare recipients to take personal responsibility for the decisions they make” (Goldwater 1960:70; Gingrich, Armey, et al.1994:65). The latter quote is found in the infamous *Contract with America*, published in 1994, but the fundamental premise on which this critique of welfare is based could be found in key publications from the mid 1960s onward. During the 1960s, the conservative movement would come to acquire a considerable degree of organization and drive. While its constituent ideological features were inharmonious, the movement was advancing an exterior which presented itself as coherent and consistent. As had been indicated in previous chapters, it had been newly energized and refashioned along

fusionist lines, and was enjoying a gradually increasing influence on the general public. Anti-communism, red-baiting, and the attack on welfarism as domestic collectivism were the issues which consolidated different types of conservatives into a practical political formation. While the drive to elect Senator Barry Goldwater to the office of President was not successful, it was triumphant in securing the power of the conservative movement within the Republican Party (Hofstadter 1964; Brennan 1995; Brennan 2003; Dallek 2004). Goldwater had failed to win the Republican Party's nomination in 1960, and though nominated to run in the 1964 election, he had lost by a colossal margin against the Democratic incumbent, Lyndon Johnson. However, Goldwater's contributions to the conservative movement were important, even though he had not been elected. First, the major push behind him had been comprised of a grassroots, conservative base, and conservative operatives had learned from each of the campaigns (Brennan 1995; Brennan 2003; Dallek 2004). Second, the Arizona Senator was not known for reserved, moderate rhetoric. While he alienated and scared off many voters, he had succeeded in exposing the public to a platform of conservative ideas on a very broad scale, even if their political realization was improbable (Brennan 1995; Brennan 2003). Goldwater enjoyed full support from and occasionally appeared in the conservative journals of opinion in circulation at the time. Goldwater's populist appeal *cum* an emergent fusionist conservative press was accessible and inspiring for that silent, conservative majority of Americans to which Nixon famously referred ("the dispossessed" to use Bell's ([1962] 2008:24) term) as well as to conservative corporate

elites who were beginning to finance and organize conservative ideological and political efforts.

Neoconservatism, on the other hand, and the entree of neocons into the world of think tanks and research groups corresponded with increased funding for conservative scholarship and activism by the corporate elite. The neoconservatives also expanded the conservative political formation to include moral and religious concerns and facilitated the inclusion of non-elite religious conservatives into the fold of voters which would ultimately elect Ronald Reagan to the presidency in 1980. The coalescence of intellectuals, political advisors, appointees, and individuals who had served in office within the think tanks during the 1970s would forge bonds which would prove to be powerful in years to come. The neoconservative critics of welfare programs utilized the methods and language of the social sciences and created a template of sorts for the policy analysis which would come to dominate the mainstream debate on welfare reform. Recently, the paleo-conservative critique of neoconservatism, most notably conveyed by Senator Ron Paul (2003) that they “express no opposition to the welfare state,” is certainly not true (Paul 2003). Rather, the neoconservatives tended to understand that the welfare state was indispensable, and have offered a torrent of expressed reservations and concerns about its consequences for decades. In fact, the political success of neoconservatism helped softened the political culture to the ideas for reform which ultimately shaped the Welfare Reform Bill of 1996. Having been subjected to ongoing critique, welfare state programs had become vulnerable to ongoing reforms which have gradually altered them to be more consistent with the shifting requirements of the

economic system and elite preferences. In other words, the political culture had become such that maintaining existing entitlements or proposing new ones required compelling justification, making the welfare state weak and susceptible to (anti-state, anti-welfare, sexually moralistic, subtly racist, etc.) ideology. Symbolic attacks on the poor and hysterical calls for the welfare system's abolishment from the right have helped to maintain the welfare system's troubled and beleaguered status. While the language of *laissez-faire* libertarianism had lent an aura of economic tenability to fusionist conservatism, it was a strategic political weapon for the neoconservatives. According to Kristol (1995:37), the success of neoconservatism was to take the philosophy of traditional American (or libertarian) conservatism and increase its scope to consider the social and cultural matters with which it had been engaged all along: to give it "an intellectual dimension that goes beyond economics to reflections on the roots of social and cultural stability, those of the moral issues which impact social and cultural stability." Neoconservatism's contribution then was to make American conservatism "more acceptable and appealing to the average American" (Kristol 1995).

The Fusionists and Goldwater

As Richard Hofstadter (1964) has pointed out, the capturing of the GOP by Goldwater was "a remarkable political performance" since he represented only "a special minority point of view." The Senator's charm, charisma, and unrelenting public speaking achievements had put "innumerable Republican workers around the country in his debt," but especially led to the recruitment and inspiring of a "corps of fanatical workers such as

no other candidate could mobilize” (Hofstadter 1964:¶11).¹ Also, a recently vitalized conservative press was heavily endorsing Goldwater’s campaign efforts. Magazines like *Human Events* and *National Review (NR)* were steadfast in their support of Goldwater. Murray Rothbard (2007:168), occasional contributor to *NR* in its early years and staunch libertarian, identified William Rusher and many of the staff and contributors of *National Review* as “the clique that inspired the Draft Goldwater movement and Youth for Goldwater in 1960.” Conservatives were decreasingly speaking only to each other in little known forums and a platform was being constructed from which people were being exposed to conservative ideas to a greater extent (Brennan 1995; Nash 1998; Brennan 2003). College youth were discovering this fairly new literature on campuses through various journals of opinion and student political societies like the Intercollegiate Society of Individualists, Young Republicans, and the Young Americans for Freedom, the first two groups having been more moderate but then greatly shifting to the right in the late 1950s (Chamberlain 1960b; Brennan 1995; Brennan 2003; Rothbard 2007). In a 1960 *Human Events* article, John Chamberlain (1960b:575) directly linked Goldwater’s popularity with a “‘new’ radicalism” which was “on the attack in the college communities.” This purported conservative radicalism and the popularity of Goldwater’s *The Conscience of a Conservative* was attributed to a “big swing” among the young away

¹ Revealing his own neoconservatism, Hofstadter (1964) argued that the moderate, Eastern Establishment Republicans needed to win back the GOP and offer up a responsible conservatism which distinguished itself from the Democrats and from the fringe of the conservative movement. He disapproved of Goldwater’s persona as “nuclear gambler” or inspired agitator with a tendency to see aggression as a valued opportunity in international affairs (Hofstadter 1964: ¶22). While this incarnation of the Senator was akin to what Hofstadter (1964:¶21-22) described as the preferred “American missionary impulse that once sent us out to make the world safe for democracy,” he argued that it diverged from it in that Goldwater advocated a “total victory” through the “destruction of the enemy as an ideological force possessing the means to power” and took a “dim view of most kinds of foreign aid.”

from “State-Welfarist political ideas” which he argued had dominated since the implementation of the New Deal (Chamberlain 1960b:575).

Goldwater’s book was ghostwritten by Buckley’s brother-in-law and old college roommate, L. Brent Bozell, and was a popular sensation (Nash 1998; Rothbard 2007). The book was published in 1960 and was one of the most successful conservative books of its day, having gone through more than twenty printings in four years and over one hundred thousand copies in its first year (Goldwater 1960; Nash 1998). It not only elevated the popularity of the eventual GOP presidential nominee, but also helped to advance conservative, free-market language on to the populace. The deliberately accessible prose in the book was, by 1960, also an objective at *NR* for their articles. This would be the case only after some mild commotion among the staff. Just a few years before the book was published Chodorov (Buckley Papers, Chodorov to Buckley, December 21, 1956) and Burnham (Buckley Papers, Burnham to Buckley, October 23, 1957) pushed for more easy-to-read pieces at the magazine in the effort to keep *NR*’s readership as great as possible. In a letter, Chodorov specifically indicated that he was happy to see more simplistic language in the magazine: “I was pleased by your piece...; you are getting rid of literary sophistication and writing in idiomatic English” (Buckley Papers, Chodorov to Buckley, December 21, 1956). However, he remained troubled that, overall, many of the articles continued to be too abstract: “Willi [Schlamm] confirmed my suspicion that *NR* is directed at the elite (which puts a limit on your circulation)” (Buckley Papers, Chodorov to Buckley, December 21, 1956). *Conscience of a Conservative* was user-friendly enough, but perhaps more importantly, this collaboration

signified an early alliance between a major conservative office-holder and icon and intellectuals who were prolific in the world of conservative magazines and journals of opinion. Bozell and Goldwater shared a fierce, pro-intervention stance on foreign policy with regard to the Soviet Union. At a right-wing rally, Bozell famously announced, “I would favor destroying not only the whole world, but the entire universe out to the furthestmost star, rather than suffer Communism to live” (quoted in Rothbard 2007:169). In *Conscience*, and with a similar tone, the tough foreign policy rhetoric was laid out for which Goldwater became infamous and, for many, respected as principled, honest, and strong (and not only by members of the far right). Brennan (1995) suggested that this perceived integrity hurt Goldwater in the election in that the public actually took him at his word and were frightened off. In a chapter titled, “The Soviet Menace,” it was asserted, “We want to stay alive, of course; but more than that we want to be free” (Goldwater 1960:91). While such talk in relation to Soviet Russia did indeed play more of a saber-rattling and authenticity-assurance function among conservatives, the book was also an early example of conservative, intellectual soft warfare against a number of other targets, including the power of the central government and taxes, the labor movement, and the American welfare state (Goldwater 1960).

The book presented the welfare state in a manner consistent with the anti-statist, libertarian rhetoric that predominated fusionist conservative analysis on welfare at the time. This reflected an early tendency by conservative intellectuals to shy away from discussing individual morality and behavior in relation to welfare. While the “consequences to the recipient of welfarism” were mentioned in *Conscience*, it was only

in a peripheral way (Goldwater 1960:73). The language was generally consistent with arguments which had already been expressed in *NR*, that the welfare state was but another form of collectivism, with the “ultimate goal” of subordinating “the individual to the State,” however by subtler methods rather than direct seizure of the means of production (Goldwater 1960:69). The argument in the book was that the strategy of the collectivists has been modified; it had been learned “that Socialism can be achieved through Welfarism quite as well as through Nationalization. They understand that private property can be confiscated as effectively by taxation as by expropriating it” (Goldwater 1960:69). When the critique of welfare included a moral dimension, it was mainly along economic lines, particularly that the very premise of the welfare state violates the sacrosanct principles of the market, i.e. that in order to “care for the needs of their fellow citizens” the state must “confiscate the earnings of X and give them to Y” (Goldwater 1960:72). It did address behavioral consequences, but sparsely. In one instance, the book claimed that the “more important” effect of welfare on the individual was that it eliminates “any feeling of responsibility for his own welfare and that of his family and neighbors,” but this effect was considered a byproduct of the welfare recipient conceding “to the government the ultimate political power – the power to grant or withhold from him the necessities of life as the government sees fit” (Goldwater 1960:73). Dependency was mentioned as a tangential concern. It was addressed, but mainly in terms of the state, through welfare programs becoming able to act toward citizens as “wards and dependents” and accumulating for itself unlimited and absolute economic and political power (Goldwater 1960:72).

The book's infamous complaint, that classical and modern liberalism focus only on the material side of humanity, implicates itself as well. While it argued that conservatism "looks upon the enhancement of man's spiritual nature as the primary concern of political philosophy," of which collectivism is a paramount violation, the modern liberal's program toward equality takes on the futility of a "fight against Nature" (Goldwater 1960:10-11). With an unholy alliance of incompatible ideologies, the book's philosophic slight of hand makes the liberal quest for economic justice one that is against nature and morality while purporting to be acting charitably. The use of *laissez-faire* principles in the book was typical for the emerging fusionist conservatism and later neoconservatism, and what had been a philosophy set against traditional authority and hierarchy had become one which was the ideological framework for a new set of such arrangements. For the fusionists and neoconservatives, free-market ideology was used to validate a new system of hierarchy. Therefore, Goldwater (1960:10 [my italics]), through Bozell, could make the claim that "It is Conservatism that puts material things in their *proper* place – that has a structured view of the human being and of human society, in which economics plays only a subsidiary role." This claim, of course, was totally false. Whether Goldwater knew it or not, *laissez-faire* economic discourse for fusionist conservatism and the emerging neoconservatism was the ideological mortar which adhered scientific and scholastic credibility to an aristocratic and elitist politics, and it would come to justify existing class arrangements. Along with anti-communism, it provided the veneer of consistency that the movement needed. This ideological feature of fusionist conservatism and neoconservatism was a paramount feature of right-wing critiques of welfare.

According to this ideology, social wages were regarded as market obstructions which limited capital investment and were identified as undemocratic, opposed to liberty, and at times even fascistic.

Until the late 1960s, most articles in the conservative journals of opinion which addressed welfare tended to follow this pseudo-free-market or neoliberal line. Actual liberals in the classical sense, or true libertarians, had mostly been marginalized and would only be asked to contribute when it would lend economic credibility to a largely aristocratic and interventionist endeavor. Some articles in the more prominent conservative magazines during the early 1960s did discuss race and morality, and at times hurtfully and maliciously, but tended to follow closely the language surrounding the specific events they were covering, e.g. the Newburgh controversy. For example, some essays in *NR* and *Human Events* addressed individual morality, but simply by parroting the demands of the Newburgh City Manager, Joseph Mitchell to deny relief for children born outside of marriage and to require work for able-bodied recipients (*Human Events* 1961a; *Human Events* 1961b; Franke 1961; *Human Events* 1961c; Fowler 1961; *National Review* 1962a; *National Review* 1962b). The conservative magazines crowded with delight when Mitchell released what *Human Events* (1961a:446) called the “13 Points Toward Welfare Sanity.” Following a similar demographic trend as many other Northeastern cities, Newburgh’s black population more than doubled between 1950 and 1960, and Mitchell’s assailing of the behavior of “the new element” of the community and his swearing to fight the state if it “steps in to tell us what to do” elicited a euphoric response in the conservative press (*Human Events* 1961a:445-446; Franke 1961:44). *NR*

reported that Newburgh was “not trying to cut off help to people who honestly need it,” and nor was it “discriminating against Negroes” (Franke 1961:44). However, it extolled Mitchell’s declaration that “the time had come for action” due to greatly increased welfare expenditures and his grumblings that things had gotten to the point where it was no longer unusual for “whiskey and automobiles” to be “purchased with welfare money” (Franke 1961:44). Mitchell’s investigating committee reported that the newcomers “apparently have no desire to take root and become part of community life. ...In short, the broadening of the base of public welfare has not curtailed social problems – it has increased them” (Franke 1961:44).

Human Events printed a letter Goldwater had written to Mitchell. The Senator wrote to him that his “stand on welfarism,” the account of which he had read in *LIFE* magazine, “was as refreshing as breathing the clean air of my native Arizona” (*Human Events* 1961b:467). He told Mitchell that his actions were courageous, and Goldwater urged that the way to nudge opinion in their favor was to widely make known their account of what was happening. The letter continued, “It is the kind of courage that must be displayed across this nation if we are to survive. The abuses in the welfare field are mounting and the only way to curtail them are the steps which you have already taken” (*Human Events* 1961b:467). Mitchell’s actions were widely displayed, and much of it reflected Mitchell’s version of what was happening. Quoting the *Washington Daily News* and following the events in Newburgh, a *Human Events* (1961c) article even made the argument that welfare was immoral to the children it assisted because it encouraged their “sub-normal” parents to give birth to more of them. Such women, it argued “should be

sterilized. Or if that is too much for the squeamish to tolerate, they should be confined to institutions” (*Human Events* 1961c:499). The article was especially sinister in its language and suppositions: “Since morons tend to beget morons, these children have little enough chance at best and that, rather than even the large sums of relief money involved, should be the main concern in this connection” (*Human Events* 1961c:499). Periodicals like *Human Events* and *National Review*, mainstream magazines like *LIFE*, and throughout American news media in general, Mitchell’s attempted succession from the welfare state was greatly taken in (*Human Events* 1961a; Levenstein 2000). While such accounts were offered and were sometimes nasty, the lion’s share of articles highlighted libertarian arguments – more generally the increasing costs of welfare programs, the further consolidation of power by the central government, and the inherent tyranny involved in using taxes to pay for the welfare system (see Chamberlain 1959; Hazlitt 1962; Poirot 1962; Chamberlin 1964; Thornton 1965; Freeman 1965; Buckley 1966; Hazlitt 1966; Opitz 1968; Hazlitt 1969; et al.). Articles criticizing the welfare state in this way were crammed onto the same pages as those advocating increased vigilance in combating communism domestically and internationally, criticizing labor unions, and arguing for representatives of American Business to begin coalescing and organizing politically.

“What Can Businessmen Do?”

Capital’s strategy of placating labor since the postwar period and its tacit acceptance of an expanding social welfare system since the enactment of the New Deal would begin to show signs of fray in the 1960s. The political activation and engagement of capital around these matters would be in full-swing by the early 1970s. The drive within conservative media to set these processes in motion had begun earlier with efforts to drum up attention to and support for many conservative policy concerns within the business community. A May 1962 *Human Events* article titled, “What Can Businessmen Do?” argued that a “bi-partisan” public affairs effort by business had to be stepped up, given the comparatively greater political activity of organized labor (Ingwalson 1962: 365). The political strategy of capital was presented as democratic, impartial, and “decentralized” while those of unions were described as “compulsory” and “centralized” (Ingwalson 1962:366). However, closer inspection of the stated objectives of the “business political action courses” promoted by *Human Events* reveals that they were “in the struggle to maintain the competitive market economy and to stem centralization of government” as well as to elect into office “many conservative candidates,” all of which were regarded as *a priori* good aims (Ingwalson 1962:364, 366). This was surely not an impartial endeavor. Graduates of such courses in the first few years of the decade totaled “over a quarter of a million persons,” and based on reports, *Human Events* declared that “the impact of businessmen in politics will be felt increasingly in the years ahead” (Ingwalson 1962:366). The article cited Goldwater’s support for business political activity, arguing that employers should allow their employees to engage in pro-business

activism. The matter was described as urgent since the few short years ahead would reveal whether the US would be a socialist or capitalist country and as Goldwater frantically warned, “It’s past [the] days of socialism creeping – it’s here!” (Ingwalson 1962:366).

Calls to arms were coming from within business as well. At a summer convention of the National Industrial Council, Rayburn Watkins, Executive Vice President of Associated Industries of Kentucky, gave a speech where he argued that making free enterprise appealing to the general public meant that “thought leaders,” in addition to the general population, needed to be targeted (Watkins 1962:765). Quoting an “astute Kentucky politician,” he told his audience that in order to have political influence, people simply need to “THINK you have political influence” (Watkins 1962:765 [author’s capitalization]). This he said was primarily a “communications challenge” and it required “facts, conviction and courage” as well as “attractive packaging” and “salesmanship” (Watkins 1962:765). The approval of “thought leaders,” Watkins (1962:765) argued, would “lend social credence and respectability to the truth we would convey.” He continued, “They are willing to listen, in most cases, if we will only speak out knowingly and sincerely ...if we keep on articulating ...if we constantly find new avenues for our evangelistic endeavor” (Watkins 1962:766). Common concerns, like rising inflation and declining profits would ultimately provide the ties that would bring powerful players together to impact policy, such as high level administrators, investors, or members of corporate boards, all representing different firms but similar class interests. A 1965 report by the Meadow Brook National Bank in West Hempstead,

New York had declared, “The maintenance of a business climate that encourages adequate corporate profits is thus of the utmost importance to the continued growth of this nation” (12). The report had indicated that the US was failing in this mission since corporate profits, as a portion of GNP, as a portion of national income, and as a portion of total sales, had been decreasing since 1948 (Meadow Brook National Bank 1965).

Though pre-tax profits had increased 5.7 times since 1929, after-tax profits had been reduced because of the increase in corporate taxes during this 35-year period (Meadow Brook National Bank 1965). Just as the crises which are associated with the early 1970s and which diminished the general sense of material security among the public were presaged in the decade before, so too were the crises affecting capital, e.g. capital shortages, increased taxes, slow-downs in productivity, and the reduction in profits (Meadow Brook National Bank 1965; Edsall 1984). Labor discipline was seen as undermined by generous government provisions like unemployment insurance, social security, and minimum wage laws (Navarro 1991; Akard 1992; Perruci and Wysong 2007). Also, a generous and permissive welfare system was believed to be an incentive for segments of the population not to work (Navarro 1991; Akard 1992; Perruci and Wysong 2007).

Since policy developments which favored labor and the expansion of the welfare state in the 1960s had become identified with reduced corporate profits and a decline in capitalist class power, business and like minded political elites had begun mobilizing around particular policy concerns (Navarro 1991; Akard 1992; Perruci and Wysong 2007). Groundbreaking legislation was implemented which resulted from the efforts of

organized labor, consumer advocacy, and the welfare rights movements and included the 1966 Coal Mine Safety Act, the 1969 National Environmental Policy Act, the 1970 Occupational Health and Safety Act, and the various programs implemented through the War on Poverty and the Great Society (Navarro 1991; Perucci and Wysong 2007). The pro-capital and conservative magazines provided a mouthpiece for American business, where its grievances and concerns could be expressed about these matters. Programs of the Great Society were seen as rewarding idleness and enlarging the federal budget with the effect of creating further inflationary pressures on the economy and more taxes for high income earners and corporations (De Toleando 1965; Hazlitt 1969). Recapping results from a Wall Street Journal survey of the business community, *National Review* (1972a; 1972b) had outlined some concerns of business with regard to the progressive welfare platform of Presidential candidate George McGovern (the more radical measures of which he would ultimately abandon after a sharp backlash in the media). His proposals, which were described as “horrendous” and as vehicles for “income redistribution” included funding for education, childcare, pollution control, public works, and socialized healthcare (*National Review* 1972a; *National Review* 1972b:784). Instead of being thought of in terms of an investment in the public good, they were considered in terms of a declining level of business activity, reduction in the share of national income going to the private sector, and decreased consumption and investment due to increased individual and corporate income taxes (*National Review* 1972a; *National Review* 1972b).

The Neo-Orthodoxy

Economistic discourse had been appropriated to give a managerial and economic authority to a politics which were at their essence aristocratic and moralistic. This attribute of fusionist conservatism and neoconservatism was at its core ideological and provided a component to the right-wing critique of welfare which was easily reproduced through anti-statist and populist slogans. In the fall of 1967, impending changes to the Social Security Act (SSA) had sparked protests from organized welfare mothers. The demands from the welfare rights activists included a guaranteed income and “jobs with a future” (US Congress 1967a:26486). When snubbed by the majority of the members of the Senate Finance Committee during a hearing, protestors were understandably angry and staged a “wait-in” (US Congress 1967a:26486). During debate in the Senate on the 1967 SSA amendment provisions, Senator Russell Long of Louisiana defended more strict work requirements and caps on AFDC funding (US Congress 1967b). The concerns of more moderate senators (e.g. Jacob Javits and Robert Kennedy) that work requirements were too strict sparked their call for and eventual passing of an amendment which exempted guardians of children under sixteen-years-old from employment which required that they be working when the children were home from school (Law 1983:1263).

While calls for more stringent reforms tended to cite dependency and the growth of the rolls as indicators of a growing welfare crisis, remarks being made in Congress were also echoing the neoconservative condemnations of the New Left, student, and welfare rights movements. Senator Byrd of West Virginia compared the angry welfare

mothers to “vermin that are honeycombing the fabric of this Nation” (US Congress 1967a:26486). They had likened the situation to an “overall strategy of revolution” one which was encouraged by misguided liberal “publicity seeking agitators” (US Congress 1967a:26486). An article by Piven and Cloward, which advocated expanding caseloads to people legally eligible, was even printed in the Congressional Record at the request of Senator Byrd as an example of such irresponsible encouragement of “civil disobedience” (US Congress 1967a:26489). Senator Long had demanded, “If they can find time to march in the streets, picket, and sit all day in committee hearing rooms, they can find time to do some useful work” (US Congress 1967a:26487). In response to Senators Javits and Kennedy, Long had suggested that the welfare poor were “sitting around and drinking wine all day” and complained that if the amendment passed, a poor mother “would not have to do so much as swat a mosquito off her leg as a condition for getting aid from the government” (US Congress 1967b:33542-33543). Insinuating blame to poor mothers for the condition of low-income communities, Long asserted that with child care and work enforcement, “The mothers would then have no excuse under the sun for refusing to do something constructive, if it is nothing more than to clean up the mess in front of their own houses” (US Congress 1967b:33543). The understanding here is that poor folks should know their place. Poor, black welfare mothers, rather than picketing and complaining should be obedient and disciplined laborers, consistent with the prescriptions of the market and the expectations of elite ideology. Women who were “out of role,” to reiterate Abramovitz’s phrase, had been castigated in Congress, with

Russell Long calling the demonstrators “Black Brood Mares, Inc.” (Moynihan 1968:21; Abramovitz 1996:320).

The early neoconservative attack on radicalism, the defense of traditional institutions, and the use and advocacy of select tenets of libertarianism would find expression in the political struggle to roll back progressive gains and protect elite interests in the decades to come. While Chapter 6 focuses on the emergence and intellectual origins of the neoconservatives and outlines their critique on welfare specifically, the evolution of Irving Kristol’s political orientation which, among the neoconservatives who trace their intellectual origins to the movement’s beginning, was probably most explicit about advocating elitist political arrangements. Steinfels (1979:81) referred to Kristol as the “standard bearer” and Coser ([1973] 1974:5) considered him the “prototype of the group.” His overall influence in defining the “neoconservative persuasion,” as he would come to think of it, and his activism as its leading exponent must be detailed a bit further. Multiple strands of conservatism converge in a provocative and dynamic way in the work of this so called “godfather” of neoconservatism (Kristol 2003:¶2). Kristol was not so much an accomplished academic like Bell or Hook nor politically situated along the lines of a Moynihan. Rather his power and efficacy were due to the fact that he was active in multiple spheres of elite activism, not to mention that he possessed an ironic and approachable, if not humorous demeanor and writing style. He identified Trilling and Leo Strauss as his chief influences, especially Strauss’ aristocratic framework which saw tradition as the “practical wisdom” which best guided the lives of the “common man” (Kristol 1995:7).

The connection to Strauss is important. Strauss' legacy on American politics *via* neoconservatism is usually associated with its approach to foreign policy. However, through his influence on Kristol and other "Straussians," a position which accepted social hierarchy as natural and preferable and which saw modernism's valorization of the common man and of equality as destructive came to inform a point of view on welfare state policy as well. Strauss' (1964) critique of the moderns and their conception of individual rights in favor of the system and priorities of the ancients was a contribution both to the resurgence of traditionalism and to early neoconservatism. Strauss (1963:viii, 1965) identified Thomas Hobbes as the earliest figure in political philosophy to give importance to the "rights of men" in theories of natural law. He had set out to reopen the case of "moderns against the ancients" because theories of modern natural law which derived from Hobbes emphasized legitimacy to the individual claim for agency through natural rights as opposed to an objective structure of laws already located in nature (Strauss 1963:xv). Implicit in Strauss' critique of Hobbes, and also existent both implicitly and explicitly in the work of the traditionalists and neoconservatives, is the opposition to reducing the scientific analysis of society to a merely materialist understanding. Strauss (1963:2) noted that Hobbes attributed his own achievements to those "made possible by the application of a new method, the method by which Galileo raised physics to the rank of a science." By way of this method, complex and subjective concepts like justice and the role of the state itself are reduced to facts which can be reduced to their elements ("the individual wills") and analyzed (Strauss 1963:2). From this point, and resulting from the method, the possibility of a "collective will" is

developed through a connection of the given facts and what was “at first an ‘irrational’ whole is ‘rationalized’” (Strauss 1963:2). One of the distinguishing elements of Hobbes’ philosophy and of liberalism, “the absolute priority of the individual to the State,” was seen by Strauss (1963:2) as “determined by... and implied in the method.” He identified two crises of modernity, the first highlighted in the work of Rousseau and the second in the work of Nietzsche (Strauss 1965). He finds in Rousseau’s work an acknowledgement that the “modern venture was a radical error” but also an implicit tension between the city (virtue) and the state of nature which Strauss (1965:253) identified as the substance of his thought. Rousseau’s critique of modernity was in favor of both classical antiquity and a reformed version of modernity itself (Strauss 1965). The great ancient cities like Rome, Sparta, and Athens were replete with “public spirit,” “patriotism,” and “virtue” (Strauss 1965:253). The “sacred unity” of the ancient city “has been destroyed” in modern times through the “dualism of power temporal and power spiritual, and ultimately by the dualism of the earthly and the heavenly fatherland” (Strauss 1965:253-254).

Strauss’ influence on American conservatism has been varied and vast. Many challenges to liberalism (both classical and modern) would come from his students and disciples. In a criticism of judicial interpretation of the First Amendment, one of Strauss’ students, Walter Berns (1957), argued that the pattern of liberal interpretation of the amendment resulted from the destructive political doctrine of liberalism which had become an American tradition. His conceptual targets were individualism, individual natural rights as opposed to natural law, and the notion of a hostile state against which individual liberty and self-realization are in opposition. Berns, like his teacher, attributed

these components of American liberalism to Thomas Hobbes (Strauss [1936] 1963, [1950] 1965). He held that virtue and character were higher goods over freedom and argued that American liberals held as an *a priori* truth the inalienable rights of man against the state. Only in a community with “citizens of *good character* who trust one another, is freedom not only possible but desirable” (Berns 1957: 255-256 [author’s italics]). He argued that only in such a community would freedom encourage virtue which is after all the objective of the legal system (Berns 1957). Berns’ was clearly not a conservatism open to a libertarian, small government perspective. Since the conservative movement came to appropriate an anti-state rhetoric, Berns found himself in opposition with many conservatives, such as Meyer and Willmoore Kendall. Other Straussians would enter the arena in which the struggle to define American conservatism was taking place. Martin Diamond and Harry Jaffa also were advocating a strong central government heading up a powerful republic as opposed to greater sovereignty to the states (Goldwin and Grodzins 1963). The constitutional convention was seen as the prevailing of the “nationalist” position over that of the federalists and also the best resolution to protect an aristocratic minority from the tyranny of combinations formed by the masses (Goldwin and Grodzins 1963:71).

In addition to the debate over the ancient and modern concepts of natural law versus natural right and by extension state versus individual sovereignty was the use of Strauss’ philosophy by his students and followers to justify a secretive and imperialist foreign policy and overall deceitful and manipulative stance towards public information. Also important are the intellectual and political genealogies emanating from Strauss and

which include figures who would become notable in the fields of opinion and/ or politics. According to a former student of Joseph Cropsey, himself a former student and mentee of Strauss, some Straussians were more philosophical and others more politically active (Norton 2005). The Straussian, Harvey Mansfield, from Harvard taught both Fukuyama and Kristol (Norton 2005). Cropsey at Chicago taught Paul Wolfowitz and Abram Shulsky, both Republican functionaries within the foreign policy elite (Norton 2005). Included on the list of more infamous students of Strauss are Jaffa, Berns, and Allan Bloom (Norton 2005). Bloom was especially influential in shaping those of Strauss' intellectual descendents who would later hold posts in government (Norton 2005). Bloom recalls that Strauss' vision of modern democracy was consistent with its founders (Spinoza, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Jefferson), that "with its orientation towards universal freedom it is nonetheless meant to be a regime of virtue" (quoted in Strauss 1995:vi). Quoting his teacher, Bloom recounts that Strauss' vision of democracy was intended to be "an aristocracy which has broadened into a universal aristocracy" (Strauss 1995:vi, 4-5). The ruling elite within this aristocracy would be absent of those that were unworthy, namely people that read only "the sports page and the comic section" of the newspaper and "can be appropriated by the meanest capacities without any intellectual and moral effort whatsoever and at a very low monetary price" (Strauss 1995:5).

Critics of Strauss and Straussianism identify as the source of this justification for lying to the public his *Persecution and the Art of Writing*. Here, Strauss (1988:34) noted that the pre-modern philosophers wrote on the assumption that the gap separating the "wise" few and "vulgar" masses was rooted in human nature itself and that no program of

freedom of speech or popular education could close it. Philosophers in this tradition therefore constructed their writings which were accessible to the masses through “brief indication” and in a commonplace, popular manner (Strauss 1988:35). These philosophers hated “the lie in the soul” most of all and therefore recognized that the opinions they expressed exoterically were merely “likely tales” or “noble lies” (Strauss 1988:35). It’s important to note here that the debates about what Strauss *really* meant by his academic efforts or whether he *really* intended for the formation of a neoconservative cabal which privileged elite power are not important (for example, see Drury 1999; Zuckert and Zuckert 2006 [my italics]). His specific views on the welfare state are also not what is relevant in terms of his significance, influence, and legacy, as many of his students supported the expansion of state power without any particular criticism directed toward welfare programs. What is important, and it has been passed on and reproduced through Strauss’ students, admirers, and mentees, is the political and intellectual legacy which advocates mass public deception and looks toward the general public with distrust. Kristol (1995:8) fondly remembered that Strauss “was contemptuous of the modern demagogic idolatry of the common man,” and shared with many of the ancient masters a care in his writing “so as not, as the British would say, to ‘frighten the horses.’” While Strauss’ thought is not directly involved with welfare state policy, the Straussian tradition which defends elite manipulation, deceit, and “lying nobly,” heralds the virtues of ancient political philosophies that advocate the organizing of democratic societies along more traditional and hierarchical grounds, and identifies as an imperative the founding of “an aristocracy within democratic mass society” translates straightforwardly into a point of

view seeking to organize the public assistance system so as to minimize any kind of collective political agency (Strauss [1968] 1995:10). As Kristol (1995:9) noted, “One didn’t study Strauss to discover ready-made political opinions.”

Kristol (1995:5) described himself as “neo-orthodox” in relation to religion, and while not an observant Jew or convinced of God’s existence, he was respectful of “tradition bound religion,” and impressed with the Christian theological “certainty ...that the human condition placed inherent limitations on human possibility.” Kristol understood the Christian metaphysic of original sin in this context as a dictate that humanity is simply not cut out for utopian doctrines, or as a healthy tendency towards skepticism of ideology. Praising Strauss’ controversial and elitist orientation, he explained that the common sense of the common man must be guided by tradition, often in the capacity of religion, itself the collectively expressed superior wisdom of the ancients (Kristol 1995). The Enlightenment “dogma” that the truth will set society’s members free was rejected, as truth and the political order were seen as inherently at odds with one another (Kristol 1995:8). He recounted that though the founding of *The Public Interest* is commonly regarded as the beginning of neoconservatism, the core group around the magazine, Bell, Moynihan, Glazer, himself, and others, considered themselves dissenting liberals at the time (Kristol 1995). *National Review* was “too right-wing” and lacked sufficient analysis and intellectualism for the emerging neoconservatives (Kristol 1995:31). Kristol (1995:31) described the early neoconservatives as having a narrow spectrum of opinion, with himself a bit to the right and Bell to the left, but all being “skeptical of government programs that ignored history and experience in favor of then-

fashionable left-wing ideas spawned by the academy.” Many in this group would eventually become secure in their conservatism and be overtaken by the rise of the counterculture and the student movement in the 1960s. This was the “major event of that period” which took them by surprise and which led them to discover that they “had been cultural conservatives all along” (Kristol 1995:31).

These disenchanted liberals were reacting to the liberal environment at the time which they had seen as reshaped by the “New Left and the counterculture” (Kristol 1995:31). This environment, Kristol (1995) argued, mistakenly led the Great Society in the direction of attempting to empower the poor through Community Action Programs and had culminated in the nomination of Senator George McGovern as the Democratic presidential candidate in 1972. Given his Straussian orientation, “metaphysical bent,” and his realization that he and the other neoconservatives were bourgeois “by habit and instinct,” a politics which empowered collectivities of the poor to directly engage the state and fight for their own economic well being independently from employers’ whims led him to conclude that “no politics ... was viable if its own culture was radically subversive of it” (Kristol 1995:6, 31).

Capital’s Mobilization

The 1970s saw large-scale organizing by the capitalist class in an effort to weaken organized labor and roll back the welfare state. The American Enterprise Institute (AEI) (2003) started in New York City in 1938 as the American Enterprise Association (AEA). The organization’s website boasts that it was “the avant-garde of two momentous

developments of the decades to come, both responding to the growing size and power of the federal government: the migration of business and trade associations from commercial centers to the nation's capital and the emergence of the policy ‘think tank’” (American Enterprise Institute 2003: ¶1). The formation of the AEA was the coming together of prominent corporate officers from companies like Bristol-Meyers, Chemical Bank, and General Mills, and libertarian intellectuals like Henry Hazlitt and ex- turned anti-New Dealer Raymond Moley (American Enterprise Institute 2003). The organization was strongly libertarian in the early years promoting unpopular measures like privatizing the Social Security system. In 1954, William Baroody took over as president of the AEI. He was an effective scout and recruiter of intellectual talent and advanced policy recommendations which were brashly libertarian at a time when *laissez-faire* individualism had yet to become considered politically useful or viable (American Enterprise Institute 2003). Economists, Milton Friedman, Paul McCracken, and Gottfried Haberler had signed on and served in the AEI’s academic advisory board by the early 1960s (American Enterprise Institute 2003). By the 1970s, the AEI became a place where neoconservative and other conservative thinkers came together for the purpose of mobilizing “ideas” for the purpose of moving “practical politics” and its operations were considerably expanded (Peschek 1987; Kristol 1995; American Enterprise Institute 2003:¶4; Micklethwait and Wooldridge 2004).

In August 1971, a corporate lawyer by the name of Lewis F. Powell ([1971] 2004) wrote a memorandum to a friend and US Chamber of Commerce Director who had recently become Chairman of the Chamber’s Education Committee. The memo was

dated two months prior to Powell's ([1971] 2004) nomination to the US Supreme Court by President Nixon. At the time, he was the member of 11 corporate boards and the memo was a manifesto of sorts for corporate political and ideological mobilization. The memo did its part in compelling like minded figures to found, fund, and remain active in groups with corresponding objectives. This included the establishment of the Heritage Foundation, Manhattan Institute, Cato Institute, and the growth of the AEI and other think tanks and research organizations (Powell [1971] 2004). The memo warned that an "assault on the enterprise system" had been mounted gradually over the two previous decades (Powell [1971] 2004:¶36). While "New Leftist spokesmen" were successfully "radicalizing thousands of the young," a greater cause for concern was the "hostility of respectable liberals and social reformers" and their views and influence, the accumulation of which could "fatally weaken or destroy the system" (Powell [1971] 2004:¶12). The memo was a rallying call for business to protect capitalism generally but also a piece of intellectual advocacy for what would one day be called corporate welfare. Powell worried that economic policies favoring private power were one of the "favorite current targets" of those trying to bring down capitalism. Rather than seeing progressive calls for corporate reform as enhancing the democratic condition or advocating on behalf of ordinary people, Powell ([1971] 2004: ¶19) was appalled by the "shotgun attack on the system" comprised by liberal descriptions of tax structures which benefit capital as "'tax breaks,' 'loop holes,' or 'tax benefits' for the benefit of business." He complained that such "rifle shots ...undermine confidence and confuse the public" (Powell[1971] 2004: ¶19).

Powell was clear about what should be done by business executives. Firstly, fighting such propaganda should be a “primary responsibility of corporate management” (Powell [1971] 2004: ¶28). The survival of the system itself, he argued, depended on “top management” making this a point of concern and doing more than just increasing their attention toward “‘public relations’ or ‘governmental affairs’ – two areas in which corporations long have invested substantial sums.” (Powell [1971] 2004: ¶30). Secondly, firms must do more than acting independently:

Strength lies in organization, in careful long-range planning and implementation, in consistency of action over an indefinite period of years, in the scale of financing available only through joint effort, and in the political power available only through united action and national organizations (Powell [1971] 2004: ¶32).

Powell ([1971] 2004) felt that the Chamber of Commerce, as the collective trade organization for business, should play an important role in this. The mounting project to endorse a less restrained capitalism was intellectual and ideological, but at its essence it was political. Alliances needed to be made and emphasis was to lie on commonalities between the various entities in this effort in combating anti-capitalistic ideas. The memo asserted that intellectuals like Herbert Marcuse and more ambivalent liberal critics need not be in the majority in the universities (Powell [1971] 2004). Powell ([1971] 2004:¶44) recommended that the Chamber pull together a group of “highly qualified scholars in the social sciences who do believe in the system” and who have published prolifically, even if the business community were in disagreement with some of their work. In terms of

reaching the public, the intellectual component of this burgeoning formation needed to “do the thinking, the analysis, the writing, and the speaking,” but also “staff personnel who are thoroughly familiar with the media” and who know “how most effectively to communicate with the public” (Powell [1971] 2004: ¶61). This “faculty of scholars” and communications experts would carefully monitor and utilize media such as television, radio, the press, scholarly journals, books, pamphlets, and paid advertisements (Powell [1971] 2004: ¶61).

Perhaps the most prescient aspect of the memo was Powell’s ([1971] 2004: ¶90, ¶92) appeal to business to emulate what he saw as the labor movement’s successful political characteristics, i.e. losing its “disposition to appease,” shedding its tendency “to regard the opposition as willing to compromise,” and becoming “far more aggressive than in the past.” This was an explicit call for business to discontinue its part in the Fordist arrangement, in other words, to forgo its end of the implicit bargain between capital and labor. Be it labor or other “self-interested groups” or “the Naders, the Marcuses and others” who Powell ([1971] 2004: ¶78, ¶93) saw as trying to destroy the American system of capitalism, he insisted that there should be no hesitation to develop a political and ideological counterattack. With the same skill and effectiveness it had displayed in the fields of production and, through influencing consumer choice through marketing and advertising, the memo announced that, “It is time for American business ...to apply their great talents vigorously to the preservation of the system itself” (Powell [1971] 2004: ¶95). This would require a massive ideological effort, because the Fordist arrangement, as has been illustrated by others (Foster 1988; Navarro 1991), was not

established as a consequence of the good nature of employers but rather as a result of working class pressure. Ford himself actually opposed the establishment of the New Deal and subsequent social welfare measures (Nevins and Hill 1963; Wik 1972; Navarro 1991).

While not a libertarian, Kristol understood the political and strategic benefits of free-market economics. In many ways, he was the embodiment of the transition from the proto-neoconservatism of the early years of *The Public Interest* into the combination of contradictory but more decisively conservative political philosophies and deft ideological and political maneuvering that became the essence of today's neoconservatism. While Kristol (1995:40; 2003:¶2) later recanted the statement, he boasted that these attributes for the "neoconservative impulse" were "pretty much absorbed into a larger, more comprehensive conservatism." The right had been transformed and made "more acceptable to a majority of American voters" (Kristol 2003:¶4). Around the same time Powell made his recommendations to the US Chamber of Commerce, Kristol ([1971] 1995:43) published an article in the *Atlantic Monthly* titled, "Welfare: The Best of Intentions, the Worst of Results." In it, he addressed what he considered were the "unanticipated and perverse consequences" of the welfare system ([1971] 1995:48). He offered a critique of Piven and Cloward's *Regulating the Poor*, which was based on an obvious misreading and misunderstanding (or deliberate misrepresentation) of their argument. Moralism *cum* economism was used to explain why welfare programs had "bred all sorts of unanticipated and perverse consequences" (Kristol [1971] 1995:48). Taking the thesis of the Moynihan Report and incorporating a dubious economic

explanation for the decline in social and familial morality, he argued that welfare had robbed the economic function from the institution of the family as well as encouraged males to no longer “persist at their not-always-interesting jobs” (Kristol [1971] 1995:49). George Gilder would pick this argument up almost verbatim in his landmark *Wealth and Poverty*, and Charles Murray’s *Losing Ground* used similar logic. Evidently, families only stayed together when their members were pressured to do so by virtue of their economic circumstances. Kristol ([1971] 1995:49) stated, “Above all, welfare robs the head of the household of *his* economic function, and tends to make of him a ‘superfluous man.’ Welfare, it must be remembered, *competes* with his (usually low) earning ability; and the more generous the welfare program, the worse he makes out in this competition” (Kristol [1971] 1995:49 [author’s italics]).

Kristol (1995:32) recalled that in the spring of 1972, none of the group at *The Public Interest* were Republican or even knew any members of the GOP, but their “political landscape was in the process of being transformed.” Just more than a year before, Buckley and the staff and contributors at *National Review* (1971:249) noticed the rightward shift among the regulars at *Commentary* magazine and invited Podhoretz, Glazer, and others to “Come On In, the Water’s Fine.” The alliance with business and adoption of supply-side, free-market language facilitated greater access and influence for the neoconservatives and would provide momentum for the movement overall, ideologically and politically. A key moment in the history of this transformation was when conservative editorialist at the *Wall Street Journal*, Robert Bartley had been paying attention to the articles and criticisms of the welfare state in *The Public Interest* (Kristol

1995). Bartley would go on to have a distinguished career as the editor of the *Wall Street Journal*, a vice president of the Dow Jones Corporation, which owned the paper at the time, and a recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom from the George W. Bush White House in 2003 (White House Archives 2003). When he had noticed the work of Bell, Moynihan, Glazer, and Kristol, he was on the *Wall Street Journal's* editorial board, and his article, "Irving Kristol and Friends," appeared in May of that year (Kristol 1995). Kristol (1995:32) recalled that the article was "favorable almost (but not quite) to the point of embarrassment." Now the emerging neocons had gained national attention (Kristol 1995). Both Bartley and Kristol would become great advocates of the soon to emerge supply-side economic doctrine, although for different reasons, and the editorial page of the *Wall Street Journal*, under Bartley's editorship, became a bastion for such principles.

Meanwhile, American business was trying to further increase its power and influence in the political sphere. The Powell memo had spread within Chamber circles (Schmitt 2005). One person who recalled being incited by the memo and decided to commit his company to a more prominent role in conservative political activism was beer baron, Joseph Coors (Edwards 1997). After some unsuccessful attempts to fund and support existing conservative political research groups, he would partner with Edwin Feulner, Jr. and Paul Weyrich to start the Heritage Foundation in February 1973 (Peschek 1987; Edwards 1997; Micklethwait and Wooldridge 2004). Coors put up \$250,000 and Richard Mellon Scaife of the Mellon family line and legacy, and one of Goldwater's early supporters, would contribute even more funds allowing a relatively new addition to

the policy planning network to use its peripheral status to act as an “‘ultra-conservative’ gadfly” (Post 1998:16).

Business was intensifying its lobbying efforts as well. Rising inflation, declining profits, and enduring the accomplishments of the welfare rights and labor movements prompted a more active role for capital in the political process. Powell was clear that organized labor had been effective in political engagement, and while labor leaders “may not have been beloved, ...they have been respected – where it counts the most – by politicians, on the campus, and among the media” (Powell [1971] 2004:¶94). Industry trade associations and Chamber of Commerce networks had become stronger, and in 1972, heads of some of the largest corporations had formed the Business Roundtable (BR) (Peschek 1987; Akard 1992; Royce 2009). The BR would play a major part in corporate lobbying, especially around the issues of labor and consumer protection and taxation (Peschek 1987; Akard 1992; Royce 2009). Small and medium business would be mobilized by comprehensive lobbying groups like the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) and a revitalized US Chamber of Commerce (Akard 1992). Over the next decade, the Chamber would more than quadruple its membership, with 60,000 member firms in 1972 growing to 257,000 in 1982 (Blyth 2002). In 1974, the NAM would move its headquarters to Washington, DC to “increase its presence in the nation’s capital,” was working in greater partnership with the Chamber, and was increasing its lobbying and legal research efforts (Blyth 2002; NAM 2008:¶43). One of the NAM’s secondary organizations, the Council for a Union-Free Environment, would authorize

reports and vigorously work to promote union free shops and fight progressive labor reform legislation (Levitt 1993; Blyth 2002).

This constituted, as Akard (1992:597) has pointed out, a “unified, class-conscious policy offensive.” This mobilization by prominent business leaders and lobbying groups represented all sectors of capital and had escalated into an effective mechanism to influence policy. Akard (1992) has described two types of scenarios which promote political cohesion within the business community. First, in the social, political, or economic environment, there must be perceived among multiple sectors of capital a common threat to shared interests (Akard 1992). Second, there must be social, economic, or organizational ties between associations, firms, or other sectors of private power (Akard 1992). Perhaps a another dimension should be added to this model, that the network of firms with shared interests possess a means to create and distribute ideas. The groupings and means to distribute information are no doubt important, but so too are intellectuals who craft the ideas being dispersed. Not only has this network included lobbying groups, like numerous Political Action Committees, the Chamber, and the NAM, but also activist intellectuals who had been mostly associated with universities before the early 1970s, but after had also been connected to the growing system of research groups and think tanks promoting various traditionalist and free-market conservative ideas. In other words, the effort must include both a political and ideological component. These ties usually bring powerful players together, such as high level administrators, investors, or members of corporate boards, all representing different firms but similar class interest. During the economic stagnation of the 1970s, a

consensus emerged between big and small business: that there was a shortage of capital for private investment and inflation was created as a result of reduced profits from increased wages for unionized laborers and excessive government regulation (Akard 1992; Burris 1992).

In the mid 1970s, there was also a remarkable increase in the number of corporate political action committees (PACs), which direct funds to candidates for public office who are sympathetic to their agenda (Akard 1992). Ironically, the use of PACs was originated by public interest groups and organized labor. In 1974, 201 pro-labor PACS were on the lobbying scene, in comparison to only 89 corporate PACs. By 1978, there was 784 corporate PACs in operation (not including the 500 or so trade organizations which were then active) compared to only 217 sponsored by labor (Akard 1992). Grassroots lobbying networks emerged, like the Committee for Economic Development, the Conference Board, and the Business Council, but the BR was the lobbying organization which would be especially active in effecting legislation in years to come (Akard 1992). Some of these organizations, like the BR and the NAM were renowned for their extreme conservatism. The NAM, whose roots go back to the late 19th century, began as an anti-union shop of employers. The BR was formed by three smaller organizations with an anti-labor agenda (Jacobs 1998:5). They had put together the “Nothing Committee” to mount an ideological drive against labor, which included reaching out and attempting to co-opt leading liberal intellectuals and attempting to influence the content of television programming (Jacobs 1998). The Nothing

Committee's main target was what it saw as an overly obstructive National Labor Relations Board.

This network of organizations unified to address the perceived problem of labor and excessive government expenditures for social programs. It successfully effected the outcomes of several pieces of planned legislation and its influence in this arena was becoming apparent. The outcomes of two pieces of legislation, proposed between 1974 and 1978, represented the success of the business lobby on the defensive. The first of these, the proposition to establish an independent Consumer Protection Agency (CPA) to monitor the actions of other regulatory agencies, represent labor's interests, and act as a "general clearinghouse" for grievances against business for unfair practices was expected to come to fruition given the election of a Democratic President and a large Democratic majority in Congress in 1976 (Akard 1992:603). A centralized organization, the Consumer Issues Working Group had represented the points of view of the NAM, BR, and Chamber against the bill, and it was defeated by the full house in early 1978 (Akard 1992). An organization hired by the BR waged a media war against the bill with negative articles, ads, cartoons, and prepackaged editorials about the CPA which were distributed for free to hundreds of small media outlets all over the country (Akard 1992; Jacobs 1998). They were largely published, and politicians looked at this media attention as "proof" of negative public opinion. Though the bill for the implementation of the CPA initially enjoyed wide public support, it would ultimately not see the light of day due to the efforts of the Business Roundtable.

Another labor bill was successfully contested through unified elements of an increasingly savvy American business lobby. The 1970s saw an increase in labor law violations, more incidents of union busting, and other unfair labor practices. As a result, there was a growing backlog at the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), and an initiative to amend the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) to quicken procedures for settling grievances and strengthening sanctions against employers (Akard 1992; Jacobs 1998). The same players came together again to launch a propaganda offensive. The NAM and Chamber, joined later by the BR, hired a public relations firm to take polls, produce and release “canned editorials,” and again send facsimiles to Congress to “prove” that public opinion was against the measure (Akard 1992). A key component to this effort was the recruitment and support of small business. The debate was now able to be framed as big labor beating up on the little guys: workers and small businesses. Though the bill easily cleared the full house, it was held up by a Republican filibuster in summer 1978, and offers by the bill’s sponsors for compromise were rejected (Akard 1992; Jacobs 1998). The Democrats decided to send it back to committee in hopes that it could be proposed at a more opportune time, however, it was never proposed again. This was a jolting legislative defeat for labor at the hands of a strong and unified corporate lobby forming ad hoc coalitions and using public relations tactics to demonize an initiative which would have given greater leverage to labor at the expense of capital.

A third case represented a supply-side tax revolt and forever changed the American political and economic landscape and took place in 1981. It was once more the result of a successful campaign waged by this same united front for private power, but

this time it illustrated business on the offensive rather than defending its interests. With the election of Ronald Reagan to the presidency, the opportunity for business to put social advocates and labor on the ropes arose. The decisive victory for supporters touting a rhetorical anti-statist agenda was the passing of his economic program in the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act and the Economic Recovery Tax Act (or Kemp-Roth bill) of 1981 (Akard 1992; Blyth 2002). Progressive policies of redistribution, both in taxing and spending, would be reversed through the measures (Edsall 1984). The ad hoc coalition representing the interest of American corporations this time would be the “Carlton Group,” named for the hotel where informal breakfast meetings took place (Akard 1992). Included in this group were representatives from the BR, the National Federation of Independent Businesses (NFIB), the Chamber, the American Council for Capital Formation, the Committee for Effective Capital Recovery, and the Retail Tax Committee (Akard 1992). The Reagan package eventually was passed and in the words of Donald Kroes, manager of the Chamber lobbying campaign, “it was important to keep a united front within the business community so we don’t start tearing the package apart” (quoted in Akard 1992:608). Among the final results included a 30 percent reduction in individual tax rates and an Accelerated Cost Recovery System (ACRS) for business (Akard 1992).

The Supply-Siders

The role of the business lobby was crucial to the transformations which were underway. The Reagan tax-plan was heralded as the beginning of a revolution and was predicated on a fairly new rendition of an old rhetorical device, that of supply-side economics. The neoliberal, supply-side doctrine, the paradigm which defined government spending, social programs, and taxes as unnecessary evils, was considered “fringe heresy” just a few short years before (Wanniski [1981] 2004: ¶5). It was developed by economists, Arthur B. Laffer (creator of the iconic Laffer Curve) and Robert Mundell but had spread as a result of the efforts of key players in the emerging policy planning network – Jude Wanniski, a supporter of the doctrine “with a remarkable capacity for infectious zealotry,” funding from a mutual financial supporter of *The Public Interest*, and the resourceful Irving Kristol (Karaagac 2001; Wanniski [1981] 2004:¶9). In December 1974, Laffer, then a professor at the University of Chicago, Wanniski, who was working as an associate editor at the *Wall Street Journal*, Donald Rumsfeld, who was Ford’s Chief of Staff at the time, and Rumsfeld’s deputy, Dick Cheney were having dinner (Laffer 2004). While discussing proposed tax increases by the Ford Administration, Laffer had penned the now iconic Laffer curve on a napkin (Laffer 2004). It had read, “If you tax a product less results. If you subsidize a product more results. We’ve been taxing work, output, and income and subsidizing non-work, leisure and unemployment. The consequences are obvious!” (Laffer 1974) This development, at the time on the fringes of classical liberal economic theory, would become revolutionary and a would constitute a new economic orthodoxy.

In 1975, the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development appointed eight eminent economists, most of whom had held high government positions, to prepare a report addressing the worsening economic conditions of the early 1970s –recession, rising inflation, and growing unemployment rates (McCracken and OECD 1977). The committee was headed by, Paul McCracken an economist who was chairman of President Nixon’s Council of Economic Advisors from 1969-1971, headed up the AEI’s Council of Academic Advisors, and who would succeed Baroody as interim President of the AEI in 1986 (American Enterprise Institute; American Enterprise Institute 2008). The report was illustrative of the changing character of economic thinking and policy. The ideology of the report, the recommendations of which were broadly quoted, would contribute to the economic paradigm shift which was taking place (Keohane 1978; McKay 1996). The report argued that economic policy should aim to increase profits and investment and that government funding for social programs would have to be diminished (McCracken and OECD 1977). Attributed among the causes for rising inflation and severe recession were increased aggressiveness in union bargaining and the provision of unemployment and other welfare benefits (McCracken and OECD 1977). By providing a viable alternative to employment through such programs, it made the employed less likely to accept pay-cuts and those who were not working less likely to accept just any job. The report argued that such conditions made reducing inflation much more difficult. McCracken *et al.* (1977:18) stated that, “Those responsible for price setting and wage-bargaining increasingly behaved as if there was no way in which they could price themselves out of markets or of jobs” (McCracken and OECD 1977:18). By enlarging the “emphasis in

government spending ...away from concern with growth towards welfare and quality of life objectives,” the committee argued, these expenditures have built into them “rigidities” which “inhibit later attempts to control them for stabilization purposes.”

Kristol recalled that when he had been first exposed to neoliberal, supply-side economics at the AEI, he “was not certain of its economic merits but quickly saw its political possibilities” (Kristol 1995:35). The neoconservative critique of progressive tax and social policy centered on the idea that that strategies for distributive justice disjoint individuals from regulatory and moral norms and that such strategies tend to weaken the position of the elites deemed worthy of their economic and political power and privilege. Kristol made use of free-market principles when they helped achieve desired ends, but *laissez-faire* doctrine was maintained for ideological purposes only. Neoconservatism was emerging as a powerful force in the larger movement and was honing itself as a means to maintain a consistent and logical appearance to a inconsistent and contradictory set of principles. Kristol openly wielded these contradictory notions with a mater-of-fact and unapologetic confidence. On one hand, the paternalistic brand of economic admonitions, which were a hallmark of the libertarian right, were described as a “dismal science,” sounding “parent-like,” and too focused on “why the good things in life that [people] wanted were all too expensive” (Kristol 1995:35). Here Kristol was implying that the libertarians were too doctrinaire in emphasizing the market’s inherent disciplinary character. Elsewhere, he evoked Adam Smith to criticize welfare programs and give justification for supply-side theory (Kristol 1975). He agreed with Smith’s understanding that “poverty is abolished” not through leveling or redistribution, but by

economic growth (Kristol 1975:15). But on the other hand, the contemporary social problems associated with the “bourgeois ethos” can be averted if it is “closely linked to what we call the Puritan or Protestant ethos, which prescribes a connection between personal merit – as represented by such bourgeois virtues as honesty, sobriety, diligence, and thrift – and worldly success” (Kristol [1973] 1995: 100). In other words, people needed a guiding hand, but the market’s invisible hand was not always the best determiner of moral outcomes. Consumption was necessary for economic growth, but consumers had to be thrifty and temperate. The discipline of traditional authority and religion were legitimate but the discipline inherent in the market did not always assure virtue and order in personal moral choices. For example Kristol ([1973] 1995:102) argued that libertarians like Milton Friedman see pornography and New Left denunciations of the institution of the family as fields for investment rather than aspects of culture which require moral correction: “One gathers that he is, in the name of ‘libertarianism,’ reluctant to impose any prohibition or inhibition on the libertine tendencies of modern bourgeois society.” Having noted Hayek’s openness to moralism and hostility to the “adversary culture,” Kristol ([1973] 1995:102-103) acknowledged Hayek’s “Burkean Whig” tendencies and his “reverence toward traditional institutions that incorporate this wisdom.” However, he complains that Hayek also falls “back on a faith in the ultimate benefits of ‘self-realization’ – a phrase he uses as infrequently as possible, but which he is nevertheless forced to use in crucial instances.” Falling back on his aristocratic, neoconservative foundation, Kristol ([1973] 1995:103) maintains that libertarianism lacks the perspective to address the following question: What would

happen if “the ‘self’ that is ‘realized’ under the conditions of liberal capitalism is a self that despises liberal capitalism, and uses its liberty to subvert and abolish a free society?”

This simultaneous and contradictory intellectual existence in multiple conservative camps, while ideological, proved to be quite effective. Combined with the neocon style, it constructed a political philosophic narrative which appeared coherent and which was necessary to hold the larger movement of conservatism together. A collaborator of Kristol’s in the establishment of the Institute of Educational Affairs in the late 1970s (and former treasury secretary under Presidents Nixon and Ford), William E. Simon (1995:90), would praise this political inconsistency as an understanding of “the nexus between economic freedom and political freedom.” In contrast to this complimentary explanation of the neoconservative style, Steinfels (1979:103, 105), in his very good book on the early neocons noted more insightfully that Kristol’s ambivalence was a “hopping back and forth from one philosophical leg to the other” – a coincident fascination with “a politics of virtue” and “a politics of the market which inhibit his exploration of the past and his projection of any ideal for the future.” This intellectual demeanor situated the neoconservative defenders of the system synchronically and ideologically, allowing for a show of illusory and logical unity. This orthodoxy dressed as heterodoxy and the desire to build economic and political alliances in part is what allowed Kristol and neoconservatism, and by extension the larger American conservative movement, to flourish. Kristol (1995:34) had taken a sabbatical from New York University and became a visiting fellow at the AEI during the academic years 1976-1979 to become “economically literate.” While he learned about the soon-to-be supply-side

orthodoxy from the AEI economists, he also developed lifetime ties with former Nixon and Ford appointees. They included former acting Attorney General and Solicitor General, Robert Bork, former Assistant Attorney General and eventual Supreme Court Justice, Antonin Scalia, and former acting Attorney General and Ambassador to Yugoslavia, Laurence Silberman (Kristol 1995). Wanniski had shown Kristol (1995) the potential of neoliberalism and supply-side economics, and his influential book, *The Way the World Works*, was written while he was at the AEI (and with grant money largely secured through Kristol's connections). Wanniski ([1981] 2004) had contributed two articles for *The Public Interest*, out of which his book was developed. The \$40,000 grant was received from the Smith Richardson Foundation, which at that time had underwritten *The Public Interest's* "fifty-thousand-dollar-or-so annual deficit" (Wanniski [1981] 2004:¶4). In addition to Kristol, Wanniski influenced the supply-side conversion of Bartley (which would later include the entire editorial board at the *Wall Street Journal*), Jeffrey Bell who was on Reagan's national campaign staff in 1976, and then New York Congressman, Jack Kemp (Wanniski [1981] 2004). Bell had been inspired by Wanniski's first *Public Interest* piece and had introduced the model to Reagan in 1976, but it was Kemp who Kristol explained had "almost single-handed," converted Reagan to the economic doctrine (Wanniski [1981] 2004; Kristol 1995:35). Though Kemp had worked with Reagan in California, and Reagan was on board with the proposed Kemp-Roth Tax Cut by 1978 and was a full convert to the doctrine by 1979, Wanniski, Kemp, and company were not the only influences on Reagan's move in the supply-side direction (Karaagac 2001; Wanniski [1981] 2004). Reagan's views on the topic had developed

over several years with the counsel of his key economic advisors, which included McCracken, Friedman, and future Federal Reserve Chairman, Alan Greenspan, all of whom had supported the Kemp-Roth tax cut (McCracken 1981; Anderson 1990).

The Passing of the Torch

The conservative political hero of the twentieth century certainly was Ronald Reagan. Even before he was elected governor in California, he was identified as “the new Republican Hope” who “could become a serious contestant for a Republican presidential or vice-presidential nomination in 1968” (*Human Events* 1965:4). While it would take longer than envisioned, his winning of the 1980 presidential election represented a conservative electoral triumph, which for American conservatives was a long overdue. Regarded as having been aligned with right-wing extremists in the early 1960s, his Gubernatorial campaign advisors helped steer Reagan toward a more moderate position to help temper public impressions of the candidate (Brennan 1995; Dallek [2000] 2004). He gained credibility and established ties with the conservative network of the GOP (as opposed to the moderate, “Eastern establishment” network within the party), and was able to acquire a reputation as being a true conservative but reasonable in disposition. During the 1966 race for Governor of California, John Birch Society members (with whom Reagan had been formerly allied) were excluded from campaign events, and his aides worked hard not to have supporters “organize as Goldwaterites for Reagan” (Dallek [2000] 2004). Reagan was a Goldwater supporter in early 1964 and was an ardent anti-communist, even during his years as a supporter of the New Deal and

Screen Actor's Guild (SAG) member (and eventual president of the union) (Dallek [2000] 2004). While an early supporter of labor, he criticized more radical unions as unpatriotic when they encouraged strikes or work stoppages during the war (Dallek [2000] 2004). He testified before and provided names to the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC), due to what he considered dangerous infiltration by communists into the labor movement and film industry (Dallek [2000] 2004). He infamously entered the speech circuit, touring General Electric plants and delivering a more or less canned presentation which was patriotic, anti-government, anti-communist, and pro-business – it was “homogenized enough that it could be used before any audience in the country,” and “it was known as The Speech” (Cannon [1991] 2000:66-67). The Speech repeated many of the political points found in the conservative literature in the 1950s and covered many of the positions which would appear in Goldwater's *Conscience of a Conservative*. Reagan had delivered his “thousand years of darkness” speech just over a week before the 1964 presidential election which did not depart much from what he usually said (Cannon [1991] 2000; Dallek [2000] 2004:68). He scathingly reproached the welfare state and his political “debut” was considered a “smashing success” (Cannon [1991] 2000:67; Dallek [2000] 2004:68). After Goldwater's defeat, Reagan had become the next “leader” of the movement, remaining hopeful and giving speeches about not turning the party over to “traitors” and admonishing moderates for not turning out to support Goldwater (Meyerson 1984; Dallek [2000] 2004:70). Nixon had noted after watching the television address, that Reagan had shown something which was wanting in Goldwater, “the ability to present his views in a reasonable and eloquent manner” (quoted

in Brennan 1995:102). *Human Events* observed in the summer of 1965, “Reagan has charm, wit, and can deliver a stirring talk on the lecture circuit. And, unlike Barry Goldwater, he has mastered that powerful political medium, television” (*Human Events* 1965:3).

Brennan (1995:141) argued that the securing of the right’s domination within the Republican Party had legitimized the movement, with an activated group of supporters built from the “precinct level up instead of merely imposing their ideas from the top.” However, the establishment of the policy planning network of lobbying and research organizations with funding from wealthy sectors of capital as well as the alliances made with the religious right, had given conservatism a power which also emanated ideologically from above. Public impressions could then be steered around particular issues which would be picked up by candidates whose campaigns were effectively mobilized at the local and grassroots levels. The need for cooperation among various conservative groups was a political lesson learned from the Goldwater campaign and was put into action by Reagan’s aides advancing both his and the movement’s ascendance (Dionne [1991] 2004; Brennan 1995). Skillfully, the combination of free-market rhetoric (embodied in the supply-side doctrine) and traditional moral values, the efforts of both capital’s and the religious right’s political apparatuses (like direct mail tactics and lobbying), and the movement becoming more moderate and attractive through Reagan’s broad appeal, inclusive rhetoric, and charming persona as an actor, corporate spokesman, and then politician helped bring the conservative movement to a position of political and ideological dominance. Looking back on Reagan’s presidential triumph, William Rusher

correctly credited Reagan's development of a broad coalition of conservatives for the 1980 victory (Meyerson 1984). Noting the importance of the populist voting base and of moral conservatism, anti-feminist and anti-ERA crusader, Phyllis Schlafly, observed that "Reagan won in 1980 because he brought in voters who had never voted before, because they don't care about politics. The advisers don't understand how Reagan's stand on such issues as abortion and gay rights and the ERA and drafting women strongly motivated so many people who normally don't vote at all" (Meyerson 1984:18).

Neoconservatism's incorporation of individual morality in its policy critique and its capability to turn philosophical and logical ambiguity into a political and ideological asset facilitated this alliance, even if the fusionists and hard-line libertarians were not convinced of their authenticity as conservatives. Therefore, Kristol (2003:¶4) also claimed Reagan as a hero for the neoconservatives, while "Republican and conservative worthies as Calvin Coolidge, Herbert Hoover, Dwight Eisenhower, and Barry Goldwater are politely overlooked." Reagan was already moving in the direction of "a more popular form of conservatism, transforming a largely fringe movement prone to extremism into a more appealing, broad-based movement" in the mid 1960s, just after Goldwater's defeat (Dallek [2000] 2004:73). The hard-line *laissez-faire* and anti-communist rhetoric of Goldwater and the fusionists saw welfare as a hidden form of socialism, a slippery slope to totalitarianism, a road to serfdom. Neoconservatism, on the other hand expressed discontent over "the concentration of services in the welfare state" and a willingness "to study alternative ways of delivering these services" (Kristol 2003: ¶7). Much more pragmatic, the neocons were content with organizing welfare programs to facilitate the

class structure, ensure a system of “just” inequality, and operate at the service of repressive economic and social institutions. Reagan and the neocons shared the same pragmatic approach to politics, preferring the forging of alliances over divisive infighting and a cheery, upbeat conservatism over a dismal and defeatist one. The arguments against welfare which had first appeared in the work of the early neocons had been integrated into a massive and pervasive attack and had represented the convergence of contradictory rationales and rhetoric, those of supply-side economic growth through small government and low taxes and of traditionalist, social conservatism. The intellectuals working within the network of conservative think tanks would play a significant role in normalizing analyses of poverty and welfare which focused on what was considered behavioral pathology as well as shaping the public discourse on reform and legislation.

-Chapter 8: Stabilizing the Myth of the Welfare Queen -

Introduction

The Reagan “revolution” was unmistakable. It was largely characterized by the drastic reductions in taxes, especially for corporations and the affluent, and spending cuts for government programs, the effects of which were evident after just two years in office. These policies were framed by the administration as bold measures which were addressing the consequences of liberal “extravagance,” measures which had “brought us inflation, unemployment, high interest rates, and an intolerable debt,” as well as welfare and dependency (Reagan 1981:¶36). Those who had been addressing welfare on the right and whose ideas had common cause with those in the administration, had been depicting poverty and welfare in terms of the growth in the proportion of out-of-wedlock births, the decline of the nuclear family, a growing culture of poverty which was perceived as “largely a black culture,” chronic welfare dependency, and unemployment among poor single-mothers. (Kaus 1986:1; Schram 1996; Thompson 2001). This current of thought had become prominent in the welfare reform discourse in the late 1960s, and it created a gendered and racialized stereotype which associated “illegitimacy,” criminality, and behavioral pathology with the poor, unwed black mother. Reagan infamously reinforced this image during his 1976 campaign for the Republican presidential nomination when he had evoked a now infamous and mythic prototype, that of the “Welfare Queen.”

Modifying the behavior of the poor was regarded as a challenge and an imperative and was placed in the context of a policy model centered around managerial problem solving.

This required an ideology of enforcing “good behavior” and “getting things accomplished” and tended to see “real reform” exclusively in terms of regressive transformations in the state mechanism of determining eligibility plus administering grants and services. With the problem being defined in managerial and behavior terms, welfare reform required identifying and addressing the everyday behaviors of a large chunk of the population as pathological and unconstructive. Moving people into work, cost-benefit analyses, imposing the values of the middle class in evaluating the quality of poor families became institutional ends unto themselves, constituting welfare reform as ideology. The reinforcement of traditional gender roles and upholding of contradictory roles for poor versus affluent women were explicitly supported by more conservative policy makers and intellectuals and taken for granted or tolerated, if not supported, by the so called moderates.

The same mechanism which had mobilized business against pro-labor legislation was utilized in promoting conservative political attitudes and support for the Reagan-Bush presidential ticket. While there was not across-the board enthusiasm for Reagan among conservatives, the success of his candidacy was a rallying point for the conservative movement which previously was largely on the margins advocating from outside mainstream politics, that is until 1981. The network of conservative research institutions now had expanded access for influencing national welfare policy. Its calls for decentralization, work requirements and time limits for recipients, the promotion of the two-parent heteronormative family, and the enforcement of the financial obligation for the presumed “financially-endowed” and “economically viable” father would constitute

the mainstream and “moderate” discourse driving anti-poverty policy and research in the 1990s (Fineman [1991] 1997:90). In 1996, the year of the signing of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), Clinton had challenged Congress to deliver him a bill which was “bipartisan” (Clinton [1996] 1998:¶29). This “bipartisanship” would mean “sweeping” reform which encouraged the values of “family and work” and would require “time limits” and “tough work requirements” (Clinton [1996] 1998:¶28). The “dominant discourse about welfare” had changed, corresponding to the shifting of the “political climate ...moving to the right starting in the ‘70s though the ‘90s” (Mead 2009). Research which had reinforced what Sanford Schram (1996; 2000a; 2000b) had called an economic-therapeutic-managerial discourse presented poverty as the product of individual pathology which was worsened by permissive and generous welfare provisions. Lawrence Mead (2009), who was active in the public dialogue leading up to the legislation, had identified the shift as “a different framing of the issue” which was “not so ideological,” but rather had “to do with employment rather than structural issues and is more focused on problem solving.”

While Mead did recognize that there was not sufficient evidence to support the assertions of Charles Murray and others that welfare benefits contributed to family dissolution and teen and unwed motherhood, discouraging the traditional family model, such reasoning had already become part of the elite and non-elite discourse on poverty and welfare. The effects of this discourse were lasting and evident in the remarks of Clinton and the language of the bill, and even later of President Barak Obama.

The Reagan Revolution

Ronald Reagan's federal welfare reform strategy was greatly informed by elite policy planning institutions and the reform of California's welfare system under his gubernatorial administration. The same tactics employed in the political activism of the Business Roundtable and the US Chamber of Commerce in the late 1970s were also used to deliver a huge conservative electoral victory in the 1980 elections. This was possible through an alliance of diverse conservative political resources and operatives as well as through a collection of voters who were increasingly rejecting liberal propositions and embracing conservative ones. The political activities of "ad hoc 'home and family groups'" were organized and strengthened by the Conservative Caucus which was headed by Howard Phillips and direct mail maestro, Richard A. Viguerie (Crawford 1980:39). While the Roe v. Wade decision was important for mobilizing the Christian Right in the 1970s, the gradual recasting of poverty in behavioral terms and of welfare as an enabler of all sorts of immoral behaviors and family dissolution brought conservatives from both religious/ traditionalist and libertarian leanings to the common ground of opposing AFDC, albeit for different reasons. Neoconservatism was a lynchpin for this alliance, having facilitated the diffusion of the behavioral pathology model for poverty, discredited measures offered by the left, and understood the value of moralistic arguments in producing compelling ideology and swaying opinion. The neocons made the partnership between traditionalism and neoliberal, supply-side economics more durable.

Direct mail made the grassroots mobilization needed for a conservative presidential victory possible. Richard Viguerie's own webpage describes him as the

person who “transformed American politics in the 1960s and ‘70s by pioneering the use of direct mail fundraising in the political and ideological spheres” (Conservative HQ.com 2009¶1). The televangelist, Reverend Jerry Falwell founded the Moral Majority in 1979 (Viguerie and Franke 2004). This method of information distribution connected millions of Americans to issue analyses and fundraising materials and did so while bypassing large media outlets (Viguerie and Franke 2004). This gave the movement the independence to frame issues and events as was seen fit for the purposes of persuasion and inciting political action within local political contexts and networks. Falwell and the Moral Majority also used direct mail to distribute information including their monthly tabloid, the *Moral Majority Report* (Viguerie and Franke 2004). The major labor initiatives which had been defeated in the 1970s had confused many political insiders given that there was a Democratic president and that Democrats comprised nearly two-thirds of the House and Senate (Viguerie and Franke 2004). Viguerie explained to the Washington Post’s David Broder that his direct mail operation was sending out up to 70 million mailings per year for conservative groups who had opposed Carter’s more progressive initiatives (Viguerie and Franke 2004). Direct mail was a way to mobilize conservative voters on the grassroots level around specific issues as well as a way to attack liberal candidates “under the radar” (Viguerie and Franke 2004:134). The 1980 elections were a huge victory for the conservative ideological apparatus, most obviously because of the election of Reagan, but also because, “In the House, the ‘Newt Gingrich class’ of conservative candidates – about 35 of them – were sworn in as congressmen” (Viguerie and Franke 2004:135). Reagan’s victory, according to Viguerie and Franke

(2004), was made possible by direct mail: “Seventy-five percent of the money for Reagan’s campaign was raised by direct mail, and behind that was the more than 1 billion pieces of conservative mail that had gone directly to voters in the preceding six years” (Viguerie and Franke 2004:135).

The Reagan presidency fulfilled a unification function for American conservatism not unlike the appearance of Buckley’s *National Review* (*NR*) 25 years before (Nash 1998). Publisher of *NR* in 1984, William Rusher accurately credited Reagan for putting “together a successful combination of economic conservatives and social conservatives that produces victories at the presidential level” (Meyerson 1984:17). The journal, *Policy Review* which was first published by the Heritage Foundation (HF) in 1977, had featured a symposium on varied conservatives and their impressions of Reagan’s first term. While there were a varied range of reviews, from total support to great disappointment, there were areas of noteworthy consistency (Meyerson 1984). A common criticism was that Reagan had not been tough enough, lacked “follow-through,” and had a tendency to appease rather than fight the enemy (Meyerson 1984:13). Howard Philips, head of the Conservative Caucus, commented, “Reagan is just the sort of nice fellow I’d like to have as a neighbor, but he defers too quickly to anyone in a three-piece suit” (Meyerson 1984:16). John T. Dolan, then chairman of the National Conservative Political Action Committee (NCPAC), lamented, “I expected more to happen. ...Reagan proposed cutting Social Security benefits, but you don’t need to cut benefits; you need to get rid of the system so that benefits will increase” (Meyerson 1984:15). But these attributes of Reagan actually worked in his favor in that his appeal and the appeal of conservative

ideas had become more broad-based and been brought further into the mainstream. The participants of the *Policy Review* symposium expressed across-the-board approval of the tax cuts and asserted that further spending reductions for government programs, especially welfare entitlements, were needed and the reductions of the first four years had not gone far enough (Meyerson 1984). Complaints that he had not drastically overhauled AFDC or social security reflected a sort of chomping at the bit and hastiness by some conservatives. Newt Gingrich and Charles Murray in the Winter of 1984-1985 had both expressed that jumping ahead too quickly with calls to “scrap the entire income maintenance system” or fight the social security program would in fact sabotage the ultimate goal of “serious reform of income maintenance” (Meyerson 1984; US Congress 1985:¶25). Murray’s comments were delivered in a speech at a Cato Institute policy forum and were reprinted in the Congressional record at the request of Senator Charles Grassley of Iowa (US Congress 1985). Murray ([1984] 1994) also said as much in his 1984 conservative public policy classic, *Losing Ground*. Murray explained that while he might want to “scrap” the entire system of cash transfers under welfare, topics where significant changes are impossible should be avoided (US Congress 1985:¶24).

In actuality, the modest redistribution historically accomplished through the American tax and welfare systems was starkly reduced by the Reagan Administration. Reagan followed through on his commitment to reduce the tax burden. However, net tax reductions were enjoyed by the affluent while the tax burden actually increased for the working class and poor. Income maintenance programs, despite claims that cuts had not gone far enough, were significantly cut even though “non-means-tested programs such as

Social Security and Medicare and a variety of veterans' benefits had been dealt with more delicately and cautiously" (Piven and Cloward [1982] 1985:15). Those making below \$10,000 per year experienced a net loss of \$95 after tax increases from Social Security and inflation and Reagan's tax cuts from the tax bills of 1981-1982 (Edsall 1984). On the other pole of the income continuum, those making above \$200,000 per year experienced a net gain of \$17,403 once tax increases were subtracted from gains from tax cuts (Edsall 1984). Reagan's cuts in Medicaid, Food Stamps, Housing Assistance, and AFDC totaled \$15.6 billion after just nine months in office, and spending on human resources programs in total would be cut by \$101.1 billion from fiscal years 1982 through 1985 (Edsall 1984; Piven and Cloward [1982] 1985). Edsall (1984) has noted that the reorganization of tax and spending programs to the advantage of the affluent and at the material detriment of all others was a significant accomplishment. This was especially so, given that Reagan's victory was secured in part through a large portion of Democratic working and middle class voters who voted Republican (Edsall 1984). The Reagan cuts, both to taxes and programs, represented less of a transformation in elite opinion in the 1980s but more of a shift in policy and perceptions of what could be accomplished. Reagan's adjustments to public relief programs during the early 1980s mirrored components of the California Welfare Reform Act from a decade before, which was a culmination of the conspicuous shift in elite discourse on welfare and the economic and ideological transformations which took place through 1960s. Reforms by Reagan which enforced employment and encouraged the decentralization of financing and administration of programs in California would provide a model of sorts for the design and enactment of the Omnibus Budget

Reconciliation Act (OBRA) of 1981 and the Family Support Act (FSA) of 1988 (Wiseman 1993). Edsall (1984:206) soundly attributes the policy changes during the first couple years of the administration to a “political strategy capitalizing on the dissatisfaction of the working and middle class,” but also must be understood in terms of an increasingly disgruntled elite. This is captured when looking at climbing inflation and unemployment rates through those decades along with diminished productivity and earnings (Bureau of Labor Statistics; Edsall 1984; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 2005). Polling data tend to support that public dissatisfaction and resentment were translating into a reduced amount of support for welfare programs as a strategy to address poverty and more of a tendency to attribute the causes of poverty to individual behavior. In 1965, 40 percent of Gallup Poll respondents attributed poverty to the “lack of effort” of the individual (Coughlin 1980:112). By 1972, 57 percent had responded that the “cause of poverty” was that the “poor don’t want to work” (Coughlin 1980:112). Growing opposition to increasing funding for programs had also become evident. In 1964, 20 percent responded that “too much” is spent on welfare programs. That proportion would significantly increase over the next 13 years with 45 percent opposing an increase in funding in 1969, and 58 percent reporting that “too much” is spent for welfare in 1977 (Coughlin 1980:112; Roper Center Public Opinion Archives 1959-1980). Observing the effects of these trends, Edsall (1984:208) concluded, “By each of these measures, the economy was tightening like a noose around the neck of the Democratic party. While causing havoc for the party, these economic developments created fertile terrain for major alterations of past policies, making the legislative agenda

vulnerable to policy initiatives beneficial to the rich.” A mandate of sorts was given for such changes which ensured that welfare programs could be slashed and modified to enforce behavior and there would likely be little popular opposition.

“Fucking Over the Poor”

A current of thought had become prominent in the welfare reform discourse in the late 1960s. It created a gendered and racialized stereotype which would persevere through the public debate leading up to the 1996 Welfare Reform Bill and it associated “illegitimacy,” criminality, and behavioral pathology with the impoverished, unmarried black mother. Reagan solidified this racist imagery during his failed 1976 presidential campaign, when he had evoked a now infamous and mythic image, that of the “Chicago Welfare Queen.” The statement was allegedly in reference to a Chicago woman who was defrauding the system, buying luxury items, and “using over 80 names” and “30 addresses” to take home over \$150,000 in welfare income (Haitch 1977:39). A *New York Times* article corrected the exaggeration, confirming that the charges were “modest,” with the woman formally accused of using four names to receive \$8,000 in income (Haitch 1977:39). As is often the case, even when claims are untrue, they may ultimately have profound influence when they possess an air of scientific credibility and are consistent with already existing ideological undercurrents.

The Heritage Foundation’s website lists as among 100 conservative victories the publication of George Gilder’s *Wealth and Poverty* and the presentation of its massive tome, *Mandate for Leadership* to the incoming Reagan administration (Meyerson 1989).

Smith's (1991) now widely cited *The Idea Brokers* identifies the publications of Charles Murray's *Losing Ground*, Gilder's book, and Allan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind* as events which demonstrated to commercial book publishers that conservatives were a viable consumer target. Lucy Williams' (1997:¶70) thorough essay on the American conservative attack on welfare recognizes Murray and Gilder's books along with the *Mandate* as the "three books" which principally impacted "Reagan's policy regarding AFDC." While Bloom's work does not address welfare in any serious way, it was clear that conservative authors in general, but especially those who were addressing welfare and calling for reform, were striking a chord in the political and popular culture. Their arguments were incorporating critiques of the behavior of the poor with market incentives, and identifying welfare as not only an interference with the market's ability to generate desirable social consequences but as an enabler for the wrong ones. Think tanks were important producers of ideas, but also of a workforce of intellectuals and an infrastructure in which they could seize a larger share of power within the economy of ideas. Gilder and Murray had written their books while active at the Manhattan Institute (MI), a conservative, free-market think tank which was founded by Antony Fisher, and the HF's *Mandate* represented a direct effort by think tank intellectuals to shape the thought and policy of the Reagan administration. The *Mandate* was described by United Press International as a "blueprint for grabbing the government by its frayed New Deal lapels and shaking out 48 years of liberal policies" and *Wealth and Poverty* had outlined and argued the basis for supply-side economics and a critique of the welfare state which incorporated economism *cum* moralism (Gilder 1981; Meyerson 1989:¶3-4).

Gilder had joined the editorial board of the Heritage Foundation's *Policy Review* from its start. He had not been an uncontroversial figure, with his views of work and family being regarded by many as extremely sexist and blatantly patriarchal. The journal had also counted among its editors some figures who were quite controversial in their theories of race and social position, including noted eugenicist and anthropologist, Roger Pearson and Sociologist and regular *National Review* contributor Ernest van den Haag.¹ The journal, like other conservative media, would promote conservative ideas on numerous policy issues, ideas which were gaining salience. After just the first issue, an article which argued that minimum wage laws had restricted opportunities for American blacks was quoted in over 2,000 newspapers, several other articles had been reprinted in other media, and some had already been printed in the *Congressional Record* at the request of members of Congress (Policy Review 1978). *Policy Review* had published excerpts of *Wealth and Poverty* in the form of an essay, which was a taste of sorts of what would be found in Gilder's forthcoming book. This strategy of providing "early leaks" of forthcoming books was an effective strategy for the conservative research institutions (Smith 1991:196). Gilder's alarm over the "coming welfare crisis" echoed the concerns of the neoconservative critics of welfare, especially Kristol's "Welfare: The Best of Intentions, the Worst of Results" and Moynihan's "The Negro Family." Gilder provocatively claimed to also be targeting neoconservative "prophets of ambivalent

¹ Pearson ultimately resigned from the journal after he chaired the 1978 conference of the World Anti-Communist League (Valentine 1978; Right Web 1990). His white supremacist and fascist leanings became exposed and had become a point of controversy after the *Washington Post* printed an article titled, "The Fascist Specter Behind the World Anti-Red League" (Valentine 1978; Right Web 1990). In a 1964 *National Review* article, van den Haag argued against integrating black children into white schools on the basis that it would place them at a disadvantage. He claimed that they required a less rigorous curriculum which took into account their "culturally deprived home environment" (van den Haag 1964:1061).

capitalism” like Bell and Kristol as well as opponents of the “acquisitive society,” offering a much more rigidly economic justification for the chauvinism which dominated behavioral analyses of welfare and the problems identified with means-tested programs and poverty (Gilder 1980; Gilder 1981; *Ocala Star-Banner* 1981:2B). He offered crude economic arguments to explain why families “breakdown,” men shun their “authority” as fathers and husbands and “no longer feel manly” in their own homes, and women are lured into the “long series of generous and seductive [welfare] programs” (Gilder 1980:25-26, 31; 1981:114, 123).

Gilder’s analysis is predicated on a patriarchal framework locating the father as the natural center of the family. He was no stranger to constructing sexist arguments or being regarded as an anti-feminist. Gilder had outraged the female members of the progressive Republican Ripon Society by writing an article in their newsletter which supported the Nixon veto of the proposed Mondale-Javits daycare bill (MacFarquhar 2000). Similar to what he would later argue in his influential *Wealth and Poverty*, he made his case against the bill by stating that welfare had made inner-city fathers superfluous and that day care would also deprive disadvantaged children from their mothers (MacFarquhar 2000). After he published *Sexual Suicide* in 1973, he became a notorious target of the feminist movement with the fairly reserved *Time Magazine* awarding him the title of “Male Chauvinist Pig of the Year” (*Ocala Star-Banner* 1981:2B). In it he argued that men’s primordial drives toward aggression and predation are only reigned-in through the acceptance of the provider role and of being productive to support their wives and children (Gilder 1973). Welfare is not only an interference in the

workings of the market, but by his rationale, it “attacks the sexual constitution” of families (Gilder 1973:137). Drawn to its logical conclusion, Gilder’s argument expressed opposition to women playing a prominent role in the work world and to poor mothers having the option to be independent from male breadwinners through welfare.

In *Wealth and Poverty*, he identified welfare as an economic incentive for both family disorganization and for low-income workers’ avoidance of work. The answer for escaping poverty was to “keep families together at all costs” and for the poor to “work harder than the classes above them” (Gilder 1980:30). Gilder (1980:26; 1981:114) argued that for poor families, welfare, “family breakdown,” and poverty were interrelated and each perpetuated the other. Poverty required the poor to struggle and work, but welfare payments removed the necessity for men to seek employment, which communicated to the male head of the family “that when all is said and done his wife and children can do better without him” (Gilder 1980:26; Gilder 1981:115). Gilder (1981:114-115) asserted that the “less measurable factors” like “male confidence and authority, which determine sexual potency, respect from the wife and children, and motivation to face the tedium and frustration of daily labor” are undermined and therefore contribute to poverty and unemployment. “In the welfare culture,” he argued, “money becomes not something earned by men through hard work, but a right conferred on women by the state” (Gilder 1980:27; 1981:115). Gilder (1980:27; 1981:115) railed on and implied that lack of work discipline fosters a disposition of dissent, commenting that “Protest and complaint replace diligence and discipline as the sources of pay.” He even maintained that for non-poor families, the removal of the provider role for men is

damaging, presupposing that “a society of relatively wealthy and independent women will be a society of sexually and economically predatory males, pursuing the violent and short-term patterns” of destructive male activity (Gilder 1973:97). *Wealth and Poverty* is almost as much an anti-feminist manifesto as it is one advocating capitalism and free-markets. In a frequently cited passage, Gilder (1980:26; 1981:115) regretted that the male identity was faced with “the gradually sinking feeling that his role as the provider, the definitive male activity from the primal days of the hunt through the industrial revolution and on into modern life, has been largely seized from him; he has been cuckolded by the compassionate state.”

Gilder’s *Wealth and Poverty* was a best seller and he had made the rounds in the media, having been featured on CBS’ *60 Minutes* and having appeared in *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *The Washington Post* (*Ocala Star-Banner* 1981). He was connected to both the Manhattan Institute and the Heritage Foundation, and President Reagan had endorsed the book to the point where he had been distributing it to friends and colleagues (*Ocala Star-Banner* 1981). Along with this conservative public policy landmark, the MI ranks Charles Murray’s *Losing Ground* among its “most successful” books which it has supported and promoted and which has “given impetus to whole movements for political and social reform” (Manhattan Institute 2009:¶4-5). The MI’s president, William Hammett, reported to Smith (1991:192) that they had taken “a big gamble” on Murray’s book. The institute had decided to compel a public debate about welfare programs and poverty by arousing controversy for as long as possible, and rather than typical book marketing (book tours and advertising), they decided to send signed copies to hundreds of

influential figures and Murray to lecture to business organizations across the country (Smith 1991). The book was seen by the MI as “another *Other America*,” making its way into “the popular press and broadcast media” and having sold more than 30,000 copies in hard cover (Smith 1991:192). The Manhattan Institute had placed much energy and funding into Murray’s book, and Hammett admitted that “If Losing Ground had failed, we would not be here today” (Smith 1991:192). However, Murray, in his introduction to the 1994 edition of the book, denied that the book was all that popular, claiming that it was largely ignored and even rejected by the Reagan Administration, and described the selling of 30,000 hardcover copies as meager (Murray [1984] 1994). He acknowledged that a mythology of the book emerged which overshadowed what it was really saying and that it no longer had to be read in order for it to be discussed. (Murray [1984] 1994). Accounts from both the right and left, Murray noted, had argued that the book “had an enormous impact on the social policy debate” (Murray [1984] 1994:xv). Such a mythology about a book as described by Murray, which very well may skew the intentions and findings of the author, gives it its constitution as a text capable of affecting perceptions on a massive scale. That details or nuances of the argument are misunderstood is not all that relevant as long as its immanent structure is realized. Later in the 1994 introduction, he recognized that what was controversial about the book, the premise that government clumsily and ineffectively intervenes in the economy through anti-poverty policy and that viable policy must address behavior, “has now become conventional wisdom” (Murray [1984] 1994:xvi). Just two years before the signing of PRWORA, Murray ([1984] 1994:xvi) admitted astonishment at the “evolution in attitude

toward the policy proposal for which *Losing Ground* became perhaps best known: to end welfare altogether.”

In the *Los Angeles Times Magazine*, at the dawn of the Gingrich revolution, Nina Easton (1994) observed that Murray and his analysis of poverty and welfare are situated in the neoconservative tradition. Easton (1994:¶14) credited Murray’s book, “as much as any tract,” with drawing “the earliest broad outlines of the ‘retro-cons’ brand of conservatism.” She also observed that Murray almost “single-handedly” provided “conservatives cover on the race issue” (Easton 1994:¶30). By arguing that welfare promoted laziness, crime, and illegitimacy, among poor whites as well as blacks, these terms had become less regarded as buzzwords for racism when evoked by conservatives. Grover Norquist, one of the designers of the *Contract with America* and “Newt Gingrich’s right hand in the mid-1990s,” had described *Losing Ground* as having laid the groundwork for different types of conservatives “to have the moral high ground” by arguing that the welfare state “has been destructive of human life” (Easton 1994:¶14; Dreyfus 2001:¶3). He likened Murray to Darwin, Freud, or Marx because he had produced a book that, once read, shifted the reader’s “whole analysis of the world” (Easton 1994:¶14). Post (1998:7) said of Murray’s book that it “has, more than any other work, updated and redefined the ‘common sense’ of the capitalist class and their political spokespeople inside and outside the government on the issue of social welfare and welfare reform.” While visiting Paul Schwarz, Murray’s former boss at the American Institute for Research, he had been struggling to come up with a title for *Losing Ground*. Schwarz jokingly suggested, “*Fucking Over the Poor...Colon...The Missionary*

Position” (Murray [1984] 1994:xiii-xiv). Other than it not being a viable title to propose to his publisher, Murray [1984] 1994:xiv) thought of it as “the perfect title” which “encapsulates the narrative and thesis of the entire book in seven words.” While he does not elaborate on why it would have been the perfect title, it is clear that he did not mean that he wished to do the poor harm by reducing and ultimately eliminating the government’s role in poor relief. Rather, in his earnest tone, he argued that the government had been unintentionally screwing over the poor by increasing funding and eligibility for public assistance through the War on Poverty of the 1960s and after. As one reviewer said, “Charles Murray’s provocative thesis can be summed up in three words: social programs backfire” (Kuttner 1984: ¶1). The same reviewer astutely observed that Murray’s thesis at that time was “a marketable theme” and that he would no doubt ultimately be “lionized as the thinking man’s George Gilder” (Kuttner 1984:¶16). Murray’s work suffers from the same fallacy as Gilder’s, he used an economic rationale to justify moralism. As one unpacks the premises and presuppositions of the argument laid out in Murray’s book, the double meaning of Schwarz’s goof-title for *Losing Ground* becomes apparent even though unintended.

According to Murray ([1984] 1994:17), prior to the 1960s, society approached the issue of poverty and relief with welfare being an appropriate means of support “if used frugally” and “to purchase life’s necessities.” There were always qualifications for its use, and he argued that conventional wisdom had rightly informed that some of the poor were “deserving” and others were “undeserving” (Murray [1984] 1994:16). The “undeserving poor” were “vagrants” who took advantage of the willingness of society to

lend a helping hand while the “deserving poor” were those involuntarily unemployed and helpless ([1984] 1994:16). Murray ([1984] 1994:178) saw this distinction as paramount to maintaining society’s use of status to “manage behavior.” Applied to a member of the executive class, it is “a way of getting our ablest people to work sixteen-hour days” (Murray [1984] 1994:178). However, Murray’s book does not take concern with the behavior of the affluent or with the institutions which subtly demand such grueling efforts, but rather accepts the deserving-undeserving distinction as a mechanism for maintaining the behavior among the poor expected by elites: discipline, self-denial, hard work, sexual austerity, marriage, etc. For those at the bottom of the economic ladder who struggle and face enormous adversity, Murray ([1984] 1994:178) recognized that status enables societies to “concoct ways in which people can live satisfactory lives anyway.” The underlying framework for the economists’ critique of welfare and the breakdown of “good behavior” is that everyone is “responsible for their actions and, especially, responsible for taking care of themselves and their families” (Murray [1984] 1994:180). The so called breakup of the traditional family model for poor families was seen primarily in the context of fathers shirking their economic obligation. For the purpose of illustrating how economic and status sanctions best produce the right behaviors of the poor, Murray outlined the options available to and choices made by a hypothetical young, poor, and expectant couple, Harold and Phyllis. What he attempted to show was that the Kennedy-Johnson War on Poverty, which greatly expanded programs in the 1960s, had actually led to increased numbers of poor people because of “unintended rewards” built into the implementation of a “social transfer” (Murray [1984] 1994:212). The shift in

elite wisdom towards a “structuralist view of poverty” was, Murray ([1984] 1994:28-29, 267n [author’s italics]) argued, counter to the conventional wisdom, and created an “intellectual consensus” that poverty was not a deserved outcome from the fault of individuals but rather structurally produced and the “*fault of the system.*” The conservative critique of social analyses of structure in studying behavior tended to caricature the left and the social sciences (often confounding the two) as morally relativistic or espousing the view that nobody was to blame for anything. Murray ([1984] 1994:180) argued that this tendency eroded “moral distinctions” with the “first casualty” being the “moral approbation associated with self-sufficiency.” The second casualty was the distinction between the “deserving poor” and the “undeserving poor.” Self-sufficiency was once regarded as the attribute of a “member of society in good standing” and the distinction between members of the poor allowed some to enjoy a favored standing among the poor (Murray [1984] 1994:180-181). Murray ([1984] 1994) downplayed the elitism implicit in such a framework of work, status, and reward. His prescriptions were quasi aristocratic and couched in a libertarian argument. What’s more, it was welfare rights reformers and leftists who were cast as elitists who had “homogenized” the poor as victims (Murray [1984] 1994:181).

Murray’s prose is subtle and demonstrates a concern for the poor, but one which seeks to restore a moral imperative to behaviors which exemplify a subordinated and disciplined class of low-wage workers. There certainly was some “fucking over” of the poor going on, but not because the welfare “explosion” of the 1960s had encouraged immoral behaviors which worsened poverty and made their claim on public sympathies

seem less legitimate. Rather, it was happening in two ways which directly contradict Murrays analysis. One relates to the paradigm shift he described in the 1960s, which allegedly made pervasive a view of poverty which blamed it exclusively on the system. There was a changing consensus among policy intellectuals in the 1960s, but not in the direction of a “structural view of poverty” diverting attention away from behavior. Instead, it was toward an emphasis on behavior and enforcing work and it channeled popular frustration and insecurity onto individual conduct ultimately creating an ideology of personal responsibility in relation to work and poverty. This was evident by the late 1960s with the adoption of the culture of poverty thesis by prominent “liberal” intellectuals with regard to the American poor and its emphasis on behavior. It was also evident with the demands being made by those in Congress who were calling for reduced caseloads and work requirements to address the behavior of welfare mothers, e.g. Robert Byrd of West Virginia, Russell Long of Louisiana, and Wilbur Mills of Arkansas to name a few (US Congress 1967b; Ellwood and Bane 1996). Public sympathies, while always being enmeshed in the pains and struggle of everyday life, were always in favor of helping the poor but with qualifications that illustrated the pervasive ideology which connected those pains and struggle to the poor “getting over,” making trouble by protesting and complaining, and unfairly being rewarded for immoral or pathological behavior.

In his 1962 message to Congress about the Social Security Act (SSA) amendments of that year, President Kennedy eloquently stated that restoring dignity and well-being would not be cheap, but it would be worthwhile in term of substantive results

as well as cost-effective in the long-run (*New York Times* 1962:10). While the 1962 amendments to the SSA expanded benefits, they also sought to return “dependent people to independence” since “many women,” said President Kennedy “now on assistance rolls could obtain jobs and become self-supporting” (*New York Times* 1962:10). While the New Deal had contributed to “national strength and well-being,” Kennedy urged that “programs must be changed” because “the times, the conditions, the problems have changed” (Kennedy 1962:¶2-3). However, as stated in Chapter 5, the legislation was within the political structure of the New Deal in that program expansion was an open and stated part of the initiative, concerns over racial equality or the racial composition of the welfare rolls were disregarded, and government intervention was offered as a legitimate solution to the complex problems associated with poverty. The 1967 amendments were a clear break with the New Deal regime in their commitment to encourage work, inclusion of race as a point of significant concern, and objective of preventing further increases in the AFDC rolls (Law 1983; Ellwood and Bane 1996; Spitzer 2007). The commitment to encouraging employment was much more decisive in the 1967 amendments. The Work Incentive Program (WIN) was established and signaled a change in orientation, with welfare mothers now identified as “employable” (Law 1983:1260). In addition, the AFDC-U program was made permanent, making training and job search services available mainly to unemployed men under the Community Work and Training Program (CWT) (Law 1983).

While a paradigm shift was happening in the 1960s which highlighted individual behavior as an explanation for poverty, outlays for AFDC were still steadily increasing

through the decade (Department of Health and Human Services 1998). A great emphasis was being placed on work, mainly through the 1967 SSA amendments, but funding for programs had yet to be scaled back (Department of Health and Human Services 1998). This was a core component of Murray's argument about behavior changes and poverty. He proposed that while there was progress against poverty in the 1960s which corresponded to increased welfare expenditures, we should not be hasty to attribute that progress to the programs. After all, he asserted, poverty began to increase again in the 1970s while expenditures continued to increase (Murray [1984] 1994). Based on Department of Health and Human Services data (1998), adjusted federal AFDC expenditures actually leveled off in the 1970s, and in most years during that decade, even decreased (Department of Health and Human Services 1998). Also, Moynihan (1981) observed that the average national AFDC benefit did not adequately follow inflation during that period, having declined by 56 percent from 1969 to 1980. Conservative policy analysts had become inclined to include in-kind benefits along with cash benefits in analyses of poverty and relief. When included with cash earnings, they overstate the annual income for a poor household which is out of synch with how Americans typically conceptualize income (since, for example, a working person with employer-provided medical benefits would tend not to factor the medical expenses they had incurred in a given year into their annual income). When counted among "welfare" benefits, it can modify the rate of increase or decrease for that trend. Murray ([1984] 1994:57) had included food stamps, Medicaid, and SSI payments with his trend line for "Federal Cash Public Assistance" in *Losing Ground*, which portrayed welfare benefits as continually

increasing through much of the 1970s. In his vignette about Harold and Phyllis, he does not consider food stamps as part of the income package if work is chosen as an option for either of them, which would in part determine the employment decisions for the couple. Since Harold would not have had to quit his job for his family to receive food stamps, the disincentives attributed to that program would not have been relevant (Kuttner 1984). The welfare poor were not only bearing the brunt of more bleak employment prospects and increased social stigma during the 1970s, but rising inflation had reduced the real value of AFDC benefit levels at a time when “illegitimacy” and other “pathological” behaviors were presented as climbing.

The second way that Murray’s analysis is off the mark and in effect unfairly portrays poverty is by reinforcing an economic model for enforcing “good behavior.” This model erroneously simplifies complex behavioral patterns and the factors which drive motivation and desire. This is the general fallacy of the libertarian, economic view of social relations as it relates to individual choice. However, it also superimposes a one-sided explanation of legitimate institutional authority. This model acknowledges the hindrance on individual liberty involved in the participation in programs implemented by the state, but interprets the social relations involved in seeking and maintaining work in the labor market as one of individual free will. Milton Friedman ([1962] 1982:23) saw the “role of the market” as a mechanism of resolution for this tension between individual freedom and collectivism. The market “permits unanimity without conformity,” he argued, while the problem he saw with social action “through political channels was that it tends to require or to enforce substantial conformity” (Friedman [1962] 1982:23). In

the Harold and Phyllis scenario, the AFDC option, laments Murray ([1984] 1994), gives Harold the choice to leave an unpleasant and low paying job. The hardship possibly forgone by Harold, which Murray does not explore, is that his boss is harassing, nasty, unfair, or exploitive. If Harold is non-white, the alternate situation presented here might include him having to suffer the indignity of being the target of a bigoted and hateful supervisor. On the other hand, Harold may have a well-meaning and sincere boss who treats him with civility and respect. Phyllis, Murray ([1984] 1994:160-161) argues, with the option to receive AFDC benefits and as the primary recipient of the check, is more likely to keep the baby and choose a “degree of independence” by not marrying Harold, thus producing another illegitimate child and female-headed household. What Murray does not deal with is the possibility, for the sake of argument, that Harold may not make for a very good spouse, or worse, he may be abusive or controlling. Not to mention, Phyllis (or Harold) may simply decide to terminate the marriage if a measure of financial security and independence is possible for Phyllis and the child. The flipside of the libertarian rationale is a bleak one. Two points of concern seem to emerge for the libertarians with regard to generous welfare provisions. First, they deprive employers of the right to exploit the poor. Put another way, stingier welfare benefits make leaving an unpleasant job less tolerable for workers and they are more likely to take just any job. From this alternate view, an adequate social safety net is an incentive for employers to pay a living wage and provide more decent working conditions. From the *laissez-faire*, capitalist perspective, such a mechanism acts as a (labor) market impediment. A Second point of concern seem to emerge, this one in relation to family life. An adequate welfare

payment, or at least a benefit set at a level competitive with the minimum wage, would deprive husbands the right to exploit their wives. Again, to rephrase, a generous social wage would make it easier for a welfare mother to forgo or leave an undesirable marriage, cohabitation, partnership, etc. It is difficult to imagine how the preferential status of entering or staying in an undesirable job or family situation represents greater independence or “self-sufficiency.” At the same time, conservative libertarians fail to recognize the enhancement to the quality of life for Harold, with his *independence* from the hot press room of the local laundry in which there is no room for advancement, and for Phyllis, with her increased *self-sufficiency* by not being dependent on a (possibly abusive or controlling) male breadwinner. In his manuscripts of 1844, Marx ([1927] 1978:95[author’s italics]) described the “true ideal” of a worker for the political economists of his day: “the *ascetic* but *productive* slave.” The same fallacy demonstrated by the political economists of Marx’s day is evident in the contemporary framing of poverty and welfare.

PART V – Welfare Reform and Beyond: “The Future of American Civilization”

-Chapter 9: Economism, Paternalism, and the Welfare State-

We have to replace the welfare state with an opportunity society. It is impossible to take the Great Society structure of bureaucracy, the redistributionist model of how wealth is acquired and the counterculture value system that now permeates the way we deal with the poor, and have any hope of fixing them. They are a disaster. They ruin the poor, they create a culture of poverty and a culture of violence which is destructive of this civilization, and they have to be replaced thoroughly from the ground up (Gingrich, Arney, et al. 1994:189).

-Gingrich’s Closing Remarks in the *Contract with America*

Introduction

The above quotation captures almost perfectly a fusion of disparate conservative philosophies and is illustrative of the “neoconservative persuasion,” as Kristol (2003:¶2) called it, on the issue of welfare. It simultaneously reinforces the *laissez-faire* objective of equality of opportunity, evokes the neocon disparagement of the leftist counterculture, and conjures up the traditionalist emphasis of civilization being in crisis and the behavioral/ cultural otherness of the poor by evoking the culture of poverty. Newt Gingrich, in his concluding remarks in the *Contract with America* wrote, “What is

ultimately at stake in our current environment is literally the future of American civilization” (Gingrich, Arme y, et al. 1994:182). He emphasized that civilization is not possible “with twelve-year-olds having babies” (Gingrich, Arme y, et al. 1994:182). This is a peculiar observation to be made, because the thought of there being an abnormally large proportion of twelve-year-olds giving birth is truly disconcerting. Based on National Vital Statistic Reports, such births are a tiny proportion of total births in a given year, and even a very small portion of births to teen mothers (Menacker, Martin, MacDorman, and Ventura 2004). This is not so much the point, however. The point is to illustrate that the drive towards reform, and the tide of opinion, for both elites and non-elites, was developing in a discursive environment constructed by half-baked analysis and compelling narratives about “destructive social behavior” and the “disaster” of the welfare system (Gingrich, Arme y, et al. 1994:65, 189).

The living standard of those in poverty and the levels of relief dispersed through federal programs were presented in a manner which were conceptually flawed and misleading. Books and reports were being developed and marketed by the policy think-tanks, and the media were widely reporting the findings of the scholars associated with these institutions. The reforms called for by this policy network of research organizations were being picked up by policy makers, staff of the groups had taken positions within the government, and the 1996 Welfare Reform Bill would be composed by many of the reforms outlined and advocated, especially by the American Enterprise Institute and the Heritage Foundation. The funding and leadership for the policy-planning groups came mainly from large corporations. The objectives laid out with regard to welfare policy

reform were consistent with the calls for reform in the conservative journals and magazines of opinion. They called for the restoration of labor discipline and productivity and the elimination of the wage inflation mechanism of the welfare state by cutting income transfers and implementing federalized “workfare.” The policy intellectuals working within the network of research institutions helped construct poverty (especially that of poor, unemployed, unwed mothers) as a social problem with its origin in individual behavioral pathology, which was exacerbated through the “structuralist view of poverty” plus the generous and permissive welfare programs increased through the War on Poverty in the 1960s.

Not “Some Kind of Ph.D. Committee”

By the late 1970s, the AEI was quickly expanding its influence, and between 1978 and 1981, it began to compete with the moderately conservative Brookings Institution (BI) for the distinction of being DC’s most influential research organization. It became a revolving door for those who had concrete experience in government and others who had specialized in academic research. Gerald Ford, after losing the 1976 election to Jimmy Carter, had become the AEI’s “Distinguished Fellow” (American Enterprise Institute ¶5; Smith 1991:179). Ford had brought with him many colleagues who would situate themselves within the growing network of conservative research institutes (Peschek 1987; Smith 1991). Among those who would reenter government were Arthur Berns, Antonin Scalia, Laurence Silberman, Robert Bork, and Michael Novak (American Enterprise Institute; Peschek 1987; Smith 1991). In fact, over thirty

AEI recruits had served as officials in senior government posts during Reagan's presidency (Peschek 1987; Smith 1991). Kristol had made the AEI his Washington center of operations and was acting as a broker between conservative funders and the expanding pro-capital, conservative policy planning network (Smith 1991; Kristol 1995). Kristol, along with General Electric's chairman, Reginald Jones, and the former chairman of General Motors, Thomas Murphy, oversaw the fundraising for the AEI, having raised nearly \$60 million and establishing a board of directors, which counted among its membership executives from Chase Manhattan, Standard Oil, Hewlett-Packard, and Citicorp (Peschek 1987; Post 1995; Smith 1991). In the early and mid 1980's however, the AEI would fall into financial and managerial disorganization, and in 1986, Christopher DeMuth took over as president following the resignation of William Baroody's son and successor (Smith 1991). After its intellectual and financial rehabilitation, the AEI would reclaim its centrality in the network of policy research institutes in the 1990s and play a prominent role in the debate leading up to the 1996 Welfare Reform Bill.

Books have played an important informative and organizational role in bestowing political and scientific credibility to the researchers and institutions working to shape the discourse on poverty and welfare. As Smith (1991:193) pointed out, "A book endows its author with credibility to speak on a particular subject and perhaps supplies the visibility that will one day lead to a political appointment." So whether or not policy makers and elected officials have time to read the myriad books and reports produced, the argument put forth in a book is more likely to enter the field of welfare ideology, since books tend

to be reviewed, covered in editorials and broadcast interviews, and addressed in op-ed pieces and magazine articles (Smith 1991). They receive consideration in briefings and lectures, and policy analyst-authors often provide legislative testimony and are cited in newspaper articles when “expert” opinions are sought by reporters (Smith 1991). The authors of books gain credibility and therefore access. Excerpts from the forthcoming *Mandate for Leadership* were “leaked” to the press creating a situation where reporters were competing over the portions that were sent out (Smith 1991:196). The strategy was effective, and when the wire-service articles appeared, the HF was “inundated with requests” from other press outlets (Smith 1991:196). This was demonstrated perhaps most unabashedly with the HF’s *Mandate for Leadership*, which was produced exclusively to steer the policy agenda of the incoming Reagan presidency and because of the notoriety of the organization, was given enthusiastic reception. Another illustration of this was the close partnership between Gingrich, Armey, et al. and the HF in the production of the *Contract with America*, the Republican policy manifesto which was a decisive text in driving the legislative welfare reform agenda in the mid 1990s.

As Nash (1998:337) had observed, it was not so much academic works, *per se*, that helped the right gain a foothold in the burgeoning economy of ideas in the 1980s and 1990s but instead an “applied conservatism” which had transformed the American political culture and intellectual landscape. While the AEI was becoming increasingly academic and hanging back from overtly affecting policy, the HF had taken a more aggressive and strategic position. Though specific conservative ideas were quite relevant in this effort, a vice president of the HF had recalled that so too was the intensity of the

effort to reach out to policy makers “with arguments to bolster our side; ...we’re not troubled over this” (Easterbrook 1986:¶39). He explained that the HF had taken the role of advocacy seriously, “We’re not here to be some kind of Ph.D. committee giving equal time” (Easterbrook 1986: ¶39). By the late 1980s, conservative research institutions and publications were numerous, with 288 conservative public policy organizations accounted for in the Heritage Foundation’s first *Directory of Public Policy Organizations* (Nash 1998; Peschek 1987; Smith 1991). Therefore, empowering the transition from disseminated ideas to decisive gains in the pursuit of political and cultural influence was the more aggressive “collaboration between conservative intellectuals and like minded politicians” (Smith 1991; Nash 1998:335). Understanding how to utilize media to generate attention and controversy around particular issues and events was also important (Smith 1991; Nash 1998). Pine informed Smith (1991:206) that, “The staff uses its expertise to mobilize arguments. They are advocates. ...We make it clear to them that they are not joining an academic organization but one committed to certain beliefs. We tell them that they will write papers with a format that is not for a professional peer group.”

The Heritage Foundation, while its resident scholars had written numerous books, had other ways to participate in the public dialogue. These “shock troops ...of conservative policymaking” were producing frequent small pieces under the titles “special report,” “executive memorandum,” “lecture,” “backgrounder,” or “issue bulletin” (Smith 1991:206; Heritage Foundation). The lectures were the transcriptions of speeches delivered by various conservative luminaries, with Jeanne Kirkpatrick, Henry

Kissinger, Alexander Haig, Russell Kirk, Newt Gingrich, and Ronald Reagan being included among the esteemed lecturers through the 1980s. HF founder, Edwin Feulner was among those delivering frequent talks, often on the subject of shaping the political culture and opinion, with one lecture titled, “Waging and Winning the War of Ideas” (Feulner 1986). Several of these small “papers” were on the topic of welfare reform, as were articles in the HF journal, *Policy Review*. Any innovation on the federal level, shy of scaling back or eliminating programs, was seen as contributing to a logic of big government, with the welfare system as part of that logic. One of the principal planners of Reagan’s California Welfare Reform Program was Charles D. Hobbs (1978a), who served as his Chief Deputy Director of Social Welfare from 1970-1972. In a 1978 *Policy Review* article, he criticized Carter’s reform plan as “another welfare industry plan, designed to meet industry goals” (Hobbs 1978b:69). Hobbs (1978b:69) saw the four goals of “the welfare industry” as (1) growth in expenditures at a faster rate than the national economy, (2) centralization of administration and control over the welfare system in the federal government, (3) greater complexity of the organization and operation of government programs, and (4) “ever-expanding” the workforce of welfare industry workers. According to Hobbs’ (1978) account, the objective of any sufficient welfare reform plan should be to undo the welfare industry’s goals, which puts the reforms implemented in California under Reagan in an important context.

The Reagan Devolution

The encouragement of waivers from federal requirements in the administration of AFDC was a driving force behind the eventual elimination of AFDC as an entitlement (Law 1983; Rector 1987; Wiseman 1993). The strategy of decentralizing AFDC program administration and financing, i.e. increasing the autonomy of state governments to implement their own reforms and fund them, was as much a political strategy as it was financial. In California, under Reagan's gubernatorial administration, the Spring of 1971 saw major changes in that state's welfare programs which would resurface in the 1981 Social Security Act amendments and the Family Support Act of 1988. According to Hobbs ([1975] 2005:102), Reagan had "cleaned up" California's "federally created welfare mess" by identifying a group of deserving poor or "truly needy" and restricting benefits for only them while requiring those who were undeserving of a social wage to either get a paying job or work for their benefits. In five years, there were approximately 400,000 fewer welfare recipients in California (Hobbs [1975] 2005). Similarly, the main goal of the 1981 amendments to the Social Security Act was to force those on welfare into the labor market (Law 1983). When Nixon and Moynihan were promoting the Family Assistance Plan (FAP) in 1966, Reagan had openly opposed it as "another step toward state socialism" in the form of a guaranteed income for both workers and non-workers (Hobbs [1975] 2005:103-104). The devolutionary measures in the 1981 amendments, many of which were brought to fruition in the federal FSA of 1988, represented, not a move toward more efficient public management but rather, a "stepping-stone to the ultimate elimination of federal involvement" in social programs

(Kane and Bane 1996; Conlan 1998:3). With the gradual decline in the federal government's role in financing AFDC and the increasing responsibility of state and local financing of the program, there were unavoidable pressures to keep benefits low (Law 1983). Looking back in 1973 on his accomplishments as governor, Reagan ([1973] 2005:63) saw welfare reform as possibly his "greatest success." A major attribute of this "success" was the shift in the financial burden for health and welfare services from the state to the counties (Law 1983). As pressures from their new responsibility to administer and fund welfare programs were escalating, municipalities were cutting benefits and services and raising taxes (Law 1983). This contributed to the anti-tax environment and inflamed frustrations about welfare and poverty. As a result, the property tax revolt realized through the now infamous 1978 California Proposition 13 which placed a cap on property taxes, was in part generated by these pressures (Law 1983). Similar pressures would evoke reactionary consequences across the states as individuals were increasingly regarded as culpable for their economic plight.

Between July 1987 and October 1988, the Interagency Low-Income Opportunity Advisory Board was active in promoting the submission of proposals by states for welfare reform and demonstration projects (Fishman and Weinberg 1993). The purpose of the initiative was to address the problems cited in Reagan's 1986 State of the Union Address, which addressed poverty and the "breakdown of the family" taking place within the "welfare culture" (quoted in Fishman and Weinberg 1993:115). In 1988, The Heritage Foundation in partnership with The Free Congress Research and Education Foundation produced a three volume "policy document" and "blueprint for mobilizing a

broad coalition of Americans” around the concerns of the “conservative majority” (vii-viii). Titled, *Issues '88*, it was looking ahead, toward the next presidential election and administration and sought to build on the “steps forward” taken by Reagan which could “easily be undone” (Heritage Butler, Buttarazzi, Copulos, Ferrara, Gardner, Gattuso, Haislmaier, Hudgins, Moore, Peterson, Rector, and Tammen 1988:x). Expressing full support of the Reagan program of decentralizing the administration and financing of welfare programs, the document declared that states were “the cutting edge of welfare policy,” and that their further exploration of new strategies was being restricted by the federal government (Butler, et al. 1988:224). Consistent with Hobbs’ prescriptions for combating the “welfare industry,” *Issues '88* called for decentralizing welfare decision making by allowing states to request waivers from current rules so that they could alter, combine, or enhance existing programs (Butler, et al. 1988). Hobbs, then Assistant to the President, was chair of this advocacy mechanism for state demonstrations, and between July 1987 and October 1988 requests were submitted by 26 states, 16 of which were approved (Fishman and Weinberg 1993). All but one of the proposals for state demonstration projects were received before the passing of the FSA in September 1988, and the remaining request was received in December 1988 (Butler 1989; Fishman and Weinberg 1993). However, as the FSA was in part the product of state government input, there were points of overlap between the governors’ proposals and those in the Act (Butler 1989). Several states either withdrew their projects or modified them after the FSA’s passage (Butler 1989).

Reagan signed the Family Support Act into law in October of 1988. In his remarks, he celebrated that the word “family” figured “prominently in the title” of the legislation (Reagan 1988:¶2). Explicitly crediting his 1971 “workfare” initiative in California, Reagan (1988:¶4) emphasized that the primary challenge for which “individuals in the welfare system” must accept “responsibility” is a “new emphasis on the importance of work.” There was debate and failed legislation prior to the final passage of the FSA. While the FSA would incorporate work requirements and training, the Heritage Foundation was highly critical of the act in that it did not cut benefits or go far enough in its behavioral enforcement. Robert Rector (1987:2) of the Heritage Foundation said of the proposals by Moynihan prior to the final FSA that it replicated “virtually every mistake in welfare policy of the past two decades.” While Moynihan, had incorporated “popular conservative rhetoric,” Rector (1987:2) complained that “eligibility was actually expanded, benefits had been raised, work requirements were “effectively barred,” new services and programs were added, and expensive training programs, which he argued had not worked in the past, were wrongly proposed to end dependence. Rector’s assertions were overstated, and in the case of work requirement, untrue.

The debates in the House of Representatives leading up to the bill were revealing in terms of how the political culture had changed. Proposed legislative provisions leading up to the passing of the FSA were in fact replicating much of what conservatives had been praising in the state demonstrations, especially work and training requirements. Moynihan, the FSA’s sponsor, had denounced that an earlier version of the bill called the

Family Welfare Reform Act had fallen “before a coalition of those who thought the benefits were too great and those who thought them too little” (US Congress 1988:¶52). With minor equivocation, Moynihan had praised President Reagan’s assessment of “family policy” in his January 1988 State of the Union Address, and quoted him, saying that welfare “created a poverty trap” that had wreaked “havoc on the very support system” needed most by the poor “to lift themselves out of poverty – the family” (US Congress 1988:¶4). He had an especially enthusiastic response to the importance Reagan had placed on the state demonstration programs revolving around work and child support enforcement (US Congress 1988:¶6). Among the state governors who had proposed reform to the Finance Committee in the previous year was then Chairman of the National Governors Association (NGA) and Arkansas governor, Bill Clinton (US Congress 1988). The NGA had made welfare reform its number one issue in 1987 (US Congress 1988). Praise for the earlier, proposed version targeted the need for reform and the focus on requiring work. Despite some faint concerns about lack of jobs and insufficient funding for child care, the character of the opposition to the proposed legislation was that it did not go far enough, limited state “flexibility in designing work programs,” or was not “true structural reform” (US Congress 1988:¶174, 427).

Representative Marge Roukema of New Jersey was particularly harsh in her opposition to the proposed bill. Echoing Murray’s rationale in *Losing Ground*, she asserted that because of a lack of punitive consequences to poverty, the bill would count among its “perverse effects” making welfare and staying on it “attractive” (US Congress 1987:¶63). To explain, she argued that the provision in the bill permitting a poor mother

with a child aged three or younger to not work or take training was unreasonable since in reality, most mothers with young children work and are forced to find childcare” (US Congress 1987). She continued to explain her concerns, pointing out that welfare mothers could just “continue to have a child every 2 years and never have to work at all” (US Congress 1987:¶63). Roukema also considered the work waiver for welfare mothers enrolled in college full-time as unfair, using the same litmus test as her other plaint: “...The reason this provision is egregious is that hundreds of thousands of people are currently working their way through school” (US Congress 1987: ¶71). She forcefully charged, “How much longer do you think the two-worker couple will tolerate the welfare state and its costs to them in taxes to support that welfare mother?” This argument assumes a highest common level of hardship logic for determining how much the state should intervene to alleviate poverty based on the premise that if most of the non-affluent are struggling, why should conditions be improved beyond that level for the very destitute? Representative Steve Gunderson from Wisconsin, the state where Governor Tommy Thompson would make sweeping reforms which presaged the PRWORA in 1996, echoed similar concerns to Roukema. He had argued that the Republican version of the bill had more adequate work participation requirements, requiring mothers of children over six-months of age to work, and would be more effective at reversing “the dependency that the current welfare system has encouraged” (US Congress: ¶179). Representative Bill Emerson of Missouri had closed the debate, capturing the current of opposition around the earlier version of the bill and welfare in general, “There is a

genuine lack of reform in this bill and it perpetuates the programs and the problems that we face in our welfare system” (US Congress 1987:¶442).

The FSA sustained the purpose and structure of Title IV of the Social Security Act, which authorized federal grants to states to provide AFDC benefits as per the conditions necessitating their distribution (Fishman and Weinberg 1993; Social Security Administration 2009). Among other things, the Act established the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) Program which required able-bodied welfare recipients with children age three or over (age one or over at the discretion of the state) to go to school, receive job training, or work (Fishman and Weinberg 1993). While not to the extent desired by the administration, it authorized numerous studies and state demonstration projects which later informed the rationale and provisions of the 1996 welfare reform legislation (Fishman and Weinberg 1993). The springboard for this series of policy changes and the increasingly explicit focus on behavior, mainly dependency, family breakup, and employment, was the promotion of state experiments in workfare and job training through the 1981 OBRA (Wiseman 1996).

No proposals were received after 1988, that is until George H.W. Bush’s renewed push for state demonstrations in Fall 1991 (Fishman and Weinberg 1993; Wiseman 1993; Wiseman 1996). A 1989 Backgrounder by the Heritage Foundation had called for President Bush to expand the authorization of waivers. The FSA had contained features similar to some of the state experiments, but not surprisingly the HF’s Director of Domestic Policy Studies, Stuart Butler (1989), charged that the Act was insufficient. The solution to removing the “bureaucratic straightjacket” imposed on state innovation, he

argued, was to expand the role of the Low Income Opportunity Board (the shortened designation for the Interagency Low-Income Opportunity Advisory Board formed under Reagan) (Butler 1989:9-10). The Bush demonstrations focused on several areas, but welfare-to-work was a key theme (Fishman and Weinberg 1993). The explicit objectives of the board were to reduce what had been framed as welfare dependency by getting people off welfare and into the labor market. A fundamental strategy in doing so was to decentralize the role of the federal government, or in the language of the board, “to create the proper climate for innovation giving states the broadest latitude to design and implement experiments in welfare policy” (Wiseman 1996:520). Most policy analysts at this time were situated in the reified center of the political discourse around welfare reform, what has been referred to as the “problem solving” paradigm (Wiseman 1996:521; Mead 2009). This perspective took for granted the problematized status of the social wage as right or entitlement. From this perspective, the Democratic and Republican proposals were significantly distinct, i.e. there were two distinct welfare policy camps in the late 1980s: (1) that of the NGA proposals which eventually produced the FSA and ultimately the Clinton welfare proposals of 1994 and (2) the “avalanche of state welfare reform initiatives” which was ultimately followed by the Republican proposals outlined in the *Contract with America* (Wiseman 1996:521; Mead 2009). The Republican reforms had greater momentum and so called progressives were attempting to implement a reform plan which, as David Ellwood has described, was less punitive but at the same time was “real” reform and “not rejected by most of the public” (Ellwood and Piven 1996:4). The steering of the debate by conservative policy analysts and

organizations and the climate of opinion for both the populace and political elites ensured that both camps were merely two channels at a fork of the same socio-political current, bound to converge as they did in the 1996 Welfare Reform Bill.

The HF and a revitalized AEI understood that state demonstrations would facilitate the drive behind nationwide welfare reform. One of the AEI's leading welfare scholars in the 1990s likened devolution to grassroots reform (Besharov 1996a). It constituted a "bottom-up revolution" where authority is devolved from the federal government to state governments, and responsibility is devolved "from local government to individuals, families, churches, and voluntary associations" (Besharov 1996a:¶1). Many conservatives feel that the role of mitigating hardship should fall on these smaller more local institutions. Heralded as a success of such a strategy was the moving of 113 of 165 shelter residents in Bell, California from joblessness into work in 1993, which was accomplished "by prohibiting sex, alcohol, and even provocative clothing" (Besharov 1996a:¶4). This example illustrates the broadly cited argument that decentralizing essential services not only encourages local and tailor-made innovations to accommodate particular issues, but also an application of methods reflective of local or institutional parochialism and practices which could create repressive circumstances for the target population. Many of the "innovations" which were under way in 1991 included granting waivers for states with regard to eligibility requirements (Wiseman 1993). The desired outcome was more strict eligibility in localized contexts as a testing ground for potentially larger-scale legislation. Many welfare recipients who had previously qualified for benefits under state law, were no longer eligible (Wiseman 1993). Several

states were implementing work requirements for welfare recipients, and the FSA would ultimately require all recipients who met the legislation's criteria to work. Bush had warned in his State of the Union Address of that year that welfare "must not become a narcotic and a subtle destroyer of the spirit. Welfare was never meant to be a lifestyle. It was never meant to be a habit. It was never supposed to be passed from generation to generation like a legacy" (Bush 1992:A17). President Bush, by the end of his presidency, would follow the lead of Butler, Hobbs, and others who were advocating decentralization and the expansion of granting state waivers to curb "dependency." Before the end of 1992, there were waivers either approved or pending for 17 states, with 11 approved and six pending (Wiseman 1993). They generally consisted of more stringent welfare-to-work initiatives, but also included restricting or eliminating AFDC benefits for non-compliant recipients, time limits, and marriage incentives (Wiseman 1993).

Enforcing Good Behavior ...for the Poor

Moynihan, the FSA's sponsor continued to frame the issue of poverty in terms of behavior and the breakdown of the male headed, two-parent family, in essence, never departing from the "tangle of pathology" rationale from his infamous 1965 report on the black family. During an address on the FSA in the Senate, he asserted that the "problems [of poor children] do not reside in nature, nor yet are they fundamentally economic. Our problems derive from behavior" (quoted in Fineman [1991] 1997:90). Reflecting on funding trends for AFDC after the FSA, Moynihan noted that the program had been reduced from 1967-1992 by 40 percent in real dollars (US Congress 1992). He attributed

the reduction to the increased “focus ...on behavior modification” (US Congress 1992:96). He continued, “This concept was central to welfare reform, whose main objective, after all, is to modify recipient behavior so as to encourage self-sufficiency” (US Congress 1992:96). In a March 1992 speech at the Heritage Foundation, Dr. Louis Sullivan, President Bush’s Secretary of Health and Human Services, directly cited Moynihan’s comments from his 1990 remarks on the FSA in the Senate and connected child poverty with behavioral origins – single motherhood and welfare dependency (Sullivan 1992).

An underlying theme in much of the research and commentary the years leading up to the 1996 Welfare Reform Bill, a theme which originated long before and is explored in earlier chapters, is that attitudes toward entitlement programs are squarely entrenched in the unwavering American tradition of individualism, belief in personal responsibility, and hard work (Coughlin 1980; Gilens 1999). The flipside of this theme, is the premise that individual freedom and privilege should not be extended to the welfare poor, as there is a set of expectations by the general public for “good behavior” among the destitute (Mead 2009). It was common for assumptions to be made about the “popular wisdom,” common sense, or basic consensus about human nature and motivation which embodied the ideology of the moral work ethic, self-sufficiency, and individual responsibility (Murray [1984] 1994:146). The “good behavior” expected of the poor was considered undercut by the incentives built into welfare (Murray [1984] 1994; Mead 2009). These attitudes are of course best understood when considered in their proper historical and ideological contexts. They are not fixed and immobile, and as

Gilens (1997:31) has pointed out, “American individualism is not absolute. Instead, it is a ‘bounded individualism’ that does not preclude government help for the less fortunate, even when that help takes the form of welfare.” Piven has similarly noted the tendency of welfare intellectuals to view public opinion as “firm and fixed when it actually is ambiguous and shifting” (Ellwood and Piven 1996:2).

Murray’s ([1984] 1994:146) framework, though already explored, presumed a “popular wisdom” with “three core premises,” that people respond to incentives and disincentives, that they require such incentives to work hard and be moral, and that people must be held responsible for their individual actions. Lawrence Mead ([1986] 2001:3) has argued that there was “substantial agreement” with regard to the government’s role in helping the poor and its solution. The problem was that a “class of Americans, heavily poor and nonwhite, exists apart from the social mainstream ...especially in schools, the workplace, and politics” (Mead [1986] 2001:3). This problem manifested itself also in terms of reduced work and productivity, and not only among the underclass (Mead [1986] 2001:3). The solution to this “social problem” was “integration” which was best achieved through attaching benefits with “serious work and other obligations,” achieving for the poor the same “balance of support and expectation that other Americans feel *outside* the welfare state” (Mead [1986] 2001:3-4 [author’s italics]). The poor will thus be integrated since dependency will be less likely to undercut either “social discipline” or “claims to equality” for underprivileged groups ([1986] 2001:41-43). In a 1986 *New Republic* article, Mickey Kaus (now fairly well known for his blog, the “Kausfiles”) argued that “no one” who has been paying attention “can doubt

that there is a culture of poverty out there” or think that a guaranteed social wage “can end the pathology.” Only through individual hard work, through a program “that expects women to work even if they have young children” would there be a “real chance of undermining the underclass” (Kaus 1986:10). Echoing Murray, Gilder, and others, the HF’s Robert Rector (1992:7-8) argued that there was an “emerging consensus” that the “incentive structure” for welfare needed to be reformed. He argued that the basic tools available for reforming welfare were reducing benefits for unemployed single mothers, requiring “able-bodied welfare recipients to work or perform community service,” and increasing financial incentives for “low-income working families” (Rector 1992:7-8). Such revisions would reduce incentives for not working or becoming a single parent and would increase rewards for “marriage and work” (Rector 1992:7).

The focus on behavior was now part of mainstream policy discourse and was certainly not simply the domain of conservative analysts. Some of the leading policy intellectuals who had worked with the Clinton Administration, and who had even dissented with the administration on the direction the legislation was taking, also accepted, more or less, these basic principles of behavior and incentives and presumed their legitimacy based on a perceived public and political consensus supporting them. In *Poor Support: Poverty in the American Family*, David Ellwood asserted, “The American public hates welfare” (Ellwood 1988:4). To illustrate this abrupt point, he explained that, “In 1984, according to a survey of the National Opinion Research Center (NORC), some 41 percent of Americans thought we were spending too much on welfare” (Ellwood 1988:3). He continued later in that same chapter, “I believe the disdain for welfare

reflects something much more fundamental than a lack of compassion or misinformation” (Ellwood 1988:4). Mary Jo Bane ([1994] 1996:124) has argued that, “America’s aspirations for its welfare system have always included eliminating it.” Identifying the goals of welfare reform in the 1990s, she asserted that “a bold alternative to the current system” would be one which encourages work and makes welfare transitional (Bane [1994] 1996:124). However, she presented a familiar caveat as Moynihan had thirty years before, that significant reforms are difficult to implement. Thus, she conceded that features of the 1994 system – training programs, food stamps, and “short- and long-term assistance” – would have to remain (Bane [1994] 1996:124). She argued that the difficulty in creating means-tested programs “truly compatible with the values of hard work and family responsibility” have led researchers and analysts “to advocate nonwelfare strategies as a long-run strategy” (Bane [1994] 1996:125). The entitlement and means-tested programs which would inevitably be transformed forever, rather than presented as part of an important mechanism of maintaining a minimum living standard, were framed uncritically as a problem which needed to be solved with the right planning, evaluation, and administration. She therefore argued that rather than eliminating entitlements, “The welfare system could be made much more supportive of the goals of self-sufficiency and work” (Bane [1994] 1996:125).

Blank (1997:15) has rightly observed that analysis of “behavioral problems” of the poor has become prevalent. “Behavioral images particularly emphasize the ‘otherness’ of the poor, making it easy for middle America to feel little sympathy or connections with them” (Blank 1997:15). The emphasis on behavior reinforces the

distinction of the worthy and unworthy poor, which has been an effective ideological impediment of the materialization of real, structural solutions to poverty and inequality in the US. In his well known book, *The War Against the Poor: The Underclass and Antipoverty Policy*, Herbert Gans explored the consequences of the constructed otherness of the poor. He argued that the basic problem in helping the poor is the categorization of some individuals into the “undeserving” category (Gans 1995:74). He explored the role of stereotyping in the construction of the label, undeserving, as well as the advantages conferred upon the privileged due to the persistent existence of the poor. Gans (1995) stated that the inability of social policies in the United States to close the income gap and reduce poverty and welfare use, rather than individual behavioral defects, is responsible for the persistence of significant social divisions (like those associated with class, gender, and race). These fault lines, so to speak, make the situation worse by creating an environment where the poor are easily made into a class of threatening others to be feared and disdained by the public. This is why, he rightly argued, anti-welfare warriors have been able to score “symbolic triumphs” by “‘taking on welfare’ Like any war, inhabitants of the combatant country have to become undeserving to become enemies” (Gans 1995:75).

The Heritage Foundation had remained active in contributing to the public policy discourse, with Robert Rector becoming its most prominent figure contributing to the debate. He appeared frequently in media and numerous times before congressional committees. Echoing Murray, he framed poverty in terms of individual behavior. However, he incorporated an additional dimension to his analysis of the poor, that they

were not really as poor as Americans thought (Rector 1990). In a 1990 HF report, he pointed out that the census data for 1989 will no doubt lead the press to focus on those who had been “left behind” as opposed to those whose conditions improved during the 1980s “economic recovery” (Rector 1990:283). Census data, he argued, had a tendency to understate the quality of life for the poor and overstate their “poverty,” which along with “poor” was a word he liked to put in quotes (Rector 1990:283). Replicating the errs of Murray in his estimation of public assistance, Rector (1990:284) was incorporating in-kind benefits, like Medicaid, food stamps, and public housing into his judgment of how poor America’s “poor” really were. He illustrated that what was missing from the Census Bureau’s report was the following:

- 38 percent of the persons whom the Census Bureau identifies as ‘poor’ own their own homes with a median value of \$39,200;
- Over 100,000 ‘poor’ persons own homes with a value in excess of \$200,000;
- 62 percent of ‘poor’ households own a car; 14 percent own two or more cars;
- Nearly half of all ‘poor’ households have air-conditioning;
- 31 percent of all ‘poor’ households have microwave ovens; and
- Nationwide, over 22,000 ‘poor’ households have heated swimming pools or hot tubs (Rector 1990:283)

Such analysis is deliberately divisive and attempts to elicit indignation from members of the general public, especially the working and middle class whose strife and frustration

can potentially be exploited and directed toward mean-spirited caricatures, basically a 1990s version of the welfare queen.

In April 1992 testimony before the Domestic Task Force of the Select Committee on Hunger, Rector outlined his terminological distinction between “material poverty” and “behavioral poverty” (Rector 1992:1). After reiterating that poverty and hunger are greatly overstated in the US, he specified, “Material poverty means ...having a family income below the official poverty income threshold” (Rector 1992:1). Rector continued, “‘Behavioral poverty,’ by contrast, refers to a breakdown in the values and conduct which lead to the formation of healthy families, stable personalities, and self-sufficiency.” He warned that, “While there may be little material poverty in the United States, behavioral poverty is abundant and growing” (Rector 1992:2). This, he argued, would warrant a conservative approach to welfare, one which presumed that “spending on most welfare programs actually has increased behavioral poverty” (Rector 1992:2). What was needed, he argued, was a “comprehensive welfare reform strategy” (Rector 1992:9). Comprehensive reform would entail reducing benefits, requiring work, requiring responsible behavior, enforcing education requirements, experimenting with “Wedfare,” using tax credits or vouchers for medical coverage, and providing tax relief to all families with children (Rector 1992:9-11). From 1988 to 1996, a LexisNexis search of news sources showed that he had been mentioned or sited as a welfare expert just over 500 times. In 1996 alone, he was cited on average more than 15 times per month (Ackerman 1999). Charles Murray was cited 679 times by media outlets between 1988 and 1996, and both he and Rector were discussing outlays for welfare spending in very

spurious terms (LexisNexis Database). In Congressional testimony in 1995, Rector claimed that the US had spent \$5.3 trillion since the beginning of the War on Poverty, but his statistic included in-kind benefits and other programs which targeted non-AFDC households (Ackerman 1999). In fact, 70 percent of the \$5.3 trillion went to “non-AFDC households with elderly, disabled or ‘medically needy’ individuals, as well as students and low-income workers,” groups not typically associated with “welfare” (Ackerman 1999:¶3).

The retaking of the House by the GOP in 1994 was eagerly anticipated by members of conservative and pro-capital lobbying groups and think tanks. Euphorically, within the network of lobbying and research institutions, hopes for a reversal of the effort by the government to address poverty were expressed. The HF’s Rector was quoted in a *Fortune* article written shortly after Congressional elections that year. A top Gingrich aide had said, “This election was not a tax revolt but a spending revolt” (Dowd and Marmon 1994:3). When the question was posed, “...Will Republicans tackle the linebacker of federal spending, those automatic spending programs known as [welfare] entitlements?” the authors answered by quoting Rector: “...Next year’s debate will not be over AFDC, *but the entire War on Poverty*” (Dowd and Marmon 1994:4 [my italics]). The article included the results of a poll of 113 heads of trade associations. Roughly half the respondents identified their top fiscal priority as “long-term tax and [welfare] entitlement reform” (Dowd and Marmon 1994:5-6). When asked what initiatives they felt would pass Congress in 1995, 65 percent identified welfare reform, and only 2 percent mentioned “tax hikes for upper-income earners” (Dowd and Marmon 1994:6-7).

Conservative policy analysts were optimistic about the possibility of a significant rollback in entitlement programs. They were prophetic, if not involved, in identifying which legislative reforms were on the horizon. Heritage representatives had given congressional testimony 11 times in just the first three weeks of the 104th Congress and contributed substantially in shaping the *Contract with America*. The *Contract with America* clearly defined the problem with “government programs,” which it acknowledged were “designed to give a helping hand to the neediest of Americans” (Gingrich, Armev, et al. 1994:65). Instead, it was argued, they have “bred illegitimacy, crime, illiteracy, and more poverty” (Gingrich, Armev, et al. 1994:65). The book vowed that a welfare reform bill, the Personal Responsibility Act, would be proposed to “attack illegitimacy, require welfare recipients to work, and cut welfare spending” (Gingrich, Armev, et al. 1994:66). In addition, it proposed family caps for mothers under 18, a two-year time limit if one year had been spent working, and a five-year time limit overall (Gingrich, Armev, et al. 1994:66). Also, the bill would have capped spending growth of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and public housing (Gingrich, Armev, et al. 1994:67). Finally, and completely in line with what had been previously proposed by the HF, the *Contract with America* called for promoting program innovation through “state flexibility” (Gingrich, Armev, et al. 1994:73).

The AEI was actively involved in the welfare reform debate in the 1990s, and it had reemerged as a considerable force. Along with the HF, they had been active in contributing to the dialogue on welfare reform leading up to PRWORA. Their ability to coordinate and financially mobilize American capitalists was evident in both its

governing structure and funding sources (Post 1998). In the years leading up to the 1996 welfare reform legislation, backing from corporate sources composed a majority of the institution's total funding. In 1993, corporate contributions made up 39 percent and corporate foundations 38 percent of its annual revenue (Post 1998). In 1994, the AEI received 41 percent of its annual revenue from corporate donors while another 41 percent came from corporate foundations (Post 1998). The great majority of the AEI's trustees (28 out of 30) were mostly corporate executives from the Fortune 1000, including executives from ALCOA, AT&T, Motorola, and Dow Chemical (Post 1998). Charles Murray was then a Resident Fellow at the AEI, and he and Douglas Besharov would emerge as the organization's leading thinkers in the area of poverty and welfare (American Enterprise Institute 2009).

The imagery of the behavioral paradigm was tinged with race and patriarchy, although many of those addressing the behavior of the poor had been claiming to go beyond the political correctness and restrictions on intellectual freedom imposed by the liberal left (D'Souza, Hitchens, Sommers, and Murray 1995). In the conservative imagination, liberals were not only the ones controlling the debate, but they had done more harm to poor women and minorities than good through misguided ideas and policies (D'Souza, et al. 1995). In the *American Enterprise*, the journal of the AEI, a discussion on the "barriers that exist against certain kinds of intellectual inquiry" amongst controversial thinkers on the right was printed in a special issue dedicated to "Building a World Without Welfare." Murray defended *The Bell Curve*, which he wrote with Richard Herrnstein, against charges of racism. He told Dinesh D'Souza, moderator of the

discussion, that he and Herrnstein had observed “strong empirical evidence of downward pressure on the intellectual capital of the country, due to differential birth rates between more or less intelligent individuals” (D’Souza et al. 1995:¶63). He was clear that neither he nor his co-author promoted the government’s encouragement of fertility among some women and not others (D’Souza et al. 1995). What was happening, he argued, was that the government was engaging in just that – social engineering through the welfare system. “It doesn’t encourage women with high IQs to have babies, but rather women with low average intelligence. So we say the government ought to stop subsidizing births to anybody, rich or poor” (D’Souza et al. 1995:¶63). The argument in *The Bell Curve* makes the claim that intelligence is largely hereditary and that there are disparities in the intelligence of different ethnic/ racial groups (Herrnstein and Murray 1994). Given the racially encoded meanings which are enmeshed in welfare and underclass ideology, it is not surprising that an analysis of poverty, illegitimacy, or teen pregnancy, intersected with presenting a distribution of intelligence which was claimed to correspond to class and race, was construed as racism (Herrnstein and Murray 1994). The earnest style of *Losing Ground*, which reads like a long disclaimer, is found in *The Bell Curve* as well. What emerges is a polite insinuation of black and Latino racial inferiority with the inferred disclaimers: (1) I’m just reporting the facts. (2) I’m not saying that differences in IQ among the races are necessarily genetic. (3) Though, if they are we’re not trying to fuel racism. These inferences are of course hung out in a discursive milieu which is structured with overwhelming and pernicious imagery about race and intelligence.

In the same issue of the *American Enterprise*, a roundtable of sorts was presented with reflections on Moynihan's 1965 report, with comments from several analysts, including Lee Rainwater, Charles Murray, Joseph Lieberman, Mickey Kaus, and George Gilder. The reflections of the participants were an accurate summation of the prevailing orthodoxy which had developed around welfare entitlements and of the ideology of welfare reform. Murray had compared the outrage which was directed at *The Bell Curve*, which he wrote with Richard Herrnstein, with the controversy of the Moynihan Report (Williams, Whitehead, Rainwater, Loury, Lieberman, Kaus, Gilder, Genovese, Anderson, and Moynihan 1995). He congratulated Moynihan for being "right in 1964 about blacks" but warned that the same was true "in 1994 about whites" (Williams, et. Al 1995:¶14). He then warned that Moynihan should understand that adjusting the system is not enough, "and President Clinton's plan is guaranteed to have no more than trivial effects" (Williams, et al. 1995: ¶14). Gilder had reiterated his thesis from *Wealth and Poverty*. Welfare, he argued, made the traditional role of males in poor families obsolete. He discussed that Moynihan recognized this to an extent as well, having noted that the welfare payment goes to the woman "and is often accompanied by female social workers" (Williams, et al. 1995:¶35). This results in demoralizing poor men even further. "Already suffering from his failure as a provider, [he] is further demoralized by becoming dependant on two women, one of them a stranger" (Williams, et al. 1995:¶35). Gilder, fearlessly and apocalyptically restated the blatantly sexist premise and racial imagery of his *Wealth and Poverty* by highlighting what he saw as the main strength of the Moynihan Report.

[The] analysis properly focused on the socialization of young men as the prime function of family and society. Society, as Moynihan put it, is continually beset by ‘invasions of barbarians,’ i.e., teenaged boys. Unless they are tamed by marriage and the provider role, they become enemies of civilization. Males rule, whether through economic power as in civilized societies or through violent coercion by the male gangs of the inner city (Williams, et al. 1995:¶36).

Democrat and future Al Gore running mate in the 2000 presidential election, Joseph Lieberman, put his support behind the findings of both the Moynihan Report and Murray’s *Losing Ground* (Williams, et al. 1995). He expressed dismay that, “Not only has the crisis deepened, but the American norm that Moynihan had described has changed, with one study claiming that 70 percent of young Americans (18-34) do not consider births to unwed mothers to be immoral” (Williams, et al. 1995:¶21).

Douglas Besharov (1994:A23), a more moderate critic of welfare on the right, was warning welfare’s harsher critics in Washington to tone down the “Bring back the orphanages!” rhetoric. He and the AEI were advocating, like the other leading critics, more market discipline along with greater supervision and behavioral strategies. Besharov’s particular perspective, however, diverges from the fusionist expression of libertarian free-market, small government critiques and instead is not reticent about wanting the government to play more of a role if the outcomes promote “certain constructive behaviors” (Besharov and Gardiner 1996:82; Mead 2009). Mead (1997;

2009) shared this view, and has called this perspective the “new paternalism.” He explained that his “view was that, rather than unfree, the poor were too free, that they had opportunities not to work that other people didn't have, they needed to have those opportunities taken away by work requirements, and if you did that you would get behavior changes” (Mead 2009).

Besharov argued that benefits should not be entitlements, but rather contingent on specific behavioral expectations (Besharov 1992; Besharov and Gardiner 1996). He argued that the persistence of behavioral pathologies makes behavior modification strategies quite urgent (Besharov 1992; Besharov 1995; Besharov 1996b). From Besharov’s perspective, simply cutting benefits to promote work is not the answer, because “the pain such a cut would cause recipients who cannot work seems hardly worth this small gain (Besharov 1992:¶3). The solution for Besharov, similar to Murray and Rector, was to make welfare less convenient (Besharov 1995; Besharov 1996b). Work had to pay, and in the existing system, the consensus among the conservative policy analysts was that it was not worth leaving welfare for a low paying job. He argued that rewarding positive behavior is more effective than penalties, citing Wisconsin and New Jersey’s “Bridefare” programs as examples of promoting behavioral changes without unintended consequences (Besharov 1992). Besharov (1992:¶15) argued that the right benefits and penalties could “encourage the internalization of long-term changes in behavior.” Additionally, from the perspective of the new paternalism, reforms and behavioral approaches were not considered “punitive” or repressive (Besharov 1995:¶20; Mead 2009). To Besharov, welfare was encouraging all types of pathology, such as child

abuse, drug abuse, and even depression, and a strict work requirement was seen as a potential solution for the social isolation behind these unintended outcomes, itself a presumed consequence of welfare. More than Besharov, Mead (2009) is explicit that the new paternalism model of reform which targets behavior does not scale back government *per se*. He explained that the traditional debate, that of how much the government should intervene in the economy is based on “partisan” or “ideological” discourse (Mead 2009). He continued,

There's nothing in there about family. There's nothing in there about single-parenthood and the associated social problems. That's off the agenda. That isn't even part of the traditional left-wing discourse, or the right-wing discourse for that matter. And those are the issues that come to dominate the poverty discourse. And it's only after those are addressed and especially only after work levels rise that you can make a serious case for getting back to the older discourse about the scale of government – how much to intervene (Mead 2009).

Besharov (1995:1996) argued that even if programs were more costly in the short-term, they would promote constructive long-term behavior, and ultimately save money. Requiring recipients to engage in “mandatory skill-building activities,” argued Besharov (1995:¶26), “could reduce caseloads substantially – if disadvantaged young people adjusted their behavior accordingly and stopped having so many babies out of wedlock, instead finishing their schooling and going to work.” Mead (2009) is less troubled than

Besharov about the prospects of larger government spending to enforce behavior. Mead (2009) noted, “[A funding source] was uneasy with my argument, because it did involve a kind of form of big government conservatism which might eventually lead to larger government. In fact Doug Besharov pointed that out in one of his critiques of welfare reform in the Public Interest. He said that this thing could lead to bigger government.” Just months before PRWRORA was signed, Besharov (1996) produced a short paper for the AEI arguing for mandatory work and against training programs, as the state demonstrations for job and educational training had not been successful. He reiterated that he felt there was a lack of familial support in impoverished neighborhoods with “many of these mothers” suffering from “multiple personal problems, from clinical depression to alcohol and drug abuse” (Besharov 1996b:¶19). More mandatory approaches were recommended for “this group,” and that “more than budget concerns” is the reason Clinton’s proposed 1994 bill (which was defeated) and the Republican bill which was being offered at that time had contained “mandatory work rules, backed up with the specter of terminated benefits” (Besharov 1996b:¶19).

Karl Zinsmeister (1995), Editor in Chief of the AEI’s journal, the *American Enterprise* expressed a measured optimism in the impending reform brewing in Washington. In the January/February 1995 issue of the *American Enterprise*, he was hesitant to not get his hopes up but sensed that real reform was “within reach” (Zinsmeister 1995:¶4). Presciently, he observed the convergence of some promising factors. Clinton had vowed to reform welfare, Moynihan (“the original sentinel of welfare-linked social decay”) was chairing the Senate Finance Committee, the public had

grown dissatisfied with urban crime and illegitimacy, and the Republicans and their *Contract with America* were now dominant in the House (Zinsmeister 1995). To Zinsmeister, this represented “one of those rare alignments of the cultural planets” where serious welfare reform was a real possibility. The provisions in the 1996 bill were based on the economic and behavioral rationale being reproduced through the network of research institutions. Scholars like Rector, Murray, and Besharov, though varied in how they described their political orientations, were just a few contributors in creating the ideological atmosphere where the welfare system would become and remain vulnerable to regressive changes. The new paternalism, though less disparaging and patronizing in that it does not see its proposals as punitive, still reinforced the distinction between deserving and undeserving among the poor which contributed to the stigma of poverty and welfare use. Schram (2000a; 2000b:71) described the tendency to reinforce “a particular medicalized viewpoint” where welfare represents a pathological danger that can “trap people in a life of dependency.” The narrative which dominated by the late 1980s, “in which experts discuss the problem as a problem to be solved, and less in terms of overall notions of justice, of structure, of partisan choice” saw the enforcement of behavior as the proper end of reform (Mead 2009).

The construction of poverty as a managerial and behavioral issue with an emphasis on problem solving continued to be prominent “even in the ‘90s when there was a resurgence of partisan controversy on account of the Republican plans to downsize welfare and turn it over to the states” (Mead 2009). The concept of dependency and the stigma associated with it have created dire consequences for the poor. Besharov has

identified addiction, feelings of isolation, etc. as consequences of dependency and as reasons for high unemployment and pervasive poverty. This dismisses the role of mutual aid and cooperation in working class and poor communities and the role of poverty itself in creating the dire consequences faced by the poor. Curiously, Besharov(1995) presumed that social isolation had been the cause of the pathologies identified and proposed a remedy of requiring and enforcing work. This discourse dances around the issue that markets produce an inadequate number of jobs to achieve full-employment and many of the jobs available to those on welfare pay very little and do not lift families out of poverty (Boushey 2002). To propose that the solution to the problems facing the poor is to enforce regular work for low wages or a welfare benefit, which is an even lower compensation monetarily, deflects emphasis away from structural causes of poverty. This discourse has also produced consequences for poor families which contribute to the very outcomes they attribute with welfare. For example, one consequence has been the attitude that single-mothers who have never been married are “bad mothers” (Fineman [1991] 1997). While being a source of humiliation and disparagement for poor families, this stigma is rationalized by conservative policy intellectuals as necessary for fostering “good behavior.”

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 incorporated many of the propositions of the policy experts who had been subjecting the welfare system to ruthless condemnation and criticism. Key features of the bill include work requirements, a five-year time limit, education and live-at-home requirements for teen mothers, optional family caps for states, and state block grants which give states

more autonomy in how benefits are administered (Administration for Children and Families; Post 1998). Hobbs, Butler, and Murray were key advocates for devolution as were Rector and Besharov. With the exception of Besharov, the expectation and hope was that some states and municipalities would terminate benefits completely and others would impose even stricter time limits than that of the five years indicated in the bill. The “tangle of pathology” and underclass concepts inform the perspective of poverty which associates it with individual failings, immediately problematizing any efforts at providing a basic income entitlement for poor mothers without behavioral obligation. This same expectation of obligation and work is not expected of affluent women with children, revealing a disdain for what has been constructed as the “welfare mother.” Single-motherhood constructed as “other-hood” therefore comes to inhabit the same plane of immoral behavior inhabited by other forms of “chronic pathology” demonized through dominant ideological narratives – sexual permissiveness, indolence, criminality, etc.

The conservatism of welfare policy discourse has become part of the domain of the political center, rendering it neither “partisan” nor “ideological” (Mead 2009). Herbert Stein, who had been at the Brookings Institution and later the AEI, had commented of these organizations that by the end of the 1970s, it was probably “true that both [were] ...moving to the middle, but the middle [was] ...moving to the right” (quoted in Silk and Silk 1980:182). Though not accounted for by Schlesinger, the “vital center” has revealed itself to be a movable and dynamic entity, and the policy planning network of the right had skillfully molded its own methods and ideas and influenced the political

culture such that that its basic premises would be situated in the center. More accurately, through its relentless (and impressive) agitation of the political waters, it gradually propelled the center in its direction. A social wage or basic income guarantee for poor mothers was represented as an enabler of social pathology and the very premise of relief as a right for able-bodied adults and poor single mothers would come to be regarded as ridiculous. This was recently evident during the 2008 presidential campaign, when Barack Obama, the so called progressive candidate, when asked if he would have supported the 1996 Welfare Reform Bill, said that he “won’t second guess President Clinton for signing” (Goodman 2008:A1). Almost eleven years prior, in the Illinois State Senate, he had said that he probably would not have supported the legislation if he were in Congress. President Obama’s now infamous speech in which he confronted the Reverend Wright controversy and addressed race relations in the US had discussed welfare reform in a way which could have come from Senator Moynihan himself: “A lack of economic opportunity among black men, and the shame and frustration that came from not being able to provide for one’s family, contributed to the erosion of black families – a problem that welfare policies for many years may have worsened” (Obama 2008:¶7).

-Chapter 10: Conclusion-

Welfare legislatively ended as we knew it in 1996 with the signing of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA). This legislation solidified decades of ideological and political efforts which problematized a fundamental premise of the American welfare state since the implementation of the Social Security Act (SSA), that if you met specific criteria, you were entitled to a benefit which was effectively a social wage for poor mothers with dependent children. As the discursive system had been gradually changing in relation to how we think of poverty, personal responsibility, work, and welfare, and economic and social conditions had changed in significant ways from the SSA's implementation, it is safe to say that welfare, "as we know it," had been changing all along, well before the 1996 legislation. In fact, the legislation was in part a legislative gesture allowing national policy to formally catch up to what had been already implemented on the policy level in many states but especially to catch up to changing sensibilities which shifted in a particular ideological and political context. Some have called (and still call) for the abolition of the entire welfare system, while others have highlighted particular aspects of it which, in their interpretation, fostered dependence, vice, and indolence. Even the New Deal liberalism celebrated by Schlesinger in the late 1940s, that of a "reasonable responsibility about politics and a moderate pessimism about man," by the late 1950s was remembered by more measured liberals as a "bold insurgent" and "old-style indignant" liberalism (Schlesinger, Jr. ([1949] 1988:165; Meyer 1958:462). The vital center was moving to the right, and what

had been regarded as fringe politics in relation to welfare state reform had become good policy by the 1980s and 1990s and in regard to the populace, good “common sense” and part of the “popular wisdom.”

Those who were assailing the welfare state in the early post war period were without political or ideological organization. The old, *laissez-faire* right, whose ideas and rhetoric would ultimately be incorporated into the American “new right,” were frustrated with the public consensus on what they saw as a totalitarian welfare state and the dominance of Keynesianism in economic policy discourse and practice. Many of the old right *laissez-fairists*, like H.L. Mencken, Albert Jay Nock, Frank Chodorov, Murray Rothbard, William Henry Chamberlin, and Garet Garrett had aligned themselves with socialists and other leftists against imperialism, corporate monopolies, and war. Though, as allegiances had shifted, old rightists had found themselves looking for political allies among the Hooverites and other conservative anti-New Dealers whom they had previously seen as half-hearted in the struggle for economic and social liberty. Many, like Nock and Mencken, would become intellectually marginalized. Chodorov and Rothbard would contribute from time to time to the burgeoning conservative press, but increasingly found themselves ostracized. Others, like William Henry Chamberlin, would eventually accept statist and new right tenets as well as join the emerging anti-communist crusade. While the old right had explained the carnage of the war, rise of fascism, and Soviet Russia in terms of New Deal-style collectivism turned totalitarian, the post-war traditionalist right was suspicious of mass democracy and blamed the loss of tradition and of superior ideas on the ascendancy of political progressivism. There was

an emphasis on hierarchy and the notion of an organic order. State programs which were seen as redistributive or operating under “equalitarian” motives were perceived as interfering, not with markets *per se*, but with nature and even God’s design. The emergence of autocratic and totalitarian regimes was seen as the by-product of social anomie resulting from the elimination of a superior social order and of the elitist “rule of Gnostic activists” (Voegelin 1987:132).

The formation of *National Review* was important because Buckley had assembled a group of divergent conservatives to serve on the editorial board and contribute articles to the magazine. There was discord in the ranks, and Buckley, looking toward the future and hoping to establish intellectual conservatism as a more unified and significant regime of thought in American political life, excluded (with a few exceptions) isolationist, atheistic, and anarchist voices of the right from the pages of the magazine. The rhetoric and style of *NR* were still forceful and unrestrained in its attack on liberalism. It frequently condemned the welfare state on libertarian grounds and was a pro-McCarthy bastion of anti-communism, a key issue which would unite conservatives throughout the gamut. With the objective of constructing a unified conservative intellectual alliance, Buckley upheld a semblance of order at the magazine despite the clashing views and temperaments of some of its staff. Other magazines, like *The Freeman* and *Human Events* would contribute to what was a revitalized conservative press in the late 1950s going into the 1960s. Traditionalist conservatives opposed the redistributive consequences of the welfare state on philosophically aristocratic grounds. The articles in the conservative magazines of opinion had adopted a “fusionist” orientation and were

critiquing government efforts to address poverty with old right anti-statist and anti-communist language. In the 1960s, Newburgh City Manager Joseph Mitchell levied an early attack on the welfare poor by evoking race and calling into question recipient behavior as a cause of their poverty to garner public support. *NR* and *Human Events* would parrot such complaints. However, in the 1960s, it was intellectuals which self-identified as liberal who gave social scientific credibility to behavioral analyses of poverty and criticisms of welfare state programs centered on a concern for preserving traditional social institutions.

In the 1960s, the “silent majority” of ordinary Americans were suspicious of the changes unfolding around them. The “backlash,” as it has been called, was to an extent a reaction to worsening racial tensions and the migration of large numbers of African Americans to the industrial Midwest and Northeast, but was also a response to greater sense of material insecurity. A working or middle class American was by the end of the decade more likely to be feeling the effects of inflation, seeing his/ her dollar not stretch as far, and more likely exposed to print and broadcast media accounts of welfare and the poor which were not favorable and which negatively depicted black recipients more than whites.

According to a 1969 *LIFE* article, this ordinary person if not affluent was likely “unblack,” “unurban” and “in seething revolt” (McGinniss 1969:20). If among the “skilled wage-earners” and “property-owning middle-income groups,” he/ she was likely “white, respectable, suburban, and small town” and equally convinced that “boondoggling” poor welfare cheats and “big business and the rich” were “getting away with murder” (McGinniss 1969:20).

Goldwater had contributed to a growing body of conservative literature with his book *The Conscience of a Conservative*. It was very popular, and exposed the public to a conservative critique of liberalism, including the liberal “welfarism” which expressed the anti-statist, libertarian rhetoric that predominated fusionist conservative analysis on welfare at the time. The book was written with the support of *National Review (NR)*. In fact, it was ghost-written by L. Brent Bozell, Buckley’s college roommate and brother-in-law. *Conscience* was consistent with the tendency by conservatives in the early 1960s to shy away from discussing individual morality and behavior in relation to welfare. The book, like the fusionist conservative formation which appeared around *NR* at the time, tended to use *laissez-faire* pretenses to legitimize an essentially aristocratic and unequal social system. The book’s claim, that conservatism “puts material things in their proper place,” illustrated the fallacy of economism as ideology in the rhetoric of the conservative movement (Goldwater 1960:10). *Laissez-faire* economic discourse was the ideological basis which provided a scientific credibility to an elitist politics which supported the existing class system.

As the 1960s advanced, the conservative movement would come to acquire a considerable degree of organization and drive, both politically and ideologically. In the early 1960s, anti-communism and the attack on welfarism as domestic collectivism were issues which consolidated different types of conservatives into a practical political formation. The campaign to elect Senator Barry Goldwater to the presidency was not successful, but in the process, the more moderate and liberal Eastern Establishment had lost control of the GOP (Hofstadter 1964; Brennan 1995; Brennan 2003; Dallek 2004).

The major thrust of the Goldwater movement had been comprised of a grassroots, conservative base, and invaluable lessons were learned by conservative operatives during the campaigns (Brennan 1995; Brennan 2003; Dallek 2004). Also, the Arizona Senator was known for being honest, straight forward, and at times abrasive, which likely made him less electable. While his rhetoric may have alienated and worried many voters, he had set major conservative ideas on multiple issues before the public, including welfare. Even if their political realization was improbable, the populace was softened, so to speak, to ideas which had been on the political fringe (Brennan 1995; Brennan 2003). Goldwater's populist allure along with a growing conservative press made him and the ideas he represented accessible and inspiring for that silent, conservative majority of Americans to which Nixon famously referred. The Arizona Senator was also striking a chord with conservative corporate elites who were looking to increase their scope of influence.

Also in the 1960s, the thought and politics of a group of intellectuals on the left who had become "deradicalized" constituted the emergence of neoconservatism. Coser ([1973] 1974:5) wrote, "The most salient feature of the current vogue of neoconservatism is its infuriating complacency." This was so in relation to their proposals (or opposition thereof) for anti-poverty policy, but they lacked no fervor in their anti-communism, hostility toward radicalism, and mistrust of direct action and dissensus politics. This orientation would eventually appraise welfare state programs in terms of their consistency with institutional requirements and in a context of family breakup, "illegitimacy," the work ethic, and behavioral pathology. The emphasis on the

supposedly detrimental social effects of welfare programs was articulated more prominently in the second half of the decade, signaled by the appearance in 1965 of *The Public Interest*, a journal founded by Irving Kristol and Daniel Bell, and Daniel Patrick Moynihan's writing of "The Negro Family," better known as the Moynihan Report. Their influence was expanding, and in addition to *The Public Interest*, their work had appeared between the covers of "little magazines" like *Commentary* and the *New York Review of Books* for several years. They would create a tradition of social criticism which focused attention away from oppression, racism, the necessity of social conflict to promote change, and welfare as a right back on to what they considered idealistic and irresponsible social activism, disorganized communities, family instability, cultural barriers to motivation, and individual dependency. Glazer's (1971:57) comments in the fall of 1971 articulated very well the shift in approach which transpired through the 1960s and accurately captured the essence of the neoconservative critique of the welfare state:

My own tendency ... would be to ask how we might prevent further erosion of the traditional constraints that still play the largest role in maintaining a civil society. What keeps society going, after all, is that most people still feel they should work – however well they might do without working – and most feel that they should take care of their families – however attractive it might on occasion appear to be to desert them. Consequently we might try to strengthen the incentive to work. The work-incentive provision is

the best thing about Family Assistance, but we need to make it even stronger.

The American liberal left was moving to the right, and the intellectual right had become more unified, organized, and was aggressive in its declared war against liberalism. Moynihan's warnings of the "tangle of pathology" for poor black families and the perceived failure, and even danger, of the Community Action Programs of the War on Poverty, Glazer's explication of the "limits of social policy," Bell and Kristol's identification of the New Left and welfare rights struggle as ideological all helped normalize a perspective on AFDC and of the poor which would become a feature of mainstream welfare policy discourse years later. Expansion of entitlement programs to address poverty or the establishment of any social wage external to private labor markets would eventually fall beyond the acceptable parameters of political consideration and therefore beyond the boundaries of the vital center.

From the early 1960s and into the 1980s, the discursive characteristics of the conservative attack on welfare would change. In the early 1960s, Goldwater, *NR*, *Human Events*, and *The Freeman*, had attacked welfare as "socialism creeping," or "Socialism-through-Welfarism" but by 1990, welfare reform would set out to address "destructive social behavior" by "requiring welfare recipients to take personal responsibility for the decisions they make" (Goldwater 1960:70; [Goldwater quoted in] Ingwalson 1962:366; Gingrich, Armey, et al.1994:65). The Goldwater movement was advancing conservative ideals among the general public, getting people directly involved in the political process and mobilize the grassroots conservative organizations during and after Goldwater's

aspirations for the White House. On the other hand, Neoconservatism and the entrance by neocons into the world of politics through think tanks and research groups corresponded with the intensification of business political behavior through increased funding for their intellectual efforts and activism by corporate donors. Neoconservatism also helped expand the conservative political movement to include moral and religious concerns and become more inclusive and appealing to an even broader swath of increasingly conservative voters. This led to the inclusion of non-elite religious conservatives into this mass constituency, which helped elect Ronald Reagan as president in 1980. The 1970s also saw the organizing and lobbying efforts stepped up by the capitalist class through organizations like the National Association of Manufacturers, the US Chamber of Commerce, and the Business Roundtable, who were effective at influencing key labor, tax, and welfare legislation in the 1970s and early 1980s, which directly effected the objective conditions of virtually all non-affluent workers and the non-working poor.

Neoconservatism had become a powerful influence in American politics and in the larger conservative movement. Neoliberal and economic reasoning had presented itself as a strategic political and conceptual device by the end of the 1970s in the form of supply-side economics. It helped maintain ideological coherence and political unity for the movement. Kristol recognized this while operating at the AEI, having recalled that when he was first exposed to supply-side theory, he “was not certain of its economic merits but quickly saw its political possibilities” (Kristol 1995:35). The neoconservatives also continued to incorporate moralistic language in its policy critique and were able to

utilize the contradictory and ambiguous quality of its philosophical premises as a political asset. They were pragmatic and willing to work with those with whom they did not see eye-to-eye. Kristol (2003:¶4) regarded Reagan as a hero, while figures like Hoover, Coolidge, Goldwater, and Eisenhower were “politely overlooked.” This made sense, given Reagan’s tendency to unite a broad coalition of diverse conservative thinkers. Reagan and the neoconservatives preferred forming alliances and displaying optimism. This conservative intellectual configuration had found an effective platform from which it developed its ideas and strategy, specifically the network of conservative research institutions, like the Manhattan Institute, AEI, and Heritage Foundation (HF), and these institutions played an important role in normalizing analyses of poverty which focused on so called behavioral pathology.

With the problem being framed as managerial in terms of program administration and the modification of the actions of the poor, welfare reform was predicated on identifying the everyday behavior of a large portion of the population as pathological and non-productive. Moving people into work, cost-benefit analyses, imposing the values of the middle class in evaluating the quality of poor families became institutional ends unto themselves, constituting welfare reform as ideology. What Charles Hobbs had disparagingly identified as the “welfare industry,” in post-welfare reform American could be said to have been replaced with a welfare reform industry, that is an industry whose basis of existence is the maintenance of a weak and feeble welfare state which can, with less difficulty, be modified according to elite preferences. Hobbs was Reagan’s chief architect for his welfare reform strategy while governor of California. The methods

employed in California provided a blueprint of sorts for Reagan's federal welfare reform strategy in the 1980s. While some of the hardliners had argued that Reagan had not gone far enough on his promise to roll back government programs, the moderate redistributive function of the tax and welfare systems had been sharply reduced during his first term. This was quite an accomplishment given that Reagan's election was in part due to a considerable number of Democratic working class and middle class votes. Paradoxically, while these voters may have consciously been voting against high taxes and "welfare cheats," the objective consequences were restructured tax and spending programs which were now largely to the advantage of capital and the affluent. This was a considerable political feat, and it required a massive ideological effort – the success of which was fueled by the discontent of working and middle class voters, but was also facilitated by an increasingly disgruntled elite. Diminished earnings and climbing inflation and unemployment encapsulated the material conditions contributing to public discontent (Bureau of Labor Statistics; Edsall 1984; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 2005). Reductions in productivity and diminished profits from the 1960s through the early 1980s contributed to the increased class-consciousness on the part of business elites (Edsall 1984; Brenner 2006).

The reports, books, media appearances, and congressional testimony by key scholars in the network of policy planning institutions had produced a current of thought which reinforced a gendered and racialized stereotype of the poor which would be pervasive in the public discourse on welfare reform leading up to and beyond the 1996 Welfare Reform Bill. It ideologically presented single-parenthood, poverty coping

strategies, and everyday social and sexual activities as “illegitimacy,” behavioral pathology, and dysfunctional sexual permissiveness. It associated these constructions of incorrigibility with the impoverished, unmarried, black mother. George Gilder’s *Wealth and Poverty* and Charles Murray’s *Losing Ground* were both influential for Reagan’s policy regarding AFDC, and both were heavily promoted by the Manhattan Institute (MI). Both Gilder and Murray were associated with the MI at the time they had written their books, and the Institute refers to these texts on their website as “public-policy classics” (Manhattan Institute 2009:¶4-5). Think tanks were significant in terms of the ideas they produced, but they had created an industry of intellectual workers and an infrastructure which allowed them to acquire a larger market share in the economy of ideas.

The drive towards reform in the late 1980s and 1990s had developed in an intellectual environment shaped by a welter of material and information (reports, books, articles, sound bites and quotes in newspaper stories, policy forums, lectures, etc.) which attributed poverty with “destructive social behavior” and poverty-generating behaviors with welfare entitlements (Gingrich, Armev, et al. 1994:65). In the late 1970s into the early 1980s, the AEI had expanded its authority on policy issues and was on par with the Brookings Institution in terms of its status and influence. President Ford, after losing the 1976 election to Carter had joined the organization as “Distinguished Fellow” (American Enterprise Institute ¶5). Many colleagues and appointees had come with him and over thirty AEI staffers would reenter government service with the election of Reagan. The AEI would fall into operational trouble by the mid 1980s, and the Heritage Foundation

rose to lead the charge. As Nash (1998:337) pointed out, it was more of an “applied conservatism” which transformed the political culture in the 1980s and 1990s, and the HF prided itself less on the academic esteem of its publications and scholars and more on producing information to give conservative policy makers the edge in political debate and legislation. Among the reforms advocated by the HF was the decentralization of the financing and administration of welfare programs. This was largely carried out by Reagan and later George H.W. Bush through the granting of waivers from federal requirements for the AFDC program and they were a driving force for the eventual elimination of AFDC as an entitlement.

The debates in the House leading up to the Family Support Act (FSA) of 1988 and the PRWORA of 1996 revealed that there was a decisive shift in the political culture in how poverty and welfare policy were conceptualized. The economico-ethical policy scheme advocated by Murray and Gilder (and others) was echoed in the chambers of Congress, with a logic that situated adversity and suffering as a necessity for ensuring good behavior. Policy which potentially could result in raising the living standard or quality of life for a poor person collecting welfare above that of the lowest paid poor worker/ working family was regarded as unfair and “egregious” (US Congress 1987:¶71). This created a highest common level of hardship rationale for social and economic fairness, which happened to favor the interests of employers and capital. Moynihan, the FSA’s sponsor, continued to situate poverty and policy in a behavioral context, which never departed from the “tangle of pathology” justification for modifying programs. The core of the problem was still understood in terms of the breakdown of the male-headed,

two-parent family and illegitimacy. The focus on individual behavior, primarily reproductive and occupational, was now part of mainstream policy discourse, and was by no means the exclusive intellectual enterprise of conservatives. The highlighting of behavioral “pathology” and the understanding of the demand for services and resources as a crisis has constituted an intellectual orthodoxy for welfare state program outcomes which has discouraged the general public from being sympathetic or identifying their own hardship with that of the welfare poor. The mechanisms for distribution of resources therefore becomes suspect by virtue of its target population and the failure of the system to regulate structural poverty or inequality can successfully be attributed to the poor themselves. The provisions ultimately included in the 1996 Welfare Reform Bill reflected the discursive environment in part produced by the intellectuals associated with the policy planning organizations. The legislation incorporated many of the proposals of the policy experts who had been subjecting the welfare system and the poor to ruthless condemnation and criticism. Key features of the bill reflected these efforts.

To reiterate and expand on an assertion made in the introduction of this study, the conservative attack on the welfare state, which spanned decades, brought about the end of welfare entitlement in the US. Different circumstances have exposed new contradictions of the American welfare state. While capitalist accumulation and production are obstructed by market “interferences” like welfare entitlements and militant welfare rights demonstrators and workers, the welfare state itself continues to be an element of late capitalism’s inner necessity. Thought of a different way, capitalism’s survival is part of its own internal logic which is supported by the welfare state. By policy analysts placing

a disparaging emphasis on the system's own human products, welfare recipients are an already constituted (although stigmatized) attribute of a system which on the surface appears to be attempting to eliminate them. Even though the welfare poor are maligned, they are required as a transgressive category. They are permitted to exist, but the systems of accumulation and welfare programs must be constantly tinkered with to ensure minimal interference to the former.

Offe (1987) had described the contradiction of the welfare state as the tendency of the welfare system to undermine the conditions of its own existence. In other words, the contradiction is that welfare programs, by virtue of the problem they set out to remedy, obstruct the accumulation process, which foils the efforts of capital, and yet capitalism cannot exist without the welfare state. He noted that this contradiction cannot be resolved in the context of capitalist democracy (Offe 1987). Perceptively, he observed that the requirements of the state in this situation are impossible unless either the private character of accumulation or the liberal democratic character of the state is suspended. In the American context, and what has become evident in the time after Offe's observations is that the discursive system has been modified such that the logic of the accumulation process and its function has become likened to that of liberal democracy. This is not a new discovery. Others have noted this tendency within highly technological societies where the share of control over the vast network of media outlets is exercised by large corporations. The pathway to freedom and independence ("self-sufficiency") has been represented in the form of the self-sacrificial and diligent worker who has a multitude of products for his/ her disposal as a reward for "good behavior." The mission and

consequences of the welfare state, while objectively providing a non-commodified (though heavily controlled) space for one's existence, have themselves been represented as antithetical to individual freedom and democracy. The actions of the individuals receiving welfare entitlements have even been successfully depicted as impositions on the freedom and independence of those who demonstrate the "right" conduct, i.e. self-sufficiency and behavioral prudence. The emergence of the neoconservative policy analysts and their focus on behavior and institutional stability has been the catalyst for this modification to conventional system requirements. Habermas was concerned about this process, having been an early witness to its development. Observing this curious conceptual inversion, Habermas (1981) explained that it is within this rhetoric that programs which mitigate the social consequences of capitalism (e.g. welfare state provisions) are successfully presented as fascist and obstructive of freedom.

The information presented here reveals that the existing withered welfare state in the US is not the product of fixed and unwavering American values, but rather those values are the product of particular economic, political, and ideological forces. That intellectuals operating within a network largely financed by corporate elites has such influence and access to power presents significant concerns for any reasonable understanding of popular democracy and distributive justice. This network has applied itself and has had great success in shaping discourse in numerous other policy areas, including education, healthcare, energy, and defense to name a few. This is important because it is this environment where people formulate their attitudes and views of this or that program or strategy designed to provide services for those in need, redistribute

income and wealth, or intercede when the market fails. Even more crucial, it is real people already struggling to overcome the effects of poverty and exploitation who bear the brunt of punitive policy and who are demeaned by the hurtful characterizations designed to compel a frustrated and disempowered public.

Figure 1

% ID Welfare as MIP and Median Incomes (SSA Data-2004 Dollars) 1959-1980

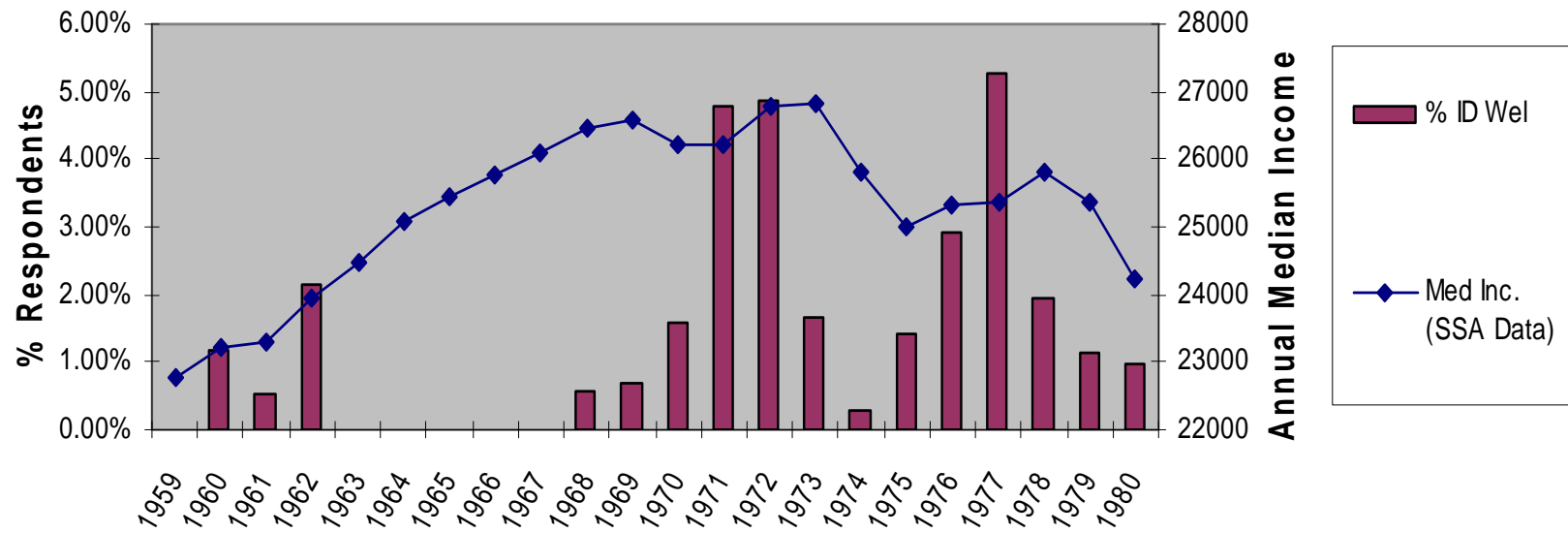


Figure 2

Annual Inflation and the Poverty Rate

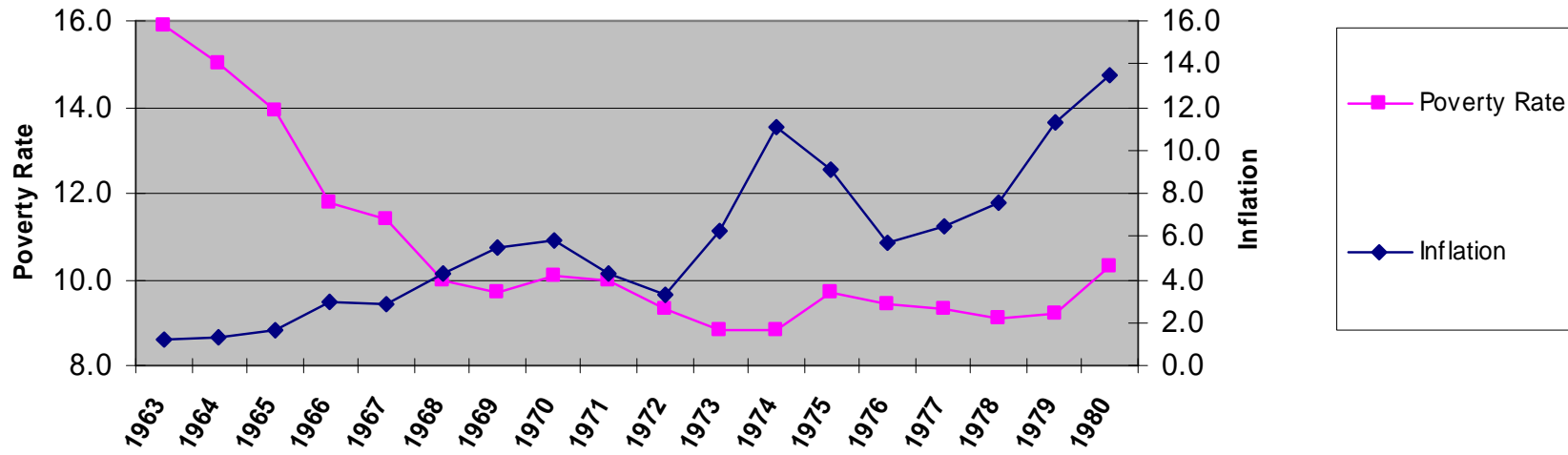


Figure 3

% ID Welfare as MIP and % Reduction in Poverty 1960-1980

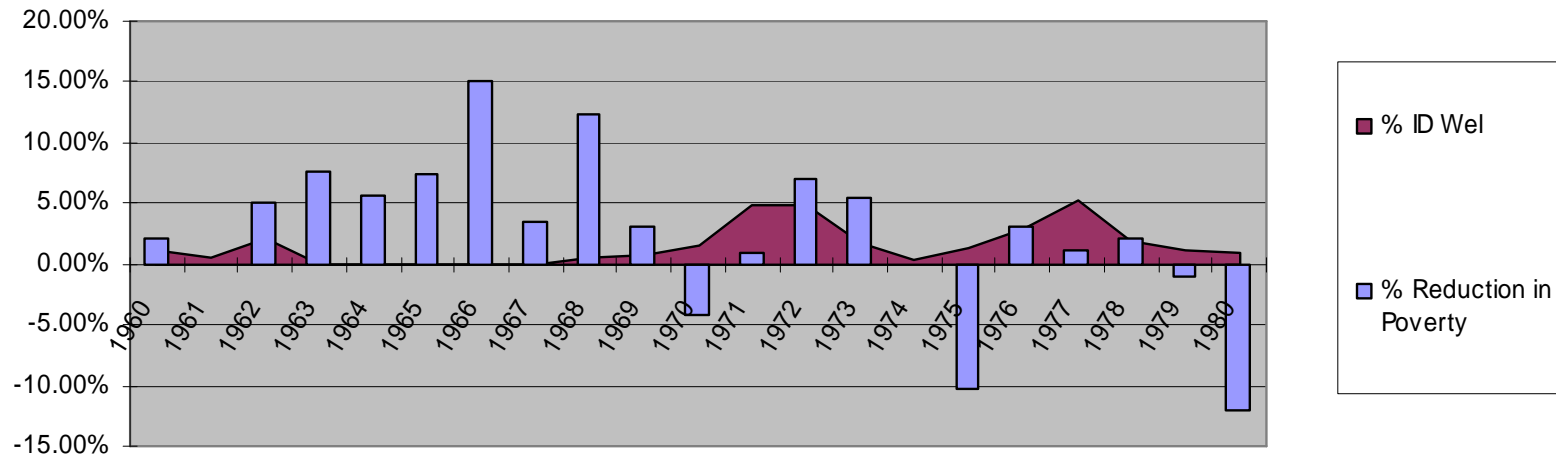


Figure 4

% ID Welfare as MIP and Number of Annual NYT Articles on Welfare

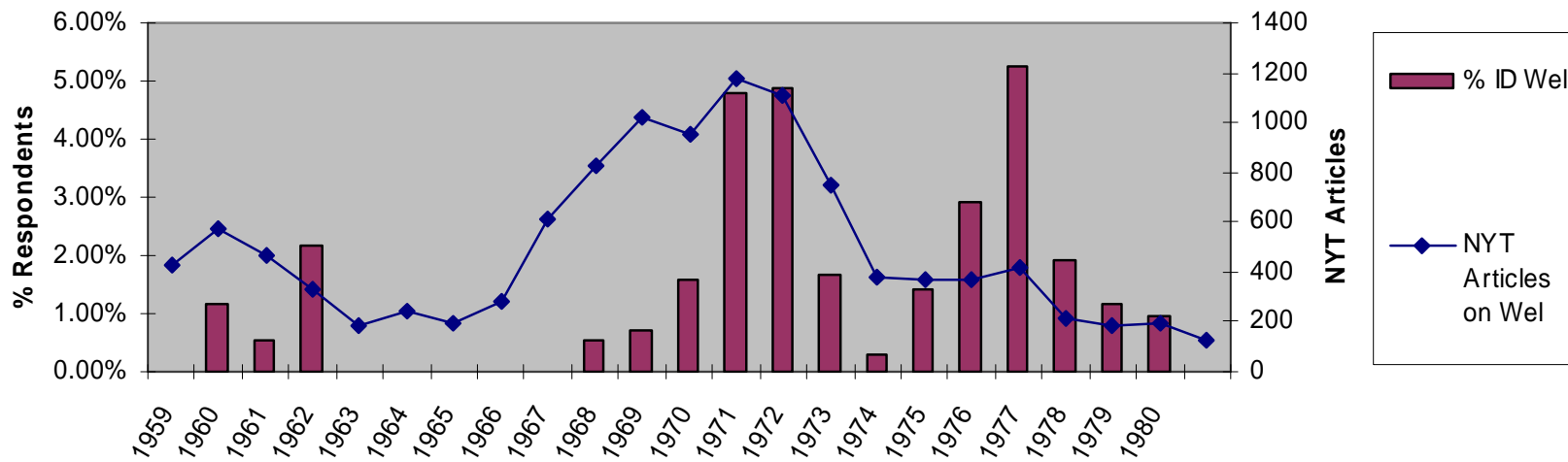


Figure 5

% ID Welfare as MIP and Number of Annual TV News Stories on Welfare

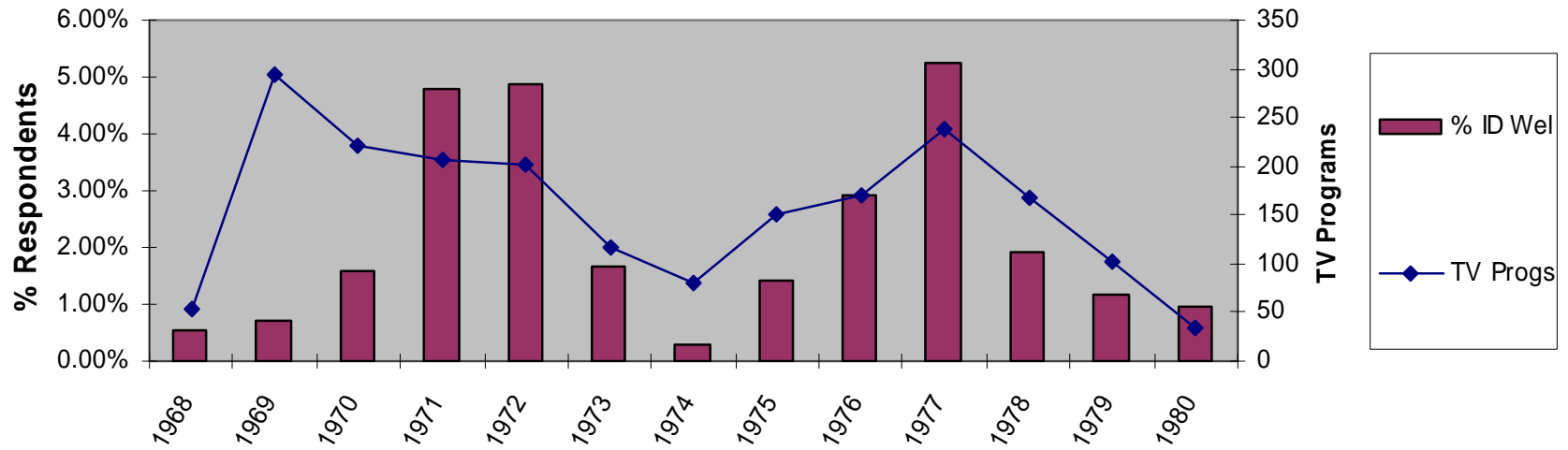
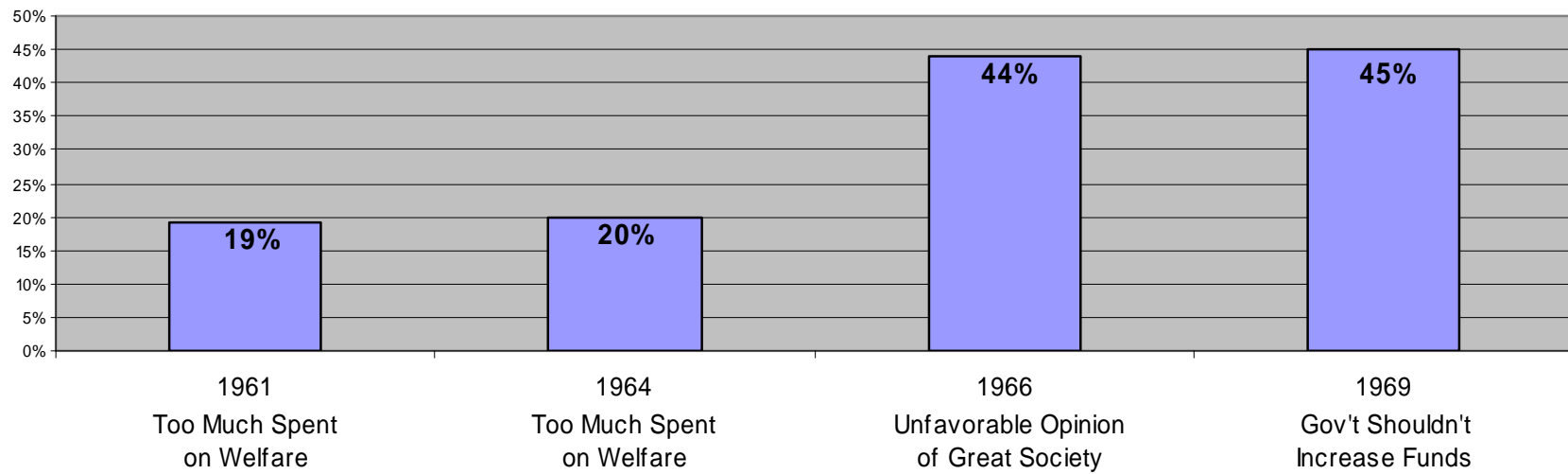


Figure 6

% of Respondents with Negative Opinion of Welfare



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