State Political Culture and TANF:
A Case Study of Pennsylvania and Fifty State Analysis

Dissertation Proposal
Stephen K. Camp-Landis
Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service
New York University

Not for quotation or citation
Introduction

As a result of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996, states are responsible for a variety of important decisions about welfare policy and its implementation. Under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, created by PRWORA, states receive a block grant from the federal government that they can use to provide cash assistance and other services to low-income families. States are required to ensure that a certain percentage of the TANF caseload engages in work or other work preparation activities, and to impose a five-year lifetime limit on the receipt of federally-funded TANF cash assistance for individual recipients.

Most states have significantly changed their welfare programs since 1996 in response to PRWORA, placing increasing emphasis on work requirements for program participants, backed up by sanctions for non-compliance. States have developed a range of strategies designed to reduce welfare reliance and increase economic self sufficiency. These strategies have included diversion programs to prevent families from entering welfare, increased work incentives through earned income disregards and state earned income tax credits, and new employment and training programs. While the stated goals of welfare reform in the post-PRWORA era are similar across states, the specific strategies states have chosen vary considerably. States vary in the generosity of work incentives provided through the TANF benefit formula, earned income tax credits, and work support programs such as subsidized child care. The length of time limits on eligibility varies across states as well, with some states adopting limits considerably shorter than the 60 month limit on federally-funded cash assistance. The extent of work enforcement also varies across the country. The all-families work participation rate reported by states to the US
Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) in fiscal year 2002 ranged from 8 percent to 82 percent (US DHHS 2004, A-249).

Research on the impact of specific TANF policy choices suggests that state level policy variation matters. The manner in which welfare work requirement and work incentive policies are designed has a significant impact on work effort and income (Blank 2002). For this reason, it is important to understand the political forces that determine state policy choices and implementation under the TANF program. In addition, the variation in state TANF policies provides an important opportunity to gain insight into state political processes.

This study is addressed to the following research question: How do state socioeconomic and political characteristics influence TANF policy and implementation? I propose to address this question through two research methods. First, I will conduct a case study of the TANF policy and implementation process in Pennsylvania. Second, I will develop quantitative models of state TANF policy and implementation based on data for all states. These two methods will complement each other. The quantitative model will be designed to test general hypotheses about the determinants of TANF policy and implementation across all states. The case study will test specific hypotheses about the determinants of TANF policy and implementation in Pennsylvania.
The state politics literature provides a context for consideration of the determinants of state TANF policy and implementation characteristics. As described by Brace and Jewett (1995), that literature, as it has developed over the past four decades, has assessed the influence of political institutions and behavior, socioeconomic characteristics, and interstate economic competition on state policy outcomes. The literature has focused particularly on explaining welfare policy variation across states. The research on the determinants of state AFDC policy variation provides a useful starting point for considering the politics of state TANF policy.

State Politics Research

The research on the determinants of AFDC policy has concluded that a wide range of political and economic factors are influential in determining benefit levels. The literature is predominantly based on statistical analysis of the 50 states. The studies have statistical power but lack a field dimension that can provide insight into the mechanisms that produce the relationships observed at the macrolevel.

Rodney E. Hero, in reviewing the state politics literature, notes that there are several general approaches to explaining state policy: approaches that focus on political institutions, such as partisan control, interest groups and governmental capacity; approaches that stress the economic context of states and fiscal competition; and approaches that stress the “broader political context” of state politics, which includes political culture and public opinion or ideology. (Hero 1998, 26-37) Hero’s own approach to understanding state politics focuses on another factor, racial and ethnic diversity.
Quantitative research on the determinants of state welfare policy considers a broad range of potential explanatory variables that are consistent with the approaches described by Hero (Tweedie 1994, Howard 1999, Lieberman and Shaw 2000, Zylan and Soule 2000). These studies generally find that socioeconomic variables, such as per capita income and state fiscal conditions, are more important than political variables in the explanation of state welfare policy.

The case study literature on state welfare policymaking both before and after PRWORA, unlike the quantitative literature, suggests that political factors are more significant than socioeconomic factors in determining welfare policies. Norris and Thompson (1995a) find that electoral incentives, political leadership, and ideology played a major role in state welfare reform decisions in the early 1990s. TANF implementation case studies in Liebschutz (2000a) and Weissett (2000a) suggest that political leadership, culture, state ideology, and institutional capacity played a key role in determining the approach states took to welfare reform under TANF. Winston (2002) finds that interest group representation and political ideology were important in state welfare reform in the 1990s. Mead (2004a) finds that political culture in Wisconsin was the fundamental source of that state’s welfare policy innovation, because it contributed to the state’s governmental capacity to make and implement work-based reforms. These studies collectively suggest that the story of state welfare reform in the 1990s, both before and after PRWORA, was primarily a political story. The values of elected officials, partisanship, public opinion, political culture, and bureaucratic capacity were the primary drivers of policy choice and implementation, while state economic and fiscal conditions played a secondary role.
Political Culture

Elazar (1984) argues for the importance of state political culture for state political institutions, behavior and policy outcomes. He defines political culture as “the particular pattern of orientation to political action in which each political system is embedded.” (109) According to Elazar, there exist three political subcultures in the United States, and states can be categorized in terms of their dominant subculture. In the moralistic subculture, politics is oriented to the pursuit of the public interest, and is believed to be an appropriate area for concern and participation by all citizens. There is a generally positive view of politics and low tolerance for corruption. The individualistic subculture “emphasizes the conception of the democratic order as a marketplace.” (115) Private concerns are central, and government action is considered most appropriately directed to promoting the functioning of the marketplace, and private initiative. Party loyalty is important. Political conflict is partisan conflict, not conflict over ideas or issues. Politics is conceived negatively by the general public, and a degree of political corruption is expected and tolerated. In the traditionalistic subculture, the role of government is to maintain the existing, hierarchical social order. Political power is concentrated in the hands of an elite determined by social class and family ties. Citizens generally are not expected to play a role in government. Political conflict generally occurs between factions within a single political party. (114-122)

Empirical research has suggested that Elazar’s categorization of political culture is related to numerous aspects of state politics and policy. Fitzpatrick and Hero (1988) found that many of the predictions of the Elazar (1984) political culture theory were confirmed statistically. After controlling for affluence, industrialization, population, and urbanization, moralistic states were found to be more innovative, to have greater party competition, more policy relevant
competition, and greater use of civil service systems than individualistic and traditionalistic states.

The potential for Elazar’s political culture perspective to explain state welfare policy making is suggested by Mead (2004a), a case study of welfare reform in Wisconsin. Mead found that the moralistic political culture in the state contributed to two forms of “governmental excellence” – elected officials that were focused on seeking a solution to the problem of welfare that was in the public interest, and a highly competent and creative bureaucracy that was capable of effectively implementing complex policies. These two forms of governmental excellence were essential to Wisconsin’s ability to enact and implement a complex but effective welfare reform policy based on work requirements for cash assistance recipients and generous work supports, including subsidized child care, for all low-income workers. The Wisconsin story suggests that political culture is very important for explaining welfare policy, because culture determines the ability of legislative bodies to craft coherent welfare policies and the ability of bureaucracies to implement the kind of complex policies that are required to reform the welfare system.

Mead (2004b) finds a significant relationship between Elazar’s moralistic political culture and welfare reform performance under TANF across case studies of 24 states, after controlling for ideology, revenues and personal income per capita, minority population, and government capacity. His definition of performance is process-oriented, focusing on the policymaking process, sufficiency of resources, commitment of administrators, and bureaucratic coordination and capacity. Mead argues that these results understate the importance of political culture because the other independent variables in his model -- revenues per capita and measures of government quality -- are likely to be, in part, the product of culture.
Political culture, therefore, is potentially a powerful explainer of state TANF policy and implementation. Government capacity is important as well, but Mead’s argument suggests that government capacity is generally a reflection of political culture, so culture is the more fundamental explanatory variable.

Consistent with Elazar’s theory and Mead’s findings, case studies of state TANF policymaking generally suggest that policymaking in moralistic states was marked by greater consensus at the legislative level and smoother implementation at the administrative level. Luce (2000) describes a TANF policy making process in Minnesota that was fairly consensual, and consistent with the moralistic political culture. “Considering the historical nature of the reforms, the debate in the legislature and public forums was remarkably free of controversy, and passage of the bill was remarkably rapid. The legislature and the governor agreed on the major stated objective—greater emphasis on moving people from welfare to work in a way that would decrease poverty but that would not break the bank.” (123)

The process of enacting welfare reform legislation in individualistic New York State, by contrast, was not consensual: “After protracted negotiations involving well-organized interest groups with their own varying agendas for both continuity and departure, the New York State Welfare Reform Act was adopted in August 1997…” (Liebschutz 2000c, 58) Crew and Davis (2000) describe serious TANF implementation problems in traditionalistic Florida, problems that suggest a low level of bureaucratic capacity, which is consistent with the Elazar theory.

Additional evidence for the importance of political culture is found in the fact that the most significant and earliest welfare reform projects were generally undertaken in moralistic states. California’s GAIN program, the Portland, Oregon Welfare-to-Work Program, Minnesota’s MFIP program, and the Wisconsin welfare reforms of the 1980s and 1990s were all
among the most significant welfare reform initiatives in the nation, and all took place in moralistic states (Mead 2004a, 219-21).

Meyers, Gornick and Peck (2001) find that the U.S. states cluster into five identifiable groups on the basis of policies supporting low-income children. These groups differ in terms of overall financial support, efforts to enforce “private responsibility” through child support enforcement and welfare work requirements, and efforts to reduce tax burdens on low-income families. The traditionalistic states according to Elazar’s classification generally provide the lowest financial support levels, do not significantly reduce tax burdens for the poor, and make modest efforts to enforce child support and implement welfare work requirements. This finding is consistent with the Elazar theory of the traditionalistic culture. Low support levels and limited tax relief for the poor can be explained in terms of the traditionalistic view that government exists to preserve the existing social order. Low enforcement of child support and work requirements in traditionalistic states is likely to reflect limited bureaucratic capacity, not tolerant social values. While the Meyers et al. classification does not clearly distinguish between Elazar’s individualistic and moralistic states, their results do suggest a link between state policy choices affecting low-income families and the Elazar culture categories.

While Elazar’s categorization of state political culture appears to be powerful, Almond and Verba (1963) and Putnam (1993) suggest another way to classify political culture. Putnam (1993) found that regional government performance in Italy is highly correlated with measures of regional political culture. He measures political culture in terms of the degree to which it is “civic.” His concept of civic culture includes four distinct elements. The first is “civic engagement,” or a tendency of citizens to engage in public affairs in pursuit of an enlightened self-interest that takes into account the interest of the community. The second is “political
equality,” or a tendency for citizens to relate to each other as equals and be bound by “horizontal” relations of cooperation rather than “vertical” relations of dominance and dependency. The third is “solidarity, trust, and tolerance,” or a tendency of citizens to be respectful, tolerant, and helpful to each other, and to exhibit a high degree of interpersonal trust. The fourth is “social structures of cooperation,” or the existence within society of many associations that provide opportunities for cooperative action. (86-91)

Putnam’s definition of the civic culture appears to be a mixture of the best elements of Elazar’s moralistic and individualistic cultures. If Putnam is correct that his concept of a civic culture is most closely related to government performance, then it may be that measures of civic culture for the American states might be closely related to TANF policy.

Almond and Verba (1963) provide another conceptualization of the “civic” political culture, which also suggests that civic culture may combine elements of what Elazar termed moralistic and individualistic culture. Almond and Verba argue that citizens in the civic culture combine three basic orientations – the “parochial,” the “subject,” and the “participant” orientation. The parochial orientation is orientation toward private life. Subject orientation is a tendency to accept and adhere to the decisions of government and defer to authority. Participant orientation is marked by a desire to participate in the political process and have an impact on public policy. Citizens in civic cultures achieve a balance between these three orientations.

An alternative way of conceptualizing political culture in the states, therefore, may be the degree to which the culture is civic. Rice and Sumberg (1997) develop a measure of state civic culture, based on Putnam’s concept. They find that civic culture is highly correlated with the Elazar typology of political culture, with the moralistic states the most civic and the traditionalistic states the least. They also find that civic culture is positively correlated with a
measure of state government performance. Their measure of performance is based on indicators of policy liberalism, innovation, and administrative effectiveness.

In exploring the relationship between political culture and TANF policy, it will be important to consider both Elazar’s and Putnam’s conceptualizations of political culture. Each concept may have something to contribute to an understanding of the relationship between state political culture and TANF.

**Ideology**

Another factor likely to be important in state TANF policy decisions is ideology. There is considerable evidence that the ideology of state residents is a determinant of state level public policy. Erikson, Wright, and McIver (1993) find a strong correlation between the mean ideological identification of state residents and an index of state “policy liberalism.” Two of the eight components of this index relate to welfare: the scope of AFDC eligibility as measured by Hanson (1983), and the scope of Medicaid eligibility as measured by Hanson (1984). Another key finding of the Erikson et al. research is that citizen ideology has a greater influence than per capita income on state education and welfare spending over most of the 1940-1990 period. Erikson et al. suggest that the reason that past research has found that state economic conditions are such strong predictors of state spending is that prior research has not incorporated the impact of state public opinion. (239) They conclude: “We see public opinion in much the same way as V. O. Key (1961, chap. 21) when he wrote about public preferences forming ‘opinion dikes’ within which activists and elected officials may act. Public opinion…sets the boundaries that rational politicians seek to learn and then heed…We assert that public opinion does have a strong influence on general patterns of state policy….” (252)
Gray (2004) also finds a high correlation between state public opinion liberalism and policy liberalism, based on more recent data covering the period from 1995 to 2001. Her index of policy liberalism is based on separate policy measures related to gun laws, abortion, TANF, tax progressivity, and unionization laws. Her index of public opinion liberalism is an updated measure based on the measures used in Erikson et al. (1993).

The findings of Erikson et al. (1993) and Gray (2004) suggest that the ideology of state residents is likely to influence state policy in general, and welfare policy in particular. Case study and quantitative research on welfare policy is consistent with this expectation. Norris and Thompson (1995) found that ideology played an important role in state welfare policy making in the early 1990s. Soss et al. (2001) found that the liberalism of state government as measured by Berry et al. (1998) was a strong negative predictor of an index of TANF policy “stringency.” Gais and Weaver (2002) found that conservative states were more likely to impose strong sanctions, short time limits and immediate work activity requirements under TANF. Winston (2002) found that a dominant conservative ideology in Texas had a powerful influence on welfare policy choices in the 1990s.

The analysis of Erikson et al. and Elazar’s conceptualization of political culture suggest that state ideology and political culture are distinct elements of the state political context. Ideology, which reflects substantive views about public policy, is likely to impact public policy directly, through the electoral incentives it creates for public officials. Elazar’s political culture, because it reflects more generalized citizen values about government and politics, is more likely to affect the nature of government institutions and the process by which citizen preferences get translated into public policy. Based on their model of the causal path linking citizen ideology to policy outcomes via political institutions, Erikson et al. find that political culture does
significantly affect the way political institutions operate to represent citizen preferences. In moralistic states, political parties adopt distinct ideological positions and pursue policies consistent with those positions, a role consistent with the “responsible parties” model. In individualistic states, parties behave in a manner more consistent with the model of Downs (1957). In this model, the primary motivation of parties is to win elections, and parties are more likely to take moderate positions that are closer to the median voter’s position (Erikson et al. 1993, 173-75).

Erikson et al. find that policy is least responsive to citizen ideology in the traditionalistic states, and most responsive in the individualistic states. Citizen preferences are relatively well represented in policy in the moralistic and individualistic states, but the means of representation differs in the two cultures. In the moralistic states, citizen ideology affects policy by affecting the partisan composition of the legislature, while in individualistic states, ideology is translated into policy because pragmatic politicians adopt policies that are responsive to citizen ideology. According to Erikson et al.:

Our results offer strong support...for Elazar’s formulation...[P]erhaps Elazar’s categories should be considered as the defining characteristics of different styles of representation...Perhaps it took no great insight to classify the southern states and some of their neighbors as traditionalistic states where cultural expectations enhance the insulation of the political elites from their masses. More remarkable is how the distinction between the moralistic and individualistic states separates two different modes of representation. The individualistic states present the archetypical models of Downsian pragmatic politics...Moralistic states present an important variation, where party positions are more distinct and offer greater prediction of what politicians do in office...[Elazar’s] classifications enable the spotlight to be pointed at different states with real variation in how the game of politics is played. (175-76)

The findings of Erikson et al. suggest that political culture is likely to have an impact on public policy and implementation primarily through the way it affects the operation of political
institutions, particularly political parties. Ideology should have a direct impact on the content of public policy, but the way that citizen ideology is translated into policy will be influenced by political culture.

Erikson et al. also suggest that political culture as defined by Elazar is largely independent of the mean ideological position of state residents. They regress individual ideological and partisan identification on individual education, income, age, race, religion, gender, and urban character of residence. They also include the state of residence as an independent term. The coefficients on the dummy variables for each state represent the impact of state of residence on individual level ideology and partisanship. These coefficients are interpreted as the state level “cultural” influence on individual ideology and partisan identification.

Interestingly, this state effect on citizen ideology and partisanship is not highly correlated with state political culture as categorized by Elazar. Traditionalistic states generally do have conservative fixed effects on citizen ideology. However, once the traditionalistic states are set aside, there is essentially no correlation between the state fixed effects on ideology and Elazar’s political culture classification. For instance, North Dakota and Utah, both moralistic states in Elazar’s terms, had among the most conservative fixed effects on citizen ideology, while Michigan, Oregon and Vermont, also moralistic states, had among the most liberal fixed effects. Erikson et al. conclude, “while Elazar’s classification has considerable appeal as a taxonomy of elite subculture…his scheme is by no means a surrogate for state effects on partisanship and ideology.” (69) This finding suggests that political culture as classified by Elazar is distinct from state ideology along the liberal-conservative continuum.
Party Control and Competition

Research suggests that the partisan control and electoral competition influence welfare policy in the states. “Partisan control” is generally understood as the extent to which one of the two major parties controls the executive or legislative branches. “Electoral competition” is generally understood as the extent to which the dominant party’s control of state government is contested by the minority party. Electoral competition has been measured in two ways: at an aggregate level or at the level of individual legislative districts. At the aggregate level, competition can be measured in terms of the difference between the number of majority party and minority party seats in the legislature, or the extent to which partisan control of the legislature or governor’s office changes over time. At the level of individual legislative districts within a state, electoral competition can be measured in terms of the average margin of victory or winning percentage of votes.

Party control and electoral competition have been measured in several ways in the literature. Ranney (1976) developed an index of the overall degree of Democratic control of state government based on votes for governor, seats occupied in the legislature, and control of the governor’s office and each house of the legislature. This index can be utilized to calculate an index of aggregate electoral competition within the state. This “folded” Ranney index ranges from 0.5, which represents total control by one party, to 1.0, which represents “perfect” competition or evenly divided partisan control (Bibby and Holbrook 2004, 86-89).

Holbrook and Van Dunk (1993) developed a measure of state electoral competition at the level of individual legislative districts. Their original index was based on “district-level state legislative election outcomes from 1982 to 1986.” (Bibby and Holbrook 2004, 90)
Klarner (2003) cites the importance of measurement for determining the influence of state partisan control on public policy. He notes that measures of state partisan control vary across studies, and suggests that the measurement of this construct should be improved and standardized. He develops new measures of the proportion of Democratic legislators, and Democratic control of the legislature and the governor’s office, which he argues are more accurate than existing measures. In a model of the determinants of AFDC benefits, he finds that different measures of partisan control produce different results, suggesting the importance of accurate measurement of this variable in research on welfare policy determinants.

Generally, the data suggest that more liberal public policies are associated with higher degrees of party competition (Bibby and Holbrook 2004, 91). The Holbrook and Van Dunk (1993) measure of partisan competition was found to be a “better predictor of policy choices in the states than the Ranney index…” (Brace and Jewett 1995, 650) The relationship between political competition and welfare policy is consistent with the thesis originally advanced by Key (1949) that “competition induces both parties to pursue more liberal public policies as they try to capture the votes of the ‘have nots.’” (Barrilleaux et al. 2002, 416)

Barrilleaux et al. (2002) found that partisan control and electoral competition are each relevant to understanding the influence of electoral politics on welfare policy. They measure electoral competition at the level of individual legislative districts, in a manner similar to Holbrook and Van Dunk (1993), and their measure of partisan control is the percentage of legislative seats occupied by Democrats. They find that party control in the state legislature has relatively little impact on welfare spending in states with low levels of electoral competition, while partisan control has a greater impact on redistributive spending in states where local legislative seats are highly contested.
Brown (1995) also found that partisan control of state government affects welfare spending levels, but that the impact of partisan control varies systematically across states. AFDC spending levels were found to be positively associated with the degree of Democratic party control of state government. However, the effect of party on welfare spending was greatest in states where partisan divisions are reflective of class divisions within society. In states where the coalitional base of each major party was primarily determined by economic class, partisan control was found to have the greatest impact on AFDC spending levels.

The research on the determinants of TANF policy has examined the impact of either overall partisan control or statewide electoral competition on different aspects of TANF policy. Soss et al. (2001) found that statewide interparty competition and the ideology of officeholders influenced the severity of sanctions under TANF. Gais and Weaver (2002) found that the percentage of Republican state legislators was significantly related to sanction severity. Fellowes and Rowe (2004) found that more liberal officeholders and the percent of legislative seats occupied by Democrats are positively associated with less restrictive eligibility rules and more flexible work requirements.

As is the case with other political determinants of policy, there is reason to expect a relationship between political culture and the impact of partisan control and electoral competition on welfare policy choices. According to Elazar’s (1984) conception, the role of political parties varies significantly across the three subcultures. In the individualistic culture, parties serve to coordinate the activity of individual political entrepreneurs. Party loyalty is valued because it is “one way of preventing individualism in politics from running wild.” (116) Partisan competition is oriented toward electoral success rather than implementation of programmatic goals. In the moralistic culture, partisan loyalty is less important because officeholders are expected to pursue
public service goals “even at the expense of individual loyalties and political friendships.” (117-118) Partisan competition is oriented toward the achievement of particular policy goals. In the traditionalistic culture, political parties are relatively unimportant “because they encourage a degree of openness that goes against the fundamental grain of an elite-oriented political order.” (119) Political competition generally occurs between different factions within a single party.

Findings from Brown (1995) and Barrilleaux et al. (2002) on the impact of party control and electoral competition on welfare spending appear consistent with Elazar’s concept of the role of political parties in each subculture. Because of the strong issue orientation of moralistic politics, one would expect partisan control to have the greatest influence on welfare policy in moralistic states. Brown (1995) finds that the relationship between partisan control and welfare spending is strongest in the 19 states in which party affiliation is determined primarily by economic class characteristics. Of these states, which he classifies as having “New Deal” partisan “cleavage structure,” 13 have subcultures that Elazar (1984) classified as purely or dominantly moralistic.

Southern states generally have lower levels of electoral competition (Bibby and Holbrook 2004, 91). The research of Barrilleaux et al. (2002) suggests that in these states, the relationship between party strength and welfare policy is likely to be relatively weak, which would be consistent with the Elazar view that political parties are less important in states characterized by the traditionalistic subculture.

Government Capacity

The capacity of state government – at both the legislative and administrative level – is also likely to be an important factor in welfare policymaking under PRWORA. I adopt the
definition of state government capacity in Bowman and Kearney (1988): “institutional arrangements that make the state executive and legislative branches capable of carrying out” three activities. These activities are “(1) to respond effectively to change; (2) to make decisions efficiently, effectively (i.e., rationally) and responsively; and (3) to manage conflict.” (343)

There is considerable evidence that governmental capacity has an important influence on welfare reform policy and implementation. Mead (2004a) finds that governmental capacity was an important factor in Wisconsin’s welfare reform leadership. Winston (2002), based on a review of welfare policymaking in Maryland, Texas, and North Dakota in the mid-1990s, concludes that the professionalism of state legislatures plays an important role in state welfare policymaking. She argues that in less professionalized state legislatures, where legislative sessions are limited and salaries are low, there is generally little policy expertise and little capacity to make informed decisions. These states are less likely to make effective welfare policy.

To assess the importance of government capacity for policy outcomes empirically, one challenge that must be addressed is developing valid measures of government capacity. Based on factor analysis of state level data, Bowman and Kearney (1988) argue that there are four key dimensions of government capacity: staffing and spending of the legislature and the Governor’s office, accountability and information management, centralization of executive power in the Governor’s office, and the representativeness of the legislature. Their analysis suggests that government capacity cannot be captured with a single quantitative measure, or even multiple measures. However, to the extent that valid measures of institutional capacity can be developed, they should add to the explanatory power of models of state TANF choices.

Other studies suggest that political culture has a substantial influence on government performance by itself, either directly or because of the ways it conditions the institutions.
Putnam et al. (1993) found that local political culture in Italy had a significant impact on the performance of new regional governments created in the 1970s. Regional governments in northern region, where a civic culture was predominant, were more effective and better served citizen needs compared to the same institutions in the south of Italy. Putnam et al. conclude that “[s]ocial context and history profoundly condition the effectiveness of institutions.” (182) Rice and Sumberg (1997) find a similar relationship between political culture and government performance in the United States. They find a correlation between an index of civic culture and government performance in the U. S. states. Mead (2004a) finds a strong relationship between state political culture and performance in the specific domain of welfare reform. He finds that states classified as moralistic by Elazar were more successful at reforming welfare, because the culture of the moralistic states supports generous aid combined with behavioral conditions. These studies all suggest that subnational political culture and government performance are linked. The linkage may be direct, or through the mediating influence of governmental institutions.

The capacity of states to implement TANF policy may be particularly affected by the level of prior experience with welfare reform. Welfare reform initiatives enacted prior to 1996 under DHHS waivers or the JOBS program were key building blocks that enabled Midwestern states to effectively implement TANF policies after 1996. Previous reform initiatives not only increased the capacity of the bureaucracy but also reduced political opposition to reform because they provided evidence on the likely effects of reform (Weissert 2000c). At the time of enactment of PRWORA, there were major differences across states in the degree of prior experience with welfare reform. The moralistic states had much the most experience, due to
their leadership in the development of reform. These differences are likely to affect TANF policy making and implementation.

*Interest Groups*

The case study literature indicates that state interest group activity plays an important role in TANF policy and implementation. Francis (1999), in a study of welfare reform in the six New England states, finds that liberal advocacy groups in four of the six states had a significant impact on the implementation of TANF policy by influencing decisions made by senior welfare administrators. Winston (2002) argues that the strength of interest groups at the state level had an important influence on state welfare policy in the mid-1990s. Based on a comparison of the federal policy making process that culminated in PRWORA, and welfare reform processes in three states, she concludes that low-income groups were generally less well represented in the legislative process at the state level than at the national level. She suggests that the lack of representation of low-income families at the state level is an argument against devolution of welfare policy making authority to the states.

Based on surveys of state public officials conducted since the mid-1980s, Clive Thomas and Ronald Hrebenar have assessed the power of particular interest groups at the state level, and the overall influence of interest groups on state political systems (Thomas and Hrebenar 2004). They find that business, labor, and professional groups have consistently been the most powerful interest groups in the states since the 1980s, and that there has been a general movement toward more powerful state interest group systems overall.

State political culture could affect the overall strength of interest groups and the way they operate to influence public policy, although there is no widespread agreement among scholars
about the influence of political culture on interest group systems (Thomas and Hrebenar 2004, 107). There appears to be an association between political culture and overall interest group strength. All but one of the states classified as traditionalistic in Elazar (1984) are included in Thomas and Hrebenar’s “dominant” and “dominant/complementary” categories of overall interest group influence, the two categories of highest influence (122).

Variation across states in the extent to which low-income families are represented effectively by interest groups, as well as the overall strength of interest groups, is likely to influence TANF policy and implementation. The importance of interest groups in determining TANF policy and implementation outcomes, as well as the strategies groups use to affect TANF decisions, could vary across states depending on political culture and other characteristics of the political system.

_Social Diversity_

Other research suggests that racial and ethnic diversity is a pervasive influence on state level political processes, institutions and policy. Hero (1998) and Hero and Tolbert (1996) suggest that many of the differences between states that Elazar (1984) attributes to culture are in fact the product of differences in the racial and ethnic composition of state populations. Hero develops a measure of minority diversity based on the percentage of the state population that is black, Latino, or Asian, and a measure of ethnic diversity based on the percentage of the white population made up of particular ethnic groups, particularly southern and eastern European groups. Based on these measures, states fall roughly into three groups: homogeneous states with low minority and ethnic diversity, heterogeneous states with high ethnic diversity and moderate minority diversity, and bifurcated states with high minority and low ethnic diversity. These
groups correspond, respectively, to Elazar’s moralistic, individualistic, and traditionalistic categories to a considerable extent.

Hero argues that many of the qualitative features of political culture described by Elazar can be explained by the differing levels of minority and ethnic diversity in the three groups of states. Hero suggests the commonwealth orientation of the moralistic subculture reflects a broad agreement about policy goals that is made possible by a relatively homogenous population. In moralistic states, issues can be more openly debated because of this agreement about fundamental goals, with the focus of debate on how to achieve them. “In homogeneous contexts, core values are shared, although intense debate may occur about interpretations and applications of values. But because the stakes are not as vivid or as redistributive in racial/ethnic terms, the nature of the discussion is different and appears more oriented to the commonwealth.” (16)

While Hero’s argument can be interpreted as a challenge to Elazar’s theory, I believe Hero’s findings are not inconsistent with Elazar. The basis of political culture in Elazar (1970) is the history of migration of different racial and ethnic groups across the country, each with their distinctive historical experience and values, and their interaction as they formed political communities. The strong relationship between Hero’s measures of diversity and Elazar’s cultural classification does not imply that state political cultures are a response to race or ethnicity per se. Arguably, the correlation between diversity and culture can more plausibly be interpreted as evidence that state political culture is rooted in the distinct values of social groups. This interpretation is consistent with Patterson (1968), who argues that differences in state political cultures reflect group differences in education, race, ethnicity, religion, and class, economic forces such as urbanization, affluence, and economic growth, and historical patterns of settlement.
Additional evidence that the Elazar political cultures are independent of race and ethnicity is provided in Fischer (1989), who argues that the distinct cultures carried by four waves of British migration to America in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries determined regional cultural patterns that endure to this day. As described by Fischer, the cultural values of two of these emigrant groups, the Massachusetts Puritans and the Delaware Valley Quakers, were, respectively, congruent with the values that characterize the moralistic and individualistic political cultures of Elazar. The cultural values of another group of British emigrants, the cavaliers who settled Virginia, closely correspond to the values of Elazar’s traditionalistic culture. Fischer also describes the culture of a fourth wave of British emigrants, the Scotch-Irish who left north Britain in the eighteenth century and settled in Appalachia. Their cultural values appear consistent with the individualistic culture of Elazar. Fischer’s history suggests that the essential elements of the three Elazar cultures had already formed by the later eighteenth century, prior to the advent of race as major issue in state or national politics.

Baltzell (1979) also suggests that regional culture patterns predate the establishment of current patterns of racial and ethnic diversity. Baltzell contrasts the value systems of the early settlers of Boston and Philadelphia, and their influence on the political and social development of Massachusetts and Pennsylvania. The sense of authoritarianism and responsibility for public service of Boston’s Puritan elites contrasted strongly with the egalitarianism and private orientation of Philadelphia’s Quakers, and this difference had significant consequences for government. Baltzell’s account suggests that much of the difference between Elazar’s moralistic and individualistic cultures has its roots in the different orientation of early elite groups, an orientation which has persisted over centuries. Baltzell’s findings on the importance and
persistence of regional cultures are consistent with Fischer’s account of regional culture and Elazar’s political culture theory.

Research suggests that racial minorities have been disproportionately impacted by TANF policies. There is little evidence that this disparate impact is the result of anti-black sentiment in the making or implementation of TANF policy. The more likely explanation appears to be that minority TANF recipients tend to live in states with more stringent TANF policies, including stricter sanctions and work requirements, shorter time limits, and family caps (Fineberg and Staveteig 2002). However, this does not imply that state policy is driven by racial considerations. The largest concentrations of minority welfare recipients are found in traditionalistic states, and these states appear likely to have adopted some of the strictest TANF policies with respect to sanctions, time limits, and family caps. These decisions could reflect the traditionalistic political culture of those states, rather than their racial composition.

A number of studies do suggest that race is an important factor in determining welfare or TANF policies. Zylan and Soule (2000) found that the likelihood of a state adopting a welfare waiver between 1989 and 1995 was higher in states with a high minority population, Republican political control, high unionization, high average AFDC payments, high AFDC recipients per capita, and financial stress. However, their models do not control for political culture, so they cannot be taken as evidence that culture is not important. Soss et al. (2001) found that the percentage of the TANF caseload that is African-American and Latino is a significant predictor of TANF time limit and family cap policies, and that the percentage of the caseload that is African-American is a significant predictor of the severity of sanctions under TANF. Again, however, the significant effects of race found by Soss et al. could be due to the fact that their models do not control for political culture. In the quantitative research I propose below, I will
assess Zylan and Soule and Soss et al.’s conclusion that race is an important determinant of welfare policy by including political culture as an independent variable along with race and ethnicity.

**Economic and Fiscal Context**

According to Gray (2004), socioeconomic characteristics of states play an important role in structuring the nature of the problems faced by state government and the policy response to those problems. These characteristics include “population size and composition, migration and urbanization, physical characteristics and natural resources, types of economic activities stemming from a state’s physical endowments, wealth, and regional economic forces.” (6) Hence, any analysis of state policy choice should consider the socioeconomic background of states and its influence on the political process.

Economic characteristics of states are likely to have an important independent impact on state welfare policy for two reasons. First, following the model outlined in Orr (1976), economic conditions – including income levels and poverty rates -- are likely to influence the price or “tax cost” of redistribution facing a state’s voters, and the price of redistribution is likely to affect the level of redistribution desired by state voters. Second, states exist within a competitive economic environment where relative tax levels and welfare benefits could influence location decisions of firms and households. Economic competition with neighboring states in particular, and other states in general, for mobile firms and households could motivate policymakers to maintain welfare policies that are consistent with those in other states.

Financial conditions of states are likely to influence welfare policy decisions as well, at least in the short term. State elected officials are likely to be judged by voters based on short
term financial performance and tax policy. Therefore, the budgetary conditions a state faces at any given time is likely to influence welfare policy decisions to the extent they have financial implications.

Plotnick and Winters (1985) find support for a “politico-economic” model of state welfare policy in which individual tastes for redistribution, as well as characteristics of political institutions, influence the level of welfare benefits. According to their model, welfare benefit levels are influenced by voter tastes for redistribution, as well as the “tax price” of welfare benefits, which is influenced by income levels, the relative size of the poor population, and federal matching of state expenditures. Voter tastes for redistribution are found to be related to recipient characteristics including race, non-marital birth rates, and the density of the poor population. In their model, several political characteristics of states – interparty competition, interest group strength, party control, and ideology – act as mediators between voter preferences and policy outcomes.

Peterson and Rom (1989) provide evidence that the structural context of economic competition between states has an important influence on welfare benefit levels. Using data on welfare benefit levels and economic and political characteristics of states from 1970 to 1985, they find that changes in state welfare benefit levels are negatively related to poverty rates and benefit levels, and positively related to overall tax effort, wealth, partisan competition, and class mobilization. Changes in state poverty rates are positively related to welfare benefit levels and wage levels and negatively related to per capita income.

From these results, Peterson and Rom conclude that high welfare benefit levels attract poor residents to states, while state policy makers set welfare benefits at levels consistent with other states in an effort to avoid attracting poor residents. To a greater degree than at the federal
level, state welfare policymaking is constrained by the spatial mobility of labor and capital. “At the state level public officials must take into account the effects of their policies on increasingly mobile labor and capital markets.” (725)

If welfare policy does have an important impact on the residential location decisions of the poor, as the Peterson and Rom findings suggest, state welfare policymaking is likely to be influenced by two basic, but possibly conflicting, forces. Policymakers face an incentive to maximize state economic growth or property values while also satisfying the redistributive preferences of the median state voter. These objectives may conflict, although the conflict may be lessened to the extent that state economic performance is an important consideration for the median state voter. (Peterson and Rom 1989, 712-713)

Peterson (1995) argues that states face incentives to lower welfare benefits due to the desire to attract labor and capital through lower taxes, and also due to the incentives of the poor to migrate to higher benefit states. The evidence that residential location decisions of low-income families are influenced by welfare benefits is limited, although more recent research suggests that differences in state welfare benefits do have some effect on residential location decisions (Brueckner 2000, Bailey 2005). Other research suggests that state policy makers are sensitive to potential migration effects in setting benefit levels, despite the lack of strong evidence that welfare migration is a significant phenomenon (Schram and Beer 1999, Brueckner 2000). This research leads one to expect that state TANF policymaking could be influenced by a concern to prevent welfare migration and to enhance economic competitiveness by reducing state tax support of welfare programs.

Research also suggests that state financial conditions influence welfare policy. Tweedie (1994) found that state fiscal considerations and political institutions were more important than
the needs of low-income state residents in setting AFDC benefit levels. Case studies of welfare reform in the early 1990s found that state fiscal constraints were important in decision making about General Assistance cutbacks and AFDC reforms (Norris and Thompson, 1995). This research suggests that state financial conditions will play a role in TANF policy making if the state is experiencing fiscal constraints and if TANF policy decisions are seen by policymakers as having a significant impact on costs.

Despite the evidence that fiscal and economic considerations did influence state welfare policy making prior to TANF, fiscal competition appears to have played a limited role in state policy choices in the early years of the TANF program. Because of the fixed block grant, and the rapid caseload decline that began in 1994, most states did not spend all of their available TANF funds. As a result, the shift from a matching to a block grant did not result in the expected race to the bottom (Moffitt 2003). On the other hand, economic conditions may have contributed to TANF policy choices in other ways. Case studies of state welfare reform policymaking suggest that strong state economic conditions increased the willingness of policymakers to impose stringent welfare policies, particularly “work first” oriented policies, in the mid-1990s (Weissert 2000c).

Leadership

There is also evidence that political leadership has an important influence on welfare policy outcomes. Gubernatorial leadership was important for welfare reform in Ohio, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Kansas, and Michigan in the 1990s (Weissert 2000c). In New Jersey, a welfare reform plan passed in 1992 in large part because it was championed by Wayne Bryant, an
African-American Democratic legislator whose district included the state’s poorest city, Camden. Bryant had great credibility and was seen as supporting welfare reform for the right reasons (Goertzel and Hart 1995). However, the influence of political leadership on state welfare policy is likely to be secondary to the state political culture, ideology, and economic conditions. Individual political actors operate within the context of state public opinion, culture, and economic and financial pressures. These forces constrain the actions of political leaders and condition their goals.
I propose to test the hypotheses through two research methods. The first method is a case study of TANF policymaking in Pennsylvania. The second method is a quantitative analysis of the determinants of TANF policy and implementation in the 50 states.

5.1 Rationale for Choice of a Mixed Method Design

In the terminology of Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998), I am proposing a simultaneous, equivalent status, mixed-method design. I will conduct the qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis concurrently, and both methods will be considered equally important in my research design. The qualitative and quantitative research will proceed independently of each other, but they are likely to influence each other in important ways. In particular, the early findings from the qualitative research may influence the quantitative research, and vice versa.

The use of multiple methods to study a single problem has been described as triangulation. According to Jick (1979), “triangulation rests on the premise that the weaknesses in each single method will be compensated by the counter-balancing strengths of the other.” (604) For this study, the case study and the quantitative analysis each have important advantages.

The case study findings will not be generalizable to other states. In contrast, the quantitative research will enable broader generalizations about the political antecedents of TANF policy in all states. At the same time, the quantitative analysis is unlikely to shed much light on the mechanisms by which particular features of state political contexts influence TANF policy and implementation. The case study, however, will provide insight into these mechanisms. The
case study will provide a detailed, rich understanding about the political determinants of TANF in one particular state. It will get inside the “black box” of the TANF policy making process in Pennsylvania.

Another reason to combine the two methods is complementarity. The two methods can be used to examine different aspects of the same phenomenon (Greene et al. 1989). The central research question for both parts of the study is: What features of state political contexts best explain variation in state TANF policy and implementation? The case study will answer the question in the specific context of one state, while the quantitative research will answer the question in a national context.

5.2 Pennsylvania Case Study

Yin (2003) defines a case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context…The case study inquiry copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis.” (13-14) Yin’s definition highlights the fact that for single case designs such as this one, to make reliable inferences about relationships between variables, it is necessarily to rely on multiple sources of evidence.

The case study method is appropriate for this study because it will shed light on the central research question: How do state socioeconomic and political characteristics influence
TANF policy and implementation? The Pennsylvania case study will provide a particularly exact and detailed answer to this question for one particular state.

**Boundaries of the Case**

The case is focused on welfare reform policymaking and implementation in Pennsylvania between 1993 and 2002. Primary emphasis will be on TANF policy and implementation from 1996 to 2002. The case study will also cover the period from 1993 through 1996, when the state made significant changes to its General Assistance (GA) program and modest changes to AFDC. It is important to understand the GA and AFDC reform process that occurred in the state from 1993 through 1996, because this process set the stage for TANF policymaking from 1996 to 2002. I have decided to consider events only through the end of 2002, which corresponds with the end of Governor Mark Schweiker’s term.

**Rationale for the Selection of the Case**

Cresswell and Maietta (2002) describe two rationales for selection of a case. “Intrinsic” cases are chosen “because they are unusual and have merit in and of themselves,” while “instrumental” cases are selected because they serve to illustrate a particular issue. (Cresswell and Maietta 2002, 162). Pennsylvania as a case meets both these selection criteria. As explained below, Pennsylvania is intrinsically important because of its size and limited prior research on welfare reform in the state. Further, because Pennsylvania appears to be a relatively pure case of an individualistic political culture as described in Elazar (1984), it is expected that it will be useful as way to illuminate the influence of political culture on TANF policymaking.
Pennsylvania is an intrinsically important case because it is a major state where there has been little prior research on welfare reform. The state ranked fourth in the nation in the number of TANF recipients in fiscal year 2002 (DHHS 2004, A-220-221). Yet Pennsylvania was not included among the case studies done by the two major projects on TANF implementation, the Urban Institute’s Assessing the New Federalism project and the State Capacity Study of the Rockefeller Institute of Government at the State University of New York. Pennsylvania has been the subject of some evaluation research, but these studies have been limited in geographic or programmatic scope (Paulsell and Stieglitz 2001, Michalopoulos et al. 2003). These studies, moreover, focused entirely on implementation and outcomes, and did not discuss the politics of policy making and implementation.

The state is also important for the cultural approach to state welfare politics pursued in this dissertation. Pennsylvania was one of only nine states classified in Elazar (1984) simply as an individualistic state, without a secondary influence from the moralistic or traditionalistic culture. (135) Pennsylvania, with its historical origins as a state defined by religious tolerance and ethnic diversity, is arguably an exemplar of the individualistic culture (Fischer 1989). The case study should provide significant insight into the role of the individualistic culture in welfare policymaking.

My Role as Researcher

My role as interviewer and data analyst in the case study will be shaped by my personal experiences. From 1988 to 1998 and from 2003 to 2005, I worked in several local government or public policy analysis positions in Philadelphia. These experiences have shaped the way I think about Pennsylvania politics, particularly as it relates to the City of Philadelphia. Most
importantly, from 1996 to 1998, I worked in the Mayor’s Office of Policy and Planning in Philadelphia. During some of my time there I analyzed welfare issues for the Mayor, and worked directly for a Deputy Mayor who was responsible for coordinating the City’s activities relating to welfare reform.

These experiences enhance my understanding of Pennsylvania political institutions and culture, particularly as it relates to welfare reform, which should improve my ability to gather and interpret data. At the same time, this prior experience also means that I could bring some bias to the study. My experience working in government left me often disappointed with the nature of public debate and the functioning of government institutions in Pennsylvania.

However, I would say that on balance, my past role in the state is an asset. My familiarity and empathy with Pennsylvania is a positive factor that outweighs any bias that may come from personal involvement. In conducting the study, to the greatest extent possible I will seek to maintain objectivity in description and balance in evaluation. As I conduct the research, and as I report it, I will reflect on how my personal biography and perspective shape the data collection, analysis and interpretation. I will discuss the potential influence of my personal perspective on the conclusions, and the possibility for alternative interpretations.

Institutional Review Board Approval

The case study research should qualify for exempt status from full review by the University Committee on Activities Involving Human Subjects (UCAIHS). All elements of the proposed research should qualify for exempt status. Interviews with elected or appointed public officials qualify for exempt status. Interviews with others qualify for exempt status as long as there is neither a risk of harm to subjects nor information sought about sensitive aspects of the
subject’s behavior. I will ensure that there is minimal risk of harm to interviewees who are not public officials by taking steps to maintain the confidentiality of interview records and the interviewee’s identity. Other data sources for the case study are publicly available documents and quantitative data, which qualify as exempt from full review. Finally, I may utilize some private documents and quantitative data. The private quantitative data sources should qualify for exempt status because they will only include de-identified data about aggregate characteristics of populations that will not allow for deductive disclosure of individual characteristics. Any information in private documents concerning individuals will not be utilized as part of the case study research or quoted in any publications.

Data Collection

Data sources for the case study will include interviews, publicly available documents and quantitative data, and private documents and quantitative data. I will utilize the following categories of public documents: newspaper articles; published research; government documents; position papers from advocacy organizations; text of laws and regulations; transcripts of legislative hearings; and testimony presented at legislative hearings. I will seek a broad range of documents that constitute a representative sample of viewpoints on TANF, including the viewpoints of a range of elected officials, administrative personnel, advocates, journalists, and the public. For instance, in reviewing press coverage, I will utilize a computer database of news articles from major Pennsylvania newspapers that represent a range of opinion and provide broad geographic coverage of the state. Existing research on contemporary Pennsylvania politics, and evaluation research on TANF policy and implementation in Pennsylvania, will be particularly useful.
The case study will also utilize publicly available quantitative data on welfare caseloads, characteristics of welfare caseloads, and other socioeconomic data relating to the welfare population or general population of Pennsylvania and other states. This information will be obtained from state and federal agencies.

In addition, I will utilize private documents and quantitative data where this data is helpful to understand the Pennsylvania case. I anticipate that some interviewees may be able to provide unpublished information. Prior to accepting this information, however, I will obtain a letter from the interviewee describing the information being provided, and granting approval for me to utilize the information. Any such letters will be provided to UCAIHS. I will not accept any unpublished information from interviewees who are current employees of the state Department of Public Welfare (DPW). If interviewees who are current DPW employees refer to unpublished information in an interview, and I would like to obtain a copy of that information, I will seek to obtain the information directly from DPW. Again, I will obtain a letter from DPW describing any unpublished information being provided, and granting approval for me to utilize the information. Any such letters will be provided to UCAIHS.

I will conduct interviews with representatives of the following groups: Governors; gubernatorial staff; legislators; legislative staff; DPW employees; employees from other public agencies; employees of private service-providing organizations; and advocates; journalists; and policy experts. Interviews will be mostly face to face, but some telephone interviews are anticipated. Interviews will last at most one hour.

The interviews will be conducted in two waves. The first wave of interviews will be designed to formulate hypotheses about the determinants of TANF policy and implementation in Pennsylvania during the period from 1996 to 2002. Upon completion of the Wave 1 interviews,
I will formulate hypotheses about the determinants of TANF policy and implementation in Pennsylvania. These hypotheses will be generated based on analysis of the Wave 1 interview records and documents. On the basis of the hypotheses, I will develop an interview guide for a second wave of interviews. These interviews will be designed to test the hypotheses. The table below presents the estimated number of interviews in each wave, by type of interviewee.

Table 3: Number of Interviews by Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee Group Number</th>
<th>Interviewee Type</th>
<th>Number of Wave 1 Interviews</th>
<th>Number of Wave 2 Interviews</th>
<th>Total Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Governors</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Gubernatorial staff</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Legislators</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Legislative Staff</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>DPW employees in Harrisburg</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>DPW employees in County Assistance Offices</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Employees of other public agencies</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Employees of private service-providing organizations</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Advocates, journalists, and policy experts</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>31</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following are my criteria for selection of the Wave 1 and Wave 2 interview samples. Interviewees in groups 1 through 8, in their official capacity, will have played a role in the TANF policy-making or implementation process during the period from 1996 to 2002. Interviewees in group 9 will be expected to have significant knowledge of the TANF policy-making or implementation process.
My primary objective is to make valid descriptive inferences about the TANF policy and implementation process in Pennsylvania, and causal inferences about the forces that influenced TANF, not to make inferences about the population from which my interview sample is drawn. Accordingly, my strategy for choosing interviewees will rely on nonprobability sampling methods. Given my research objectives, it is appropriate to choose interviewees who appear most likely to be able to provide information that will address my research questions, based on information available about these individuals from documents and interviews.

For gubernatorial and legislative staff, DPW employees in Harrisburg, and advocates, journalists and policy experts, I will rely on purposive sampling based on documents and interviews. Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) define purposive sampling as follows: “Selection of individuals/groups based on specific questions/purposes of the research in lieu of random sampling and on the basis of information available about these individuals/groups.” (76) In the case of gubernatorial and legislative staff and DPW employees, I will choose individuals who appear to have played a significant role in the TANF policymaking or implementation process, based on evidence from documents and interviews. In the case of advocates, journalists, and policy experts, I will choose individuals most likely to be knowledgeable about the TANF process, but I will also seek a sample that is diverse in terms of location, organizational affiliation, and political ideology.

For state legislators, my method of sample selection will be a combination of purposive sampling and stratified non-random sampling. I will purposively sample legislators who appear, based on documents and interviews, to have played a major role in the process of enacting Act 35, Pennsylvania’s major welfare reform legislation. Then, I will stratify the remaining legislators within each house on the basis of party and district location, and choose a sample
from within each subgroup based on convenience. This will ensure that I interview not only legislators who were major players in the welfare debate, but also a diverse group of more typical legislators.

For DPW employees in the county assistance offices, and employees of other public agencies, I will utilize a two step procedure. I will first choose a purposive sample of five or six “focus” counties that is diverse in terms of demographics, location, and size of the welfare caseload. I will then select interviewees purposively from among the managerial employees within the DPW county assistance offices and other public agencies for each focus county.

DPW has agreed to provide to me a comprehensive list of private organizations that provided services to TANF clients during the early years of the TANF program. I will identify which of these organizations are located within the focus counties, and then choose purposively a group of organizations from each county that is diverse in terms of organizational size and type of service provided. I plan to obtain the names of officials of these organizations using public information.

There are two advantages of interviewing DPW, local government, and service provider officials from a select group of focus counties. First, this will reduce the cost of travel across the state, as interviews will be clustered within compact areas. Second, I will be able to more clearly understand the interrelationships between DPW, local government, and private service providers by focusing on particular local areas.

The details of my interview sampling methods are presented in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee Method of Determining Interview Sample</th>
<th>Interviewee Method of Sample Selection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Table 4: Method of Determining Interview Sample
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Number</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Determining the Universe of Potential Interviewees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Governors</td>
<td>Prior knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Gubernatorial staff</td>
<td>Documents and interviews, state Telephone Directory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Legislators</td>
<td>The Pennsylvania Manual, 1995-1996 edition, will provide a list of legislators in office at the time Pennsylvania’s welfare legislation was enacted in May, 1996.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Legislative Staff</td>
<td>State Telephone Directory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>DPW employees in Harrisburg</td>
<td>State Telephone Directory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>DPW employees in County Assistance Offices</td>
<td>State Telephone Directory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Employees of other public agencies</td>
<td>Documents, interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Employees of private service-providing organizations</td>
<td>A list of private service-providing organizations provided by DPW.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Advocates, journalists, and policy experts</td>
<td>Documents, interviews</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I will contact potential interviewees by US mail. I will obtain the contact information for all interviewees using publicly available information. In cases where I cannot obtain contact information for an interviewee using public information, they will be dropped from the interview.
sample. The initial contact letters will include a uniform statement to subjects, as described in the UCAIHS application.

Wave 1 and 2 interviews will follow an interview guide. I will record responses on a computer, and audio tape the interviews. The primary written record of the interview will be my computer record of the interviewee responses. I will not attempt to transcribe all responses word for word. The tape recordings will allow me to ensure that quotations are accurate and clarify responses that were unclear in my initial written record of the response.

Data Analysis

The goal of the case study research is both descriptive and explanatory. I seek to describe the legislative process that led to Pennsylvania’s welfare reform law, Act 35 of 1996, and the administrative process of implementing that law and the TANF program. I also seek to explain the characteristics of Pennsylvania’s TANF policy and implementation choices in terms of state socioeconomic and political characteristics. My analysis of documents, interview data, and quantitative data, will be designed to achieve the descriptive and the explanatory goals.

Following Rubin and Rubin (1995), I will develop concepts, themes, and an overall interpretation of the textual data that I analyze. Through an iterative process of reading and coding documents, I will develop a scheme of codes to represent important concepts and themes. I will then code all documents and interview records according to a final coding scheme that best fits the textual data as a whole, as I understand it. Sections of text will be grouped according to the coding scheme. I will then compare text within groups to develop the meaning of concepts and themes, and compare text across groups to develop relationships across concepts and themes.
These relationships should build to an overall interpretation of the text that relates the various concepts and themes to each other.

Some codes will relate to the descriptive goal of the research. For instance, I may develop codes for specific events, dates, and names. This will assist in developing a chronology of events and a narrative of the story of welfare reform in Pennsylvania. Other codes will relate to the explanatory goal of the research. These codes will generally represent concepts and themes.

Following the Wave 1 interviews, I will develop an initial coding scheme. This coding scheme will be used to interpret the Wave 1 interview records and other key documents. This interpretation will form the basis of the hypotheses I will seek to test through the Wave 2 interviews, and the Wave 2 interview guide. Following the completion of the Wave 2 interviews, I will complete a second round of data analysis. In this round of data analysis, I will develop a new coding scheme, and code all interview transcripts and relevant documents, and develop an overall interpretation of the case. This interpretation will either confirm or disconfirm the initial hypotheses formed following the Wave 1 interviews.

My interpretation of the case will be reported in a narrative that will constitute at least one chapter of the final dissertation. The narrative will include the following sections:

- A description of relevant aspects of Pennsylvania’s socioeconomic, political, and historical context, including a history of the state’s experience with welfare reform prior to the enactment of the state’s major welfare reform law in 1996.
- A chronological account of major events relevant to TANF policy and implementation in Pennsylvania from 1996 to 2002.
• An analysis of the political and socioeconomic determinants of TANF policy and implementation in the state, based on the major themes that emerge from the qualitative data analysis. This analysis will include as a major focus the influence of the state’s political culture on TANF policy and implementation.

• A discussion of how the findings are consistent or inconsistent with the initial hypotheses that were formed based on the initial interviews and the research literature. This discussion will include as a major focus how the case study findings are consistent or inconsistent with Elazar’s theory of the individualistic political culture, as well as other competing interpretations of state politics, such as Hero (1998).

• A discussion of the questions raised by the case that are unresolved and could bear further research.

Throughout the narrative, specific illustrations of events, perspectives of individuals, and quotations from documents and interviews will be provided for illustration and illumination.

**Validity**

The case study will necessarily have an element of subjectivity. In qualitative research generally, “the researcher filters the data through a personal lens that is situated in a specific sociopolitical and historical moment.” (Creswell 2003, 182) The manner in which I frame questions, and collect and analyze data, about Pennsylvania will be influenced by my own personal perspective. At the same time, the element of subjectivity in the case study will be reduced because my hypotheses about Pennsylvania will be situated within the context of the literature, as well as the quantitative findings from the 50 state analysis.
In addition, I will use the following strategies to increase the validity of my conclusions about Pennsylvania. I will seek confirmation of facts and interpretations from multiple sources, including documents and multiple interviewees. For certain interpretations and facts, I may return to individual interviewees to seek verification that the information is accurate, in cases where the interviewee is part of both waves of interviews. I will use direct quotation of particularly compelling language, and include detailed information about important or telling events, that will add richness and depth to the narrative. I will seek to clarify bias on my part that may influence my findings. I will explicitly discuss conflicting or discrepant findings that emerge from the interviews or documents, and address the questions they raise about my interpretation of the case. Following the completion of a preliminary draft of the narrative, I may seek review and comment from key individuals who can be expected to provide feedback on the validity of facts and interpretations.

In the interviews, I will avoid asking questions in a leading way that prevents interviewees from presenting their own perspective on events and their causes. Where appropriate, I will seek feedback from interviewees on alternative ways of seeing events that other observers have mentioned.

5.3 Fifty State Quantitative Analysis
I will develop quantitative models of the determinants of state TANF policy and implementation in the 50 states. Data on state policy choices will be drawn from the Urban Institute’s Welfare Rules Database (Rowe and Russell 2004). Data on TANF implementation will be based on data reported by states to DHHS and other government data sources.

The goal of the quantitative models is to test the relative importance of the main determinants of welfare policy that emerge from the literature, including: economic conditions; racial and ethnic diversity; political culture; public opinion or ideology; party control and interparty competition; interest group strength; and government capacity. I will include variables that measure all these determinants and see which best account for state TANF policy and implementation. In the process, I will critique existing work in this vein, such as the models of Zylan and Soule (2000), Soss et al. (2001), and Fellowes and Rowe (2004). My expectation is that political culture will turn out to be more important than suggested in this earlier research.

Conceptual Definition and Measurement

The TANF policy measures will be based on information in the Urban Institute Welfare Rules Database and other reliable sources of TANF policy information. In developing the policy variables, I will define broad measures and component measures of TANF policy. The broad measures represent the characteristics of policy along major dimensions. The component measures represent specific characteristics of policy that relate to policy along a particular broad dimension. Table 5 presents a proposed set of broad and component measures.

Table 5: TANF Policy Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broad Measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefit level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Breadth of eligibility | • Eligibility for two-parent families  
• Eligibility for childless pregnant women  
• Eligibility for non-citizens  
• Eligibility for children living with non-eligible parents |
| Work incentives and supports | • Implicit tax rate on earnings (accounting for TANF, Food Stamps, EITC, state tax policies)  
• Child care subsidies  
• Transportation subsidies |
| Work requirements | • Exemptions related to illness or incapacity  
• Exemptions related to recipients caring for ill or incapacitated family members  
• Exemptions related to age  
• Exemptions related to pregnancy  
• Exemptions related to age of youngest child  
• Range of allowable activities  
• Hour requirements  
• Time at which work is required |
| Behavioral requirements | • Requirements relating to child school attendance and performance  
• Requirements related to child immunization  
• Requirements related to health screening |
| Sanctions | • Amount of initial sanction (e.g., does sanction apply to whole family or head of household only)  
• Duration of initial sanction  
• Amount of worst-case sanction  
• Duration of worst-case sanction  
• Applicability of sanction to various types of non-compliance |
| Time limits | • Duration of lifetime time limit  
• Presence of intermittent time limit  
• Applicability of limit (e.g., does limit apply to whole family or head of household only)  
• Exemption due to illness  
• Exemption due to disability  
• Exemption due to caring for young children  
• Exemption due to caring for persons who are ill or disabled  
• Extensions to time limits for specific categories of recipients |
| Family cap | • Extent to which there is a benefit increase for the birth of additional children  
• Form of any benefit increase for the birth of additional children  
• Permanency of family cap  
• Applicability of the family cap to second and subsequent births |

In developing this typology, I will be guided by existing literature that has explored how to characterize TANF policies, such as Fender et al. (2002), as well as other literature that has characterized TANF policy along broad dimensions, such as Fellowes and Rowe (2004) and Rector and Youssef (1999).
I will code each state in terms of each component measure. The component measures will then be combined into indices that represent the broad measures. To the extent that the component measures are binary variables, they could be combined to form an additive index that represents the broad measure, a method used in Fellowes and Rowe (2004) to represent two dimensions of TANF policy: breadth of eligibility and flexibility of work requirements. The problem with this approach is the potential arbitrariness of assigning equal weight to a range of component policies. In cases where the component policies are interval measures, measures could be converted to z scores and converted to an index variable using factor analysis.

To measure implementation, I will use data reported by states to DHHS, and other government data sources. My goal is to develop valid measures of the extent to which official policy is put into practice. Table 6 presents a set of proposed implementation measures.

<p>| Implementation Measures |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Broad Measures</th>
<th>Component Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breadth of eligibility</td>
<td>• TANF caseload as a percentage of low-income population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Work incentives and supports</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Medicaid/SCHIP enrollment, Food Stamp enrollment, and child care accessibility and affordability as measured by DHHS for purposes of the TANF High Performance Bonus program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Total spending per low-income person on subsidized child care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Average state and local income tax payments per low-income household</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Total spending per low-income person on state earned income tax credit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Percentage of TANF block grant and state MOE funds allocated to work incentives and supports (transportation, child care, supportive services, refundable EITC, or other refundable tax credit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Work requirements</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• TANF all-family work participation rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• TANF two-parent family work participation rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Percentage of TANF adults with hours of work participation, by activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Percentage of TANF adults exempt from work participation requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Percentage of TANF adults meeting federal all-family work requirement with hours of work participation, by activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Percentage of TANF adults in two-parent families meeting federal two-parent family work requirement with hours of work participation, by activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Average hours of work participation per TANF adult, by activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Percentage of TANF block grant and state MOE funds allocated to work related activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Percentage of TANF/MOE work related activities funds allocated to education and training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Percent of TANF cases closed due to work-related sanction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Behavioral requirements</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Percent of TANF families with grants reduced due to failure to comply with behavioral requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Percent of TANF families with cases closed due to failure to comply with behavioral requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Sanctions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Percent of TANF families with grants reduced due to sanction, by reason (work requirement, teen parent not in school, non-cooperation with child support, other)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Percent of TANF cases closed due to sanction or failure to cooperate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Time limits</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Percent of TANF families with more than 60 countable months of TANF receipt who are exempt from termination of assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Percent of TANF families with less than 60 countable months of TANF receipt who are exempt from accrual of months due to receiving state funded assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Percent of TANF cases closed due to federal or state time limit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Family cap</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Percent of TANF families with grants reduced due to family cap policy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Where possible, I will combine information on TANF with information on Separate State Programs funded through state maintenance of effort funds, since including data on the Separate State Programs will promote comparability of the data across states. As in the case of policy measures, I anticipate that I will develop an index for each broad measure based on the relevant component measures. Most of the implementation component measures will be interval level
measures. Accordingly, factor analysis will be an appropriate method of combining the component measures into broad measures of implementation.

The proposed measures will reflect the way state policies are translated into action. For instance, work requirement policy will be reflected in the numbers of TANF recipients who meet federal work participation requirements, the type of work activities in which they participate, the percentage of state TANF/MOE resources allocated to work related activities, and the percentage of cases that are closed due to a work-related sanction. Each of these measures can be expected to measure different aspects of work requirement policy. However, all can be expected to capture some aspect of the intensity with which a state requires work and enforces that requirement.

The value of utilizing implementation measures as well as policy measures as dependent variables is that implementation measures will shed light on ways in which the policy in action is different from official policy. For instance, some states may have strong work requirement policies on paper, but the implementation measures will suggest that the strong official policies were not well enforced, and that the state’s work requirements were weak in practice.

The independent variables will reflect those factors identified in the literature as contributing to the explanation of state policy and implementation. These factors will include: economic conditions; racial and ethnic diversity; political culture; public opinion or ideology; party control and interparty competition; interest group strength; and government capacity. The primary challenge is to conceptualize each of these constructs based on the research literature, and develop valid measures of the constructs consistent with that conceptualization and the availability of data. I will develop, for each construct, at least one measure. However, for a number of the constructs, I may utilize different, plausible measures. For instance, in the case of
political culture, where there are two competing conceptions of political culture, Elazar’s and Putnam’s, I will develop at least two sets of variables measuring political culture: one set of variables designed to measure the Elazar conception, and another set of variables designed to measure Putnam’s concept of civic culture.

Table 7 presents a proposed list of constructs and measures for the independent variables.

Table 7: Independent Variables: Constructs and Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Political culture          | • Dummy variables to indicate whether a state was classified as moralistic, individualistic, or traditionalistic in Elazar (1984).  
• Interval measures of the Elazar cultures, including the indices in Johnson (1976) and Morgan and Watson (1991).  
• Interval measures of “civic” culture such as that in Rice and Sumberg (1997). |
| Ideology                   | • Citizen ideology measures based on Erikson, Wright and McIver (1993). (Updated measures available from Gerald Wright’s website.)  
• Citizen and government ideology based on Berry et al. (1998) from the State Politics and Policy Data Archive at Florida State University. |
| Party control and competition | • Ranney party control index and party competition index, from Bibby and Holbrook (2004)                         |
| Interest group strength    | • Measure of the overall influence of interest groups in state politics, and a specific measure of the influence of interest groups representing low-income families, cited in Thomas and Hrebenar (2004) |
| Social diversity           | • Measures of racial and ethnic diversity based on Hero (1998).  
• Measures of ethnic diversity described in Alesina and La Ferrara (2005) |
| Economic conditions        | • Per capita personal income, unemployment rate, percentage change in employment, change in the employment to population ratio, change in average earnings. |
| Fiscal conditions          | • Recent changes in overall state revenues or fund balance. |

Data Analysis
The first task will be assembling the component elements of TANF policy and implementation into the main policy and implementation measures. This could be accomplished through factor analysis, or development of a summated rating scale as in Fellowes and Rowe (2004).

The second task will be to develop models for each of the main policy and implementation measures. For each dependent term, I will first determine whether it has a significant bivariate relationship with each of the independent variables. I will then construct multivariate models using terms that have significant relationships at the bivariate level.

For interval level measures, bivariate association will be measured in terms of the product-moment correlation coefficient, $\rho$. In the case of categorical variables, bivariate association will be measured using the Pearson $\chi^2$ statistic. Variables that exhibit a significant bivariate relationship with the dependent term will be candidates for a multivariate model.

Multivariate models will be constructed for each dependent term. For interval dependent terms, the models will be OLS regression models. For binary categorical dependent terms, the models will be binary logistic regression. For ordered categorical dependent terms, I will use ordered logistic regression. My analyses will utilize the Stata statistical package, version 9.0.

In some cases, there will be more than one model for a particular dependent variable, because it may be the case that different ways of conceptualizing and measuring a construct (such as political culture) result in different models with different levels of explanatory power.

It should be noted that I will have different hypotheses about the determinants of policy and implementation variables. For instance, I would expect government capacity measures to have a greater effect on implementation measures than on policy measures.
One of the issues I will need to consider is multicollinearity. Political culture measures are likely to be correlated with social diversity measures, as the data in Hero (1998) suggest. Measures of partisan control or conflict may also correlate with political culture or other measures. I will need to explicitly consider the difficulty in untangling the independent effect of variables that may be highly correlated in a small data set.

To the extent possible, I will also conduct a set of analyses with the dependent term constructed in a manner consistent with measures of TANF policy in the existing literature on the determinants of state TANF policy choice (Soss et al. 2001, Gais and Weaver 2002, and Fellowes and Rowe 2004). These studies do not include political culture as an explanatory variable in their models. By utilizing policy measures that are consistent with those in the literature, I will be able to more directly assess the impact that consideration of political culture would have had on the conclusions of these studies.

**Interpretation of Results**

My interpretation of the empirical results will focus on providing answers to the following questions:

- Taking into account all the TANF policy and implementation measures, what independent variables seem to be most important?
- What independent variables seem to be most important for TANF policy generally?
- What independent variables seem to be important for TANF implementation generally?
• Is there a pattern to the types of independent variables that are important for predicting particular kinds of policy or implementation?
• How well do the results fit my initial hypotheses?
• In cases where there is more than one measure of a particular independent variable construct, do the results shed light on which alternative way to conceptualize or measure the construct is most appropriate?

My analysis will focus on all the independent terms, but will place particular focus on the importance of the political culture measures. I will give particular attention to these issues: the importance of culture relative to other explanatory variables; the explanatory power of alternative measures of culture; and what the empirical results suggest about the utility of Elazar’s theory of state political culture, compared to an alternative conceptualization based on Putnam’s concept of civic culture.

5.4 Relationship between Qualitative and Quantitative Research

The quantitative and qualitative research will proceed simultaneously. They will influence each other in various ways: (1) the hypotheses for the case study will be related to the hypotheses for the quantitative analysis; (2) the preliminary results of the quantitative research may suggest refinements to the hypotheses for the qualitative research, and vice versa; (3) the case study findings will affect my interpretation of the quantitative findings, and vice versa; (4) the quantitative data for Pennsylvania utilized in the 50 state model will provide important context for the case study, and may influence the direction of qualitative inquiry; (5) areas of
divergence in findings between the quantitative and qualitative research will raise issues which can be pursued; and (6) areas of consistency in findings between the qualitative and quantitative work will increase my confidence in those findings.

Figure 2 presents the relationship between the qualitative research, quantitative research, and the hypotheses that each is testing.

**Figure 2: Relationship between Qualitative and Quantitative Research**

Hypotheses derived from research literature are the basis of the quantitative research hypotheses, data sources and models. Similarly, the research literature, along with the preliminary findings from the Wave 1 interviews, are the basis of the hypotheses that will be framed about Pennsylvania’s TANF process and tested through the Wave 2 interviews. The preliminary findings from the qualitative research may influence the hypotheses tested in the quantitative work, and vice versa. Finally, the findings from both the quantitative research and the qualitative research will each suggest modifications to the theory of the determinants of state welfare policy.
that emerges from the literature. In addition, the findings of the qualitative research will be interpreted in relation to the findings from the quantitative research, and vice versa.

5.5 Limitations and Strengths of the Proposed Research Design

The research design is strengthened by the use of multiple methods. The qualitative research will provide insight into the details of the policymaking process that would not be possible through the quantitative analysis alone. The case study will shed light on the specific reasons why particular decisions were made and particular actions taken. Elazar (1980) suggests that an important aspect of the study of political culture is seeking to understand the reasons why actions are taken. He notes that the same policy action can be taken for different reasons in different political subcultures. “Developing ways to understand the different reasons why people do what are apparently the same things is a key to the systematic study of political culture.” (135) The case study should provide greater understanding of the reasons and motivation behind political decisions, and the specific ways political culture influenced TANF policy and implementation decisions. This specific, contextual understanding provided by the case study will aid in interpreting the findings of the quantitative models.

The quantitative analysis will support general conclusions about the politics of TANF policy making in the United States, something that would not be possible with a single state case study. To the extent that these general conclusions are consistent with the specific findings about the politics of TANF policymaking in Pennsylvania derived from the case study, the strength of the findings of both the qualitative and quantitative research will be reinforced. The quantitative analysis will also permit comparing Pennsylvania to other states, by showing how differences in
Pennsylvania’s TANF policy and implementation can be attributed to differences in antecedent political factors.

In terms of the quantitative research, the most significant challenge will be developing credible measures for various policy outcomes to be explained. Categorizing TANF policy in a valid way is an important challenge. I will compare my TANF policy measures to other measures in the literature as one way of assessing the validity of my measures. My TANF implementation measures will be based on quantitative data reported by most states to DHHS on a presumably uniform basis. However, because of the variability in TANF programs across states, including variation in the populations covered by TANF, the interstate comparability of the measures is a concern.

For instance, work participation rates will be affected by variability in state work incentive policies. States with high work incentives are likely to have a larger portion of the caseload working simply because the benefit structure makes it easier for adults to combine work and welfare. Also, some states have set up “separate state programs” which cover certain populations outside of the TANF program. States often use separate state programs as a means to exempt cases from the time limit on federally-funded assistance. So it will be important to consider separate state programs when constructing a measure of the percentage of cases that are exempt from time limits. More generally, it will be important to consider the impact of differences in the structure of state programs on the implementation measures reported to DHHS. I will avoid the use of measures that appear to be significantly affected by these problems. Where necessary, I will exclude states from the dataset to achieve comparable measures.

A particularly significant problem is that some states still operate under waivers that predate PRWORA. This allows them to calculate their work participation rate on a preferential
basis not comparable to other states. ACF measures participation with and without waivers only starting in 2001.

There are also challenges in developing valid measures of the independent variables. I will utilize the most defensible available measures of each of the independent variables, based on data that are appropriate to the time period under consideration.


