The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare

Volume 18
Issue 1 *March*

Article 3

March 1991

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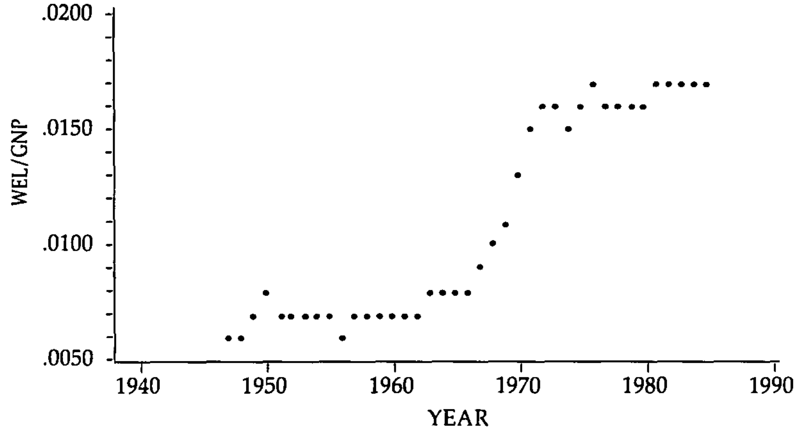
A large body of research has examined the determinants of welfare spending at various jurisdictional levels. This paper takes stock of the accomplishments of these studies within a limited framework. Primary socioeconomic and political factors are surveyed and reviewed with respect to their explanatory association with appropriations for public welfare at the level of states.

Public welfare appropriations at the state level (consisting of cash assistance under categorical and other welfare programs, direct payments to vendors, and the provision and operation by the government of welfare institutions) are second in magnitude to only educational outlays—amounting in 1988 to $84.2 billion. As shown in proportion to GNP since 1947 (in Figure 1), welfare spending rose most rapidly during the late 1960s and early 1970s and best exemplifies what Nobel-laureate economist James Buchanan regards as the "alarming" and "horrendous" growth in government (1977, p. 3).

This paper examines research on the causal links between state welfare spending and primary socioeconomic and political factors. Empirical research to explain state spending originated with the effort of Solomon Fabricant in his study of 1942 interstate variations. Subsequent research—which has been conducted primarily by economists and political scientists—has contributed much to our understanding, and the goal here is to summarize the principal hypotheses and findings since Fabricant's path-breaking study. The connection between jurisdictional welfare appropriations and sociological, economic, and political factors is a province which has been neglected by other disciplines. Consequently, this survey examines only research

Figure 1. States' public welfare expenditures/GNP*



*Source of Figures: All figures were prepared by the author based upon data obtained from sources indicated in the Appendix.

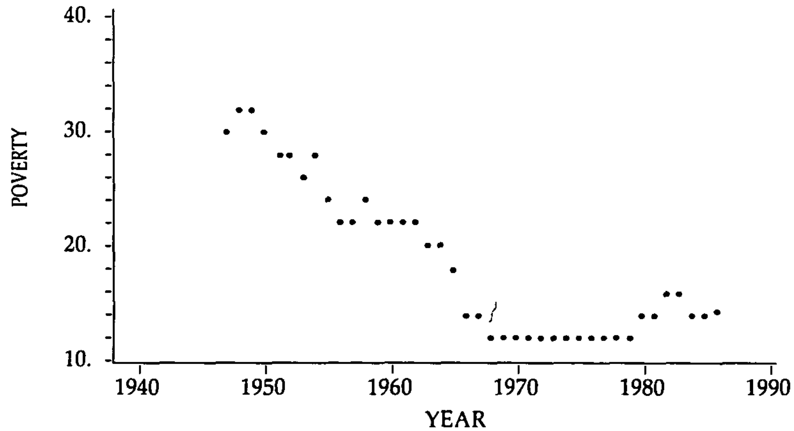
which has appeared in books and journals of political science and economics.

The Explanatory Factors

Poverty

Figure 2 illustrates the path of official poverty in the United States since 1947. From highs in the late 1940s, the incidence of national poverty declined to its lowest levels during the 1970s.

Figure 2. Percentage of population in poverty



Poverty creates social and economic tension which, in turn, can be transformed into political pressure. During periods of widespread economic downturn the poor achieved growing political influence, and this influence is presumably reflected in higher levels of publicly provided assistance to the needy.

Piven and Cloward identify the 1960s as years of explosion in AFDC cases (pp. 183–84), largely as a consequence of the modernization of Southern agriculture and of its impact primarily on blacks (p. 196). As blacks migrated to cities, they "emerged as a political force for the first time. . . and the relief system was. . . one of the main local institutions to respond to that force" (p. 196). The economic convulsions and resulting political instability led to a liberalization of relief provisions (p. 197).

Poor voters may bargain for additional transfer payments and taxpayers will acquiesce if they too receive some benefit. Benefits include the reduced likelihoods of crime, social disturbance, and uprising. Taxes to pay for relief may be viewed as insurance premiums to ensure the maintenance of domestic peace and security.

Federal programs hired the disadvantaged, while social workers and lawyers spurred the poor to apply for relief (p. 198) and to vote (pp. 222, 242). After 1964, local governments were prodded by the central government to liberalize relief (p. 246). During the 1960s, federal intervention counseled the poor on how to obtain welfare, challenged local laws that restricted welfare rolls, and supported organizations which applied pressure on local agencies to approve applications for assistance.

Winters (p. 624) and Plotnick and Winters (p. 471) find a direct relationship between needs and state redistribution. In addition to the greater ease of organizing where there are high concentrations of the poor, Plotnick and Winters suggest that the greater visibility of needy people creates a more direct knowledge of their condition and affects the senses of the nonpoor (pp. 462, 471). That is, "taxpayers derive utility from increments to the income of transfer recipients" (Orr, p. 359). However, the empirically direct association which is found between needs and state redistribution may be due, in part, to the fact that benefit levels rise as more individuals become eligible to receive assistance (Gramlich and Laren, p. 494).

Greater contact with the poor and observation of their distressed condition inspire taxpayers to provide additional aid. This willingness is communicated to lawmakers or observed first-hand by legislators (Plotnick and Winters, p. 466). Also, a higher incidence of poverty makes the nonpoor more aware of their own economic vulnerability and the need for the insurance of an income safety net (Danziger, Haveman and Plotnick, p. 70).

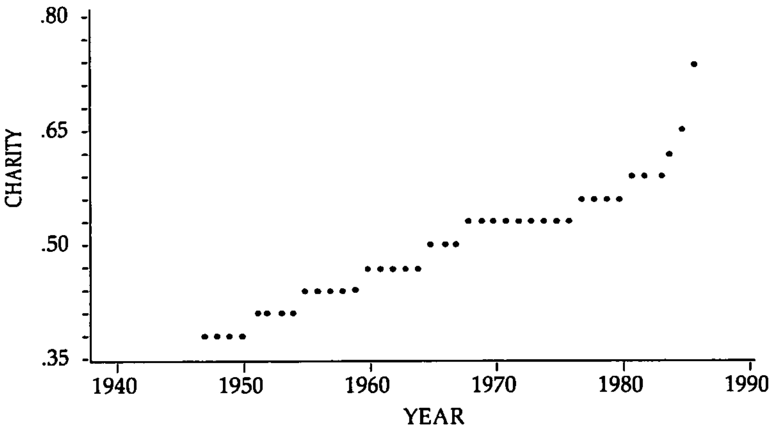
In all the described scenarios, the association between state public welfare and poverty is predicted to be direct.

Charity

Private giving by individuals to nonprofit charitable organizations, institutions, and agencies has grown rapidly—especially in recent years. Figure 3 illustrates the path of total giving in real dollars by private citizens since 1947. *To be sure,* not all charitable giving is directed towards the poor or needy. Available data, however, are not broken down according to targeted populations. Consequently, total giving by individuals to charity can serve only as a rough gauge of public generosity towards the poor. But, it may reasonably be inferred that private charity aimed at the poor follows a path parallel to private total charitable giving.

Antipoverty efforts by the governmental sector are critically dependent on sympathetic public opinion (Heclo, 1986). And, charity is a measure of the willingness, generosity, and social conscience of the public. Private charitable contributions provide an index of public concern for the less fortunate. Yet, the humanitarian desire of the public still must be transmitted through political representatives in order to affect welfare appropriations. As Plotnick and Winters express this connection, "voter preferences do not influence the policy decision directly. Preferences only enter indirectly in a representative democracy via election of like-minded legislators and, after the election, by direct or indirect (via interest groups) communication to these lawmakers" (p. 464). The hypothesized relationship between

Figure 3. Private charitable giving (in real billion dollars)



private giving to charities and jurisdictional welfare outlays is direct and complementary.

Interdependent utilities are presumed between the givers and recipients of charitable contributions (Becker, 1988; Gramlich, 1987), and the motive to provide charity can be classified as direct or ulterior (Rodgers, pp. 180–89). With the former, utility is derived from the *act* of giving. Satisfaction is obtained from anonymously helping others or from the approval of others. The actual impact of the contribution on the well-being of recipients is irrelevant. With an ulterior motive, satisfaction is derived from the *effect* of one's contribution upon recipients. There may be a genuine concern for the poor and in alleviating hardship, or there may be a desire to modify the behavior of the poor either by reducing antisocial activities or by improving their health and education.

A second and opposite association involving charitable contributions consists of a replacement effect, where there is an inverse relationship to jurisdictional welfare spending (Bird, p. 193). The implied assumption is that the total charitable contribution of society has some specific limit and that there is an optimal mix of private and public efforts. Gramlich's (1987) model of charitable giving enlists both indifference curve analysis and game theory to describe competition between the state and private charitable individuals in the provision of relief. The two "altruistic" parties function independently and do not cooperatively plan their actions. Although they both wish to help the needy, each party would prefer that the other provide the desired support. Consequently, when one party increases its gift to the poor, the other altruist responds by reducing its gift and thereby from what may be regarded as an increase in income (pp. 418–19).

An inverse relationship between the charitable contributions of individuals and the state is harmonious with Tullock's explanation. Rather than make a private contribution to aid the less fortunate, the typical (selfish) individual will reduce cognitive dissonance by voting for a tax to be paid by all taxpayers (pp. 26–9). Thus, the cost to the individual is diluted while his/her conscience is at rest. In other words, it is "wise to vote charitably and act selfishly" (p. 28).

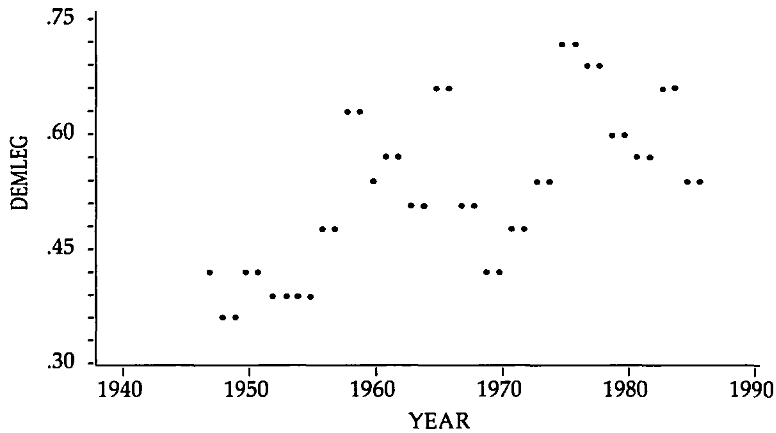
Empirical evidence of substantial crowding out of private charitable contributions by government transfer payments is found by Plotnick and Winters (pp. 468, 470) and in two studies by Abrams and Schmitz (1984; 1978). This inverse relationship between public and private transfers is a consequence of both a substitution and an income effect. Government transfers have a substitution effect by lowering the need for private charity, and create an income effect by reducing the disposable incomes of taxpayers.

Sharing of Responsibility with Other Jurisdictions.

As illustrated in Figure 4, the share of total public welfare which is assumed by state jurisdictions is highly variable over time, although states are responsible for a generally smaller temporal proportion of the entire federal-state-local obligation. This downward trend would be much more pronounced if the years of the Reagan administration were excluded.

Although states form a separate political system, account must also be taken of federal welfare efforts (Dye, 1966, p. 292). As discussed by Dye (1969, pp. 417–29; 1966, pp. 115–22), until the Great Depression of the 1930s, the provision of public welfare in this country was primarily a state and local responsibility. However, with the Social Security Act of 1935, responsibility shifted from lower levels almost exclusively to a shared

Figure 4. States proportion of total public welfare expenditures



obligation with the central government. And by 1986, aggregate state expenditures for social welfare were approximately equal to like-purpose federal outlays. Currently, the distinction between respective responsibilities has virtually evaporated, and official welfare activity has evolved into a cooperative effort shared by all three jurisdictional levels. In the words of Albritton, "welfare represents a policy arena characterized by a higher degree of interaction among federal, state, and local governments. . . [with an] inextricable mix of influences and decision-making" (p. 378).

The shift in responsibility from lower levels to the central government is reflected by their respective roles for Public Aid over a 34-year interval. Between 1950 and 1984, in contrast to a 22-fold increase by combined state and local jurisdictions, federal spending grew 51-fold (U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, pp. 26, 27). As a proportion of total budget, federal outlays for Public Aid have grown from 2.7% in 1950 to 10.5% in 1984, while combined state-local shares were 6.8% and 9.5% respectively (p. 31, Table 6).

The current division of responsibility is not only between the federal and state levels, but also with local jurisdictions. In many states, local governments still account for a significant portion of welfare funding—particularly for Medicaid. As Albritton shows, overall funding for welfare by local governments varied from 0% to 25% in 1977–78 (pp. 387–88). In comparison, welfare funding by states during the same fiscal year ranged from 20% to 74%.

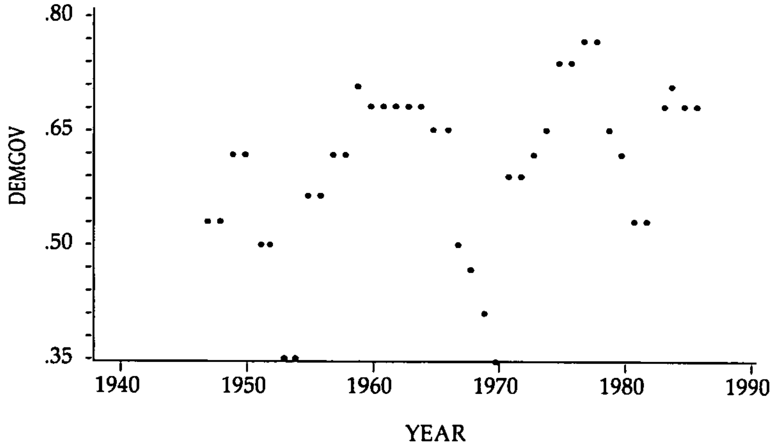
Yet, the concept of cooperation between the different levels of government can be taken too far. Gramlich (1987) highlights the noncooperative aspects of the present system of assistance and the free-riding interaction between state and federal welfare programs. When states increase their public assistance payments, there is a reduction in federal benefits. Similarly, when federal housing contributions rise, state contributions fall. Thus, vertical levels "strive to free-ride on the transfers of the other government" (p. 420). In sum, although not unambiguous in impact, the jurisdictional sharing of responsibility can have a profound influence on state social welfare policies.

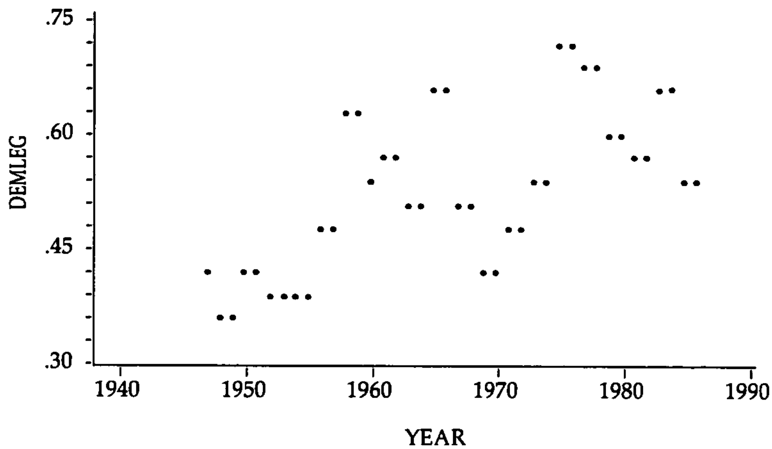
Political Parties

Democratic control of governorships (upper graph) and of both state legislative houses (lower graph) are illustrated in Figure 5. The patterns that emerge since WWII are cyclical and of a gradual increase. Further, there is a rough degree of correspondence within states between party control simultaneously of the highest executive office and of the legislative branch.

"The Democratic party has traditionally favored a larger government role in providing for social welfare and economic intervention than has the Republican party" (Browning, p. 17). Whereas Republicans are more adverse than Democrats to expansionary spending, Democrats have a greater aversion to unemployment (Hibbs, p. 66; Tufte, p. 83). Democrats tend to vote for more spending and taxes than do Republicans (Chester, p. 409; Peltzman, p. 658). McClosky, Hoffman and O'Hara identify Democratic leaders with a significantly stronger willingness than Republican leaders to employ legislation for the benefit of the poor (pp. 416, 417), and Democrats place a much greater emphasis than Republicans on economic and social leveling (p. 420). Since Democrats favor more of a redistribution of wealth and income than Republicans (Tufte, p. 74), when the Democratic party gains political strength, the additional strength is used to expand social welfare programs (Lewis-Beck and Rice, pp. 16, 20, 26). Nevertheless, a large group of studies

Figure 5. Proportion of governorships and of legislatures controlled by democrats





(Dawson and Gray; Dawson and Robinson; Dye, 1966, pp. 244, 245, 293; Fry and Winters; Gray; Hofferbert; Lewis-Beck; Plotnick and Winters; Winters) conclude that the relative power of political parties has little influence on social welfare programs at the state level.

Furthermore, it is commonly hypothesized that the greater the competition between parties within a state, the more liberal the social welfare policies adopted by that state. More competition is presumed to force the parties to appeal to the have not groups for support. And, in appealing to the more numerous low-income groups, the government tends to redistribute income away from high-income groups (Downs, p. 202).

Jennings points out that the "generosity of a state's social welfare policies depends upon the organization and mobilization of the lower classes" (p. 416), and that even though "lower-class support [may be] concentrated in one party,. . . welfare benefits can be expected to increase only if that party gains sufficient power to implement [the programs]" (1979, p. 416). Further, he argues that opposition party control of the two houses of the legislature or between the governor and the legislature can create a barrier to the implementation of social welfare policies (p. 417). Hence, in contrast to the hypothesis that divided control of the state government (as an indicator of interparty competition) stimulates higher welfare benefits, a divided state government "frequently stands as a barrier to more generous welfare policies" (p. 417).

To measure interparty competition, Dawson and Robinson examined the relative popularity of the governor and the percentage of legislative seats held by the major party. State welfare policies are defined as those programs which benefit lower socioeconomic groups through a redistribution of wealth. Their findings indicate that the level of welfare programs is far more a function of the wealth of a state (its ability to pay for public welfare) than of competition for the votes of the poor (p. 289).

In a more general sense, according to Hofferbert "the party system and its operation do not seem to go very far toward explaining the kind of policies produced in the states" (p. 82), and state welfare expenditures are unaffected by either party (p. 81). Gray concludes that economic variables "have greater explanatory power and the direction of the relationships [with state welfare policies] is more clear-cut than for the political variables" over time (p. 250). Dawson and Gray similarly discovered that socioeconomic factors better predict state welfare efforts than do political factors (pp. 472, 474), and that politics within states is a comparatively weak variable and growing weaker (p. 471). Once economic development is controlled, Dye finds that the association between partisanship and public policy disappears (1966, pp. 244, 253, 258, 259; 1969, p. 101), and that competition between the parties has no liberalizing effect either on state welfare policies (1966, p. 144) or upon tax and revenue levels (1966, p. 246). Neither Democratic nor Republican control within a state has a major or consistent influence on policy (1966, pp. 244, 293–94).

The typically loose empirical relationships may be due to the difficulty of identifying a single national party position which applies interregionally across all states (Key, 1964, p. 284; 1949, p. 392). As Hansen expresses it, "the single Republican-Democrat dichotomy. . . cannot begin to capture the diversity of state party systems" (p. 428). Since each party is divided into 50 individual state organizations, they merely reflect the socioeconomic characteristics of their local constituencies rather than a unifying national philosophy (Dye, 1969, pp. 108–09; Dye, 1966, pp. 239–41). Neither major party offers a consistent program from state to state (Dye, 1966, pp. 241, 247, 293). Jennings offers the succinct opinion that "party labels. . . are. . . meaningless" (1979, p. 429). The difficulty lies in grouping together all Democrats regardless of region, since the "Ideological differences among Democrats may be as great as between the average Democrat and Republican" (Mogull, 1990, p. 366). For example, "Many Southern Democratic states are far more conservative than. . . Republican Northern states" (Hansen, p. 428), and Piven and Cloward see the Southern and Northern regional differences within the Democratic party as an "unmanageable" fragmentation (p. 252). In addition, Dye suggests that intrastate welfare policies of both Democrats and Republicans in rural environments may be more similar than within the same party in rural versus urban areas (1966, p. 141). Since both parties compete in the same vote market, their policies are more alike than same-party policies in other states (Dye, 1969, p. 94).

Finally, Burtless argues that "The choice of redistribution policy is ultimately political rather than. . . economic" (p. 47). Plotnick and Winters, however, broaden the theoretical approach to one where state redistribution policies are the result not only of competition between parties, but of its interaction with a host of economic and political factors (p. 471)—a methodological viewpoint shared by Buchanan (1967, p. 171).

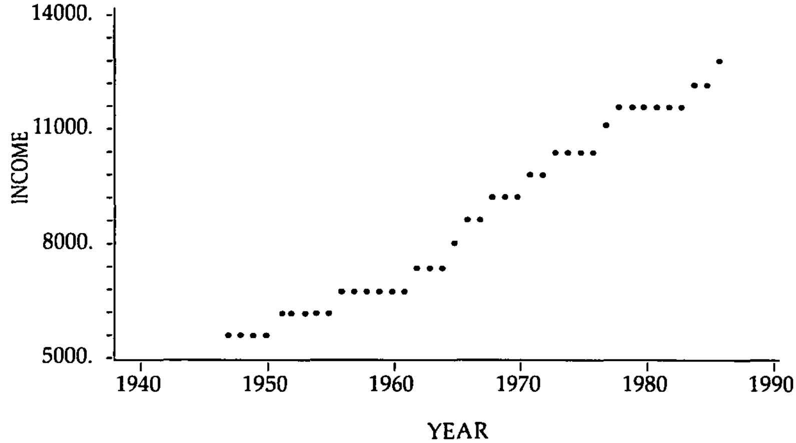
Fiscal Resources

Browning states that expenditures for social welfare increase with economic development (p. 168), Jennings identifies per capita income as responsible for a significant amount of the variance in state welfare spending (1980, p. 39), and Orr shows AFDC payments to be "strongly influenced by state per capita income" (p. 368). Albritton concludes that "welfare recipients benefit from spillover effects from the general prosperity of nonwelfare-related citizens" and that the economic well-being of a state provides the strongest link with welfare policy (p. 396). Plotnick and Winters find per capita income to be positively and significantly related to state welfare guarantees (p. 470). Mogull concludes that "the ability to assist the poor is, by far, the most powerful single determinant" of welfare appropriations (1981, p. 408), and that "fiscal resources are the prime determinants of state and local antipoverty expenditures" (1978, p. 296). According to Dye, "all available evidence indicates that economic development is significantly related to . . . welfare policy in the states" for all major programs (1969, p. 429), and "A state's income is the single most important variable determining the level of welfare benefits" (pp. 429, 431). He advises that "it is far better to be poor in a wealthy state than in a poor one" (p. 431).

For the record, per capita personal income in constant dollars has grown steadily since 1947, as shown in Figure 6. Despite several dips (in 1958, 1974–75, and 1980–81), states have generally enjoyed a healthy fiscal base.

However, to the extent that a causal relationship exists between state fiscal health and transfer payments, the association is not necessarily straightforward. In the words of Plotnick and Winters, "the conflict between economic and political explanations of redistribution is an artificial one" (p. 471). Sharkansky and Hofferbert find the interaction of state wealth with both high voter turnout and intense interparty competition to be responsible for high levels of welfare expenditures (p. 878).

Figure 6. Per capita personal income (in real dollars)



Browning similarly emphasizes that "politics and economics interact to affect the level of expenditures" (p. 26). And, Dye too concludes that social and economic conditions together determine state budgets (1969, p. 164).

A close empirical relationship between the fiscal strength of a jurisdiction and subsequent welfare spending does not explain the basis for that association, and various explanations may be envisioned. For example, Orr identifies a supply function by noting that higher taxpayer incomes cause a downward shift in the marginal cost of supplying assistance, which subsequently intersects the demand curve at increased equilibrium levels of transfers (p. 363). Plotnick and Winters express this somewhat differently by stating that greater affluence allows the nonpoor to "indulge at higher levels their impulse to aid the needy" (p. 462).

An alternative explanation of the linkage between economic activity and transfer payments is from the perspective of demand—based upon the proposition advanced by Adolph Wagner in the late 1800s. Referred to as his "law of expanding state activity, "Wagner's rule postulated that state expenditures grow both absolutely and as a percentage as national income rises (Wagner, pp. 7,8).

From either perspective, the relationship between income or wealth and government transfers is presumed to be direct and close. However, it remains theoretically unclear as to whether the functional association with public welfare is due to supply or to demand, or to an equilibrium composite of both.

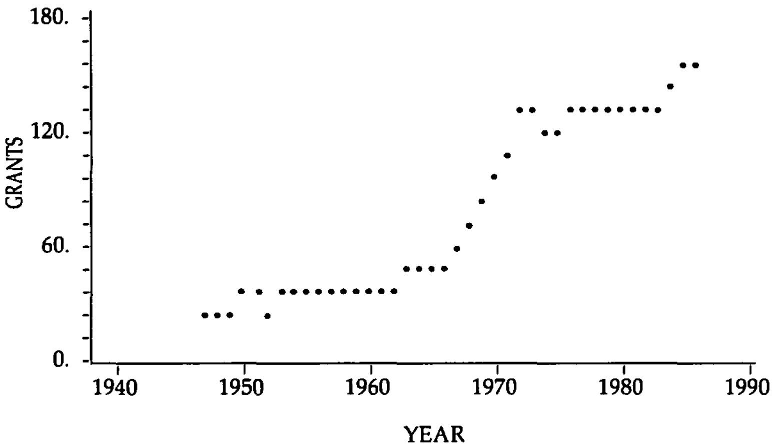
Outside Grants

Since the 1950s, federal grants have been apportioned among the states based upon a formula which accounts for population, needs, fiscal resources, and payments to recipients. States then include the federal monies in their public welfare expenditures. This is also true, although to a much smaller degree, for local monies (Albritton, pp. 387–88). Grants-in-aid can be justified on the ground that states may be unable to cope with a problem which is too large or too complex to be handled without federal assistance (Dye, 1969, p. 469). Specific rationales for extending intergovernmental grants for welfare include benefit spillovers, income redistribution, counter-cyclical stabilization, the establishment of minimal support levels, helping subnational jurisdictions to attain national goals, assisting locales to uniformly conform to national policy, and an equalization of welfare efforts.

Conditional categorical grants stimulate states to spend more for public welfare by the amount of the grant (Gramlich, 1977, p. 234), and Orr finds that federal AFDC grants displace state funds of equal value, but have no significant income effect on state AFDC payments. On the other hand, the increased spending on welfare due to lower realized cost (that is, the marginal price effect) is significant, and changes in the AFDC matching formula have a nonnegligible impact on state benefit levels (Orr, p. 366). According to Hansen and Cooper, "Federal aid. . . is the best predictor of state expenditure growth" (p. 26), and Gramlich contends that "without federal matching [grants] and using reasonable elasticity estimates, benefits. . . would drop to almost nothing" (1986, p. 347).

As illustrated in Figure 7, with the increasingly active participation of the federal government in welfare programs, per capita real grants to states from both federal and local jurisdictions grew especially rapidly during the 1960s. However, when President Ronald Reagan assumed office in January 1981, he

Figure 7. Per capita federal plus local welfare grants to states (in real dollars)



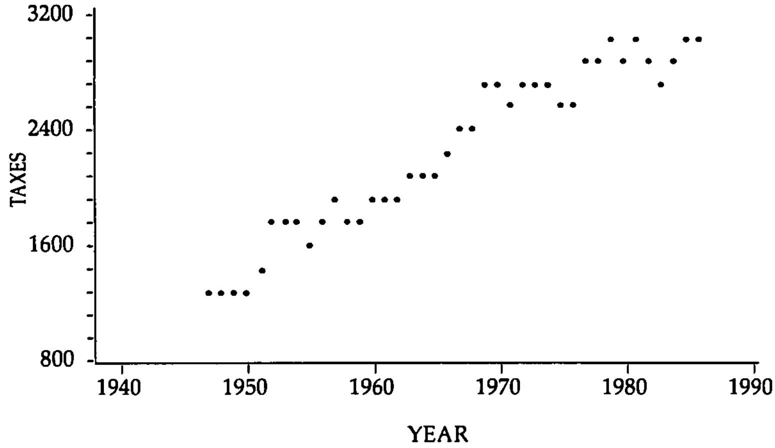
dramatically altered the cooperative federal relationship with subnational levels of government. The Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 curtailed federal grants, consolidated categorical grants into broad purpose block grants, loosened restrictions on the use of funds, and eliminated the matching feature of some types of grants (Herber, p. 52; U.S. G.A.O., p. i). These changes are likely to have caused a contraction of state (and local) welfare spending—due both to the loss of a price effect and to a shift of funds into other programs. Consequently, the "New Federalism" should prove to have widened the fiscal disparity between rich and poor states (Herber, pp. 61–2; Albritton, p. 385).

Taxes

In relation to income, taxes imposed by all governmental levels combined has increased from 3% in the late 1940s to 6.5% in the 1980s. On a per capita basis, real aggregate taxes from all levels rose from $1,281 in 1950 to $3,064 in 1986. This latter trend is traced in Figure 8 and illustrates the persistent rise in the burden and effort of public programs.

There are, however, large differences among individual states in tax burden (taxes in relation to personal income) and in tax effort (tax dollars per capita). For example, in FY 1985–

Figure 8. Per capita total taxes (in real dollars)



86, Alaska collected $4,489 in per capita taxes while Mississippi collected only $965 (U.S. Dept. of Commerce, p. 98). Per thousand dollars of personal income, Alaska again ranked highest with $253, while New Hampshire was lowest with $84 (p. 102). Part of the interstate difference is due to a differential reliance on local governments to supply services. But the most important reason for differences in the tax burden is state economic development, where the relationship is inverse (Dye, 1969, pp. 451, 453).

Taxation is the "extraction of resources from citizens" and the question of who pays (and who benefits) is a political issue (Hansen, p. 416). The antipoverty policies of the Kennedy-Johnson War on Poverty and Great Society created much higher taxes—which are estimated to have been between $115 billion and $195 billion in 1980 (Danziger, Haveman and Plotnick, pp. 71, 72). Hansen concludes, however, that revenue elasticity and legislated tax changes have little independent impact on spending at the state level (p. 439). Although the empirical relationship between revenues and subsequent expenditures was direct from 1960 to 1970, it turned inverse from 1970 to 1976 (Hansen and Cooper, pp. 28, 32).

Clayton maintains that "Tax revenues are a good measure of public commitment to social purposes" (p. 48), and that resistance to taxes rather than to spending is the key indicator of support for public welfare (p. 102). Buchanan similarly states that the demand by the taxpaying public for transfer payments is dependent upon its willingness to accept the tax burden (1977, p. 6). Correspondingly, Mogull employed a tax burden variable to help account for welfare outlays and found the association both significant and strong. Furthermore, state spending for public welfare is becoming increasingly related over time to the tax burden (1981, pp. 407, 409; 1978, p. 299).

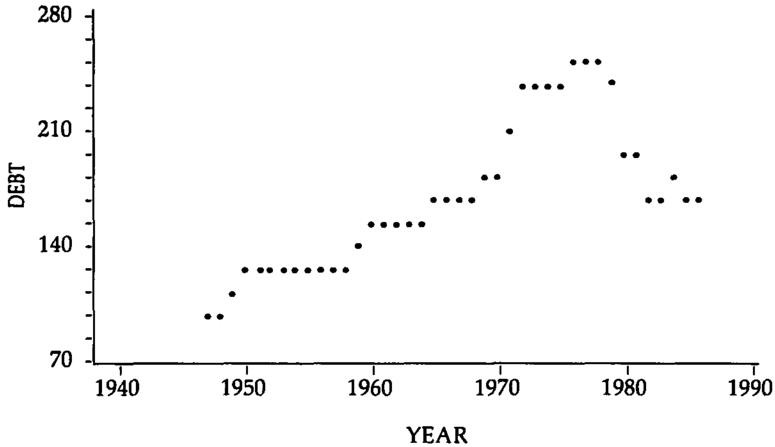
Penniman concludes that the public decision to spend on welfare is complex. "Citizens frequently find the relation between taxes and expenditures hard to keep in mind" (p. 520), and decisions on taxation are greatly dependent on the past political, social, and economic environments (p. 521). Further, her analysis presumes that interparty competition, citizen participation, the length of governor's term, the probability of reelection, apportionment within the legislature, and the effectiveness of lobbyists are some of the diverse political factors which interact to influence state taxation policies (p. 525). Additional dimensions include the growth of population and affluence, and the reliance of a state on income rather than on sales and other taxes (pp. 553–54).

Debt

Between 1947 and 1986, the aggregate net debt of states rose from $13.4 billion to $41.8 billion in dollars of constant purchasing power, while per capita real magnitudes increased from $93 to $173 and peaked at $257 (see Figure 9). Thus, state debt has grown substantially—particularly during the 1970s.

Buchanan (1967) emphasizes the fiscal illusions and false conceptions involved in spending when budgets are permitted to be unbalanced. By permitting a debt alternative to taxation, the connection between spending and taxes becomes more difficult to construct since the "two. . .choices become *independent,* in any current period sense" (p. 100). Allowing for public borrowing "makes any reasoned comparison of benefits and costs almost impossible" (p. 112), and there is a perception of a lower cost to the expenditures. Consequently, the public becomes more accepting of larger public outlays and "more reluctant to levy current taxes" than in a no-debt model (pp. 100–01).

Figure 9. Per capita states debt (in real dollars)



According to Sharkansky, the most hospitable environment for expanding public services would be in those states where burdensome per capita expenditures and debt are low and where per capita personal income is high (p. 1223). Whereas the Buchanan analysis envisions a direct association between debt and public welfare expenditures, the Sharkansky hypothesis anticipates an inverse relationship. Yet, "State officials often fear that espousal of a new tax or tax increase is tantamount to political suicide" (Hansen, p. 419), and borrowing may be the only feasible method of financing necessary current social welfare programs.

Summary and Final Comments

In brief, the preceding review of the literature portrays the following functional relationships between primary economic/social/political dimensions and subsequent spending for public welfare at the level of states:

Poverty—a direct association;

Charity—a direct association if it represents willingness/generosity/social conscience, but an inverse association if "crowding-out" occurs;

Sharing of Responsibility—an inverse association;

Political Parties

Strength of Democratic Party—a direct association,

Competition Between Parties—either a direct or an inverse association;
Fiscal Resources—a direct association;
Grants-in-Aid—a direct association;
Taxes—an inverse association;
Debt—an inverse association according to Sharkansky, but a direct relationship according to Buchanan.

This review has focused only on journals and books serving the fields of political science and economics—within which the relevant research on state welfare spending has appeared. Yet, clearly an understanding of causal relationships is also important to sociologists and social work professionals. Consequently, not only can this survey of current knowledge serve as a challenge to those with both the expertise and an interest in the issue, but the anticipated contributions from scholars in these disciplines can add new dimensions and layers of comprehension. It is a contribution to which this researcher looks forward. As indicated throughout the paper, there are a multitude of avenues of inquiry to be explored and clarified with many issues still to be resolved. It is especially disturbing when plausible theoretical relationships fail to receive substantiation from the empirical evidence. (This problem is nowhere more apparent, for example, than with the presumed influence of Democratic controlled legislatures.) Cross-fertilization from research conducted by scholars of diverse disciplines can greatly help to clarify our understanding of the causal factors which systematically influence welfare spending on each jurisdictional level. Sociologists and social work professionals have much to contribute to an issue which up-to-now has been preempted by economists and political scientists.

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Appendix

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