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Cover Page Footnote
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Devolution was embedded in the 1996 welfare reform. Using the National Survey of America's Families, this article explores the relationship between living in a Second Order Devolution (SOD) state and administrative exclusion from a welfare program. Results from the logistic model indicate that low-income clients and single mothers living in a SOD state had an increased likelihood of administrative exclusion. Administrative exclusion reflects bureaucratic choices and rules violations—implying some of these individuals and families may be leaving welfare without having achieved self-sufficiency. Results suggest that a careful evaluation of the state welfare performance measure and of the devolution of authority under block grants are needed before block granting other safety net programs.

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA)—also known as welfare reform—created a block grant system of delivering traditional welfare and job assistance programs to the poor. The reform and the resulting transition from Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) to Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) decentralized the responsibility of addressing poverty from the federal government to states (Blank 2001; Brueckner 2000; Rodgers 2000; Schoeni & Blank 2000; Ziliak 2015). Many of these states further devolved authority over TANF to local policymakers (Gainsborough 2003; Sheely 2012; Kim & Fording 2010). This sub-national devolution under welfare reform, also known as the Second Order Devolution (SOD), created a unique administrative structure and coincided with incentives for states to reduce their caseloads, namely allowing them to reduce their federal work participation requirement (Hahn, Kassabian, & Zedlewiski 2012).

The extant literature shows that that devolution of authority under welfare reform reduces state TANF caseload by creating stricter program rules (Kim 2007; Kim & Fording 2010; Sheely 2013). However, the literature has yet to focus on the effects of this devolution on welfare exits at the individual level. This article investigates the relationship between the second order devolution (SOD) and administrative exclusion within the welfare governance structure. To explore the link between administrative exclusion and SOD, this article focuses on the following research question – Does living in a SOD state increase the likelihood of administrative exclusion for a welfare client? Though Sheely (2013) assesses this connection, she focuses only on the State of California. The present study uses nationally representative data to assess this connection, thus making the results more generalizable. Since the literature provides the evidence that states with higher proportions of African American welfare clients tend to develop stricter welfare rules (Sheely 2012; Soss, Schram, Fording, & Houser 2009; Soss, Schram, Vartanian, & O'Brien 2001), this study also explores the relationship between administrative exclusion, SOD, and client race. The study is organized as follows. Section I explores the history and state performance measure under PRWORA. Section II discusses welfare rules, administrative exclusion, and SOD. Section III describes the data and research design. Section IV discusses the results from the empirical analysis. Section V explores policy implications, and section VI discusses the limitations of the current study and future work.

History of the PRWORA

Debates about the social safety net programs are not new in the US. Since the 1950s, many debates and revisions have occurred in the development of what is called "welfare policy" (Bane & Ellwood 1994; Brodkin 2007; Rodgers 2000; Skocpol 1994). The case-worker model of welfare provision was criticized in the 1960s and 1970s (Brodkin 2007) for being a punitive and rigid system with very low benefits (Bane & Ellwood 1994). In the 1980s, a new direction called for movement from an emphasis on cash assistance to an emphasis on work and self-sufficiency (Bane & Ellwood 1994; Dinitto & Johnson 2016; Rodgers 2000). A major shift in policy occurred in 1996 with the passage of the PRWORA. The act was the culmination of over sixty years of debate and change. Devolution of responsibility for welfare programs to states, privatization of social services, and adoption of a new performance measure that rewarded reductions in welfare caseload were all consistent with the tenets of New Public Management (Lynn 2006; Brodkin 2007). It is also important to note that, during the Clinton administration, the focus on "reinventing the government" led to a major overhaul of many federal programs. The politics of the "new Democratic coalition" under President Clinton (Brodkin 1995; 1999) was an important influence on the overhaul of the welfare system, though a detailed exploration of the coalition is outside the scope of the current study.

State Welfare Performance Measure

Under PRWORA, states are required to have most able-bodied TANF participants engaged in work-related activities and to sanction those who fail to meet such requirements. Though states have the discretion to design the rules for who must participate in work and what happens if participants fail to comply with requirements, their decisions are mostly influenced by the federal work participation rate. The law requires that 50 percent of all TANF families must be engaged in work-related activities for 30 hours per week, and 90 percent of two-parent families must be engaged in work-related activities for 35 hours per week. If a state does not meet its work-participation requirement, it faces steep financial penalties, where the state TANF grant is reduced, depending upon the severity of non-compliance. For each state, the target work participation requirement equals the difference between the statutory work participation rate and the caseload reduction credit a state receives. A state's caseload reduction credit equals the percentage point decline in its average monthly caseload between the previous year and the base year of 2005 (Health and Human Services 2017). Given this connection between work participation rate and the caseload reduction credit, states have the incentive to use caseload reduction as an important output measurement to get clients off the welfare caseload, thereby displacing the goal of client economic self-sufficiency.

The goal of welfare reform and welfare-to-work programs was to move clients into the workforce and off public assistance. This program goal assumed that a recipient would find a job and become self-sufficient, and declining caseloads would signal this self-sufficiency. From 1997 to 2011, the TANF caseload declined by 50 percent nationally. This caseload decline varied among the states from 25 to 80 percent (The Urban Institute 2012). Receiving the caseload reduction credit encourages states to use both administrative and non-administrative methods to keep the caseload low, either by removing current clients (through work placements or otherwise) or creating a system so difficult to navigate that new welfare clients do not enter the system. States have the power to create strict program rules, such as full family sanctions, pre-program requirements of job search, strict time limits (less than 60 months in the federal guidelines), and other restrictions allowed under the broad guidelines of TANF (Golden 2005; Rodgers 2000; Rowe & Giannarelli 2006; Ziliak 2015). A very strict assessment of a client's progress can create another barrier to participate in the welfare program.

Under the reform, states received more flexibility in developing and implementing their welfare programs. Welfare reform decentralized the welfare system in two steps. First, the national government transferred program responsibility to the states via TANF, which is referred to as the first order devolution. Second, some states chose to further transfer the responsibility of programs to local governments through administrative or funding mechanisms—second-order devolution (SOD) (Watson & Gold 1997). Devolution of decision making in welfare programs is consistent with federalism and played an important role during the 1990s. Under second-order devolution, states delegated more responsibilities to local governments and, in some cases, to non-profits and the private sector to better address the needs of welfare recipients (Allard 2007; Nathan & Gais 1998; Poole 2003; Whitaker & Time 2001).

Welfare Rules, Administrative Exclusion and Devolution

Rules and Administrative Exclusion

Administrative exclusion is defined as "nonparticipation attributable to organizational factors rather than claimant preferences or substantive eligibility status" (Brodkin & Majmundar 2010, p. 827). For example, clients can be sanctioned off a welfare program for "missing appointments" or "not filing paperwork" (Cherlin, Bogen, Quane, & Burton 2002). Clients find requirements, such as attending an in-person meeting for redetermination of program eligibility, as a bureaucratic hassle (Quint, Widom, & Moore 2001).

Organizational rules and regulations can create a complex welfare system, making participation in that system difficult. For example, organizations can set up formal rules for program participation, such as requirements to produce documents for verification. These documents may not be under the control of the participants, and they may need to collect these documents from agencies, such as schools. This type of procedural requirement increases the "cost" for the participants to participate in the welfare system (Brodkin & Majmundar 2010; Brodkin, Fuqua, & Waxman 2005; Sheely 2013). Welfare offices may also require clients to participate in job search activities and provide proof that they have searched for jobs for a certain time and with certain employers (Maloy, Pavetti, Shin, Darnel, & Scarpulla-Nolan 1998). Such formal rules also increase the "cost" that participants must pay (in terms of time and money) to participate in a cash assistance program, and, thereby, can dissuade them from continuing their application (Lurie 2001).

Administrative exclusion can also be exercised through informal rules and procedures through caseworker's discretion, such as making decisions about the adequacy of eligibility documents (e.g., canceled check vs. a note from the property owner as a proof of rent paid (Brodkin & Majmundar 2010)). Welfare participants may leave the welfare rolls completely if they fail to satisfy program rules, because these rules are burdensome or considered as a "hassle" (Quint, Widom, & Moore 2001).

Removal due to rule violations is different from the other factors leading to a welfare exit, such as a client's preference for non-participation or an increase in income that changes eligibility status, as the latter may signal a transition out of poverty. Hence, it is important to make a distinction between administrative and non-administrative welfare exits.

Welfare Reform and Second Order Devolution

At face value, devolution stands apart from administrative exclusion as a policy choice for organizing bureaucracies. The devolution of authority from the federal government to state and local governments was embedded in welfare reform. Though many states locally administered AFDC programs even before the welfare reform, post-reform the SOD became even more pronounced. Devolution created a wide range of TANF programs at state and local levels. States adopted policy packages that ranged from minimal provisions—conservative approaches that emphasize private responsibility—to integrated approaches that combined generous direct assistance with explicit policy commitments to support families and enforce family responsibility (De Jong, Graefe, Irving, & Pierre 2006; Meyers, Gornick, & Peck 2000; Weil & Finegold 2002).

One motivating assumption behind devolution is that state governments know more about the needs of their welfare population and would be able to serve that population better. This new welfare governance structure has led to a debate between proponents and opponents regarding the potential positive and negative consequences for clients under devolution. Proponents of devolution argue that decentralization leads to better programs that are specifically targeted toward the populations that localities know better than the federal government. States and, more specifically, local governments are aware of the economic and social context of the programs, and, thus, can design programs catering to the needs of the local welfare population (Kim 2008; Sheely 2010). The opponents of the devolution argue that devolving such authority to state and local governments would lead to a "race to the bottom" (RTB) via stricter sanctioning policies, shrinking benefits, and more difficult program rules. Thus, decentralization would lead to punitive treatment of clients (Peterson & Rom 1989). The RTB theory anticipates that states will compete with other neighboring states to avoid being "welfare magnets" due to their more generous public benefits. Hence, they will closely monitor neighboring states when determining the current level of benefits for their welfare population (Bailey 2005; Bailey and Rom 2004; Figlio, Kolpin, & Reed 1999). The literature does not, however, find conclusive evidence of a race to the bottom phenomenon under welfare reform (Berry, Fording, & Hanson 2003).

How much devolution occurred within a state under TANF depended upon how much responsibility a state had already given to the localities before the implementation of PRWORA. Prior to the passage of PRWORA, 15 states had locally administered AFDC programs, and 35 states had state-administered programs (Gainsborough 2003; Watson & Gold 1997). After the reform, significant changes occurred in eight states (California, Colorado, Maryland, Minnesota, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, and Wisconsin) that previously had county administered programs. In these states, counties gained additional authority and discretion under TANF. Some states did not devolve the responsibility to local governments. Instead, they created local or regional advisory boards. Though in some cases these advisory boards have local government representation, the emphasis is usually on business representation, local community groups, and service providers. These states link welfare function to workforce development in the state. The states where this type of devolution occurred are Arkansas, Tennessee, Utah, Florida, Michigan, and Texas. In eight states, significant devolution occurred after PRWORA, and, in six states, welfare responsibility was given to the workforce development boards. Thus, fourteen states currently provide TANF implementation responsibility through the local authority (Kim & Fording 2010). These states are referred to as the "SOD states" in this article.

Effect of Devolution

What is known regarding the effects of this devolution? Devolution of policymaking authority increases perceptions of successful policy outcomes at the subnational level for county officials (Cho, Kelleher, Wright, & Yackee 2005). Under the flexibility of the reform, states with a greater proportion of African American clients on welfare adopted more stringent policies (e.g., stricter sanctioning policies, shorter time limits, and family cap policies) than the states with a lower proportion of African Americans on welfare. Likewise, the relationships among the political climate, the racial-ethnic composition of welfare caseloads, and program implementation is well documented in the literature (Fording, Soss, & Schram 2007; Keiser, Mueser, & Choi 2004; Sheely 2012; Soss, Schram, Fording, & Houser 2009; Soss, Schram, Vartanian, & O'Brien 2001) providing evidence that racial minorities may suffer due to strict welfare rules and their implementation (Abramovitz 2006).

In a closely related study, Kim and Fording (2010) focus on SOD and TANF implementation in a state-level analysis and found that SOD states experienced a greater degree of caseload decline than non-SOD states. Also, SOD states were more likely to use punitive policies such as sanctions. Thus, SOD might lead to the more restrictive implementation of TANF rules.

Research Design

Data

This study uses a uniquely constructed data set comprised of the data from the National Survey of America's Families (NSAF) combined with data from University of Kentucky Center for Poverty Research (UKCPR) National Welfare data, and the Welfare Rules Database (WRD). The Urban Institute conducted NSAF as part of the Assessing New Federalism project. NSAF provides a comprehensive look at the well-being of children and non-elderly adults and reveals sometimes-striking differences among the 13 states studied in depth. The survey provides quantitative measures of child, adult, and family well-being in America, with an emphasis on persons in low-income families. Though 13 states in the survey (Alabama, Massachusetts, New Jersey Washington, California, Michigan, New York, Wisconsin, Colorado, Minnesota, Texas, Florida, and Mississippi) were selected for intensive sampling, the data is representative of the US after combining observations from the 13 states with the rest of the nation. Conducted in three rounds—1997, 1999, and 2002—to gather information on more than 100,000 people and more than 40,000 families across the country, NSAF gives researchers tools to track national trends during that period, drawing on detailed and comprehensive information about low-income parents and their children. It also provides detailed information about TANF exits, which is the main variable of interest for this research.

The NSAF data is further supplemented with state-level data, which are retrieved from three sources. State characteristics, such as unemployment rate, TANF caseload, etc., are retrieved from the University of Kentucky Center for Poverty Research (UKCPR) National

Welfare data, and the state TANF policies, such as sanctions and diversion payments, are retrieved from the Welfare Rules Database (WRD). The state political ideology score is adapted from the citizen and political ideology measure developed by Berry, Fording, Ringquist, Hanson, and Klarner (2010).

Variable Creation

In the empirical model, administrative exclusion is denoted by the variable administrative exit. The variable categorizes exits from a welfare program for an administrative or a non-administrative reason. The NSAF asks questions about the reason why a client exited a welfare program. It does not provide an insight into program entry issues. Hence, consistent with Brodkin and Majmundar (2010), the dependent variable in this study is “the reason for exiting welfare.” The reasons are coded as administrative and non-administrative to create a binomial dependent variable. The exit can happen in two ways. Either a welfare office can remove a client for various reasons, or a client can choose to leave welfare. Thus, the sample includes non-missing observations of all working-age adults (18-64) who exited welfare in either way, with a sample size of 4,685. Like Brodkin and Majmundar (2010), reasons for exiting welfare are coded based on rule violation and administrative problems to create the dependent variable administrative exit.

The reason for exiting welfare is coded as an administrative exit if a client cited any of the following reason for exiting welfare: “Did not follow program rules,’’ ‘‘Administrative problems/mix up,” “Didn’t want or need/too much hassle/system too frustrating.” The welfare exit is coded as a non-administrative exit if a client cited one of the following reasons for exiting welfare: ‘‘Earnings had increased,’’ ‘‘Assets were too high,’’ ‘‘Reached end of time limit,’’ ‘‘Received money from another source,’’ ‘‘Change in family situation,’’ ‘‘Moved,’’ ‘‘Got a job,’’ ‘‘Same job, worked more hours, or got a raise,’’ ‘‘Got a better job,’’ ‘‘Married/remarried,’’ ‘‘Moved in with family,’’ ‘‘Moved to another county/state,’’ ‘‘Did not want it or need it/uninterested,’’ ‘‘Earnings too high,’’ and ‘‘Income too high.”

Second Order Devolution (SOD) states are coded based on Gainsborough (2003), Kim (2008), and Kim and Fording’s (2010) classification to create a binomial independent variable. Fourteen states were coded as SOD states. They are California, Colorado, Maryland, Minnesota, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Wisconsin, Arkansas, Tennessee, Utah, Florida, Michigan, and Texas.

In 1997, 12.33 percent of welfare exits were attributed to administrative reasons. In 1999, 15.31percent of exits were for administrative reasons, and in 2002, 3.33 percent of exits were attributed to administrative reasons.

Theory and Research Hypothesis

To understand how the implementation of welfare policy differs across SOD and non-SOD states, this study focuses on the relationship between administrative exclusion and SOD. It builds on two previous studies by Brodkin and Majmundar (2010) and Kim and Fording (2010) and extends the analysis further.

Brodkin and Majmundar (2010) developed a framework where formal rules, informal rules, and governance work together to create exclusion. It assessed the effect of administrative exclusion on caseload decline and found that clients in higher caseload reduction states are likely to exit welfare due to administrative exclusion.

The second study by Kim and Fording (2010), tests two main hypotheses. First is the efficiency hypothesis, which predicts that the SOD states will have better TANF program outcomes than the non-SOD states because of a greater discretionary power granted to local administrators and case managers. The second hypothesis is the stringency hypothesis. According to this hypothesis, local administrators and case managers have greater incentive to use policy tools, such as sanctions, to discourage clients from continued use of TANF benefits. Thus, under the SOD, caseload will decline due to the punitive use of TANF implementation. This happens due to the financial and administrative structure of TANF programs in an SOD state. Under the SOD, some local or regional jurisdictions receive block grants from the state. This generates pressure on the county or the regional board, since they have to pay 100 percent of the welfare cost beyond the state's contribution. Additionally, some states reward their counties for savings in the welfare program. Another concern in SOD states is the political pressure and competition among counties to avoid an in-flow of poor people and the loss of business and tax revenue. Because of these financial incentives and political pressures, counties in SOD states are more likely to use punitive policies to reduce the TANF caseload, and these states experience greater TANF caseload decline than the non-SOD states. Kim and Fording (2010) found evidence that the SOD states are also more likely to use punitive measures, such as sanctions. Thus, building on these two previous studies, the central hypothesis of this article is that the SOD states, as compared to the non-SOD states, are more likely to use administrative exclusion to reduce welfare caseloads.

Empirical Model

The dependent variable administrative exit is a binary variable that shows how a client exited the welfare program and is coded as 1/0. The study focuses on assessing the probability of exiting a welfare program for an administrative reason for a client who resides in a SOD state. The most commonly used methodological practice for binary dependent variables is a linear probability model (LPM) (Wooldridge 2016). However, LPM suffers from two main limitations: first, the fitted probabilities can be less than zero or greater than one and, secondly, the partial effect of any variable in the level form remains constant (Wooldridge 2016). To overcome these limitations, a more sophisticated binary response model, such as logistic regression, can be utilized. This study uses logistic regression to estimate equation 1 below, along with clustered standard errors, and state and year fixed effects.

$$Yist = \beta 0ist+\beta 1Xist+\beta 2Zist+\beta Qst+\varphi s+\psi t+ \varepsilon ist \qquad [1]$$

Where Yist is the indicator of administrative exit and equals 1 if an individual (i) who resided in the state (s) and exited welfare due to administrative reason in the year (t). Xist is the indicator SOD residence, equals 1 if, a client resides in a SOD state. It is the main independent variable of interest. Z is the vector of the demographic controls, which include race (white is the omitted category), Hispanic ethnicity, gender (compared to female), age, single (widowed/ separated/ divorced/ never married) relative to married, educational attainment (compared to high school dropout), and the number of dependent children. Q is the vector of state-level controls that include the state unemployment rate, state political ideology, a state's sanctioning policy (compared to a full sanction), the presence of diversion payment (compared to no diversion payment), and welfare caseload in a state. φs is the state fixed effect, ψt is the year fixed effect, and εist is the error term. To explore if there is a connection between SOD residence, race, and administrative exit, the study uses another specification focusing on the interaction between race and SOD residence to estimate equation 2 below.

$$Yist = \beta 0ist+\beta 1Xist+\beta 2Zist+\beta 3Qst+ \beta 4\ Xist * Black +\varphi s+ \psi t+ \varepsilon ist \qquad [2]$$

Here, β4 is the coefficient of the interaction term between race and SOD. The interaction between Black*SOD compared to White*SOD is the main variable of interest. The literature finds evidence of a negative relationship between the type of welfare program and the racial composition of welfare caseload, and, hence, this interaction assesses the connection between client race and living in a SOD state. Along with the full sample, three subgroups are also analyzed. They are low income (up to 150 percent of Federal Poverty Level or FPL), low education (high school and less), and single mothers, as they represent a high-risk population for welfare participation.

Results

This results section describes summary statistics and interprets the results for the logistic regression. Table 1 describes the summary statistics for the full sample and three subgroups.

The sample consists largely of single women. The average age is 32, and the number of dependent children on an average is 2. Seventy-one percent of the sample consists of poor (100% of FPL) and near-poor (150 percent of FPL), while 18.15 percent of the sample consists of individuals in deep poverty (50% of FPL).

Table 2 describes aggregated state-level characteristics comparing SOD and non-SOD states. The average state unemployment rate is 4.73 percent, and the average welfare caseload is 55,000. Seventy-eight percent of the states have partial sanctions, and 60 percent of the states have adopted diversion payments. Eleven percent of administrative exits take place in SOD states, while 10.38 percent of administrative exits happen in non-SOD states.

Table 3, column 1 shows that for the working-age population, living in a SOD state has no significant effect on the probability of an administrative exit. The probability of administrative exit is higher for singles than married (2.7 percentage points), and Hispanics have a higher chance of administrative exit (3.4 percentage points). As compared to white clients, both Black and Asian clients have a higher likelihood of an administrative exit (3.4 percentage points and 16-percentage points, respectfully). Since both Asian and Black clients exit the welfare caseload for violation of rules or other administrative problems at a higher rate, it appears that such administrative problems affect non-white clients more often than their white counterparts, indicating that welfare sanctions may affect races differently. Race effects of this analysis are consistent with the literature. As compared to clients with no high school education, high school education reduces the chance of an administrative exit by 5.9 percentage points. None of the state level controls is significant, indicating that, except SOD, other state-level policies, including the sanctioning regime, presence of diversion payments, and state unemployment rate, do not have a statistically significant effect on administrative exclusion.

Among the remaining three subgroups, for low income mothers and single mothers, living in an SOD state increases the likelihood of an administrative exit by 10.6 percentage points and 7 percentage points, respectively. In the case of the low income and low education sample, race, ethnicity, education, and marital status are associated with administrative exit in the expected direction, consistent with the literature (Brodkin & Majmundar 2010). As compared to married clients, single clients have a higher likelihood of administrative exit. Hispanics and non-white clients have a higher likelihood of administrative exit. Education

Table 1: Individual Level Descriptive Statistics

	All (N = 4,685)		Low Income (N = 3,097)		Low Education (N = 4,461)		Single Mothers (N = 2,209)	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Administrative Exit		10.8		12.4		10.83		12.22
Race								
White	3,055	65.21	1,874	60.51	2,910	65.23	1,241	56.18
Black	1,403	29.95	1,080	34.87	1,341	30.06	884	40.02
Asian	63	1.34	33	1.07	53	1.19	20	0.91
Other	164	3.5	110	3.55	157	3.52	64	2.9
Marital Status								
Married	2,402	51.27	1,454	46.95	2,276	51.02	-	-
Single	2,283	48.73	1,643	53.05	2,185	48.98		
Gender								
Male	1,254	26.77	690	22.28	1,178	26.41	-	-
Female	3,431	73.23	2,407	77.72	3,283	73.59		
Ethnicity								
Hispanic	740	15.8	513	16.56	715	16.03	305	13.81
Non-Hispanic	3,945	84.2	2,584	83.44	3,746	83.97	1,904	86.19
Education								
Less than High School	1,207	25.76	902	29.12	1,207	27.06	516	23.36
High School/GED	3,254	69.46	2,089	67.45	3,254	72.94	1,600	72.43
BA or Higher	224	4.78	106	3.42	-	-	93	4.21
Income as a % of FPL								
Family Income < 50% of FPL	791	18.15	791	25.54	773	18.49	486	23.2
50% <= Family Income <100 % of FPL	1,244	28.54	1,244	40.17	1,196	28.61	658	31.41
100% < = Family Income < 150% of FPL	1,062	24.36	1,062	34.29	1,022	24.45	454	21.67
150% <= Family Income <200% of FPL	680	15.6	-	-	638	15.26	279	13.32
200% <=Family Income <300% of FPL	582	13.35	-	-	551	13.18	218	10.41
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Children under 18	2.35	1.28	2.49	1.32	2.37	1.29	2.21	1.24
Age	31.98	8.60	32.01	8.59	31.85	8.58	30.25	8.24

Source: Author's tabulation of data from NSAF, 1997, 1999, 2002.

remains a predictor of administrative exit where clients with lower than high-school education exit TANF at a higher rate compared to clients with more than high school education. In the case of single mothers, along with race, ethnicity, and education, the number of dependent children have a significant effect on administrative exit. Every additional child increases the likelihood of an administrative exit by 1.1 percentage point. For single mothers, the state unemployment rate affects administrative exits. For every 1 percentage point increase in the state unemployment rate, the chance of administrative exit for this group increases by 5.9 percentage points.

Annual administrative exits in this study range from 3 to 15 percent, providing estimates comparable to a previous study by Pavetti et al. (2003). A review of the literature on TANF sanctioning policies conducted by Pavetti et al. (2003) found that studies of closed welfare cases reported sanctioning rates ranging from 10 to 28 percent. While the specific effect of SOD residence on administrative exits in the current study is small, it is important to note the timing of the NSAF data collection. The NSAF data were collected right after the welfare reform, when the country experienced economic expansion. Ziliak, Figlio, Davis, and Connolly (2000) attribute a 66 percent decline in AFDC/TANF caseload to the economic expansion. Thus, it is possible that due to macroeconomic growth, TANF clients exited the program due to non-administrative reasons, as reported in the NSAF data. However, such an assessment of client welfare exits must be done during the periods of economic decline, such as during the Great Recession. Studies of TANF find that TANF did not respond to client

Table 2: State Level Descriptive Statistics

	All (N = 153)		SOD (N = 42)			Non-SOD(N=111)
Administrative Exit	Percent		Percent			Percent
	10.8		11.01			10.38
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Unemployment Rate	4.73	1.18	4.89	1.24	4.66	1.16
Welfare Caseload	55,932.20	10,0811.10	120994.5	169910.4	31314.03	32479.72
Political Ideology Score	46.37	13.39	47.78	14.52	45.84	12.97
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Sanction						
Full	35	22.88	10	23.81	25	22.52
Partial	118	77.12	32	76.19	86	77.48
Diversion Payment						
Yes	60	39.22	24	57.14	36	32.43
No	93	60.78	18	43.86	75	67.57

Source: Author's tabulation of data from UKCPR and WRD for 1997, 1999, 2002.
Note: Political Ideology score for DC is unavailable.

need during the Great Recession compared to other safety net programs, such as SNAP and EITC (Pavetti & Rosenbaum 2010; Hall 2015; Schott 2016). Therefore, it is important for future studies to carefully assess welfare exits during times of low economic activity and a high unemployment rate to understand further the administrative vs. non-administrative factors affecting welfare exits.

Table 3: Logistic Regression Model of Administrative Exclusion (APE Reported)

Predictors of Administrative Exit	All	Low Income	Low Education	Single Mother
SOD	0.03	0.11	0.03	0.07
	(0.05)	0.06	(0.05)	(0.04)*
Male	0.01	0.01	0.01	
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	
Hispanic	0.03	0.05	0.04	0.03
	(0.01)***	(0.02)***	(0.01)***	(0.03)
Single	0.03	0.02	0.03	
	(0.02)*	(0.02)	(0.02)*	
High School Diploma	-0.06	-0.05	-0.06	-0.08
	(0.01)***	(0.02)***	(0.01)***	(0.01)***
BA or More	-0.05	-0.05		-0.07
	(0.03)	(0.05)		(0.04)
Asian	0.17	0.17	0.18	0.27
	(0.07)***	(0.11)**	(0.07)***	(0.14)***
Black	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.05
	(0.02)**	(0.02)*	(0.02)**	(0.02)**
Other	-0.06	-0.07	-0.07	-0.01
	(0.02)**	(0.02)**	(0.02)**	(0.04)
Age	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)*
Child under18	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)*
Unemployment Rate	0.01	0.04	0.01	0.06
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)*
AFDC/TANF Caseload	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Sanction	0.01	-0.01	0.01	0.01
	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Diversion Payment	0.00	-0.03	-0.01	0.00
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)
Political Ideology	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Constant	-1.33	-3.52	-1.22	-3.37
	(2.11)	(2.23)	(2.06)	(1.54)**
Observations	4,537	2,993	4,315	2,123

Robust clustered standard errors in parentheses, clustered around the state. The results control for year and state fixed effects, which are not shown in the table. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Since the results find that non-white welfare clients have a higher likelihood of exiting a welfare program than their white counterparts, the connection between SOD residence, race, specifically black/African American race, and administrative exclusion is further explored. Results in Table 4 find no statistically significant effect of interaction between race and SOD on administrative exit, indicating no cumulative effect of race and SOD residence on administrative exit.

Table 4: Logistics Regression Model of Administrative Exit using the interaction between race and SOD (APE Reported)

Predictors of Administrative Exit	(1) All	(2) Low Income	(3) Low Education	(4) Single Mother
SOD	0.01	0.09	0.01	0.04
	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Male	0.01	0.01	0.01	
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	
Hispanic	0.04	0.05	0.04	0.03
	(0.01)***	(0.02)**	(0.01)***	(0.03)
Single	0.03	0.02	0.03	
	(0.02)*	(0.02)	(0.02)*	
High School	-0.06	-0.05	-0.06	-0.08
	(0.01)***	(0.02)***	(0.01)***	(0.01)***
BA or More	-0.05	-0.05		-0.07
	(0.03)	(0.05)		(0.04)
Asian	0.17	0.17	0.18	0.28
	(0.07)***	(0.11)**	(0.08)***	(0.14)***
Black	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.03
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.04)
Other	-0.06	-0.07	-0.07	-0.01
	(0.02)**	(0.02)**	(0.02)**	(0.04)
SOD X Black	0.03	0.02	0.03	0.03
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.05)
Age	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)*
Child Under 18	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)*
Unemployment Rate	0.01	0.04	0.01	0.06
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)*
AFDC/TANF Caseload	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Sanction	0.01	-0.01	0.01	0.01
	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Diversion Payment	0.00	-0.03	-0.01	0.00
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)
Political Ideology	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Constant	-1.16	-3.43	-1.06	-3.15
	(2.12)	(2.21)	(2.08)	(1.55)**
Observations	4,537	2,993	4,315	2,123

Robust clustered standard errors in parentheses, clustered around the state. The results control for year and state fixed effects, which are not shown in the table. *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$

Discussion

Results for this analysis show that, for low-income clients and single mothers, residence in a SOD state increases the likelihood of a welfare exit due to rule violations and bureaucratic hassles, as reflected in administrative exits. For these two sub-samples, which are representative of vulnerable populations that face more barriers to employment, SOD residency predicts administrative exit likelihoods at levels similar to race, ethnicity, marital status, and educational attainment. It is unclear why the devolution of authority results in TANF clients exiting the program for administrative reasons at higher rates. Moreover, administrative exclusion reflects bureaucratic choices and rules violations—implying some of these individuals and families may be leaving without having achieved self-sufficiency. One of the reasons behind decentralization of welfare policy was to provide program responsibility to states, under the assumption that they know their welfare population better and will design welfare programs that are suitable to the needs of their clients. Given such power, states have the ability to be more generous, but also have the ability to be stricter.

The policy implications of this phenomenon are clear. Recently, federal policymakers have proposed block granting other safety net programs, such as SNAP (Ryan 2014). Results of this analysis suggest that the effects of devolved authority under block grants need to be assessed carefully before block granting other federal safety net programs.

The federal government evaluates a state's TANF performance using work participation rates as a performance measure—a decision that has been criticized on two main grounds (Hahn, Golden, & Edelman 2012). First, many states cannot meet work participation rates given the narrow definition of work-related activities and high level of expected work participation rates. Secondly, since states get credit for work participation rates by reducing cash assistance caseloads for reasons other than a change in eligibility requirements (Government Accountability Office 2010), it creates direct incentives for states to do so. The results of this analysis point toward distorted incentives created within the system due to the performance measure, namely the work participation rate, as it relates to caseload reduction. This study finds that single mothers and low-income TANF clients leave welfare at higher rates for administrative reasons, indicating that for some vulnerable populations who may need more support to transition into the labor market, TANF policies and rules may not be working. Thus, for some TANF clients, work support and rules may be operating effectively, but, for others, TANF rules appear to be more punitive.

Race and ethnicity remain important predictors for administrative exclusion. Studies have shown that Hispanic and Black women face a higher rate of sanctions as compared to white women (Schram, Soss, Fording, & Houser 2009; Monnat 2010). Thus, findings of race and ethnicity as predictors of administrative exclusion are consistent with the literature. This brings forward an important discussion about the role of street-level bureaucrats as state agents in the implementation of welfare policy, which is well documented in the literature (Meyer, Glaser, & MacDonald 1998; Riccucci, Meyers, Lurie, & Han 2004; Sandfort 2000). How these front-line workers understand and implement TANF rules have direct consequences for clients whose well-being depends on these caseworkers and managers. For example, if a caseworker interprets case management as "meeting quotas," then the most important aspect of the job becomes meeting those numbers in order to remain compliant with the program rules (Brodkin 1997).

Caseworkers develop their own methods to cope with work conditions, such as access to resources, caseload size, and performance measures. They also include their personal assumptions and experiences in their work practices. Thus, both organizational conditions and personal values influence the way in which caseworkers deal with clients (Hasenfeld

2010). Given the importance of caseworkers' role in the implementation of welfare rules and policies, future research should explore this connection between client race, caseworker practices, administrative exclusion, and the SOD.

The performance measure of work participation rates and caseload reduction credit are tied closely together and appear—in some cases—to be displacing the goal of client economic self-sufficiency. This brings forward the issue of goal displacement within welfare governance. Bohte and Meier (2000) discuss the main issue with evaluating agency performance based on output rather than the outcome. They conclude that agencies give more importance to the performance measure, and focus on generating numbers to satisfy those output targets, rather than focusing on achieving important policy outcomes, such as economic self-sufficiency in the case of welfare clients, creating the problem of goal displacement.

Performance measures can lead to achieving small-term, measurable goals instead of long-term, more difficult goals (Marschke 2001; Moynihan 2010). In the case of welfare reform, such performance measures focus mainly on caseload decline. However, rewards for caseload decline are not balanced by penalties for failure to provide adequate access for clients, creating skewed informal practices focused on the performance measure of caseload reduction (Brodkin 2007). To resolve this issue of goal displacement within welfare programs, a better performance measure might be the number of clients successfully employed through the TANF program and the number of clients who remained out of the system due to continued employment, focusing more on the goal of self-sufficiency than on caseload reduction (Bitler & Hoynes 2015; Hahn et al. 2012).

In the early period after the passage of PRWORA, declining caseload was considered one of the indicators of program success. This, in part, was driven by the strong labor market, which absorbed single mothers at previously unseen rates. However, very broad and competing policy goals and the myriad programs developed under PRWORA make it difficult to assess its success. Understanding specific issues of implementation under PRWORA will help policymakers understand which administrative factors are influencing the measured program outcome, which continues to be the work participation rate. If other program rules become more important than self-sufficient clients, then program rules need to be revised to improve implementation outcomes other than caseload reduction. If the policy goal is to help people move "from welfare to work," the case outcome focus should become "work" versus the number of cases closed and dollars saved in the process.

Limitations and Future Research

It appears that by creating additional barriers to successful transition to the labor market through many administrative rules and procedures, welfare bureaucracies may be limiting access for those who need assistance the most (Brodkin, Fuqua, & Waxman 2005). However, the results of this study should be interpreted with caution. This study uses the NSAF data, which include observations from 1997, 1999, and 2002. Thus, this analysis is limited to the period right after the passage of PRWORA during a major economic expansion and expansion of the EITC at the federal level. The effects need to be explored in during major economic downturns, such as the Great Recession. During the Great Recession, the unemployment rate increased by up to 10 percent. Though families faced job loss and struggled to meet basic needs, TANF caseloads did not increase immediately, and, as a program, it was not as effective as other safety net programs, such as SNAP (Hall 2015). Hence, future research should explore the connection between administrative exclusion and SOD to understand this link over a longer time period, with multiple business cycles. This study also explores the connection between race and SOD. However, future research could explore a connection between SOD, education, and race to understand how these conditions together affect administrative exclusion.

We have passed the 20th anniversary of welfare reform, and it is important to critically examine the relationship between devolution and welfare reform, especially given that federal policymakers have proposed block granting other safety net programs, such as SNAP (Ryan 2014), it is imperative to settle still unanswered questions about the long-run self-sufficiency of welfare clients, and how block-granted programs may help or hinder this goal. Policymakers should therefore carefully assess the effect of devolution and block granting under current welfare policy.

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