

Interview Template: welfare05 federal

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A. Starting off

- “Thank you so much for meeting with me”
- Discuss **CONSENT FORM** and **ATTRIBUTION**
- Recording: (PRESS BUTTON TWICE, CHECK RECORDING AND LEVELS)
- “This is a study about federal-state relations in social policy. Specifically welfare and unemployment insurance. During this interview I want to focus on the reauthorization of TANF. Compared to welfare reform in the 1990s, the reauthorization of TANF is less discussed, but it entailed some important changes to TANF including to the work requirements and how those rates were calculated. What was ... [Q1]”

B. Motivation behind changes to TANF in the 2005 Deficit Reduction Act

1. What was, according to you, the primary motivation behind changes to TANF in the 2005 Deficit Reduction Act?

Possibly supplement with options:

- Cutting costs/retrenchment (e.g. the name: DRA)
- Respect for state autonomy
- Concerns about the behavior and/or incentives of states (lack of activation, driving up federal costs)
- To improve the lives of low-income individuals
- [Ask specifics: why? How was this expressed? Can you give a practical example?]

C. The relevance of federal-state relations and IMH for welfare reform

2. Did federal-state relations play any role during TANF reauthorization, and if so how?

- Why, or why not?
- Was it important for the reauthorization?
- What role for state autonomy?
- What role for the block grant structure?

[Ask specifics: how was this expressed? Can you give a practical example?]

3. What role, if any, did concerns about the behavior and/or incentives of states (how states spent resources or design policies) play during the debate on TANF reauthorization?

- How did this express itself?
- Can you give a practical policy example of how such concerns were translated into policy?

[Possibly: give brief assessment and ask if that is a fair assessment]

D. Effect of welfare reform on federal state relations

4. So the before the reauthorization the division of costs and competences was as follows [...], correct?

- States had very wide-ranging autonomy to implement their TANF programs
- States had strong incentives to reduce the size of their TANF cash benefit-caseloads

5. How did reauthorization change this division of costs and competences?

- What was the effect on the autonomy of the states?
- What was the effect on the state incentives regarding the design of welfare?

[Ask specifics: what was the most important element of welfare reform for the incentives of states?]

E. Policy remedies to IMH

6. How, if in any way, were concerns about state behavior/incentives (IMH) explicitly addressed? - If not, how would you characterize the changes to work requirements (C.R.C., MOE)? - If so, was it successful? - If so, how exactly did these changes mitigate federal concerns about state behavior? - Why were these specific policies chosen to mitigate federal concerns? - What was the response of states to these policies? 7. Were there other policies considered that related to concerns about state behavior/incentives? - Were they implemented, and why (not)? - How did they work?	-
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F. Perceptions and motivations of other government levels

8. How would you characterize relations between federal and state policy-makers preceding and during TANF reauthorization? - Were there stumbling blocks in terms of federal-state relations and if so what was the biggest one? - How did this relate to the initial motivation of welfare reform? - Was the federal government concerned about IMH? - Were states concerned about federal overreach? [Ask for specifics: how was this expressed? Can you give an example?] 9. How did federal policy-makers perceive states and vice-versa? - As partners in welfare reform, as budget- or power-maximizers, or as primarily concerned about electoral politics in their own constituency? - [Ask specifics: how did this express itself? Can you give an example?]	
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G. Reflecting on Institutional Moral Hazard

“For my research project, I frame federal funding for welfare as an 'intergovernmental' – or 'federal-state' – insurance. Federal funding, partially, insures states against the costs of welfare dependency. Any insurance entails some level of moral hazard. Moral hazard means the ability of the insured party to influence the insured risk. A classic example is that when a person is insured for the cost of visiting the doctor, that that person will visit the doctor more often. In the case of welfare, because of federal funding, states may be less inclined to reduce welfare dependency vis-à-vis a situation without federal funding and/or they may be inclined to find other ways to maximize federal funding. I call this phenomenon ‘Institutional Moral Hazard’. In other words, the moral hazard of states. What I want to analyze is whether the federal government has any concerns about what I call Institutional moral hazard with regard to welfare, if and how the federal government addresses these potential concerns and in turn how that might affect state autonomy and how states reflect on such potential federal concerns.”	
10. Do you think that this framework to analyze federal-state politics makes sense? - If so/not, why? - Do the governments involved ever conceive of their relationship as a type of insurance-relationship, you think? 11. How would you characterize federal-state relations in welfare at this moment(, keeping that frame of institutional moral hazard in mind)? - Keeping in mind this institutional moral hazard frame [if interviewee thinks it makes sense] - Are there currently any important stumbling blocks? - If so: Are there any solutions for these stumbling blocks considered? If so, which and why? - If not: what makes the current federal-state relation working so smooth?	

H. Wrapping up

- Is there something we left out?
- Thank you so much, do you have any questions for me?
- Who should I talk to, to learn more?
- You know how to get in touch?
- Again, thank you so much!

Additional Notes:

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