Who' Calling the Shots on State AFDC Policy:  
The Governor, the State Legislature or the Bureaucracy?

Sung Chul Kim  
Kyu Cheon Lee  
and  
Robert Jay Dilger

Please Direct Correspondence to the Following Address:

Dr. Sung Chul Kim  
Public Administration Department  
Myung Ji University  

Phone: 300-1713  
Fax: 300-1520
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Political scientists and others interested in governmental policies affecting the poor have conducted a great deal of research on why state welfare policies, particularly decisions concerning recipient benefits, vary so significantly from one state to another. Previous research has focused on various political and socioeconomic factors in the determination of state welfare policies.

This article attempts to sort out the relative importance of the states' three major institutions—the governor, the legislature, and the bureaucracy—in determining the outcomes of state AFDC policy decisions. This study, however, examines the direct influence of the governor on welfare policy. Thus, a model of the gubernatorial policy-making assumes that the governor play a key role (i.e., giving more weight to the governor) in the determination of state Aid to Family with Dependent Children (AFDC) program's fiscal decisions compare to state legislature and welfare agency (i.e., assuming that the state legislature and the state welfare agency indirectly influence the outcome of state AFDC decisions).

This paper selects the AFDC program, which serves as fine laboratory since the state government play a major role in the delivery of AFDC benefits. Finally, this study uses Linear Structural Relations (LISREL) method since it allows us to test the direct and indirect influences as well as confirmatory factor analysis.

Literature Review

Previous research has shown that states with competitive political party

1. The AFDC program was created in 1965 to provide cash assistance to single mothers with dependent children. This program serves one of the few open-ended categorical grants that are reimbursed by a matching ratio. Basically, the cash amount of AFDC benefit for recipients depends on state government's fiscal decisions.