Dissertation Prospectus

January 2004

2nd Draft
ABSTRACT

Religion was a large part of American welfare before welfare became government welfare. Therefore, care for the poor in twenty-first century America cannot be rightly understood without taking into account the many roles of religion: providing a wide range of services outside the government welfare system, advocating for changes in welfare policy, delivering government-funded services, raising questions about how much and what kind of assistance is to be provided. Yet, the most influential meta-narratives in American social welfare policy seldom, if ever, recognize the role religion plays in addressing the needs of the poor. However, the tide is changing. More than 20 years after Richard John Nehauus and Peter Berger wrote To Empower People” and first urged policymakers to encourage society’s “mediating structures” (e.g. families, churches, voluntary organizations, neighborhoods, etc), it would appear as though the United States is heeding the call to energize those “civilizing institutions that are neither market-driven or government run”. More and more, today’s social policy debate revolves around what Burke called “the first principle… of public affection”, civil society and the “little platoons” that do the heavy lifting of shaping good citizens and that act as a buffer against cultural disintegration.

This research seeks to examine the role of faith-based organizations in addressing the needs of the poor through the Charitable Choice Initiative. It seeks to examine in detail the theological, organizational and administrative constraints that would prevent faith-based organizations from becoming “key players” in the welfare reform landscape. Emphasis is placed on marginalized religious denominations and the role they play in the generation of social capital.
INTRODUCTION

Religion was a large part of American welfare before welfare became government welfare. Therefore, care for the poor in twenty-first century America cannot be rightly understood without taking into account the many roles of religion: providing a wide range of services outside the government welfare system, advocating for changes in welfare policy, delivering government-funded services, raising questions about how much and what kind of assistance is to be provided. Yet, the most influential metanarratives in American social welfare policy seldom, if ever, recognize the role religion plays in addressing the needs of the poor. The main story line portrays a “quasi-welfare state” supplanting the fragmentary assistance offered by local sectarian, voluntary and municipal programs, and instead measures welfare progress by the growth of government provision at the expense of private and religious action. Olasky concurs noting those bureaucratic programs unable to address the needs of the poor- a process he refers to as the tragedy of American compassion- has replaced effective, personal and spiritual assistance. This marginalization or privatization of religion that has occurred as the result of the construction of the American welfare state, while it may have “boxed-in” religious activities on the governmental front, did not minimized the role of religion in addressing the needs of the poor. While it may have been silenced, it was not dead.

Religion witnessed a revival of sorts by the end of the twentieth-century as many were welcoming the role of religion as a “supplementary agent” or even a partner of

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government in developing a personal, tailored, value-centered approach to state sponsored welfare programs. Federal welfare reform legislation included a specific measure, the Charitable Choice provision, designed to make faith-based programs part of the mix of services offered by the public sector to families in need. Religion was becoming de-privatized, becoming explicitly part of the nation’s public welfare system.4

What factors lead to the resurgence of religion in the political landscape as it pertains to welfare and addressing the needs of the poor? Do religious organizations, which are now being asked to provide direction and purpose to welfare reform, possess the administrative capacities and organizational traits to be propelled to the forefront of welfare after decades of being brushed off? Or have they assumed the posture that they will continue to operate as they have always operated refusing to accept the rules and regulations imposed by federal legislation? Equally important, can the federal government continue to reform welfare without the assistance of religious groups and religious denominations?

THE MODERN AMERICAN WELFARE STATE

The American public welfare state always seems to be the target of critique, criticism and reform. Concerns about dependency- whether programs are functioning as a “hand-up” or only as a “hand-out”- has been particularly persistent. From the very beginning, President Roosevelt warned against “being on the dole” and sought to provide work opportunities through programs such as the Youth Conservation Corps whenever possible.5 In the 1960’s, the Democratic Leadership in Washington recognized the

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5 Theda Skocpol, Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States (Cambridge, MA, 1995), 3ff
importance of developing some type of work requirement for welfare recipients. In 1988, the Family Support Act combined a liberal demand for better government to prepare people for employment with a conservative demand for work requirements in addressing the needs of welfare recipients and the increasing welfare rolls. Unfortunately, these reforms made only minute changes in the actual operations and outcomes of the American welfare state.

However, by the mid-1990’s radical welfare reform arrived reversing the trajectory of six decades of American welfare development. Through the efforts of a conservative Republican Congress and a President, who vowed to “change welfare as we know it”, the core welfare program known as Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) was transformed into Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) almost overnight.

Several important trends set the stage for this dramatic change. One powerful factor was the belief by many, including those on the receiving end of welfare benefits, that much of the government welfare effort and expenditure had done little good and even harm to those who were poor. Over 11.6 million Americans were on the welfare rolls in 1998 and the Urban Institute estimates that more than 2.6 million people were added to the list in a two-year period from 1994-1996. Since the 1960’s, America has spent $5.4 trillion on human service programs. Yet, the United States has endured a 30-year rise in illegitimacy of 500 percent, watched violent crime increase by 600%, and seen the

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number of children on welfare rolls swell from 3.3 million in 1965 to 9.6 million in 1993.  

A renewed appreciation that poverty can be thought of within a behavioral context as well as an economic context was also resurfacing. In the mid 1960’s, research focused on variables that are commonly associated with moral judgments concerning the poor; the belief that the poor have no morality (sexual immoral, steal, etc), are lazy, don’t want to get an education and improve themselves and are a bunch of “sickies.” Research validates the assertion that many people are poor because of external factors such as racism, lack of job opportunities, etc. but scholars have pointed out that many times persons or families are poor because of choices they make: regressing into negative habits, rejecting opportunities for advancement and resolving themselves to a life of apathy instead of revitalization and resurgence. The product of such action is the relegation of people to a life outside the mainstream of society despite the creation of federal job-training programs and income assistance programs because the mental preparedness and motivation was never addressed.

The other vital trend was the upsurge in civil society, social capital and volunteerism. The observations of Tocqueville were being celebrated once again as Americans turned to voluntary associations and personal activism, not to government, to address social problems. While some conjured up the idea of a “nanny state” that had robbed civil society of its functions and abilities to perform, many others wondered

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12 Tocqueville observed, Americans are a collective group of compassionate individuals and faith communities in which people worship together are arguably the single most important repositories of social capital in America; see Robert Putnam, “Bowling Alone: America’s Declining Social Capital.” *Journal of Democracy.* 1995, 6: 65-78.
whether the government welfare system had trodden under foot the desire and capacity of people to directly help their neighbors.\textsuperscript{13}

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA [PL 104-192, 1996]) responded to these trends by changing the direction of welfare.\textsuperscript{14} Preceded by experiments from various states through a waiver system and through the use of pilot programs, PRWORA addressed each on the above-mentioned trends in a specific manner.

First, through the development, design and implementation of state and local programs administered in the form of block grants, government welfare is now able to take into account the specific characteristics of the welfare population in specific jurisdictions but also the specific mix of economic opportunities and barriers. Through devolution, the increasing federal dominance of the welfare system is replaced with local controls, which can capitalize on non-governmental resources. In the new system, the federal government sends its welfare funds to the states as block grants, requiring the states to design and operate their own welfare programs within broad federal guidelines.

Secondly, the purpose of welfare has shifted from income maintenance to empowerment for self-sufficiency. The name change from Aid to Families and Dependent Children to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families exemplifies this not so subtle transformation and is reinforced by specific assistance designed to provide “temporary” help: child care support, life-skills counseling, time limit remuneration,


employment requirements, etc. Being “on the dole” and the creation of second and third generation welfare families is legislatively a thing of the past.

Finally, public welfare was transformed from a government-centered activity to a collaborative effort with civil society, specifically religious organizations. In attempting to measure the impact of faith-based organizations on governmental services, one estimate put their services as being worth $34 billion. Congress, however, did more than give direct or indirect impulses to push public welfare into greater collaboration with civil society as PRWORA contained a specific provision designed to expand the involvement of religious organizations in the public welfare effort. The law’s Charitable Choice section specifically required state and local government’s to open the door to faith-based organizations when buying services from nongovernmental sources. In reversing the trajectory of American government welfare, legislators set in motion a process to bring religion back in public welfare. What circumstances lead to this sudden change?

**RELIGION AND GOVERNMENT WELFARE**

To understand the role of religion in the welfare programs of the government is striking similar to watching a pendulum swing from the right to the left. From the marginalization of religion to the complete involvement of religion in programs sponsored by the government is not without controversy and conflict- even within the ranks of the religious leaders of the twentieth century.

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16 President Franklin Roosevelt warned against being on the dole and sought to provide work opportunities whenever possible.
During the early parts of the twentieth century America’s majority Protestant religion was divided and weakened by the modern-fundamentalist controversy over the relationship between modern day values and scriptural purity. Seeking to restore and reaffirm biblical authority, the evangelical/conservative movement engaged itself in the “great reversal” and in so doing distanced themselves from social and political involvement choosing to “save one’s soul” first and to “help those who help themselves”. They, in essence, became autonomous islands to themselves in an ocean of need and despair.

In stark contrast, we see the pendulum shifting to the extreme opposite end of the continuum as mainline or liberal Protestant churches became involved in society and politics and began to frame their mission within the context of the Social Gospel. Within this framework, religious groups adopted the Good Samaritan approach recognizing that government’s role was to govern and churches role was to take care of their neighbors. As government’s role in welfare expanded and diversified, mainline Protestant churches welcome the interaction and encouraged government to become more proactive in addressing the needs of the poor\textsuperscript{18}. These two opposite stands by religious leaders resulted in a series of policies that further weakened the role of religious groups in governmental welfare programs.

First, this fragmentation of the Protestant faith was not confined to two camps: mainline and conservative. Within each subgroup (Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran, etc) splinter groups formed and replicated themselves, each adopting different views, both social and spiritual, related to addressing the poor. Statistics indicate that as of 1997,

\textsuperscript{18} See for example, Mark A. Noll, \textit{A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada}, (Grand Rapids, MI, 1992), chap 14.
more than 1500 religious groups exist in the United States all originating from the Protestant faith\textsuperscript{19}. By their own actions, the Protestant faith allowed themselves to be slide to the back of the agenda and for many; this was a wonderful place to be.

Secondly, this splintering affect lead to increased marginalization by the government. The United States Constitution requires religious liberty and no established state religion- dual requirements easily satisfied when there were two religious groups (Catholics and Protestants) and something that troubled few. But this arrangement became problematic as the nation became increasingly heterogeneous in religious convictions. Minority religious groups began to become concerned about the dominance of one religious group over another, even if not formally recognized. Baptist were concerned about governmental funds going to Catholic schools and Catholic dioceses were concerned about funds being sent to Lutheran charities. In a nation of many faiths, this subtle recognition could not continue.

The United States Supreme Court solution to the problem, promulgated in a series of decisions was “no aid seperationism”: the government will support no religion and nothing government supports can be religious\textsuperscript{19}. But to remove a key component of governmental welfare, even if thought of in an unofficial capacity, was not easy. Such extreme fastidiousness was more at the level of doctrine than at the level of practice. In fact, various levels of government continued to collaborate with organizations of a religious nature adopting a “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy.

For people of faith, in whom caring for the needy is a core religious requirement, in a physical and spiritual sense, governmental policies carry little weight or substance.

While many mainline Protestant churches were willing not to speak about religion as they provided their services, conservative evangelicals advocated a defiant attitude noting that they answer to a much higher power than the government and silently wondering if addressing the needs of the poor mandated the marginalization of their values in such a manner. So, as the 1996 welfare reform package was signed into law, their existed a strong religious dichotomy as it pertaining to welfare and helping the needy.

Ironically, the passage of PRWORA was not the result of pressure from the faith communities, nor did it receive much initial support from them. Each dichotomous group had their own agenda and focused on different issues and concerns. Mainline and progressive religious leaders put assistance to the poor on top of their agenda, elevating government to a role of society’s agent for good, as they pressed for expanded welfare programs and services. Conservative evangelical groups convinced that religious denominations were responsible for saving the total person, advocated shrinking welfare as the catalyst for moving forward.

Progressive religious leaders emphasized and questioned cuts in federal spending, the end of legitimate entitlement to federal welfare, devolution of welfare control to lower governments and the narrowing of welfare eligibility. In their opinion, the legislative majority was pursuing not so much welfare reform as welfare abolition; the process representing abandonment of the nation’s poor by the government itself. To emphasize the increased involvement of religious organizations was both rhetoric and a

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20 In the case of Everson v. Board of Education 1947, the Court ruled that not a single dollar could go to religion.
22 Cnaan notes that progressive denominations include those who engage to some degree in political and social life outside of their respective denominations. An example of this would include Lutherans, Methodists, etc.
sideshow; mainline churches (Catholics, Lutherans, and Jews) were already operating government-subsidized charities and did not need any additional changes, which would allow the “wealth to spread about”. What the poor needed was more welfare help, not more religious charity.

Conservative evangelicals saw the government as a liberal, money giving machine that rewarded bad behavior. The most active groups pushed to ensure that welfare would become more stringent, more focused on behavioral change and less on income support. Leading the charge was the Christian Coalition, who advocated for time limits on benefits while discouraging the awarding of benefits to unwed mothers. This was not merely a bias for less government spending or a crude attack on the poor; this stance was one based on strong theological and religious principle that emphasized accountability and responsibility. But what is most striking is that groups such as the Moral Majority, the Religious Right and the Christian Coalition paid little attention to the congressional process as it attempted to bridge the gap between public welfare and faith-based organizations. Evangelicals and other conservatives were more inclined to see their churches as alternatives than as potential partners.

THE GOSPEL OF WELFARE: CHARITABLE CHOICE?

Buried within the pages of the long federal welfare law known as PL104-192 was a small section (section 104), a brief legal statement addressing religious service that has come to be known as Charitable Choice. Known not so much for what it says and what it doesn’t say, section 104 provides basic guidelines for procurement of funds by

addressing who can compete for government funds to provide welfare services and on what terms. Charitable Choice brings religion back into American public welfare by enabling religious organizations to accept government funds without the pressure to sideline their religious character. The Charitable Choice provision, by its own declaration, is designed to permit religious organizations to collaborate with public welfare “on the same basis as any other nongovernmental provider” but “without impairing their religious character” and “without diminishing the religious freedom of beneficiaries.”

To enable religious organizations to go from the fringe to being a key player in the welfare system, Charitable Choice addresses four main areas of concern.

First, the new federal legislation obligates state and local governments not to discriminate against religious organizations when making procurement decisions. Faith-based organizations cannot be excluded from receiving federal funds simply because they are too religious, religious or of the wrong religion. The aim is to create a level playing field and as such faith-based organizations get no special treatment- competency and accountability are the standards to be used when awarding funds.

Secondly, Charitable Choice allows faith-based organizations to retain their independent status as organizations defined and guided by their religious beliefs. Organizations have the right to display religious symbols and items in the places they use to provide governmental funded services and to some degree they have the right to use

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26 States may require houses of worship to establish separate 501© (3) organizations.
moral and religious concepts and language in those services. Most importantly, by retaining their religious identity, each faith-based organization retains the right to hire only employees who agree with their religious convictions. This control insures that the mission of the organization remains intact and has the backing of both the courts and the legislative branch of government.

Third, Charitable Choice explicitly protects the religious rights of the recipient of services outlawing any form of religious coercion in exchange for assistance. Recipients who enter a faith-based program can decline to take active part in any religious activity offered by the sponsoring agency. And most important, the state or local government must be prepared to offer an alternative to any recipient who objects to receiving services from a religious provider. This requirement ensures that recipients are not forced to violate their religious convictions, makes it clear that government is not establishing any particular faith and enables the religious organizations to manifest their convictions within their specific spiritual theology without fear of trampling on the rights of those receiving the services.

Finally, Charitable Choice maintains the separation of church and state by requiring that faith-based organizations use the funds for what they were intended for-helping the needy. Faith-based organizations cannot divert the funds to pay for worship services, sectarian instruction or proselytization. Ministers, clergy and religious support

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staff can address religious questions posed by those receiving services but they must use private monies for activities such as Bible study, prayer groups, etc.

Charitable Choice changed the welfare reform landscape through the establishment of TANF funding- the core federal welfare law that can be spent on a wide-variety of services. The next year Congress attached the provision to the special services for hard to employ welfare recipients by adopting the Welfare-to-Work program as an amendment to the 1996 welfare law. In 1998, Charitable Choice language was added to the Community Services Block Grant Program administered by Community Action Agencies for low-income communities. However, due to the procurement regulations many religious organizations were excluded and many others exclude themselves. Those faith-based organizations that do participate have to so downplay their role to be accepted that although they were allowed to participate, government’s attitude welcomed them despite and not because of their religious character.

It is also worth noting that the redesigned rules for procurement presume and exemplify a new church-state framework. In place of no-aid seperationism, Charitable Choice rests on the constitutional concept of government neutrality, an alternative interpretive scheme, which is favored by the Supreme Court. No-aid seperationism requires religion to keep out of government -funded services so that the client cannot be coerced into adhering to a particular religious belief or conviction that otherwise would have occurred on its own. The neutrality principle claims that, through rules such as


Charitable Choice, government can accept faith-based organizations into public welfare without returning to the old and unconstitutional practice of an informal or formal religious establishment.

Critics, both religious and secular, have condemned Charitable Choice for allowing too much religion into public welfare and into government’s collaboration with religious providers. Separationists worry that religious coercion is likely because, notwithstanding the provisions feature to protect clients, it does not specifically require governments or religious agencies to inform recipients of their option not to actively participate. But these critics most basic objection is the very inclusion of faith-based providers in governmental welfare. Such organizations cannot and will not separate out the (improper) religion from the (proper, i.e., secular) social services government wants to fund. Speculation is that government will end up supporting religion; clients will end up “indoctrinated’, not assisted. The only solution is to exclude pervasively sectarian providers, allowing in only religious affiliated organizations, religious organizations that run separate, secular, social service programs.

But that, of course, was the norm before Charitable Choice arrived on the scene. While many rely upon the interpretation of the Constitution to demand a separation of church and state, it is no longer so obvious that exclusion constitutes good welfare policy. Even Vice-President Al Gore made the case of Charitable Choice when he said:

“ As long as there is a secular alternative for anyone who wants one, and as long as no one is required to participate in religious observations as a requirement for receiving services, faith-based organizations can provide jobs and job-training.

counseling and mentoring, food and basic medical care. They can do so with public funds- and without having to alter the religious character that is so often the key to their effectiveness.”

More than 20 years after Richard John Nehauus and Peter Berger wrote *To Empower People*” and first urged policymakers to encourage society’s “mediating structures” (e.g. families, churches, voluntary organizations, neighborhoods, etc), it would appear as though the United States is heeding the call to energize those “civilizing institutions that are neither market-driven or government run”. More and more, today’s social policy debate revolves around what is called “the first principle… of public affection”, civil society” and the “little platoons” that do the heavy lifting of shaping good citizens and that act as a buffer against cultural disintegration.

CHARITABLE CHOICE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

It appears that Charitable Choice is not merely a momentary fancy of a few politicians desperate for something different. Federal legislators have continued to propose new applications for the principle- to programs for the homeless and addicted, to juvenile-justice services and efforts to strengthen fatherhood and even, in a “Charitable Choice Expansion Act”, to all federal funds that flow to nongovernmental providers either directly or through lower governments. A notable aspect of the Democratic Presidential primary race of 2004 is the statement by four of the candidates who said “America’s social problems can be better solved by closer collaboration between

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35 Senator John Ashcroft (R-MO) introduced this measure in both the 105th and 106th Congresses. In 2001, he became United States Attorney General in the Bush Administration.
government and charitable associations than by government alone”. The Pew Forum reports that 75% of those who surveyed support government funding for faith-based organizations Yet, a troubling fact remains: governmental dollars are not reaching the poor through faith-based organizations. Charitable Choice has been almost entirely ignored by governmental officials and religious leaders. Consider the following:

- The Office of Justice Programs at the Department of Justice acknowledges that in FY 2001 it awarded about 0.3% of total discretionary funds- one third of one percent- to faith-based organizations (1.9 million of 626.7 million).

- HUD’s Continuum of Care process for the homeless has collected information to identify faith-based providers and reports that 399 such groups won 16% of all the funds ($139 million of a total of $896 million) in the FY 2000 competition.

- In the Department of Labor’s Youth Opportunity Grant Program that underwrites employment and job preparation services, $6.7 million (3%) went to faith-based organizations in the FY 2001.

- In multiple rounds of competitive funding for Welfare to Work services, more than 1,800 applications arrived- 2% of those were from faith-based organizations. Faith-based organizations received 3% of the funds.

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36 Senators Lieberman (D-CT), Edwards (D-NC), and Kerry (D-MA) along with Rev. Al Sharpton supported the concept of faith-based initiatives with more government oversight as outlined in an Iowa debate, January 2004.


38 Amy Sherman, Testimony to the Oversight Hearing on “State and Local Implementation of Existing Charitable Choice Programs”, Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on the Constitution, U.S. House of Representatives, April 24, 2002.
The neighborhood-based charities, both secular and religious, that daily supply so much indispensable help to needy families receive little support from the Federal government in part because the Federal grants system is inhospitable to their involvement. A careful analysis of the rules and practices in a large sample of programs in the five Cabinet departments show that these organizations face myriad barriers. Specifically, these barriers include: 1.) A pervasive suspicion about faith-based organizations, 2.) Excessive restrictions on religious activities 3.) Denial of faith-based organizations’ established right to take religion into account in employment decisions, 4.) The heavy weight of regulations and other requirements and 5). Requiring Formal 501 © (3) status without statutory authority.39

Furthermore, there is a growing dissatisfaction within the religious community about accepting federal funds and their question about faith-based organizations maintaining their unique identity in the political community. Institutional theories in organizational analysis suggest that organizations and their leaders are relatively powerless to resist institutionalizing pressures in their organizational fields.40 In particular, according to the institutional isomorphism hypothesis, religious organizations within the organizational field of public social services will become subject to powerful forces within the institution of social welfare. In response to these forces, such as professionalism and bureaucratization, many ministers and clergy express concern that their faith-based organizations will come to resemble the dominant secular organizations in the field. In general, the more a religious organization adapts modern, hierarchical,  

bureaucratic forms, the more difficult it is to maintain and protect its religious identity and uniqueness. In 2001, more than 400 prominent American Clergy openly expressed their concern and disgruntleness over the Charitable Choice legislation noting that allowing government to pick and choose among religions for limited government funds will foster an unhealthy competition between religions and could lead to insidious forms of public abuse. They also note that exempting government-funded religious institutions from employment laws banning discrimination on the basis of religion weakens our nation’s civil rights protections for those seeking to provide assistance to those in need.

Why this disjunction? Is it because faith-based organizations are not interested in seeking Federal funds for the services they provide? Is it because they have theological objections to receiving governmental funds for activities they believe adherents should support while expressing concerns about implementing governmental policies with which they might partially disagree? Most notably, do many faith-based groups have concerns that the cost of federal funds is the putative divestiture of much or all of their religious character?

**Research Questions**

This research seeks to answer three unanswered hypotheses drawn from the existing body of knowledge on religious involvement in social welfare reform and the role of religious individuals in addressing social welfare issues:

*Hypothesis 1:* Religious nonprofits and religious individuals provide a plethora of social capital ranging from volunteerism, to civil service attitudes to social service


programs, which serves as a linkage mechanism for addressing social welfare concerns, but is not utilized in an effective manner.

This hypothesis will be tested through quantitative research data that measures and differentiates between “bridging” activities and “bonding” activities. Qualitative data in the form of a case study may also be incorporated.

Hypothesis 2: Faith-based organizations do not possess the institutional capacity (administrative, organizational, etc) to build the bridge between governmental welfare programs and the poor.

This hypothesis will be tested through the surveying of 400+ American Clergy, who expressed a concern about the procurement and administrative constraints placed on faith-based organizations.

Hypothesis 3: Charitable Choice is an exclusionary program that results in the putative divestiture of much, if not all, of the religious character of faith-based organizations.

Specific survey data will be obtained from clergy and the religious community.

**Proposed Study**

The proposed research differs from previous research in several ways. First, it will include a more comprehensive set of questions than previous research by combining the existing traditional variables (gender, religious affiliation, income etc) with detailed attitudinal control variables and detailed questions on factors affecting participation. Special emphasis will be placed on why congregations would not participate in Charitable Choice initiatives. For example, question will be asked concerning

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institutional and administrative constraints and theological beliefs as well as political and social activities. Emphasis will also be placed on those congregations and faith-based organizations that traditionally have been excluded from the data-pool: evangelicals, non-western religious groups, etc.

In addition to collecting new data, I will use a more precise methodology to analyze the data. Most research on this topic has reported simple frequencies, percentages or statistical levels of significance through simple cross-tabs, regression tables, etc. King et al notes that this type of tells little about the strength of association between variables. I will use appropriate multivariate regression procedures and a Monte Carlo simulation technique (Clarify software) to simulate probabilities and predict the likelihood of certain attitudes affecting level of participation among religious congregations while controlling for other factors.

**Contributions of the Proposed Research**

Methodologically, this research contributes to the established existing literature in three ways. The existing research advocated by scholars such as Putnam and Wuthnow does not consider such independent variables as church attendance as a contributing factor towards the generation of social capital or participation in charitable choice. Chaves notes that churches of less than 1000 people are not a factor in his study. This research attempts to discuss social capital on a more individualistic dimension in lieu of at the aggregate level. As previously noted, emphasis will also be directed towards

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theological differences that exist within religious denominations. Existing research recognizes that differences exist, but little, if any, definitive research exists that examines the differences.

Secondly, while much of the literature, if not all of the literature, focuses on Mainline Protestant Religious, those viewed by Putnam as “hemorrhaging”, this research draws attention to other religious denominations that are taking over the religious community (Islamic, Buddhist, Evangelical, Hindu, etc)\textsuperscript{46}. There is no known research that addresses “marginalized religious groups” generation of social capital, at the aggregate (congregational level) or at the individual level.

Finally, this research recognizes what Shen identifies as theological/institutional constraints of a religious nature.\textsuperscript{47} Shen notes that many religious organizations consider themselves to be \textit{faith centered and not faith based}. He notes that this is not a “play on words” but rather is rooted in their strong theological convictions based on their interpretations of the scriptures. Many evangelicals recognize this distinct difference and would not accept governmental funds because it violates their religious conscience. While the literature recognizes that theological differences may contribute to individual congregations uneasiness or unwillingness to participate in Charitable Choice, there is limited data or research to explain why this is the case.

\textbf{Dissertation Organization}

The first chapter of the research will provide a general overview of the historical context of welfare and welfare reform. It will include charts and illustrations depicting

the changes in welfare since the mid 1930’s noting the increased caseloads and the effects of the 1996 PWORA bill. It will include a brief timeline drawing special attention to the moral regulation overtones set forth in the legislation. Chapter two will provide an overview of Section 104, the Charitable Choice provision, and discuss the key components of the provision. This chapter will also address the role of religious organizations in addressing social welfare needs. At this point of the paper I will present the thesis of this dissertation: the growing reliance of government and the nonprofit world on religious organizations to generate social capital so that welfare reform impacts can be felt.

Chapter three will emphasize the ability of religious organization to generate social capital, as defined by political sociologists such as Putnam and Wuthnow. This chapter will also explore the findings of data analysis from the Pew Center dealing with volunteering among religious organizations and their views of charitable choice. This information will serve as a prelude to chapter four and will use a more sophisticated approach to analyze acquired data related to the generation of social capital. Using the data acquired from Princeton Survey Research Associates and the Pew Center for the People and the Press 1996 & 2000, multivariate regression analysis will be presented. Using a Monte Carlo simulation procedure (Clarify software) to estimate probabilities and predict the likelihood of certain attitudes and institutional constraints in affecting participation levels while holding other variables such as religious affiliation, church size, etc. constant will be highlighted.

Chapter four will incorporate logistical regression analysis to examine in-depth the role religious values; religious institutions and governmental regulations play in addressing participation rates. Specifically, do religious leaders who chose not to participate do so because they lack administrative capacity? Do they fear losing their religious autonomy and feel threatened of a government sanction “state religion” if they participate? Approximately 400+ ministers who oppose Charitable Choice and government funding for religious denominations will be surveyed to determine what constraints exist that inhibit participation in welfare reform programs. Chapter five will address the role-marginalized religious groups play in welfare reform. Using the data acquired from a developed survey of more than 1000+ marginalized religious denominations (Islamic, Buddhists, Hindu, etc.), multivariate regression analysis will be presented. Using a Monte Carlo simulation procedure (Clarify software) to estimate probabilities and predict the likelihood of certain attitudes, demographics and institutional constraints on affecting participation levels while holding other variables such as religious affiliation, church size, etc. constant will be emphasized. Chapter six will serve as the conclusion and includes the discussion of the findings, its implications for policies related to the involvement of religious denominations in addressing social welfare problems and suggestions for future research in religious political participation and Charitable Choice.

As part of the research strategy, I am applying for a dissertation fellowship from the Louisville Institute, a component of the University of Louisville/Louisville Seminary and funded through the Lilly Endowment for the Study of American Religion. The Louisville Institute funds projects, which contribute to understanding contemporary
religious communities. If received this fellowship will allow me the opportunity to spend a large portion of my time in the 2004-2005 school year on research and writing.

In addition, to assist in the funding of the research, I am submitting applications for funding to the Pluralism Project (Harvard University), the Association for the Sociology of Religion (Fichter Research Grant) and the Kent State Graduate Student Senate to offset the costs associated with the development of the survey instruments and the dissemination of the survey instrument to the selected population. If all of these proposals are rejected, I will rely on existing data. Among the data that comes closest to the needs of this proposal is the 1998, 2000 and 2002 Politics and Religion Survey. This data is available from the American Religious Data Archive at [www.arda.com](http://www.arda.com) and is free of charge. I also will attempt to acquire data from the Pew Center related to faith-based initiatives. The consequences of using this survey, in lieu of developing the surveys proposed in this prospectus, is that the existing survey with limited independent variables that measure theological beliefs, etc. This will adversely affect the depth of the proposed study.

Another avenue that will be explored is the Time-Sharing Experiment for Social Sciences (TESS) sponsored by the National Science Foundation (NSF). The TESS, created in 2002 allows graduate students and faculty to submit questions to be added to ongoing national telephone surveys being conducted by the Indiana University Center for Survey Research. Proposed questions that are accepted will be collected free of charge.

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