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HOW UNIVERSITY-BASED POVERTY RESEARCH CENTERS AIM TO INFORM ANTIPOVERTY POLICY AND PRACTICE

BY

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation describes the activities of two university-based poverty research centers in the United States—the Center for Research on Poverty in Society (CRPS), and the Regional Poverty Research Center (RPRC). Using a multiple case study approach, at each center, the study included document analysis; interviews with 5 individuals including the center director; and observations of relevant center activities. The primary question the study answered is: "how do university-based poverty research centers in the United States aim to inform antipoverty policy and practice"? While prior research has examined the relationship between social research and social policy, and though poverty research centers greatly shape our understanding of poverty causes, consequences, and solutions, my searches have not yielded a body of literature that examines such centers as important producers of policy-relevant research. This dissertation presents important findings on six aspects of the two centers' policy-relevant activities: 1) guiding rationale, 2) research characteristics, 3) research dissemination, 4) activities to train and support scholars, 5) activities to facilitate research-policy-practice partnerships, and 6) contextual factors shaping the centers' work. The study found that each center took a different approach to inform antipoverty policy and practice—CRPS is primarily concerned with developing an infrastructure for measuring poverty and inequality and RPRC is primarily concerned with bringing together people who have an interest in addressing social issues related to poverty and inequality. A range of contextual factors seemed to shape each center's work including institutional setting, sources of funding, societal conversations about poverty, and the background of individuals who play a role in shaping the center's work. This dissertation contributes to literature on the research-policy relationship by describing the work of two producers of poverty research. It also contributes to literature on university-based research

centers by exploring centers in the social sciences. Finally, the study provides an up-to-date profile of poverty research conducted and supported by two important poverty research producers in the U.S..

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to my mother, Nairee Mustafaa, who has always been an example of a hardworking, persevering individual, and who has always supported and encouraged my endeavors.

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There are many people who have played a role in my completion of this dissertation. I acknowledge and thank them in the order in which they entered my educational journey. First, there was my original group of teachers, tutors, and supporters. My mother, Nairee Mustafaa, has always supported and encouraged me to be successful in academic and other endeavors I chose. She has also been a living example of someone who works hard to achieve her goals and I'm so proud to have her as my mother and as a model to aspire to. Since I was a child, my sisters, Khajeefah and Faheemah, have supported my education. From walking with me to school and helping me with my homework, to reading fellowship application personal statements, both of my sisters have supported me throughout my educational career. Additionally, both have always (whether intentionally or not), set an example of how to be successful when you set your mind to accomplishing a goal. I'm thankful to have a mother and sisters I can look up to.

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At Penn State, the McNair Scholars Program introduced me to social science research and to the idea that I could study social problems and conceptualize approaches for addressing those problems. Teresa, the program director, and Felicia, the program's academic coordinator, provided enumerable resources to support my undergraduate career and preparation for graduate school. During my participation in the McNair Scholars Program at Penn State, Professor Dana Mitra, my first faculty mentor, introduced me to educational research and gave me space to

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Last, but not least, thank you to the centers that agreed to participate in my study. The director of the Center for Research on Poverty in Society said "yes" with no questions asked. He, and four other individuals at CRPS, gave their time to assist me with my study. The director of the Regional Poverty Research Center engaged in multiple conversations with me as she considered if she would agree to participate. The questions she asked helped me to further refine the study. She, and four other individuals at RPRC, gave their time to assist me with my study.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This dissertation study examines how university-based poverty research centers in the social sciences *aim* to inform antipoverty policy and practice in the United States. This introductory chapter highlights the need for the study by discussing how this study contributes to scholarship on the research-policy relationship. First, I briefly discuss relevant literature and areas in which this literature is underdeveloped. Second, I introduce the purpose of this dissertation research study and the research questions this dissertation answers. Third, I describe the scholarly and practical significance of this dissertation. Fourth, I define key terms that are used throughout this text. Fifth, I conclude with an overview of the organization of this dissertation.

Background and Problem Statement

Much research has examined the relationship between social science research and the creation of effective solutions to address social issues in the United States (Bogenschneider & Corbett, 2010; Little; 2015; O'Connor, 2001). However, this body of literature has not given due attention to the poverty research-antipoverty policy relationship. This is interesting given that 1) poverty is a pervasive issue in U.S. society and that 2) many of our approaches to evaluation and policy analysis came out of efforts to address poverty in the U.S. (Featherman and Vinovskis, 2001; O'Connor, 2001). This study aims to add to literature on the relationship between research and policy by studying poverty as a specific social policy concern, and university-based poverty research centers as a specific group of research organizations which aim to influence such policy.

Past research in this field has emphasized various aspects of the research-policy relationship. One theme in this scholarship has included identification, description, and understanding of the aims and roles of researchers and policymakers (Bogenschneider and

Corbett, 2010; Bulmer, 1982; Campbell, 1981; Williams, 1998). Though not a recent publication, Bulmer's description of three models for knowledge use in policy is a useful way for conceptualizing these aims, even as described in recent works (1982). The models include the empiricism, engineering, and enlightenment models. The empiricism model involves research as a source of data that can be generalized and used to develop or test theories. Thus, for policy, research in this model serves as a "valid" representation of social life and social problems for which policy solutions can be developed. The engineering model involves research as a direct source of information which is meant to direct the decision-making of policymakers. In this model, from the start, the researcher is concerned with how the research will be used for decision-making in relation to policy and practice. And finally, the enlightenment model involves research as one contributor to broader conceptualizations of, and discussions surrounding, social issues and appropriate solutions. In this model, the researcher is largely concerned with conducting research that is deemed high "quality", often with the recognition that this research may not directly influence decision-making in relation to a social issue.

Along with the theme of identifying, describing, and understanding the roles of researchers and policymakers, research in this field has also included examination of specific types of producers and consumers of social science research, with an emphasis on think tanks as producers and federal policymakers as consumers (Finch, 2001; Bogenschneider and Corbett, 2010; Little, 2015; Medvetz, 2012).

Another strand of this research has focused on highlighting factors which shape the relationship between social science researchers and policymakers such as the communication of research (Cole, 2007; Little, 2015; Maynard, 2006); the extent to which both groups of actors understand the nature of the other's work (Bogenschneider and Corbett, 2010; Finch, 2001;

Lindblom and Cohen, 1979; Weiss, 1999; and Williams, 1998); and the role of research dissemination in the relationship (Grande et al, 2014; Hawkins, Langford, and Saunders, 2015; and White, Spalter-Roth, Best, and Joyce, 2015).

While the research in this area of study has been extensive, there are some gaps. First, literature on the roles of producers and consumers has largely focused on a specific set of producers. In their 2010 book, Bogenschneider and Corbett highlight the importance of examining the ways researchers and policymakers think about and approach their relationships to one another. But our knowledge in this area is limited in some ways. In that same book, the authors highlight various knowledge producers who are involved in this research-policy relationship. They list producers as: researchers in "university-based" settings, "intermediary organizations", and "government settings". While previous research has examined the work of producers in intermediary organizations and government settings, literature on researchers in university-based settings has been limited. Research on intermediary organizations such as think tanks has been expansive, focusing on a range of topics including think tanks' sources of funding and think tanks' impact on policy processes (McGann, 2007; Medvetz, 2012; Stefancic and Delgado, 1996). Scholarship has also examined researchers in government settings as producers of social research which can inform social policy making (O'Connor, 2001; NRC 1978; Williams, 1998).

While some scholarship has examined knowledge producers in university-based settings, this scholarship has been limited to particular fields and particular knowledge-application aims. Studies examining university-based research centers as sources of evidence for decision-making largely discuss centers in the natural and physical sciences (Boardman & Ponomariov, 2007; Bozeman & Boardman, 2004) and highlight centers' relationships to commercial industries

(Nelson, 2012), not to policymaking bodies. Many poverty research centers in the U.S. cite an interest in informing policy and practice to address poverty in the U.S.. Thus, examining how these organizations aim to do that is important.

A second gap in this body of literature is the lack of scholarship viewing researchers' efforts to inform policy and practice as a *concerted series of efforts*, rather than as singular strategies without links to one another. Some studies have examined poverty researchers' strategies to engage in policy-relevant work, but have highlighted specific aspects of researchers' work which are a part of this effort such as the communication of ideas (Little, 2015) and the development of relationships with important actors in the policy world (O'Connor, 2001; White et al., 2015). However, this work has not examined the creation of policy-relevant poverty research as a concerted series of efforts on the part of poverty researchers. Such research could provide us with an understanding of the range of practices poverty researchers engage in to inform policy and practice in addition to communicating their ideas and disseminating their research. Such research would further illuminate our understanding of the preliminary conceptual framework developed by White et al. (2015). The framework suggests that the primary mode through which university-based social science research enters the social policymaking process is through the publication of research in academic journals and the sharing of such research at meetings of scientific and professional organizations. My exploration of university-based poverty research centers' concerted efforts to inform antipoverty policy and practice offers additional input to shape this conceptual framework.

Thus, this study contributes to literature on the research-policy relationship by highlighting university-based poverty research centers as a specific group of producers who aim to influence antipoverty policy and practice and whose efforts we should seek to understand.

The following section will detail the purpose of this dissertation study.

Purpose of Research

This dissertation is an exploratory multiple case study which examines how university-based poverty research centers in the United States *aim* to inform antipoverty policy and practice. My literature searches have not yielded a framework which explains how university-based poverty research centers shape their practices to contribute to the design of antipoverty policy and practice in the United States. While some aspects of previous researchers' conceptual frameworks add to this understanding (Bulmer, 1982; Hawkins, Langford, and Saunders, 2015; White, Spalter-Roth, Best, and Joyce, 2015), my study expands this previous scholarship by developing a conceptual framework concerned with university-based poverty research centers as units that engage in concerted efforts to engage in policy-relevant work. This study used key documents, interviews with center staff and affiliated-researchers, and observations of key center events to answer the guiding research questions.

Research Questions

The primary research question this study addresses is:

1. How do university-based poverty research centers in the United States *aim* to contribute to the design of antipoverty policy and practice?

The subsidiary research questions this study addresses are:

2. What are topical, methodological, and other characteristics of centers' bodies of research and on what basis do centers make decisions about which studies to carry out?
3. What activities do centers use to disseminate their research and why are those activities chosen?
4. In addition to producing and disseminating research, what other activities do centers

engage in to contribute to the design of antipoverty policy and practice, and why are those activities chosen?

5. How do relevant contextual factors and other factors shape centers' activities?

Significance of Research

This research is significant for 1) its contribution to scholarship concerned with the production and use of knowledge for the purpose of societal improvement and 2) its practical contribution to an ongoing effort to improve policy and practice to address poverty. As highlighted previously, this study contributes to our understanding of the work of university-based poverty research centers in the United States as producers of poverty research who aim to inform antipoverty policy and practice. By examining not only characteristics of centers' bodies of research, but centers' research dissemination practices, and other practices aimed at informing policy, this study expands previously-held ideas about the contemporary role of social science research in the policymaking process. This contribution will inform scholarship on the research-policy relationship. In addition to this scholarly significance, Bogenschneider and Corbett (2010) have highlighted the importance of improving our understanding of the efforts of knowledge producers and knowledge consumers so we can forge more effective relationships between these actors. Thus, this study has practical significance.

Many people in the policy world have advocated for using research to inform the design of effective solutions for addressing poverty, given that poverty is such a pervasive issue in U.S. society (Committee on Ways and Means, 2015; Library of Congress, 2015a; 2015b; Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, n.d.). A 2014 report published by the Census Bureau using data from a sample of over 60,000 U.S. households showed an estimated 45.3 million people living in poverty, which means

14.5% of the population is estimated to live below the poverty threshold. The highest rate for all age groups was that for people under the age of 18 (19.9%) and for all racial and ethnic groups was that for African American people (27.2%) (DeNavas-Walt & Proctor, 2014). Highlighting the significance of these numbers, various individuals have argued throughout history about the implications that experiencing poverty has for individuals, families, and society as a whole. Such implications include limited access to: basic needs such as food (Mossell, 1921; Jackson, 2015), educational resources (Dauber, Alexander, & Entwisle, 1996; DuBois, 1899; Kaushal, Magnuson, and Waldfogel, 2011); and health insurance (Huston et al., 2001).

Thus, given continued calls for the use of research in the design of government social policymaking, we can benefit from this dissertation study's examination of the work of organizations that aim to provide sources of evidence for this policymaking. The following discussion of these "recent calls" for the use of research in policy decision-making further highlights the importance of understanding this relationship and the efforts of those in the research and policy worlds.

Three of these recent calls are relevant to legislative activities. The first was a bill introduced to the U.S. House of Representatives in March 2015 and sponsored by Representative Todd Young, a Republican serving Indiana. The "Social Impact Partnership Act" would create a competition in which state and local governments could submit proposals to state how they would address various social issues and achieve outcomes such as "employment for the unemployed, high school graduation, and reduction of teen and unplanned pregnancies as well as incidences and adverse consequences of child abuse and neglect". Outside evaluations would be required for the state or local governments to receive "outcome payments" if the outcomes are achieved (Library of Congress, 2015b).

The second call for a stronger relationship between research and social policymaking was a house committee hearing held in March 2015 by the Ways and Means Committee Human Resources Subcommittee titled "Expanding Opportunity by Funding What Works: Using Evidence to Help Low-Income Individuals and Families Get Ahead". Testimonies were given by a series of individuals such as Grover J. Whitehurst, Director of the Brown Center on Education Policy at The Brookings Institution and David Muhlhausen, Research Fellow in Empirical Policy Analysis at The Heritage Foundation. In the opening statements for the hearing, the Human Resources Subcommittee chairman, Representative Charles Boustany, argued that policymakers need more evidence to judge the effectiveness of federal funding for addressing various social issues. He stated:

> *Think about the information that many use every day to make the best decisions with our own money. If you're my age and your family's washing machine breaks, you might turn to Consumer Reports to find the most reliable replacement for your money…consumers have a wealth of data to…make an informed judgement about where their money is best spent. Yet policymakers don't have the same sort of data about the effectiveness of government programs—which millions of families depend on for both basic financial needs and for the hope of a better life for themselves and their children. That's just not good enough…The bottom line is this: We need to evaluate every program, determine what works, and focus resources on effective programs so more people can get ahead. Low-income individuals and taxpayers alike deserve programs that are effective in promoting opportunity and helping people improve their lives*. (Committee on Ways and Means, 2015)

Boustany's proposal rests on the idea of determining what programs are effective for "helping low-income individuals and families get ahead" and funding and implementing those programs.

The third call for increased use of research to address social issues was a bill introduced in the U.S. Senate in April 2015 and sponsored by Senator Patty Murray, a Democrat serving Washington. The "Evidence-Based Policymaking Commission Act of 2015" would create the "Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking" to examine "the data inventory, data infrastructure, and statistical protocols related to federal policymaking" to assist with further developing an infrastructure that can assist in evaluating government programs and determining the costs and benefits of such programs. Such information would ideally inform the work that is done by various federal agencies (Library of Congress, 2015a).

The fourth call is related to an executive branch activity. The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) continues to offer funding for poverty research centers at universities in the United States. The initiative provides funding for ongoing research and evaluation on issues related to poverty and programs and services meant to address poverty. HHS states: "centers will focus on issues of national significance to further enhance the understanding of the nature, causes, correlates, and effects of poverty, and programs and policies to ameliorate it". The last recorded funding competition listed on the HHS website is the 2011 competition, which provided $2.4 million and funded three poverty research centers—at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, at the University of California-Davis, and at Stanford University (Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, n.d.).

These "recent calls" give a few examples of policymakers' recent advocacy for using research to design "effective" (antipoverty) social policy. It is important to note that while these

examples highlight support for the use of research in the design of antipoverty policy and practice, this support does not suggest that all research and evaluation will assist in reaching a consensus regarding appropriate antipoverty solutions. Thus, recognition of the politics of the policymaking process into which research and evaluation enter is important. Various factors, including conceptualization of social problems, political ideology, and the broader agenda of policies being considered for implementation, play a role in determining what policies and programs are deemed "effective" for addressing poverty. This point will be discussed in greater depth later, in the review of relevant literature. For now, the inclusion of these examples of support shows advocacy from political actors in different branches of government and various political organizations, for the use of research in the design of solutions to address poverty.

If various actors in the policy and academic world believe poverty warrants a solution, and that research can be a contributor to the design of those solutions, then studying organizations that engage in that work, to learn how they *aim* to inform policy, can help us to understand how the efforts of those organizations can be better matched with the efforts of individuals in policymaking roles. With this understanding, we can hopefully answer these calls most effectively. My dissertation study on the ways in which university-based poverty research centers in the United States *aim* to inform antipoverty policy and practice in the U.S. is an important contributor to this effort.

Definition of Key Terms

Below I define terms which are used commonly throughout this text, but which may have different meanings for different people. Thus, I describe how I conceptualize these terms and what sources of information informed these definitions.

Poverty. For most people, the term "poverty" relates to a state of being in which those

who are “impoverished” experience an absence of economic resources. This conceptualization corresponds to different ways of measuring poverty. For example, the U.S. Census Bureau commonly measures poverty by comparing the total cash income of a household to the total number of residents in a household. If the income is below a certain level, called the “poverty threshold”, and the household has a certain number of members, then the members of that household are considered to be living “in poverty” (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). For example, in 2014, the lowest poverty threshold ($11,354) was that for a household with one person over the age of 65. The highest poverty threshold ($52, 685) was that for a household with nine people, one of which was a related child under the age of 18 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). Thus, by using the poverty thresholds, government agencies make use of the “official poverty measure”. In some publications and for some purposes, the Census Bureau refers to the “Supplemental Poverty Measure” (SPM), which is not solely based on a household’s level of income and number of residents. This measure, which varies by geography, considers additional economic resources a household may have, such as benefits from government agencies. It also considers a range of necessities that people need to pay for, including housing and clothing, whereas the official poverty measure (calculated in 1963) is based on the cost of three meals per day for members of the household. Finally, the SPM has a more flexible understanding of who can be a member of a household.

For others, the term “poverty” may have a different definition, and may take into consideration a conceptualization of inequality, rather than a focus on “absolute deprivation”, denoted by a threshold (O’Connor, 2001). Such a conceptualization therefore, may consider the idea of poverty in relation to something else. Thus, a person, or family, or household is not in poverty because it does not have income or total economic resources above a certain threshold,

but rather, a person, or family, or household is in poverty because it has a certain level of economic resources relative to other people, or families, or households (O'Connor, 2001). In this study, when discussing "poverty" I use both conceptualizations—the absolute deprivation conceptualization as well as the inequality conceptualization.

Social policy. Policy implemented by federal, state, or local government which is intended to address a perceived social issue. Such as issue may relate to income, education, the environment, or any other social issue deemed to warrant a solution. For this definition I used the definition for "policy" given by Bogenschneider and Corbett (2010, p.3) and expanded that definition from a collective reading of the scholarship highlighted in this study's literature review. Bogenschneider and Corbett (2010) define policy as "the development, enactment, and implementation of a plan or course of action carried out through a law, rule, code, or other mechanism in the public or private sector" (p. 3).

Policy decision-making or policymaking. The range of decisions made by individuals in policymaking bodies in the federal, state, or local government. These include decisions about what issues are important enough to warrant a solution; what solutions should look like; who should be involved in implementing these solutions; who will fund these solutions; and how these solutions will be evaluated. I developed this definition based on my collective reading of scholarship highlighted in the section of this dissertation's literature review titled "Relationship between Social Science Research and Social Policy Decision-Making".

Organization of Dissertation

Following this introduction, chapter two reviews literature relevant to university-based poverty research centers and their *aims* to inform antipoverty policy and practice in the United States. I organized the review of relevant literature into three main sections: 1) the relationship

between social science research and policy decision-making; 2) research centers in their higher education context; and 3) poverty's causes, consequences, and solutions. I end the chapter with a discussion of how this dissertation study will draw on, and expand these bodies of literature. Chapter three gives an overview of the research design and methodological approach for this study. Chapter four presents highlights from the findings for center one—the Center for Research on Poverty in Society. Chapter five presents highlights from the findings for center two—the Regional Poverty Research Center. Chapter six discusses similarities and differences among the findings from each research center case. Finally, chapter seven discusses conclusions, implications, and directions for future research.

Chapter One Summary

In this chapter, I have introduced the need for, and purpose of, this dissertation study. In the United States, poverty is a pervasive issue which various individuals such as researchers and policymakers have argued warrants our continued attention and effort toward alleviation. While university-based poverty research centers play an important role in how we understand poverty and approaches for addressing poverty, no study has systematically examined these centers and their activities. Research (Bogenschneider & Corbett, 2013) has called for additional studies to examine the producers and consumers of research in order to better facilitate collaboration among these actors. Thus, this study aims to contribute to bodies of literature concerned with describing the policy-relevant work of research producers, namely, university-based poverty research centers in the social sciences. The chapter also presented terminology that will be useful to the reader of this dissertation and provided an outline to guide the reader through the remainder of this dissertation.

Chapter 2: Review of Relevant Literature

I begin this chapter with a brief description of the methods I used for seeking relevant literature to include in this review. Then, I discuss each of the bodies of social science literature I consulted for my study—scholarship on: the relationship between social science research and policy decision-making; research centers in their higher education context; and poverty's causes, consequences, and solutions. These bodies of literature primarily consist of scholarship in sociology (DuBois, 1899; Featherman &Vinovskis, 2001; Massey & Denton, 1993; Medvetz, 2012) but also includes scholarship from other social science disciplines and fields such as history (O'Connor, 2001), evaluation (Campbell, 1981; Weiss, 1999), and education (Donmoyer, 2012a; Maurrasse, 2001; Sabharwal & Hu, 2013). Next, I highlight areas in these bodies of literature which warrant further exploration, and highlight ways in which my study contributes to these bodies of literature. I conclude with a further articulation of how my study draws from, and extends the reviewed literature, and discuss the conceptual framework I used to examine how university-based poverty research centers aim to inform antipoverty policy and practice in the U.S..

Literature Search Process

I consulted a number of sources for literature to inform the conceptualization and design of this dissertation study. I initiated the search using the ProQuest theses and dissertations database. I searched in the "full text" field using the keywords "policy" and "research". This search, initiated in April 2015, yielded a few dissertation studies (Augustine (2001) and Finch (2001)) concerned with the use of research in decision-making. Next, I used the University of Illinois Libraries website guides for sociology and political science, given my preliminary interest in the relationship between social science research and anti-poverty policy. From these

guides, I used databases such as Social Sciences Citation Index, Scopus, and Soc Index with Full Text. Using a series of fields, I searched for keywords such as "poverty" and "research"; "university-based research"; and "research center model". These searches yielded numerous useful studies which are included in this review of relevant literature. I used this method periodically, throughout my literature search. In addition to this method, I frequently referred to the scholarship cited in books and articles I was already using in my literature review for additional background to guide my study. I also searched the editions of journals in which articles I was already using were published. This approach led to my exploration of journals such as *Research Policy* which yielded many relevant studies included in this review. Finally, throughout this search process, I frequently used the Scopus "Author search" feature to search for articles and books which cited works which have been important in shaping my study, such as Alice O'Connor's *Poverty Knowledge* (2001).

Ultimately, this review of literature includes specific pieces of scholarship from a range of disciplines which could inform my understanding of these bodies of literature in a comprehensive manner. Thus, I am not suggesting that this review includes all research relevant to my areas of interest. However, the research included can provide a detailed understanding of these bodies of literature and further review of the reference lists of these pieces of literature can suggest further sources to consult for even more expansive background.

Overall, this approach to searching for relevant literature to include in this review was useful. Combining my initial subjects of interest with the leads from the reference lists of specific articles and books provided me with a variety of studies to inform my understanding of the relevant areas.

Relationship between Social Science Research and Social Policy Decision-Making

I begin this review of relevant literature with a discussion of scholarship on the relationship between social science research and social policy decision-making. A significant body of research has explored the relationship between social science research and social policy decision-making. This body of research has highlighted: 1) aims of this relationship, 2) actors in this relationship (producers and consumers of this research), and 3) factors which shape this relationship, and 4) lessons for researchers engaging in research to inform policy. Each of these sub-areas will be discussed in detail in this section of the literature review. In addition, I will discuss how my study of university-based poverty research centers draws from this literature, and extends it.

Goals of the research-policy relationship. Past research has highlighted various reasons why social science research and social policy decision-making should be connected (Bogenschneider and Corbett, 2010; Featherman & Vinovskis, 2001; Weiss, 1977). Most of these reasons stem from the idea that if policy decision makers have access to empirical information about the nature of society and social problems, then they can design effective solutions to those problems. Researchers have observed the fact that this conceptualization of the relationship between social science research and social policymaking has existed since the late 19th century in the United States (Bulmer, 2001; O'Connor, 2001).

Social science in the U.S. has its foundations in 19th century settlement house work which focused on addressing various social issues facing Americans, especially those living in cities. A significant aim of this work was to produce accurate knowledge to contribute to social reform (Bulmer, 2001; Featherman and Vinovskis, 2001; O'Connor, 2001). Such notable examples of settlement houses are The University Settlement in New York and Hull House in

Chicago (Bulmer, 2001, p. 20). In documenting the development of social science disciplines in the U.S. and the prominent scholars who participated in those developments, researchers such as Morris (2015) and O'Connor (2001) have highlighted the work of early researchers such as William Edward Burghardt ("W.E.B.") DuBois and Jane Addams and her colleagues at Hull House in Chicago. Such researchers have been described as a part of the progressive-era research movement which was concerned with documenting the reality of life of Americans, specifically with a focus on social inequality, for the purpose of informing social policy and practice to address inequality. O'Connor (2001) characterizes the social research (on poverty) of this era as largely quantitative because it made use of surveys in a effort to summarize experiences and conditions, and was meant to develop a complete and accurate picture of social life to be able to inform social policy.

Another component of this early relationship between social science research and social policy decision-making was that social science researchers like DuBois and Addams largely combined their inquiry efforts and their social reforms efforts, personally occupying multiple spaces and roles in their efforts to seek social change (Featherman & Vinovskis, 2001). Thus, W.E.B. DuBois is known for his social science scholarship as well as his social and political activism and institution-building. Similarly, researchers at Hull House are known for their exploration of social issues through their scholarship as well as their individual and community development work in Chicago, Illinois (Morris, 2015; O'Connor, 2001).

This brief discussion of the goals of early social science researchers who aimed to inform social policy decision-making has highlighted one central aim in this relationship—to develop knowledge regarding society and social problems which can inform the design of effective solutions to address those problems. Though many researchers who advocate for the use of social

science research in the design and revision of social policy agree with this general aim, researchers vary in their conceptions of how this relationship should look. In a 1982 book, Martin Bulmer suggests a useful set of "models" for the relationship between social research and policymaking. He describes these major models ("empiricism", "engineering", and "enlightenment") and then "patterns of influence" within each model. For Bulmer, the models are an effort to develop a theoretical understanding of possible "relationships between knowledge and policy". He argues that theory is an important foundational factor of research and that theory can increase the likelihood of research use. Thus, his description of these models is an effort to provide us with ways of thinking about this relationship and potentially, to suggest how researchers should proceed moving forward, if they aim to inform policy with their research. The "patterns of influence" are the subcategories which describe potential ways these models can be carried out.

While Bulmer suggested these models in 1982, today, the models are a useful way for organizing researchers' continued discussions of the aims of this research-policy relationship. In the following sections, I use Bulmer's three models as the organizing categories with which to discuss the range of aims for the relationship between social science research and social policy decision-making.

***Empiricism model*.** The empiricism model requires that a social scientist collects valid data that can be generalized and used to develop or test theories (Bulmer, 1982). Policymakers can then potentially make use of these data to design effective solutions to social problems. Potential patterns of influence here include "authoritative facts" and "political ammunition". With the authoritative facts model, the data serves as a set of definitive facts and knowledge that inform decision-making. With the "political ammunition" model, the research provides evidence

to support a policy or decision which someone has largely already decided on (Bulmer, 1982).

Various researchers have written about the relationship between social science research and social policy decision-making as representative of the empiricism model (Finch, 2001; Grande et al, 2014; Weiss, 1999). Advocates of "evidence-based" policymaking suggest that the important role for social science research is to provide valid sources of data from which policymakers can draw as they engage in the policy process and make policy decisions (Bogenschneider and Corbett, 2010; Grande et al 2014). Additionally, researchers suggest that policymakers can use study findings to weigh the benefits and costs of potential solutions and make informed decisions regarding the best way to proceed (Weiss, 1999). In her 2001 study, Finch supported the utility of this model. Finch conducted interviews with nurses engaged in "policymaking and research" in the federal government to learn how the nurses used research to "influence health policy" (p. xvii). Findings showed that respondents used research for decision-making to identify and define problems during the early stages of policy design as well as to assist in program planning and implementation. Thus, having access to knowledge on issues of concern and potentially useful approaches for addressing them was important for the nurse-researchers. These findings relate closely to the "authoritative facts" pattern of influence. Researchers have also cited the relevance of the "political ammunition" pattern of influence, arguing that policy decision makers sometimes use research to support conclusions or policy decisions they have already reached (Aaron, 1978; Williams, 1998). Overwhelmingly, researchers have argued that this approach helps policy-makers to garner support from others by signaling that the policymakers are knowledgeable about the target policy issue. Weiss (1999) suggests that data helped policymakers to appear "modern, up to date and well informed" (p. 473). Bogenschneider and Corbett (2010) found that some policymakers in their study viewed

using research as a way to legitimize their perspectives for their peers. Thus, policy decision-makers use research theories to inform their understanding of social problems and solutions, as well as to share with their peers to show that they are knowledgeable about the issue or solution of interest and garner support for their proposed solution.

Engineering model. The engineering model involves a social scientist studying an issue in context and presenting the findings which policymakers can use to inform their decision-making (Bulmer, 1982). This positions the social scientist as an applied researcher who is concerned from the start with how the research will be used. The patterns of influence here are "tactical research" and "program evaluation". Tactical research involves a decision-maker who assigns the research task to someone in an agency or contracts out to have the research done. Program evaluation "combines rigorous scientific analysis of causality with the purpose of achieving scientific control" (Bulmer, 1982, p. 159). Thus, for Bulmer, "program evaluation" is largely thought of in terms of experimentation.

Research such Jewett (2013) have discussed the engineering model as an objective for the relationship between social science research and social policy decision-making. In a study of the practices of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) during the early 1990s, Jewett (2013) argues that the USDA adopted a "tactical research" approach to engage in cultural reform. Decision-makers and implementers at the USDA aimed to change people's beliefs and practices related to farming and thus, enlisted university professors to give a series of lessons on "the deep meaning of recent political changes" and their relevance to agriculture in 45 states during the decade from 1935-1945 (p. 397).

Researchers have also discussed program evaluation as a model for connecting social science research and social policy decision-making in the U.S. (Campbell, 1981; Haveman,

1987). Researchers have highlighted the mid-1900s in the U.S. as a particularly relevant time when the field of program evaluation was being developed and used widely in society, to support the research and evaluation needs of the federal government as it implemented a series of programs related to its War on Poverty and Great Society policies (Haveman, 1987, p. 153; O'Connor, 2001). With increased government funding for social programs, government officials needed approaches and a system for collecting and storing data to inform their future work. While analysis and evaluation had been previously used in the Department of Defense, they were a relatively new idea for federal agencies administering social programs (Haveman, 1987). For many researchers, this era ushered in the idea of social experimentation, conceptualized by Campbell (1981) as the "experimenting society". Social experimentation would assist policy decision-makers with deciding how to proceed on various policy proposals by assessing the effectiveness of various approaches for addressing social issues. The experimenting society would be based in: "honest, open criticism, experimentation, willingness to change once-advocated theories in the face of experimental and other evidence" (p. 16). Researchers have also cited the performance measurement and accountability approaches of evaluation developing during this period as agencies at the federal and local levels aimed to hold people accountable given the (lack of) ability of their program or unit to achieve a certain set of outcomes (Cronbach and Associates, 1980; Hatry, 2013). This approach is largely focused on the end-result (looking backward), rather than looking forward. Thus, researchers have highlighted various approaches to using research to inform policymaking which fit the engineering model.

Enlightenment model. The enlightenment model involves a researcher who is largely focused on conducting "quality" research which plays a role in policy conversations and agenda-setting, but may or may not directly shape the design of a policy (Bulmer, 1982). The patterns of

influence here are "conceptualization" and "interaction". Conceptualization means that research leads to further understanding of social issues. Interaction recognizes the context in which the policy is designed and views research as one potential contributor to the process (Bulmer, 1982).

Various researchers have advocated for the enlightenment model to guide the relationship between social science research and social policy decision-making (Bogenschneider & Corbett, 2010; Cousins & Whitmore, 1998; Greene, 2006). Researchers adopting the "conceptualization" approach have largely explained research as playing an important role in our broader understanding of social issues in a democratic society and thus, aiding in developing a more-informed citizenry and thus, more-informed decision-making. Jewett (2013) argues this was the aim of many people in the public policy field during the New Deal. Many other scholars who adopt this idea are actually associated with the field of evaluation. Thus, their approaches are sometimes connected to the "engineering" model, and also connected to the "enlightenment" model. Cronbach and Associates (1980) argued that "the proper mission of evaluation is not to eliminate the fallibility of authority or to bolster its credibility. Rather, its mission is to facilitate a democratic, pluralistic process by enlightening all the participants" (p.1). Campbell (1981) and Airasian (1983) seconded that idea, arguing that research and evaluation (opposed against values about preferred policy approaches) should guide what programs are adopted in a democratic society. Additional evaluation theorists have highlighted the important role of evaluation in supporting the values of a democratic society by introducing the perspectives and ideas of a range of stakeholders in the process of program evaluation decision-making (Cousins & Whitmore, 1998; Greene, 2013; Sabo, 2003). Discussing the "interaction" pattern of influence, scholars such as Bogenschneider and Corbett (2010) argued that research will never be the primary factor used in policy decisions, but it is an important factor and its use can be improved,

as researchers gain greater knowledge about the policy contexts they are aiming to influence with their research. This idea will be discussed in more depth in the "factors which shape this relationship" section below.

In conclusion, the relationship between social science research and social policy decision-making has many forms. Featherman and Vinovkis's (2001) discussion of the changing role of research in U.S. social policy decision-making suggests that various models have been more prevalent over time, with the engineering model being less prevalent than previously. Among the three models, the enlightenment model is likely the most commonly-found model today, though the others come into play in some settings. In the next section, I will discuss briefly how researchers have conceptualized the sources or "producers" of this research, and the users, or "consumers" of this research.

Actors in the research-policy relationship. An important aspect of the research-policy relationship is the actors who are engaged in the relationship, commonly conceptualized as "producers" and "consumers" of social research. It is important to note that there is not a clear-cut set of groups "producers" and "consumers". Some people occupy both spaces in their work. In their 2010 book, Bogenschneider and Corbett shared the results of a ten-year exploratory study based on interviews and surveys with policymakers and researchers. They aimed to add to our understanding of how policymakers and researchers make sense of their connections to one another and to learn how these connections may be better facilitated. They identified a series of producers and consumers of research (p. 92) which we will discuss briefly below.

***Producers of research in the research-policy relationship*.** Bogenschneider and Corbett (2010) described producers as researchers in "university-based" settings, "intermediary organizations", and "government settings". University-based settings could include individual

researchers or those affiliated with centers; intermediary organizations include think tanks and other organizations which engage in research and advocacy around various issues; government settings include local, state, and federal governmental agencies and organizations in which individuals carry out or commission research. Interestingly, studies of research organizations as producers of policy-relevant research has focused much on the work of intermediary organizations and government agencies (Medvetz, 2012; NRC, 1978; Stefancic & Delgado, 1996; Williams, 1998), and less on research done in university-based settings (Bogenschneider & Corbett, 2010; Little, 2015).

Research on intermediary organizations, such as think tanks, has been expansive, focusing on a range of topics including think tanks' sources of funding and think tanks' impact on policy processes (McGann, 2007; Medvetz, 2012; Stefancic and Delgado, 1996). Overwhelmingly, such researchers have cited think tanks as significant contributors to policy processes in the United States McGann (2007) shared the results of a survey of 23 think tanks conducted by the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP) at the University of Pennsylvania. The findings of the survey showed that think tanks struggle to develop their research agendas when many sources of funding are short-term and very specific, rather than longer-term and allowing for more flexibility for them to carry out their work. In a 2012 publication, Medvetz used archival documents such as tax records and newspapers and interviews with 44 people knowledgeable about the work of think tanks. He argued that:

> Think tanks, the products of a long-term process of institutional growth and realignment, have become the primary instruments for linking political and intellectual practice in American life. Their proliferation over the last forty years has resulted in the formation of a new institutional subspace located at the

crossroads of the academic, political, economic, and media spheres. (p. 7).

Thus, researchers have studied actors shaping the work of think tanks, and their relative role in the policy world and in U.S. society.

Scholarship has also examined researchers in government settings as producers of social research which can inform social policy making (O'Connor, 2001; NRC 1978; Williams, 1998). A 1978 National Research Council study highlighted the fact that in the federal government, the roles of research producers and consumers often overlap. The study also found that the knowledge that is produced is largely meant to be applied by people outside of the federal government, stating: "the amount spent on activities directed to nonfederal users exceeds the amount spent on activities directed to federal users by more than two to one" (p. 3). The report gave a series of recommendations for how to improve knowledge production and application in the federal government. One such recommendation was that people in leadership positions make planning for knowledge production and application of "high quality" research a significant task (NRC, 1978).

Scholarship on the research-policy relationship for research conducted in university-based settings has largely focused on research done in the physical and natural sciences and engineering, not in the social sciences (Boardman and Ponomariov, 2007; Bozeman and Boardman, 2004; Sabharwal and Hu, 2013). I will discuss this literature in more depth in the "university-based" center research section.

***Consumers of research in the research-policy relationship*.** Because this dissertation study is concerned with the practices of university-based poverty research centers as producers of policy-relevant research, I will only briefly discuss literature on the role of research consumers in the research-policy relationship. Bogenschneider and Corbett (2010) identified the

consumers of research as those in intermediary organizations and government settings. In their 1980 study, Weiss and Bucuvalas reported on the perceptions of government workers in federal and state agencies regarding their uses of health research to carry out their work. Finch (2001) highlighted the role of government-based researchers and analysts. In that context, these were nurses working in the federal government commenting on their use of research in decision-making processes. In their 2010 book, Bogenschneider and Corbett argued that it's important to recognize that policymakers are people with variability and therefore the role that research plays in their decision-making can vary greatly. Thu, someone who aims to have his/her research inform a policy decision must understand the particular research consumer group.

Factors which shape the research-policy relationship. A significant body of research has focused on the factors which shape the relationship between social science research and social policy decision-making (Augustine, 2001; Donmoyer, 2012a; Maynard, 2006). The relevant factors I will discuss in this section are: 1) characteristics of research, 2) differential natures of research and policy institutions, 3) interaction between researchers and policymakers, and 4) dissemination of research.

***Characteristics of the research*.** Various researchers have discussed specific characteristics of research that are important factors which shape the likelihood that policymakers will use the research (Erickson, 2012; Lindblom & Cohen, 1979; Little, 2015). These include: the conclusiveness of research findings which can inform decision-making, if the research is framed in a policy-relevant manner, how the ideas are communicated, if the research is synthesized, the research methods that are used, and the ability of research to pass a series of "tests" for quality. I will briefly discuss literature on each of these relevant characteristics.

*Conclusive findings to inform decision making***.** One relevant issue is the ability of social

science researchers to provide products which have conclusive findings that can inform policymaking. In many ways, this means that social science research could provide policymakers with a set of tested theories about the ability of proposed solutions to address relevant social problems (Bulmer, 1982). This can often be difficult because social science researchers deal with social issues and developing a theory which can suggest definitive outcomes that would result from a given policy decision is often impossible. For one, the complexity of the social world makes it difficult for social researchers to develop theories which "stick" (Donmoyer, 2012b). Since the social world changes, what may have been "proven" to work in the past, or in one context will not necessarily be proven to work now, in another context (Lindblom & Cohen, 1979). Finally, research findings are often refuted and theories don't necessarily stick around long as definitive sources of information (Aaron, 1978). Maynard (2006) outlines a series of scenarios in which it is difficult to provide a definitive answer about how to address social issues. For example, she argues that many researchers would agree that neighborhoods are important for shaping the development and experiences of youth. Thus, from this conclusion, we could consider developing a set of policies to shape the neighborhood environments in which youth are engaged. However, other research will say that neighborhoods are not as important as other factors such as peers and family. This lack of conclusiveness is likely too murky for policymakers, but this is the type of answer that we often get from social science research.

Framing research as policy-relevant. In addition to policymakers desiring conclusive findings which can inform their work, they also tend to prefer research which has been designed with policy in mind. Thus, if questions and findings are framed in a policy-relevant manner, then policy makers may more readily use the research (Gueron, 2001; NRC, 1978). Hawkins, Langford, and Saunders (2015) examined survey data from 754 researchers at universities in

Canada to learn how social knowledge gets applied. Findings showed that most research that was applied was research that was already related to some problem being faced by the knowledge consumer. Cole (2007) highlights the importance of researchers stating why their research is useful. Cole's study involved a survey of 868 individuals who were "Forest Service employees who work in fuel reduction planning and decision-making". Findings suggest that when research is communicated in a way that highlights the benefits of using fuel reduction research, and which suggests that using such research is not very difficult, then research consumers may be likely to consider using the research (p. 59). Thus, when research and findings presuppose their policy-relevance and thus, are communicated as such, decision-makers are more likely to use it. Maynard (2006) argues that aiming to provide policy-relevant research can often lead some researchers to over-generalize their findings which is problematic, but still, as cited by the reviewed studies, considering how to frame one's findings in terms of their policy-relevance can increase the likelihood of use by decision-makers.

Communicating ideas. In addition to research which is framed in terms of policy issues, the general communication of ideas is relevant in research that is meant for policy decision-maker audiences. For example, the specific language used is important. Bogenschneider and Corbett, 2010, argue there is "scientific language" and there is "policy-relevant language" and they are different. Scientific language is field-specific, passive, and is not always conclusive. Policy-relevant language should be conclusive, and direct (Bogenschneider and Corbett, 2010, p. 185). Thus, the words that are used, and how they are put together is important. In addition, how issues are framed is important. In her 2015 study, Little found that researchers studying poverty frame their ideas for policy audiences with the recognition that poverty is an issue which appeals to many people's values related to society. To make their focus on poverty a less-contentious

topic, researchers in the study often wrote about poverty as an issue connected to other issues such as "economic security, income inequality, and mobility", thus focusing on prospects for future success, and dealing with the issue of poverty, rather than a focus on the present, and a focus on the "problem" (Little, 2015, p. v).

Synthesized research. Research has also shown that policymakers tend to prefer synthesized research to single studies (NRC, 1978). Hawkins, Langford, and Saunders (2015) found that researchers reported that applied research was often the result of ideas developed over time, rather than adoption of some approach from the findings of a single study. Syntheses of studies are important because they can provide a cumulative view of knowledge on a given issue, potential solutions to the issue, and the potential outcomes of those solutions (Maynard, 2006). Syntheses may also be useful because they save important resources such as time and money. Because conducting new research can be time-consuming, and can require hiring employees, finding research that has already been completed and that can be used in its current form is useful for policymakers (Bulmer, 1982). Finch's 2001 study found that most often, the respondents used data already collected to analyze and make conclusions because this approach allowed them to save resources. It thus gave the decision-makers needed information without having to collect the data themselves, or hiring someone to do it.

Research methods used. Researchers have overwhelmingly cited the preference of policymakers for research which uses quantitative methods (Finch, 2001). Researchers attribute this to the belief that quantitative research can provide more definitive answers about what does and does not work in addressing various social issues (Donmoyer, 2012a). This is also due to policy which has encouraged the use of quantitative research in policy decision-making. Finch (2001) cited the use of quantitative research by nurses in her study as important given the

political process and the belief in the value of quantitative research. Eisenhart (2006) points specifically to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and the What Works Clearinghouse in IES, arguing that both encouraged the use of quantitative, experimental approaches in educational research. Donmoyer (2012a) echoes this belief, arguing that the use of randomized controlled trials in educational research was prominent because its use was promoted by Grover Whitehurst, a former director of the Institute for Education Sciences.

Though practice and policy suggest a preference for research which uses quantitative methods, various researchers have cited the importance of qualitative research for our understanding of social issues and potential policy solutions for addressing these issues. Qualitative research is viewed as useful because of its ability to study context, and the relevance of particular factors for bringing about a given outcome. Thus, qualitative research can answer the "why" question more appropriately than can quantitative research (Donmoyer, 2012a; Eisenhart, 2006). Additionally, because qualitative research is often concerned with people's perspectives and sense-making, this can be useful for policymakers. Erickson (2012) argues that while policymakers may prefer quantitative research because of the belief that it can prove causation, qualitative research is actually useful for making causal arguments. In order to understand how a set of outcomes was reached, qualitative research can tell us what relevant factors were present in a particular context that made "x" lead to "y". Researchers have cited that policymakers may use qualitative research, but in limited ways, such as to support quantitative research. Thus, an "anecdotal" story may be valued (Donmoyer, 2012a), but not on its own (Finch, 2001). From this research, it is possible to conclude that research which used mixed methods may be useful for its ability to provide what policymakers are looking for, and to give the description and complexity they need.

Researchers have also suggested potential ways to shape research given knowledge of policymakers' preference for quantitative research. For example, Donmoyer (2012a) stated it is important to recognize the utility of presenting qualitative results in a detailed manner, rather than in summary form in tables. This thick description can provide policymakers with more understanding of the complexity and details of a case. It can also make them question their rigid concern with what works (Donmoyer, 2012a). Maynard (2006) has suggested that answering questions may require different research studies using different methodological approaches to get a real picture of what is going on.

Research "tests". A few researchers have highlighted a series of "tests" that policy makers use to determine if research is appropriate to be used. In an early study, Weiss and Bucuvalas (1980) interviewed individuals in "upper-level positions in federal, state, and local agencies in the fields of mental health, alcoholism, and drug abuse" (p. 303). The 155 participants received 2 research reports and rated the reports on a number of dimensions related to "quality", "objectivity", and "applicability of findings within existing programs" (p. 303). Findings showed that respondents considered research on the basis of its "truthfulness", or validity and its "utility" (p. 308). Research that is valid uses theory and methods to carry out and report the study, and includes findings which make sense to the potential user. Research that is useful can direct the action of the decision-maker by providing clear recommendations for how to proceed (Weiss and Bucuvalas, 1980).

In a more recent study, Bogenschneider and Corbett similarly found that research should meet three "tests" in order for policymakers to consider using it. These tests are the "credibility", "accessibility", and "timeliness" tests. They summed up this idea stating: "when high quality and objective research is presented on a timely basis in brief, understandable format—it is more

likely that research will be perceived as useful in policy discourse and decisions" (Bogenschneider and Corbett, 2010, p. 52).

***Differential natures of research and policy institutions*.** Researchers have argued that researchers and policymakers occupy different institutions, with different cultures, and thus, these different cultures often shape the tensions which exist between the creation and use of social science research (Lindblom & Cohen, 1979; Nye, 2008). In their 2010 book, Bogenschneider and Corbett state:

> Community dissonance theory attributes the underutilization of research in policymaking to a lack of communication between knowledge producers and knowledge consumers from a number of disparate communities who engage in different core technologies and operate in distinct professional and institutional cultures. (p. 126).

In the following sections, I will highlight research on these differences.

Role. One relevant difference is the ways that we conceptualize the roles of researchers and policymakers. We view researchers as "objective" studiers of the social world, and policymakers as people who engage in the world of value-based decisions. Nye (2008) conceptualizes this difference in roles as based in the generality of the questions studied by researchers and the specificity of the problems faced by policymakers. He states: "academic ethic is to offer elegant theoretical answers to general questions while the policy maker seeks definite answers to particular questions" (Nye, 2008, p. 598).

Another difference in role relates to the people to whom researchers and policymakers have to answer when they make decisions. Rose (1977) argued that a social scientist is able to study the world fairly freely and answer to his/her peers regarding the appropriate ways for

engaging in this study. A government worker or bureaucrat on the other hand is largely bound by the duties of his/her position, which oftentimes includes being responsive not only to peers, but also being responsive to constituents. Bogenschneider and Corbett (2010) argue "the values of policymakers and their constituents are potent policy levers" (p. 168). This becomes a point of tension because researchers arguably try to keep their values away from the forefront of their work, while policymakers often use values and beliefs to shape their work. Researchers have also pointed to compromise as an important element of the work of policymakers. For example, the nature of our policymaking structure is such that bills have to go through both houses of Congress and get approval from different people (Finch, 2001). Thus, even if a policy is proposed with the "best" research as evidence, numerous hands touch it before it gets passed. Various scholars have discussed the importance of understanding the interests of various actors and stakeholders with a vested interest in particular policy issues given that these varying interests can shape what policy proposals and adopted policies ultimately look like (Kingdon, 2003; Sabatier, 2007). Danziger (2001) highlights the role of compromise in the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) during the Clinton administration. Initially, the administration seemed to consult research to conceptualize its welfare policy proposals, but once the compromising and negotiation took place, the resulting PRWORA did not seem to be based in relevant scientific knowledge of the time. The PRWORA assumed that if people look for jobs, they will get them, but we know from research that changes in the economy has led to decreases in (living-wage-paying) jobs for people without certain skills and formal education (Danziger, 2001).

Time. Time is another factor which differs in the world of many researchers and policymakers. Because of the rapid nature of much of policymaking, policymakers are not often

able to wait for research to inform their work (Gueron, 2001; Maynard, 2006), they can usually make use of research that is available when they need it to make a decision about a particular issue. In his 1978 study, Aaron argued policymakers often have limited time before they can make a decision about addressing some issue; thus, this often means acting before enough research has been conducted to reach some definitive conclusion. Nye (2008) highlights the potential issue that arises here given that research often requires careful design and implementation, which may not match the quick timelines followed by policymakers.

Other policies on the policy agenda. Many decisions are made day-to-day that have significant impacts on the creation and implementation of policy; thus, insertion into this process is difficult because there are so many stages at which decisions are made (Weiss, 1999). Research has specifically examined the concept of the "policy agenda" and how issues which are being considered for policy solutions can influence if other issues are also considered (Kingdon, 2003). Cobb, Ross, and Ross (1976) discuss the idea that there are different types of "policy agendas" that are relevant for examination. For example, the public agenda is often a longer list which includes a wide variety of issues potentially being discussed to determine some policy solution. The formal agenda on the other hand, is a more concrete list of issues and solutions that policymakers are seriously considering. The formal agenda therefore, could be more important for analysis. Within this discussion, scholars have talked about factors that influence what issues are considered for the formal agenda (Sabatier, 2007). A series of context-specific factors are relevant. Research can play a role, but urgent or pressing issues which may receive advocacy from interest groups, or may be given further pertinence from current events, may often be most readily picked up on the formal agenda (Kingdon, 2003).

Different types of knowledge. We should also recognize that policymakers may use a

range of sources of knowledge (outside of research) in their decision-making. For example, problem solvers often use "ordinary knowledge" to inform their decisions. Ordinary knowledge is knowledge that we possess that hasn't necessarily been tested, or "proven", but it is what we believe to be true and thus live by (Lindblom & Cohen, 1979). Thus, policymakers' prior knowledge and own intuition are important sources of information for their decision-making (Aaron, 1978, p. 166). Public opinion is another relevant type of knowledge which may shape policymakers' decision-making (Puhl, Luedicke, & King; Smith & Irwin, 1984). Burstein (1998) argues that "democratic governments often do what their citizens want, and they are especially likely to do so when an issue is important to the public and its wishes are clear" (Burstein, 1998, p. 51). Other scholars have questioned this assertion, arguing that the relationship between public opinion and policymaking is more nuanced, often being mediated by other factors (Pawson & Wong, 2013). As this section suggests, when making policy decisions, policymakers draw on many sources of information, not just research.

***Interaction/relationship between researchers and policymakers*.** Not only are the differential natures of the institutions of researchers and policymakers important for our understanding of the relationship between social science and social policy decision-making, but so is our understanding of how people in these institutions interact with one another, even given these differential natures.

Networks. Networks are one factor which is important to this process. Finch (2001) argued that researchers often have limited political influence and thus, have to consider ways to develop relationships that can improve the likelihood that their research will be used. Such an approach could involve building coalitions with others who have similar interests and aims. Augustine (2001) also spoke to the importance of the connection between the research producer

and research user. Augustine surveyed 482 institutional researchers to examine the perceptions of researchers on the factors which influence the use of research findings in higher education. Findings showed that the potential match or mismatch in disciplinary background of the researcher and his/her supervisor played a significant role in the likelihood that the findings would be used. A 2014 National Science Foundation Sociology Program workshop resulted in a conceptual framework for explaining the relationship between social science research and social policymaking titled "A Relational Model for Understanding Research in the Policy Process". The workshop brought together people from a range of spaces who agree that social science research is important and can be useful to the policy process. Participants concluded that the networks that researchers are a part of play a significant role in their ability to get their research into the hands of people who can use that research for policy decision-making (White, Spalter-Roth, Best, and Joyce, 2015).

Credibility of researcher/organization. Another relevant relational factor is the perceived credibility of the researcher or the organization which is the producer of the research. Similar to our previous discussion of policymakers preferring research which has been conducted using quantitative methods, policymakers may also tend to prefer research from a researcher and/or organization that the policymaker believes will provide credible research to inform policy decision making. The 1978 National Research Council study of knowledge production and application in federal agencies found that knowledge may not be applied because those in the position to apply it question the research's quality and/or relevance. Finch (2001) found that nurses in her study viewed certain organizations such as the National Institutes of Health, the Food and Drug Administration, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as credible sources of research to inform decision making compared to others (p. 173). Augustine (2001)

found that the prominence or perceived importance of the institutional research office would influence the likelihood that the office's findings were used. Nye (2008) highlighted the relevance of this credibility issue in relation to individual researchers. Some people view credibility in terms of the ability of the researcher to conduct independent research without trying to make the work relevant to policy. Thus, people may view research as more credible if the researcher did not specifically try to shape it for policy-relevance. This of course may create a dilemma for a researcher depending on the expectations held of him/her in the context in which he/she is working.

Ability of both sets of actors to understand the nature of the other's work. A final relational factor of relevance is the ability of research producers and research consumers to understand the nature of the other's work. This can look many different ways. However, while some researchers such as Walter Williams have highlighted the ways in which policy decision makers should respond to this issue, various others have suggested that researchers must aim to learn more about policy processes and the contexts in which their research may play a role. Williams (1998) argued there is an abundance of quality policy analysis, and the appropriate techniques available to engage in it, but that we have to examine if those in decision-making roles are in the position to, or desire to use the results of those analyses. Thus, he states:

> What stands out, particularly during the period I have concentrated on the presidency, is the overt misuse of information and analysis, the hiding of potentially relevant data, the ignoring of available information that could modify one's ideological tenets, and the failure to invest in the development of badly needed policy-relevant data for the future through large-scale policy research". (p. xv)

Still, many scholars focus on the responsibility of researchers. Finch (2001) talked about the importance of nurse researchers being "politically savvy" in order to influence the use of research. This meant having knowledge of political processes and being able to bring together the research they found or created, their knowledge of these political processes, and the power they could wield in their given position (2001). Bogenschneider and Corbett (2010) highlighted similarly the importance of researchers learning more about policy processes. They suggest a number of things researchers should know about policy processes and how to proceed such as: "policymaking is a political process designed to reach consensus among divergent views", so "respect the use of compromise as a tool for getting things done"; "policymaking is a fluid process" so "respond quickly to emerging issues and remain patient as issues cycle on and off the political agenda"; and "because of the nature of electoral politics, provide evidence on how an issue affects a policymaker's constituents, or how a policymaker's jurisdiction such as a district or state compares with similar jurisdictions" (p. 171). Little (2015) enters the discussion, highlighting the importance of researchers' ability to understand how policy audiences understand social issues such as family poverty as researchers aim to shape their work to policy decision making (Little, 2015).

Dissemination of research. An important factor to consider when discussing the relationship between social science research and social policymaking is the research dissemination mechanisms used by researchers (Augustine, 2001; Little, 2015). Maynard (2006) argues that researchers can't control if someone actually uses their research, but they can conduct the research and share it. Thus, the sharing is a significant factor of concern. To some extent, the dissemination methods a researcher uses relate to the researcher's motivation for conducting research and aims for the impact it will have (Finch, 2001; Hawkins, Langford, and Saunders,

2015). The next sections will discuss some methods researchers use to disseminate their work and the potential utility of different methods of dissemination.

Targeted dissemination. Researchers have discussed the importance of targeted dissemination. This often involves reaching out to specific individuals. Finch (2001) found that for nurses in her study, face to face meetings with people in decision-making roles was an important method of research dissemination. Grande et al (2014) examined researchers' perceptions of the utility of social media for conveying findings to audiences. The respondents were given one of three "vignettes" which included different factors which may shape the decision-making of the subject in the story. Respondents rated "direct outreach to policy makers" as the most efficacious method of research dissemination. However, they had less confidence in that method than in using traditional media and also perceived that their peers had less respect for that method than for disseminating through traditional media (p. 1282). Researchers have also highlighted targeted dissemination to groups as a useful approach. Bogenschneider and Corbett (2010) reported on a series of policy seminars and found that policymakers liked receiving information in a "seminar" format which involves discussion and sharing ideas among people (Bogenschneider and Corbett, 2010, p. 53).

Open dissemination. Researchers have also discussed open dissemination methods. One such method is to share research in "traditional academic mediums" such as journals and other publications. Finch (2001) found that some of the nurse-researchers in her study often sought out published work for data they could use to inform their policy decision-making. In a 2015 publication, White, Spalter-Roth, Best, and Joyce (2015) cited academic publications and scientific society meetings as the primary mode through which university-based researchers insert their research into the policy making process.

News media is another "open dissemination" mode through which researchers can disseminate their research. Finch (2001) reported that one nurse communicated information on the dangers of drug use in a media campaign initiated in Congress (p. 183). Thus, open dissemination through media was an important part of the process because the findings were meant to be presented to a wide sector of the population. Grande (2014) found that 67% of the 215 health policy researchers in her study had used traditional media such as newspapers to share their research in the past year (p. 1282). Such an approach has been used by various poverty researchers. For example, the National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) at Columbia University chronicles its press releases and news coverage on its website. For example, a recently-published Washington Post article (July 14, 2015) titled "Black children are nearly four times as likely as white children to live in poverty, report says" cites a NCCP report (Berman, 2015). NCCP included a link to this article on its own website (NCCP, 2015).

Various poverty researchers and poverty research organizations have used multimedia as a mode of research dissemination. For example, Ananya Roy, a professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, is a part of the #GlobalPOV Project (Blum Center for Developing Economies, 2015). On its YouTube page, the project identifies states: "The #GlobalPOV Project combines critical social theory, improv art and old|new|social media to explore innovative ways of thinking about poverty, inequality and undertaking poverty action. Join the #GlobalPOV conversation on Twitter" (GlobalPOV, n.d.). Many research bodies and centers, including the Institute for Research on Poverty at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the Stanford Center on Poverty & Inequality at Stanford University, and the Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University, have YouTube pages which feature videos highlighting the work of center-affiliated scholars, the experiences of graduate students, and the various efforts of

the centers (Youtube.com).

Others researchers use social media such as twitter. Many of the poverty research centers explored during the conceptualization of this study have some form of social media account (twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Facebook). In a 2014 study, Grande found that of the 215 health policy researchers in her study, 14% had tweeted, and 21% had blogged "about their research or related health policy" in the past year (p. 1282). Among users of social media, assistant professors (compared to associate and full) were most likely to rate social media as an efficacious method of research delivery for health policy decision-making (Grande et al 2014, p. 1282).

While in 2001, Featherman and Vinovskis (2001) suggested that the role of social science as a useful factor in policy decision-making may be decreasing as people in decision-making roles have access to other sources of information through media and the internet, this section has highlighted how researchers use a range of mechanisms to disseminate their research.

Two conceptual frameworks for research dissemination. In addition to our broader discussion of these dissemination processes, a few recent studies have provided useful frameworks for considering the dissemination methods of social science researchers and the potential implications that those methods have for how researchers can inform the social policymaking process. Hawkins, Langford, and Saunders (2015) aim to learn how social research gets shared and applied. They report findings from a survey of 754 university researchers at 6 universities in Canada. The researchers provide an "analytical framework for knowledge application" which has been reproduced here. Our concern for research dissemination therefore, relates to the modalities and venues that producers use to share their research "outputs" (Hawkins, Langford, and Saunders, 2015). Findings showed that researchers' motivations for

engaging in research shaped their research outputs and modalities. For example, the authors found a connection between having a research contract (as part of the motivation for engaging in the research), and using “reports”, “cultural industry products”, and “media” for dissemination (p. 89). Findings also showed that the knowledge producers perceived that particular outputs could impact their academic career including "refereed academic publications”, “academic conference presentations”, and “cultural industry products” (p. 89). Thus, this connects to the ways in which academic setting shapes the perceived value of certain dissemination mechanisms. This conceptual framework also highlights the importance of considering how dissemination mechanisms connect to other parts of the knowledge production and application processes. This aspect of the framework will be discussed in the concluding section of this chapter.

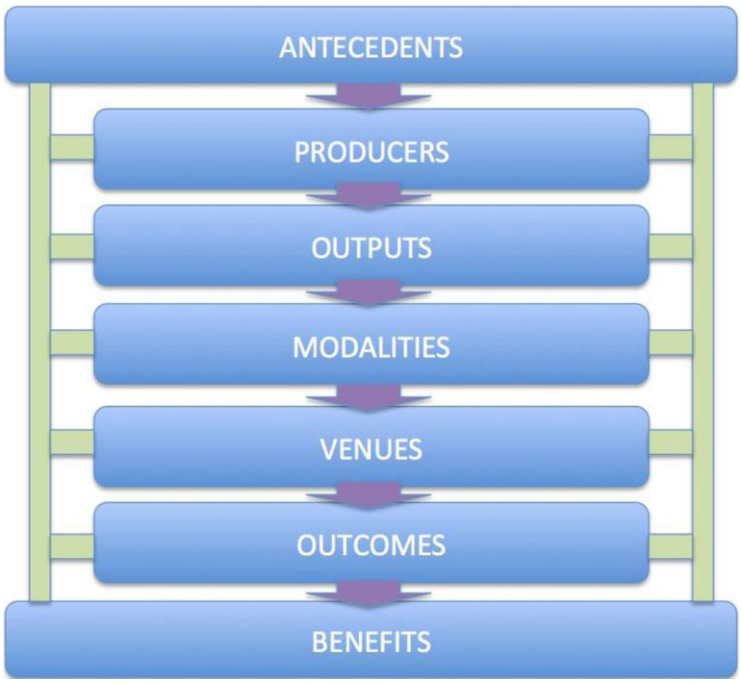


Figure 2.1. “Analytic Framework for Research Application” from Hawkins, Langford, and Saunders, 2015, p. 88.

White, Spalter-Roth, Best, and Joyce (2015) also highlight the role of research

dissemination in the application of social science research for policy decision-making. Their report of discussions at the 2014 NSF Sociology Program workshop titled "A Relational Model for Understanding Research in the Policy Process" included a preliminary conceptual framework which includes research dissemination as a relevant component in the process. Their diagram is reproduced below. The researchers suggest that the primary mode through which social science research conducted by university-based researchers enters the policy process is through "academic publications" and "scientific society meetings" (White, Spalter-Roth, Best, and Joyce, 2015). My study of university-based poverty research centers will consider if this framework reflects the dissemination of research by these centers.

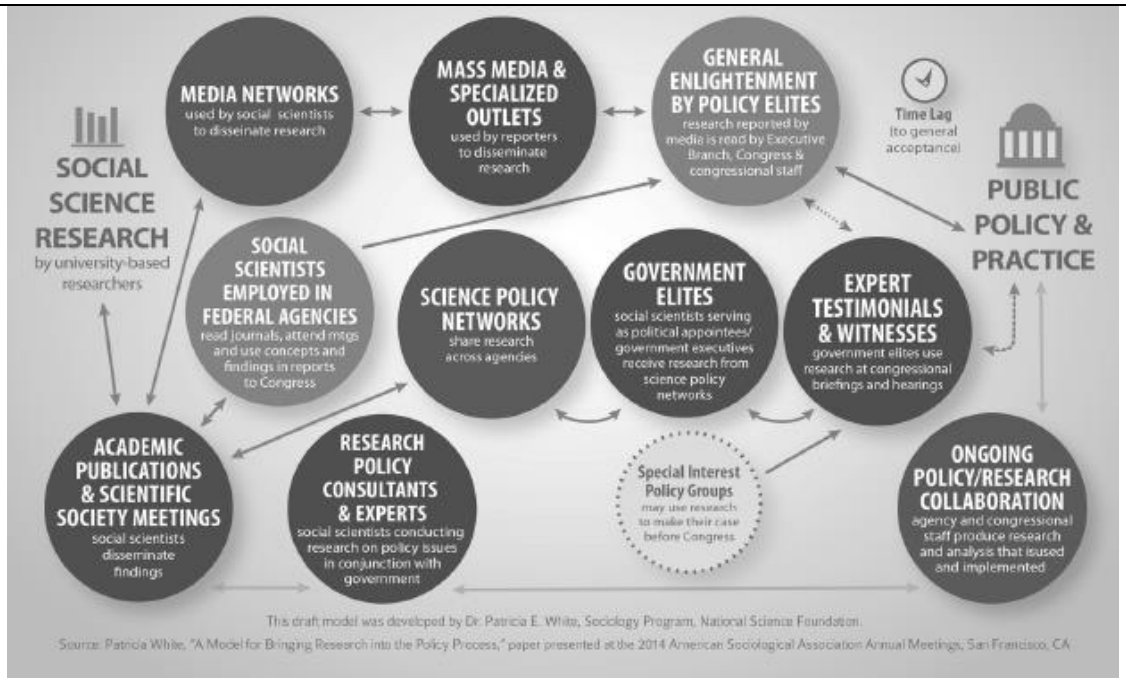


Figure 2.2. "Social Science Research and Public Policy: A Conceptual Framework of the Utilization Process and Relationships" from White, Spalter-Roth, Best, and Joyce, 2015

Lessons for researchers who aim to make their work policy-relevant. Researchers have drawn on the broader discussion of factors relevant to the research and policy relationship and suggested how researchers can proceed overall to influence the use of their research in

policy decision-making. Many researchers have advocated for adopting an "enlightenment" approach to forging a relationship between their social science research and the policymaking process. Lindblom and Cohen (1979) argue that because the work of social science researchers cannot achieve "independent authoritativeness", given the complex context of social problems, researchers must consider how to situate themselves within that context and within the other factors of relevance (p. 72). Later Weiss (1999), and Bogenschneider and Corbett (2010) have advocated for the use of "education" over "advocacy" approaches to research sharing which means sharing information which can inform the policy process, but not sharing information with specific people, or with the goal of people adopting a particular policy proposal. The "education" approach seems to be largely effective because it involves presenting policymakers with information, but not opinion, and involves sharing the information rather than trying to gear policymakers in one direction to make a particular decision (Bogenschneider and Corbett, 2010; Weiss, 1999). Lynn (2001) argued that policy analysis is an important role because people who do it are able to interpret and make conclusions about research so that it can be used by policymakers. However, people in the field of studying and training for policy analysis have to strengthen their position as useful sources of information and influence. They should "adopt a more scientific approach", "demonstrate the political relevance of their work" and "identify [their work] more clearly as a unique "contextualized craft" that is neither wholly scientific nor wholly political" (Lynn, 2001, p. 209). Bogenschneider and Corbett (2010) suggested that researchers channel the research through some setting that is relevant and regular for the policymaker. They found that policymakers may be more likely to use research when it is delivered to them through some channel that is already a part of their regular process. Thus, a researcher may be able to share research with someone who is a "go to" person for a

policymaker. Or, the researcher himself/herself may be that "go to" person (Bogenschneider and Corbett, 2010). White, Spalter-Roth, Best, and Joyce (2015) reported on some advice that was also shared by workshop participants which can be summed up as:

> Be prepared to repeat findings over and over; find the gatekeepers to policymakers; match your research to the mood of the public; frame and translate research for the public and the media; be alert to windows of opportunity; do not confine evidence of impact to the federal and national levels; and know that politics can trump research and the truth does not always triumph. (p. 3)

This dissertation study examines how university-based poverty research centers proceed to make their work policy-relevant.

Gap this dissertation study fills. This section of this review of relevant literature has highlighted scholarship on the relationship between social science research and social policy-making. I have given an overview of research focusing on the aims of this relationship, the actors in this relationship, and the factors which shape the relationship. In this section, I will describe how my study of university-based poverty research centers uses this literature as a foundation, and also extends this literature by filling gaps which have not been covered by prior research in this field. Additionally, I specifically draw on "next steps" for future research which were cited in some of the literature included in this section.

I am concerned with deepening our understanding of how university-based poverty research centers aim to use their research to influence antipoverty policy and practice. Thus, I examine the specific practices such centers engage in to contribute to antipoverty policy and practice.

First, I draw from Bogenschneider and Corbett's discussion of the importance of

"changing the cultural milieu in which knowledge producers function" (2010, p. 299). They argue that in order to make a greater link between the work of researchers and the work of policymakers, then researchers have to be in spaces which emphasize various factors of relevance for creating research that can be useful for policymakers. I argue that we need to first examine this "cultural milieu", and in particular, I am interested in the context of producers of "poverty knowledge" (O'Connor, 2001). Bogenschneider and Corbett (2010) suggest an action agenda for future research and practical work to inform our greater understanding of the research-policy relationship and to further support this relationship. Theme 2 for this agenda is "changing the cultural milieu in which knowledge producers function" (p. 299). They state: "We do not encourage researchers to focus on the utility of their work for policy…Even as our land-grant institutions of higher learning espouse efforts to extend knowledge beyond the walls of the academy, the target population for such efforts is seldom policymakers" (p. 296). They suggest this new aim because they argue that currently, there is not much focus in the practical world, or the scholarly world, on the use of research in public policymaking. I argue that examining the current "cultural milieu" of researchers within particular contexts is important for setting this agenda. Thus, this study draws from this agenda, a call for developing policies and practices which can encourage researchers to engage in efforts to make their research policy-relevant. We need to know what efforts researchers are engaging in to make their work policy-relevant, and what factors are shaping these efforts. Knowing what these efforts currently look like can inform this process of developing policies and practices to further shape the work of researchers in an effort to make that work policy-relevant.

Second, I draw from the quantitative study of knowledge application conducted by Hawkins, Langford, and Saunders (2015). I argue that studying similar questions using primarily

qualitative methods can be worthwhile. In their 2015 publication, Hawkins, Langford, and Saunders presented a conceptual framework for social knowledge application. They justify the need for their study arguing that past research on knowledge application has focused largely on research in STEM fields. Their quantitative study aimed to answer the following questions: 1) "Who produces social knowledge, and where and how is it produced?"; 2) "Why and how do producers of social knowledge contribute to its practical application?"; 3) "How and where is social knowledge applied and what are its outcomes?"; and 4) "How do academic and non-academic communities communicate and interact?" (p. 85). My qualitative study is also concerned with how social (poverty) knowledge is produced, and by whom, and how poverty researchers aim to apply that knowledge (to inform antipoverty policy and practice). Thus, this qualitative approach provides us with an additional study on the aims of researchers who seek to apply social knowledge (given the limited research in this area), and provide us with in-depth data on researchers' efforts and rationale for these efforts.

Third, I draw on Little's (2015) qualitative study of the ways in which researchers who study family poverty framed the issue of family poverty in their publications, what factors shaped their writing, and how they aimed to shape their writing for their audiences engaged in policy work. While Little is concerned with poverty, unlike my study, her study largely focuses on think tanks. They make up 14 of the 24 policy organizations whose work she includes in her study, while university-based poverty research institutes (such as those in my study) make up 6 of the 24 policy organizations whose work she includes in her study. Additionally, Little focuses on specific research publications (one per organization), and interviews the publications' authors to examine how these researchers framed their research for policy audiences. My study extends this focus on specific publications, to focus on organizational activities. Little (2015) cites the

importance of this broader focus toward the end of her dissertation:

> Furthermore, research in this vein could delve more deeply into the historical roots and evolution of policy organizations, examining how the progression of organizational missions and focuses over time affects what contemporary authors write about and how they craft their messages. It would also be informative to qualitatively and quantitatively explore how research dissemination occurs through mediums beyond policy publications, looking at packages of dissemination products, word-of-mouth information sharing between policymaker networks, and the development of trust and relationships between policymakers and experts. (p. 249)

My study is concerned with how poverty research centers, significant contributors to our body of knowledge on poverty, shape their range of efforts to use their research to influence antipoverty policy and practice. Thus, how authors frame their research is important, but dissemination is also important (Hawkins, Langford, and Saunders, 2015; White, Spalter-Roth, and Best, 2015) and networks between researchers and policy audiences is also important (White, Spalter-Roth, and Best, 2015). Additionally, my study focused on centers' other activities to use research to influence antipoverty policy and practice.

The following two literature review sections build on this core section which has focused on scholarship on the relationship between social science research and social policy decision-making. While this section has examined the aims of developing a relationship between social science research and social policy, the actors in this relationship, and factors which shape what this relationship will look like, the following two sections complement our understanding of this relationship. The following section focuses on a specific producer of research—university-based

centers, and calls for the need to study these centers given that much of our current knowledge on poverty comes from such centers. Thus, those interested in the use of research in design of antipoverty policy can benefit from my examination of how such centers aim to use their important source of knowledge to influence antipoverty policy and practice. This examination naturally relies on an understanding of the context of these centers. The final literature review section provides an overview of poverty research, highlighting relevant factors which may shape my research.

University-Based Research Center Model

The introduction to this dissertation discussed the importance of devoting energy and resources to the study of poverty's causes, consequences, and solutions, and using those studies to inform antipoverty policy and practice. The introduction also highlighted various recent advocacy efforts from researchers and elected officials to increase the use of research and evaluation in the design of antipoverty policy and practice. The previous section of the literature review highlighted literature on the relationship between social science research and policy, and specifically cited our need for additional scholarship which studies knowledge producers and their practices to inform anti-poverty policy and practice. Thus, this section of the literature review aims to introduce an important group of producers of knowledge on poverty's causes, consequences, and solutions. Those contributors are university-based poverty research centers.

Specifically, this section of the literature review discusses scholarship on university-based research centers and how their aims and structures affect the researchers who participate in them, the institutions in which the centers are situated, and factors which shape these centers' work. Ultimately, I argue that this study of university-based poverty research centers and their practices to inform antipoverty policy and practice will add to this body of literature, which has

been limited in its study of university-based centers outside of the natural, physical, and health sciences. Additionally, I will highlight how such scholarship has been limited in its study of the relationship between such centers and social policy and practice. First, I highlight why this dissertation study focuses on poverty research centers. Second, I discuss the history and rationale for the university-based research center model. Third, I discuss the importance of understanding the higher education context of such centers and the implications that this context has for centers' work. Finally, I end with a discussion of how this dissertation study can contribute to the bodies of literature highlighted in this section.

Why university-based poverty research centers? Many university-based poverty research centers include in their mission a goal to carry out policy-relevant research. In fact, as an early model of this approach to the research-policy relationship, we have the example of the Institute for Research on Poverty (IRP) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, founded in 1966. It was conceptualized as a "think tank for the poor" and modeled on the RAND Corporation (Medvetz, 2012; O'Connor, 2001). The IRP was developed as a concerted effort by the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) and scholars at UW-Madison to engage in research on poverty and poverty policy. Specifically, its aims were "to find out who was poor and why; to determine whether programs were meeting their objectives; and to find the best way of eliminating income poverty by 1976" (O'Connor, 2001, p. 217). The Institute for Research on Poverty is still in operation today.

Today, the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), an office which carries out some of the work of the former OEO, continues to offer funding for "poverty research centers" at universities in the United States. The initiative provides funding for ongoing research and evaluation on issues

related to poverty and programs and services meant to address poverty. HHS states: "centers will focus on issues of national significance to further enhance the understanding of the nature, causes, correlates, and effects of poverty, and programs and policies to ameliorate it". The last recorded funding competition listed on the HHS website is the 2011 competition, which made available $2.4 million and which funded three poverty research centers—at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, at the University of California-Davis, and at Stanford University (Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, n.d.).

A series of internet searches yielded a list of 22 university-based centers in the United States that study some aspects of social inequality and poverty, which could be narrowed to a list of 14 "poverty research centers". These 14 centers are those which specifically state on their center website that a focus of their work is to study and/or contribute to the design of solutions for addressing "poverty". Centers which do not use the language of poverty but instead focus on some other aspect of social inequality were not included. These 14 centers span the country geographically, and are situated at public as well as private institutions. Some have large staff, others have smaller staff. But the amount of research done by such centers is significant and warrants further examination. The list of 14 centers is presented in Table 3.2.

History of and rationale for the university-based research center model. Many university-based research centers have been developed with the idea that we need to combine the efforts of individuals with diverse disciplinary backgrounds, who can share resources to study important questions. This recognition has led to the development of many university-based research centers over the past fifty years. Often, such centers are designed around particular research areas or interests, include people from different disciplines, and receive some sort of

federal funding (Boardman and Bozeman, 2007, p. 430; Lewis, 2002). These centers have different foci and different sources of funding depending on the aims of funding sources and the centers. Sources of funding come from many organizations including the National Science Foundation (Boardman and Bozeman, 2007); the former Office of Economic Opportunity (O'Connor, 2001; Haveman, 1987); the National Institute of Mental Health (Flynn, Brekke, and Soydan, 2008; Lewis, Henney, McRoy, and White, 2002); and the Department of Health and Human Services (Office of ASPE, U.S. Department of HHS).

***Support for this model*.** Researchers have cited a number of reasons to support research centers, and to support one common aspect of research centers, which is collaboration among researchers (Boardman and Bozeman, 2007; Bozeman and Corley, 2004; Cheetham, 1994). One such benefit is the interdisciplinarity of the research that occurs at the centers, and that benefits society. This is a benefit because the study of social issues involves studying complex questions. Thus, a group of people from different disciplines can lend different perspectives to the study of complex social issues (Boardman and Bozeman, 2007; Cheetham, 1994; Sacha et al 2013). Another reason that interdisciplinarity is useful is that people with different backgrounds and skillsets means more dissemination methods (Cheetham, 1994). This is especially relevant for our concern with the dissemination methods of policy-relevant researchers. Finally, another benefit is that an interdisciplinary center can result in centralized resources and opportunities for engaging in work and garnering influence (Lewis, 2002). Thus, more people working together, with different perspectives, can also mean that these people have more resources to draw from to affect the type of change they would like to influence.

In addition to those overall benefits of bringing together groups of researchers to study complex social issues, working at university-based research centers and collaborating with others

can also have benefits for individual researchers. One such benefit is that collaboration contributes to the ability of researchers to learn new things and develop relationships and networks that will help them to be successful. Bozeman and Corley (2004) reported on a survey of 451 researchers who worked at university-based centers. Study findings found that: 1) "as grant funding increases, the total number of collaborators increases" (p. 606); 2) that female respondents are more likely to collaborate with other female researchers than are male participants in the same ranks as the female participants; and 3) that researchers who take on a "Mentor" approach to collaboration are more likely than some others to be tenured, collaborate with graduate students, and women, and junior faculty, and "have a favorable view about industry research and research on industrial applications" (p. 613).

Research has shown that collaboration can have significant influence on a researchers' career; thus, considering the benefits of working at a university-based research center and collaborating is important. In a 2008 survey study, researchers found that researchers' academic careers were positively influenced by their networks with researchers in their own institutions and others. Collaboration helped to develop such networks (van Rijnsoever, Hessels, & Vandeberg, 2008). Additional research has studied in depth what those potential academic benefits are. In a 2013 study, Sabharwal and Hu studied how participation in university-based centers affected faculty. They analyzed the CVs of 402 faculty members at research universities who study in the area of "learning sciences". Findings showed that research productivity is higher for researchers affiliated with centers than for those who are not. Productivity is measured in terms of the articles, books, and chapters published each year, as well as the grant funds attained each year. A question that still arises is if the center actually contributes to greater productivity or if researchers who are already doing these things themselves become affiliated

with centers. Research collaboration is also higher for researchers associated with centers than for those not affiliated. Gaughan and Ponomariov (2008) also showed these findings, concluding that center-affiliated researchers are more likely than non-affiliated researchers to co-author work with other researchers. At the same time, center affiliation is associated with lower numbers of individual grants for the given researchers of interest.

Opposition to the university-based research center model. Many scholars have highlighted potentially-negative aspects of university-based research centers for individual faculty as well as for the institutions with which the centers are affiliated (Boardman and Ponomariov, 2007; Carayol and Nguyen, 2005).

Faculty-level. Researchers have argued that the reward structure of higher education, in which these university-based centers are situated, does not support researchers who are connected to centers, and have cited different reasons for this. One reason for this connection is that currently, most of the evaluation that faculty receive is based on their research activities and how these are rated by peers in the field. Thus, working at a center, in an interdisciplinary setting, may not speak favorably to a researchers' ability to be an expert in his/her discipline and/or field. Carayol and Nguyen (2005) analyzed the work of over 900 researchers at a top French research university. Data include researchers' publications and laboratories with which the researchers were associated. Findings concluded that the traditional academic setting does not encourage participating in interdisciplinary research. Because promotion is partially based on the ability of researchers to use the methods and ideas relevant to a given discipline, and publish in the journals associated with that discipline, researchers trying to establish themselves will likely gear their work toward those discipline-specific publications and aims. Thus, researchers who are earlier in their careers are less likely to engage in interdisciplinary research than others,

likely because of the lack of incentives they have for engaging in interdisciplinary research at this stage in their careers.

Another potential drawback of participating in research centers is that working in centers may often mean engaging in applied research, rather than basic research. Many academic systems likely privileges single-discipline work over interdisciplinary, "problem-driven" work (Carayol and Nguyen, 2005, p. 77). Boardman and Ponomariov found that non-tenured, tenure-track faculty are more concerned than tenured faculty that participating in research which has a goal of "commercial application" will decrease the quality of that research. Thus, the higher education context shapes the work of faculty such that faculty who are not tenured may seek to engage in basic research geared toward approval by others in the field rather than applied and/or commercially research applicable to some other audience, which may commonly be found at university-based centers.

A third potential drawback for faculty engaging in work at research centers is that some academic departments do not count the work that faculty engage in at centers to fulfill the faculty members' duties to their departments. A 2007 study examined the experiences of 21 scientists and engineers associated with NSF Engineering Research Centers or Science and Technology Centers. Findings found this lack of cohesion between center duties and departmental duties to be relevant. For example, one participant argued that after she fulfilled her departmental and center research and grant duties, she did not have much time, or space left to devote to teaching (Boardman and Bozeman, 2007, p. 448). Thus, at the individual researcher level, it is difficult to balance the demands of the work at the center and the department when they are viewed separately by one of the bodies. Finally, a fourth drawback of university-based centers is for those people who don't participate in centers. Bozeman and Boardman (2004) highlighted that a

concern for many people is that since centers bring together people and sources of funding, those researchers who are not associated with centers may have access to less funding opportunities to support their individual research, given that a great proportion of funding sources go to groups of researchers, many of whom are based in centers.

Organization- and institution-level. Opposition to the center-model also occurs at the departmental and wider-higher education institutional level. One reason is that at the departmental level, researchers who engage in interdisciplinary work and applied research may have more difficulty receiving approval and tenure and promotion if departments value single discipline and basic research over what the center-affiliated researchers are producing (Boardman and Bozeman, 2007). Thus, departments will miss out on the continued expertise and work of those researchers if they are not given the stability (through tenure) to stay around. At the university level, the body of research produced may not maintain the same quality that it would without the issue of strain (Boardman and Bozeman, 2007). Thus, if researchers are stretched to carry out their duties both at their center and in their department and if these double duties do not overlap, then the university-based researcher may have difficulty carrying out all of the duties at a high level of quality. Ultimately, this impacts not only the researcher, but the institution in which he/she is situated.

Researchers have suggested various ways to deal with this issue. Greenwood (1995) argued that one potential solution is the restructuring of governance systems in higher education such that systems of faculty rewards and incentives match more closely with desired outcomes. Currently, most rewards focus on research products such as publications, but past research has shown that faculty would accept a changed system in which rewards based on teaching and research were more similar or "balanced" (Greenwood, p. 42). Boardman and Bozeman (2007)

recommended it may be worthwhile to consider how institutional policies and practices can be put into place to help with the issue of role strain, thus, allowing researchers to competently carry out their various roles as center-affiliated researchers, and members of academic departments.

***Characterizing models*.** In addition to considering support and opposition for university-based center models, it may also be important to consider how the work done at such centers changes based on the aims driving the centers. One recent study has highlighted different "models" which can shape how we think about the work of university-based research centers. Those models are "center as technical support", "center as thematic driver", and "center as organizing culture". A technical support center tends to receive its original support from the university and aims to "provide general technical support for proposal development". A thematic driver center tends to be supported by an external funding source and aims to "conduct research on a specific theme". And organizing culture centers tend to receive their funding support from the university and aim to "create and maintain an organized and sustainable collective research culture". The diagram below shows how the authors of this article conceptualized the different center models and the implications the models can have for center processes. According to these researchers, the model taken up by the center can shape how the work of the center looks. In studying a given center, it is therefore important to examine the center model and how this model may shape the center's development of a research agenda, processes for carrying out research, and processes for making other decisions (Flynn, Brekke, and Soydan, 2008).

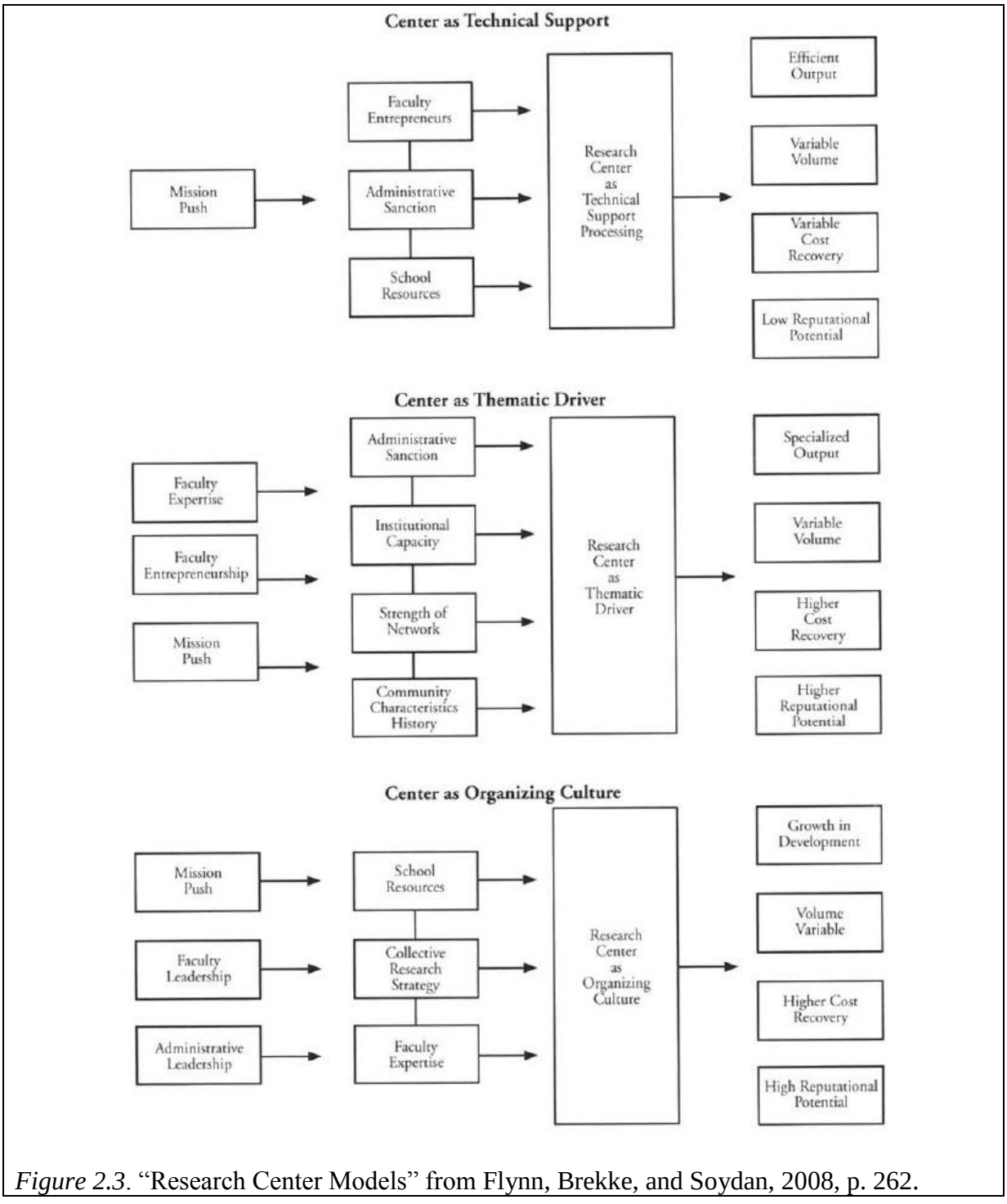


Figure 2.3. "Research Center Models" from Flynn, Brekke, and Soydan, 2008, p. 262.

Importance of higher education context of centers. The previous discussion of university-based research centers has highlighted the rationale for the model and potentially-positive and negative aspects of the centers. This discussion focused partly on ways in which the

higher education context of centers shapes the implications that participation at centers has for individual faculty and the institution at large. This section will continue that discussion, briefly highlighting specific ways in which the higher education context may be relevant for my study of university-based poverty research centers.

Importance of studying non-administrator decision-making in universities. Researchers have argued that much of the study in the field of higher education and higher education organization focuses on work and decision-making at the administration level, but not at the unit- or individual faculty or staff level. Thus, they argue it is important to study the work of people in higher education, outside of decision-making of administrators (and factors that shape that work) (Barley, 1996; Barley & Kunda, 2001; Bastedo, 2012; Heath & Sitkin, 2001). One such area of study could focus on unit-level, such as departmental (or center) decision-making (Massy, Wilger, and Colbeck, 1994; Collins, 1994). Hearn and McClendon (2012) argue "the most significant governance activity on campuses arguably occurs not at the institutional level but at the level of the academic subunits on campus: programs, departments, and, in large institutions, field-based colleges such as engineering, liberal arts, education, business, and law" (p. 55). Thus, examining the work of university-based centers, as sub-units, can add to this body of literature. Another such area of study is decision-making at the faculty-level. Sacha, Sanchez, Hancock, and Pastor (2013) interviewed 20 directors of university-based centers to learn how institutional factors shaped the "institutionalization" of their centers. Findings showed that a range of factors were relevant, leading the authors to recommend the following decisions and actions for centers aiming to become institutionalized: 1) develop a network among centers with similar aims and doing similar work (across the country); 2) garner the support and affiliation of junior faculty; and 3) balance sources of funding between university and external sources. Bastedo (2012) has

argued that understanding the context of faculty member's work can help us to better understand the decisions that faculty make regarding that work. This relates to our prior discussion of reward structures for researchers' work. Additionally, Bastedo (2012) has argued that universities play a significant role in the creation of knowledge, though this contribution to society is often not well recognized or acknowledged (p. 3). Thus, my study's focus on centers' decision-making and knowledge development can add to this body of literature.

Cooperative extension and applying knowledge to society. In addition to studying the decision-making processes at the unit and faculty level, the field of higher education can also inform our understanding of the ways in which university-based poverty research centers respond to societal issues. One such body of literature concerns land grant institutions as early models for university-based sources of societal problem-solving (Jewett, 2013; Maurrasse, 2001; Sacha et al., 2013). Land grant institutions received the designation given by the Morrill Act of 1862 and 1890. The Act aimed to support the development of institutions which would teach "agriculture, military tactics, and the mechanic arts as well as classical studies so that members of the working classes could obtain a liberal, practical education" (p. 1). Through their Extension Offices, the United States Department of Agriculture plays a significant role in carrying out the aims of the legislation which provided funds for land grant institutions by administering the funds and coordinating efforts to carry out the aims of the various associated Acts (Extension at Washington State University, 2009). Extension is meant to be an essential part of the work of land-grant institutions—to use research to inform practice. One USDA website describes the work of Extension in this way:

> Extension provides non-formal education and learning activities to people throughout the country — to farmers and other residents of rural communities as

well as to people living in urban areas. It emphasizes taking knowledge gained through research and education and bringing it directly to the people to create positive changes". (n.d.)

Additionally, Extension aims to: "translate science for practical application", "identify emerging research questions, find answers and encourage application of science and technology to improve agricultural, economic, and social conditions", and "prepare people to break the cycle of poverty, encourage healthful lifestyles, and prepare youth for responsible adulthood", among other aims (USDA, n.d.). Thus, this study of the practices of university-based poverty research centers has to recognize the already-inherent belief in the role of land-grant universities to assist in the development of data-informed solutions to societal problems. As other researchers have highlighted, at the societal level, many people hold this expectation of postsecondary institutions at large (Likins, 1995), regardless of their land grant designation.

Gap my dissertation study fills. My literature searches have not yielded studies focused on university-based centers which aim to inform antipoverty policy. Thus, I argue that my study of the ways in which university-based poverty research centers aim to use their research to shape antipoverty policy and practice contributes to this field. Such prior in-depth research has focused on the development of university-based research centers, why they are needed, and issues center researchers face (Boardman and Ponomariov, 2007; Bozeman and Boardman, 2004; Hetzner, Gidley, and Gray, 1989). Other studies have profiled specific centers in the health sciences and social work (Cheetham, 1994; Flynn, Brekke, and Soydan, 2008; Turrkan, Kaufman, and Rimer, 2000). Lewis's (2002) study of The Center for Social Work Research at the University of Texas at Austin profiled the center, its founding, sources of funding, and its current work. A profile of the center's current work showed that some portion of the center's work (20%) focused on

poverty (p. 443). This study and others have all been useful for suggesting questions of relevance to ask about the centers in my study including what led to the centers' founding, what are their sources of funding, what are their areas of foci, and what are their research dissemination methods. I have only found in-depth reference to one poverty research center in the literature, and that is the Institute for Research on Poverty at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (Bogenschneider and Corbett, 2010; Haveman, 1987; Medvetz, 2012; O'Connor, 2001). Finally, the brief overview of scholarship from the field of higher education has highlighted the importance of continued research on decision-making at the faculty and unit-levels. Thus, my study contributes to our understanding of university-based poverty research centers as sources of knowledge which can be applied to address social issues (as we have seen done in other fields), as well as to our understanding of the factors which shape this work (individual and institutional).

Poverty and Poverty Research

The purpose of this section of the literature review is to give an overview of the ways in which research (as a source of evidence) has conceptualized poverty's causes, consequences, and solution. This overview is important to understand the content of the work of university-based poverty research centers. This overview is also important to understand the context of the work of university-based poverty research centers. The previous two sections focused on how particular contexts for research shape the role it takes on—in the research-policy relationship, and in the context of university-based centers in higher education. Thus, our discussion of poverty research will include a discussion of factors which may shape what poverty research looks like. Thus, we will be able to combine this conversation with our prior discussions of the factors which shape the relationship between such research and policy decision-making, and the

way that the university-based center model in higher education can shape the work of policy-relevant researchers.

For this overview, Alice O'Connor's 2001 book, *Poverty knowledge: Social science, social policy, and the poor in twentieth-century*, serves as a foundational source. O' Connor's book, published by the Princeton University Press, traces the historical development of the field of poverty research, beginning with the work done by researchers during the social survey movement of the late 1800s, and ending with the work done by researchers during the era of the 1996 welfare reforms passed during the Clinton administration. She details historical works published during each era, highlighting the contextual factors which shaped the development of the works, and also discussing how the works fit within the larger conversations about poverty of the time. Ultimately, O'Connor advocates for a new way of thinking about social inequality that places emphasis on the individual and institutional policies and practices that create it, rather than on the people who are most harshly experiencing it. She argues: 'building an antipoverty agenda will require a basic change in the way we as a society think collectively about "the poverty problem," a change that begins with a redirection in contemporary social scientific poverty knowledge' (p. 4). O'Connor thinks our focus on poverty needs to be developed by people from different disciplines, using different methodological approaches, and focused on structural issues related to poverty.

Given O'Connor's discussion of the range of factors which shape poverty research and which shape the relationship between poverty research and antipoverty policy, I argue that in order to examine the research development, dissemination, and other practices of policy-relevant university-based poverty research centers, then we have to situate our examination in a historical understanding of "poverty knowledge" (O'Connor, 2001). Thus, now that we have situated our

centers of focus within a number of appropriate contexts (research-policy relationship context, and university-based center in higher education context), I end this review of relevant literature with a review of research on poverty. While O'Connor's book uses a chronological approach to highlight the development of the field of poverty research, I use a thematic approach, which includes researchers from different eras who have adopted and developed different ideas about the nature of poverty in the United States. This section discusses literature on: 1) causes of poverty; 2) consequences of poverty; 3) proposed solutions for addressing poverty; and 4) context of poverty research (methods used, researchers involved, and factors which shape research on poverty).

Causes of poverty. This section provides an overview of causes of poverty, as conceptualized in social science research. These causes include societal causes and individual or group causes. In each section, I made a decision about which research to include and which to exclude. In many cases, a study may highlight causes which fall into multiple categories, which I have attempted to highlight. Someone else carrying out this same review of literature may choose to categorize these studies in a different way.

***Societal causes*.** Societal causes of poverty are those which are often viewed as systemic, and institutional. Thus, these causes of poverty were created by and/or maintained by, policies and practices of societal structures such as the government and economic system.

Policy to deny economic advancement. The first societal cause cited by researchers is historical and systemic oppression and denial of participation in various parts of society. This denial of participation include policies which specifically aim to deny people access to opportunity, or policies which give access to opportunity, but unevenly.

Policy which inherently denies access to economic advancement. One such policy was the policy

which stated that some individuals in society were the property of others. This was the case with the policy of slavery which denied wealth, economic progress, and mobility for those who were enslaved. Thus, for centuries in U.S. history, it was policy for African Americans to live in poverty (Franklin, 1997). Frazier (1932) argued that African American families who were not enslaved were more likely to have achieved "economic competency" during the mid-late 1800s. However, despite their freedom, given the presence of slavery in society, free African Americans were frequently denied opportunities for economic advancement in society, during the period of slavery (Frazier, 1932). Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) discuss the role of "people as property" in the current economic and educational inequality we have in society. They highlight the policy of slavery, and also note that at some points in U.S. history, women, and children were considered to be property and thus, could not accumulate economic resources on their own. Thus, during periods in history when they were viewed as property, enslaved persons, women, and children, could not themselves have access to property and power in society. Their lack of personal wealth therefore, left them vulnerable and at a higher likelihood of experiencing poverty.

The legacy of such policy is prevalent today with the higher rates of poverty experienced by African Americans, women, and children, relative to their non-African American, male, and non-children counterparts. In 2014, 26.2% of African Americans were experiencing poverty, compared to 12.7% of European Americans, 12% of Asian people, and 23.6% of Hispanic people of any race. That same year, women were more likely to experience poverty than men, with percentage of the population living below the poverty line at 16.1% and 13.4%, respectively. Finally, individuals under age 18 were the most likely of reported age groups to experience poverty. For those under age 18, 21.1% experienced poverty, compared to 13.5% for

those aged 18 to 64 and 10.0% for those age 65 and older (DeNavas-Walt and Proctor, 2014, p. 13).

Scholars have discussed how the end of the policy of slavery and subsequent opportunities for African Americans to obtain access to economic and political power led to the development of the era of Jim Crow oppression and widespread sharecropping in the south. Franklin (1997) highlights that opportunities for economic advancement were denied from some African Americans, thus, continuing to limit their access to income, and opportunities for economic advancement in society. Thus, the late 19th century to early-mid-20th century marked continued oppression. Dorsey (1936) highlighted the drawing back of political and economic access that African Americans had obtained during reconstruction. He argued that because African Americans mostly had access to industrial education and labor jobs, then they had little access to many opportunities for social mobility. DuBois (1936) seconded this perspective, arguing that lack of access to political power during this era meant that African Americans could not combat measures to subjugate them economically. For example, lynching was used as a method of intimidation to prevent civic participation and economic advancement (Wells, 1892).

Scholars have highlighted the implications that racial segregation played, and continues to play, in the poverty experienced by some Americans. Wilson (1987) argued that concentration of individuals with limited economic resources in certain neighborhoods in the United States has led to increasingly limited opportunities for social mobility for such individuals. This segregation has a historical legacy given continued policies to limit the spaces to which African Americans could gain access for residency (Massey & Denton, 1993; Sugrue, 1996). Finally, scholars such as Michelle Alexander (2010) have stated the implications that differential policies for the incarceration of African Americans and Latinos have for the access that such individuals have

for economic access and social mobility post-incarceration (Alexander, 2010).

In addition to discussing poverty as a result of policies which have specifically aimed to deny people access to opportunities for the development of economic resources, researchers have also highlighted situations in which people were denied access to potentially beneficial resources.

One such set of policies relate to opportunities for economic development and wealth accumulation (Oliver & Shapiro, 2006). For example, Mendenhall (2010) discusses the 1862 Homestead Act which gave land to "white squatters" in the West and Midwest U.S. She argues "it is estimated that there are currently 46 million descendants of homesteaders who have benefited in terms of property ownership and wealth. The 46 million descendants represent about a quarter of the adult population" (Mendenhall, 2010, p. 23). This means that those people who were enslaved during that period, and their descendants, could not benefit from the opportunity to own property, a source of wealth for many Americans (Mendenhall, 2010).Various scholars have cited the policies of the New Deal of the 1930s which were meant to provide access to economic advancement for Americans, but which in action, denied opportunity for many. Bunche (1936) argued that various provisions of the National Recovery Administration (NRA) did not provide protections for African American workers who were largely part-time or temporary workers. In areas where pay raises were proposed and African Americans composed a large part of the work force, such as in the laundry industry in which 30, 000 African American women were employed, the provisions were not always carried out. African Americans were similarly denied access to opportunities for home ownership through the Home Owners Loan Corporation. This legacy matters even today because these sources of funding provided opportunities for Americans to purchase housing which for many, may be a source of wealth

(Mendenhall, 2010). Franklin (1997) further highlights such policies and practices arguing the ratings created by the HOLC made it difficult for people seeking loans for housing in central city neighborhoods that had high proportions of African American residents. Various home owners' associations also encouraged European American homeowners to sign "restrictive covenants" stating they would not sell or rent their home to an African American person. These agreements typically lasted about 20 years and if a person failed to comply, he or she could be sued in court for money. This practice of discrimination furthered residential segregation (Franklin, 1997), which many scholars cite as a significant contributor to lack of economic opportunity (Massey & Denton, 1993; Sugrue, 1996).

Finally, schooling in the U.S., which has often been cited as a mode to economic opportunity and success in society, has served as a limiting force for economic mobility when individuals have been denied equal and/or equitable educational resources (Kozol, 2005; Ravitch, 2014).

Lack of jobs or jobs which pay a living wage. The second societal cause of poverty cited by researchers is a lack of jobs overall or jobs which pay a living wage. An early study, considered to be one of the first major social survey studies conducted, was carried out by Charles Booth in London (Booth, 1892-1897). His study included a series of maps and other displays of neighborhoods in which people of different "social classes" lived. He specifically highlighted the extent to which people's experiences with poverty were due to unemployment, low wages, and other structural issues, rather than due to behavior (p. 28). Other researchers during the era such Residents of Hull House (1895) and W.E.B Dubois (1899), examined the extent to which experiences with poverty were a result of limited income in the current economy. Later, Myrdal (1944) argued that African Americans experienced poverty disproportionately

because they were relegated to jobs which did not pay a living wage such as sharecropping and jobs in industry which didn't require high levels of skills. Anderson's 2008 study of the early work of the Russell Sage Foundation (RSF) highlighted the problematically low wages earned by laborers during the early twentieth century, which sparked the need for supplemental income. Ultimately, the research out of RSF which focused on this topic advocated for an end to predatory lending policies which were viewed as a part of the larger system of economic inequality, forged by the capitalist economy. Researchers at RSF viewed poverty in light of structure and political economy (Anderson, 2008). Studies of the more recent era highlight a similar issue of poverty and limited economic resources as a result of lack of jobs or jobs which pay a living wage.

More recent studies continue to focus on the ways in which a lack of jobs contributes to inequality (MacCleod, 1987; Schram, 2000). MacCleod's (1987) study of youth living in a housing project in a largest northeastern city focuses on how the structure of society and the economy limit youth's opportunities, even in light of different aspirations. Thus, even though different youth in the study had different plans for their future employment opportunities, given their start in a neighborhood with limited jobs and jobs which paid a living wage, many had difficulty obtaining the better-paying jobs they might have worked hard in school to prepare for. Schram (2000) argues that with the current political economy, it is becoming increasingly more necessary that a household have two wages in order to provide a sufficient living for a family. Thus, families without two wages are less likely to be financially stable. In order to understand a family's economic situation then, Schram points to the political economy as a source of understanding, rather than looking narrowly at family structure and individual behavior as "causes" of poverty.

Other researchers have cited changes in the economy as being a factor contributing to poverty because changes in the economy lead to decreased opportunities for some individuals to obtain jobs. Such changes are those which favor people with greater education or skills, and which replace people with lower education and skills with technology (Goldthorpe, 1996; Hawkins & Maurer, 2012). Thus, as requirements for participating in the economy to earn a living wage constantly increase, those with lower levels of credentials have difficulty participating (Brown, 1995; Labaree, 2010).

Location. A third societal cause of poverty which researchers have cited is location (Cotter, 2001). Researchers have argued that where one lives has implications for the economic resources to which he/she has access.

Early researchers studying this topic discussed the role of immigration in the likelihood that people would experience lack of access to economic opportunity (DuBois, 1899; Mossell, 1921). An early 20th-century study done by researchers at the University of Chicago argued that taking up residence in cities led to "social disorganization" and various types of undesirable living conditions including poverty for recent Polish immigrants. After moving to urban centers in the U.S. and working in industry, the ways of life that were prevalent in Poland were disappearing, and people were losing their connections to others. With more time, education, and re-connecting with others in the community, social organization would come about, and thus, the unfavorable behaviors related to crime, and disconnected families and lack of education would disappear (Thomas and Znaniecki, 1927). Wilson (1999) highlighted experiences with poverty as partly a result of living in urban centers with limited access to well-paying jobs. Cotter (2002) analyzes the impact of living in certain spaces on the likelihood that a person will live in poverty by comparing rural and metropolitan spaces as impacting people's economic situation. Harris

and Parisi (2008) aimed to examine the role of location in how residents responded to changes in their access to public assistance benefits. The researchers carried out a case study in two counties in Mississippi, one with a 36 % poverty rate and the other with a 13% poverty rate. The researchers interviewed 56 women living in the counties and aimed to learn the role that location played in how poverty looked for residents. They found that residents in one area were more easily able to adjust to policy changes because more jobs were available in their county while residents in the other county didn't have access to the same number of jobs. Thus, in order for those residents to work, some had to travel a distance, which required finding childcare and transportation. Thus, location matters for the access one has to economic resources to combat poverty.

Individual or group causes. Various researchers have examined poverty as a result of characteristics, beliefs, behaviors, and values held by individual people, or people who belong to groups argued to possess those characteristics, beliefs, behaviors, and values. Some of the researchers included in this section attribute the origins of the problems in history or the economy, or society at large, but *presently* focus on the actions of individuals as the locus of importance and concern.

Interpersonal discrimination. Researchers have discussed interpersonal discrimination as a cause of poverty in terms of "society" and "individuals". I include this cause in this section because ultimately, interpersonal discrimination as a cause of poverty is typically discussed as a problem of individuals and their problematic views and behaviors which limit the opportunities and outcomes of others.

Discrimination is viewed as a cause of poverty because it can limit people's access to jobs if the employer denies work from a potential employee. An early study of this topic was

included in DuBois's 1899 study in which he argued that prejudice was more prevalent than most residents of Philadelphia during the period recognized. He highlighted various views which members of society held which limited access to employment for African Americans. For example, one such idea was that "no matter how well trained a Negro may be, or how fitted for work of any kind, he cannot in the ordinary course of competition hope to be much more than a menial servant" (DuBois, 1899, p. 323). Similarly, in his 1944 study, Myrdal highlighted the role of whites' perceptions and discrimination in African Americans' lack of access to well-paying jobs. A more recent study focused on the role that discrimination played in hiring practices. Researchers submitted a series of resumes to employers who had job openings. For resumes with a given level of applicant experience, multiple resumes with different names were sent out. Thus, the researchers were able to examine if resumes with "African American" names were more likely to be rejected than other resumes. "White resumes" were far more likely than "Black resumes" to receive a call-back, even when the resumes showed the same level of applicant experience. The results suggest that some sort of policy adjustment would be needed to change this differential treatment of applicants with the same level of experience (Bertrand and Mullainathan, 2004).

Lack of training and skills needed to obtain jobs. Many researchers have focused on the idea that people are unemployed because they do not possess the needed background knowledge, skills, and training to successfully obtain and carry out the types of jobs which are available (Goldthorpe, 1995; Myrdal, 1944; Wilson, 1999). O'Connor (2001) argues that this approach to the study of unemployment and related issue of poverty was prevalent during the 1950s and 1960s in the U.S. and was the rationale for many government programs developed during the period. The notion was that investing in people's human capital development would increase the

person's likelihood of obtaining employment to earn a living wage. This approach to study of unemployment and related poverty is also common today. In a recent Council of Economic Advisors Report (2014), the CEA highlighted the series of government programs which have been designed since the mid-20th century and those being implemented by the current administration to provide access to higher levels of training for people in society as a way to combat poverty.

Family structure. Another topic which has received much attention by researchers studying poverty throughout history is the structure of families that experience poverty. Researchers have highlighted different reasons for this supposed causation, but overwhelmingly, this variety of explanations concludes that families with children with one parent, compared to families with children with two parents, are more likely to experience poverty than other families because of the lesser incomes of households and families with fewer wage earners. Researchers attribute this situation to different causes though. For example, some researchers attribute this state of affairs to simple math—less people in the household and/or family means less money to support the household and/or family. Mossell (1921) highlights a correlation between family size and income, arguing that yearly income increased with the size of the family. Other researchers however attribute this situation to a lack of desire for marriage, conceptualized as the sole way to include two wage earners in the household (Franklin, 1999). Thus, such researchers often advocate for ways to encourage people to want to get married, to lead to greater economic resources and better outcomes for children (Amato, 2004).

Cultural causes. Many researchers often study cultural causes of poverty (Lewis, 1959; Lynd and Lynd, 1929; Moynihan, 1965; Jencks, 1992). These causes may be used to explain any of the above individual beliefs or behaviors, but the focus is on a set of values, beliefs, and

behaviors which members of a particular group hold and pass on to succeeding generations which are believed to increase the likelihood that a person or people will live in poverty. I associate these with individual and/or group causes of poverty while other researchers may discuss these causes differently. Overall, researchers whose study cultural causes of poverty suggest that individuals who participate in such a culture maintain beliefs, values, and practices which don't allow for or don't privilege success and economic mobility. Some researchers assign cultural causes to poverty, but situate this culture within a broader socioeconomic and historical context.

Lynd and Lynd (1929) concluded that people were experiencing poverty because they were not able to appropriately deal with issues of unemployment and low wages due to their culture, which focused on "consumerism and individual gain" (p. 58). Oscar Lewis is famously associated with developing the idea of a "culture of poverty" in his 1959 publication *Five Families: Mexican Case Studies in the Culture of Poverty*. He situated the experiences of the families he studied in the changing economic contexts of their societies. In his 1959 report of a 15-year ethnographic study of families in a Mexican city, he stated: "My purpose has been to contribute to our understanding of the culture of poverty in contemporary Mexico and, insofar as the poor throughout the world have something in common, to lower-class life in general" (p. 1). He ultimately concluded some commonalities among the families which he associated with "lower class" culture such as having "free union" or "common law" marriages. He does not however, explain how these patterns result from some "lower-class" culture held by the families. In his study of African American families, *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*, Moynihan argues problematic values, beliefs, and behaviors are shaped by and shape, participation in welfare programs. He focuses on a "pathology" which he argues has been

adopted by poor African American families which helps to explain the levels of social inequality which exist in society (Moynihan, 1965). He highlights for example, what he argues are the problematic roles of African American parents in families, as another contributor to social inequality. African American women are said to be too masculine and too controlling, taking on the role of the man in the family, while men do not step up and play the role as the leader of the household. This state of affairs negatively impacts children. Murray (1984) overwhelmingly argued that people experiencing poverty experience it because of their failure to take advantage of opportunities for economic advancement in society. He argues that not working and receiving assistance in the form of housing, food, and cash assistance is viewed by some people as preferable; thus, their set of beliefs and behaviors reflects this, but keeps people living in poverty. Jencks ultimately agrees with this perspective, citing a supposed "underclass" culture as problematic because "it tolerates a degree of selfishness and irresponsibility, especially on the part of males, that is extremely destructive in any community, but especially poor communities" (Jencks, 1992, p.22). Thus, Jencks is arguing that the social inequality experienced by such communities is due to members of the communities living against the norms of selflessness and responsibility which guide how society otherwise operates.

Consequences of poverty. Researchers who study poverty have discussed a number of relevant consequences. Some of those are consequences for individuals in society and others are consequences for society as a whole.

***Individual Consequences*.** A significant focus of poverty research has highlighted the implications that living in poverty have for the experiences of children and youth. Such implications include developmental, educational, and behavioral effects. Developmental consequences vary. In an early study, Mossell argued migrant families with more children tended

to have children who were underfed (1921). A recent study examined the role of access to nutritional food for children experiencing poverty. The findings showed that children experiencing poverty whose families did not participate in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), were less likely than children of families participating in WIC to have children with positive health and academic outcomes (Jackson, 2015).

Researchers argue educational consequences also vary. Coleman and colleagues' (1966) study found that social class background of students and others in their school was a significant contributor to differential outcomes on standardized tests for students. Recent research has continued to confirm these findings, highlighting differences in math and reading performance for students with different socioeconomic statuses (SES) (Reardon, 2011). In a longitudinal study, results showed that these scores correlate with later outcomes such as high school and postsecondary educational attainment as well as earnings later in life (Farkas, 2011). Huston and colleagues (2001) studied the impacts that participation in the New Hope antipoverty program had for children and their parents. The program involved parents' increased employment and receipt of wage supplements and subsidies for things such as health insurance and child care. Findings from the study showed that increased family income led to improved educational outcomes for children. Additionally, researchers have argued schools respond differently to students from different social class backgrounds, leading to differential outcomes. Researchers have found that students from less financially-affluent families are more likely to be "tracked" into "lower track" curricula (Dauber, Alexander, & Entwisle, 1996). The types of educational resources that students have access to are influenced by social class, especially in a changing economy and changing systems of government participation in the education system. Apple

(1993) discusses how economic capital can be exchanged for outcomes in education (Apple, 1993; Brown & Lauder, 1996; Dale, 1997).

Researchers have also studied the behavioral consequences of living in poverty for children and youth. Moynihan's 1965 report argued that as a result of the prevalence of households led by a single mother in "poor" African American families, that youth did not receive the parental guidance they needed. Such youth, he argued, were more likely to engage in undesired behaviors including crime such as rape, murder, and aggravated assault. An updated focus on this consequence was found in the 2001 study by Huston and colleagues, which concluded that participation in the New Hope antipoverty program was associated with improved behavior for male children.

Researchers have also studied the consequences of poverty for adults. Experiencing poverty and associated issues such as lack of access to quality education can limit upward social mobility. The types of employment and levels of income that people ultimately attain can be associated with their educational attainment and the educational attainment of their parents (Blau, Duncan, & Tyree, 1967; Massey & Denton, 1993; Sewell, Haller, & Portes, 1969).

Societal Consequences. A portion of research on poverty has highlighted consequences of poverty for society. Some researchers have argued poverty detracts from economic growth for society as a whole (Aaron, 1978). In addition to arguing that people experiencing poverty do not contribute to the economy, researchers have argued that people experiencing poverty take more than their fair share of government funding and benefits. In a 1965 *Special Message to the Congress*, President Lyndon Johnson cited large amounts of money spent each year on families "on relief" as justification for need for funding to increase resources for educational opportunity. In that same speech, Johnson spoke to crime as a consequence of poverty which plagues society

as a whole (Johnson, 1965). In a 2009 study, Wilkinson and Pickett analyzed studies on levels of income and social problems and found that when income inequality is high, rates of crime are higher, levels of educational performance are lower, and various other social issues are exacerbated.

Other researchers have highlighted potentially positive benefits of social inequality and poverty, arguing that it can contribute to individuals' desire to work hard to succeed in life. In their 1945 paper, Davis and Moore argue that inequality is a necessary feature of society because it helps to motivate individuals to work hard to be upwardly socially mobile, and to fulfill their duties in their respective roles in the society. Krueger (2003) argues that inequality is something that can be useful for society because it can encourage people to achieve social mobility. He argues therefore, that to encourage people to be productive in society, societies must determine what level of inequality should be beneficial, thus, striking a balance. Murray (1984) agrees, ultimately asking if inequality is problematic if it stems from people's failure to accept a rightful role in society as a worker.

Solutions for poverty. This section summarizes research on solutions for addressing poverty. Ways of thinking about or explaining poverty tend to connect to ideas for solutions for addressing poverty. The diversity of approaches for designing solutions to address poverty partly draws from the diverse approaches to explaining poverty. Thus, our prior discussion of research on the causes and consequences of poverty has implications for this current discussion of appropriate solutions for addressing poverty. Lepianka, van Oorschot, and Gelissen (2009) state "the way the general public perceives the poor, and especially the causes of poverty, is generally assumed to have a profound influence on the legitimacy of anti-poverty policies" (p. 421). This connection also exists within research. Thus, the ways in which researchers conceptualize the

causes and consequences of poverty will likely shape the ways in which they study solutions for poverty.

***Individual and group solutions*.** Some scholarship focuses on solutions for poverty which address individuals or groups as the site of change. One of the most prevalent approaches involves education and work training. This approach assumes that the barrier to economic advancement is an individual's inability to take advantage of work opportunities because he or she has not received enough educational and/or work training. Woodhall (1987) advocates for government assisting people in developing human capital, arguing that people with higher levels of education are more productive; thus, society would benefit from this increased productivity. Investment in human capital could come in the form of many different policies including investment in training, education, and healthcare. Many of the programs which came out of the War of Poverty programming focused on the idea of investing in human capital development for individuals experiencing poverty. Programs such as Head Start (the early childhood educational program), Job Corps (an educational and work training program for young adults), and other workforce training programs out of the Manpower Demonstration and Training Act (MDTA) and later, the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), took this rationale and approach (CEA, 2014; Holzer, 2012; O'Connor, 2001). Additional approaches which don't directly provide opportunities for education and training, but which support such opportunities include training for teachers; investment in technology and educational equipment (Johnson, 1965), and increased access to financial resources for college students by changing guidelines for loan programs and increasing access to federal grant and education credit programs (CEA, 2014).

Another prevalent approach focuses on subsidies, cash assistance, and tax credits. Such

programs include benefits for elderly, workers, people with children, and low-income people meeting other criteria through Social Security, the Earned Income Tax Credit, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, and Unemployment Insurance. Research has shown that such programs have played a significant role in decreasing poverty that would have been experienced by Americans facing a series of hardships (CEA, 2014, p. 3). Research on specific programs includes studies of the "negative income tax" (NIT) which Nixon aimed to implement with his Family Assistance Plan (Williams, 1998). The notion for such a program was to supplement the income of workers with various resources and benefits. Mendenhall et al, in a 2012 study, examined how recipients of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) responded to receiving the credit in either a lump sum or in installments. The study argued it is important to examine how recipients of the EITC plan to use the refund, how they use the refund, and what decisions go into their planning and spending processes. Findings showed that recipients used their funds for a range of purposes, including immediate needs, education, savings, and some for long-term planning such as purchasing a home. The researchers argued this research could be useful for understanding how recipients actually respond to different arrangements for tax credit receipt, which could inform how people designing and implementing programs could think about the best approaches for such design and implementation.

Additional solutions have been suggested which focus on encouraging individuals to engage in, or not engage in certain behaviors. In welfare policy and education policy, the U.S. government has supported the adoption of numerous measures aimed at decreasing the role of the government in social affairs and increasing "personal and institutional accountability" (Newman & Chin, 2003, p. 3). Such solutions have partly come out of beliefs that participation in various government-funded programs has led to engagement in undesirable behavior (Jencks,

1992; Moynihan, 1970; Murray, 1984). Murray (1984) argued that the legacy of past policies implemented led people to further hold unfavorable beliefs and engage in unfavorable behaviors. He argued policy implemented since the 1950s had made it very easy for people to receive government assistance without doing things for themselves. Thus, he argued, we needed policy to turn the tables and require that people work to get the benefits they needed, thus, ending poverty. Findings from the New Hope project study done by Huston and colleagues (2001) concluded that "for adults who were employed full time, it provided wage supplements sufficient to raise family income above the poverty threshold and subsidies for child care and health insurance. Project representatives provided advice and services to participants, and community service jobs were available for people who could not find market employment" (Huston et al 2001, p. 318). Thus, the antipoverty program focused on encouraging employment among participants in order for them to receive access to program benefits. Other research has disputed this idea, arguing that "despite concerns that antipoverty programs may discourage employment, the best research suggests that work disincentive effects are small or nonexistent for most programs" (CEA, 2014, p. 4). And citing the wide participation in programs helps to hone in on this point. A significant portion of the U.S. population participates in some social program during their life. "About half of taxpayers with children used the EITC at some point between 1979 and 2006, and over two-thirds of Americans aged 14 to 22 in 1979 received income from SNAP, AFDC/TANF, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or UI at some point between 1978 and 2010" (CEA, 2014, p. 4). Thus, because participation in social programs including antipoverty programs is so widespread, it is difficult to support the idea that participation decreases incentives to work.

Additional policy and practice has emphasized discouraging people from engaging in

nonmarital childbearing, with the notion that a causal relationship exists between engaging in nonmarital childbearing and having children who will live in poverty. Such policies were direct efforts to remove childbearing capabilities from women experiencing poverty. In her 2006 book, Harriet Washington found that "by 1983, when blacks constituted only 12 percent of the population, 43 percent of the women sterilized in federally funded family planning programs were African Americans" (Washington, 2006, p. 203). According to Franklin (1997) "Carl Shultz, director of HEW's Population Affairs Office, estimated that in 1972 between 100,000 and 200,000 sterilizations had been funded by the federal government" (p. 191). Further investigation showed that many doctors had been particularly marketing sterilization procedures to poor and African American women (Franklin, 1997).

Societal solutions. Researchers have also focused on society as the site for implementing solutions to address poverty. One such approach has advocated for the creation of organizations, councils, and other networks and resources in a labor movement to fight for political and economic rights for workers in the capitalist society (Dorsey, 1936; DuBois, 1936). Thus, the idea is to create institutions which can bring about change in the greater society, which is viewed to be the site of the problem of poverty. A study sponsored by the Russell Sage Foundation in Pittsburgh focused on industrialism and how it impacted working families. It was released in a series of volumes between 1909 and 1914. The study and its recommendations largely focused on the living conditions and opportunities for residents and suggested various protections and benefits for workers (Kellogg, 1909-1914).

Others have advocated for policy and practice to create jobs and increase wages. Mallon and Stevens (2011) highlight the importance of job availability and resources to facilitate being successful in a job. Holzer (2015) has argued that a minimum wage is beneficial for providing

greater resources to workers, but that other considerations are relevant. In some places, raising wages for some workers has led to decreases in available jobs overall. Thus, the thought is that if employers are required to pay higher wages to their workers, then they will not be able to, or willing to, maintain the same number of employees. Thus, those people who are employed will be better off, but those people who lose jobs, or can't gain jobs will be worse off.

Researchers have studied addressing discrimination to deal with unemployment and subsequent economic inequality. Gary Becker studied the potential effects of discrimination on income, arguing that when a group was discriminated against and was a minority in the overall population, then it was difficult to address this discrimination (Becker, 1957). Following the findings of their study of call-backs for resumes, Bertrand and Mullainathan (2004) advocated for addressing discrimination in employment practices, recognizing the role that discrimination can play in limiting opportunities for employment for people from certain groups, and thus, increasing the likelihood of limited access to economic resources.

In addition to focusing on work specifically, researchers have focused on a broader set of societal factors which contribute to the likelihood that individuals and families will live in poverty and have suggested addressing these as potential solutions for addressing poverty. For example, researchers have focused on addressing segregation because it influences the resources that are or are not concentrated in certain spaces and thus, the resources that children and adults have access to (Duncan & Murnane, 2014). Massey and Denton (1993) point to specific policies throughout U.S. history which have denied African Americans access to housing in certain neighborhoods. The legacy of these policies has implications for why neighborhoods look how they look today. Other scholars, such as Oliver and Shapiro (2006) specifically examine policies which have been in place throughout history which have made it difficult for African Americans

to accumulate wealth. Thus, expanding opportunities for wealth development would help to address this issue.

This section has highlighted research on poverty's causes, consequences, and solutions. This overview has shown that researchers have conceptualized these causes, consequences, and solutions in many ways, but that one pattern is often that causes conceptualized as "individual" tend to lend themselves to discussion of solutions to change individuals. The same follows for societal causes. The following section then, highlights the context of research on poverty, to complement our discussion of the content of research on poverty.

Context of research on poverty. While my primary focus in this section has been the content of research on poverty, it is important to place that research in a context. Thus, we will now briefly discuss research methods used in such research, researchers who participated in such research, and factors which have shaped this research.

This review of research on poverty's causes, consequences, and solutions, has shown that researchers studying poverty use a variety of qualitative and quantitative methodological approaches to study poverty. This variety of approaches is beneficial because it allows us to examine various aspects of the issues of relevance.

This review of literature has not highlighted in depth who the researchers were. O'Connor (2001) argued that in poverty research, only some people's ideas about the nature of social inequality are a part of the broader discourse in many settings that shapes our understanding of poverty, and that shapes policy to address poverty. She highlights researchers with university training who carry out their research at postsecondary institutions and research institutes. She highlights the importance however, of considering how a new agenda for poverty research could be different. (O'Connor, 2001). Evidence has shown us the potential benefits of

expanding participation in the research process to address issues of social inequality. For example, Johnnie Tillmon, an early member and eventual executive director of the National Welfare Rights Organization, was a single mother of 6 children who was a welfare recipient in the 1960s. To gather data about the beliefs and experiences of welfare recipients, she surveyed women who lived in her housing project and her results showed that 599 out of 600 respondents preferred training and employment to receiving welfare (Franklin, 1997, p. 171). She, as a resident of this community, was able to gather data on the perspectives of her community members, and ultimately, went on to be the organization's Executive Director. Thus, her personal experience and connection, and research, mattered for her being a person in a decision-making role in this organization, and in particular, an organization which aimed to gain resources and rights for its members.

Research has highlighted a series of factors which seem to shape research and research on poverty and inequality in particular, including relevant issues of the time, funding sources, and characteristics of the researcher engaging in the work (Jewett, 2013; Little, 2015; O'Connor, 2001). O'Connor (2001) argues that our thinking about poverty has been shaped by various things throughout history—war, migration, and changes in the economy. Thus, given these changes in society, politics, and economy, researchers have gravitated toward the study of particular topics (Aaron, 1978; Haveman, 1987). In addition, researchers have also cited that the receptiveness of the public to particular issues of the time can shape what their research looks like. Little (2015) found that researchers studying family poverty may write up their work in such a way that they believe will make it palatable for policy audiences given current public opinion on topics such as welfare.

Research has also shown that funding sources have shaped what research on poverty has

looked like. Some researchers have argued this funding has been presented with the requirement that research that is funded should result in findings which can inform some sort of policy or practice moving forward. Jewett (2013) argued that after WWII, funding for social science research from the federal government largely shaped research to address the specific knowledge and data needs of various bodies in the federal government. O'Connor (2007) has made a similar argument, with the addition that such funding came along with support for research which could follow a particular ideological perspective. She chronicled some of the work of Russell Sage Foundation, highlighting RSF's aims for research to contribute to "rational, scientific understanding of society and its problems" (p. 1).

Research has highlighted a range of characteristics of the researcher which may shape the research that he/she engages in. The institution where the researcher is positioned may often play a role. This is implicit in the discussions of funding sources shaping the research of researchers, but further, Bogenschneider and Corbett (2010) argue that "where we are located institutionally and how we are prepared professionally shape how we see the world and act in that world. If we understand these influences more deeply, we can begin the process of enhancing our understanding and communication" (p. 74). They highlighted thus, how the "culture" of conducting research as a professor at a university for example, can shape one's work. O'Connor (2001), through tracing the history of poverty research, highlighted how disciplinary background of researchers shaped their approaches to studying poverty.

Another set of relevant characteristics of researches which may shape their research on poverty is the researchers' own sets of assumptions, biases, and beliefs, which may or may not be related to institutional context and disciplinary background (Collins, 1989). In his 1992 book on social policy, Jencks also addresses the role that ideology often plays in work on and

advocacy for particular ideas surrounding poverty. For him, his assumptions, and prejudices can be seen in the words he uses, and he aims to highlight some of this in the introduction. Little (2015) argues that how researchers viewed themselves shaped how they framed their work. Researchers view their role as one in which they are independent studiers who must balance their goal to do quality research, and also shape their work to inform policy audiences. Thus, viewing oneself as an independent researcher can shape how he/she, as a researcher of family poverty, endeavors to carry out his/her work.

Gap my dissertation study fills. Because my study examines how university-based poverty research centers aim to inform antipoverty policy and practice by shaping their research, research dissemination, and other practices, my examination of this body of literature was important. This review helped me to identify categories of relevance in poverty research. Such a categorization was useful for developing a profile of the research of university-based poverty research centers in my study.

My study contributes to this body of literature by examining a particular set of producers of "poverty knowledge". In her 2001 book, Alice O'Connor highlights university-based institutes as a part of the "poverty research industry" which began developing in the mid-1960s. Thus, my study of the poverty research produced by such organizations, and the factors which shape that research, is relevant for our overall understanding of poverty research and the contexts in which it is created.

Further, I aimed to examine O'Connor's conclusions about the uniform nature of poverty research. O'Connor (2001) argues that research on poverty which shapes public policy in the U.S. has increasingly become more uniform (since the mid-1960s). She outlines a "poverty research industry" which involved increased government investment in funding for poverty

research, development of various journals, professional associations, and graduate programs focused on policy analysis for rational policy decision-making. Such research is largely: 1) conducted by various research institutes which are public and private, in government, and at universities, and think tanks; 2) focused on national data that is quantitative; and 3) focused on behaviors of people living in poverty and participation in welfare programs, with no focus on political economy.

Examining this assertion was important for an overall understanding of the role of such centers. My logic was that if the centers endeavor to carry out high-quality research to inform the antipoverty policymaking process, then we need to know if the research that is being done is representative of the full range of questions and concerns that we have regarding poverty in the U.S.. Alice O'Connor argued that:

> The single most important challenge for poverty knowledge in the post-welfare era is to put poverty on the national agenda as a legitimate public policy concern: not in the narrow sense of income deprivation, but as part of the larger problem of the steady and rapid growth of economic, political, and social inequality. (2001, p. 292)

Thus, my exploration of the context and content of the poverty research conducted at university-based centers is a part of an effort to profile the work being done in this field to assess if we need to work harder to move closer to O'Connor's vision.

Conceptual Framework for this Dissertation Study

The goal of my dissertation study was to assist in the theory-developing process, rather than a theory-testing process, given that there is not much research on the efforts of university-based (poverty) research centers to inform policy and practice. The study contributes to the

development of "theory" on how university-based research centers in the social sciences develop and shape their activities to influence policy in the United States. Additionally, I was concerned with factors that shaped the centers' activities.

I have not found a specific theory which explains how university-based poverty research centers shape their work and practices in order to achieve their aims. But some aspects of previous researchers' conceptual frameworks add to this understanding. Such research highlighted specific aspects of researchers' efforts such as the goals of their relationship for influencing policy (Bulmer, 1982), their communication of ideas (Little, 2015), and their participation in networks with individuals influential in the policy world (White et al, 2015). My study was shaped by these, but it also further shapes a conceptual framework concerned with such centers as units which engage in concerted efforts to engage in policy-relevant work. At the end of each section above, I highlighted how scholarship from that body of literature contributed to the development of this study, and how this study expands on scholarship in that area. Now, I will describe specifically how I used this review of literature to guide the focus of this dissertation study.

For this study, I used the conceptual framework, detailed in Figure 2.4, as a lens for studying the centers' work. This conceptual framework guided my exploration of how the centers shape their research and other activities to inform antipoverty policy and practice in the United States. This includes therefore, a focus on the centers' activities (content), and a focus on factors which shape those activities (context). Because I used a grounded theory approach, I did not directly draw from prior literature as a lens for studying these activities. However, I did draw on prior literature in some ways.

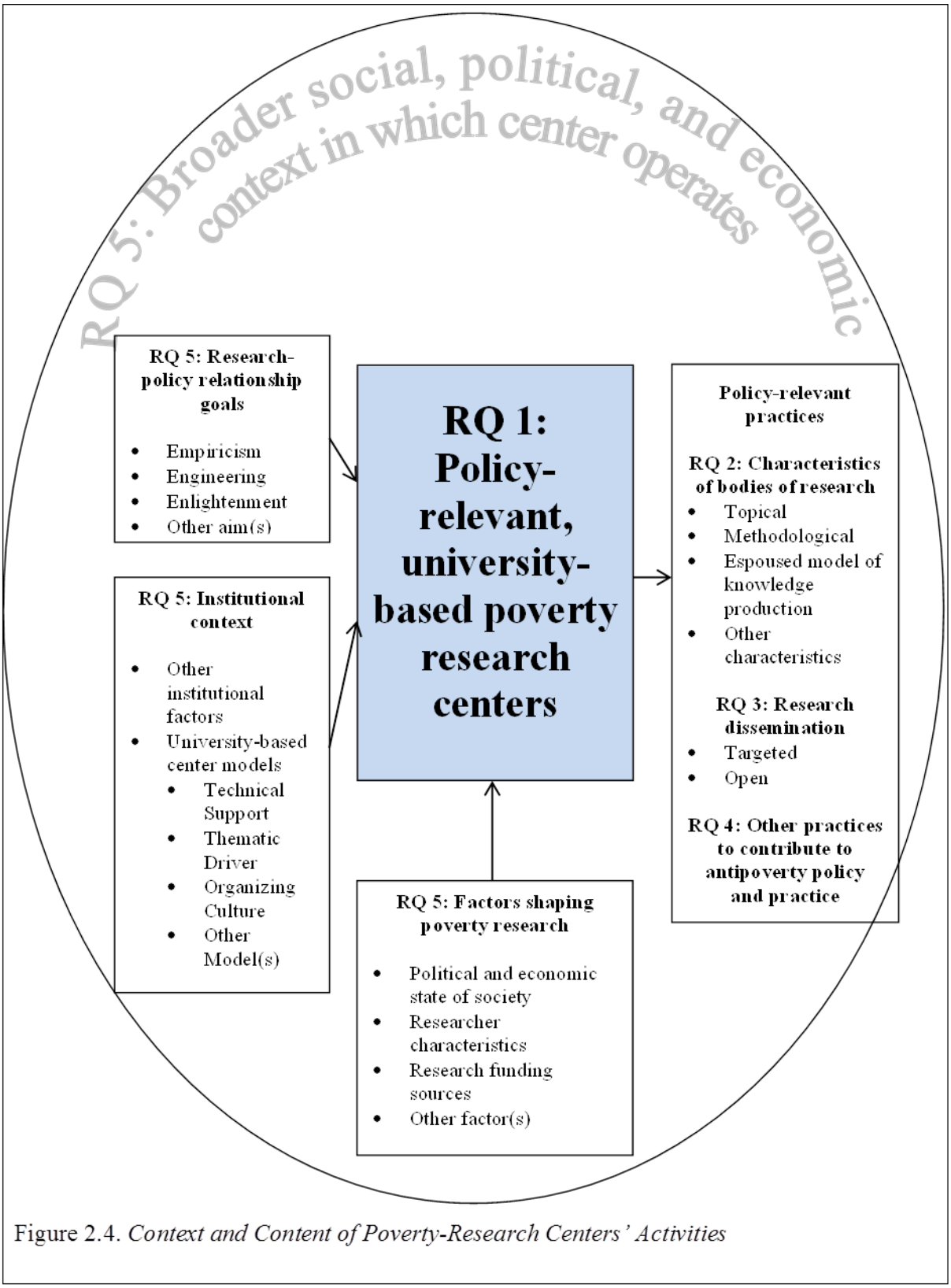


Figure 2.4. *Context and Content of Poverty-Research Centers' Activities*

At pictured in the center of the diagram, the focus of the study was to examine centers' policy-relevant activities. This corresponds to the study's primary research question. Each of the other sections of the diagram corresponds to subsidiary questions that ultimately, contribute to answering the primary research question.

To the right of the diagram, the box labeled "policy-relevant practices" is meant to depict the primary concern in my study—what activities do centers engage in as they attempt to impact antipoverty policy and practice with their work? From literature and from preliminary examination of research centers' websites, it is clear that producing research and disseminating that research are two relevant practices. Corresponding to research question 2, which focuses on characteristics of the centers' research, one section to the right of diagram lists possible relevant characteristics of centers' research I may wish to describe which include topical characteristics and methodological characteristics. Based on examining relevant literature, topical characteristics may include discussions of poverty's causes, consequences, and solution and methodological characteristics may include the use of quantitative or qualitative research methods in the research. Corresponding to research question 3, which focuses on research dissemination, I have suggested that centers may engage in dissemination practices that are "open" such as at conferences or on their websites. Centers may also engage in dissemination practices that are "closed" such as by meeting with individual policy makers and testifying at legal hearings. Corresponding to research question 4, I have included in the diagram a space for "other practices to contribute to antipoverty policy and practice".

The remaining parts of the conceptual framework relate to research question 5, focused on the "contextual and other relevant factors that shape centers' practices". Both the literature review section on the relationship between social science research and social policymaking, and

the literature review section on university-based research centers, inform my understanding of the context of the centers in my study. The "Policy-Research Relationship Goals" section in the top left-hand corner demonstrates Bulmer's (1982) discussion of the aims of the research-policy relationship. The other literature cited as relevant to each of the aims (empiricism, engineering, and enlightenment), will guide my study. I also listed "other aim(s)" with the understanding that my study may highlight an aim for the research-policy relationship that is undertaken by the university-based poverty research centers, but one that is not already explored in the literature. The "Institutional Context" section in the bottom left-hand corner of this framework relates to the research center models presented by Flynn, Brekke, and Soydan (2008). In addition to the models discussed in their article, I included "other model(s)" with the recognition that my exploration of university-based poverty research centers may reveal another model for research centers that has not been previously discussed. Additionally, I included "other institutional factors" that may come up in the study that may be relevant for understanding centers' work. The "factors shaping poverty research" section at the bottom of the conceptual framework represents factors that appeared in the review of poverty research literature such as the political and economic state of society, researcher characteristics, and research funding sources. Once again, I included "other factor(s)", recognizing that factors highlighted in this framework might not be sufficient to describe centers' work.

Finally, the oval that surrounds the sections of the conceptual framework I already discussed is labeled "broader social, political, and economic context in which center operates", to account for the broader set of factors that shape the centers' work by virtue of the centers existing in the United States at this particular time.

Ultimately, my goal is to learn what "policy-relevant practices" university-based poverty

research centers carry out, and how such practices are shaped by the context of the centers. To visually display the conceptual framework, I draw on Medvetz's (2012) discussion of think tanks in their social space to guide my research on university-based poverty research centers' efforts to inform antipoverty policy and practice. His model, shown in Figure 2.4, helps to situate the work of such organizations in their broader contexts and highlights factors which shape the work of think tanks as they aim to serve a knowledge-producing and policy-informing role in U.S. society.

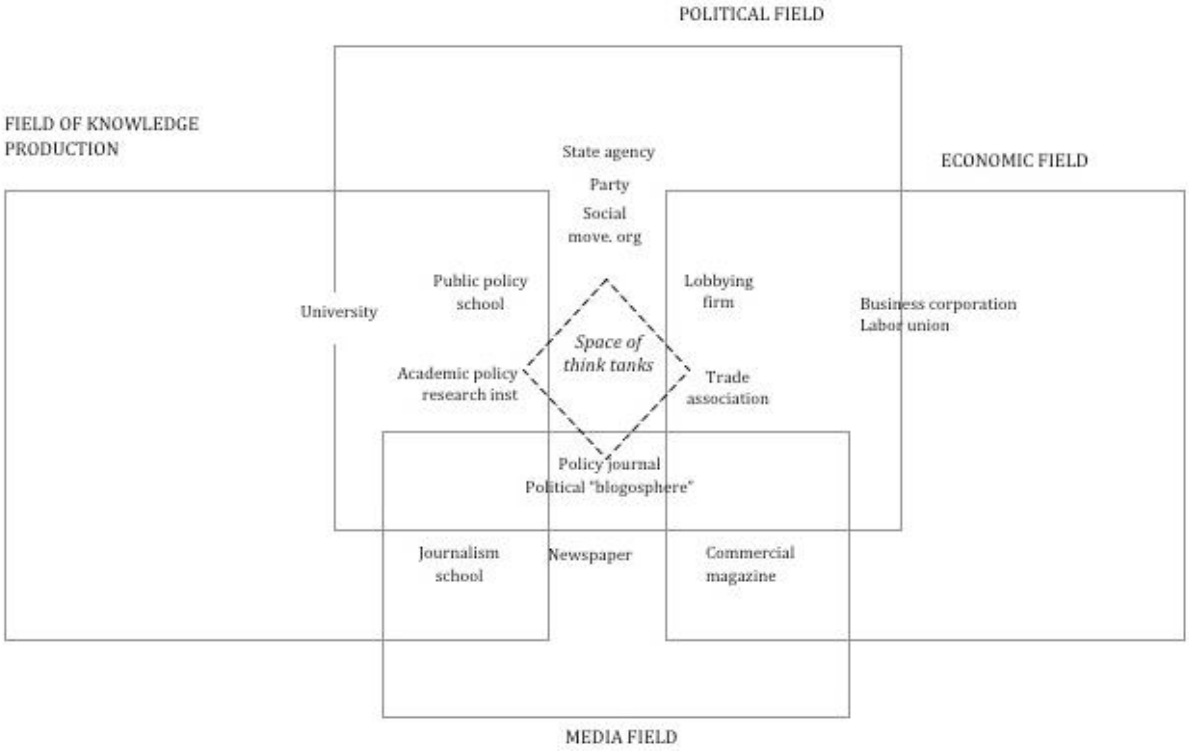


Figure 2.5. "Thinks Tanks in Social Space" from Medvetz, 2012, p. 37

Below, I list the research questions this dissertation study answers. These questions were shaped by my review of relevant literature, and my interest to expand and further develop this literature.

The primary research question this study addresses is:

1. How do university-based poverty research centers in the United States *aim* to contribute to the design of antipoverty policy and practice?

The subsidiary research questions this study addresses are:

2. What are topical, methodological, and other characteristics of centers' bodies of research and on what basis do centers make decisions about which studies to carry out?
3. What activities do centers use to disseminate their research and why are those activities chosen?
4. In addition to producing and disseminating research, what other activities do centers engage in to contribute to the design of antipoverty policy and practice, and why are those activities chosen?
5. How do relevant contextual factors and other factors shape centers' activities??

While this chapter has ended with a description of the conceptual framework that guided the design of this study at the outset, later in this dissertation, I will return to the conceptual framework and revise the conceptual framework based on the findings that came from the data collected and analyzed for each center.

Chapter Two Summary

In chapter two, I discussed how the reviewed bodies of literature shaped the ways in which I examined the work of university-based poverty research centers. Those include literature on the research-policy-practice relationship, literature on university-based research centers, and literature on poverty's causes, consequences, and solutions. Then, I highlighted areas in each body of literature that warrant further exploration in future research. Next, I presented the conceptual framework for this dissertation study, discussing how this dissertation study both

draws from, as well as, expands prior research. In chapter three, I will discuss how I carried out the study to answer the research questions of interest.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

In this chapter, I will discuss the design, methods of data collection, and methods of data analysis for this dissertation study. First, I will describe the study's inductive and case study approach. Second, I will introduce the sources of data and instruments for the study. Third, I will discuss the case and participant selection and recruitment processes. Fourth, I will detail my process for data collection and analysis.

Research Approach and Rationale

I employed an inductive approach for this research by using evidence as a basis for generating concepts, rather than as a basis for confirming or testing already-held concepts or theories (Ragin & Amoroso, 2011). Still, prior knowledge has guided my inquiry of how university-based poverty research centers aim to contribute to antipoverty policy and practice, as outlined in the conceptual model presented at the end of chapter two. To facilitate this inductive approach, I chose a case study methodology.

Assumptions about the nature of knowledge and of research. Researchers hold a variety of views on the nature of knowledge and how the research process is connected to those views (Schwandt, 2000). This dissertation study was guided by my view that my research questions do not have one answer that already exists in the world that I am trying to uncover. Instead, I believe that I, through the process of collecting and making sense of the data, am creating answers to my questions. These answers though, are just one possible interpretation that could be reached given the data inputs. Some researchers would describe this as a "naturalist" or "interpretive" philosophy of research (Rubin & Rubin, p. 21).

My views shape a number of decisions I have made regarding how to carry out my dissertation study. These decisions will be further detailed throughout this chapter but include:

my choice of data sources, the design of my instruments, my process for collecting and analyzing data, and the findings I developed based on these data analyses.

Case study approach. This dissertation is designed as a multiple case study which examines how three university-based poverty research centers *aim* to inform antipoverty policy and practice in the U.S.. Case studies are a methodological approach often taken by researchers who aspire to study a particular phenomenon of interest. By identifying a "case", and using a set of boundaries to determine what the case encompasses, a researcher can study characteristics of the case and processes occurring within the case to contribute to greater understanding of that phenomenon (Stake, 2006). For this dissertation study, the phenomenon of interest is the practices of university-based poverty research centers aimed toward contributing to antipoverty policy and practice. To study this phenomenon, I identified "cases" as individual centers.

Specifically, I used an *embedded* case study which involved examination of multiple units of analysis within the case (Yin, 2009). While the cases of interest are individual research centers, I designed the study in an effort to learn about various aspects of the centers' work, including the development and dissemination of research. Thus, the different aspects of centers' work and practices were the units of analysis. This contrasts against a holistic case study which would involve further examination of the center as a whole, as the focus of the inquiry, rather than the identified phenomenon.

Primary qualitative approach and supplementary quantitative approach. I primarily used a qualitative approach to carry out this study. Qualitative research is a broad umbrella term which encompasses the use of a range of research methods including interviews, observations, and document reviews (Preissle, 2006). Qualitative research primarily provides a methodology for gathering evidence to describe some type of experience or phenomenon (Polkinghorne,

2005). Data collected are meant to be representative of the phenomenon of interest, and allow the researcher to make inferences about that phenomenon. Scholarship has also highlighted the utility of qualitative research approaches for researchers concerned with questions of "why", and "how" in relation to human experience and practices (Polkinghorne, 2005; Preissle, 2006).

Moreover, qualitative inquiry can also assist practitioners and researcher-practitioners in their decision-making processes. Because qualitative research is concerned with everyday processes and gives us rich description and detail regarding these processes, it helps us to understand a phenomenon in a given context and can inform the work of people who engage in that context (Bloor, 2004). In this study, my examination of the work of university-based poverty research centers contributes to a greater understanding of their work. This understanding can inform staff members' reflections on their practices and potentially guide the development of their future practices.

Finally, I also made some use of a quantitative approach. My interest in centers' bodies of research is best represented as a profile of this work, with description of topics studied, research methods used, identity of researchers, and other characteristics. This is particularly relevant to my concern for an expansive body of poverty research which can be useful for informing antipoverty policy and practice, as advocated for by O'Connor (2001).

Sources of Data and Instruments

I used four instruments to collect data to answer the study's guiding research questions. These included me as the researcher, a document review and coding guide, an observation guide, and an interview guide. I was involved throughout the data collection process. I used the document guide at the beginning of the data collection cycle, in March and April 2016, and at the end of the data collection cycle, in June and July 2016. Then, I visited centers in April and May

2016, during which time I engaged in observations, carried out interviews, and collected remaining documents.

I used multiple methods of data collection to answer each of the research questions with the recognition that collecting data using different methods would provide a more complete picture of the centers' practices. This approach is often labeled as triangulation, which means I used various approaches for confirming the meaning that I drew from the data. Triangulation can involve having multiple researchers collect the same data, collecting data from multiple people with different perspectives on a particular question of interest, or using multiple data collection methods to answer questions of interest, among other approaches (Stake, 2006). I have used the last approach, using a variety of data collection methods to answer the study's guiding research questions.

Table 3.1 highlights the various instruments I used to collect data in this study and the research questions each instrument was used to answer. The data I collected using each instrument served as a primary source, or secondary source of evidence for answering my research question. A single "X" signifies that that method of data collection served as a primary source of data to answer that research question. A double "XX" signifies that that method of data collection served as a secondary source of data to answer that research question. The full instruments I used can be found in Appendix B.

Table 3.1

Conceptual Plan for Instruments

	Rafiqah as Researcher	Document Review and Coding Guide	Observation Guide	Interview Guide
1. How do university-based poverty research centers in the United States aim to contribute to the design of antipoverty policy and practice?	X	X	X	X

Table 3.1 (cont.)				
2. What are topical, methodological, and other characteristics of centers' bodies of research and on what basis do centers make decisions about which studies to carry out?	X	X	XX	X
3. What activities do centers use to disseminate their research and why are those activities chosen?	X	X	XX	X
4. In addition to producing and disseminating research, what other activities do centers engage in to contribute to the design of antipoverty policy and practice, and why are those practices chosen?	X	XX	XX	X
5. How do relevant contextual factors and other factors shape centers' activities?	X	X	XX	X
Note: X= Primary Method; XX=Secondary Method				

Rafiqah as researcher. I am the researcher and thus, am an instrument because I was intimately involved in the data collection process and relied on myself to make sense of the data I collected and analyzed. Additionally, because I am not a normal presence in the spaces I occupied for data collection, my presence in the spaces potentially played a role in what occurred in the spaces (Becker, 1996). Finally, my personal identity, and my rationale for studying this topic shaped my inquiry. I designed this study because of my concern for social inequality in the United States, and my interest in contributing to effective approaches for addressing this social inequality. This inquiry was also shaped by my concern for the responsibility of policymakers in a democracy to be responsive to the needs of their constituents.

Document review and coding guide. The goal of the document review and coding guide was to develop a profile of each center's research publications, and contribute to my understanding and description of each center's efforts to inform antipoverty policy and practice.

The guide was developed using literature which has informed my understanding of characteristics of poverty research, and of the research-policy relationship, including efforts of research producers.

As a resource for the development of this instrument, I used Brint's (2013) article on a "collective mind" in which he created a profile of research done in the field of sociology of education. He coded research publications published in the field of sociology of education over a ten-year period, and summarized those codes using descriptive statistics. In the article, he said the following of his approach:

> I have a pluralistic and fragmented image, based on counting each specific piece of work in the field. One can count the pieces of work to form an image of the whole. As this reference to counting suggests, my approach will be quantitative. I have read and coded the past 10 years of work in Sociology of Education, the leading U.S. journal in the subdiscipline, and will present a portrait of the collective mind of the field based on a content analysis of that body of work. (p. 273)

This is the approach I used to design the profile of centers' bodies of research. The categories I used to code these data developed out of my decisions about relevant aspects of centers' research to characterize. It is possible that someone else engaging in this inquiry may have used a different coding approach. I am confident though, that the included categories have assisted me in developing a greater understanding of the bodies of research of these centers.

In addition to developing a profile of the research of these centers, I also used the documents to answer the guiding research questions about research dissemination and other policy-relevant practices. However, unlike with the profile of centers' research, this inquiry was

heavily guided by the actual data, rather than mostly from my previously-developed ideas from the literature.

Observation guide. The goal of the observation guide was to gain a basic feeling of the center's spaces in which research was conducted and decisions about policy-relevant practices were made. Observations took place in open spaces, meetings relevant to my questions, and other settings of relevance. I used the observations to "fill in" the spaces of my understanding regarding the centers' practices aimed at contributing to antipoverty policy and practice. These observations therefore, provided a context for understanding the other sources of data as well as to document things that were not included in those other sources of data (Polkinghorne, 2005).

Interview guide. The goal of the interview guide was to gain key staff members' perspectives on the centers' practices. The interviews with such individuals contributed to 1) the profile of the centers' research and policy-relevant practices and 2) an explanation regarding factors which shape the centers' research and policy-relevant practices.

The guide was developed from literature and the conceptual framework, again, which provided a lens for examining centers' practices. However, interviews were flexible to allow interviewees to share their perspectives broadly on the phenomenon of interest. Some of the questions asked in the interview were:

1. First, I would like to talk about your time at the Regional Poverty Research Center. How long have you been here and how did you come to be involved here?
2. Now, could you tell me about your own work studying poverty? What is the focus?
3. What about the aspects/facets of poverty studied within the work of the center overall?
4. In addition to producing research, what activities and programs are characteristic of

this center's work?

5. In your opinion, what does the center hope to accomplish by implementing those activities and programs? (follow up on each practice)

The full interview instrument is included in Appendix B along with other instruments used for data collection.

Data quality. Data quality is a relevant concern because in order to answer my guiding research questions, I need to base my findings in data that will likely help me to really understand my phenomenon of interest. Researchers have defined and used a variety of concepts related to data quality (Cho & Trent, 2014). For this study, I draw on the concepts of "credibility" and "dependability", outlined by Lincoln & Guba (1985). Credibility can be understood as the extent to which the data represent what I, as the researcher, claim they represent. In this study, the data are meant to represent a description of aspects of the activities of the research centers. Dependability can be understood as the extent to which the research process is outlined and explained such that other researchers can understand the process and possibly repeat it is interested. While Lincoln and Guba outline a number of concepts related to the "trustworthiness" of data, I specifically draw on credibility and dependability because I think these are most relevant for the purpose of suggesting that the claims I make are good claims that can be supported by the data.

Credibility. Researchers have suggested a variety of methods for attempting to produce and use credible data in qualitative research (Freeman, deMarris, Preissle, Roulston, & St. Pierre, 2007; Maxwell, 2013). Here I describe methods I have chosen for my study.

First, I attempted to collect rich data (Maxwell, 2013). This method aims to ensure that the data that are collected in the study provide a great depth of detail so that the researcher can

base his/her conclusions in data which have great depth. To achieve this, I collected data from three sources: documents, observations, and interviews. By collecting data from a variety of sources, I have brought together multi-faceted data which together, can provide me with a more complete picture to understand the work of the centers in my study. In addition, I attempted to collect rich data by conducting in-depth interviews with participants at each center, as well as conducting follow-up interviews with a few participants from each center.

Second, I chose interviewees based on their ability to inform my guiding research questions. According to Rubin and Rubin, "to enhance credibility, you choose interviewees who are knowledgeable, whose combined views present a balanced perspective, and who can help you test your emerging theory" (2012, p. 64). For my study, I chose individuals who have played an integral role in each center's development and each center's ability to implement its activities. I also chose individuals who occupy different roles and who could give me different perspectives on each center's work.

Third, I implemented the method of "respondent validation", also termed by some researchers as "member-checking" (Maxwell, 2013). This method involves sharing my record or interpretation of an interviewee's responses, and asking for him or her to confirm that my record or interpretation reflects his or her intended statements. During my interviews, I often repeated the interviewee's words to ensure that the way I understood the words was in line with what the interviewee intended. In addition, for four interviewees, I conducted follow-up interviews during which I returned to parts of the original interview for which I needed clarification or greater depth to help with my interpretation.

Dependability. In addition to implementing a number of practices to attempt to produce and analyze credible data, I also used a number of methods to increase the likelihood that I

would produce and analyze dependable data. Like credibility, researchers have suggested a variety of methods for attempting to achieve dependability (Cho & Trent, 2014).

First, I involved other researchers in my study design process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The faculty members on my dissertation committee, as well as other PhD students at the University of Illinois, reviewed my choice of data sources and my data collection instruments. My research director gave in-depth feedback to assist my revision of the data collection instruments.

Second, I used the same research questions to guide all of my data collection and analyses. Those questions shaped my design of the document, observation, and interview guides. For each of those guides, I used the same questions to guide my collection of data from different documents, different observations, and different interviews.

Finally, I have outlined the steps of my data collection and analysis process so that other researchers can review my process and if interested, can repeat it to also answer similar guiding research questions.

Case and Participant Selection, Recruitment, and Data Collection

Center sites. For this study, I included two university-based poverty research centers as the cases of interest. The centers included in the study were chosen based on their likely ability to contribute rich data to my understanding of how university-based poverty research centers *aim* to inform antipoverty policy and practice. This has been termed "theoretical" or "purposeful" sampling by some researchers. This means the researcher chooses cases that will help to develop knowledge on the phenomenon of interest (Stake, 1995). Thus, cases and participants are not chosen because they are representative of the population, but rather because they can offer the researcher rich or important data to inform his/her understanding of the phenomenon

(Polkinghorne, 2005).

To begin my search for cases, I identified potential centers of interest using the "Google" search engine and the keyword "poverty research centers". These searches yielded websites for individual research centers as well as lists of centers on the Spotlight on Poverty and Opportunity (Spotlight on Poverty, 2015) website and a website held by the Notre Dame University College of Arts and Letters (University of Notre Dame, 2015). Both websites listed university-based research centers which study poverty. Using both of those lists and individual center websites, I developed an initial list of twenty-two university-based research centers which studied poverty and/or related issues such as social inequality.

Then, using the twenty-two individual research center websites, I engaged in a more in-depth exploration of those centers and their bodies of research. I then removed from my list the eight centers which did not explicitly state they aimed to study and/or contribute to the design of solutions for addressing poverty. I developed a small database of the remaining 14 centers and included data on the type of institution in which they are housed, their years of establishment, sources of funding, purpose/mission, size of staff, and the geographic area in which the centers are located. This preliminary list of fourteen centers considered for the study is included in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 includes the preliminary list of fourteen centers considered for the study, labeled with pseudonyms to maintain centers' confidentiality. The table also presents the type of higher education institution in which the center is housed, the date the center was established, the center's historical and current source(s) of funding, the size of center staff, and the geographic region in which the center is located. Also to maintain centers' confidentiality, I use general categories for centers' characteristics. For example, the establishment date range listed for each

center encompasses the center's actual establishment year. For sources of funding, a source found across many centers, "ASPE", signifies the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation in the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

Table 3.2

Preliminary List of University-Based Poverty Research Centers Considered for Study

	Center Pseudonym	**Type of Institution Housing the Center**	**Date Est.**	**Historical & Current Source(s) of Funding**	**Size of Staff**	**Geographic Region**	**Geography of Research Focus**
1	Poverty Alleviation and Local Development Center	Independent research university	1960-1990	ASPE; Urban Institute, U.S. Department of Ed	24	Midwest	Local
2	Antipoverty Policy Center	Private research university	After 1990	?	?	Northeast	National
3	United States Family Poverty Center	Private research university	1960-1990	?	19	Northeast	National
4	Inequality Eradication Center	Private research university; Jesuit university	?	?	5	Mid-Atlantic	National
5	Poverty and Government Center	Private Jesuit university	1960-1990	U.S. Congress	2?	South	Local
6	Poverty Program at the Policy Research Center	Private research university	1960-1990	?	24	Midwest	National
7	Center for Research on Poverty in Society	Private research university	After 1990	ASPE	23	West	National
8	Poverty Research Center (A)	Public research university	After 1990	ASPE	77	West	National
9	Institute for the Study of Poverty in U.S. Urban Society	Public research university	1960-1990	?	7	West	Local
10	Poverty Research Center (B)	Public land grant university	After 1990	?	34	Southcentral	National
11	Center for Study of Poverty in the United States	Public research university	After 1990	ASPE	?	Northcentral	National

Table 3.2 (cont.)

12	State Poverty Center	Public research and teaching university	After 1990	Private grants	3	Southeast	Local
13	Regional Poverty Research Center	Public university	After 1990	ASPE	43	West	Local
14	Institute for the Study of Poverty in U.S. Society	Public land grant research university	1960-1990	ASPE	> 190	Northcentral	National

Note: 1)"ASPE" is the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2)"Size of staff" includes affiliates and advisory board members; "?" means "unknown"

Next, after my continued reading of literature and understanding of potential factors which could shape centers' research and practices, including those aimed at influencing antipoverty policy and practice, I developed a list of criteria which would help me to further narrow the list of centers for my inquiry. These criteria therefore, are characteristics which I determined would be important for the centers in my study to include. The criteria are listed based on those which are most important for centers to possess:

1. Mission/purpose: Focuses on studying poverty and contributing (in some way) to policy and practice to address poverty.
2. Research type: Conducts some applied research.
3. Geography of research focus: At least one center which focuses on poverty as a national issue and at least one center which focuses on poverty as a local or state issue.
4. Institution type: At least one that is a land-grant institution.

The center's mission or purpose is a criterion because I only wished to include in the study centers which stated an interest in both studying contributing some policy or practice to address poverty. Since the study is concerned with centers who aim to influence antipoverty policy and practice, it would not make sense to include centers which don't state that goal as a

part of their mission.

The type of research that the center conducts is a criterion because I am concerned with the work of centers that seek to use their research for the practical purpose of addressing poverty. Center which conduct applied research fall into this category.

The geography of the center's research focus is a criterion because the geographic area in which the center aims to address poverty is relevant for understanding the center's practices. If the center primarily focuses on poverty as a national issue, then its practices may be geared toward some national policymaking body or organization which aims to address poverty. If the center primarily focuses on poverty as a local issue at the state or city level, then its practices will likely be geared toward a local policymaking body or organization which aims to address poverty. Thus, in my study, I aimed to include at least one center concerned with poverty as a national issue, and at least one center concerned with poverty as a local issue, to reveal the variety of practices centers may engage in, given these different foci.

Institution type is a criterion because institutional context likely shapes the work of centers. Specifically, I aimed to include at least one center housed at a land grant institution, given the theme highlighted in the review of relevant literature regarding the knowledge application for public problem-solving mission often found at land grant institutions.
I considered including other criteria such as funding sources and age of centers, but ultimately decided that the above criteria were most important.

After developing this list of criteria, I re-organized the list of centers based on the extent to which they fit the criteria, and in the order in which I planned to recruit them for the study. I also listed justifications for why each center was positioned as it was on the priority recruitment list. That list of centers is included in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3

Center List Organized by Priority for Recruitment

Rank	Center Pseudonym	Why this Center?
1	Poverty Alleviation and Local Development Center	Studies poverty as a local issue and focuses on local approaches to addressing the issue; conducts applied research and evaluation.
2	Regional Poverty Research Center	Makes links between research and policy and practice in a deliberate way such as with their policy seminars.
3	Institute for the Study of Poverty in U.S. Society	Has a long history of engaging in policy-relevant poverty research.
4	United States Family Poverty Center	Uses research to contribute to solutions; focuses on families in poverty.
5	Inequality Eradication Center	States its focus is on working with people to advocate for and develop policy and practice to alleviate poverty.
6	Poverty Research Center (B)	Focuses on "evidence-based policy" and on poverty as a national issue.
7	Center for Research on Poverty in Society	Studies poverty and aims to contribute to the design of "science-based" antipoverty policy.
8	State Poverty Center	Research primary
9	Center for the Study of Poverty in the United States	Research primary
10	Institute for the Study of Poverty in U.S. Urban Society	Research primary
11	Poverty Research Center (A)	Research primary
12	Poverty Program at the Policy Research Center	Research primary
13	Poverty and Government Society	Research primary
14	Antipoverty Policy Center	Launched within the past 5 years, so very young.

Initially I aimed to include three centers in the study. Thus, after organizing the list of centers based on priority for recruitment, in August 2015, I emailed the directors of the top three centers on the list to invite them to participate in the study. The recruitment email script is included in Appendix C. Based on the initial recruitment, the director at the Regional Poverty Research Center agreed to participate; the director at the Institute for the Study of Poverty in U.S. Society declined to participate; and the director at the Poverty Alleviation and Local Development Center did not respond.

In September, I followed up with an email to the director at the Poverty Alleviation and

Local Development Center. The director did not respond. By late October, I decided to contact the directors at the fourth and fifth centers on the list. Those were the United States Family Poverty Center and Inequality Eradication Center. After an initial email in November and follow-up email in December, both directors declined to participate in the study. In January 2016, I emailed the directors at the remaining centers on the list. Over the next two months, I sent follow-up emails to each. In March 2016, the director of center six, the Center for Research on Poverty in Society, agreed to participate in the study.

With two center directors agreeing to participate, I began to plan for my center data collection, which would include document review and analysis, observations, and interviews. I scheduled a visit to the Center for Research on Poverty in Society for April 2016 and a visit to the Regional Poverty Research Center for May 2016. Ultimately, I was only able to include two centers in the study because the directors of those centers agreed to participate. Because I would no longer include three centers, I decided to attempt to study the two participating centers in greater depth. To increase the depth of data I collected for each center, I decided to: 1) extend my period of document review and analysis, and 2) conduct follow-up interviews with participants.

Document selection and document data collection. After recruiting centers in spring 2016, I engaged in document collection and review in March and April 2016, and June and July 2016. Documents were chosen based on their ability to contribute to my understanding of centers' efforts to inform antipoverty policy and practice. Such documents included center research publications, center websites, funding applications, and secondary sources on centers' work. I specifically sought documents using the center website, and online search engines and library databases at the University of Illinois as well as the postsecondary institutions housing the centers. Later, during center visits, I collected documents at the physical center offices.

After gathering documents that I thought could help to answer the study's guiding research questions, I used the document review guide to extract data from each document. For center research publications, I read each publication in order to categorize the publication along a number of dimensions (noted earlier in the document guide section). For remaining documents such as the center website and funding applications, I extracted data that could provide evidence for answering the study's guiding research questions.

Observation selection and observation data collection. Observations took place during center site visits in April and May 2016. Observation events and spaces were chosen based on the likelihood that such events and spaces could help me to answer the study's guiding research questions. In advance of my center visits, I emailed center directors to learn which events and activities I could attend and observe during my visit. During my April visit to the Center for Research on Poverty in Society, I observed a conference the center was sponsoring, a graduate seminar taught at the center by the center's director, and the center office open spaces. During my May visit to the Regional Poverty Research Center, I observed a research seminar hosted by the center, a roundtable hosted by the center which convened poverty researchers and professionals from local social programs, and the office spaces of center staff members.

I used the observation guide described previously in this chapter, along with a laptop computer to record observation notes. I recorded the content of the events I attended such as the topics of the presentations given during the seminar, the conversations that took place at the seminar and the roundtable, and characteristics of the event attendees. I also recorded my in-time reactions to, and analyses of, the content of the events and activities I observed.

Interviewee selection, recruitment, and data collection. Interviews took place during center site visits in April and May 2016. Interview participants were selected based on their

ability to inform my understanding of the centers' efforts to inform antipoverty policy and practice. I initially aimed to interview 3-5 individuals at each center. Those would include the center director, at least one researcher, and at least one staff member who occupied an administrative role. After engaging in the document review and analysis and preliminary email and phone communication with center directors, I was able to identify potential interviewees to recruit.

After identifying potential interviewees, I emailed the individuals with an invitation to participate in an interview, indicating that the center director had agreed for the center to participate in the study and that I had scheduled a one-week visit to the center during which time I planned to carry out the in-person interview. At the Center for Research on Poverty in Society, the 5 individuals I initially contacted agreed to participate. At the Regional Poverty Research Center, I scheduled four interviews in advance of my visit. During my visit, I spoke with a fifth individual who was not available during my visit. I was however, able to schedule an interview with that individual for after my visit. We spoke via phone in June 2016. The text of the recruitment emails in included in Appendix C.

During my visit to each center, I met interviewees at pre-determined times and locations. The interviews were structured based on the interview guide described previously in this chapter. In addition to using the interview guide, I also asked follow-up questions in the moment based on how the interviewee responded to previous questions. This process of starting with structured questions, then following up is outlined by Rubin and Rubin (2012) as useful for achieving in-depth interview data.

During the interviews, I used a printed version of the interview guide along with a notepad, pen, and audio recorder. During the informed consent process, I obtained consent from

each interviewee to audio record the interview. I used the notepad and pen to take written notes and highlight areas of the recording I wished to return to later.

Table 3.4 displays a profile of individuals I interviewed at each center. At each center, I interviewed the center director. At the Center for Research on Poverty in Society, I also interviewed the center's associate director, a postdoctoral researcher, and two research associates. At the Regional Poverty Research Center, in addition to the current center director, I also interviewed the center's founding director who is now a faculty affiliate, the center's research director, another faculty affiliate, and the former co-chair of one the center's roundtables.

At the time of the interviews, all but one interviewee held an academic position at the postsecondary institution housing the center. The exception was the former co-chair of the roundtable at the Regional Poverty Research Center who is a retired executive director of local nonprofit organization which focused on expanding affordable housing in the region. At the Center for Research on Poverty in Society, four interviewees were male and one was female. At the Regional Poverty Research Center, four interviewees were female and one was male. All interviewees were white.

Table 3.4

Profile of center interviewees (organized by interview order)

Center Pseudonym	**Individual's Role at Center**	**Professional/ Academic Background**	**Sex (*Researcher Perceived*)**	**Racial/Ethnic Background (*Researcher Perceived*)**
Center for Research on Poverty in Society (CRPS)	Director	Founded two university poverty research centers including CRPS; PhD in Sociology	Male	White
CRPS	Research Associate	Former center postdoctoral researcher; PhD in Economics	Male	White
CRPS	Research Associate	Trained at a university-based center concerned with inequality; PhD in Sociology	Male	White
CRPS	Postdoctoral Researcher	PhD in Social Work	Female	White

Table 3.4 (cont.)				
CRPS	Associate Director	Started at Center as research associate; PhD in Sociology	Male	White
Regional Poverty Research Center (RPRC)	Former co-chair of center roundtable	Retired executive director of local affordable housing nonprofit	Female	White
RPRC	Director	Former elementary school teacher; PhD in Human Development and Social Policy	Female	White
RPRC	Faculty Affiliate	Academic poverty researcher since 1970s; PhD in Economics	Male	White
RPRC	Research Director	Former poverty researcher at a nonprofit and the Library of Congress; Sociology PhD student	Female	White
RPRC	Founding Director; Faculty affiliate	Former researcher in state and federal organizations; PhD in Social Work	Female	White

Constant comparative method. My data collection and analysis was guided by the "constant comparative method" outlined in Ragin and Amoroso (2011). This meant that throughout the research process, I sought out evidence which was likely to confirm or refute what was already believed to be true so that continued sources of evidence could contribute to a further understanding of the central phenomenon (Ragin and Amoroso, 2011). Thus, as I collected data from each source and across cases, I sought out data which could give me a fuller practice of centers' efforts and sought out data which was different from what I had already found, to continue shaping my understanding.

This means that once I analyzed the interviews from my first round of interviews at each center, I developed follow-up interview questions which allowed me to return to interviewees and ask questions to fill in gaps in my understanding. Additionally, while I originally collected documents before my center visits, I collected additional documents after I analyzed the interviews because the interviews pointed to answers to my research questions that I needed to further develop with additional data from documents.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data collection and analysis shape and guide each other throughout the research process (Polkinghorne, 2005). As described in the previous section, I first engaged in center recruitment, and then collected documents to review. I then scheduled center visits and observations with center directors and scheduled interviews with select center staff members and affiliates. During and after center visits, I collected additional documents.

I analyzed data for each center individually. After analyzing each center's data and developing findings from those data, I looked across the findings from both centers to discuss commonalities and differences in the findings.

My process of data analysis began in May 2016 with transcribing the interview transcripts verbatim. By having the audio data typed, I was able to review and analyze the data. Then, I coded my interview data first. Since the interviewees were key sources of information, I decided that their responses on questions would represent the data units I would be analyzing within the transcripts (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

Interview analysis. My analysis of the interview data was guided by my research questions. Using my study's guiding research questions and interview guide, I aimed to extract meaning from the data. For analysis, I viewed individual responses as the data units of interest (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

My first step of this process was to create a coding guide to guide my analysis. I used my study's guiding research questions and interview guide to develop the coding guide. For each major study research question, I created a related code that I planned to use to label data related to that question. See Appendix E for the final coding guide.

Next, I looked at the typed transcripts and looked for content related to my guiding

research questions that I could label using the codes I developed on the coding guide. Using the "comment" feature in Microsoft Word, I labeled chunks of interview text with codes which corresponded to different topics of interest for my study including: characteristics of center's research, center's research dissemination practices, and contextual factors shaping the center's work. The codes I used were largely "process" codes because the labels I developed related to some process taking place at the center, or some action that center staff engaged in (Saldana, 2014).

While I was labeling the data using the coding guide I developed based on my guiding research questions, I also paid close attention to data that were present that could not be labeled using the codes I had already created, but data that were important nevertheless. For these data, I developed new codes that I thought could more appropriately label the data than the codes I had developed in advance. For example, the code "center's guiding mission" was not a major code in my original guide. It was simply a "factor" I included in the list of factors for the code "relevant contextual and other factors shaping center's activities". After coding the interviews, I decided that my current list of codes did not fully reflect the story that interviewees were telling about their centers' activities. Thus, I had to revise my guide to show this story that I was learning. This process of developing codes from the data is in line with the "grounded theory" approach outlined by Glaser and Strauss (1967).

Once all of the data were coded either with codes I developed in advance or new codes that came from the data, I revised my coding guide to now incorporate the newly-developed codes. By revising the coding guide, I aimed to develop a more complete guide which could now be used to code all of the data. Then, I re-coded all of the interview data, using the newly-developed coding guide which had been informed by my guiding research questions, as well as

the interview data I had collected.

Once the data were re-coded, I aimed to look across interviewees' data with similar labels to pull out common themes, concepts, or categories that could help me to move closer to answering the guiding research questions (Saldana, 2014). To facilitate this process, I transferred the data from the separate Microsoft Word files to a common Microsoft Excel file. In Excel, each workbook represented a major code such as "characteristics of research the center conducts and supports". Each sheet within a workbook represented a minor code such as "espoused model of knowledge production". Each column within a sheet represented the most detailed level of code such as "whose perspective on the subject matter is represented". Each row represented an interviewee. In each cell, I placed excerpts of the interviewee's responses that I had labeled with the relevant code.

Once the data were organized in Excel, I was able to more readily review data across interviewees for the purpose of pulling out common themes, concepts, and categories. What is represented in the findings chapter then, are the common themes, concepts, and categories that I developed by looking across the coded data and attempting to answer the study's guiding research questions. Saldana calls this process "interrelating", which involves making connections between pieces of data and the meaning that I have extracted from them.

Document analysis. After coding the interviews, I coded the documents. As described in the data collection section, collecting the document data involved extracting data from the publications and documents that I thought would help me to answer my guiding research questions. As I collected these data, I organized them in Microsoft Excel similar to the interview data. Each workbook represented a major code. Each sheet represented a minor code. Each column represented the most-detailed level of code. Each row represented a document.

Profile of center's work. For this analysis, I used the publication review and coding guide that I developed from the literature, presented in Appendix B. As described in the data collection section, I was seeking very specific information. Once I had the data for the publications coded as described in the previous section, I then aimed to summarize across the publications to provide a profile of the center's research in terms of topical characteristics, methodological characteristics, and characteristics of researchers.

Description of center's work to answer other research questions. I used the revised interview coding guide to code the remaining document data. Like with the interviews, I aimed to look across documents to develop common concepts, themes, and categories. Because documents varied greatly in type, some documents provided more evidence for answering guiding research questions than others. Thus, the documents as a group, were needed to make sense of the center's work.

Observation analysis. Because the activities and events I observed varied greatly in their purpose and focus, I was ultimately able to mostly use them to supplement the interview and document data. Similar to the process I used with interviews, I used the revised interview coding guide to label the observation data. Once the data were coded, I transferred the data to Microsoft Excel. Then, I looked across the data from observations of different events to develop common concepts and themes.

Cross-case analysis. The previous sections highlighted my process for analyzing and making sense of the data from each center. Based on my guiding research questions, I also had an interest in exploring any patterns across the data from both centers, to make possible conclusions about commonalities among, or differences between, the practices of the two centers. For this process, I used what Saldana (2014) calls "interrelating", which involves

making connections between pieces of data and the meaning that I have extracted from them and "reasoning" which involves thinking "in ways that lead to causal probabilities, summative findings, and evaluative conclusions" (p.16).

For the final stages of my analysis process, I compared the cases and highlighted commonalities and differences in relation to the centers' efforts to inform antipoverty policy and practice in the U.S.. I aimed to answer the research questions with data from all of the cases, for a collective understanding of centers' practices. The cross-case analysis helped to further refine and develop my understanding of the efforts of university-based poverty research centers to inform antipoverty policy and practice (Stake, 2006). Those findings are presented in chapter six of this dissertation.

Chapter Three Summary

For this dissertation study, I used a case study approach to collect, analyze, and report data. By identifying individual centers as cases, I was able to facilitate my understanding of the phenomenon of interest—university-based poverty research centers' activities meant to inform antipoverty policy and practice. I primarily used qualitative methods to review documents, observe center events, and interview center staff members. I also used a quantitative approach to profile the research of the included centers.

By using a constant comparative method (Ragin and Amoroso, 2011), I was able to engage in ongoing collection of documents and interview follow-up data throughout the analysis process to facilitate my answering the guiding research questions. For the final stage of analysis and preliminary writing, I first reported findings for each individual case, and then reported findings across cases. The findings for case one—the Center for Research on Poverty in Society, are presented in chapter four. The findings for case two—the Regional Poverty Research Center,

are presented in chapter five. And the findings for the cross-case discussion are presented in chapter six.

Chapter 4: Findings: Center for Research on Poverty in Society

In this chapter and the following two chapters, I will present what I have learned about the centers' efforts to inform antipoverty policy and practice. The primary research question guiding this study was "how do university-based poverty research centers in the United States aim to inform antipoverty policy and practice?" There are many answers to this question which I will detail in the following chapters. Given the exploratory nature of the study, I will primarily focus on telling a story about the work of each center and how that work is connected to each center's larger guiding rationale for its work. Ultimately, I learned that both centers developed, and continue to operate out of a commitment to helping social science researchers, policymakers, practitioners in a variety of fields such as education and social work, and to some extent, the broad United States public, to understand the reality of different aspects of poverty, and to consider how a variety of public policies, social programs, contextual factors, and individual actions, can both contribute to the pervasiveness of poverty, and contribute to the dismantling of poverty. Though both centers have this commitment, the centers enact the commitment differently. Thus, in this chapter and the following two chapters, I will describe these commitments and centers' activities which help to enact those commitments.

In this chapter, I will detail the Center for Research on Poverty in Society's (CRPS) activities which relate to enacting a commitment to better understanding poverty and informing policy and practice to address poverty. First, I will describe CRPS's guiding rationale that seems to shape much of its work. Second, I will share the profile of research CRPS conducts and supports. Third, I will discuss CRPS's research dissemination. Fourth, I will detail CRPS's activities to train and support researchers. Fifth, I will describe CRPS's activities to facilitate research-policy-practice partnerships. Sixth, and finally, I will discuss contextual and other

factors that seem to shape CRPS's work.

Table 4.1 displays a summary of the findings I will present in this chapter, outlining CRPS's guiding rationale, research, dissemination, training and support activities, and partnership facilitation activities, and contextual factors which shape its work.

Table 4.1

Summary of Findings: How the Center for Research on Poverty in Society Aims to Inform Antipoverty Policy and Practice

Guiding Rationale	Develop an infrastructure for measuring poverty and inequality in the United States
Characteristics of Research	• **Topical**: various, with an emphasis on intergenerational mobility • **Methodological**: primarily quantitative • **Participating researchers**: university faculty, other university research staff, and graduate students
Research Dissemination	• **Methods**: CRPS website; conferences and seminars; articles, magazine, and book series • **Intended audiences**: other poverty researchers; national policymakers
Activities to Support and Train Researchers	• Early scholar grants; special topic grants; and graduate fellowships • On-campus undergraduate certificate and master's degree programs • Free online poverty course • Databases with poverty and inequality measures
Activities to Facilitate Research-Policy-Practice Partnerships	• Work with government agency staff to develop poverty and inequality databases • Published plan for reducing poverty and inequality at state level
Contextual and Other Factors Shaping Center's Activities	• **Institutional setting**: private university • **Source of funding**: major federal grant • **Societal conversations/trends in poverty and antipoverty policy and practice**: conversations about increasing inequality • **Background of center actors**: director's history of founding poverty research centers; center staff doctoral training at other poverty research centers

Developing a National Poverty and Inequality Data Infrastructure

After analyzing data from the documents, observations, and interviews, it became clear to me that each center had a guiding rationale. This meant that each center, as explained by its staff members, as described in its published documents, and as evidenced in its activities, has a set of ideas about why it is engaging in the work it engages in. While my study did not originally aim to examine this "guiding rationale", my analysis of the data showed this theme to be particularly significant. This guiding rationale concept takes into consideration what each center has stated

on its website and other publications as its "mission", but the guiding rationale also takes into consideration statements about what the center views as important and how its activities are meant to take into consideration what the center views as important. Some of these things cannot be encompassed by a formally stated "mission". It is also important to note that the story that I tell about each center's activities will be through the lens of my understanding each center's guiding rationale.

The Center for Research on Poverty in Society (CRPS) was established in the first decade of the twentieth century. Its director, who had established a poverty research center at another postsecondary institution, was asked to start the Center for Research on Poverty in Society and he obliged. His first year at CRPS was spent working with other university faculty to decide what the focus of the center should be. This process, he describes, largely involved considering what other poverty research centers around the country were already doing and trying to find a gap that CRPS could fill.

The answer that those meetings settled on was that the center would focus on poverty and inequality measurement as an important part of creating an infrastructure from which others (researchers, government agencies, etc.) could use data to make decisions. In our interview, the director stated:

> *So it's focused on measurement and it comes out of the position that our infrastructure for measuring poverty and inequality in the U.S. is woefully inadequate…it's partly because those agencies that are charged with measurement, mainly government agencies, have no spare capacity to do anything but deliver the same sorts of analysis that they always deliver. They don't have the capacity and that's where universities hopefully come in, that have*

> *the capacity to step back and say, "Okay, how can we deliver better measurement so that we're not operating in the blind, so the policy can be informed by what's happening on the ground." And so we see that as our role. That is what we based our application to [federal funding source]…[and] that's where we think we have something to contribute.*

Based on this logic, CRPS's primary goal for how it will contribute to the design of antipoverty policy and practice is to create an environment and a system in which others can study poverty and proposed solutions for addressing poverty, and make decisions about the appropriateness of those solutions.

According to the center's director, there were various reasons for this decision. First, the United States does not currently have a good set of data on poverty and inequality so the center decided to make that its focus, to provide something that we don't currently have. Second, other entities that we commonly think should be charged with measuring poverty are government entities, and they often have other priorities, so poverty measurement can't be their main focus. And third, universities are a good type of entity to be able to conduct this type of work because they have the capacity to do poverty and inequality measurement. They have this capacity because they can "step back" and be able to study these things from a distance because they don't have policy and program implementation and service delivery competing with studying poverty.

The director also made clear that the choice to focus on poverty and inequality measurement was an informed decision and also took into consideration other potential foci for the center's work. For example, the center decided that its focus would not be policy analysis or program evaluation because it felt that there were already entities that could do that well:

So note that there's not as deep a commitment to policy evaluation because there's lots of groups that do that really well. And so we didn't think there was value added there.

So while the center knows that policy evaluation for example, is important, it didn't see a gap there. The center believes that its primary goal of developing a data infrastructure will contribute to better policy analysis though, among other things.

Proposed outcomes of developing this data infrastructure. There are at least three main outcomes the center hopes can result from its development of a poverty and inequality data infrastructure. First, CRPS believes that its work will provide good data with which others can conduct policy analysis and program evaluation. The center's associate director cited this proposed outcome:

I think, you know, I think we will succeed and bringing in – linking up these administrative data and providing a process whereby scholars can use these data. I really think that's gonna transform how we do research and enable a whole new – whole new light to be shed on poverty and inequality policy. So that's sort of the – that's the infrastructure capacity building element of what we do.

CRPS hopes that it can develop a data infrastructure that others can use to engage in policy analysis and program evaluation.

A second outcome the center hopes will result from its work is that society's discourse on poverty will change. As a result of the center's work, people will have a better picture of poverty and inequality and thus the conversation about poverty and inequality will be better-informed. One center research associate highlighted this possible outcome:

...that it would change the conversation and make people pay more attention and

have an impact given that a lot of the political discussion is conducted under the impression that unequal opportunity is not a big problem…You have this key element of the country's self-identity as a country that gives wide opportunities to everyone. It's a key component. The American dream – it's difficult to convince people…These are the results. This is what's going on. Look at it. So that's the hope.

By putting data into the world in a digestible way, the center hopes that society will have a true picture of poverty and inequality and thus, base conversations and policy and program decisions with that accurate picture in mind.

The third outcome the center hopes will result from its work is that people who make decisions will have better data with which to make decisions about how to address poverty. The center's Associate Director expressed this objective:

...Because, you know, we have the proof, the proof's in the pudding…the US is a high poverty country…compared to other rich countries…So our goal, you know, I think is to bring that down, at least in line with other similar countries and perhaps…The way we're doing that is providing these tools…We just provide the evidence for, you know, for policies that – we are in a very good position, and we'll be in an even better position with these administrative data linkages, to provide the very best evidence-based analysis and evaluation of policies…

As highlighted, the Associated Director thinks that with good data, policy decision-makers will make decisions that are in line with what the data proves are effective policies and programs.

While the center has various ideas for the outcomes it hopes will come out of its work, there was not much discussion of how the center will evaluate its attainment of these outcomes.

Such a discussion did come up during my follow-up interview with one of the center's research associates. When discussing a conference the center held in May, the research associate stated that the conference was successful because people who participated in the May conference will hopefully go on to support the center financially. The center organized the May conference to document the types of research that could be done once the data infrastructure is created.

Setting CRPS's guiding rationale and agenda. In our discussion of the center's guiding rationale, it is important to discuss the process of setting this rationale. Based on my interviews, it seems that the center's leadership plays the primary role in giving input to shape the center's guiding rationale. For example, as discussed previously, the center's director was recruited to start CRPS and once he arrived, he spoke with other individuals to decide what the center's focus would be. Supporting the important role of the director, the associate director stated:

> *We decide – we do it like sort of – we have weekly meetings. These decisions are all – are at least presented in a collective manner. I mean, you know, our director is the vision, is the primary visionary.*

Other leadership, including the Associate Director, seems to play a significant role, largely during the center's planning meetings in which the leadership discusses the center's directions. Supporting this idea, the Associate Director said:

> *So in terms of the research work, that's typically – so there's research, there's research right, and there's research projects, and those are typically defined by the director with me and with the research scholars who will be involved in those particular projects. So not everyone is involved, you know, in every meeting. But, you know, for example, the administrative infrastructure, that's primarily driven by the director, me and one research scholar that's primarily involved in*

that…You know, we have regular meetings where we talk about, you know, what do we want to do, how we want this project to be shaped, what's the long-term vision for – a lot of our projects are long-term, you know, infrastructure capacity building projects.

As suggested by the Associate Director, while the leadership makes many of the decisions, the decisions are already shaped based on the center's primary goal of developing a data infrastructure.

It appears that other center researchers and staff do not play much of a role in guiding the center's activities, outside of their specific area of work. For example, one research associate stated that his primary involvement in the center's conferences is as a participant who presents his research:

So there's a different theme each year that they – I think it's [center leadership] – all decide on the theme. So in 2015 it was [conference title]; so, what's inequality at the state level? This year was inequality at an international perspective. So, how I became involved is, [center director] asked…[co-author's name], to write a paper on income inequality.

Thus, this research associate became involved because the center director invited him and one of his co-authors to present a paper. The other research associate also described his role as primarily pertaining to his research tasks, stating:

But in all honesty, because I've been so focused on this one project, I have not been involved really in these other ways. I can comment a little bit. Any other person in the center is almost for sure a better source than I am on this other stuff.

This research associate made it clear that he did not feel knowledgeable about the "big picture" of the center's work and thus, kept referring me to others, stating that they would be more knowledgeable. Now that I have described the guiding rationale for the work of the Center for Research on Poverty in Society, I will describe characteristics of research CRPS conducts and supports.

Research Using Quantitative Administrative Data for Primarily Academic Audiences

In this section, I will describe characteristics of the Center for Research in Society's body of research. Those characteristics include: 1) types of research the center conducts and supports; 2) topical focus of the center's research; 3) methodological focus of the center's research; 4) characteristics of researchers who participate in the center's research; and 5) the espoused model of knowledge production that is evident in the center's research.

The Center for Research on Poverty in Society is primarily concerned with creating a data infrastructure for the study of poverty and inequality. To this end, the center develops different types of research.

Types of research CRPS conducts and supports. The center's website describes different types of research the center conducts and supports. First, the center gathers administrative data from agencies such as the Census Bureau and the Internal Revenue Service and presents the data in formats that can be readily available for other researchers' use. These "administrative data" are data that are typically not publically-available, and which the agencies collect. Thus, the center has gathered such data and de-identified these data and made them available for use. Second, the center's director, research associates, and postdoctoral associates conduct research using those data. Third, the center convenes other researchers including faculty and students at CRPS's university and other universities who participate in the center's 10

research groups. Fourth, the center organizes a variety of publications to present research conducted by center staff, faculty affiliates at CRPS's university, faculty at other postsecondary institutions, and individuals at various policy research organizations. In the following sections, I will describe characteristics of these different categories of research the center conducts and supports.

Topical focus of CRPS's research. The research that the center conducts and supports spans a variety of topics. The center primarily conducts research related to poverty, inequality, and intergenerational mobility. The center supports research related to a wide range of poverty- and inequality-related topics.

Poverty, inequality, and intergenerational mobility: Center-developed databases and research projects. Most of the research that the center conducts currently focuses on the topics of poverty, inequality, and intergenerational mobility.

The center currently has two major projects which focus on poverty and inequality measurement in society. The first is a set of databases that the center has developed with publically-available data of all types related to the recession of the late 2000s, poverty, and inequality. Anyone can access the databases through the center's website. Users of the database can choose variables and types of analyses and run the analyses to learn for example how educational attainment relates to one's perception that "people get ahead by hard work". Using the database, users can also create graphs and download data and the products of the analyses. The center's associate director discussed the utility of these databases:

> *...we're also heavily involved in producing data…that researchers who want to study poverty and inequality can – and policy people, can come and get that data. So we have [database name] was an initiative we had a couple of years ago. And*

> *we're still updating it, but, you know, we developed it at the height of the recession, where we brought together a bunch of indicators of how the country is faring during this economic downturn. And that data was produced on a website, and there's a graphing utility that we've developed that people can come and download the data and work with it.*

Thus, the center's work surrounds gathering these data on topics related to poverty and inequality and creating a database that others can use.

The second major project the center has developed focused on the topic of poverty and inequality is a state poverty measure, modeled after the Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) that was developed by a working group of staff from a number of government agencies (referenced in chapter one of this dissertation). The SPM was created to contribute to more accurate measurement of poverty at the national level by incorporating a number of factors into the formula for what constitutes "poverty", than what are included in the formula for the "Official Poverty Measure". These factors include: a consideration of location, a wider range of income sources, and a wider range of household expenses. The center's version of this is focused on accurate measurement of poverty in the state where the center is located. The center's postdoctoral associate described the state poverty measure and its potential utility:

> *…I'm sure you know about the supplemental poverty measure, and so we have a state-specific version of that we built, and the different census dataset that allows us to say things at a lower level of geography, so we can actually say, in [local] County, this is what poverty looks like, or, I don't know, single-parent households in [state], this is what it looks like.… But basically each year we put together all the data to produce this measure kind of thing…*

The center does the work of gathering all of the data that is needed to develop this measure and makes this measure available for others to use and make sense of poverty in the state.

The center's other major topical focus is intergenerational mobility. At the conference I attended during my visit to CRPS, four out of the six paper presentations focused on intergenerational mobility. One of the center's research associates explains why intergenerational mobility is a focus of the center's work:

> *Basically, the main effect it may have on policy is because we are documenting very, very high levels of reproduction across multiple generations – meaning low mobility. So we are recommending really high levels. So the main impact may be getting people to think – in the US it's easier to get people interested, worried, or concerned about intergenerational unequal opportunity than about other things…*

Thus, the center continues to focus its work on intergenerational mobility because it believes social status is being reproduced across generations. If it can show through its research that it is difficult for children to improve their status in society relative to that of their parents, then people in U.S. society might pay attention to the issue.

As further support that poverty, inequality, and intergenerational mobility are foci of the center's work, all researchers at the center, including the center's director, associate director, the two research associates, and the postdoctoral associate, are all currently working on projects related to either poverty and inequality, or intergenerational mobility. The following selected quotes highlight this. The center's director said:

> *And then as is the case again with many folks, I've returned to an interest in studying intergenerational mobility. So that's been one very dominant line of research in my career. I've also more recently focused on issues of poverty*

directly as opposed to mobility…And then perhaps the third line of commitment has been studying income inequality…

One research associate said:

Well, let's see if we can link these other Census Bureau projects and then we can study intergenerational mobility and look for equality of opportunity, see if it has been actually going down; if it's constant. So the project that we're doing now is a pilot project to see if it's actually feasible…

The other research associate said:

…got access to do research on intergenerational economic mobility. It's a big, big deal. So at that point, it was bigger than I thought so we arranged for me to stay longer… I can tell you more if you want, but I'm still working on that project. I do a few other things, but mostly I work on that project.

The postdoctoral associate said:

And I guess since I've been here, I've worked on a couple of projects that look at – we have a poverty measure that's specific to [state] that we've developed, and so I work on analyzing the data for that, and producing policy briefs and academic research papers and stuff based off that data.

Thus, these topics are essential to work all research staff members at the center are currently engaging in. Additionally, the center has fifteen research groups, described on the center's website, one of which is focused specifically on poverty, and one of which is focused specifically on social mobility.

Poverty and other related issues: CRPS's fifteen research groups. In addition to the center's staff members developing databases and measures for others to use, as well as

conducting their own research on the topics of poverty, inequality, and intergenerational mobility, the center also convenes fifteen research groups which conduct research related to a variety of topics. The research groups are named based on their focus: life course; consumption; discrimination and poverty; education; family; health; housing; incarceration; income and wealth; labor markets; poverty; race, ethnicity, and immigration; safety net; segregation; and social mobility.

Each of the research groups has a profile on CRPS's website. Each group is led by one or two faculty members at the university where CRPS is located or at another university in the United States. Group leaders have an expertise in the area that is the focus of the research group. For example, the race, ethnicity, and immigration group is led by a faculty member with a decades-long history of work on social stratification along the lines of race and ethnicity. The leader(s) of the groups typically set the agendas for the groups' research and decide which projects or tasks the groups will focus on. The groups also typically include one or more graduate students who have an interest in the focus of the research group. CRPS's associate director described the make-up and role of the research groups:

> *There's at least one research group leader…who lead those groups and do a lot of the research in those groups. And what that typically means is they're working with a graduate student, or set of graduate students to execute a specific research task, or research project. So in the poverty research group, which is our largest, there's sort of a – that has two research group leaders, one of them is a quantitative expert, one of them is a qualitative expert…*

Thus, the research groups vary greatly and are guided by the expertise and interest of the leaders and participating researchers. Center staff plays a supporting role for the research groups.

Presenting views: CRPS's primary publication as a sounding board for scholars, practitioners, and policy-involved individuals. The center's primary publication is the final area of CRPS's research that I will discuss. This publication is a magazine which the center has been publishing since the late 2000's. The magazine includes entries from mostly university faculty across the country, but also includes entries from individuals working at policy research organizations, and entries from candidates for elections for political office, including President Barack Obama. The topic of each magazine varies from focusing on inequality, to immigration, to health, to housing. CRPS's associate director describes the role of the magazine in CRPS and the process for developing each edition:

> *…because what we're trying to do with the magazine is, you know, publish cutting edge research on poverty and inequality and social policy…it's invited…and that's by design. The way the magazine works now is they're topical in nature…In [one] case we received a grant… and then we, as the Center, field a team of researchers who do that work. They did the work…and then at the end, this is the dissemination of their results of that research work that they did. In other cases we have an annual [edition title] poverty and inequality report that we put out. In that case, that's our research group leaders. Or for some topics it's the top expert in that field…And again the key is to – we're looking for the top researchers and most cutting edge research in its field and that's what we try to bring in through the invitation for finding people to contribute.*

The magazine therefore, includes articles from individuals who have been invited by the center leadership to submit an article because they are experts in their field of study. In some cases, those individuals have received a grant from CRPS to conduct research and are writing the

article based on the research they conducted with the grant. In other cases, those individuals are leaders of one of the center's research groups.

With that context in mind, I will present findings on the topical characteristics of CRPS's primary publication. I downloaded each edition of the magazine from the center's website and examined each article in each edition. There were originally 140 articles. I eliminated "research briefs" which reviewed research published elsewhere, editor's notes, articles focused on poverty outside of the United States or comparisons between countries, and articles that did not specifically discuss poverty. The final result was 103 articles for which I will now present findings.

I will present findings on how the 103 articles handled the topics of: 1) sources of poverty, 2) causes of poverty, 3) consequences of poverty, 4) solutions for poverty, and 5) who should play a role in addressing the issue of poverty.

Sources of poverty. The "source" of poverty relates to if the article situates poverty as an individual or societal level issue; as a national or local issue; and as a historical or contemporary issue. The majority of the publications discussed poverty as both an individual and societal issue, as a national-level issue, and as a contemporary issue as displayed in table 4.2. By situating poverty as an individual and societal issue, most (70.74%) of the articles were both concerned with policies and institutional practices that shape individuals' outcomes, as well as the role of individual actions in those outcomes. By explaining poverty as a largely national issue, many (58.3%) of the articles were concerned with federal policy and poverty trends at a national level. A majority of the articles (78.54%) discussed poverty as a contemporary issue, meaning they did not situate the issues related to poverty that they were discussing in potential historical causes or contexts.

Table 4.2

Sources of poverty in primary publication of Center for Research on Poverty in Society, n=103

	Frequency	**Percentage**
Locus		
Individual	31	13.54%
Society	18	15.72%
Both	54	70.74%
Level		
National	60	58.3%
Local	23	22.3%
Both	20	19.4%
Basis		
Historical	2	0.91%
Contemporary	86	78.54%
Both	15	20.55%

Causes of poverty. The potential causes of poverty discussed in the articles varied greatly. For these, I used a binary system to code articles as either including ("yes"), or not including ("no") a particular cause of poverty. Thus, some articles were labeled as discussing more than one cause of poverty. Causes were categorized as either "individual" or "societal" causes. Table 4.3 displays these findings.

Of the 103 articles, almost half (n=50, 48.54%) discussed some individual cause for poverty. Of the individual causes discussed, the most commonly-included cause was "lack of training and skills needed to obtain jobs". This included articles for example, which focused on a need for education and training programs as a factor explaining poverty. Of the 103 articles, 59 (57.28%) discussed some societal cause for poverty. Of the societal causes discussed, the most commonly-referenced was changes in the economy. CRPS's primary publication included one edition focused solely on the "great recession", but many of the articles which included "changes in the economy" as a cause for poverty were found outside of that special edition. Of the 103 articles, none included discussion of a "fatalistic" or "biological" cause for poverty. Thus, of the articles that discussed some cause of poverty, the greatest percentage (57.28%) included some

societal cause of poverty.

Table 4.3

Frequency and percentage of articles citing cause of poverty CRPS's primary publication

	Frequency	**Percentage**
Individual (n=53)		
Interpersonal Discrimination	5	4.85%
Lack of training and skills needed to obtain jobs	44	42.72%
Family structure	10	9.71%
One's cultural practices	5	4.85%
Societal (n=59)		
Policy to deny economic advancement	2	1.94%
System of industrial capitalism	5	4.85%
Changes in the economy	44	42.72%
Location	33	32.04%
Other (n=0)		
Fatalistic	0	0.00%
Biological	0	0.00%

Consequences of poverty. Like the causes of poverty, the consequences of poverty discussed in the articles varied greatly. I used the same binary system for coding these articles, again, which means that some articles were labeled as discussing more than one consequence of poverty. Consequences were categorized as either "individual" or "societal" causes. Table 4.4 displays these findings.

Of the 103 articles, almost three-quarters (n=75, 72.82%) discussed an individual consequence of poverty. Of the individual consequences discussed, "economic" consequences were the most-commonly referenced. These were, for example, articles which discussed the ways in which childhood poverty could affect one's future prospects for employment which paid a living wage. Of the 103 articles, less than one-fifth (n=19, 18.45%) discussed some societal consequence for poverty. Of those consequences, "lack of contributions" to economy was the most-commonly cited societal consequence of poverty. Articles coded with this label were those for example, which were concerned with how individuals experiencing poverty would affect the national economy, if, as some authors suggested, those living in poverty did not contribute as

much money through taxes as their more well-paid counterparts. Thus, of the articles that included some consequence for poverty, the greatest percentage (72.82%) cited an individual consequence.

Table 4.4

Frequency and percentage of articles citing consequence of poverty CRPS's primary publication

	Frequency	**Percentage**
Individual (n=75)		
Developmental	34	33.01%
Educational	36	34.95%
Behavioral	10	9.80%
Economic	63	61.17%
Societal (n=19)		
Lack of contributions to economy	14	13.59%
Unfair use of government assistance	7	6.80%

Solutions for poverty. Like the causes and consequences of poverty, the solutions for poverty discussed in the articles varied greatly. I used the same binary system for coding these articles, again, which means that some articles were labeled as discussing more than one solution for poverty. Solutions were categorized as either "individual" or "societal" solutions. Table 4.5 displays these findings.

Of the 103 articles, 71.57% (n=73) discussed an individual solution for poverty. Of the individual solutions discussed, almost half discussed each of two solutions. Unemployment insurance, subsidies, cash assistance, tax credits, and housing vouchers were discussed as solutions in 50 (48.54%) of the articles. Social services such as those offered at health centers or clinics were discussed as solutions in 49 (48.04%) of the articles. Of the 103 articles, 42 (40.78%) discussed some societal solution for poverty. Of the societal solutions discussed, the most-commonly referenced solution was to create jobs, with 15.53% (16) of the articles citing that solution. Thus, of the articles that discussed a solution for poverty, the greatest percentage (71.57%) discussed an individual solution for poverty.

Table 4.5

Frequency and percentage of articles citing solution for poverty CRPS's primary publication

	Frequency	Percentage
Individual (n=73)		
Education and work training	41	40.20%
Unemployment insurance, subsidies, cash assistance, and tax credits, housing vouchers, etc.	50	48.54%
Social services such as those offered at clinics	49	48.04%
Encourage individuals to engage in (or not engage in) certain behaviors	28	27.18%
Societal (n=42)		
Restructure the relationship between our economy and government	5	4.85%
Networks and resources to fight for political and economic rights in capitalist society	2	1.94%
Create jobs	16	15.53%
Increase wages	11	10.68%
Eliminate discrimination	7	6.80%
Address racial segregation	9	8.74%

Who should play a role in addressing the issue of poverty? The possible answers to this question include "individuals", "government", or "business". I used the same binary system for coding these articles as I used for coding the causes, consequences, and solutions of poverty, which means that some articles were labeled as discussing more than one potential group that could play a role in addressing poverty. Table 4.6 displays these findings.

Of the 103 articles, all but one discussed a particular group that should play a role in addressing poverty. An overwhelming majority (n=92, 89.32%) of articles cited the government as a party that should play a role in addressing the issue of poverty. Almost half (n=48, 46.60%) suggested that individuals should play a role in addressing poverty. And 20.39% (n=21) suggested that businesses should play a role in addressing poverty.

Table 4.6

Who should play a role in addressing the issue of poverty in CRPS's primary publication

	Frequency	Percentage
Individuals	48	46.60%
Government	92	89.32%
Business	21	20.39%

The findings in this section present an interesting profile of the articles published in

CRPS's primary publication since its first edition in the late 2000's. Of the 140 articles that have been published, I presented findings on the 103 articles which met my criteria. Excluded articles were "research briefs" which reviewed research published elsewhere, editor's notes, articles focused on poverty outside of the United States or comparisons between countries, and articles that did not specifically discuss poverty.

Based on my review of poverty research literature, I assumed that the majority of the articles in this publication would focus on: 1) poverty as an individual, national, and contemporary issue, 2) the individual causes of poverty, 3) societal consequences of poverty, 4) individual solutions for poverty, and 5) individuals as responsible for addressing poverty. Some of the findings followed the trend I expected, and others followed a trend different from what I expected.

Some of the findings on the sources of poverty followed the trend I expected. For the locus, I expected a greater percentage to cite poverty as an individual issue than as a societal issue. As shown, 15.72% of articles cited poverty as a societal issue, compared to 13.54% which cited poverty as an individual issue. Almost three quarters (70.74%) cited poverty as both an individual and societal issue, and 86.46% cited poverty as a societal issue. For the level, I expected most articles to cite poverty as a national issue, and they did, with 58.3% only citing poverty as a national issue. And as I expected, the greatest percentage (78.54%) of articles cited poverty as a contemporary issue.

The findings on the causes of poverty did not follow the trend I expected. The greatest percentage of articles which cited a cause for poverty cited a societal cause (n=44, 57.28%). Of those causes, changes in the economy (42.72%) and location (32.04%) were cited as the most prominent causes, with causes related to governmental structure or institutional system cited just

a few times. Policy to deny economic advancement was discussed as a cause in two (1.94%) articles, and the system of industrial capitalism itself was discussed as a cause in five (4.85%) articles. Still, almost half of the articles cited an individual cause for poverty (48.54%).

The findings on the consequences of poverty did not follow the trend I expected. The greatest percentage of articles which cited a consequence for poverty cited an individual consequence (72.82%). Of those consequences, economic consequences were cited in the greatest percentage (61.17%) of articles. Just twelve (13.59%) of the articles cited lack of contributions to government and just seven (6.80%) of the articles cited unfair use of government assistance as consequences of poverty. These were the two societal consequences included on the coding guide.

The findings on solutions for poverty followed the trend I expected. The greatest percentage of articles (n=73, 71.57%) which cited a solution for poverty cited an individual solution. Of those solutions, the most cited solution (n=50, 48.54%), discussed unemployment insurance, subsidies, cash assistance, tax credits, and housing vouchers. About forty percent (40.78%) of the articles cited a societal solution for poverty. Of those solutions, the most cited solution (n=16, 15.53%) was creating jobs as a societal solution for poverty.

The findings on responsible party did not follow the trend I expected. An overwhelming majority (n=92, 89.32%) of articles cited the government as a party that should play a role in addressing the issue of poverty. Almost half (n=48, 46.60%) suggested that individuals should play a role in addressing poverty. And 20.39% (n=21) suggested that business should play a role in addressing poverty.

Thus, for the sources of poverty cited in the 103 articles, the locus (societal) was different from what I expected, but the level (national) and basis (contemporary) were what I expected.

Different from what I expected, the greatest percentage of articles cited societal causes for poverty and individual consequences for poverty. However, interestingly, the commonly-cited societal causes of poverty related to the economy and location, rather than the structure of government or institutional system. Like I expected, the greatest percentage of articles cited an individual solution for poverty. And unlike I expected, the greatest percentage of articles cited the government as the party that should play a role in addressing poverty.

Methodological focus of CRPS's conducted and supported research. While I used a publication coding guide to highlight some of the major topical features of articles in CRPS's primary publication, for this section, I will refer to other sources of data to highlight the methodological features of CRPS's conducted and supported research. The reason for this is that the articles included in CRPS's primary publication do not include a discussion of methodological approach in the texts.

For research that CRPS conducts on its own, quantitative approaches dominate. A review of the center's website shows that each of the five individuals I interviewed at the center has in the past, and is currently working on a research project which uses quantitative methods. My interviews with center staff members and researchers also highlighted this trend. For example, the center's associate director stated:

> *... people talk about big data and, you know, a lot of times they're talking about data that is available through, you know, apps or software on your computer. But – and we're interested in that too as to what it can tell us about poverty, but a lot of the administrative data that we work with here is just – is state, you know, collected by the state. It's data that's there, but it's not something that researchers have typically been able to access, or been able to use to study any –*

study poverty and inequality policy

When we think of "big data", the center is concerned with data that has already been collected that can be analyzed in quantitative form.

The center's postdoctoral associate stated:

> *Yeah, so the work I've been doing here is very strongly quantitative…It's like analyzing survey data and imputing missing data and imputing, using multiple datasets to impute things like childcare values to a dataset where it doesn't have childcare values using a dataset that does have it, those kinds of things. Yeah. In this work, I haven't done any qualitative work at all. I mean, the center, I think, is involved in some qualitative work, but it's been totally separate from mine.*

She mostly knows about the center's quantitative work which she has been conducting. She believes the center is "involved in some qualitative work", but it is separate from her work.

Given the current focus of the center's work—creating a data infrastructure for the study of poverty and inequality—it makes sense that the center is primarily focused on using quantitative methods. As described previously, the center aims to largely draw from administrative data as it develops the databases for others' use, and as it creates and revises the state poverty measure modeled off of the SPM. Administrative data includes data collected by various government agencies such as the Census Bureau and includes data for example, on people's participation in various programs and usage of various government benefits. The center's director describes why administrative data are useful for research:

> *So a lot of our work at the Center is with administrative data and exploiting that capacity which has gone, until recently, rather unexploited and exploiting that capacity to develop a better infrastructure. So part of this is all about a transition*

from survey data, which are expensive and the quality of those data are going down as we increasingly deal with problems with attrition and non-response.

Using administrative data is good because administrative data are likely higher quality and less expensive than the presently more commonly-used survey data.

For research that the center supports such as through its research groups and at its conference, there are both quantitative and qualitative approaches represented. For example, on many of the center's research teams, there is a quantitative and a qualitative expert, as stated by the center' associate director:

So in the poverty research group, which is our largest, there's sort of a – that has two research group leaders, one of them is a quantitative expert, one of them is a qualitative expert.

In addition to the center's research groups, the research presented at the conference I attended at CRPS also displayed the center's support of qualitative research, though quantitative research dominated at the conference. Of the six papers presented at the conference, all six used some quantitative methods. One of the papers was a mixed methods paper which also used qualitative methods, and the remaining five papers solely used quantitative methods.

Characteristics of researchers participating in CRPS's research. There are various relevant researcher characteristics I will discuss here including the researcher's institutional home, role and status, disciplinary background, and interest in and history studying poverty and inequality. I will discuss some of these characteristics in relation to research staff at CRPS as well as authors of articles in the center's primary publication.

Institutional home of researchers conducting CRPS's projects and publications. For most research produced and supported by the center, lead researchers are housed at

postsecondary institutions. For center-conducted research products, this is obvious, given that the center is housed at a postsecondary institution. As discussed in the previous section, the center has a number of research projects that its research staff are engaged in presently, focused on building a data infrastructure for the study of poverty and inequality, and focused on developing and revising a state poverty measure. For many of these referenced projects, center research staff and their faculty affiliates at the university take the lead. For example, one of the center's research associates discussed how this looks on one project he is leading:

> *In terms of other people at [CRPS's university], on the project there's [center director] and [other faculty member at the university], who's a sociology professor, are on the standing committee, and are the people we report to. Then there's another sociology professor…who is the PI on the project. So her role is kind of on the big picture; she and I talk every so often; same thing with [center's director] and [other faculty member at the university]. So I'm kind of the person at [postsecondary institution housing center], day to day.*

Thus, researchers at CRPS's university tend to lead projects. Still, for some projects, these researchers partner with staff in other types of organizations and agencies such as the Census Bureau and the Internal Revenue Service. The description given by the research associate continues:

> *Then at Census there are a few people who are then making sure that we can get access to everything, and making sure that we're obeying Census policies – and the law, the law of the United States – so we don't break any laws. Then they're also then working with, on how best to work with the vendors that we've hired; then evaluate the output once we get the output.*

The center's associate director supported this idea:

> *...so that's what I'm involved with most now, is sort of – is building that infrastructure through, you know, partnerships with state agencies and federal – in particular with the Census Bureau.*

Thus, for center-conducted research, center research staff partner with other researchers at the university and individuals in government agencies to carry out projects.

In addition to research projects led by center research staff, there are also projects that are led by research groups. As discussed previously, research groups are led by faculty at postsecondary institutions who are considered to be experts in their fields. According to CRPS's director, when forming research groups, the center first attempts to find experts at the university housing CRPS:

> *...so we try to figure out who is a leader in these existing areas that we set out and solicited them to join us. Yeah, so often leaders are here at [CRPS's university]. We try to privilege [CRPS's university] people when they're available...but if someone's better who's outside of [CRPS's university] we just went outside...*

The center first seeks leaders in their fields at the university where CRPS is located, but if someone at another university is considered to be a leader, then CRPS leadership may ask that person to lead a research group. A review of CRPS's website shows that of the fifteen research groups, seven are led by faculty at CRPS's university, seven are led by faculty at other postsecondary institutions, and one is led by a staff member at a well-known national research institute.

The final group of center-supported research I will discuss in this section is the articles in

CRPS's primary publication. For the primary publication, people from a variety of settings are invited to submit pieces. Typically though, these are people in postsecondary institutions, government offices, and policy organizations. My analysis of the institutional home of the authors of the 103 articles is displayed in figure 4.1. The analysis showed that the largest group of authors is located at postsecondary institutions, with 23% located at CRPS's university and 51% located at other postsecondary institutions. The next largest group (17%) is located at policy (research) organizations, 7% are located at government institutions, and 2% are located at organizations which offer social programs.

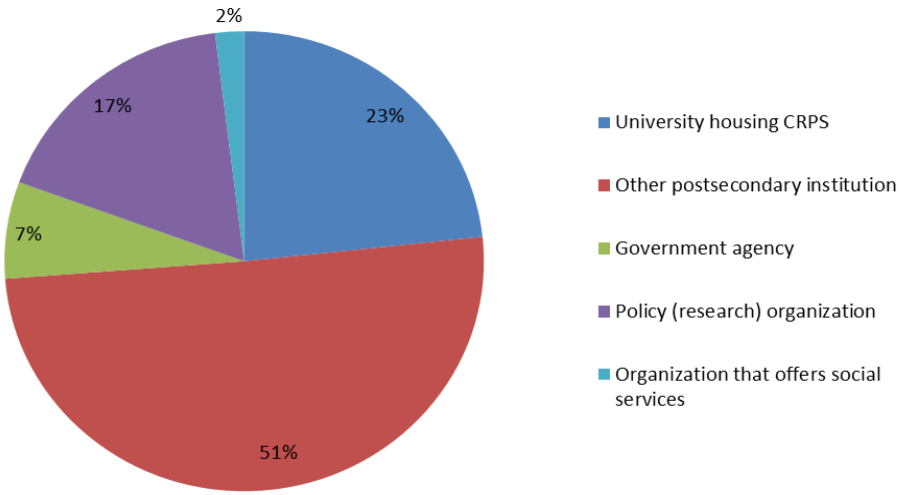


Figure 4.1. Institutional home of authors in CRPS's primary publication

Role and status of researchers conducting CRPS's projects and publications. While the previous section hinted at the role of the researchers conducting CRPS's projects and publications, here I will specifically discuss the role of these individuals. As evidenced in the interview findings discussed already, most of the people who work on CRPS's projects and publications are faculty members or other researchers in the academic setting such as

postdoctoral researchers and undergraduates. These include CRPS leadership and research staff, leaders of CRPS research groups, and students on research groups. Other people working on CRPS research projects and publications are staff members at government agencies. Evidence from my analysis of articles in CRPS's primary publication follows this trend. The findings from this analysis are displayed in Figure 4.2. Over one half of the publication's authors are faculty members at postsecondary institutions. Almost one quarter maintain some other role. This includes research directors at policy research organizations and candidates for public office. Thirteen percent are CRPS research staff members, and four percent are students at postsecondary institutions.

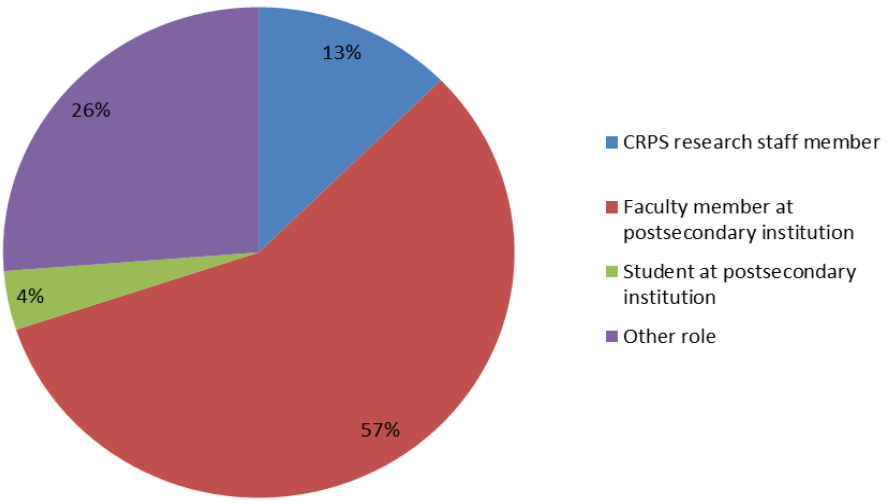


Figure 4.2. Role of first author of article in CRPS's primary publication

These findings show that the majority of individuals have some role in postsecondary institutions, but a large proportion—one quarter, occupy some other role.

Disciplinary background of researchers conducting CRPS's projects. All individuals conducting CRPS's projects have a background of study and training in the social sciences. A review of curriculum vitas of CRPS leadership and center research staff shows that three of those

individuals—the center's director, associate director, and one research associate, have PhDs in sociology. The center's other research associate has a PhD in economics, and CRPS's postdoctoral researcher has a PhD in social work. As discussed previously, all of CRPS's leadership and research staff specifically have training in quantitative research methodologies, regardless of disciplinary background.

A review of the university profiles of the leaders of CRPS's fifteen research groups shows that all but one of the research groups has a first-listed leader who is affiliated with a social science department. Of those, a plurality of research groups (five) is led by a professor of sociology. Four research groups are led by a professor of economics. The one research group not led by a social scientist is the "health" research group, led by a professor of medicine. Thus, the majority of CRPS's research projects and groups are led by social scientists.

History of work on, and interest in studying inequality and poverty of researchers conducting CRPS's projects and publications. A final area of concern is the motivation which shapes researchers' interest in participating in CRPS's projects. I conceptualized this motivation as some combination of history of work to address poverty and inequality, interest in studying poverty and inequality, and personal experience with poverty and inequality.

In interviews with CRPS leadership and research staff, I asked about each individual's interest in, and history with, studying and addressing poverty and inequality. All but one of those individuals had a particular history of studying poverty and inequality. Three of those individuals had a history of working to address poverty and inequality. None of those individuals indicated a personal experience with poverty and inequality.

Interest in and history of studying poverty. Four members of the center's leadership and research staff shared that they had a history of studying poverty and inequality. The research

director stated:

> *And I had founded a center on the study of inequality at [other postsecondary institution]…So I've long had an interest in intergenerational social mobility and the extent to which the country is living up to its commitment to delivering high rates of mobility…Then as was the case actually with a lot of folks within social science, I dropped that line of research…I've returned to an interest in studying intergenerational mobility. So that's been one very dominant line of research in my career. I've also more recently focused on issues of poverty directly as opposed to mobility.*

He has studied topics of social mobility since he was in graduate school, and has recently added the study of poverty to his research agenda. In addition, before founding CRPS, he was the director of a center on the study of inequality at another university in the United States.

The center's associate director described his introduction to the issue of inequality and poverty:

> *So poverty has always been a big part of my interests, you know, going back all the way to when I was a kid, and also inequality. But I grew up in [southern state] and I've, you know, from the time that I was a sort of cognizant youth of my surroundings, I was very interested in – I was very concerned about the high levels of poverty in my, in my city and in my state… when I was a teenager I sort of expanded. I started doing – you know, I did a lot of service work in the city, sort of in, you know, soup kitchens. And my parents...they thought it was very important that I spend time working in soup kitchens or food banks and that kind of thing. So I did a lot of that as a kid in the city, and later in doing service*

projects…more housing related service projects in rural areas…my parents, my parents were both working class people. And so they – I think that allowed them to – in a way they had more, sort of, opportunities than some might to interact across, sort of, class lines and also, importantly in the South, across racial lines. So my dad was a government employee, my mom was a nurse. And so they dealt with, you know, people from all walks of life…for them there was also a religious element. So, you know, I was raised in a church, and this was, for them, you know – these two things mapped onto each other. You had the dictates of Christianity to, sort of, help the poor…And so I don't know it was intentional on their part that they were going to raise us up to be poverty researchers, or poverty – any poverty crusaders or anything like that. But, you know, it certainly had an impact on what I wanted to do, and, you know, what my siblings do as well…

He went on to explain his history of studying poverty and inequality:

I pursued study of stratification, social stratification, poverty and inequality in graduate school. That was one of the main motivating factors that had me apply to graduate school in Sociology. And so I studied it there.

As explained, as a youth, he became aware of the issue of poverty and inequality and as encouraged by his parents to play a role in addressing the issue. To this end, he participated in various service activities. Then, he went to graduate school to study sociology because of his interest in studying social stratification and poverty and inequality.

One of the center's research associates explained his history of studying poverty and inequality:

I'm a lefty, so that plays a role. Low wage work was something that is – basically,

like many other people, I think low wage workers are the basis of many of the poverty problems with the country. There are other issues, but we will go a long way toward solving the poverty in this country and the problem of the working pool and all that if we attack the problem of low wage jobs…When I arrived, my main focus was – this is a complicated thing – both on low wage work. I had done some very descriptive work on low wage workers and jobs.

His work as a graduate student focused on an aspect of inequality in society related to low wage work.

Finally, the center's postdoctoral researcher explained her interest in and history of work related to studying poverty and inequality:

…in high school, I got involved in a program that was teaching English as a second language classes to a group of landscape workers. There was a housing complex that hired a couple high school students to teach ESL classes there. … And so that was sort of my first exposure to other people living in the community who didn't have the same level of privilege that I did… So that's sort of the beginning of it, but in college, I was really involved in an adult education program in public housing projects, and after college I went to work for a social service agency that helps find permanent housing for homeless families and individuals. And I did a lot of that work before I went back to grad school to study these things kind of from an academic perspective…so I came here shortly after finishing my PhD in social work, basically. And basically, I mean I came here because my work in grad school focused on poverty and poverty management, and policies that affect poverty.

In high school, she became personally aware of the issue of inequality, and as a graduate student, she studied poverty and antipoverty policy.

History of work to address poverty and inequality. Three of the center's research staff shared a history of working to address poverty and inequality.

As evidenced in the previous section, the center's postdoctoral researcher had a history of working with various programs she associated with antipoverty policy such as ESL classes for landscape workers and adult education courses for residents of public housing. The center's associate director had a history of working to address poverty that he believes was based in his upbringing. His parents, given their religious background, were committed to the idea of helping others who they perceived to have less money than they had. As a result, he and his siblings have a commitment to addressing issues of poverty and inequality. As a youth, he did this by engaging in various service activities. Today, he does this by studying poverty and inequality and antipoverty policy and programs.

One of the center's research associates also has a history of working to addressing poverty and inequality. He stated:

> *Also, during my PhD I worked at a place called the [center name], which is at the [other postsecondary institution] …It's a think and do tank…their goal was not to just have ideas about what we can do on studies, but to go and implement them. And then they had done a lot of work especially. Low income workers had been a center of focus for other recently because there was a lot of forward thinking work. Also, because it's a strong manufacturing base, so the idea was to try to connect people to the jobs in manufacturing and help in many other ways to attack this problem in low wage – career ladders and other problems to promote*

upward mobility from bad jobs to good jobs.

As a graduate student, he worked at a center which focused on conducting research and developing various strategies to translate that research into practice. Through his interest in low-wage work, he was also able to work on projects which were meant to address the problem of low-wage work in society.

The only center research staff member who did not explain a history of interest in studying poverty or addressing poverty came to his work on poverty through his study of the Consumer Expenditure Survey. He stated:

> *I think my relationship to the poverty work was mainly that I had worked with the Consumer Expenditure Survey. With the Supplemental Poverty Measure, the thresholds are now calculated every year using new data – using the Consumer Expenditure Survey – and so I've used that in a lot of my research. I've done a little bit on poverty, but nothing – so it was tangentially you'd relate it, but not directly. I knew enough about the Supplemental Poverty Measure in my previous work that it wasn't hard to join that team and help.*

He had expertise with the Consumer Expenditure Survey, and since those data are used to calculate the SPM thresholds, his expertise made him a good candidate for working on projects concerned with the Consumer Expenditure Survey.

Espoused model of knowledge production in CRPS's work. The final feature of CRPS's research I will discuss is the espoused model of knowledge production that is supported in CRPS's work. Given my review of poverty research literature and the arguments of scholars such as Alice O'Connor, when examining poverty research and antipoverty policy, it is important to consider whose perspectives on the issue of poverty are included and factor into

conclusions that are reached. By understanding this, we can get a better understanding of the context in which the research is conducted.

One feature of CRPS's espoused model of knowledge production is that it is interdisciplinary. The review of research profiles of the center's research staff and affiliated faculty shows that these individuals use a variety of social science disciplines to ground their work. The center specifically seeks individuals who are "experts" in their area of study, thus, drawing from a variety of disciplines and fields.

Another feature of CRPS's espoused model of knowledge production is that research projects and ideas originate with the center's leadership, research staff, and research groups. Because the majority of these individuals are faculty and other researchers at postsecondary institutions, this means that the ideas that guide the research projects are based in the academic setting. Though I see this trend of individuals in postsecondary institutions guiding CRPS's research projects, there are some situations in which a project or paper may be developed based on a partnership or relationship with another individual or group that is not based in a university. The center's associate director spoke on this matter, stating:

> *…That occurred at a conference. You know, I was giving a paper – I was giving the paper on [state] and this, our coauthors now, were in attendance, and they were giving their own paper on some other, related but not the same topic. And that's how we started talking about, "Hey, what – you know, wouldn't this be good to do for the whole country? And let's see how we could make that happen." And I think, you know, these conferences that we have, you know, we host them here at the Center, and that is one of their key benefits…the way that you spur innovation…*

Thus, while many of the center's projects originate with the center, there are situations in which individuals at the center may meet other researchers and develop ideas for projects or papers based on those interactions.

In this section, I have described characteristics of CRPS's research, which includes research the center conducts, research the center supports such as through its research groups, and research the center publishes in its primary publication. I have discussed topical characteristics of the center's research, methodological characteristics of the center's research, characteristics of researchers who conduct this research, and the center's espoused model of knowledge production. For research the center conducts on its own, the topics of intergenerational mobility and poverty and inequality dominate. For research the center supports and publishes, topics vary. While quantitative approaches dominate the projects the center conducts, methodological approaches vary among research the center supports and publishes in its primary publication. For characteristics of researchers who conduct CRPS's research and publications, faculty at postsecondary institutions dominate the pool. For the center's own research, all but one of the members of the center's research staff has a history of studying and addressing poverty. These interests are reflected in the center's work. Finally, the center's espoused model of knowledge production involves center leadership and research staff originating ideas and from time to time, drawing on the ideas and interests of collaborators who are located in other universities or organizations and agencies.

Ultimately, the CRPS is concerned with developing an infrastructure for the study of poverty and inequality. To that end, its projects are primarily focused in that direction. Additionally, since some part of the center's work is concerned with enlightening society, and providing data for robust conversation about poverty and conceptualization of poverty, then its

work also helps contribute to that. Next, I will discuss the Center for Research on Poverty in Society's research dissemination activities.

Open Dissemination for Widespread Use

The Center for Research on Poverty in Society uses a variety of methods for disseminating its research. All of these methods are open methods which are intended for a wide range of audiences to use. In this section, I will discuss dissemination strategies and intended audiences.

Dissemination strategies. CRPS uses three primary methods for disseminating its research—its website, conferences, and various research publications. A review of CRPS's website shows that the center displays various types of research on its website. First, the center shares the databases it has developed that others can use to analyze data on poverty, inequality, and related issues. The databases are housed on outside websites, but CRPS has a hub on its website for others to access each of the databases it has developed. Second, the website shares a variety of center publications including the primary magazine it publishes and research reports written by center staff members. Visitors to the website can view and download all editions of the center's primary magazine and a variety of research reports. Third, the center shares lists of the research groups as well as center research staff which visitors to the website can use to access those individuals' research profiles.

The conferences are another significant forum in which CRPS disseminates its research. CRPS's website lists the conferences the center has hosted over the years. Each year, the center hosts at least four conferences, focused on a range of topics from poverty measurement, to trends in inequality, to segregation in society. I attended one such conference during my visit to the center in spring 2016 and was able to see firsthand the structure and content of the conferences. The conference I attended was a joint conference organized by CRPS and another university-

based poverty research center. At the conference, center research staff, other faculty at CRPS's university, and faculty from the other university hosting the conference each presented their research. After each presentation, audience members asked questions and engaged in a brief discussion with the presenters.

According to center staff I spoke with, the conferences have a number of foci. First, the conferences are meant to re-package academic research for a broader audience. In this way, the conferences are forums in which center research staff as well as other faculty at CRPS's university and other institutions can present their poverty- and inequality-related research. The center's postdoctoral researcher spoke on this matter:

> *...there's a conference they do, the [conference title] that they do every January, and then sort of policy briefs and things that we do. But all of these things, I think – a lot of it is taking the work of academics who are doing very sort of technical academic work and sort of re-packaging it, kind of presenting it in a way that's more digestible kind of.*

The conferences are meant to present academic research to a wider audience of individuals.

Second, the conferences are a space in which individuals from local agencies and organizations can come together to learn about research that may be useful to them as they implement policy. One center research associate shared his perspective on this:

> *I think the goal of the conference is a local outreach. Because it really is people from the county welfare agency, or people actually on the metaphorical ground, the people actually on the ground helping people. So essentially it's a bridge between the research community; what's happening in research on inequality in international perspective, or at the state level, to again, the people who are*

actually working.

Extending the idea of translating academic research for a wider audience, the conferences also focus on providing a space for practitioners to gain access to research being conducted that can be useful for their work.

Third, the conferences are a space for CRPS to garner support for it work, and to possibly gain additional funding to support its ongoing projects. By bringing together people from foundations, and various policymaking bodies such as the U.S. Congress, the center aims to highlight the important work it is conducting by developing a data infrastructure for the study of poverty and inequality. One of the center's research associates spoke about such a conference that the center hosted in spring 2016:

> *We're going to be talking, in part, to the research community to get them interested and help – essentially help motivate why we need to do this. But there will also be people from foundations, and I believe people from Congress have been invited as well. So there was the Ryan-Murray bill on policy based program evaluation; I think a couple people have been invited from that; and then people who will be on that commission. So that's the sort of outreach we're doing right now for that project. Is essentially saying, "Look, these are the possibilities of what we can do if we get enough money to actually complete the project; and if we're successful, these are all the sorts of things we can do."*

Thus, the center needs to advocate for its own work and garner support from individuals who can fund and use the research.

The publications are a third forum in which the center presents its research. As discussed previously, visitors to CRPS's website can view many of its publications there. First, visitors to

the website can view and download all editions of CRPS's primary magazine. CRPS's director describes the role of the magazine:

> *The magazine, [title] magazine, the intent is to meet…I think the need to open up a conversation about poverty and inequality to a wider population than is typically the case. I mean, it turns out that a lot of scholars like [magazine title] because it gives them an easy sort of entry into an area about which they might not know all that much. So their needs are actually very similar to that the general public in areas in which they're not experts. And so they actually like it a lot, too. But then there's just a general readership. It's a more, I think a more educated public that reads [magazine title] is not an easy read, but it's much easier than going to the journals. It gives you that easy entry.*

Like the conferences, this magazine is meant to take academic research and present it in a way that it can be useful for a wider audience outside of academia.

Second, the center publishes research reports and briefs which present findings from research projects center research staff and affiliated individuals have conducted. About these publications, the center's director stated:

> *Then we have research briefs which we're gonna be ramping up a lot, which we use for sort of center-mandated research. So this is different than the research that, you know, say like [CRPS research group leader], who heads up the educational access group, doesn't publish much in the research brief zone because he's just publishing journal articles. But when it's specially mandated projects that are funded almost exclusively with Center funds, then we will put that into the research brief form. So that would be like – our work with the [state]*

Poverty Measure usually comes out as a research brief.

These reports and briefs are typically intended to present findings from center-conducted research and which may be created for an academic audience or as a report for a funder.

Third, the center also publishes research in its book series, which disseminate the work of researchers conducting research on poverty, inequality, and related topics. The book series is published by CRPS's university press. Visitors to the center's website can view titles that have been published in the series and detailed information on each book as well as order copies of the books. The center's associate director spoke about the series:

> *That's, I guess, a more traditional university publishing model where our director is one of the editors of the series. And so he's reaching out to – he's developing the, sort of, series, and bringing in the authors to do the series. And yeah the Center's involved in sponsoring, sort of, events that promote that series*

Thus, the center's director plays a significant role in putting together the series and selecting books that can be developed for inclusion in the series.

Intended audiences. As discussed in the previous section, CRPS disseminates its research for a number of purposes: to re-package academic research for a non-academic audience, to present findings for potential usage by practitioners, and to garner support for its future research. With these goals in mind, the center has a number of audiences that it disseminates its research to to accomplish these goals.

First, the center disseminates its research to the members of the public. Because the center's website is openly-accessible, anyone who finds the website can access the center's research databases, primary magazine, and research reports. In addition, the center's conferences have free and open admission.

Second, the center disseminates its research to people in government and other organizations that provide programs and services. As mentioned earlier, some of these individuals are the target of some of the center's conferences, such as the conference I attended and the conference held later in the spring to garner support for the center's work. In addition to the conferences, the center also targets these individuals by sending them copies of the center's publications. The center's associate director discusses this:

> *So the audience is – I can tell you exactly who they are… more or less. So the audience is Capitol Hill for one. We send this magazine to every – to the staff of every senator and representative on the Hill. So, you know, and I know that they get it because we get comments back, some good, some bad. So we're trying to reach them. We're a [center receiving government funding] so, as you – I think that that's part of our mandate is to sort of inform what's – what the Washington debate is on this stuff…We've also, as we've done, as we've started doing more and more [state] work, reaching out to State-level – to State-level legislators, and, sort of, county welfare directors, people who are involved in the – on the ground work of poverty and inequality in [the state]. And as we expand – as we increasingly make more connections in other states, we'll do that in other states too…*

The center targets policymakers and practitioners who can hopefully use the findings of the research to support their own work, or to perhaps fund or advocate for the center's work.

Third, the center disseminates its research to an academic audience. Given its focus on developing research databases and a data infrastructure, the center aims to make data available for researchers' use. In addition, the center specifically targets an academic audience by sending

its primary publication to those individuals:

> *It also goes to policy – policy researchers. So we send out to people who are involved in policy research community. And we reach them through their memberships in Policy Association Memberships. It also goes out to sociologists of poverty and inequality, you know, which probably every sociologist could be counted in that in some way – well not everyone, but a large… We reach out through the American Sociological Association to people who are doing this research. And they get the magazine.*

The center targets individuals who are conducting poverty and inequality research by sending its primary publication to members of various professional associations.

In conclusion, CRPS disseminates its research in many open forums for a widespread set of audiences. The center intends to repackage academic research for non-academic audiences, share data for others to analyze, and share research to garner support for its ongoing work. The center presents this research on its website, at its conferences, and in its publications. To achieve its goals, the center invites academic researchers, policymakers and practitioners, and the wider public to attend its conferences and read its publications. In the next section, I will discuss CRPS's activities to train and support individuals with an interest in studying and addressing poverty.

Training the Next Generation of Scholars, Policy Analysts, and Politicians

The Center for Research on Poverty in Society offers a variety of programs and activities to train and support individuals with a concern for studying and addressing poverty. By offering these programs and activities, CRPS is carrying out what it views as one of its important functions. The center's director spoke in this matter:

So part of what all [centers receiving particular source of funding] are mandated to…to do is to draw in new scholars and to provide seed grants to young scholars so that they can do the best possible work they can do.

Thus, the variety of support activities, including providing grants, is an essential part of the work the center does. Specifically, the center carries out five categories of activities: 1) Grants and fellowships, 2) workshops, seminars, and conferences, 3) on-campus degree programs, 4) free online poverty course, and 5) online databases for researchers' use. In this section, I will describe the purpose and nature of these activities.

Grants and fellowships. CRPS offers a variety of funding opportunities for scholars with an interest in studying poverty and inequality. Each of these is described on CRPS's website. A review of the center's website describes these various funding opportunities. The first such funding opportunity is the "new scholar grants" which are available for people who received their PhD within the past seven years and whose work falls in line with one of the center's research groups. The funds are provided for recipients to carry out a proposed research project. The second such funding opportunity is the "graduate student grants" which are grants of up to $2,500 offered to three to four graduate students each year. The third such funding opportunity is the postdoctoral fellowships for recent PhD graduates who work at the center as a part of its research staff. Currently, the center is funding one postdoctoral researcher.

Workshops, seminars, and conferences. CRPS offers a variety of forums for scholars, including graduate students and faculty, to gain additional knowledge and connect with other individuals interested in studying and addressing poverty and inequality. The first is a graduate seminar on poverty and inequality that is run by the center's director. I attended this seminar during my visit which involved a discussion among the center's director and twelve graduate

students. According to one of the students in the seminar, the majority of students enrolled in the course are sociology graduate students and a few are graduate students in other programs such as education policy. The second forum the center offers is a workshop that is run by the center's associate director. The workshop allows center-affiliated faculty and students to present on research they are conducting through the center. According to the center's associate director, the workshops are an important space for scholars to get feedback on their work which assists in their further development:

> *…its' also graduate students, or others, other research scholars at the Center coming in, research staff at the Center are coming in and presenting, "Okay, this is the Center work that I'm doing, you know, give me feedback on this." So it presents – it's both an opportunity for training and a way to move the research forward…some of our projects are, you know, are – have heavy involvement from graduate students. You know, they are doing the hard work of developing these measurement technologies…– so that program is a way for them to come and say, "…here's what I've developed, tell me ways to improve this, or tell me it's good to go. What's our, you know, what's our – even sort of, what's our dissemination strategy on this? How are we going to release the report?"*

Thus, the workshops are an important space for researchers to get feedback on and improve their work. Finally, the center's conferences, which I described in the previous section on research dissemination, are a space in which CRPS supports scholars. The center's associate director spoke about this important role of the conferences:

> *You know they bring the research in, students show up, they get exposed to all the people that are – all the affiliates that are working on that particular topic. So*

that serves an important training function. And, you know, they may – some of the students may link up with – you know, if you've got a good student who's working on something related, we'll connect them to the, to the faculty who may be at [CRPS's university], or may be one of our research group leaders at, you know, NYU or something. We provide that connection, and they may go work for them on that particular project.

Thus, the conferences provide an opportunity for students to be exposed to new research and connect with scholars in their field.

On-campus degree programs. CRPS offers two on-campus degree programs to train and support scholars interested in studying poverty and inequality. Each of these is described on CRPS's website. The first is an interdisciplinary Master's degree in public policy with a concentration in poverty and inequality that the center offers in partnership with the university's sociology department. Most students who participate have already been admitted into a PhD program at the university and through the program, take courses in economics, psychology, organizations, and law. The second is an undergraduate certificate program in which undergraduate students sign up and get matched with an advisor who assists them in enrolling in relevant coursework that can help to shape their curriculum in the study of poverty and inequality. To complete the certificate, participating students must: 1) enroll in one core course, 2) enroll in two elective courses, and 3) write a research paper by either working with a research group housed at the center, or by developing an independent project. One of the center's research associates spoke about the integral role that graduate and undergraduate students working with the center played in the development of one of the center's research databases:

It was very time consuming because there are a lot of variables to be collected or

produced yourself. The data had to be collected from multiple sources. It is also time consuming because the group collects the data twice (the graduate student collects it first, and then the undergraduate student collects the data again to ensure that the data are okay). Then, there is a second undergraduate who checks it once the data have been uploaded to ensure that the data and the usability are linked appropriately.

The project that he was referring to was described as a time-consuming and in-depth project which required many steps for completion. The participating graduate and undergraduates therefore, played an important role in that completion given the steps described in the quotation.

Free online poverty course. In addition to offering on campus degree programs, the center also offers a free online poverty course which presents lessons on a variety of topics related to poverty and inequality. The course is accessible through CRPS's website and provides a great deal of material including guest lectures, readings, and assignments. Individuals can enroll in the course and follow a series of modules which focus on various topics including: the experience of poverty; the causes of poverty; education; social mobility and jobs; gender inequality; and racial and ethnic inequality. To complete the course, individuals would need about two months, and can receive a statement of completion.

Online databases for researchers' use. Finally, CRPS offers a series of databases that researchers can use to study poverty and inequality. As discussed in the section on the center's research, CRPS is committed to developing an infrastructure for the study of poverty and inequality. Thus, the development of this database is a part of that commitment. The databases are accessible through the center's website and allow researchers to analyze data and generate graphs and tables from the data. The databases include sub-databases related to particular subject

areas such as the recession of 2008, Latino population in the U.S., [state in which CRPS is located], and income segregation.

In this section, I have described the variety of programs and activities that CRPS offers to train and support researchers with an interest in poverty and inequality. Those programs and activities include grants and fellowships; workshops, seminars, and conferences; on-campus degree programs; a free online poverty course; and an online databases for researchers' use. Together, these programs and activities are intended to provide funding and training opportunities for scholars to develop knowledge and skills related to the study of poverty and inequality. In the following section, I will describe the activities that CRPS implements to facilitate collaboration among individuals concerned with addressing poverty and related issues.

Collaborating to Develop Research Infrastructure and Propose Policy

The majority of CRPS's activities would not be classified as activities to facilitate research-policy and research-practice collaborations. However, to conduct some of its research projects, center research staff members partner with individuals in a variety of organizations to carry out work the center believes is important for building an infrastructure for measuring poverty and inequality and for creating a context in which people can make sound decisions on policy and practice.

First, center research staff members work with individuals at agencies such as the Census Bureau and the Treasury Department to gain access to data needed to carry out studies and develop the data infrastructure. For example, one of the center's research associates partnered with an individual at the IRS to conduct a study on intergenerational mobility. He described the process for starting the collaboration with the IRS:

I found a paper by a guy at the IRS, in the statistical part of the IRS, that had

done some work – you know, when you fill in a tax form, you have to write down your occupation…I called and when they asked me why, I explained that we are interested here in [CRPS] in studying intergenerational mobility and I wanted to talk to this person…but another person after a couple of calls, called me back. He was [IRS staff member]. He's at the SOI division, but he was in the area of income taxes. He wasn't interested in doing this kind of intergenerational stuff or talking to us about that, but he was interested in income. The occupation, he said, was a mess. There was just a pile of analyses and the occupation was not really ready to go. But income, we maybe could do research. So that was at the end of 2010 or the beginning of 2011. We started to talk about how to do the research. And that is how it started, and we have been working since then…

Thus, for the past few years, the CRPS research associate has been partnering with an IRS staff member who has an interest in income data—data which are useful for CRPS's studies on intergenerational mobility. Similarly, the center has been contacted by agencies to partner on research. The center's associate director spoke on this:

…myself and my coauthor were approached by some analysts at the Treasury Department and they said, "Hey, you're doing these studies on individual states… we have all the data on the whole country, so you can do this for nationwide." So they approached us, we said, "Yeah, that's sounds great." And then – and so that's, for the last, I guess, about three years we've been working on that paper. And that's being – that'll be – that's being published next month…

Thus, the center has also partnered with the Treasury Department to conduct research since the Treasury Department has access to the data needed to conduct analyses for the whole United

States.

Second, CRPS has also partnered with a foundation in its state to develop a report on "evidence-based policy". The report is displayed on the center's website and highlights the relevance of antipoverty policy in today's economic climate. The report also discusses various areas of policy and programs which have been shown to address poverty including health, education, and employment. The center's director described the process that it took to develop this report:

> *So a foundation reached out to us to try to develop a plan for substantially reducing poverty in [the state], the argument being that we tend not to be so audacious, at least not for the last half century, in trying to take on poverty in a real and fundamental way and actually end it. Not the narrow gauge reforms, the small interventions that now seem to be the…the flavor of the day, but what if we actually committed to doing something in a big way? It's a huge problem, right? It's gonna take a big, big, big response presumably. Not everyone believes that, but many people think that we need major institutional reform to take it on.*

Thus, the foundation was concerned with developing a plan for reducing poverty in the state and the center agreed to review policies and programs that have been designed with that goal in mind.

In conclusion, CRPS implements a few activities to facilitate research-practice and research-policy collaborations. Those activities involve working with individuals in government agencies who have access to data as the center conducts research using those data. In addition, the center has partnered with a foundation to develop a plan focused on evidence-based antipoverty policy in its state. In the last four sections, I have described similarities and

differences among activities that CRPS implements to carry out its aims—conducting and supporting research, disseminating research, training and supporting scholars, and facilitating research-policy-practice collaborations. In the following section, I will describe contextual and other factors that seem to shape CRPS's activities described in the previous sections.

Relevant Contextual and Other Factors Shaping CRPS's Activities

In this section, I will discuss the main contextual factors that appear to have some impact on the work of the Center for Research on Poverty in Society. Those factors include the center's institutional setting, sources of funding for the center's activities, societal conversations about poverty and trends in poverty and antipoverty policy and practice, and the background of individual actors who play a role in the center.

Institutional setting. The institutional setting of the Center for Research on Poverty in Society seems to impact much of the center's work. The center is located in a prestigious and well-known private research university in the United States. According to center staff members, this setting impacts both the center's aims and the center's body of research. The center's director discussed how this setting may impact the center's aims:

> *So there are always tensions on the matter of how broad our purview should be. And to some extent, from the point of view of [CRPS's university], we should be a full-service center that assists in the study of all sorts of poverty and inequality, which is a daunting task. And so to some extent we meet that objective, although I would say not as well as we should. We also, though, have a focus I would say – or many, but perhaps if I had to choose one it would be that we think our major value added contribution can be better developing an infrastructure for measuring poverty and inequality.*

While the center wants to focus on the development of an "infrastructure for measuring poverty and inequality", it does recognize that the university wishes for it to have a broader focus and thus, considers this institutional preference in its actions.

The institutional setting also affects the center's aims because the center is positioned as "non-partisan". This means that the center cannot promote a particular set of policies in its work. The center's associate director spoke on this matter:

> *I mean, we're not, you know, we're a non-partisan organization. I think it's important to clarify that. And so we don't take political stance on how this is going to get done. We just provide the evidence for, you know, for policies…I mean that's, you know…I personally, you know, I want to see poverty come down. But I don't, you know, the Center doesn't advocate. You know, we don't go out and say, "Okay, this – we're going to tackle this." So that's an important distinction. But that's the nice thing about the Center is that it does provide this – it is providing – I think it is going to provide the tools to ultimately reach that goal [of reducing poverty].*

This quote highlights the fact that the center views its work as contributing to society knowing more about poverty and inequality and antipoverty policy; however, because the center, as an institution, is "non-partisan", then the center does not advocate for the utility of one policy over another.

In addition to impacting the center's aims, the center's institutional setting also plays a role in the research that the center conducts. For example, because the center is housed at a university, the majority of individuals who conduct research through the center, and who conduct research that is supported by the center, are operating in an academic setting. To this end, many

of these individuals produce their research products for an academic audience. The center's postdoctoral researcher spoke about this:

> *Well, I would actually say more I think almost everyone who's working here is coming from an academic background, and especially [university] Sociology is a very – they're into rigorous methods and stuff like that, right, so basically I would say everyone who's involved, including the faculty who aren't actually at [CRPS's university], because there's a lot of affiliates who are at other universities – they all certainly do scholarly publications that are focused at a scholarly audience. And I think it seems to me that by being part of the center, part of what they agree to do is come together and write papers that draw on their academic work, but that present the kinds of things that are more relevant for a more general audience.*

Thus, while the center is concerned with conducting and supporting research that can inform the design of "evidence-based policy", many of the researchers affiliated with the center produce research for an academic audience, not necessarily for a policy audience. Still, those individuals produce products that they believe could be used by a broader audience.

In addition, the research that the center produces is impacted by its institutional setting because as a society, we often expect that universities will provide some sort of service for society. The center's director discussed this idea:

> *And so we see that as our role. That is what we based our application to [federal funding source] to become a [grantee] was that that's where we think we have something to contribute. Where the country should rightfully look to the universities to provide some assistance in that regard because they just don't have*

the capacity to do that themselves typically. Although we're partnering all the time with the Census Bureau in what capacity they have they're so happy to work on these kinds of questions. It's very important to them, too and they're major, major players in this as well. And so it's very much a collaborative enterprise but we can add to their capacity.

Thus, because universities are positioned to conduct research of relevance to society and social problems, as a society we often look to them to use their capacity to provide that service.

Sources of funding for CRPS's activities. The funding that CRPS receives also seems to play a role in the activities that the center engages in. The funding has shaped the center's development of its guiding rationale and its research.

The center's sources of funding affects its guiding rationale in two ways. First, when the center first submitted its application for funding to a major government funding source, the center stated what its guiding rationale and focus for its work would be; thus, to some extent, the work the center engages in is bound by what the center first committed to in its funding application. According to the center's director, this matters in an ongoing manner:

To some extent… those decisions were made when we put forward our application to [federal funding source] to be a [grantee]. We laid out what our commitments would be and then we felt like that was implicitly a contract.

So the center views its funding application as somewhat binding and thus, operates based on the idea that its guiding rationale will be what the center originally proposed to the funder.

Second, because that major funding source came from a government entity, the center believes that it has a commitment to using taxpayer money in the capacity that the center proposed. According to the center's director:

> *This is taxpayer money and they said, "We're gonna put our money on this," and we had to deliver on that. And in some cases I think we've done a good job of delivering on what we committed to delivering and in other cases it hasn't been as good as I like.*

Thus, the center is bound to adhere to the commitments it made when it agreed to accept taxpayer money from the government funding source.

In addition to impacting the center's guiding rationale, the center's sources of funding also shape the center's research in particular. This is especially relevant for the types of research projects the center can carry out. The center is able to work on projects for which it gets funding. One of the center's research associates shared how funding affects center projects:

> *So that's where the direction – for my work – is pushed by, where do we actually have the money for? Like there are some interesting things we could do with the [state] Poverty Measure, but right now it's all self-funded and they don't have external funding. So it's harder to spend time on that without the money to actually back it up. So that's why my focus has been less on that since the money ran out. I still work on that team, but less focus on that, and more focus on these other areas where we have funding.*

Because the center has a research staff that conducts its work, the research staff are able to work on projects for which there is funding. While the center has commitments to studying a variety of topics, only some projects receive funding and thus, those projects get more attention than others with less funding.

Societal conversations about poverty and trends in poverty and antipoverty policy and practice. CRPS's activities are also impacted by broader conversations in society about

poverty, and by trends in poverty and antipoverty policy and practice. This factor shapes the center's guiding rationale and the center's research. This factor shapes the center's guiding rationale because CRPS chose its focus based on its assessment of what types of poverty and inequality research were already being conducted in society. The center's director described how the center chose its guiding rationale based on this assessment:

> *So how do we develop that playbook? Well, I think, you know, we try to step back and say, "Okay, what are the [poverty research centers] delivering and how might we deliver something that isn't already being delivered?" And that's I think – what can we do? What do we have the capacity to do here at [CRPS's university] and what does the country need? And how can we – I mean, I think it's kind of simple…in the sense that it wasn't complicated…So I mean obviously measurement I think is fundamental to advancing basic science on poverty and inequality. If we don't measure it well, then it's hopeless in understanding what's driving it. So I see that as certainly a necessary condition for doing good basic research on poverty and inequality. I guess that would be objective one of a grander sort. Make basic research on poverty and inequality better. Also as I mentioned, it turns out that developing a better measurement infrastructure goes hand in hand with better program evaluation.*

Though there are many organizations in the United States that are studying poverty and inequality and working to address poverty and inequality, the country still does not have a great infrastructure for measuring poverty and inequality; thus, CRPS decided that developing that infrastructure would be its focus.

In addition to shaping the center's guiding rationale, broader societal conversations and

trends in poverty and antipoverty policy and practice also shape the center's research. As described previously, much of the center's research focuses on the study of intergenerational mobility. This focus is shaped by a number of societal conversations and foci. According to one center research associate:

> *There was determined a need to look at and understand equality of opportunity, and whether essentially intergenerational mobility has declined. There's been a lot of discussion of it, but not enough data. So they were talking about ways to study intergenerational mobility, and they decided that the best way is to use existing data resources.*

Thus, in society at large, people have been discussing intergenerational mobility, but the data have not been developed to allow us to study intergenerational mobility. The center therefore, views this as a driver for the research it conducts. Further highlighting the importance of the topic, the center's director referenced President Obama's discussion of mobility in his State of the Union addresses:

> *…last several State of the Union addresses President Obama has openly worried about a possible decline in mobility in the country. And yet, we're all…troubled that our capacity to measure trend – and you saw that come up, our capacity to measure trend is very compromised because we dropped the ball.*

The urgency of measuring intergenerational mobility is highlighted by the fact that the president of the United States has cited it as an important problem in his State of the Union addresses.

Background of individual actors. CRPS's activities also tend to be shaped by the background of individual actors who play some role in the center. The role of these individuals shapes both the center's research and the center's research dissemination.

The center's research is shaped by the background of its staff and affiliates as well as its intended audience. First, the center is shaped by the background of its director because his ideas guide the work of the center. He is a professor of sociology who has studied issues related to poverty and inequality throughout his career. One of the center's research associates spoke about the important role of the director in guiding the center's work:

> *…[Director], the head of the Center, has a vision of the things he wants to do; then there's also, he is a – I would say a dreamer – and has really big ideas…*

In addition, the center director and the center's two research associates were affiliated with other university-based research centers that are concerned with poverty and inequality. My review of the three individuals' curriculum vitas shows this prior affiliation. In addition, the director and one of the research associates spoke about the role of these centers in their training. The center's director said:

> *And I had founded a center on the study of inequality at [former] University…and was asked to start up a similar center here at [CRPS's university]. And so that's when I decided, much as I loved [other university] and loved that Center, and it is thriving now I should add, much as I loved it I decided to come here. So I've been at work since then.*

Due to his work at the center at his other postsecondary institution, the center director was asked to start CRPS. His background in leading a center with a focus on poverty and inequality inspired the development of the CRPS and its research agenda.

One of the center's research associates stated:

> *…during my PhD I worked at a place called the [former center], which is at the [former university] …It's a think and do tank…But their goal was not to just have*

ideas about what we can do on studies, but to go and implement them. And then they had done a lot of work especially. Low income workers had been a center of focus for other recently because there was a lot of forward thinking work. Also, because it's a strong manufacturing base, so the idea was to try to connect people to the jobs in manufacturing and help in many other ways to attack this problem in low wage – career ladders and other problems to promote upward mobility from bad jobs to good jobs. So I got interested in that.

Because of his PhD job at a center at his former university, one of the research associates became interested in mobility. One of the primary research projects he works on at CRPS is focused on intergenerational mobility. Thus, his training at another center contributed to his background and skills that allow him to carry out his current work.

In addition to shaping the center's research, the background of the center's intended audiences also shapes the center's research dissemination because center research staff disseminates research in a number of forms, depending on the intended audience. The center's primary publication—the magazine described in the "research" and "dissemination" sections, is intended for a broad audience including academics, government officials, individuals in the nonprofit sector, and members of the general public. Because of this intended audience, the center decides to disseminate the content in a magazine format, recognizing that if the center had presented the research in some other format, then this broad audience may not have access. The center's director spoke about this:

I think the need to open up a conversation about poverty and inequality to a wider population than is typically the case. I mean, it turns out that a lot of scholars like [the primary magazine] because it gives them an easy sort of entry into an area

about which they might not know all that much…But then there's just a general readership. It's a more, I think a more educated public that reads [the primary magazine] is not an easy read, but it's much easier than going to the journals. It gives you that easy entry. We also have – that goes out to lots of folks in D.C. and to folks in local government, too. So it's government folks who have difficulty getting the time to read the journals, so this gets them up to speed, gets them up to speed – academics, general public, nonprofit folks tend to be consumers of [the primary magazine]. So that's kind of our public commitment to not just developing measurement infrastructure, but then to disseminate results and come out of that in terms of the general public to know where we stand.

Thus, the center produces its magazine as a way to disseminate research to a broad audience that the center knows cares about the content, but that may not typically have access to the content in the form of academic journals and other mediums.

Another example of this differentiated dissemination is the center's conference that was held in spring 2016. One of the center's research associates spoke about this:

We're going to be talking, in part, to the research community to get them interested and help – essentially help motivate why we need to do this. But there will also be people from foundations, and I believe people from Congress have been invited as well. So there was the Ryan-Murray bill on policy based program evaluation; I think a couple people have been invited from that; and then people who will be on that commission. So that's the sort of outreach we're doing right now for that project. Is essentially saying, "Look, these are the possibilities of what we can do if we get enough money to actually complete the project; and if

we're successful, these are all the sorts of things we can do.

Thus, the center chose to disseminate some of its current research in this conference format in order to garner support from the audience which included researchers who could use the data infrastructure, funders who could fund CRPS projects, and some policymakers who could use the results of data analyses for their decision-making.

In sum, there are various factors that appear to shape the work of the Center for Research on Poverty in Society. Those factors include its institutional setting, its sources of funding, societal conversations about poverty and trends in poverty and antipoverty policy and practice, and the background of individuals who play a role in the center. These factors shape a variety of aspects of the center's work, including its guiding rationale, its research, and its research dissemination.

Chapter Four Summary

In this chapter, I presented findings from my study of the activities and contextual factors which shape the activities of the Center for Research on Poverty in Society. CRPS is largely concerned with developing an infrastructure for the study of poverty and inequality in the United States. To that end, the center conducts and supports a wide variety of research. Most of the research the center conducts is quantitative in nature and focuses on poverty and inequality measurement. The center supports however, research utilizing a variety of methods and focusing on a variety of topics. The center disseminates its research through a variety of mediums including online publications, conferences, and seminars. The center carries out a variety of activities to support scholars with an interest in studying poverty and inequality such as offering degree programs on-campus and a free poverty course online and providing funding through fellowships and grants. The center implements a few activities to facilitate collaborations among

individuals concerned with studying and addressing poverty such as working with individuals from government agencies to gather data for CRPS's studies, and such as working with individuals at a foundation in the state to develop a plan for addressing poverty and inequality in the state. Finally, my study found that a range of contextual factors shape CRPS's activities such as institutional setting, sources of funding, and the background of individuals who play a role in the center's activities. In the following chapter, I will describe findings related to the Regional Poverty Research Center's activities and contextual factors shaping those activities.

Chapter 5: Findings: Regional Poverty Research Center

In this chapter, I will describe how the Regional Poverty Research Center (RPRC) enacts its commitment to helping social science researchers, policymakers, practitioners in a variety of fields such as education and social work, and to some extent, the broad United States public, to understand the reality of different aspects of poverty, and to consider how a variety of public policies, social programs, contextual factors, and individual actions, can both contribute to the pervasiveness of poverty, and contribute to the dismantling of poverty. Largely, the RPRC does this by facilitating partnerships among individuals concerned with addressing poverty and other social problems. The organization of this chapter follows the organization of chapter 4, which focused on the activities of CRPS. First, I will describe RPRC's guiding rationale that seems to shape much of its work. Second, I will share the profile of research RPRC conducts and supports. Third, I will discuss RPRC's research dissemination. Fourth, I will detail RPRC's activities to train and support researchers. Fifth, I will describe RPRC's activities to facilitate research-policy-practice partnerships. Sixth, and finally, I will discuss contextual and other factors that seem to shape RPRC's work.

Table 5.1 displays a summary of the findings I will present in this chapter, outlining RPRC's guiding rationale, research, dissemination, training and support activities, and partnership facilitation activities, and contextual factors which shape its work.

Table 5.1

Summary of Findings: How the Regional Poverty Research Center Aims to Inform Antipoverty Policy and Practice

Guiding Rationale	Facilitate partnerships among individuals concerned with studying and addressing poverty who are located in settings such as university-based research centers, nonprofit organizations, and government
Characteristics of Research	• **Topical**: various, with an emphasis on questions that benefit researcher, practitioner, and policymaker communities • **Methodological**: quantitative and qualitative • **Participating researchers**: university faculty, graduate students, and community partners

Table 5.1 (cont.)	
Research Dissemination	• **Methods**: RPRC website; seminars, roundtables, and research-policy-practice conferences; condensed book and articles publication, and conversation series publication • **Intended audiences**: leadership and staff at local nonprofit organizations and government agencies; other poverty researchers
Activities to Support and Train Researchers	• Research-policy-practice relationship grants • Academic seminars and policy roundtables
Activities to Facilitate Research-Policy-Practice Partnerships	• Grants which require collaboration among researchers, policymakers, and practitioners • Policy roundtables • Poverty summit • Conversation publication series
Contextual and Other Factors Shaping Center's Activities	• **Institutional setting**: public university • **Source of funding**: local foundation grant • **Societal conversations/trends in poverty and antipoverty policy and practice**: advocacy for research to inform policy and practice in society • **Background of center actors**: director's graduate training at federally-funded center; center affiliates' prior training at poverty research centers

Convening Concerned Organizations and Individuals to Collaborate

The Regional Poverty Research Center (RPRC) is primarily concerned with facilitating partnerships between people who are concerned with addressing poverty. This rationale will be the the rationale that I use as a lens for understanding the center's current work. However, it is important to note that for the first few years after its establishment, RPRC had a different focus.

At its founding in the first decade of the twentieth century, the Regional Poverty Research Center was primarily concerned with conducting research, disseminating research, supporting scholars, and connecting with other poverty research centers in the United States. The center's current director supported this sentiment, stating:

> *But the early few years our audience was the academic community, and the main focus of the center was creating a community of scholars and reaching out to other scholars mostly nationwide and participating in the network of…poverty centers – and engaging with other researchers who were at peer institutions. It*

was the people who were focused most heavily on research.

The current director's words are supported by the evidence from the center's application for its original major funding source. The application stated that the center staff and its affiliates were uniquely positioned to study poverty's causes, consequences, and solutions, in the region in which the center is located.

The center shifted its focus for a number of reasons, but the primary reason, as suggested in each of the four interviews I conducted with current and former center staff, was that when the center applied to renew its funding with the original major funding source, the center's renewal was not granted and thus, the center had to rethink its focus. I will discuss the role of funding in the center's activities in more depth in a following section focused on contextual and other factors shaping the centers' work; however, here, I highlight the importance of funding in the words of the center's current director:

> *We secured funding from this foundation to fund our first two cohorts of students. Part of that work was hearing what the foundation wanted. What they really saw value in was having more engagement between researchers at the university and scholars here – and practitioners and policy makers in the community. The program officer said, "This is part of our capacity building mission. We want to make the nonprofits and the policy actors in our world better users of information and have them think more in terms of what's evidence and knowledge."…So that, in some ways, represented a real shift from the [original major federal funding source] that was more research for other researchers.*

Partly as a result of a shift in funding, the RPRC decided to focus more on a policymaker and practitioner audience than on an academic audience, which was its prior focus.

The RPRC now primarily concerns itself with facilitating relationships between people concerned with addressing poverty, largely conceptualized by the center as "researchers", "practitioners", and "policymakers". While this focus seemed to be largely shaped by the center's shift in funding, this commitment actually seems to be well-aligned with the commitments of many individuals associated with the center. For example, when the center's founding director first came to RPRC's university, she had already engaged in years of work concerned with using research to inform policy and program decision-making. It was generally an important, central concept to her:

> *...I was also doing a lot of work with various advocacy groups or labor unions, folks who were trying to influence policy primarily in national policy. Sometimes in states, but mostly this was at the national level. Trying to get this research and these counter narratives into the conversation...That's a lot of what I was trying to do in my own work was to publish, do my academic and science, my social science, and then also to be able to do the translational work of sharing that with folks who are actually trying to influence policy and seeing what kinds of information would be useful to provide to the field.*

For the center's founding director, this commitment had always been a part of her work. Thus, while the center initially focused on research, dissemination, and training scholars, and while its shift in focus was largely affected by its change in funding sources, the center now views its focus as an opportunity to enact a commitment that was already important. With this current guiding rationale in mind, the RPRC has a few outcomes it hopes to accomplish by facilitating research-policy-practice relationships.

Proposed outcomes of facilitating research-policy-practice partnerships. The first

outcome the RPRC hopes to achieve by facilitating research-policy-program partnerships is to provide a space for people who work in different sectors to come together and discuss data on social problems and social programs. The center's current director expressed that potential outcome:

> *For instance, we have a small grant we funded with a sociologist who's interested in housing – and folks from the local Public Housing Authority. They've both been coming to our roundtable. I think maybe the Public Housing Authority had actually given a presentation at a roundtable where they were like, "Here's our data. Anyone come play with it and debate?" I know he's also gone out and talked about his research at the housing authorities. Sometimes folks will come to us and say, "Here's my interest. Who can I get in touch with?"*

The events the center organizes become a space for people to come together to discuss data and to hopefully develop ideas out of those discussions.

The center also hopes that its partnership facilitation will result in more robust conversations which convene people with diverse backgrounds and different perspectives to share their ideas on poverty and antipoverty solutions. The center's founding director stated:

> *It became also very clear, and painfully clear, that all of these conferences I was going to were about "welfare reform" and the behavior of mostly poor and women of color and immigrant women. The people who were at the front of the room talking, we were lucky if there was a woman on the panel. It was always white men. It just became increasingly painfully clear the disconnect between who was the authority, who had authority to speak on these issues, and who was affected…How do we change? How do we create the conditions in which we can*

have a more diverse…group of people who are in this leadership role and privileged role of being academic researchers and teachers? Especially on issues of poverty and inequality where it seems so important that you've got to have the full range of voices if you're going to come up with any kind of solution, any kind of insight.

This perspective was seconded by another interviewee—a retired executive director of an affordable housing organization who chaired one of the center's roundtables. She stated:

One of the things I really like about the concept of the [RPRC] here is that connection between practitioners – the connection that's probably missing is the people who actually are experiencing the challenges of poverty or affordability or criminal justice or education…In fact, the last housing roundtable we had, the speaker was talking to us about his experiences actually getting to know and talking to people who had been chronically homeless…So that's one of the things I think is the next step to me. Now we're getting the university people with the people who are actually doing the work. We're not isolating ourselves in either of those arenas. So now how do we embrace the people who know those challenges firsthand?

For her, expanding conversations and coming to good conclusions about good policy means that people experiencing the challenges that are often the target of policy must be a part of the conversations and the partnerships.

Like the Center for Research on Poverty in Society, the Regional Poverty Research Center does not have a formal way of evaluating its attainment of its proposed outcomes or objectives. However, individuals I spoke with have some thoughts on how to assess this

attainment. One way is that the center collects feedback from people who participate in its activities. The center's program director stated:

> *…we've surveyed and asked people, "Was this useful? What do you like about them? Are we valuable? Any suggestions for improving them?" So we get that feedback…I think one thing I take as a measure of how well the roundtables are working is people keep coming back…You know, the criminal justice and deputy sheriff, and the office of the prosecutor – they have other things to do, and they take time out of their day to come. So we see that as something that we value.*

Thus, the center is able to conclude that its activities are valuable because attendees state they are satisfied and because they continue to attend.

Though the center hopes that its work will achieve some important aims, the center recognizes that the outcomes of its work are hard to measure. The center's current director expressed this perspective, stating:

> *The dirty secret is we mostly make claims. I'm of two minds on this. One is I've taught evaluation classes and I'm thinking what is our counterfactual? What would the world be like if we weren't here? But that's also really hard to know without a counterfactual. The other thing is thinking about the work we do. I like to say we strengthen networks, but any good network has redundancies in it. We'll often connect people who already had another connection, but we'll do the connecting that got them in the same room at the same time or got them engaged in a small project together. It's not like folks wouldn't have known each other. We're kind of strengthening a network. How we measure that impact – quite frankly, what shows up in our grant reports are often anecdotes about that.*

Thus, while the center believes in the work that it does, it feels that it is a part of a larger network of activities that are taking place that may connect people and encourage their collaboration.

Setting RPRC's guiding rationale and agenda. As discussed in the opening of this section, the center's guiding rationale and agenda are largely shaped based on commitments that the center's leadership has made to funders, which reflect commitments that the center has to facilitating research-policy-practice partnerships. At the center's founding, the founding director asked a group of faculty who were already on campus studying poverty, inequality, and other social issues, to join her in developing the center. Thus, early on, the input of those individuals shaped what the center looked like. On this matter, the center's current director stated:

> *There were already some researchers at the university who were meeting to discuss topics of inequality and when the call for funding for [major funding source] came out, the group of individuals involved at [our university], including [founding director], decided to apply… I helped write their original grant application. I don't think I was named on it other than as a possible affiliate, but I contributed to the visioning. And then when it came here, I was on the internal executive board for a few years…*

Another faculty member who played a role in the center's early development supported this idea, stating:

> *So, when [founding director] was here and this announcement came out, [founding director] really led the effort, but I was obviously one of the go-to people. It was a smaller group of poverty and sort of social policy people back then, but enough of us that we were able to put together a decent proposal. I really give [founding director] the credit for taking the lead on that…*

Thus, the founding director played a significant role in the center's early development.

Now, the center's current leadership (director and research director) plays a significant role in setting the center's agenda, based on the guiding rationale. The center's internal advisory board also plays a role in setting the center's agenda by drawing on faculty affiliates from each unit which houses the center who can meet to discuss the center's work. Regarding the internal board, the current director stated:

> *And then we have an internal advisory board where we draw on those affiliates to give us guidance, help us a bit with fundraising in their units, and getting support from their deans. They help us review small grant applications or student fellowship applications when we're able to offer those. There is definitely a little bit of work involved in that.*

In addition to the internal advisory board which guides its work, the center plans to establish an external advisory board consisting of local individuals on the policy-practice side of the research-policy-practice partnerships. The current director stated:

> *…We realize now that we're more community facing we need to have some community champions and advisors who play a similar role. I suspect we may go to a smaller internal advisory board and then have a parallel external board that are people who are executive directors at local foundations or active in the practice community, who can give us ideas and feedback and connections for our community work.*

With the center is shifting its focus, it anticipates that a greater incorporation of involvement from individuals external to the university may be in line with that focus.

Ultimately, the Regional Poverty Research Center is concerned with bringing together

concerned individuals to study poverty and related social issues and to discuss possible solutions for addressing such issues. This guiding rationale is different from the center's original guiding rationale which focused more on conducting and dissemination academic research. In the following section, I will describe RPRC's research activities and how they relate to the center's guiding rationale.

Translational Research for Academic and Practitioner Audiences

The Regional Poverty Research Center is primarily concerned with bringing together concerned individuals to discuss poverty and inequality and to conceptualize and hopefully implement solutions for addressing poverty and inequality. To this end, the center supports different types of research. The center's director describes RPRC's focus:

> *So that's an example of what we're doing now. It's much more of a service orientation. We are supporting some research now, but it's small grants for [RPRC's university] faculty who are working on things with community partners. I'm currently trying to raise money so we can keep doing this. In some ways, it's very foundational, behind-the-scenes work. We're not talking to individual people in poverty. We're not delivering intervention programming. We're not publishing research. Our affiliates do, but the center doesn't. We're this infrastructure, communications, and networking membrane. That's how we've shifted over time.*

However, many of the center's activities related to supporting research are better described in following sections on training and supporting scholars, and facilitating partnerships. Given this focus of RPRC's work, this section on RPRC's research will not be as extensive as the CRPS section on research. In this section, I will discuss the center's general philosophy regarding the types of research activities it supports, characteristics of the center's two main research

publications, characteristics of researchers who guide much of the center's work, and the center's espoused model of knowledge production.

Types of research RPRC supports. The center generally supports research conducted by researchers in a variety of disciplines, who use a variety of research methods. According to the center's founding director, this orientation is intentional:

> *My intuition was that what we wanted to do is create a cross disciplinary group of faculty colleagues who could be the backbone of the center and do that kind of mentoring to bring younger faculty and graduate students into the work…I already knew somebody in the [school of public policy]. I had a colleague there in public affairs who I knew would be interested and networked to find somebody in sociology and somebody in geography…My instinct was to find an anchorperson in these different disciplines to create a core of senior faculty and then to build the research agenda of the center on their existing research…To me, it had the strength of bringing disciplinary diversity, which I think was important, and creating connection without building an additional separate research based research group.*

Thus, from the beginning, the center did not conduct research of its own but rather, supported faculty in a variety of disciplines who were affiliated with the center. Review of the center's website shows that this pattern continues. Faculty affiliates come from a variety of departments including: sociology, public policy, geography, social work, law, public health, history, landscape architecture, education, American ethnic studies, and political science.

RPRC has two primary research publications. The largest is a magazine in which RPRC publishes condensed versions of research articles that have been previously published in

academic journals or books. The second is a paper series in which the center facilitates conversations between scholars with research-in-progress, and practitioners who can inform those scholars' work. In the following sections, I will describe characteristics of the research published in the magazine and the paper series by highlighting how these publications discuss sources of poverty, causes of poverty, consequences of poverty, solutions for poverty, and who should play a role in addressing poverty. Additionally, I will describe the methodological approaches used by the authors of these articles. Each of these characteristics are conceptualized in the same way that they were conceptualized in my analysis of the articles in CRPS's primary publication.

Topical focus of research in RPRC's primary publications. For this publication analysis, I include fifty single articles and papers. These are the fifty submissions which were included in either of the two publications I described above which focus on poverty and inequality. In total, RPRC has published fifty five articles in its magazine series. I included forty four of those in this analysis. In total, RPRC has published six papers in its conversation series. I included all six. Thus, this analysis focuses on those fifty articles and papers.

Sources of poverty. In table 5.2, I display findings from my analysis of how each of the fifty articles and papers discusses the "source" of poverty. For locus, the majority of the entries (n=43, 84%) discusses poverty as an individual issue. For the level, the majority of the entries (n=32, 64%) discusses poverty as a national issue. Still, 34% discuss poverty as a local issue. Finally, for the basis, 86% discuss poverty as a contemporary issue.

Table 5.2

Sources of poverty in primary publications of Regional Poverty Research Center, N=50

	Frequency	**Percentage**
Locus		
Individual	42	84.00%
Society	5	10.00%
Both	3	6.00%

Table 5.2 (cont.)		
Level		
National	32	64.00%
Local	17	34.00%
Both	1	2.00%
Basis		
Historical	1	2.00%
Contemporary	43	86.00%
Both	6	12.00%

Causes of poverty. Findings related to the causes of poverty in RPRC's primary publications are presented in table 5.3. Of the fifty articles and papers included in this analysis, twenty-two (44%) discuss some individual cause of poverty. Of those twenty-two, the most commonly-cited cause is "interpersonal discrimination", with ten (20%) of the entries discussing that cause. Fifteen (30%) of the articles and papers discussed some societal cause of poverty. Of those fifteen, the most commonly-cited cause was location (n=14, 28%). Only one (2%) of the fifty articles and papers discussed some other cause of poverty, citing a biological cause.

Table 5.3

Frequency and percentage of articles citing cause of poverty RPRC's primary publications

	Frequency	Percentage
Individual (n=22)		
Interpersonal Discrimination	10	20.00%
Lack of training and skills needed to obtain jobs	7	14.00%
Family structure	8	16.00%
One's cultural practices	4	8.00%
Societal (n=15)		
Policy to deny economic advancement	0	0.00%
System of industrial capitalism	1	2.00%
Changes in the economy	0	0.00%
Location	14	28.00%
Other (n=0)		
Fatalistic	0	0.00%
Biological	1	2%.00%

Consequences of poverty. Findings on the discussion of the consequences of poverty are presented in table 5.4. Thirty-six articles and papers discussed some individual consequence of poverty. Of those, the greatest percentage (n=28, 56.00%) discussed economic consequences. The next greatest percentage (n=15, 30%) discussed developmental consequences. Four articles and papers discussed societal consequences of poverty. Two (4.00%) of those mentioned lack of contributions to the economy and two mentioned unfair use of government assistance.

Table 5.4

Frequency and percentage of articles citing consequence of poverty RPRC's primary publications

	Frequency	Percentage
Individual (n=36)		
Developmental	15	30.00%
Educational	6	12.00%
Behavioral	7	14.00%
Economic	28	56.00%
Societal (n=4)		
Lack of contributions to economy	2	4.00%
Unfair use of government assistance	2	4.00%

Solutions for poverty. Table 5.5 displays findings related to discussion of solutions for poverty in the fifty articles and papers analyzed for RPRC. Of the fifty articles and papers, thirty-

two (64%) discussed some individual solution for poverty. Of that thirty-two, the greatest percentage (26%) cited encouraging individuals to engage in (or not engage in) certain behaviors as an individual solution. The next greatest percentage (22%) cited social services such as those offered at clinics as an individual solution. Eleven (22%) articles and papers discussed some societal solution for poverty. Five (10%) of the articles and papers cited the most-commonly discussed solution—creation of networks and resources to fight for political and economic rights in capitalist society.

Table 5.5

Frequency and percentage of articles citing solution for poverty RPRC's primary publications

	Frequency	**Percentage**
Individual (n=32)		
Education and work training	8	16.00%
Unemployment insurance, subsidies, cash assistance, and tax credits, housing vouchers, etc.	7	14.00%
Social services such as those offered at clinics	11	22.00%
Encourage individuals to engage in (or not engage in) certain behaviors	13	26.00%
Societal (n=11)		
Restructure the relationship between our economy and government	0	0.00%
Networks and resources to fight for political and economic rights in capitalist society	5	10.00%
Create jobs	0	0.00%
Increase wages	2	4.00%
Eliminate discrimination	3	6.00%
Address racial segregation	1	2.00%

Who should play a role in addressing the issue of poverty? Table 5.6 displays findings related to discussion of who should play a role in addressing poverty. Of the fifty articles and papers, thirty (60%) suggested that individuals should play a role in addressing poverty. Thirty-one (62%) suggested that government should play a role in addressing poverty. And just five (10%) suggested that business should play a role in addressing poverty.

Table 5.6

Who should play a role in addressing the issue of poverty in RPRC's primary publications

	Frequency	**Percentage**
Individuals	30	60.00%
Government	31	62.00%
Business	5	10.00%

Methodological approach of the articles. Table 5.7 displays findings regarding methodological approach of the articles and papers. Each of the articles and papers analyzed for RPRC discussed the author(s)' methodological approach. The most commonly-used methodological approach was quantitative, with forty-three (86%) of the articles and papers using quantitative methods. Only five (10%) used qualitative methods. And only two (4%) used a mixed-methods approach.

Table 5.7

Methodological approaches in RPRC's primary publications

	Frequency	**Percentage**
Quantitative	43	86.00%
Qualitative	5	10.00%
Mixed	2	4.00%

The findings in this section present an interesting profile of the articles published in RPRC's primary publication since its first edition in the late 2000's. I presented findings on the fifty articles and papers which met my criteria. Excluded articles were "research briefs" which reviewed research published elsewhere, editor's notes, articles focused on poverty outside of the United States or comparisons between countries, and articles that did not specifically discuss poverty.

Based on my review of poverty research literature, I assumed that the majority of the articles in this publication would focus on 1) poverty as an individual, national, and contemporary issue, 2) individual causes of poverty, 3) societal consequences of poverty, 4) individual solutions for poverty, and 5) individuals as responsible for addressing poverty. Some of the findings followed the trend I expected, and others followed a trend different from what I expected.

The findings on the sources of poverty followed the trend I expected. For the locus, I

expected a greater percentage to cite poverty as an individual issue than as a societal issue. As shown, 10.00% of articles cited poverty as a societal issue, compared to 84.00% which cited poverty as an individual issue. This confirmed my assumption. For the level, I expected most articles to cite poverty as a national issue, and they did, with 64.00% citing poverty as only a national issue. And as I expected, the greatest percentage (86.00%) of articles cited poverty as a contemporary issue, compared to the percentage (2.00%) which cited poverty as a historical issue.

The findings on the causes of poverty followed the trend I expected. The greatest percentage of articles which cited a cause for poverty cited an individual cause (n=22, 44%). Of those causes, the most commonly-cited cause was interpersonal discrimination (n=10, 20%). Over one quarter of the articles and papers (n=15, 30%) cited a societal cause, with fourteen of that fifteen discussing location as a societal cause.

The findings on the consequences of poverty did not follow the trend I expected. The greatest percentage of articles which cited a consequence for poverty cited an individual consequence (72%). Of those consequences, economic consequences were cited in the greatest percentage (28%) of articles. Fifteen (30%) articles and papers discussed developmental consequences for poverty. Just four (8%) articles discussed a societal consequence.

The findings on solutions for poverty followed the trend I expected. The greatest percentage of articles (n=32, 64%) which cited a solution for poverty cited an individual solution. Of those solutions, the most cited solution (n=13, 26%), discussed encouraging individuals to engage in (or not engage in) certain behaviors as a solution to poverty. Eleven (22%) articles cited a societal solution for poverty. Of those solutions, the most cited solution (n=5, 10%) was creating networks and resources to fight for political and economic rights in a

capitalist society as a societal solution for poverty.

The findings on responsible party did not follow the trend I expected. Almost equal percentages (60% and 62% respectively), discussed individuals, and government, as responsible for addressing the issue of poverty. Only five articles and papers (10%) discussed business as responsible.

The sources of poverty discussed in the fifty articles and papers were what I expected—the locus discussed was societal, the level discussed was national, and the basis discussed was contemporary. Similar to what I expected, the greatest percentage of articles cited individual causes and individual solutions for poverty. Different from what I expected, the greatest percentage of articles discussed individual consequences for poverty. And unlike I expected, the greatest percentage of articles cited both individuals and the government as the parties that should play a role in addressing poverty.

Characteristics of researchers guiding RPRC's activities and participating in RPRC's publications. There are a few relevant characteristics of researchers I will discuss: institutional home, role and status, disciplinary background, and history of work on, and interest in studying poverty. For most of this discussion, I will highlight characteristics of the individuals who play a role in guiding RPRC's work. For some of this discussion, I will also add characteristics of researchers whose articles and papers are published in RPRC's primary publications.

Institutional home of researchers conducting RPRC's projects and publications. All of the individuals guiding RPRC's projects are located at university where RPRC is located.

Of the fifty articles and papers, a majority (64%) were first-authored by a researcher at the university which houses the RPRC. Findings related to this are presented in figure 5.1. The

next largest group of first authors (26%) occupies some role in another postsecondary institution.

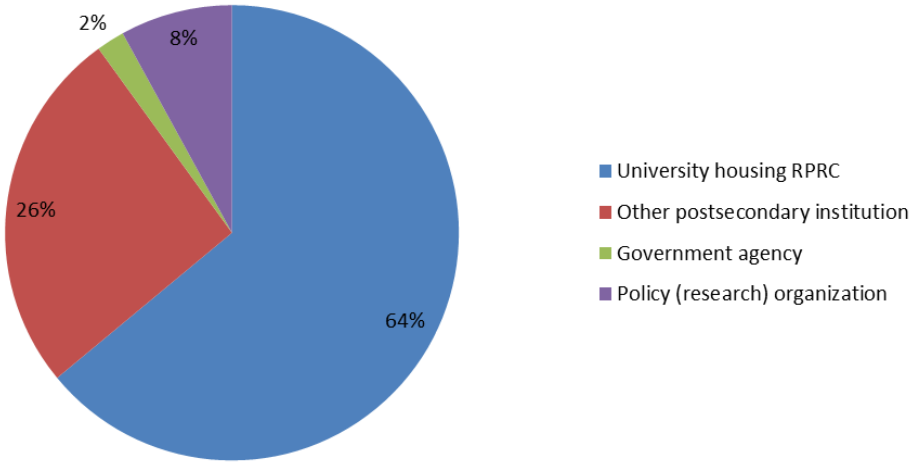


Figure 5.1. Institutional home of authors in RPRC's primary publication

Role and status of researchers conducting RPRC's projects and publications.

Four of the five individuals I interviewed at RPRC play a role in guiding RPRC's projects. Those include the center's director, the center's founding director, the center's research director, and a faculty affiliate who is also a member of RPRC's internal advisory board.

Findings for this section are displayed in figure 5.2. Of the fifty articles and papers analyzed, a large majority (84%) were authored by individuals who are faculty at postsecondary institutions. Only two percent were first-authored by students. Fourteen percent were first-authored by individuals occupying some other role such as research staff at universities who are not considered "faculty", and researchers at policy research institutes.

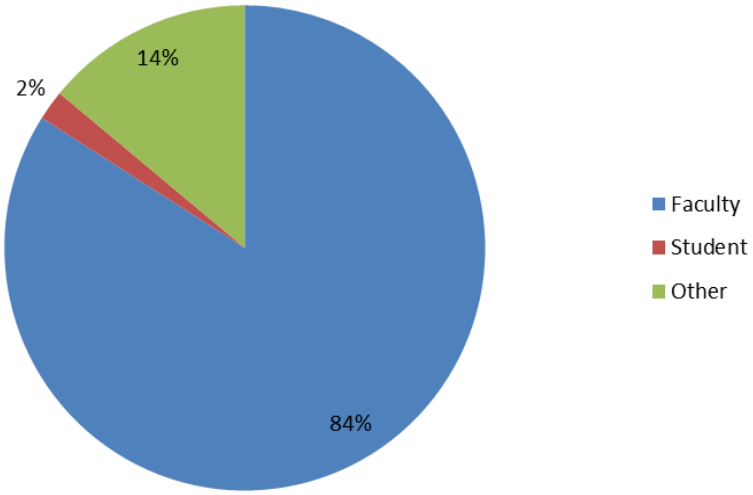


Figure 5.2. Role of first author of article in RPRC's primary publication

Disciplinary background of researchers guiding RPRC's projects. As mentioned previously, RPRC does not conduct its own research, but members of the center's staff and internal board play a significant role in shaping the work of the center (as discussed in the section on the center's guiding rationale). After reviewing the center's website including curriculum vitas of these individuals, as well as interviewing them, a few themes related to their disciplinary background became apparent.

First, three of the four individuals are housed in disciplinary settings which privilege application of knowledge. For example, the center's current director is a professor of social work and received her PhD in a social policy program. The center's founding director is a professor of social work and received her PhD in a social work program. And one of the faculty affiliates who is also a member of the center's internal board is a professor of public affairs who received his PhD in economics. According to the center's director, individuals with these types of disciplinary backgrounds privilege the application of knowledge:

Some of it was definitely reinforced by being in social work, which is an applied

school. It's different than being in a discipline. Lots of poverty researchers are economists or sociologists, where they may have very applied interests but their intellectual tradition is largely theoretical. The intellectual tradition of social work or public affairs and public health is always about engagement and the bulk of our work as a school is training masters level practitioners – people who will go out and do work.

Thus, the center's director believes that the disciplinary background of the schools from which the center's leadership is drawn, is an important part of the story regarding the work the center supports.

The remaining individual I spoke with is a PhD student in sociology. Thus, her disciplinary training is not specifically in an area of work that at its core largely privileges applied work, but her history of work (discussed in the following section) shapes her orientation to her work in the center.

History of work on, and interest in studying inequality and poverty of researchers guiding RPRC's projects. Each of the four individuals I interviewed who play a role in guiding RPRC's work expressed a history of studying and working to address poverty. Interestingly, the experiences they had which led them to this work vary.

Interest in and history of studying poverty. Two of the RPRC leadership whom I interviewed became interested in the issue of poverty prior to attending graduate school and were encouraged to attend graduate school based on that interest. The center's founding director shared her story:

I think I would say I came into the work through my work in community work in the first place. I started working in college and post-college with Head Start.

Fortunately, it was a really good well run Head Start program. I became very convinced it was possible to do programs. I don't want to say interventions, but actually did have an equalizing effect. I was very impressed by the Head Start program and that it was doing what it set out to do. There was a real need for young kids who were going to start school less prepared maybe than kids who had lots of advantages and lots of other kinds of resources. That, actually, was the beginning of my questions about research to policy too because I thought it was pretty clear that the science was good and the model was good. But for some reason, it was not 100 percent available. Every kid who needed it didn't get to go to Head Start. I actually started thinking then about how do you get good ideas and good research into policy. I did that. I did some other work in different areas. I worked for the state of [RPRC's state] on community development and early education programs. All of that led me to go back and get my first graduate degree—a master's degree from the Kennedy School at Harvard looking at the public policy side.

Thus, she began working in a Head Start program after college and believed that this program was a quality program and should be widely-available. Her recognition that it was not widely-available is what encouraged her interest in the relationship between social research and social policy and programs.

The center's current director had a similar experience, whereby she had questions about social programs she was observing and how research had informed or could inform the design of particular social policies and programs:

I ended up in grad school because I was a teacher and I wasn't very good at it. I

was looking for something else to do. Fifth graders are not my focal audience. I was also teaching in Chicago in the mid-'90s when welfare reform was really affecting the lives of the kids I taught. I was in a low income working class school, but we had a number of kids who were coming out of public housing whose moms had probably been on welfare before. They had other people in their family who worked. I was seeing those changes and shifts and seeing Chicago was starting to tear down its public housing at that point and how that shifted. I wanted to have a better conceptual understanding of that and to think about how to address those things.

She was a middle school teacher who observed her students experiences in light of changes to social policy in the U.S. in the 1990's. She wanted to find a way to study what she was observing.

A third individual stated that his interest in studying poverty actually came as a result of employment he found as a PhD student:

So, I'm an economist, got my doctorate in 1976 from Berkeley, but before I got my doctorate actually, my wife was studying social work in [mid-west city], my brand-new wife, and so I went to [that city] looking for work, I was sort of ABD, and found the full-time junior research position at the [other poverty research center], which then and always has been a fantastic place for poverty research. It was interdisciplinary, it was exciting. Way back then, there were some of the early negative income tax experiments were sort of being housed and analyzed there. So, it was very exciting and it got me hooked. I thought I was going to go into some form of labor economics before I came to [that city], but the folks there

were terrific mentors and so that set my career path really; it was fundamental to my career path.

He was initially studying labor economics and when he obtained a job at another poverty research center, his focus narrowed to poverty and work.

Finally, the fourth individual became interested in poverty as an issue as a youth traveling to different places and seeing different ways of life:

We also lived overseas for a while, so seeing different models of how the world works and being very aware of inequality. We lived in North Africa and even as a young child it was hard not to notice that things were being distributed very differently – some people were very poor. Some people were very rich. Americans living abroad – you have a very different lifestyle from people we saw every day. It was just very hard to ignore. So I think I had a built-in awareness of inequality from a young age and I think it just, where does that come from?

Thus, she became aware of the issue of inequality by becoming aware of her own economic and national privilege relative to others.

As evidenced in this section, each of the four individuals guiding RPRC's work who I interviewed expressed the root of their interest in questioning poverty and ultimately studying it academically. Two individuals also discussed their history of working to address poverty which motivates their current work.

History of work to address poverty and inequality. Both the center's founding director and the center's current research director expressed a history of working to address poverty that motivates their current work. The center's founding director worked in a variety of government and nonprofit settings both delivering services and advocating for particular types of policy and

programming:

> *I think it came out of – so in my own personal bio I had a very middle class and privileged upbringing…I think I was very compelled by a sense of fairness in a sense that there was profound unfairness that needed to be addressed. I flew into Head Start because I was just doing political work in community organizing on other issues and…I was very convinced that if we could help kids when they're really young then that would make a huge difference long-term and that the earlier the intervention and the earlier we tried to equalize and create more fairness earlier in kids' lives we could do that the better… I went to work for the State of Washington, which oversaw and distributed the Community Block Grant and some early education stuff. I realized that within that bureaucracy they felt like they didn't have power…*

Thus, she had worked in various settings implementing early childhood programs which she felt could be beneficial for addressing inequality by providing resources to youth at an early age.

The center's research director discussed her role in assessing the effectiveness of antipoverty programs:

> *I had worked on social policy prior to coming back to graduate school, so I had a background on welfare reform research and worked in Washington, D.C. on national and state level with their policies, and also in California on some of those evaluations of state welfare programs.*

Thus, she has a history of studying the effectiveness of antipoverty programs.

Espoused model of knowledge production in RPRC's work. Like with CRPS, I believe it is important to discuss the model of knowledge production that is apparent in RPRC's

work. There are two features I will discuss—the interdisciplinarity of the work and the dispersed origins of ideas for the work the center supports.

As discussed earlier in this section, the work that RPRC supports is interdisciplinary. According to the center's founding director, this was intentional, to allow the center to draw from the expertise of individuals in a variety of disciplines. This idea is supported by a review of the center's website which describes the disciplinary backgrounds of faculty affiliates, students who received funding from the center for research, and a list of poverty "experts" the center shares on the website. These lists span a variety of disciplines including sociology, public policy, geography, social work, law, public health, history, landscape architecture, education, American ethnic studies, and political science.

In addition to RPRC supporting researchers in a variety of disciplines, RPRC also has a model in which the center does not originate ideas for research. Because the center does not conduct research of its own, the center focuses on supporting others' research. According to the center's (website) description of the grants it provides, this means that the center does not have pre-determined topics it wishes for others to study, but rather, that it requires that individuals whose research it supports conduct work that involves partnerships between individuals in academia and individuals working in local organizations concerned with social issues such as poverty.

In this section, I have described characteristics of the research conducted and supported by the Regional Poverty Research Center. I have discussed topical characteristics of the center's research, methodological characteristics of the center's research, characteristics of researchers who conduct this research, and the center's espoused model of knowledge production. As shared, center staff members do not conduct research through the center, but conduct research on their

own. In addition, the center supports research through providing grants (described in more depth in the following section on training and support), and the center publishes research of scholars with an interest in poverty. This research that the center supports is often interdisciplinary and uses a variety of research methods. The individuals who conduct the research are primarily faculty at postsecondary institutions, including the university where RPRC is located. The individuals guiding RPRC's work have a history of studying and working to address issues related to poverty and inequality. Finally, RPRC has an espoused model of knowledge production in which ideas for research originate with the research producers who are often the authors of the articles and papers that RPRC publishes. In the following section, I will discuss the research dissemination activities of the Regional Poverty Research Center.

Targeted Dissemination for Discussion Facilitation

The Regional Poverty Research Center uses a few open dissemination strategies to share the research it supports. Through these strategies, the center aims to present research that can start conversations and facilitate collaborations. The intended audiences for this work are various and include researchers in academic settings such as faculty and students, policymakers, and practitioners.

Dissemination strategies. RPRC uses four primary strategies to disseminate research that it supports—its website, its seminars and conferences, its roundtables, and its publications. A review of RPRC's website shows that the center uses the website to disseminate its publications, to share its calendar of activities, and to share lists of its faculty affiliates and research experts. By sharing this information on its website, the center makes the information widely available.

The center's seminars and conferences are a space in which researchers whose work the

center supports can share their work as well as where researchers and practitioners can come together to discuss research. The center's website lists topics of conferences the center has held focused on a number of topics including immigration and labor and economic security. According to the center's research director, the center's most recent conference, held in 2015, focused on bringing together local practitioners, policymakers, and other concerned individuals to hear from poverty researchers about findings from their work. The purpose of that conference was to bring people together who might not otherwise connect to talk about social issues and research related to those issues:

> *We got together 80, 90, 100 local politicians, local policy makers, program managers, executive directors from local non-profits around [the county] and a little bit of representation from the state from the governor's office, from the state representatives' offices, like that. The [conference] was asking the question, "How are we doing?" Let's just have a local check in of how is our response to poverty, how are we doing responding to the needs of our community?" Because we're a poverty center based at the university, the way we did that was focusing on projects – poverty-related projects that were happening and having the researchers present findings, background about the issues, and their findings from their research and then having a local panel and a mix of politicians, practitioners, and non-profit EDs, that type of person, responding to the work. It ended up being a really good event. I think we have – anyway got lots of great comments…So this becomes space to create connections that they wouldn't normally be able to make, to have discussions they wouldn't normally have, and to learn a little bit about – you know we talk about silos in the university – there*

are silos out there too in the world and people are aware of them. So then mix people up, I think people enjoyed it and appreciated it. So we're doing that again this year.

By bringing these individuals together, RPRC hopes to facilitate attendees' asking questions and considering what work remains to be done to address poverty in society. The center is organizing a similar conference to be hosted in 2016.

RPRC's seminars play a similar role, but on a smaller scale. The center's website also includes lists of past seminars and upcoming seminars. At seminars, one researcher from RPRC's university or from other postsecondary institutions across the country visits the RPRC campus and presents his or her research. During my visit to RPRC, I attended a seminar and observed the nature of the activity. The researcher who presented was a faculty member at another university in the country. She shared her work and then opened the space for questions from the audience. Thus, the space was meant to share research findings and facilitate conversations.

RPRC also hosts policy roundtables which are often an extension of its seminars. During my visit to the center, I was able to observe a roundtable. At the roundtable, the researcher who presented at the seminar, as well as another researcher, shared their work briefly and then a faculty affiliate of the center facilitated a conversation among the attendees. The attendees included other faculty at the university, graduate students, and individuals from a variety of local organizations including nonprofit organizations and government agencies. The center's research director described how the roundtables came about and the rationale behind the roundtables:

So when we started those the idea with those as well was to mix academics with practitioners and policy makers. We built on any connections that we already

had. So we started in those areas that had the most academic energy, who were already doing work in areas. So housing was one where we had faculty who were very active on housing research and, okay, some of them had worked with community members already… we've gotten some money to help with capacity building for work with non-profits, so that seemed like a way we could expose people who aren't on campus to the research, help them understand high quality research…to help expose them to that, again, that's not accessible to them because of the barriers of time, and then journal, general perception that's very sensitive. So we came up with the idea…

Thus, the center was interested in bringing local practitioners to campus to gain access to the academic research being conducted by university researchers and affiliates at other universities.

The final dissemination strategy the center uses is two publications in which it presents research of faculty affiliates. The first publication is a magazine in which the center's research director condenses recently-published poverty research. The research director finds research that has been published in an academic journal or book and asks the author if she can condense the text and include it in the center's magazine. The goal is to give people access to new research that is being done and to keep them aware of what people in their field are studying. For local people outside of the university, the research director describes the goal:

…make it accessible enough that people will be able to understand it even if they have no background in either the specific methodology or topic. You know, sort of make it relevant to poverty. And pass those around very broadly…

As the research director described, by condensing the research and presenting it openly on the center's website, the center makes the research accessible to a wide audience.

The second publication is the result of a process. The center's research director describes the publication:

> *...we have researchers take a work in progress. We or they distill their findings into a six- to twelve-page paper, and then we distribute that to a set of respondents who work in the area and practitioners and policy people. Then so we have them read that and then we convene a phone call with the researcher and all those people who read it, and we just facilitate the discussion around – what was interesting about the work? What did you think? Do you have questions? How would this be relevant to your work? Is it relevant to your work? What would be the next step if you were gonna make it relevant? And then we publish a summary of the paper, the shortened paper, and the then the discussion as the "[title]," we call it, for helping just feedback on that process of the research and making it applicable.*

Thus, the center's research director asks a researcher who has work in progress to share his or her paper. The center's research director then shares that paper with local practitioners working in a variety of settings. Once the people who have received the paper read it, the research director facilitates a conversation between the researcher and the practitioner-readers. The center publishes a paper which includes the summary paper and the discussion that came out of it. This process aims to help researchers get feedback on their work from people outside of academia, and for the local practitioners to have access to academic research that might inform their work.

As described, the center has four dissemination strategies aimed at presenting academic research to a practitioner audience and to facilitate conversations among involved individuals. In the following section, I will further describe the center's intended audiences.

Intended audiences. The center's intended audiences vary for its different dissemination strategies. As discussed in the previous section, the center disseminates research on its website, at its conferences and seminars, at its policy roundtables, and in its two publications.

For the website, content is widely-accessible to the public. Anyone can access the center's website and all content on the website including the center's publications, lists of researchers and their work, and calendars for upcoming activities.

For the conferences and seminars, the audiences are various, but include faculty, graduate students, and local practitioners. The center's research affiliate who is also an internal board member spoke about the benefit of the seminars for graduate students:

> *From an educational point of view, doctoral students that come – we had some Master's students as well, but especially doctoral students get to see a wide range of research topics and research methods which generally is good for doctoral education. To some extent then they get to know the players in the field, a subset of them, so it's an early network building for them.*

The center's current director supports the benefit that these seminars have for graduate students and adds that in general, the seminars provide a space for a wider academic community of people such as faculty affiliates who have similar interests:

> *We ideally want affiliates to be engaged in the community – give a talk in our seminar series now and then, refer their students to our seminar. And that's a big part of our model now. Our seminar series is also a doctoral class. It's just a one-credit credit/no credit, but by getting students who sign up and take it, we can help justify our existence. It also creates a cross disciplinary community for students who are interested in this stuff and create some accountability. You have*

to go or else you don't get credit.

Thus, students and faculty are targets for the seminars.

According to the center's research director, the conferences target faculty and individuals who hold leadership roles in local organizations and government:

> *…the idea there is to focus everyone on how well we're doing and to engage the leaders, really the leaders of the organizations and try to get them focused on poverty and then have them, if they want to do something definite…So I think executive directors of non-profits, we had some City Council people or staff, and then people with the County. Let's see, a couple – we had lots of faculty, which was nice. So non-profits, program people from City, County, and some of the politicians.*

The audience is expansive and includes individuals in academic and wide range of individuals in local organizations and policymaking bodies.

The roundtables also aim to bring together students, faculty, and practitioners, but a different group of practitioners, according to the research director:

> *Well, there's the tension between wanting to keep it small enough so that you can have conversation. So we decided to do a lead strategy. So the roundtables with those we engage actual people who are on the ground. So people who come to those aren't the executive director. They're usually people who manage programs, or who advocacy, or who are data analysts, or housing authority, or you could do research in small non-profits. Those type of people come to those.*

RPRC aims to bring to the roundtables individuals who are largely directly involved in delivering services.

Finally, the list of audiences for the center's publications is also expansive. For the condensed research articles, the audience is a large list of individuals who can benefit from accessing academic research that is typically published in journals, or individuals who wish to keep abreast of research being done by colleagues:

> *The other is a distillation of an academic article and I turn that into one page and make sure that the academic is happy with the summary. We're taking out a lot obviously. But focusing on what we need for that. So that is sent to our mailing list that includes a lot of people in the university. That one actually goes to a national audience as far as other universities, think tanks in D.C., foundations, things like that, but also a local audience. So we see that as – we distribute those very proudly. It serves different purposes. Like I think our affiliates, it keeps people aware of scholarship and their colleagues at other poverty centers – we have a list of these – get to see what they're up to. Then locally we try to make it accessible enough that people will be able to understand it even if they have no background in either the specific methodology or the topic. You know, sort of make it relevant to poverty. And pass those around very broadly.*

According to the center's research director, the audience includes those in academia as well as practitioners and policymakers.

In conclusion, the Regional Poverty Research Center primarily disseminates its research through its website, at conferences and seminars, at roundtables, and in its publications. The goal of much of this dissemination is to present academic research to non-academic audiences, and to facilitate conversations between researchers and practitioners. The audiences for this dissemination vary and include graduate students, faculty at postsecondary institutions,

policymakers, and staff at various nonprofit organizations and government agencies which offer social programs. In the following section, I will discuss RPRC's activities to train and support individuals with an interest in studying and addressing poverty.

Training Scholars with an Interest in Research-Practice-Policy Relationships

The Regional Poverty Research Center offers a variety of programs and activities for scholars with an interest in studying and addressing poverty and inequality. According to the center's founding director, these opportunities are intended for individuals who value research-practice-policy relationships:

> *We approached a local funder about shifting our work to be more engaged with the local practice community. Initially, we did that as a negotiation between what we wanted to do – which was fund doctoral students…Also, we wanted to help support the intellectual development of doctoral students who wanted to see their work have real world impact.*

As she described, the center sought funding from a local funder to pay for its activities and specifically to support doctoral students who have an interest in having their research applied to address social issues. Aside from doctoral students, the center also supports other scholars with this interest. RPRC implements a variety of activities and programs to train and support scholars with an interest in applying their research to "have real world impact". Those activities and programs include: 1) grants and fellowships, and 2) seminars and roundtables. In this section, I will describe those activities and programs in more depth.

Research grant and fellowships. The Regional Poverty Research Center currently provides small research grants for scholars who are developing projects which have a research-policy, or research-practice component. According to the center's website, this funding source is

provided given the center's commitment to supporting collaborations between those conducting poverty research and those who can make use of the research in their policymaking and program implementation roles. One of the center's faculty affiliates shared his thoughts on the importance of the grants:

> *…these small seed grants and that's helped in some of our younger faculty that have gotten some grants to do work they might not have otherwise done*

Thus, this funding source is meant to provide support for research projects that might not have otherwise received support. The center's website displays the disciplinary background of some scholars who have received the funding in the past. These include: four from social work, four from economics, three from sociology, three from public affairs, one from education, one from political science, one from consumer science, and one from urban studies and planning. This variety shows the center's commitment to supporting interdisciplinary research.

In addition to the research grants the center currently provides, many of the individual I spoke with specifically commented on the graduate fellowships that the center used to offer. The center's research director described the nature of the funding in more depth:

> *In the past I also worked on a training program we ha[d] for Ph.D. students. We ha[d] the [graduate scholars program]… So we tried to place doctoral students in research internships, research placements we were calling them, with local organizations that had data but had a question that had both an academic piece and an applied piece that the organizations could come up with some information that would be useful for them and the Ph.D. student would have something, a dissertation, an article. So I also helped organize those and manage those when we had that program. We haven't given those out for a few years now.*

As I'll discuss in a following section on the role of funding in RPRC's activities, the program could not be sustained without continued funding and thus, the center ceased offering the fellowships.

Seminars and roundtables. The seminars and roundtables play an important role in training and supporting scholars for a number of reasons. First, they provide a space for graduate students to get exposed to new ideas that they can use to inform their research. One individual I interviewed, who chaired one of the roundtables, spoke about the benefit of these to new graduate students:

> *Over the years, I've seen that people who came to the table as people who were, for example, entering a doctoral program are now about to graduate and they've been doing research and are going to continue being able to do that research that is informed by those discussions. The roundtables provide a space for graduate students to come and learn about issues and possible develop ideas for their own research.*

By attending the roundtables and engaging in discussions, new graduate students are able to develop ideas that they can use to inform their research throughout their graduate career. Second, graduate students use these as a space to come into contact with ideas and people that they might not otherwise get access to in their academic units. One of the center's faculty affiliates and internal board members shared his thoughts on this:

> *…students get to see a wide range of research topics and research methods which generally is good for doctoral education. To some extent then they get to know the players in the field, a subset of them, so it's an early network building for them… they're there and get a sense of research processes beyond what their own*

department's teaching them or sort of taking them through that process. They see a broader spectrum of methods, disciplines, topics, and so forth.

Thus, students can connect with new ideas and people that they otherwise would not have access to.

As described in this section, the Regional Poverty Research Center aims to support scholars who have an interest in having their work applied in a practical setting. In the past, the center supported graduate students by providing them with funding, connecting then with local organizations or agencies that could use their work, and providing in-class training. Currently, the center provides small research grants to scholars who partner with local organizations to develop projects. In addition to funding projects, RPRC also encourages graduate students to attend seminars and roundtables in which they can gain access to new ideas and research methods and connect with scholars whom they might not usually get an opportunity to connect with in their own department or discipline. In the following section, I will describe RPRC's activities to facilitate collaboration among individuals concerned with studying and addressing poverty and related issues.

Facilitating Research-Policy-Practice Partnerships as RPRC's Core Work

The Regional Poverty Research Center implements a number of activities to facilitate research-policy and research-practice collaborations. Such activities are meant to be mutually-beneficial for participants, who are often university students and faculty, and staff members at local nonprofits organizations and government agencies. These activities include: 1) the center's various forums that bring people together to meet, present, and share ideas such as seminars, roundtables, and conferences; 2) the center's other forums which aim to facilitate discussion such as the paper series, and 3) the former graduate student fellowship program which aimed to bring

together graduate students with local organizations who could contribute to their development, and who could also benefit from the students' research.

Convening physical groups to network and share new ideas. RPRC's core activities include bringing together individuals in various forums to meet, present, and share ideas. Such forums include the center's seminars, roundtables, and conferences. As discussed in previous sections, these activities provide a space for faculty, students, policymakers, and practitioners to come together to share their work, be exposed to new ideas, and make connections with other individuals. One of the center's faculty affiliates who is also a member of the internal board spoke about the role of the roundtables in facilitating collaborations:

> *The roundtables that you've probably heard of by now or talked to folks about. I think they've been very successful. I may have done one year ago, but they really do connect good academics with the local and regional community. Given where we are, given our size, being a national player in terms of – you know, it's just too hard. We're too small and too far away. We're certainly not much involved in national poverty outreach or – how would I call it – informing folks. It's more state and regional. But I think that it's been good.*

Thus, the roundtables are a great space for facilitating relationships and collaborations between people inside of the university and outside of the university in the local community. One individual I interviewed who chaired one of the roundtables in the past spoke about the specific benefit to local practitioners:

> *…We actually identified some areas of data that we felt would be helpful in convincing legislators and people in the public – influences and voters – about the impacts that affordable housing can have in the success of a community.*

> *Economic success and the success of eliminating or reducing poverty…For those first few meetings, it was about identifying areas where the practitioners felt data would be helpful and then the academics saying, "Oh, here's what we might be able to do about that." I would say we did that for about a year or maybe a little bit more than that – maybe 18 months…*

Thus, the roundtables she attended often involved local practitioners sharing their various data needs and hearing from researchers at the university on how their work could assist the practitioners.

In addition, the forums serve as a place to bring together people within the university who may not otherwise connect with one another. The center's current director spoke about this role:

> *We ideally want affiliates to be engaged in the community – give a talk in our seminar series now and then, refer their students to our seminar…Senior faculty we will draw on to support junior faculty. For instance, when a new assistant professor joins, we'll often try to connect them with a few folks who would be outside their department but share similar interests. We can be a broker for that information for our junior affiliates.*

The seminars bring together junior faculty and senior faculty as well as faculty and students who may not otherwise be connected with one another.

Convening groups in written form to share ideas. In addition to bringing people together in physical forums to meet, present, and discuss, RPRC also facilitates collaborations through written mediums. For example, the center has the paper series which involves researchers submitting papers to the center which the center distributes to local practitioners who can then provide feedback and engage in a dialogue with the researcher. The center's research

director described the process for facilitating this dialogue and described the potential value that the dialogue provides for the participants:

> *Then so we have them read that and then we convene a phone call with the researcher and all those people who read it, and we just facilitate the discussion around – what was interesting about the work? What did you think? Do you have questions? How would this be relevant to your work? Is it relevant to your work? What would be the next step if you were gonna make it relevant? And then we publish a summary of the paper, the shortened paper, and then the discussion…for helping just feedback on that process of the research and making it applicable…Only in general I think the researchers have found those to be useful conversations. How much it changes some of the academic work? How much that changes what they do for the paper that's gonna get published? Maybe it changes their – who they talk to about the work later. Maybe it changes their next project, when they go next time…*

This collaboration provides feedback for the researcher to hear other people's thoughts on their work and it allows local practitioners to learn about current research that is being conducted and which could potentially inform their practice.

In addition to the paper series that encourages dialogue between researchers and local practitioners and policymakers, the center also engages in other activities to connect researchers at the university and individuals who can benefit from their work. For example, if someone from a local newspaper calls the center, then the center may recommend that they talk to a particular affiliate who is knowledgeable about the area of work that the person requesting the information is interested in. One of the center's faculty affiliates described this process:

You know, we're on the go-to list when news stories come out, so many of our names are down with the press office and if someone calls and says, "I'd like to talk to someone about the latest poverty numbers," it's a classic one that's every year, then they'll send the reporter to someone or they'll put out a call and say, "Who would like to respond to this reporter from the [city] Times," or "We have a call in from the [other local city]," whatever the [local city] paper is…

Thus, the center is known as a place where local press can find individuals who are knowledgeable about poverty and related issues. The center staff serves as a facilitator for the papers to find the knowledgeable scholars and for scholars to be able to share their ideas.

Connecting research producers and research consumers. The final RPRC activity I will discuss here is the former student fellowship program. As described in the previous section, this fellowship focused on providing a training opportunity for graduate students by funding the students and connecting them to local organizations which could make use of their work. The center's research director spoke about this activity:

So we placed students again trying to collect data: how do you do this locally relevant but nationally significant research? So we have tried to place doctoral students in research internships, research placements we were calling them, with local organizations that had data but had a question that had both an academic piece and an applied piece that the organizations could come up with some information that would be useful for them and the Ph.D. student would have something, a dissertation, an article…

As described, the activity was not only focused on training graduate students. It was also concerned with providing useful knowledge and resources to local organizations that could make

use of the work of the graduate students. Such organizations included government agencies, nonprofit organizations offering services, and advocacy or lobbying organizations.

In sum, the Regional Poverty Research Center organizes a variety of activities to facilitate research-policy-practice collaborations. Because the center views itself as a mediator which convenes individuals who produce poverty research and individuals who use poverty research, these activities are central to the work that the center engages in. In the following section, I will discuss relevant contextual and other factors that shape RPRC's work.

Relevant Contextual Factors Shaping RPRC's Activities

There are various contextual and other factors which appear to shape the work of the Regional Poverty Research Center. Those include its institutional setting, sources of funding for its activities, societal conversations about poverty and trends in poverty and antipoverty policy and practice, and the background of individual actors. In this section, I will describe these factors and how they appear to shape the work of the Regional Poverty Research Center.

Institutional setting. The institutional setting of RPRC appears to shape the center's guiding rationale and its research. The setting shapes the center's guiding rationale because of how university-based centers tend to operate. The center's founding director discussed the role of this factor:

> *The problem with that is the way academic research institutions survive financially is off the indirect funds that they get from large grants. That's how you pay for the space and the desks and the staff and the students and everything else. By doing it the way we did it, we didn't create that structure. Each of the disciplines and each of the senior and then subsequent members of the network ran their grants through their own existing departments… but the problem is then*

once the federal funds weren't available there was no source of funds. There was no source of funds for the administration of the center. It was, I think, a good, but it wasn't a really sustainable model. It's very hard to get funding either from government or foundation sources just for the work of a center, the staffing and the space. Everyone wants to support the specific research or the specific activities. It was a flawed model in terms of sustainability.

Thus, the founding director aimed for the center to be designed in such a way that faculty affiliated with the center could run their own research programs rather than the center having a primary research program that faculty and staff could work on through the center. With that model, the center was not able to be supported because as a university-based center, it needed to receive its own continued grants to support its functioning. As discussed previously, this loss in funding required to the center to shift its focus. I will discuss the specific role of funding in more depth in this section.

The center's institutional setting also shaped the center's research activities. First, because the center is located in a university, faculty members are not often rewarded for participating in a center with a focus on "applied" or "practical" work; thus, some faculty face a tension due to this. The center's director spoke about this:

Resources are definitely the one we're struggling with most. To some extent, the tension between applied and scholarly work. For folks in the professional schools, that's an easier thing. But we'll have affiliates who are sociologists, political scientists, geographers, or economists who this isn't seen as part of the work that they're rewarded for doing. Sometimes that comes up around trying to find folks who are a good fit for some of our publications or people who are willing to give

a talk to practitioners. It's more something I feel we're always able to navigate…The faculty who participate clearly care about poverty and addressing it as a social issue, but they also have to contend with the constraints they face as faculty.

While faculty members clearly care about the issue of poverty and lending their expertise to address poverty, they face tensions when their home departments and units don't reward them for work they do through the center.

Sources of funding for center's activities. The Regional Poverty Research Center's activities are also shaped by its sources of funding. This factor shapes the center's guiding rationale, research, and training and support activities.

RPRC's sources of funding shapes its guiding rationale because different funding sources require different things of their grantees. When the center was first developed, it was granted funding from a government source and developed its focus and program of activities with that funding in mind. For example, the center was able to fund graduate students, conduct some research, disseminate research, and collaborate with other centers receiving that source of government funding. According to the center's director, when it was denied that source of funding upon its second application, the center could no longer maintain that focus:

Initially, it was started because of this [government] funding. We put together a proposal. There is a pretty basic set of activities that the [government] funded centers do. They support research. They do dissemination and convening and they support students. So we proposed things around all of those categories… We secured funding from this foundation to fund our first two cohorts of students. Part of that work was hearing what the foundation wanted. What they really saw

value in was having more engagement between researchers at the university and scholars here – and practitioners and policy makers in the community…So that, in some ways, represented a real shift from the federal funding that was more research for other researchers. It was nice to have that come on board and start complimenting that other activity. We then weren't successful in the re-competition.

Thus, the center fully committed to a focus on facilitating research-policy-practice relationships when it was denied government funding to support its former program of activities and received ongoing support from a local foundation which was concerned with the development of relationships between research producers and research consumers.

This shift in funding was highlighted by all four individuals currently affiliated with the center and a few mentioned that as the center looks to its future, it will constantly consider the role that funding will have in its activities. One of the center's faculty affiliates and internal board members spoke about this:

…We don't expect to get the federal center funding, so it's a matter of foundation support. I mean, we could get some internal support, but it's gonna be modest, mostly giving people the time to participate rather than money to bring in speakers, or maybe a tiny bit of money for the speakers series because it's good for the university. So, the real struggle is to find a funding model that's viable, that is something that folks are enthusiastic about doing, not just funding for the sake of funding…The connection to the community, I think, has been quite valuable, but it's not free. It takes resources, staff time, and even if you don't pay the affiliates much, just the basics of keeping an organization going requires some

funding and ideally funding that's, I mean, not permanent but stable. It's not a year at a time. You can do some planning over a three or four year horizon. So, that's the biggest challenge for the coming year I think.

As the center looks forward to its future agenda, it has to consider how it will be able to sustain its efforts and find funding that will allow for that. As a result of the center's sources of funding shaping its guiding rationale, other aspects of the center's work, including its research and training and support activities, are impacted.

The center's research is impacted by its sources of funding because the center only funds projects that indicate a focus on "engagement with local institutions". A review of the center's evaluation form for grant applications highlights this important factor. In addition, the center's current director highlighted this in my first interview with her:

We now, because of our funding, really only fund work where there's some engagement with local institutions – for the most part nonprofits. So the questions will reflect a negotiation between the interest of the scholar and the interest of the organization.

Thus, when individuals submit applications for grants, they have to describe how the project will consider the interests of the individual and those of the organization with which the scholar is collaborating.

The shift in funding now means that the center can support junior faculty and faculty who are not tenure-track. According to the current director:

When we had the federal funding, we established that we would only have faculty level appointments – assistant professors, associate professors, and full professors. I think now it makes sense to relax that. We'll probably bring on some

folks who are lecturers and have more of a role at the university where they're spanning practice and are teaching – less research oriented people… [scoring for grants will give] preference to more junior faculty – so among two equally qualified candidates, you would want to reward somebody who is junior in their career and this would advance their career.

In the past, the center mostly supported tenure-track and senior faculty because those were favored based on the federal funding source. With the shift in funding, and removal of that requirement, the center is now expanding its focus to assist a different group of faculty.

The shift in funding also affected the training and support activities the center engages in. The center's current director stated:

As our federal funding progressed, we wanted to both increase the reach of the center and diversify our funding. We approached a local funder about shifting our work to be more engaged with the local practice community. Initially, we did that as a negotiation between what we wanted to do – which was fund doctoral students…Also, we wanted to help support the intellectual development of doctoral students who wanted to see their work have real world impact.

With the federal funding, the center could provide fellowships to graduate students with a variety of foci. Once the center no longer received that funding, it had to limit how many graduate students it could fund, and it began to specifically fund graduate students who had an interest in making their work useful at the local level.

Finally, the shift in funding shaped the center's current orientation to facilitating research-policy-practice partnerships. The center's founding director described this shift in orientation:

I think some of the important shifts have been the development of capacity around

more direct translational or networking outside of the university…Each time we did a topical conference, like we did one on immigration and we did one on assumptions that the American welfare state coming into the 21st century. We involve people from the community in part of the conference. We'd have the regular academic conference, but then we also had sessions in which we invited advocates, local government people, activists, and community and foundation folks. Folks who were actually working in those topics. We'd invite them to interactive sessions because we wanted to start. We were interested in this translation that's getting it out of the academia into the real world.

Thus, the center's focus is now on "translation" and bringing together people who have an interest in poverty and who bring different knowledge and skillsets to the table—university researchers, nonprofit and government service providers, and foundation staff, among others.

Societal conversations about poverty and trends in poverty and antipoverty policy and practice. The center's activities also appear to be shaped by the broader social context which includes conversations about poverty, and trends in poverty and antipoverty policy and practice. This social context appears to shape the center's research and its facilitation of partnerships.

This factor shapes the center's research because at times, changes in policy may affect the research that the center supports. For example, one of the center's faculty affiliates who is also on the center's internal board, discussed how changes in minimum wage policy shaped his research agenda:

The minimum wage work was obviously provoked by the [city] minimum wage, but also the general rise in inequality in recent years. So, I've picked the topics,

but yeah, they've been influenced by the public discussion and I guess the scholarly debates about various aspects of poverty and anti-poverty policy.

Thus, he chooses his research projects based on his interests, but he may narrow his focus on a given topic depending on relevant issues in society at the time. A review of local city websites shows that the mayor of the city in which RPRC is located has recently signed what some call a considerably "progressive" minimum wage law for city employees and has committed to expanding the law to increase the minimum wage for all employees in the city. Thus, this topic of research chosen by the faculty affiliate is particularly relevant at the local level.

The broader social context may also play a role in the center's work related to facilitating research-policy-practice partnerships. According to the former affordable housing nonprofit executive director who I interviewed, the work of RPRC fits in with the local context:

Because I was working in [the city], over the years I got a big appreciation for how the community that we work and live in, and serve, is extremely collaborative…There are so many organizations that have the capability to provide housing affordability, but there aren't enough resources to go around. However, collaborated over the years, and still the community does, to make sure we were maximizing what we had and that we could together influence an action of legislation that would increase those resources. So it was unusually collaborative in comparison to some other areas of the country. It was also unusually gifted with a lot of capacity. So we would collaborate on policies and resources and then we'd compete for the same resources. It's a really interesting dynamic in the community that I found very refreshing and very satisfying for me. So that's how I became involved…

Over time, various local entities have developed a commitment to addressing social issues through collaborations and thus, have created a context in which the work of organizations like RPRC can operate.

Background of individual actors. The final factor that I will discuss that appears to shape the work of the Regional Poverty Research Center is the background of various individuals who play a role in the center. That factor seems to shape the center's guiding rationale. For example, the center's current director shared how her academic and professional background contributed to her valuing research-policy-practice relationships:

> *...I was also teaching in Chicago in the mid-'90s when welfare reform was really affecting the lives of the kids I taught. I was in a low income working class school, but we had a number of kids who were coming out of public housing whose moms had probably been on welfare before. They had other people in their family who worked. I was seeing those changes and shifts and seeing Chicago was starting to tear down its public housing at that point and how that shifted. I wanted to have a better conceptual understanding of that and to think about how to address those things. I entered a doctoral program, not really knowing what a doctoral program prepares you to do. Turns out it prepares you mostly to be a professor. For me this has been a great fit…I feel very lucky to have ended up in an applied school where my colleagues value that I have connections with people who are policy makers and practitioners in the community. I don't think if I would be happy if I was in a department where that was seen as weird and a waste of time. Some of that is why personally I'm committed to this.*

The center's director views her commitment to applied research as central to the work she does.

Because she has found a discipline and a center that also values that, she is able to carry out her commitment.

In addition to the commitments of the center's current director, the background of a few individuals at the center who were affiliated with other poverty research centers is important to note. The center's current director was affiliated with a poverty research center as a graduate student; one of the center's faculty affiliates who is also on the center's internal board worked at the country's first university-based poverty research center in the 1970s; and the center's founding director was trained by individuals who had worked at that same center. These individuals highlighted how affiliation with these centers has impacted their work. The center's current director stated:

> *How I came to be affiliated is actually a story that, for me personally, goes back before I got here and before the center was here. I was trained in a poverty center – one of the federally funded, which at the time was the [center name] …For my entire doctoral career, it was this institution for training and engagement in an interdisciplinary group. It was with scholars who were interested in poverty and inequality, and it was great for a student perspective. And then when I came to [RPRC's university], we had very strong social sciences and a good set of interdisciplinary collaborators, but not focus on poverty.*

This experience of being affiliated with a university-based poverty center which focused on bringing together an interdisciplinary group of scholars to study and address poverty was the current director's model for how to engage in poverty research.

Sharing his background with university-based poverty centers, the faculty affiliate stated:

> *… found the full-time junior research position at the [university-based poverty*

research center], which then and always has been a fantastic place for poverty research. It was interdisciplinary, it was exciting. Way back then, there were some of the early negative income tax experiments were sort of being housed and analyzed there. So, it was very exciting and it got me hooked. I thought I was going to go into some form of labor economics before I came to [Midwestern city], but the folks there were terrific mentors and so that set my career path really; it was fundamental to my career path. In the 40-something years since then, that was back it – I was there '73 to '75 – finished my doctorate at [university] and taught in New England 'til '84, came down here, and throughout this time, my research has always had some connection to poverty and anti-poverty policy.

For this faculty affiliate, the time he spent at the other poverty research center shaped the course of his entire career. By working at that center, he became interested in poverty research and antipoverty policy and was trained by a group of interdisciplinary scholars. Thus, his ultimate transition to become a faculty affiliate of the RPRC fit within that trajectory.

Highlighting the role of university-based centers in her training, RPRC's founding director stated:

My first appointment…at [public university] where I had another very good mentor who is a founder of or early participant in the [poverty research center]. I went from there to [private university] where I also had a very good mentor who was also trained at the [poverty research center]. In addition to my academic training, I think the thing that I got early in my career was experience with the power of research centers to pull together and network and different academic

> *perspectives and researchers. Kind of the sum is greater than the whole. Also, that was a really important training ground for graduate students and young professors. I benefited enormously as a graduate student and then as a junior faculty member from being in places that had strong research centers where I could get more training and more mentorship. That really influenced the way I thought about this whole translation research to policy and my interest in having a poverty center eventually at [RPRC's university].*

As a result of being trained by individuals who were affiliated with another well-known university-based poverty research center, RPRC's founding director developed an affinity for centers' ability to bring together faculty and graduate students, provide them with resources, and serve as a space for developing research that could be beneficial for policy and practice. Thus, affiliation with university-based poverty research centers has played a role in how RPRC's current and former leadership approach their careers, and their engagement with the center in particular.

In this section, I have described the various contextual factors that appear to have an impact on different aspects of the work of the Regional Poverty Research Center. Those factors include the center's institutional setting, its sources of funding, broader conversations in society about poverty and trends in poverty and antipoverty policy and practice, and the background of various individuals who play a role in the center. Those contextual factors appear to shape a variety of activities including the center's guiding rationale, research activities, training and support activities, and activities to facilitate research-policy-practice partnerships.

Chapter Five Summary

In this chapter, I presented findings from my study of the activities and contextual factors

which shape the activities of the Regional Poverty Research Center. RPRC is largely concerned with facilitating collaborations among individuals concerned with studying and addressing poverty in the state and the region. To that end, the center does not conduct its own research, but it supports research that is generally concerned with drawing on the expertise and the needs of university-based researchers and non-university-based practitioners who are all concerned with addressing poverty and related issues. The center disseminates research it supports through various mediums including two publications—one a magazine presenting conversations on research between a researcher and local practitioners and policymakers, and the second a series which presents condensed versions of published articles and books. The center also disseminates research it supports at conferences and through its seminars and roundtables. RPRC carries out a variety of activities to support scholars with an interest in studying poverty and inequality such as providing research grants, and opportunities for young scholars to network at its seminars and roundtables. A majority of RPRC's activities can be described as those which seek to facilitate collaborations among individuals concerned with studying and addressing poverty. These include the center's conversation publication series, its conferences, its roundtables, and its research grants which require collaboration among individuals based in the university and those who are not. Finally, my study found that a range of contextual factors shape the center's activities such as institutional setting, sources of funding, and the background of individuals who play a role in the center's activities. In the following chapter, I will discuss the similarities and differences I found among the activities and contextual factors shaping the activities of both centers in the study.

Chapter 6: Findings: Where the Work of CRPS and RPRC Meets and Disperses

In this chapter, I bring together what I presented in chapters 4 and 5 regarding the work of the Center for Research on Poverty in Society and the work of the Regional Poverty Research Center. I will highlight aspects of the centers' activities that are common, and those which are not. More importantly, I will describe what factors these commonalities and differences seem to stem from, and why they matter. Table 6.1 combines the summary of findings from table 4.1 and table 5.1 to display a summary of the findings regarding each center's activities. The discussion in this chapter will draw on the findings from chapters 4 and 5.

Table 6.1

Summary of Findings: How the Center for Research on Poverty in Society and the Regional Poverty Research Center Aim to Inform Antipoverty Policy and Practice

	Center for Research on Poverty in Society	**Regional Poverty Research Center**
Guiding Rationale	Develop an infrastructure for measuring poverty and inequality in the United States	Facilitate partnerships among individuals concerned with studying and addressing poverty who are located in settings such as university-based research centers, nonprofit organizations, and government
Characteristics of Research	• **Topical**: various, with an emphasis on intergenerational mobility • **Methodological**: primarily quantitative • **Participating researchers**: university faculty, other university research staff, and graduate students	• **Topical**: various, with an emphasis on questions that benefit researcher, practitioner, and policymaker communities • **Methodological**: quantitative and qualitative • **Participating researchers**: university faculty, graduate students, and community partners
Research Dissemination	• **Methods**: CRPS website; conferences and seminars; articles, magazine, and book series • **Intended audiences**: other poverty researchers; national policymakers	• **Methods**: RPRC website; seminars, roundtables, and research-policy-practice conferences; condensed book and articles publication, and conversation series publication • **Intended audiences**: leadership and staff at local nonprofit organizations and government agencies; other poverty researchers
Activities to Support and Train Researchers	• Early scholar grants; special topic grants; and graduate fellowships • On-campus undergraduate certificate and master's degree programs • Free online poverty course • Databases with poverty and inequality measures	• Research-policy-practice relationship grants • Academic seminars and policy roundtables

Table 6.1 (cont.)		
Activities to Facilitate Research-Policy-Practice Partnerships	• Work with government agency staff to develop poverty and inequality databases • Published plan for reducing poverty and inequality at state level	• Grants which require collaboration among researchers, policymakers, and practitioners • Policy roundtables • Poverty summit • Conversation publication series
Contextual and Other Factors Shaping Center's Activities	• **Institutional setting**: private university • **Source of funding**: major federal grant • **Societal conversations/trends in poverty and antipoverty policy and practice**: conversations about increasing inequality • **Background of center actors**: director's history of founding poverty research centers; center staff doctoral training at other poverty research centers	• **Institutional setting**: public university • **Source of funding**: local foundation grant • **Societal conversations/trends in poverty and antipoverty policy and practice**: advocacy for research to inform policy and practice in society • **Background of center actors**: director's graduate training at federally-funded center; center affiliates' prior training at poverty research centers

Guiding Rationales

As evidenced in chapters 4 and 5, the Center for Research on Poverty in Society and the Regional Poverty Research Center have similarities in their guiding rationales and their processes for developing these rationales, but they also differ in some important ways.

One important similarity to note is that both centers have a commitment to helping people to think about important issues related to poverty and inequality with an ultimate goal of using that thinking to shape appropriate solutions for addressing poverty. The centers differ however, in their mechanisms for achieving that. CRPS believes that its role is to bring together data on poverty, inequality, and related issues and to organize the data in such a way that other individuals can analyze the data and make sense of poverty and inequality. By analyzing these data, people will have a more accurate picture of poverty, and will also be able to make more sound decisions about how to address poverty. RPRC believes that its role is to bring together researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to discuss research findings and research needs, and to consider how the research can inform the design of appropriate approaches for addressing

poverty. While RPRC was initially established with a focus on conducting and disseminating research (an important part of CRPS's work), RPRC no longer sees this as a primary goal of its work.

The centers are also similar in their assessment of their attainment of the outcomes they hope to accomplish through adhering to their guiding rationale. The centers largely rely on the perspectives of individuals who participate in their activities to assess the value of their activities. Both seem to acknowledge though, that while they have a concern for addressing poverty in society, they don't view a direct link between the work they do and the creation of antipoverty policy and practice. The work they do is providing data for others and setting up spaces for others so that those individuals can go on to make decisions related to antipoverty policy and practice.

Finally, the centers are also similar in their processes for setting their centers' agendas. For both centers, the guiding rationale has been developing since the center's founding, and the leadership plays a primary role in setting the center's agenda, partly based on that guiding rationale. For CRPS, that guiding rationale has been fairly similar since the center's founding. For RPRC, that guiding rationale has shifted since the center's founding, largely as a result of the center's changing funding source. Another way in which RPRC differs is that because of its focus on working partly for the benefit of individuals working in local nonprofit organizations and government agencies, the center plans to develop an external advisory board through which those local individuals can help to guide its work.

Now that I have discussed each center's guiding rationale, in the next section, I will discuss similarities and differences among the centers' research activities.

Bodies of Research

There are a few ways in which the bodies of research of the CRPS and that of the RPRC are similar, and a few ways in which they differ.

The centers differ in the types of research they conduct. CRPS conducts research on its own which focuses on gathering data to create an infrastructure that others can use to conduct research on poverty and inequality. CRPS also conducts research on its own related to measuring poverty and inequality, especially at the state level. Finally, CRPS supports research that members of its research groups conduct. RPRC on the other hand, does not conduct any research on its own. Instead, it supports research of other scholars including faculty, students, and local practitioners.

The centers are similar however, in the types of publications they produce. Both centers publish a magazine which includes short articles written by researchers housed at their university and others. The nature of these articles varies though. CRPS's primary publication includes original articles written by the scholars, and most of the scholars are faculty from postsecondary institutions outside of the university where CRPS is housed. RPRC's primary publication publishes abbreviated version of articles that scholars have published elsewhere. RPRC's research director gets permission from these scholars to reproduce their work in abbreviated form in the magazine. For that publication, the majority of authors are faculty at the university that houses RPRC.

Both centers vary in the topical focus of their research. For the sources of poverty, CRPS's articles were more likely to cite poverty as a societal issue, rather than as an individual issue; as a national issue, rather than as a local issue; and as a contemporary issue, rather than as a historical issue. Similarly, RPRC's articles and papers discussed poverty as a national and

contemporary issue, but differently, these articles and papers discussed poverty as a societal issue rather than as an individual issue. For the causes of poverty, the centers differed. CRPS articles were more likely to discuss societal causes (57.28%) of poverty than individual causes (48.54%) of poverty and RPRC articles and papers were more likely to discuss individual causes (44%) of poverty than societal causes (30%) of poverty. For the consequences of poverty, the centers were similar, with 72.82% of CRPS's articles discussing an individual consequence of poverty and 72% of RPRC's articles and publications discussing an individual consequence of poverty. For the solutions for poverty, the centers were similar, with both more likely to cite an individual solution for poverty than a societal solution for poverty. Seventy-three (71.57%) of CRPS's articles discussed an individual solution and thirty-two (64%) of RPRC's articles and papers discussed an individual solution. For responsible party, articles published in the centers' primary publications were similar. A large percentage of articles at both centers suggested that government should be responsible for addressing poverty. For CRPS's primary publication, this was 89.32% of the articles and for RPRC's primary publications, this was 62% of the articles and papers. At RPRC, 62% of the papers and articles, suggested that individuals should be responsible. And at CRPS, 46.60% of the articles suggested that individuals should be responsible.

The centers are similar in their methodological focus given that both centers support research that uses a variety of methods. CRPS however, conducts its own research that is primarily quantitative, and RPRC, in its primary publications, publishes research that is primarily quantitative.

The centers are similar in the characteristics of the researchers participating in their research. The majority of those individuals are faculty at postsecondary institutions. At CRPS,

center research staff members conduct the center's own research projects along with individuals in other settings such as the Census Bureau. While the centers are similar in that the authors of the articles in their primary publications are faculty at postsecondary institutions, at CRPS, the majority of these individuals are faculty at postsecondary institutions outside of the university housing CRPS, while at RPRC, the majority of the authors of the articles and papers in its primary publications are faculty the postsecondary institution that houses RPRC. At both centers, most center research staff members and center leadership have a history of studying poverty and inequality and at both centers, at least two individuals who play a role in guiding the center's work have a history of working to address poverty.

Finally, the centers' espoused models of knowledge production have characteristics that are both similar, and different. These models are similar because both centers value interdisciplinary research by supporting faculty affiliates and research group leaders from a variety of disciplines. The centers' models differ in the origin of ideas for the research projects. Because CRPS conducts its own research, many of the ideas guiding this research originate with the center. But because RPRC does not conduct its own research, the ideas guiding research the center supports are dispersed among the individuals who conduct the research that the center supports.

In this section, I have discussed the ways in which CRPS's and RPRC's bodies of research are similar and different. In the following section, I will discuss similarities and differences among the centers' research dissemination activities.

Dissemination

In this section I will describe the research dissemination strategies and intended audiences of the Center for Research on Poverty in Society and the Regional Poverty Research

Center. While I have highlighted in previous sections that the centers have different foci for their work, the strategies and intended audiences are very similar.

Both centers disseminate research on their websites. Given that the CRPS conducts its own research, that research is presented on the website. In addition, it also makes available databases for other researchers to access and analyze the data. Since RPRC does not conduct its own research, it disseminates research it supports on its website.

Both centers also organize conferences and seminars at which researchers share their work with the goal of sharing that academic research in a setting that is for academic and non-academic audiences. The conferences and seminars differ given that CRPS conferences are largely shaped around the presentation of research while the RPRC conferences are largely shaped around the conversations that come out of the research presentations. RPRC also has an additional dissemination medium which can be viewed as an extension of the seminars. In the roundtables, the center brings together researchers, students, and practitioners to discuss research that may be relevant to the work of the practitioners.

Both centers also disseminate research in different types of publications. Both disseminate research conducted largely by individuals external to the center in a condensed version that is meant for a wide audience. CRPS also disseminates its own research in research reports and briefs, and then publishes research conducted by poverty and inequality scholars in its book series. RPRC also disseminates research in its paper series which focuses on conversations between researchers and practitioners.

While the centers have very similar methods of research dissemination, their audiences vary somewhat. CRPS has a wide audience which includes graduate students, faculty, policymakers, and practitioners. However, other researchers at postsecondary institutions and in

policy organizations and government seem to be the primary audience because those individuals are also conducting research. Those individuals therefore, can benefit from the research infrastructure that CRPS is developing. RPRC has a wide audience that also includes graduate students, faculty, policymakers, and practitioners. However, the audience seems to be combined groups. Thus, the center aims to disseminate research and facilitate conversation when those individuals can come together in physical spaces and in publication spaces.

In conclusion, both centers have a variety of research dissemination strategies and audiences. The ways in which the centers conceptualize their work seems to be largely shaped by their intended audiences. In the following section, I will describe similarities and differences among the centers' activities to train and support researchers.

Activities to Train and Support Scholars

The Center for Research on Poverty in Society and the Regional Poverty Research Center offer a variety of activities and programs to train and support scholars with an interest in studying and addressing poverty. There are a few activities that the centers have in common, and a few additional programs that the CRPS offers. The centers' profiles for the types of scholars and projects they aim to support also vary.

Both CRPS and RPRC offer funding for research projects. While RPRC previously provided graduate fellowships, due to a shift in finding and focus, the center now offers small grants that researchers can use to develop early-stage research projects. CRPS offers a variety of types of funding including grants for new scholars, grants for graduate students, and postdoctoral fellowships.

Both centers also offer venues for scholars to get exposed to new ideas and connect with others engaging in similar work. At the RPRC, those include seminars and roundtables, and at

the CRPS, those include seminars and conferences.

In addition to funding opportunities and venues to get exposed to new ideas and people, the CRPS also provides on-campus degree programs for undergraduate and graduate students, a free online poverty course, and databases for other scholars to have access to data to analyze and write about.

Finally, the centers differ in the types of scholars they aim to support. Both centers offer training and support opportunities for scholars with a wide variety of interests and research topics. But in addition, RPRC expects that scholars participating in its activities and programs have an interest in research that can inform policy and practice. For its research grants, this interest is a requirement for grant recipients.

In conclusion, CRPS and RPRC both have a commitment to supporting poverty research scholars, and additionally, RPRC has a commitment to supporting antipoverty practitioners and policymakers. In this section I have described the specific activities each center engages in to provide such support. In the following section, I will describe similarities and differences among the centers' activities to facilitate research-policy and research-practice collaborations.

Research-Policy-Practice Collaboration Activities

As described in this section, both CRPS and RPRC implement activities to facilitate research-policy and research-practice collaborations. As mentioned previously, this is specifically RPRC's focus; thus, the overrepresentation of RPRC's activities in this section makes sense. The center's activities which focus on such collaborations vary greatly though.

CRPS has two primary activities to facilitate research-policy and research-practice relationships. The first involves collaborating with individuals in various government agencies to conduct research on topics such as intergenerational mobility. The second involves collaborating

with local organizations such a state-based foundation to develop a "plan for reducing poverty". These activities primarily focus on the center's research staff collaborating with other organizations and agencies to conduct research and propose policy.

RPRC's activities focused on collaborating for research-policy and research-practice activities are concerned with bringing together research producers and research consumers to share ideas and develop working relationships that can be mutually beneficial. Those activities include seminars, roundtables, and conferences which bring individuals together to present research, get exposed to new ideas, and develop relationships. The second group of activities involves those which bring people together remotely such as the paper series and through public forums such as newspapers. Finally, the final activity was the graduate fellowship program in which the center brought together graduate students and local organizations to develop projects that could encourage students to develop knowledge and skills and that could provide resources to the participating organizations.

Both centers are concerned with research-policy and research-practice relationships. However, because RPRC has these relationships as a core part of its work, it implements more activities which are focused on facilitating such collaborations.

In the last five sections, I have described similarities and differences among activities that each center implements to carry out its aims—conducting and supporting research, disseminating research, training and supporting scholars, and facilitating research-policy-practice collaborations. In the next section, I will describe similarities and differences among factors relevant to each center's context that shape its work.

Contextual Influences

There are various ways in which the contextual factors shaping the work of the Center for

Research on Poverty in Society and the work of the Regional Poverty Research Center are similar and different. In this section, I will discuss those similarities and differences.

The institutional setting seems to shape the work of each center. For CRPS, institutional setting is relevant because the center views itself as nonpartisan. Thus, the center is careful to not advocate for any particular policy solution. Institutional setting also matters for CRPS because the center, as a university-based center, largely produces and disseminates research to share with an academic audience. For RPRC, the institutional setting matters because by virtue of being housed in a university, the center has to contend with its faculty affiliates facing tension as a result of working in disciplines that don't necessarily value applied work, but being affiliated with a center that does privilege applied work. Based on the role of institutional setting in the work of each center, it appears that the university setting of centers matters for how centers can conceptualize their work to either be produced for an academic or non-academic audience. While RPRC has shifted its focus to facilitating collaborations among researchers, policymakers, and practitioners, and seems to be somewhat successful in this effort, because the the center draws heavily from faculty at its university, the tension faced by those faculty members matters for how the center can sustain its work.

Sources of funding also shape the work of each center. For CRPS, the commitments that the center made in its application for funding largely guide the work that the center does today. In addition, because much of the center's funding is government funding ("taxpayer money"), the center feels a commitment to conduct research that it believes is beneficial to society. Funding also matters for RPRC, but differently. Because the center was denied a renewal of its primary source of funding after its initial funding cycle, the center has shifted the focus of its work to be committed to developing collaborations among researchers, policymakers, and

practitioners. For both centers then, the source of funding shapes the work, and maintaining a major source of government funding seems to provide a great deal of support for a wide variety of activities.

Broader societal conversations about poverty and trends in poverty and antipoverty policy and practice appear to play a role in the work of both centers. For CRPS, these conversations and trends matter because they have shaped the center's decision to develop an infrastructure for measuring poverty and inequality, and to conduct research on intergenerational mobility. By paying attention to the work of others in the poverty research realm, the center was able to determine that society needs a better infrastructure for measuring poverty and inequality. And by listening to conversations in society about mobility, the center was able to determine that it needed to use real data to assess intergenerational mobility in society today. For RPRC, these conversations and trends matter because they have shaped research produced by faculty affiliated with the center, and these trends have created an environment in which the center can thrive. For example, changes in minimum wage policy in the local area encouraged the faculty affiliate to conduct research on that policy. And decades worth of work in the city focused on collaborations among various organizations has created an environment in which people are open to collaborating to address various social issues such as poverty. For both centers therefore, the broader social context hints at important topics that should be the focus of the centers' work.

Finally, the background of various individuals who play a role in the centers seems to shape the work of the centers. The experience of the director of CRPS has shaped the development of the center. He started a similar center at another university and was asked to start the CRPS based on his prior work. In addition, the prior affiliation of three of the center's research staff members with university-based centers concerned with poverty, inequality, and

mobility, shaped their orientation to, and valuing of, such centers. Similarly, the current director of the Regional Poverty Research Center, as well as the founding director and faculty affiliate, all received training from individuals affiliated with other university-based poverty centers in the United States. All of those individuals highlighted the role of that training in the development of their careers and in their conviction that university-based poverty research centers are valuable. In addition, the background of the center's current director involved a decision to attend graduate school based on her interest in studying and addressing social issues. Thus, for both centers, the background of the center director, and the affiliation of center leadership and staff members with other poverty research centers has shaped each center's focus.

In this section, I have described how various contextual and other factors shape the work of the Center for Research on Poverty in Society and the Regional Poverty Research Center. In the following section, I will revisit the conceptual framework that I presented in chapter two.

Revisiting the Conceptual Framework

Now that I have presented findings related to the activities each center implements in an effort to inform antipoverty policy and practice, I will return to the conceptual framework that I presented in chapter two. As described, the conceptual framework was presented as a lens for studying the activities of each center. After conducting the study, I believe that the conceptual framework was a useful lens for studying the work of each center. However, I can also make revisions to the conceptual framework based on the findings.

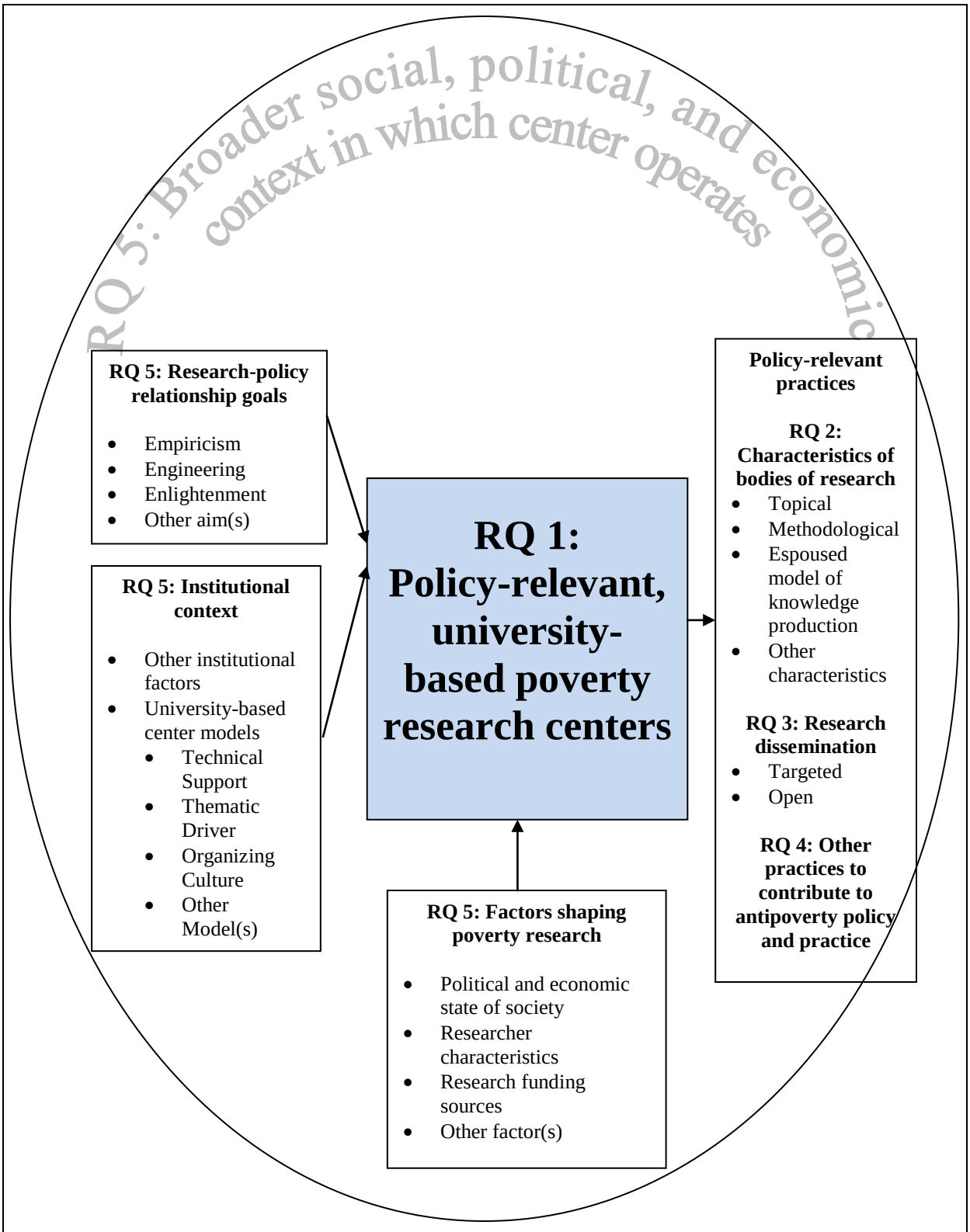


Figure 6.1. *Content and Context of Poverty-Research Centers' Practices* (replication of Figure 2.4)

For the most part, the conceptual framework represents the work of each center. Each center is a central unit which is concerned with informing antipoverty policy and practice. In an effort to inform antipoverty policy and practice, each center implements a number of activities that I have described in depth in this chapter. As centers implement these activities, a variety of contextual and other factors appear to have an impact on the centers' work. However, some aspects of the original conceptual framework can be revised slightly to reflect the work of each center. Figure 6.1 displays the original conceptual framework (also depicted in Figure 2.4 in chapter 2). Figure 6.2 displays the revised conceptual framework which represents the Center for Research on Poverty in Society. Figure 6.3 displays the revised conceptual framework which represents the Regional Poverty Research Center.

Figure 6.2 is revised to reflect the work of CRPS. This conceptual framework is revised from the original conceptual framework depicted in Figure 6.1 in a number of important ways. First, I have revised the center's policy-relevant activities to be displayed separately. Thus, I have emphasized the distinct areas of the center's work, which includes the research it conducts and supports, its dissemination practices, its activities to train and support individuals with an interest in studying and addressing poverty and inequality, and its activities to facilitate collaboration among individuals concerned with poverty. Second, I have added the center's guiding rationale as an important part of the conversation regarding what shapes the center's work. To the left of the guiding rationale, I have displayed each of the relevant contextual and other factors which appear to shape the center's work, through its guiding rationale. Those factors include the institutional setting, sources of funding, broader societal conversations about poverty and trends in poverty and antipoverty policy and practice, and the backgrounds of individuals who play a role in shaping the center's work.

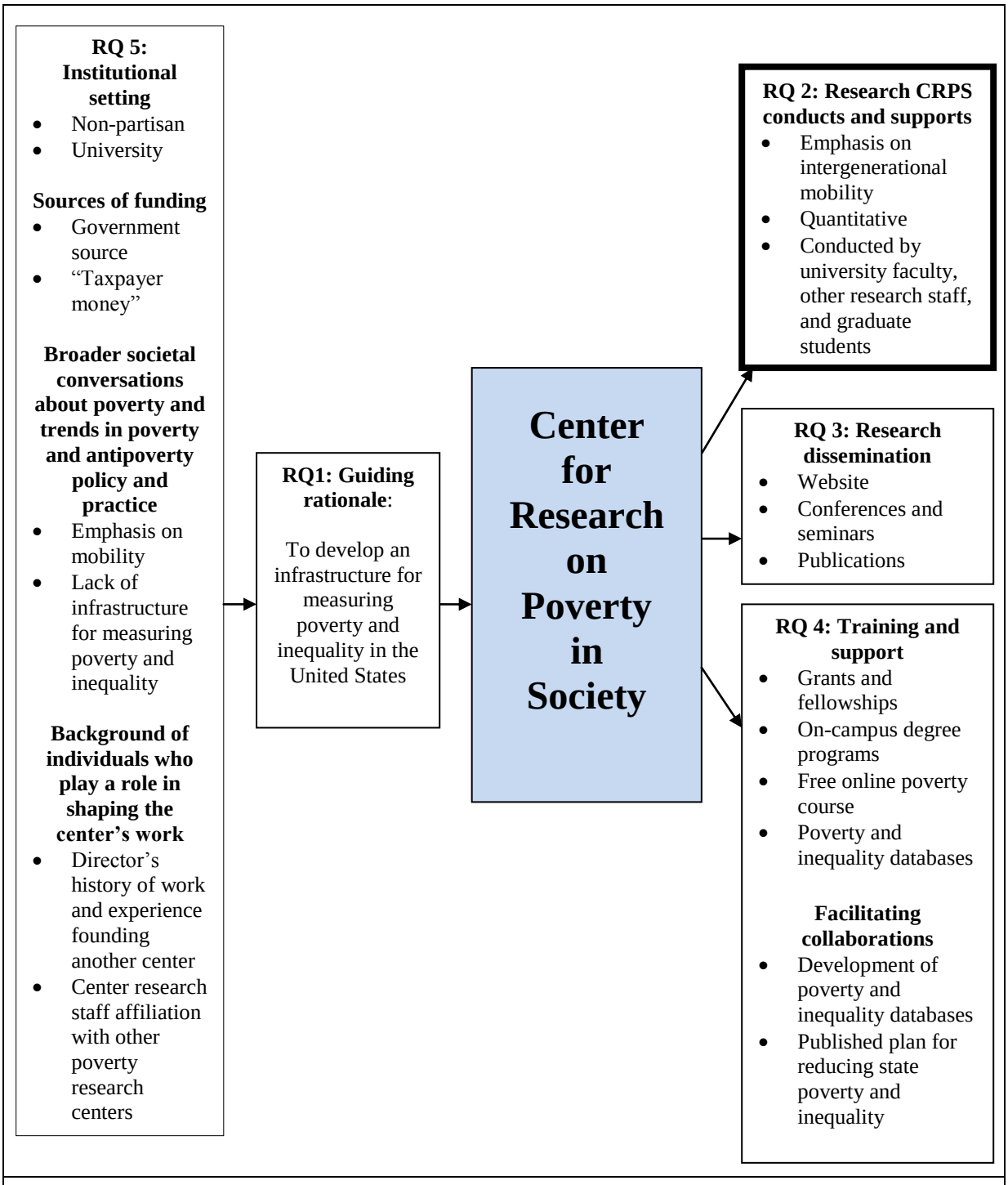


Figure 6.2. *Context and Content of Center for Research on Poverty in Society's Activities*

Figure 6.3 is revised to reflect the work of RPRC. Similar to Figure 6.2, I have revised this conceptual framework to emphasize the different facets of the center's activities on the right,

and the contextual and other factors shaping the center's guiding rationale and through that, its activities, on the left. While the general structure of the conceptual framework is the same for both centers, the specific details of the context and content of each center's activities are different.

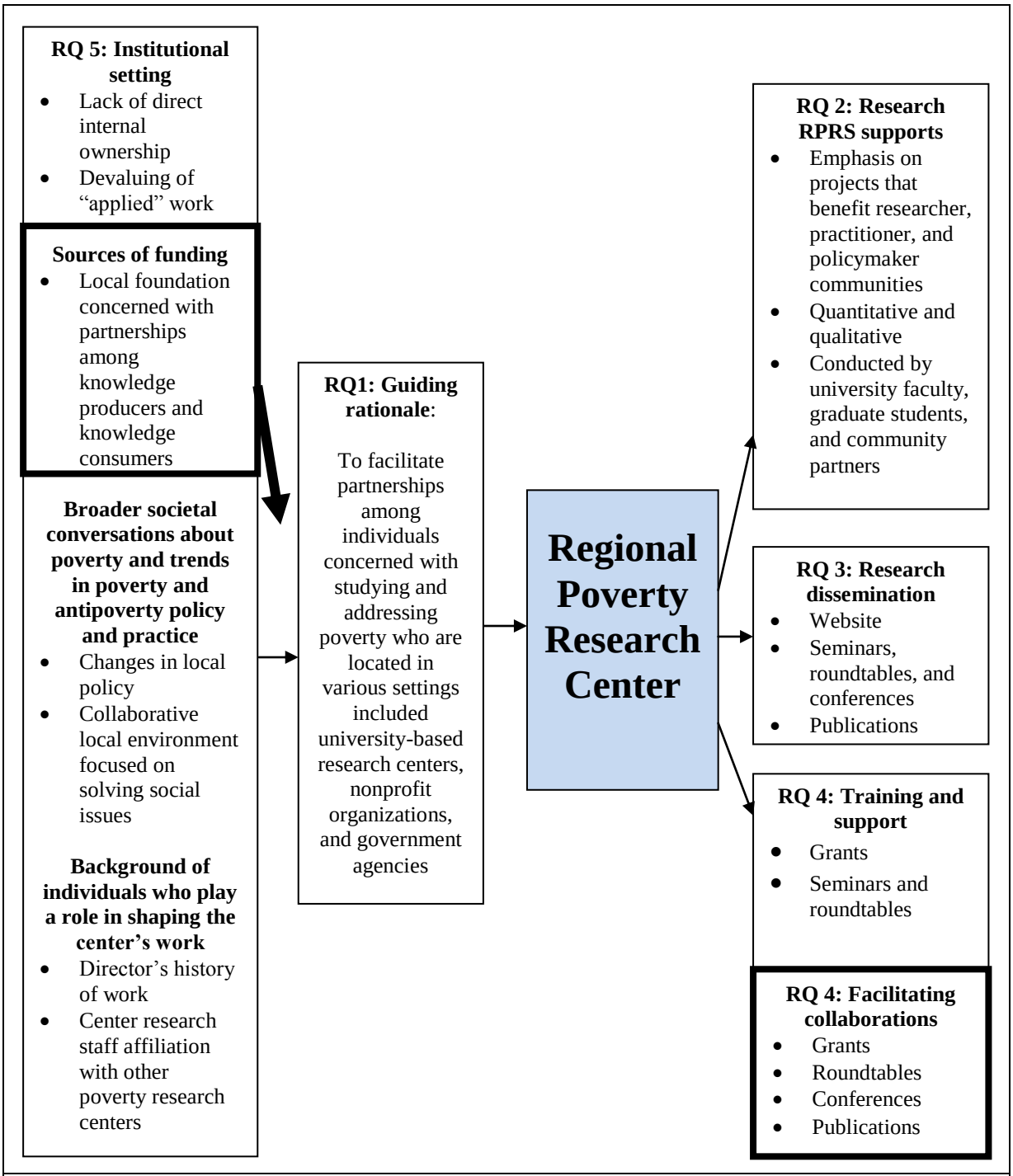


Figure 6.3. *Context and Content of Regional Poverty Research Center's Activities*

As mentioned previously, the original conceptual framework presented in Figure 6.1 was a useful starting point for describing each center's work. However, after conducting the study

and analyzing the data, the findings led me to revise each center's conceptual framework slightly to better represent each center's work.

Chapter Six Summary

In this chapter, I have presented what I learned about similarities and differences among how each center in this study aims to inform antipoverty policy and practice. I ended the chapter with a discussion of the conceptual framework I presented in chapter two of this dissertation and presented two revised conceptual frameworks, meant to represent the work of each center. In the next chapter, I will return to the research question that guided this study, and discuss how this study's findings can contribute to how we think about the research-policy-practice relationship in the context of poverty research and antipoverty policy and practice, and how future research can continue to shape how we understand this relationship.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

In this chapter, I will conclude the dissertation study. First, I will present a summary of the study's purpose and findings. Second, I will discuss how the study's findings contribute to relevant bodies of literature and to ongoing efforts to forge greater collaborations among poverty research producers and poverty research consumers. Third, I will highlight some limitations of this study. And fourth, I will discuss potential directions for future research in this area of study.

Summary of the Study

The impetus for this study was a concern for addressing the pervasive issue of poverty in U.S. society. Various individuals today call for the use of research in the design of appropriate approaches for addressing poverty in U.S. society. My review of organizations concerned with addressing poverty in the United States showed that university-based poverty research centers play an important role in conducting research on poverty and antipoverty policy, and additionally, that many of these centers aim to inform the design of antipoverty policy and practice. My review of literature on the research-policy relationship highlighted the need for identifying research producers and research consumers and the nature of their work in order to better facilitate relationships between them (Bogenschneider & Corbett, 2013). Thus, this study was designed with this goal in mind. If university-based poverty research centers are important producers of poverty research who also aim to inform antipoverty policy and practice, then it would be worthwhile to examine how these centers carry out their work with this effort in mind. This type of study is a part of a larger effort to describe the work of knowledge producers and knowledge consumers in an effort to develop better collaborations between them.

As a result of the study, I found that the two centers that I studied, the Center for the Study of Poverty in Society, and the Regional Poverty Research Center, carry out a number of

activities in their effort to inform antipoverty policy and practice. I also found that the centers have different rationales for the work that they carry out, but that these rationales developed out of a concern for understanding, measuring, and addressing poverty and inequality in U.S. society.

The Center for the Study of Poverty in Society is concerned with developing an infrastructure for measuring poverty and inequality in the United States. To that end, CRPS conducts and supports a variety of research products, with an emphasis on the topic of intergenerational mobility, and on quantitative methods. The center disseminates its research through a variety of mediums including seminars and conferences, publications, and its website. In addition to its research and dissemination, the center also engages in various activities to train and support scholars such as providing grants and fellowships and on-campus degree programs. CRPS also facilitates collaborations among various groups concerned with studying and addressing poverty and inequality such as center research staff members and staff members of government agencies. Finally, the study revealed that a number of contextual factors appear to shape the center's work including it's private university institutional setting, major federal source of funding, societal conversations about increasing inequality, and the background of individuals who play a role in shaping the center's activities, such as the center director's history of founding poverty research centers.

The Regional Poverty Research Center is concerned with facilitating partnerships among individuals concerned with addressing poverty. To that end, RPRC supports some research with a focus on developing projects on social issues that draw on the interests of university researchers and community partners. To disseminate research that it supports, the center hosts seminars, roundtables, and conferences; publishes two paper series; and shares resources on its

website. Like the CRPS, RPRC also offers activities to train and support scholars such as awarding grants and organizing seminars. And as the center's guiding rationale suggests, the center implements various programs to facilitate collaborations among poverty researchers and antipoverty practitioners including its roundtables, conferences, and one paper series. Like the CRPS, RPRC's work appears to be shaped by a variety of contextual and other factors including it's public university institutional setting, local foundation source of funding, societal advocacy for research to inform antipoverty policy and practice, and the background of individuals who play a role in shaping the center's activities, such as the director's training at a university-based poverty research center.

Contributions to Scholarship

This study's findings contribute to a few developing fields that I discussed in the literature review chapter of this dissertation. First, this study provides a better understanding of the nature of activities of an important group of poverty research producers—university-based poverty research centers. I reviewed scholarship on the relationship between research, policy, and practice. This body of literature is concerned with identifying: 1) research producers and consumers, 2) the reasons why developing relationships between these groups is important, and 3) factors that arise as these groups aim to collaborate. Bogenschneider and Corbett (2013), in their suggestion of an agenda for future research on the research-policy relationship, suggested that we continue to conduct studies to better understand the nature of the work conducted by research producers and research consumers. This dissertation study, as an exploratory study, has aimed to describe the work of two university-based poverty research centers in the United States. While over twenty such centers exist, while many of the centers aim to inform antipoverty policy and practice, and while the first such center was founded in 1966 with funding from the U.S.

government to develop solutions for addressing poverty, no prior study has provided an in-depth exploration of the work of such centers. This dissertation study has identified the work that these centers engage in, and the factors that appear to shape that work, thus, further contributing to our understanding of these important poverty research producers.

Second, this study adds to our further understanding of university-based research centers in the social sciences. While prior research has explored university-based research centers in the physical and health sciences (Boardman & Bozeman, 2007; Flynn, Brekke, & Soydan, 2008), not much prior research has explored university-based research centers in the social sciences. Prior studies have discussed the nature of the work of such centers in the physical and health sciences, highlighting the impact that such centers have on application of knowledge to society. Additionally, such studies discussed how participation in those centers impacted faculty researchers at universities (Boardman & Ponomariov, 2007). This dissertation study contributes to this literature by focusing on two university-based research centers in the social sciences which aim to apply their work to society. This study has also highlighted how the institutional setting of a university affects the work that the centers are able to produce and the impact that this setting has on faculty. For example, since the centers are housed in universities, often, the centers view academic audiences as a primary audience, even if the centers aim to influence some change in policy or practice outside of the university. Additionally, because some faculty who participate in the centers' activities come from disciplines that don't necessarily privilege applied research, those faculty may face pressure from their home departments to not engage in center-related work that is viewed as "applied" and therefore, less "valuable" than academic work. These findings confirm findings on the importance of institutional setting from literature focused on centers in the physical and health sciences.

Third, this dissertation study contributes to our understanding of the nature of poverty research in today's society. In chapter 2, I discussed O'Connor's book *Poverty Knowledge* and her extensive review of poverty research, and its relationship to antipoverty policy and practice at different periods in U.S. history (2001). Since that book was written in 2001, I aimed to understand what poverty research that is conducted today, fifteen years later, looks like. My analysis of the primary publications produced by the Center for Research on Poverty in Society and the Regional Poverty Research Center, and of the body of research conducted by CRPS showed that the research of the centers varies. While CRPS's own research is primarily quantitative and concerned with intergenerational mobility, the center has fifteen research groups which focus on different aspects of poverty and inequality, and which are led by faculty using a variety of research methods. Research supported by RPRC also varies, but maintains the requirement that grant recipients develop projects that bring together researchers and community partners in nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and foundations. Thus, this study helped to provide an up-to-date exploration of a subset of one group of poverty research producers. In addition to making contributions to scholarship, this study also contributes to the further development of the research-policy-practice relationship.

Contribution to the Research-Policy-Practice Relationship

In chapter one of this dissertation, I discussed recent conversations and policy proposals which advocate for increased use of research and evaluation to inform the design of antipoverty policy and practice. In chapter two of this dissertation, I discussed in depth the importance of describing the work of individuals and organizations concerned with producing research and with describing the work of individuals and organizations concerned with using research to inform this work. This effort of describing is important for identifying spaces for potential

collaboration among these research producers and consumers, as well as for identifying various aspects of the work of producers and consumers which could prove to be challenging for the development of collaborations. This study therefore, contributes to the development of research-policy-practice relationships by describing in depth, the work of two university-based poverty research centers which aim to collaborate with antipoverty policymakers and practitioners in varying capacities. By describing the centers' activities which are focused on the development of such collaborations, I have been to highlight for readers some important aspects of the centers' work. Hopefully, other concerned individuals can use these descriptions to inform how they can seek to facilitate collaborations among research producers and consumers.

Limitations

A few limitations related to this study are relevant to discuss. The first is related to the center participants in the study. My initial interest was in how university-based poverty research centers aimed to inform antipoverty policy and practice in the U.S.. Because I included two centers, and those were centers that agreed to participate, my inquiry was guided and shaped by the identities and contexts of these centers. Thus, if I had conducted the study using different centers, my findings may have been different. For example, both centers have received the same major government funding source in the past. This funding source has particular requirements for activities that must implemented by its grantees. It is possible that other centers, without that funding source, may conceptualize their activities very differently. In future research, I plan to carry out a more comprehensive examination of the work of university-based poverty research centers in the United States.

The second limitation is related to my ultimate concern—better facilitating the relationship between poverty research and antipoverty policy. Because my study only focuses on

the aims of the research producers—university-based poverty research centers, I have only highlighted one side of this very important relationship. In future research, I will examine the other side of this relationship (consumers of the research of university-based poverty research centers) and the connection between the producers and consumers.

Directions for Future Research

This study explored two university-based poverty research centers as a part of an agenda to develop an understanding of the nature of work of research producers and research consumers. Researchers interested in this area of work can extend this study in a few ways. First, future research can explore a greater number of poverty research centers. The methodology chapter of this dissertation presented a list of over twenty university-based research centers in the United States that are concerned with issues related to poverty and inequality. The two centers included in this study are those that were also concerned with informing antipoverty policy and practice, and that agreed to participate in my study. This means that there are many more university-based centers that are concerned with poverty and inequality that have yet to be explored. Future research could examine individual centers in a case study form as I did in this dissertation. Future research could also do a survey-style study and aim to explore a larger group of centers.

Second, future research could also explore the other side of research-policy-practice relationship. Given Bogenschneider and Corbett's (2013) call for conducting research to explore the nature of work of poverty research producers and poverty research consumers, future research could aim to understand the nature of work of the organizations and individuals that university-based poverty research centers aim to collaborate with. In my study, I interviewed one individual who was a former executive director of an affordable housing nonprofit organization, and who chaired one of the Regional Poverty Research Center's roundtables. The perspective

she shared was useful to understand the nature of the center's work from the perspective of a community partner. Future research, by focusing specifically on the organizations and agencies that university-based poverty research centers aim to work with would help us to understand the other side of the collaboration and potentially identify factors that could contribute to greater collaboration.

Given the pervasiveness of poverty in U.S. society, it is likely that individuals concerned with poverty and inequality will continue to endeavor to understand those and related issues, and to understand appropriate approaches for addressing those issues. With continued work in this area, I hope that greater strides toward alleviating issues of poverty and inequality will be made.

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Appendix A: Human Subjects Approval

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research
Office for the Protection of Research Subjects
528 East Green Street
Suite 203
Champaign, IL 61820

December 3, 2015

William Trent
Education, Organization and Leadership
368 Education Bldg
1310 South Sixth Street
Champaign, IL 61820

RE: *How university-based poverty research centers aim to influence anti-poverty policy and practice*
IRB Protocol Number: 16369

Dear Dr. Trent:

Your response to stipulations for the project entitled *How university-based poverty research centers aim to influence anti-poverty policy and practice* has satisfactorily addressed the concerns of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Institutional Review Board (IRB) and you are now free to proceed with the human subjects protocol. The IRB approved, by expedited review, the protocol as described in your IRB application with stipulated changes. The expiration date for this protocol, IRB number 16369, is 12/02/2016. The risk designation applied to your project is *no more than minimal risk*. Certification of approval is available upon request.

Copies of the attached date-stamped consent form(s) must be used in obtaining informed consent. If there is a need to revise or alter the consent form(s), please submit the revised form(s) for IRB review, approval, and date-stamping prior to use.

Under applicable regulations, no changes to procedures involving human subjects may be made without prior IRB review and approval. The regulations also require that you promptly notify the IRB of any problems involving human subjects, including unanticipated side effects, adverse reactions, and any injuries or complications that arise during the project.

If you have any questions about the IRB process, or if you need assistance at any time, please feel free to contact me at the OPRS office, or visit our Web site at http://oprs.research.illinois.edu.

Sincerely,

Ron Banks, MS, CIP
OPRS Coordinator

Appendix B: Data Collection Instruments

Document Review and Coding Guide

Document Identification		
Document Citation		
Document Type		
Document Source (where I found it; thus, where was this document disseminated?)		
Document Purpose		
Document Content		
Coding Category *(all may not be relevant to all documents)*	**Potentially-Relevant Coding Sub-Categories From Literature**	**Data from this Document**
Research Agenda	None	

Factors Shaping the Agenda	• Researchers' own, and Center's perceptions of poverty (based in factors such as discipline)
	• Researchers' own and Center's perspectives on "good" theories, methods, research (based in factors such as his/her academic discipline)
	• Institutional context
	  ○ History (date of founding, reason for founding, reputation)
	  ○ Relationship of Center to other organizations (networks and communications)
	  ○ Relationship of researchers to other researchers outside of Center (networks and communications)
	  ○ Policy
	  ○ Culture
	  ○ Type of institution: postsecondary or not; private or public; government-funded or not
	  ○ Belief in utility/rigor/validity of certain methods
	  ○ Government relations office/person
	  ○ Center's audience(s)
	• Funding sources (which privilege study of certain topics, use of certain methodologies, participation of people with certain credentials)
	• "Owned" by versus "affiliated" with college or universities	

Research Dissemination Strategies	• Targeted
	  ○ Individual meetings with potential research consumers and users
	  ○ Testify at government hearings
	• Open
	  ○ Post reports on center website
	  ○ Organize and host conferences
	  ○ Present at academic conferences
	  ○ Present at conferences aimed toward practitioners and policymakers	

Other Practices to Develop Policy-Relevance	• Training researchers • Policy seminars	
Most Useful Strategies and Practices	None	

Center or Center-Affiliated Research Publications Only		
Topics Covered	Source of Problem	
	Locus	□ Individual □ Societal
	Level	□ National □ Local
	Basis	□ Historical □ Contemporary
	Causes	
	Individual	□ Interpersonal discrimination □ Lack of training and skills needed to obtain jobs □ Family structure □ Cultural causes
	Societal	□ Policy to deny economic advancement □ Industrial capitalism □ Location
	Other causes	□ Fatalistic □ Biological □ Other
	Consequences	
	Individual	□ Developmental □ Educational □ Behavioral □ Economic
	Societal	□ Lack of contributions to economy □ Unfair use of government

		assistance
	Solutions	
	Individual	□ Education and work training □ Subsidies, cash assistance, tax credits □ Encourage individuals to engage in (or not engage in) certain behaviors
	Societal	□ Networks and resources to fight for political and economic rights in capitalist society □ Create jobs □ Increase wages □ Eliminate discrimination □ Address racial segregation
Ideological Perspective	Who should play a role in addressing the issue of poverty?	□ Individuals □ Government □ Businesses
Theoretical Approach	Methodological	□ Inductive □ Deductive
	Aims	□ Evaluation □ Collaborative, participatory, empowerment, etc.
Research Methodological Approach		□ Quantitative □ Qualitative □ Mixed
Identity of Researcher(s)	Center-housed researcher	□ Staff member □ Faculty □ Student □ Other
	Center-affiliated researcher	□ Faculty □ Student □ Other
	Non-center-affiliated researcher	□ Faculty □ Student □ Other
Stated Implications for Antipoverty Policy and Practice		Open coding

Observation Guide

Date and time:
Setting/event observed:
Purpose of event/setting:
General role of participants in event/setting (center staff, university students, all public, etc.):
Observer:
Format of data collected (handwritten, typed):

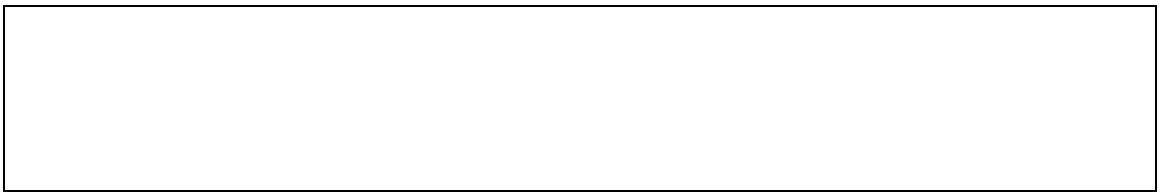
Initial Data Collected:

Observation	Researcher Thoughts and Comments

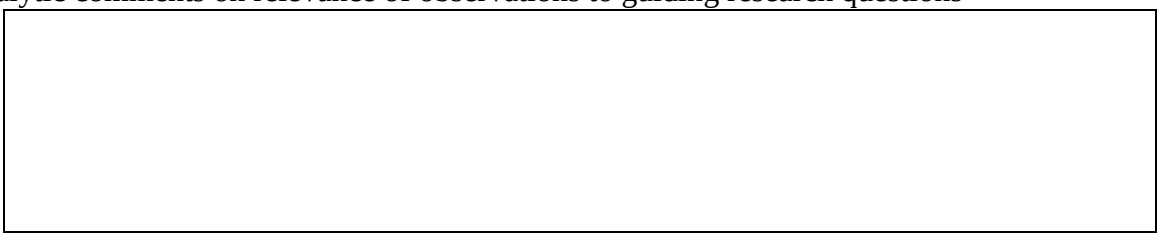
Data Summary:
Narrative description of context, including seating pattern, materials used, etc.

Narrative description of content, including topics discussed

Methodological comments on data quality (limitations and enhancements)



Analytic comments on relevance of observations to guiding research questions



Interview Guide

Introduction

(Informed consent process)

Thank you again for agreeing to participate in this interview. I greatly appreciate the opportunity to speak with you in person and get your perspective on the work of (Center name).

The purpose of this dissertation study is to better understand (a) what kinds of poverty research is conducted by (center name) and (b) how (center name) uses its research to influence US anti-poverty policy and practice. This interview is an effort to hear what you think about the broader guiding interests of the study.

Center Aims and Practices

1. First, I would like to talk about your time at (Center name). How long have you been here and how did you come to be involved here?
    a. Probe: Role, experiences

2. How would you describe the purpose and mission of (Center name)?
    a. Probe: Role of (Center name) in contributing to antipoverty policy and practice?

3. Could you describe some specific center practices that help to achieve this purpose and mission?
    a. Probe: Confirm any others I have learned about

4. Of those practices we just discussed, do you view any in particular as more important than the others for informing antipoverty policy and practice?

5. Think of a particular center practice which you believe has helped to bring about a change in some policy or practice. What did the trajectory of that practice look like?

6. If you had to characterize the research of the center, how would you describe it?
    a. Probes:
        i. Topics studied
        ii. Methods used
        iii. Researchers involved
        iv. Sources of funding
        v. Dissemination methods

7. In your experience, how do decisions about which research studies to carry out get made?
    a. Probes:
        i. Who makes the decisions
        ii. What is the process
        iii. What about decisions for how to carry out the studies and who will carry them out

Center Aims and Practices in Context of Publication
Now let's specifically discuss the publication that we emailed about it advance.

Originally when I emailed, I asked for you to send a publication which you felt was a good representation of the work of this center and which you felt was particularly useful for consumers of your centers' work.

8. What led you to choose this publication?
    a. Probe: Characteristics
        i. Topics
        ii. Research methods
        iii. Dissemination methods

9. Why is it useful for consumers?
    a. Probe: Are other publications of the center similar to this?

10. Those are all of my questions. Is there anything else I have not covered that you would like to share about the work of this center, about your role, or about anything else?

Appendix C: Recruitment Emails

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

College of Education
1310 S. Sixth Street
Champaign, IL 61820

Date

Dear (Director Name)

I am writing to invite you and staff members at the (Center Name) to participate in a study on the efforts of university-based centers to inform antipoverty policy and practice in the United States. The purpose of this dissertation study is to better understand (a) what types of poverty research these centers produce and (b) how these centers use their research to influence US anti-poverty policy and practice. (Relevant Center justification: Your center will be an ideal site for the study because of your focus on poverty as a local issue and your use of applied research and evaluation to study and address issues related to poverty).

The study will be conducted by Rafiqah Mustafaa, a graduate student from the College of Education at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) under the supervision of Professor William Trent (her committee chairman) in the Department of Education Policy, Organization, and Leadership at UIUC. The study data collection will include center document review, interviews with 3-5 staff members, and a center visit. Document review will take place remotely during January-March 2016 and the interviews and visit will be scheduled based on your center's convenience for March-May 2016.

This study aims to enhance our understanding of the contributions that university-based centers make to the body of knowledge on poverty in the U.S., and to policymakers' and practitioners' design of effective approaches to address poverty. Rafiqah would greatly appreciate the opportunity to speak with you to share additional details and discuss any potential concerns. If you agree to speak with her, please reply to this email indicating so. Rafiqah will then follow up with an email to schedule a phone call with you or your designee at a time of your convenience.

The attached informed consent letter provides more details about the study and your potential experience as a participating center director. If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Rafiqah Mustafaa at 215-384-3579 or rmustaf2@illinois.edu or Professor William Trent, her dissertation committee chairman at 217-333-6153 or w-trent@illinois.edu

Thank you,
Professor William Trent
Department of Education Policy, Organization, and Leadership
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

College of Education
1310 S. Sixth Street
Champaign, IL 61820

Date

Dear (Research Center Name) Staff Member

I am writing to invite you to participate in an interview as a part of a study on the efforts of university-based centers to inform antipoverty policy and practice in the United States. The purpose of this interview is to learn more about the nature of your center's research on poverty and the center's aims to use that research to shape policy and practice to address poverty in the U.S..

(Center director name) has agreed for (center name) to be a part of the study. The study will be conducted by Rafiqah Mustafaa, a graduate student from the College of Education at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) under the supervision of Professor William Trent (her committee chairman) in the Department of Education Policy, Organization, and Leadership at UIUC. The study data collection will include center document review, interviews with 3-5 staff members, and a center visit. Document review will take place remotely during January-March 2016 and the interviews and visit will be scheduled based on your center's convenience for March-May 2016.

The attached informed consent letter provides more details about the study and your potential experience as an interviewee. We believe your input will offer a needed perspective to our study. If you agree to participate in this interview, please reply to this email and Rafiqah will contact you to schedule the interview for a date and time of your convenience.

If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Rafiqah Mustafaa at 215-384-3579 or rmustaf2@illinois.edu or Professor William Trent, her dissertation committee chairman at 217-333-6153 or w-trent@illinois.edu

Thank you,

Professor William Trent
Department of Education Policy, Organization, and Leadership
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

IRB # 16369/December 16, 2015/version 2

Appendix D: Informed Consent Letters

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

College of Education
1310 S. Sixth Street
Champaign, IL 61820

Date

Dear (Center Director Name)

I am writing to invite you and staff members at the (Center Name) to participate in a study on the efforts of university-based centers to inform antipoverty policy and practice in the United States. The purpose of the study is to learn more about the nature of centers' research on poverty and centers' aims to use that research to shape policy and practice to address poverty in the U.S.. This form provides you with more information about participating in the study.

The study will be conducted by Rafiqah Mustafaa, a graduate student from the College of Education at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) under the supervision of Professor William Trent (her committee chairman) in the Department of Education Policy, Organization, and Leadership at UIUC.

The study data collection will include center document review, interviews with 3-5 staff members, and a center visit with observations. Document review will take place remotely during January-March 2016, and the interviews and visit will be scheduled based on your convenience for March-May 2016. Interviews will include questions about interviewees' experience conducting research sponsored by the center, interviewees' perceptions of the aims of the center's work, and interviewees' thoughts on factors which influence this work. Observations will take place at scheduled center events and will be decided upon in advance based on convenience for center staff.

The information obtained during the study will be kept confidential. Thus, your center will not be identified, and individual study subjects will not be identified in data reporting. The study findings will be utilized in the dissertation report being written by Rafiqah Mustafaa. Findings may also be used in scholarly publications or for presentations at professional conferences.

When this research is discussed or published, no one will know that you were in the study. However, laws and university rules might require us to disclose information about you. For example, if required by laws or University Policy, study information which identifies you and the consent form signed by you may be seen or copied by the following people or groups: a) The university committee and office that reviews and approves research studies, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Office for Protection of Research Subjects; and b) University and state auditors, and Departments of the university responsible for oversight of research.

This study aims to enhance our understanding of the contributions that university-based centers make to the body of knowledge on poverty in the U.S., and to policymakers' and practitioners' design of effective approaches to address poverty. (Center name) will provide an ideal setting to engage in this research given (insert reason).

We hope you will agree to participate and look forward to working with you and your center staff to carry out the study. If you agree to participate, please sign the attached form and return to rmustaf2@illinois.edu.

If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Rafiqah Mustafaa at 215-384-3579 or rmustaf2@illinois.edu or Professor William Trent, her dissertation committee chairman at 217-333-6153 or w-trent@illinois.edu

If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or if you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, including questions, concerns, complaints, or to offer input, you may call the Office for the Protection of Research Subjects (OPRS) at 217-333-2670 or e-mail OPRS at irb@illinois.edu.

Thank you,

Professor William Trent
Department of Education Policy, Organization, and Leadership
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

Please put your initials next to the statement that describes your decision regarding participation in this study.

____ Yes, I have read this consent form and voluntarily agree for my center to participate in this study

____ No, I do not agree for my center to participate in this study

_____
Center Director Name

_____ _____
Center Director Signature Date

IRB # 16369/November 19, 2015/version 1; University of Illinois approved consent until December 2, 2016

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

College of Education
1310 S. Sixth Street
Champaign, IL 61820

Date

Dear (Research Center Name) Staff Member

I am writing to invite you to participate in an interview as part of a study on the efforts of university-based centers to inform antipoverty policy and practice in the United States. The purpose of this interview is to learn more about the nature of your center's research on poverty and the center's aims to use that research to shape policy and practice to address poverty in the U.S.. This form provides you with more information about participating in the interview.

The face-to-face interview will be conducted by Rafiqah Mustafaa, a graduate student from the College of Education at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) under the supervision of Professor William Trent (her committee chairman) in the Department of Education Policy, Organization, and Leadership at UIUC.

The interview will be scheduled for some time during March-May 2016, based on your convenience during Rafiqah's visit to your center. The interview will last approximately 60 minutes and include questions about your experience working as a staff member at the center, and/or conducting research sponsored by the center, your perception of the aims of the center's work, and your thoughts on factors which influence this work.

The information that is obtained during this interview will be kept strictly confidential. With your permission, the information collected during the interview will be audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. Recordings and transcriptions will be kept on a digital storage drive held by the graduate student researcher. Data will be saved in files with passwords which will be stored in a separate location. The study findings will be utilized in the dissertation report being written by Rafiqah Mustafaa. Findings may also be used in scholarly publications or for presentations at professional conferences. No sharing or publication of the study findings will identify you or the center by name.

When this research is discussed or published, no one will know that you were in the study. However, laws and university rules might require us to disclose information about you. For example, if required by laws or University Policy, study information which identifies you and the consent form signed by you may be seen or copied by the following people or groups: a) The university committee and office that reviews and approves research studies, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Office for Protection of Research Subjects; and b) University and state auditors, and Departments of the university responsible for oversight of research.

Your decision to participate or decline participation in this interview is completely voluntary. We

do not anticipate any risk to this study greater than normal life, and we anticipate that the results will increase our understanding of research done at university-based poverty research centers and such centers' efforts to shape policy and practice in the U.S. to address poverty.

If you have questions regarding this interview or broader study, you may contact Rafiqah Mustafaa at 215-384-3579 or rmustaf2@illinois.edu or Professor William Trent, her dissertation committee chairman at 217-333-6153 or w-trent@illinois.edu.

If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or if you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, including questions, concerns, complaints, or to offer input, you may call the Office for the Protection of Research Subjects (OPRS) at 217-333-2670 or e-mail OPRS at irb@illinois.edu.
Thank you,

Professor William Trent
Department of Education Policy, Organization, and Leadership
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

Please put your initials next to the statement that describes your decision regarding participation in this interview.

____ Yes, I have read this consent form and voluntarily agree to participate in this interview.
____ No, I do not wish to participate in this interview.

____ Yes, I agree to have the interview audio taped for the purposes of transcription.
____ No, I do not wish to have this interview audio recorded.

_____
Participant Name

_____ _____
Participant Signature Date

IRB # 16369/November 19, 2015/version 1; University of Illinois approved consent until December 2, 2016

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

College of Education
1310 S. Sixth Street
Champaign, IL 61820

Date

Dear (Research Center Name) Staff Member or Event Attendee,

I am writing to invite you to participate in an observation as a part of a study on the efforts of university-based centers to inform antipoverty policy and practice in the United States. The purpose of this observation is to learn more about the nature of your center's research on poverty and the center's aims to use that research to shape policy and practice to address poverty in the U.S.. This form provides you with more information about participating in the interview.

The observation will be conducted by Rafiqah Mustafaa, a graduate student from the College of Education at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) under the supervision of Professor William Trent (her committee chairman) in the Department of Education Policy, Organization, and Leadership at UIUC.

The observation will take place at an event or in a setting approved by (center director name).Observations will focus on gaining a greater understanding of the center's research and research dissemination practices and will not include any information regarding the individual contributions of those present at the event. Observation notes will be handwritten or typed only. No audio- or video-recording will take place. Additionally, observation notes will only include data related to individuals who have agreed to participate in the observation and the observer will leave at any time if any event attendee requests.

The information that is obtained during this observation will be kept strictly confidential. Data will be kept on a digital storage drive held by the graduate student researcher. Data will be saved in files with passwords which will be stored in a separate location. The study findings will be utilized in the dissertation report being written by Rafiqah Mustafaa. Findings may also be used in scholarly publications or for presentations at professional conferences. No sharing or publication of the study findings will identify the center by name. Individual event attendees will not be identified in any sharing or publication of the study findings.

When this research is discussed or published, no one will know that you were in the study. However, laws and university rules might require us to disclose information about you. For example, if required by laws or University Policy, study information which identifies you and the consent form signed by you may be seen or copied by the following people or groups: a) The university committee and office that reviews and approves research studies, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Office for Protection of Research Subjects; and b) University and state auditors, and Departments of the university responsible for oversight of research.

Your decision to participate or decline participation in this observation is completely voluntary. We do not anticipate any risk to this study greater than normal life, and we anticipate that the results will increase our understanding of research done at university-based poverty research centers and such centers' efforts to shape policy and practice in the U.S. to address poverty.

If you have questions regarding this interview or broader study, you may contact Rafiqah Mustafaa at 215-384-3579 or rmustaf2@illinois.edu or Professor William Trent, her dissertation committee chairman at 217-333-6153 or w-trent@illinois.edu.

If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or if you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, including questions, concerns, complaints, or to offer input, you may call the Office for the Protection of Research Subjects (OPRS) at 217-333-2670 or e-mail OPRS at irb@illinois.edu.

Thank you,

Professor William Trent
Department of Education Policy, Organization, and Leadership
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

Please put your initials next to the statement that describes your decision regarding participation in this observation.

____ Yes, I have read this consent form and voluntarily agree to participate in this observation.

____ No, I do not wish to participate in this observation. *If you select this option, no notes related to you will be included in the observation*.

_____
Participant Name

_____ _____
Participant Signature Date

IRB # 16369/November 19, 2015/version 1; University of Illinois approved consent until December 2, 2016

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

College of Education
1310 S. Sixth Street
Champaign, IL 61820

This script will be read by a center staff member at events which the graduate student researcher will observe.

(Center name) is participating in a dissertation study being conducted by Rafiqah Mustafaa, a graduate student from the College of Education at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) under the supervision of Professor William Trent (her committee chairman), and Professor Bernice McNair Barnett (her research director) in the Department of Education Policy, Organization, and Leadership at UIUC.

As a part of her dissertation study, Rafiqah is observing center events and meetings such as this one. At these events, she is hand-recording notes related to (center name)'s research, research dissemination, and other policy-relevant practices. She is not recording individual people's actions or statements. She is also not audio- or video-recording.

If you have any questions about Rafiqah's observations or overall study, please see me for her contact information.

Thank you.

Contact information shared:

You may contact Rafiqah Mustafaa at 215-384-3579 or through email at rmustaf2@illinois.edu, her dissertation director Professor Bernice Barnett at 217-333-7658 or via email at bmbarnet@illinois.edu, or Professor William Trent, her dissertation committee chairman at 217-333-6153 or via email at w-trent@illinois.edu.

IRB # 16369/November 19, 2015/version 1; University of Illinois approved consent until December 3, 2016

Appendix E: Data Analysis Guide

1. Center's guiding mission
    a. Research-policy-practice relationship goals
    b. Setting the center's mission and agenda
        i. Who gives input
        ii. Process for setting the mission and agenda
    c. How center evaluates its attainment of the mission
        i. Changes in center activity participants
        ii. Changes in society

2. Characteristics of research the center conducts and supports
    a. Topical
    b. Methodological
    c. Espoused model of knowledge production
        i. Who makes decisions about aspects of the research process
        ii. Whose perspective on the subject matter is represented
    d. Participating researchers
        i. Academic and professional background
        ii. Interest in studying poverty
        iii. Demographic characteristics
    e. Process for conducting research
        i. Length of time to carry out projects
    f. How center mission is reflected in this activity

3. Center research dissemination
    a. Strategies
        i. Targeted
            1. Testifying at hearings
        ii. Open
            1. Conferences and seminars
            2. Publications
    b. Audiences
    c. Process to determine dissemination strategies
    d. How center mission is reflected in this activity

4. Center activities to train and support researchers
    a. Nature of training and support activities
        i. Research grants and fellowships
        ii. Seminar series
        iii. Skill development activities
        iv. Facilitating opportunities with other organizations
    b. Process for recruiting participants
    c. Characteristics of researchers who receive training and support
        i. Academic and professional background

        ii. Interest in studying poverty
        iii. Demographic characteristics
    d. How center mission is reflected in this activity

5. Center activities to facilitate research-policy-practice partnerships
    a. Nature of partnerships
        i. Policy roundtables
        ii. Poverty summit
    b. Characteristics of participating organizations and individuals
        i. Academic and professional background
        ii. Interest in studying poverty
        iii. Demographic characteristics
    c. How center mission is reflected in this activity

6. Relevant contextual and other factors shaping center's activities
    a. Institutional setting
    b. Sources of funding for center's activities
    c. Broader social, political, and economic context in which center operates
        i. Trends in poverty and antipoverty policy and practice
        ii. Conversations about poverty in society
    d. Individual actors
        i. Center staff and affiliates
        ii. Intended audience for center's work
    e. Nature of institutions with which the center collaborates

    Note: This is a cross-sectional code (I will document these contextual factors along with the codes to describe the center's activities)