NOT ANOTHER HILLBILLY SALVATION: READING WELFARE ASSESSMENT AS CONFESSION IN FIVE APPALACHIAN COUNTIES

A Thesis

by

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ABSTRACT

NOT ANOTHER HILLBILLY SALVATION: READING WELFARE ASSESSMENT AS CONFESSION IN FIVE APPALACHIAN COUNTIES. (December 2006)

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With the enactment of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRA) in 1996, the welfare system became more invasive through requirements for multiple assessments. In this thesis, I analyze seventeen qualitative interviews with welfare participants and workers in five Appalachian counties to examine the role of assessment processes in creating deserving and undeserving welfare subjectivities. Combining postmodern theory and qualitative research, I ask the question: how do local policies and practices produce "the Appalachian welfare participant"?

In Appalachia, the welfare system continues a long history of reform efforts claiming to promote cultural uplift among supposedly backwards hillbillies who don't know the value of "personal responsibility." I trace the complex history of Appalachian reform movements and the related claims of deservedness, particularly in relation to whiteness, that have been made about Appalachians and welfare participants. Just as Appalachia has historically become a "case" for the nation to "cure," so do individual welfare participants become cases, with the supposed goal of reform, but with a certain outcome of government regulation and control of their lives and resources.

Using Michel Foucault's concept of confession, I argue that local welfare assessment practices (re)produce a discourse of deservedness that affects participants' access to services and resources. Instead of engaging in the debate over the deservedness of Appalachians and/or welfare participants, I recommend rejecting and re-envisioning the terms of welfare subjectivity. Using queer theory, I conclude that rights-based and back-talking strategies for change often reify the oppressive subjectivities they are intended to refute. When we identify the production of welfare subjectivity and expose its historical and current social constructions, we can reject oppressive criteria for judgment and envision new possibilities for understanding welfare participants.

DEDICATED TO

my family

Carolyn Baird (1947 – 2006) for her inspiration

Mom, Dad, and David for everything

Angie Martin for advice and lifelong friendship

Katie Caggiano for the home stretch

and all my friends for their love, support, and patience.

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Introduction

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996: Scholarly Responses and New Directions

I have a girl right now that's on Zoloft and I really, I don't think she'd be in the shape she was in if she wasn't on that. Her doctor has her convinced that she's suicidal. No I don't think that's the problem. I think the girl just needs to get busy and get a job. When you have responsibility, and that was one of the things I talked to her the other day about. When you have responsibility, you have a set schedule, you have a job that you have to get to. You don't have time to be depressed. When you're working 40 hours, or plus, or in my case, I don't have time to think about my home life if I've got some kind of issue goin' on, because I'm too busy doing other things. That keeps you motivated. That keeps you pumped up. And I told her, you know once you got out and you hear everybody else's problems, yours doesn't look so bad. That's the one thing that I thought she needed to do was to get a job and that would help, part of her depression, not totally cure it. But it would help some. If you set at home and you look at four walls, that is depressing. She sleeps 'til eleven or twelve o'clock, she watches TV, soaps and that kind of thing, well no wonder the woman's gonna go crazy. I'd need Zoloft too [laughs].

-- Allison, Work Specialist, 2004 (on the benefits of responsibility)

One of the great innovations in the techniques of power in the eighteenth century was the emergence of "population" as an economic and political problem: population as wealth, population as manpower or labor capacity, population balanced between its own growth and the resources it commanded. Governments perceived that they were not dealing simply with subjects, or even with a "people," but with a "population," with its specific phenomena and its peculiar variables [...] At the heart of this economic and political problem of population was sex: it was necessary to analyze the birthrate, the age of marriage, the legitimate and illegitimate births, the precocity and frequency of sexual relations, the ways of making them fertile or sterile, the effects of unmarried life or of the prohibitions, the impact of contraceptive practices....

-- Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*

In the rural Appalachian area I studied, the current welfare system continues a long history of reform efforts claiming to promote individual, cultural, and financial

uplift among supposedly backwards hillbillies who don't know the value of "personal responsibility." Many scholars, activists, social workers, and some welfare participants conceive of the welfare system as a set of programs that can help people become "self-sufficient" if the policies could only be tweaked or overhauled in certain ways. Through seventeen qualitative interviews with welfare participants and workers in five Appalachian counties, I have come to see welfare not as a system that reduces poverty or helps large numbers of people "reform" their behavior and financial circumstances; instead, I demonstrate how the state uses the welfare system to regulate one of the nation's poorest populations.[1]

Welfare discourse in the media, the law, and practice shapes our understanding of the lives of people living in poverty. With the enactment of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRA) and the creation of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program in 1996, the welfare system became more invasive through requirements for multiple assessments, which are in-depth interviews into participants' work history, education, mental and physical health, financial status, and home life. In this thesis, I examine the role of welfare assessment processes in creating deserving and undeserving welfare subjectivities. Combining postmodern theory and qualitative research, I ask the question: how do local policies and practices produce "the welfare participant"? In other words, what does "women on welfare" mean in this small geographic area?

The discourse of deservedness can be found in the PRA and in popular discussions of welfare, but I claim that it takes on a specific meaning in the context of

[1] See Piven and Cloward (1993) for a thorough argument on the regulation of the poor labor force through the welfare system after 1970 (348).

Appalachia. I trace the complex history of reform in the region and the multiple claims of deservedness, particularly in relation to whiteness, that have been made about Appalachians and welfare participants in various reform efforts. Using discourse analysis and Michel Foucault's concept of confession, I argue that local welfare assessment practices (re)produce a discourse of deservedness in the welfare system that affects participants' access to services and resources. Through my data analysis, I identified seventeen criteria of deservedness that informants repeatedly referenced to justify assistance. As I moved through the research process, I realized that the intersection of "Appalachian" and "welfare participant" dramatically exposes the ways that the helping model of reform produces subjects through the discourse of deservedness; at the same time, this model uses the criteria of deservedness that it produces to mask the regulatory function of the system by labeling participants who do not "succeed" as "undeserving."

Using queer theory, I conclude that rights-based and back-talking strategies for changing the welfare system often reify the oppressive subjectivities that the system produces. As an alternative, I recommend rejecting and re-envisioning the terms of welfare subjectivity, rather than engaging in the argument over the goodness or deservedness of Appalachians and/or welfare participants. I begin with a brief summary of current federal welfare policy to provide a context for my argument, followed by a history of this project and a review of the welfare literature, before expanding on my findings and analysis of welfare reform in the following chapters.

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996

In August of 1996 President Clinton signed into law House Resolution 3734, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act. Originally drafted by

Republicans in 1994 as part of the "Contract with America," the PRA assured concerned taxpayers in the United States that welfare recipients were no longer "entitled" to anything, but would be required to work for their monthly assistance check. The issue of welfare reform dominated politics from 1994 until the PRA passed, and the heated debate about the PRA's massive changes continues today as the law comes up for revision next year.[2] Politicians in both parties promoted the PRA as the solution to America's social problems, citing crime, public health, welfare dependence, and the deterioration of "the American family," and they identified single mothers living in poverty as the root of these problems, which could be corrected through an overhaul of the welfare system. On the day the Contract with America was signed, Representative John Boehner concisely stated the purpose of the PRA to the House of Representatives: "Welfare reform: Replace the welfare state with programs which encourage people to work, not to have children out-of-wedlock" (1994). In his argument for the Contract and the PRA, Representative Joe Knollenberg explained to the House that "[...] we are in the midst of a social crisis. Illegitimacy rates are exploding. Crime rates are rising. Our cities are decaying, and millions of Americans are trapped in poverty" (1994).

The PRA pledged to end "welfare dependency," but more than this the PRA promised to decrease teenage pregnancy, "out-of-wedlock" birth, and even reproduction by poor women through state-sponsored abstinence programs, marriage incentives, and the new family cap, which "caps" the monthly assistance amount regardless of new births. The law can be divided fairly neatly into two major directions. The first,

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[2] The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 reauthorized TANF with new guidelines that went into effect on June 30, 2006. The Act increased the types of families required to participate in work and created more reporting and regulation of work by participants, workers, and states. The law also allotted 150 million dollars for "promoting healthy marriages and responsible fatherhood initiatives." (http://thomas.loc.gov and http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/ofa/drafact.htm)

referenced above, focuses on poor and working-class women's reproduction and relationship to the state through men and marriage. The second direction emphasizes transitioning participants from welfare to work, which involves work, education, and/or community service hours to fulfill "participation" requirements, and includes various new incentives to attain wage work, a GED, or a college degree.

The "end of entitlement" created a vastly different system and an entirely new language that now includes "sanctions." Sanctions allow case managers to take punitive action when participants do not fulfill one of the many requirements of the program, such as finding employment and working their hours, attending job readiness classes, or coming in for assessments. Sanctions could range in severity from decreasing the monthly benefit amount to taking away the medical card. Previously, case managers were merely "eligibility workers" who used a formula to determine eligibility for assistance and the benefit amount, and they monitored participants to prevent fraud. The PRA gives case workers a new kind of power, even more invasive and discretionary than in the past, and many new techniques and mechanisms for control.

The job of the case manager became much more difficult (and some say interesting) because of the complexity of state policies. At the most basic level, the welfare system includes three benefits: a monthly assistance check, a medical card, and food stamps, now in the form of a card as well. The system also involves incentives, benefits, programs, trainings, classes, and sanctions that did not exist before, each with its own intricate set of rules and time limits. For example, a "work incentive" may mean that in the first 90 days of employment a participant's income will not "count" in the TANF case, but this may only be allowed twice in a lifetime. And gaining employment

may affect the TANF case (monthly check) one way and the food stamp case in another. It is a very complex system, and some case managers and supervisors know policy better than others. The job of case management has become much more discretionary in the sense that many exemptions (from the time limit for example) are up to supervisor policies and case manager discretion. For example, some offices may give a domestic violence exemption from the time limit only with an Emergency Protective Order, while others may give the exemption with a corroborating letter from a witness, and this may change from case to case. The level of individual discretion in the new system has serious impacts on welfare practice that frequently go unnoticed in welfare literature.

The PRA's mandatory paternity establishment, child support enforcement, and work requirements link multiple government agencies such as the district attorney's office and the unemployment office together to monitor and regulate participants in new, more invasive ways. Participants must go through two initial assessments as well as constant progress and work reporting and monitoring, which the newest revision of the law increases (see footnote 1). Required classes may also involve testing for literacy levels and "employability" and personality tests. "Life Skills" classes may be assigned to teach "basic skills" such as personal hygiene and timeliness. From the outside, the welfare system can appear much like the public school system where case managers control the curricula that will assimilate participants into "proper American values." Case managers and social workers take on many roles as researchers, educators, counselors, and disciplinarians. It is not uncommon to hear a case manager compare her caseload to having many children or to being a parent or teacher. In the past, the case worker only used economic information to calculate eligibility. While home visits and

discussions of personal hygiene may have been state-mandated for the social worker (from child welfare), this was not the domain of the eligibility worker.

The linkage of government agencies in this quest to know and manage the welfare participant can literally be seen in the changing architecture of welfare that I observed during my research. Currently, new buildings are being created to house multiple agencies, insuring greater efficiency and new forms of spatial technology to control participants.[3] In the past, state agencies were housed separately and many were some distance apart because their functions were more distinct. While this still appears to be the norm, structural arrangements in some areas are shifting to house social services like Protection and Permanency together with Family Support. Additionally, the PRA resulted in the creation of new positions such as work specialists, transitional specialists, and safety net workers who cross over many agencies and often work in various offices on different days.

In practice this means that during an assessment, if case managers determine the need for a "referral" for domestic violence, drug abuse, or vocational rehabilitation, the participant can simply walk down the hall to the next assessment. In another example, if a worker concludes that the participant is a threat to the safety of their children, the worker can pick up the phone and have a social worker at their door in a matter of minutes. This new architecture of welfare has certainly increased the efficiency of localized state government operations and has made more visible and easily accessible

[3] Wanda Pillow (2000), using Foucault, notes the use of the space of the classroom as a technology for controlling and policing teenage pregnancy. In her research, she found that young pregnant women were hidden away and isolated from other students in classrooms in basements or other remote areas. She also noted that the desks they sat in were much too small for their bodies. The architecture served to stigmatize, hide, and punish them for their "deviance." Similarly, the spatial location of welfare works toward the control of welfare participants in the ways mentioned here.

the systems of surveillance available to the case manager. Case managers also noted that participants who have serious transportation "barriers" (another new term)[4] can now access services more easily and conveniently. The offices I visited are also located very centrally in towns, usually on the main road. While this may also be an issue of convenience and easy access for participants, the highly visible location of these offices serves to expose the participants' participation as other town residents see them or their vehicles at the office. In fairness, most businesses in these small rural towns are located on a small industrial strip. Other aspects of the welfare system such as food stamps and the medical card have become more discreet by changing to a credit card or insurance card format. This shift is part of an effort to mask welfare participation with "normal looking" payment methods and thereby decrease stigmatization; in contrast, the new architecture of welfare agencies in these small towns serves to expose participation.

As I mentioned above, the law also brought about many changes in the language of welfare practice. The discourse of welfare in recent history has mostly silenced any discussion of the children who receive assistance, or the real impacts and lived experience of poverty, instead focusing on blaming poor and working class mothers and fathers (in different ways) for their supposed cultural deficiencies. Despite the long history of this discourse, the name of the former entitlement program, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), did not reflect this stigma. In the current program, each new term seems to reflect and reinforce the idea that welfare participants need to learn a set of values and cultural norms that can only be taught through a system of tightly controlled rewards and punishments. This can be seen in the new program title,

[4] Terms such as barrier, participant, sanction, cooperative, etc. have come about because TANF is now a program with work requirements and related assessments, rewards, and punishments. This new language forms the discourse of deservedness that shapes welfare subjectivities.

"Temporary Assistance to Needy Families" (TANF), where families become stigmatized as both culturally and financially "needy." The "temporary" aspect emphasizes the time limit and the end of a program where every family in need (according to the federal definition) was entitled to cash assistance, medical aid, and food stamps.

On the local level of welfare language, "clients" became "participants." Today, you will hear case managers comment on whether or not someone is "participating," which indicates whether or not the person is involved in a "countable activity."[5] The new language is as complicated as the new system and its mammoth policy manuals, but essentially this shift in terms reflects the change to a numbers game where case managers, local offices, regions, and states have become highly accountable for the behavior of participants. For example, the state currently demands that case managers achieve between a forty and fifty percent participation rate (depending on type of family), which means that this percentage of their caseload must be in a countable work activity. This demand does not change, even if much of their caseload is exempted from the requirements due to factors such as attaining a higher educational degree, domestic violence, or disability. There are proposals in Congress now that would demand up to a seventy percent participation rate from case managers by 2010.[6] Fred, a case manager, explained the pressure to force participants into work, stating:

> For example, if my participation rate got below fifty percent, what I'd have to do, I'd have to case by case, call each of my clients and say, "hey, are you sure that this is the route you have to take?" And then on each client that comes in after

[5] Countable work activities can include job search, job readiness courses, job training, community service, vocational rehabilitation, and education. These are all time limited as countable except actual waged employment, which is the ultimate goal. Many activities are "allowable," but not "countable," such as working toward a GED or vocational rehabilitation beyond 12 months. For example, counseling is allowable but not countable, but certain types of counseling became allowable in the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005.

[6] See House Resolution 240, the Personal Responsibility, Work, and Family Promotion Act, currently in committee.

> that for a new application, well I have to try and steer them away from disability, have to steer them away from voc rehab, I have to do whatever I can to put them into one of their little countable components so that my numbers go up. Which, I personally I don't care about all that much. I take care of my clients, my clients get what they need, what they deserve, my numbers ain't there, my numbers ain't there. So, I've been chewed before, don't care to get chewed again.

Quotas abound because the new system works on federal block grants that are awarded in large part according to "participation" numbers, and only certain activities count as participation (see footnote four). The many "exemptions" for medical reasons and disability also leave the case manager without anything to "count." The new language of welfare reflects the local level emphasis on transitioning to work and the need for case managers and supervisors to attain their numbers. The new numbers game drives the entire system, and interestingly places state workers in a system of accountability, "responsibility," and regulation that is similar to the TANF system they enforce on participants.

If case managers do not meet their quotas, they can be reprimanded much like participants are sanctioned for not meeting work requirements. The punitive design of the welfare system is passed down through the hierarchy from the federal to the state level, to the district supervisors, to the county administrators, to case managers, and finally to participants. Case managers often use their own requirements as justification to participants for why they must find full-time employment, arguing that they (case managers) will be punished if they do not force participants to work. Supervisors hold case managers accountable for participation rates, because the county and state could lose funding if they do not meet the requirements; however, they also often collude to find ways to make numbers appear to satisfy requirements while making sure their participants get their GED or have a domestic violence exception.

The PRA includes another major change of a five-year nonconsecutive time limit created to reduce the number of people accessing TANF. The numbers "on the dole" were also cut significantly by the provision that legal immigrants cannot access assistance until they become citizens after a minimum of five years residence. This shift reflects and reinforces ever-increasing U.S. American animosity towards immigrants, particularly related to competition over quickly decreasing jobs available to the working class. While recent immigrants are required to pay income taxes, many citizens do not acknowledge this and thereby argue that immigrants sap funds and jobs from an already overburdened system. These provisions for cutting TANF numbers came under harsh criticism for leaving many immigrant families without any possibility of the small support they had previously received. Many welfare activists, liberal critics, and scholars have taken issue with every aspect of the reform, finding little that is worthy of support in the PRA. The massive overhaul of the welfare system in 1996 led to an explosion of welfare scholarship that continues today.

Scholarly Responses to Welfare Reform: Three Camps

As I began researching welfare reform several years ago, I noticed some patterns emerging in the scholarship. While some works in this extensive body of research were not easily categorized, I began to situate most scholars in three major groups of reform strategy: policy changers, myth busters, and paradigm shifters. Within these categories, we can see the scholarly divide between postmodern theoretical analysis and materialist social science research. The policy changers and myth busters tend to be social science researchers producing materialist scholarship and conducting qualitative and/or quantitative research, while the paradigm shifters tend toward more abstract postmodern

arguments. This diverse literature includes theoretical writing about welfare subjectivity, rhetorical analyses of the PRA, ethnographies of the experiences of participants, economic analyses, histories of the programs, and discussions of citizenship and rights. Within the literature, critics tend to concentrate on racism, compulsory heterosexuality, rights violations, forms of resistance, effects of capitalism, and many other problematic elements of the system. The literature about welfare reform is immense. In this section, I review the research most relevant to my thesis by focusing on scholars who best exemplify each camp, specifically those who deal with issues of welfare rights, race, Appalachia, and subjectivity.

Scholars in the policy changer camp take a revisionist approach by criticizing certain elements of the welfare system and recommending policy changes, thereby accepting the fundamental idea that the system can be remade to provide salvation (or at least relief) from poverty. Some policy-changers use rights-based strategies to make liberal appeals for legal change based on various kinds of rights (civil, citizenship, property, privacy, human) of groups or individuals. Most of these arguments focus on identifying the problems facing participants or the harmful impacts of the law and then recommend legal and policy reform as solutions.[7]

For example, in their 2003 report on the effects of welfare reform, the Institute for Women's Policy Research presented warnings about many aspects of PRA including work requirements, time limits and sanctions, lack of education and training programs, racial/ethnic bias, and labor market gender inequities (Jones-DeWeever, Peterson, and Song 2003, ix-xii). The Institute's report claims that time limits and work requirements

[7] For more examples of this approach, see Albelda and Tilly (2001); Brush and Higgins (2002); Ehrenreich (2001); Fording (2003); Polakow (2004); Poole (1997); Safa (2005); Stoesz (2000); Weber, Duncan, and Whitener (2002); Zimmerman and Hirschl (2003).

do not necessarily reduce poverty because participants are forced into a limited, low-wage, and gender-biased labor market; additionally, with its emphasis on transitioning from "welfare to work," the PRA enforces requirements that are more easily attained by white participants than by women and men of color. The report calls for a new goal of reducing poverty, rather than simply reducing welfare participation. Using appeals to civil and human rights, the Institute recommends the creation of a living wage, more funding for TANF and Medicaid, legislation to decrease gendered labor inequity, and expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit.

Another policy changer, Richard Couto (2003), argues that welfare time limits force Appalachian women into a terrible job market that cannot alleviate poverty, but will in fact make it worse, and he calls for more government mitigation of market capitalism. His claims rely on the notion of government responsibility to keep citizens, particularly women and children, out of abject poverty. While changing the time limit is an important goal that could offer some extended relief to many people, Couto's argument accepts the notion that the state, through the welfare program, is working to alleviate poverty. Additionally, Couto reinforces middle-class norms of individualism and personal responsibility by arguing that his proposed revision of the law would better encourage responsibility among welfare participants.

Gwendolyn Mink (2001) argues explicitly for rights-based change and attacks TANF's work requirements and time limits. Mink states: "The [TANF program] disciplines recipients by either stealing or impairing their basic civil rights. In exchange for welfare, TANF recipients must surrender vocational freedom, sexual privacy, and reproductive choice, as well as the right to make intimate decisions about how to be and

raise a family" (2001, 80). Mink also presents a feminist critique of the lack of childcare, the race and gender wage gap, and the emphasis on marriage in the PRA.

Rights-based, policy change arguments for reforming elements of the system are important because if they succeed in affecting policy by extending financial support, increasing food stamps, decreasing work requirements, and making daycare affordable, they can alleviate some of the burdens of poverty and the difficulties of the welfare system. While essential to making smaller, short-term fixes that can make life more livable, this strategy generally accepts the notion that welfare is a helping system that only needs reform to "really help" poor women. I claim that reforming welfare cannot lead to the alleviation of poverty in a system that actually exists to regulate the poor. Important changes can be achieved with the policy change strategy, but the overall circumstance of poverty will not drastically change for the majority of people. Because our economic system needs the working poor and the unemployed in order to continue functioning, the state cannot support a system that actually moves large numbers of people, especially women and people of color, from below the poverty line into the working and middle classes.

Another revisionist strategy that often overlaps with the policy changers described above is the myth buster approach.[8] Some qualitative researchers take this tack by outlining myths and stereotypes about women on welfare and offering up their research as the truth and reality of welfare participants' lives. Others use statistical research to challenge these myths. Scholars like Patricia Williams (1995) make essential contributions to this literature by exposing the fundamental racism of welfare discourse.

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[8] For other myth busters, see Cammisa (1998); Halter (1997); Henly and Danziger (1997); Hoechstetter (1997); Ozawa and Kirk (1997).

Williams demonstrates the ways that racist stereotypes, like the myth of the Black welfare queen, perpetuate a punitive welfare system and allow wealthier citizens to blame people of color living in poverty for social problems in order to maintain their oppression.

Karen Seccombe (1999) presents participants' life narratives as evidence that they are in fact responsible, hard working women facing many barriers to survival. Similarly, Sharon Hays's qualitative sociological study of women on welfare, *Flat Broke with Children* (2003), provides huge amounts of insider information on the experience of welfare accompanied by Hays's insightful feminist cultural analysis and policy recommendations; however, like Mink and Couto, Hays does not directly engage questions of participants' citizenship or the subject position of the social worker. She seeks to present different versions of the "truth" about welfare participants and the impacts of policy, rather than question the production of truth itself.

The myth buster approach provides convincing arguments to change the minds of some individuals about the character of welfare participants and reform, and I admit that I have wholeheartedly adopted this tactic in my Introduction to Women's Studies courses due to its strategic usefulness. This strategy can generate interest in the issue of welfare reform with its powerful claims of unjust stereotyping that appeal to many activist-minded people. I myself became passionate about welfare reform via myth busting scholarship; however, this strategy ultimately proves to be very limited because it merely exchanges one "negative" type for another "positive" type, thereby validating the criteria for judgment that we should be challenging (Cruikshank 1999, 107).

Myth busting does not challenge the assumptions grounding our understanding and judgment of welfare subjects, such as the notion that every able-bodied adult (eighteen-years-old and over) should perform wage labor and that this reflects "personal responsibility." For example, if we argue that women who receive welfare do not in fact have more children than women who do not receive it, then we accept and in fact affirm that there is something wrong with having more children and that it is okay for the government to set the terms of normal and deviant reproduction, as long as they get their facts straight. The myth buster approach fundamentally claims that if we simply know the truth about participants, we can fix the system; it does not acknowledge that the system largely creates participants and shapes our sense of who they are.

In the third category of scholarship, "paradigm shifting," scholars use postmodern theory to radically challenge common conceptions of the welfare system. These scholars, more than the policy changers and myth busters, provide a model for my study. One of their most important contributions is the insistence that welfare participants do not exist outside or prior to the welfare system, but are created through it. Edited collections like Adrienne Chambon, Allan Irving, and Laura Epstein's *Reading Foucault for Social Work* (1999), and *Rethinking Social Policy* by Gail Lewis, Sharon Gewirtz, and John Clarke (2000) shift the focus from considering who the welfare participant is (the search for the "truth" of the subject) to asking how and for what purpose that subject is formed.[9] Additionally, they offer new frameworks for understanding how power works in the welfare system and new grounds and techniques for subverting the system.

Paradigm shifting scholars create diverse arguments, just as do those in the two previous categories. Some paradigm shifters call for change and subversion within the

[9] Also see the work of Carabine (2000) and Finch (1991) for examples of shifting the welfare paradigm.

system (like the policy changers), but none of them accept the system at face value. A small group of paradigm shifting scholars have used Foucault to analyze power and subjectivity in the welfare system. In his discussion of welfare surveillance as a technique of state regulation, Ken Moffatt (1999) argues that if social workers operate from a self-aware framework and recognize their role in subject formation, they can use different subversive techniques within the system, such as changing their language or the physical space of the interview.

Laura Epstein (1999) traces the historical construction of social work as part of the social science discipline. She views social work as a "technology" of population management (8), a Foucauldian concept that sees science as a way to construct normal and deviant subjects who can then be managed in different ways. Epstein explains that the job of the social worker is popularly understood to be the normalization of the "deviant." She states, "the meaning of normalization is clear: to make to conform or reduce to a norm or standard, to make normal, by transforming elements in a person or situation" (9). The role of the social worker as expert and healing confessor is central to my confessional analysis of welfare assessments. As welfare subjectivities are produced, the social worker discovers and documents "deviance" and the undeserving aspects of the participant in order to apply a "cure."

Adrienne Chambon also focuses her scholarship on the production of welfare subjectivities, explaining that "in a Foucauldian sense, social workers do not really start from 'where the client is at.' Clients do not exist outside the historical activity of social work; they are the result of that activity. The starting point is not inside the client but inside social work" (1999, 52-53). In this statement, Chambon explains the notion that

subjects do not exist outside of discourse, but are produced through discourse. Welfare participants become possible through the language of the system.

In *The Will to Empower*, Barbara Cruikshank (1999) argues against the pervasive idea that welfare participants do not have full citizenship, and the related model of reform that calls for powerless subjects to become transformed into citizens. She calls this drive to correct the "lack" of power and to create citizens "the will to empower." Cruikshank explains that fighting for citizenship rights is a fatally flawed strategy because the will to empower *is* the framework that constitutes citizens and constrains their actions, but people blindly see it as the solution that will create citizens, masking its initial productive power. Cruikshank influences my argument by reminding us that welfare participants are not excluded from participation, but they are brought into participation in specific, punitive and regulatory ways.

Anna Marie Smith (2001), a feminist legal scholar, critiques the moral, marital, and sexual regulation of the PRA as a violation of participants' privacy rights through the family cap, child support enforcement, restrictions on teenage mothers, abstinence education, and marriage rhetoric. Because the PRA assumes heterosexuality, Smith claims that lesbians are inconceivable in its framework; but, all unmarried women on TANF become subject to government monitoring and reproductive control in different ways (303, 314). Smith views the sexual regulation of the PRA as part of a new "risk-management discourse" where women who participate in "high-risk" sexual behavior (mainly unmarried pregnancy) should be punished through the welfare system. This "neo-conservative" discourse often connects "risky behavior" with genetic deficiency and constructs participants as "risk choosers" who should take responsibility for their

economic status (306-307). While Smith bases her appeal on privacy rights claims, her central argument demonstrates the ways that welfare law constructs participants' sexuality. Her analysis offers a good model because she combines paradigm shifting with a practical way for welfare participants to make rights claims to affect policy; however, her assessment of welfare is very distanced from the experiences of welfare participants and she seems to make assumptions about practice through her interpretation of the law.

Following the work of Nancy Fraser (1989), Lisa Brush (1997) creates the concept of the "file person" to explain how welfare records (files) contribute to the social construction of single motherhood by turning the human being into the file person through needs assessment (721). In the process of determining needs, the social worker assesses the recipients' eligibility for and worthiness of assistance based on their "conformity to notions of proper, capable, and deserving motherhood" (722). Looking at hundreds of published files from 1900-1988, Brush quantitatively analyzes categories of single motherhood (widowed, divorced, never married) and evaluations of their worthiness (724). She uses discourse analysis to empirically demonstrate the ways that the welfare system enforces gender conformity through definitions of worthiness across an extended time period.

Brush carries out a similar project to my own in that she traces the social construction of single mothers on welfare by looking at welfare records (as I trace the construction of Appalachian welfare participants); however, Brush does not take the step of understanding this process as the construction of welfare subjectivity or discuss its impacts on welfare participants. She delineates the gendered evaluations of single

mothers (the production of norms through welfare) as they have changed over time. Brush analyzes published records rather than conducting interviews, and possibly because of this she does not consider the ways that assessment is an interaction between worker and participant; in contrast, my interpretation of assessment as confession emphasizes this interaction.

These paradigm shifting scholars ask broader interdisciplinary questions about the discourse of welfare, the meaning of citizenship, and the existence of welfare subjectivities. Materialists often criticize scholars in this postmodern group because they do not make practical recommendations for changing women's lives; however, scholarship that "only" offers new ideas about welfare can be as (or more) important than work that offers specific guidelines for change because changing the way we think about welfare is fundamental to the choices we make as activists. While acknowledging that changing minds is important, I have been frustrated by the many paradigm shifting scholars who leave the reader with lots of criticism, but without any suggestions for making change, so I attempt to bridge this gap in my project.

Dividing welfare scholars into these three distinct groups is a generalization, and it cannot be done neatly or with finality. It is a strategic division for the purpose of arguing for new dialogue about welfare among the three camps. If you were to peruse the bibliographies of the works discussed here, you would find at least some tinge of the division of the three groups with authors like Cruikshank citing Foucault, de Tocqueville, and Fraser, but not considering the work of Mink. Similarly, many scholars doing social science research are not using the insights of Cruikshank, Chambon, and others who have brought postmodern theories to the welfare discussion. This divide appears to reflect a

broader academic division among materialist research, understood as practical and useful for making change but often criticized as intellectually limited, and postmodern theories, which are often understood as intellectually superior, but criticized as intellectual play that is disconnected from "reality."[10]

In some ways, this is a disciplinary division, but it is also a question of accessibility to different audiences. Works by Mink, Seccombe, and Hays are highly accessible to the general public, while works by Cruikshank and Chambon will likely only be accessible to academics. Of course writing for different audiences is acceptable and desirable, but there is not a clear reason for these scholars not to interact with each others' work in their publications.

Using an interdisciplinary approach and finding a middle ground of accessibility is both possible and desirable in welfare research. In this project, I bridge the gap in feminist welfare scholarship between the humanities/postmodern theorists and the social sciences/materialist researchers. My research provides evidence for the benefits of work that is informed by both methods, and illuminates the potential pitfalls of remaining entirely entrenched on one side or the other.

Locating My Research in Welfare Reform Literature

When I began my welfare research, I based most of my understanding of welfare on the text of the PRA and on the work of feminist welfare scholars. I was interested in welfare subjectivity, or in the limits that the language of the PRA placed on the possibilities for who a "woman on welfare" could be. As I explored these possibilities, I began to question my assumptions about how the language of the law became implemented in policy. For example, the PRA insists on marriage as the solution to the

[10] See Ebert (1996) for a materialist critique of postmodern feminism.

"welfare problem" and single motherhood and absent fathers as the causes of "welfare dependency." Government enforcement of marriage is so central to the law that I easily fell into the assumption that this was somehow implemented and enforced in individual state policies and practice.

At first, I set out to do qualitative research with case managers, social workers, and welfare participants to provide evidence for my claims about the effects and practices of the abhorrent marriage and sexuality restrictions in the PRA. After my first interview with a case manager, I was quickly disabused of many of my assumptions, and I realized the massive learning curve that I faced. The biggest shock of my research was learning that marriage and sexual behavior restrictions are not built into state policy or practice in my research site in any direct way. While this does not mean that the language of the law, public welfare discourse, and the related emphasis on marriage does not affect welfare practice, it certainly challenged the central assumption I had made—the naïve idea that what is central to the law is also central to policy and practice. I quickly began to question the appropriateness of my initial methodological approach.

Through my research in a small rural Appalachian area, I learned that while we can think about effects of the law without local level knowledge, we cannot rely on assumptions about how the law works in practice, confirming my assertion that ethnographers and theorists (not mutually exclusive) need to interact with each others' research. For example, someone vaguely familiar with welfare reform could read much of the literature analyzing the Personal Responsibility Act and come away believing or assuming that the marriage and abstinence rhetoric of the law is implemented in practice in a simple one to one relationship. Some qualitative research, including my own, has

shown that these elements of the law are not enforced in state policy manuals and trainings. Citing her qualitative research in a southeastern town and large city in the west, Hays (2003) argues that the "family plan" of enforcing the morality of the law is not visible in practice, in comparison with the "work plan," or the part of the law that enforces labor force participation (23-24, 33-34).

Welfare policy differs across states and even from one county to another. Some aspects of policy, such as maximum income amounts, remain constant across location (within a state), but others such as number of home visits or attitudes about sanctions can vary from one local office to the next. I expected to find much more consistency than I did, and while I do not want to privilege the experiences of informants over other sources, local level research can significantly complicate the welfare debate. Although qualitative data often corroborates the worst fears of liberal welfare critics, it can also be useful as a challenge to claims made in the PRA when participants and employees reject the assumptions and emphases of policymakers. All welfare scholars do not need to pursue qualitative research; but, we should be careful to avoid making conclusions about welfare practices without examining them in specific local contexts.

My training in my Women's Studies Master of Arts program left me stranded in the middle of the scholarly divide between the humanities and the social sciences, and between postmodern theory and materialist research. The debate was powerful, causing large amounts of interdepartmental strife and finger pointing with the materialist anthropologists and sociologists calling the postmodern film critics "intellectually playful" and "bourgeois" and the postmodernists calling the materialists "out-dated," "obsolete" and (heaven forbid) "Marxist second-wavers." Because I have been

intellectually raised and steeped in Interdisciplinary Studies from my undergraduate through my graduate career, I desperately wanted to bridge these disciplines, methods, and theories; however, when I attempted to argue the need for materialist research using postmodern theory, I had great difficulty articulating this position and it was received (by some) with hostility on both sides.[11] As I stated above, when I began to seriously research welfare, I quickly recognized the need for both because I was not content to stop at the discursive construction of welfare subjects without discussing the material effects on women's lives.

This thesis adds to the existing literature a specific, localized examination of the welfare assessment process as a tool of state regulation of welfare participants in an Appalachian area. I make a strong contribution to Appalachian Studies scholarship by focusing on women, who have been largely excluded, and by analyzing whiteness in the region, which has been largely ignored (B. E. Smith 1998, 2004). The paradigm shifting scholars have begun the work of reframing welfare discourse, and my work explores how the power relations they describe function locally. Through this research and identification of welfare processes as productive of subjects, I seek to create new awareness of welfare subjectivity and new possibilities for subject formation. For example, if social workers question the ways that concepts such as "deserving" and "responsible" shape welfare subjectivities and the criteria for judging who is worthy of assistance, they may begin to articulate new welfare subjects and alternative possibilities within the system. Similarly, welfare activists could put energies into rethinking their

[11] I am not claiming that this is a neat divide or that all feminist scholars can be divided into these categories, but it is a division that exists nonetheless, and it extends beyond Women's Studies of course into a larger intellectual debate between the humanities and social sciences. The postmodern/materialist battle is also being waged within traditional departments, disciplines, and scholarship.

language, foundational assumptions, and strategies, in addition to working for policy change.

To begin making an argument for the use of postmodern theory and qualitative research, some explanation of this combination and definition of terms is necessary. Poststructuralists insist on the centrality of language in creating meaning, arguing that the discourses we have access to shape our understandings of our experiences, and our subjectivity (Weedon 1997, 76). Discourses are historically and culturally specific systems of language, or knowledge systems, that are never fixed, but ever-changing and contested. We know ourselves and our relationships to others through language, and there is no self that exists before or outside of language. Foucault explains the importance of discourse as a way to understand how power works, stating:

> Indeed, it is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together. [There is a] multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play in various strategies. It is this distribution that we must reconstruct, with the things said and those concealed, the enunciations required and those forbidden [with] different effect -- according to who is speaking, his position of power, the institutional context in which he happens to be situated.... (1990, 100)

Therefore, according to Foucault, we must analyze how welfare subjects come to be through language to understand how power works through the welfare system. Chris Weedon stresses the importance of poststructuralism to feminism, particularly in a feminist analysis of power relationships and identity, arguing that:

> Language is the place where actual and possible forms of social organization and their likely social and political consequences are defined and contested. Yet it is also the place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity, is *constructed* [...] Subjectivity is produced in a whole range of discursive practices-economic, social and political – the meanings of which are a constant site of struggle over power. (1997, 21)

Thus, understanding the possible subject positions of the "welfare participant" requires investigating the multiple, historically and contextually specific production and meanings of those terms in competing discourses.

In her more recent work, Judith Butler makes connections between material experience and feminist poststructural theory. She claims that a person's social intelligibility within certain socially constructed categories like race or sex determines our humanity and our access to rights (Butler 2004, 2); therefore, according to poststructuralism, understanding the terms of intelligibility is crucial to understanding materialist concerns about access to rights, privilege, money, and food. We need poststructuralist insights to understand that humanity is not a preexisting state or essence that constitutes rights, but is actually a discursive formation that we can contest and change. For welfare, this means that we can go beyond a humanist, individualist claim that all citizens deserve to eat (a leap for many) to explore the power relations of language that constitute some humans as citizens and some as not, or some as worthy of food and shelter and others as not. These are some of the material effects or the stakes of welfare discourse, which demonstrate that the study of language cannot be separated from materialist concerns, and in fact understanding language is essential to understanding the effects and consequences of power relations.

In terms of identity and rights struggles, poststructural scholars reject any universal, fixed, or essential idea of identity, such as the notion that we can talk about a welfare participant as representative of a entire, homogenous, group of static individuals who need to fight for rights; however, we can study dominant and counter-hegemonic welfare discourse, institutions, and practices to understand welfare subjectivities, and we

can expose contradictions and excesses and propose future contestation. Butler recognizes the need to use the language of a unified identity such as "gay" or "woman" or "welfare participant" to attain rights under the law, but she also recognizes the limits and the normative boundaries of these identity categories. Particularly, she emphasizes the sociality of the self or the need for recognition, which means that the self is always formed "in community" (Butler 2004, 21). Butler states: "Indeed, we had better be able to use [shared group identity] language to secure legal protections and entitlements. But perhaps we make a mistake if we take the definitions of who we are, legally, to be adequate descriptions of what we are about" (Butler 2004, 20). Butler insists on the crucial importance of rights claims and battles, which are often thought to be materialist concerns, and at the same time, she maintains a poststructural understanding of subjectivity, proving that the two are not mutually exclusive.

As I cautioned above with the marriage example, it is dangerous to make assumptions based on one context for understanding welfare, such as the law, policy manuals, or practice. By bringing in multiple aspects of welfare discourse and practice to a study of welfare, we can make more complex arguments that reject simple or universalizing conclusions. Qualitative research can illuminate daily circumstances and local practices with the specificity and contextuality that poststructuralism demands in its rejection of meta-narratives and stable and universal conceptions of identity. Using qualitative research, we can gain an understanding of welfare practices, adding another dimension to and often challenging the assumptions of a discursive analysis. For example, I could read the state policy manual and see that the state allows for an extension of the sixty month time limit based on domestic violence, but the meaning and

criteria for judgment of "domestic violence" remain open to interpretation. Through interviewing case managers, supervisors, and participants, I learned that domestic violence means something different and is determined differently by different individuals in practice. For example, some workers required an emergency protective order to justify the extension while others were satisfied with a doctor's letter or even a letter from a child in the family. Some workers considered actions such as a man keeping a woman from working or leaving the home a part of domestic violence, while others did not. This example also reflects the intersection of welfare discourse with other related discourses, which include discourses of domestic violence, race, class, sexuality, and the discourse of Appalachia, which I discuss in Chapter two.

My project considers a very specific population, rather than generalizing about the hugely diverse United State welfare population, as many scholars tend to do. The welfare system relies on the universalization and simplified blaming of poverty on the individual's lack of appropriate virtues (like responsibility). It is therefore essential to reject this universalization, because it leads to erroneous assumptions, and because it helps maintain the status quo. This thesis does not seek to uncover a hidden "truth" of welfare to be found within local level interviews, but rather it offers another approach for understanding how the welfare system produces and regulates subjects in a specific Appalachian area. This area proves particularly interesting in the welfare debate because the participants are almost entirely white, because of the long history of failed "reform" efforts in the region, and because the welfare system barely alleviates any of the "barriers" facing poor women who live there. My findings to this effect provide convincing evidence that the welfare system is not designed, and never can or will be

reformed, to uplift people from poverty; but, instead welfare works to define welfare recipients as "poor," categorize them as deviant (or not) in various ways, and to justify their abandonment by the state and the rest of its citizens.

In the first chapter, I introduce my methodology, research site, and my sample. This section includes an outline of the specific state and local policies and programs in my research area. I also introduce some of the obstacles in conducting qualitative research on welfare reform and discuss my experiences in the field. In order to preserve confidentiality, I chose not to reveal even the state where I conducted interviews.[12] I also provide vignettes of my informants to give an overall sense of experience and jobs of the participants, case managers, and specialists I interviewed as well as the different attitudes and styles of local offices.

In the second chapter, I consider the relationship of Appalachian and welfare subjectivities as they have been formed historically and currently through reform movements. I outline the history of reform in Appalachia and the production of stereotypes of the hillbilly and the hillbilly welfare tramp. Specifically, I look at the production of whiteness in the region as a criterion of deserving assistance and the relationship of the white hillbilly welfare tramp to the mythical Black and Latina welfare queens. My data analysis demonstrates the extensive influence of racialized Appalachian and welfare stereotypes on definitions of the subject "Appalachian welfare participant."

In the third chapter, I explore the production and regulation of subjects through the welfare assessment process as described by my interviewees and defined in policy. Foucault's concept of confession is a useful tool for understanding how, at the local level,

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[12] I use general terms, such as "TANF Office" and generic job titles, such as "work specialist" throughout to maintain confidentiality because each state, region, and local office may have different titles that could be used to identify the informant.

the many interviews between social worker and "participant" or "client" in the assessment process construct welfare subjects. Using confession as a framework, I show how TANF programs and assessments construct subjects that they appear to simply regulate. Using Foucault, I read the assessment process not as the discovery of a pre-existing subject, but as the creation of a subject that does not exist prior to this productive process.

My thesis demonstrates the benefits of combining qualitative research of local welfare practices and poststructural theory. Using the insights of many different scholars in the humanities and social sciences, I bring together multiple theoretical frameworks with substantial original data, and a discussion of the law, rights and citizenship in an effort to bridge the gaps between much of the current welfare literature. Conducting ethnographic research enabled me to recognize the ways that the discourse of deservedness produces Appalachian welfare subjectivities; furthermore, I discovered that criteria of deservedness affect services and access to resources for welfare participants. These findings provide convincing evidence of the need to challenge the entire discourse of welfare, rather than limiting the debate to rights-based claims for policy changes. Ultimately, I emphasize the potential for transforming welfare subjectivity on the local level and looking for alternative forms of change outside of the welfare system.

Chapter One

Methodology

In this chapter, I describe the demographics of my research area and the details of specific interview sites, my use of qualitative methods, and descriptions of interview and sampling procedures. Because I encountered multiple, significant research problems, I spend a considerable amount of time describing the obstacles and how I dealt with them, particularly the ways that I negotiated the welfare bureaucracy and Institutional Review Board procedures. I conclude with brief vignettes of my sixteen informants to provide a foundation for the interview data presented in later chapters.

Research Site

For my research site, I chose TANF offices in five adjoining Appalachian counties several hours away from my current home. The Appalachian area where I currently live survives on a tourist and university economy, but this research focuses on coalmining (and former coalmining) areas with very little tourism development. I chose coalmining counties because of my familiarity with the coal industry and its history, and because of the extreme poverty and association with high welfare rates in most coal areas. Abandoned coal towns, mechanization of the industry, and the shift to strip mining and mountaintop removal have left a high unemployment rate and environmental

devastation in these counties.[13] In County One particularly, there is a visible, massive class divide between the very wealthy owners and professionals and the unemployed or underemployed service sector class living in abject poverty.

In Appendix E, I created a table to give basic demographic information on my counties. This data constructs a picture of each county in a specific way, and is taken from institutions that regulate and monitor the health and poverty of counties as defined by the federal and state agencies, including the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), the county Health Departments, and the county family services offices. The purpose of this table is for reference only to give a general sense of the very rural geography, the mostly white racial makeup, the extreme poverty, and the low educational attainment levels. I included the section on "Birth and Family Makeup" to further illustrate the ways that welfare participants are classified by the state, through the categories of marital status, birth rate, and age of mother at birth. These statistics are often used to argue that mountain people have various moral, intellectual, and behavioral deficiencies that lead them to higher rates of welfare participation. My table consists only of statistics with no causal analysis because I am not making any quantitative claims; but certainly conditions such as the coal economy, poor education system, and lack of jobs with a living wage are causes for high welfare participation.

All but four of my interviews took place in the central county offices. Of the four non-central interviews, one was in a more rural satellite office, one in a satellite work training center, another was in a participant's home, and the fourth was in a participant's job site. Neither the University nor the state placed any restrictions on where the

[13] While my research does not focus on the impacts of coal, I found interesting, and not surprising, correlations between coal-related disabilities and unemployment, SSI, and TANF that I would like to explore in a future research project.

interviews could take place. Because most of my interviews were only vaguely scheduled ahead of time, they usually took place wherever it was convenient for the informant. For example, a worker would call another worker or participant and say, "Okay, drive here right now," and I did. All the interviews but two (with Rhonda and Sandy) took place when informants were working, reflecting the very limited amount of time my informants had for interviewing (or anything else), especially for participants.

In addition to conducting my interviews, I spent a good deal of time waiting in TANF office lobbies of seven different sites conducting some participant observation and becoming familiar with a central site where welfare "happens." As I mentioned in the introduction, one significant shift in welfare practices is happening spatially. In several counties, the state had consolidated multiple related agencies into one (sometimes new) building incorporating departments like Family Services, TANF, Protection and Permanency, SSI, and Employment Services. This reflects new linkages between previously autonomous agencies through welfare reform. When waiting for and conducting interviews, I could see the assembly-line style setup where participants could move from eligibility (check box), to assessment (check), to work registration (check), to targeted assessment (check), and on down the line. Workers also pointed out that if there was a problem, they could simply buzz on the intercom and have another type of worker at their door, ready to reform their client in the "necessary" way. All of the family services offices, big or small, old or new, were on main streets with high visibility. Participants going to these offices often park cars or walk to the site on the only major road in the town, essentially exposing their participation in welfare. In a system that has

made other efforts to hide participation through the "credit card" style medical and food stamp cards, the local offices make participation very visible.

These consolidated sites were sterile, government-looking office buildings (big gray concrete rectangles with monochromatic signs and state seals) with long fluorescent-lit blank hallways and yellowy off-white walls. The offices were not too small, and were often decorated with fake flower baskets, teddy bears, pictures of pets and children, cross stitch clichés, and plenty of posters giving parenting advice. The posters tended to take two basic strategic approaches – positive and negative reinforcement. One might illustrate the benefits of pre-natal vitamins, or the spoils of employment like a fancy car and a house, while the next one warns of fetal alcohol syndrome or the perils of teenage motherhood.

The offices are all structured so that the worker can input, read, and share information about a client on a networked computer system, with some restrictions. Workers seemed to indicate that they did not usually use the computer during assessments, but entered information from a paper form after interviews. Even so, the computer was always present next to the wall of filing cabinets, indicating that records were looming. One worker said that she could pull files for generations on some participants. Checks, food stamps, and medical cards come in the mail. This was a space of documentation, of recording, of people made into cases—a person at this desk, a file in a drawer, a file on a computer. It was not a comfortable space for me to be in and I always felt a bit ill at ease in the hallways because there was a sense that I was an intruder, an outsider who is probably okay, but might have ulterior motives. I had to be

led places, like the restroom, as if I might start grabbing files and forms at random, or spying on interviews. I was invited in, but with caution.

Of course not all of the sites were new, and the older, smaller sites felt much more relaxed and less intimidating. I visited two satellite sites, one in a school up a creek and one in a small town out in the county. I had been warned about the road on the former, and it was very badly damaged with huge chunks missing due to flooding that had happened more than a year before and had not been repaired by the county. I interviewed a participant at this site, which was a school being used as a training facility for job readiness classes. It was in fairly good shape and definitely offered convenience and accessibility for participants who live further out or who cannot or do not like to travel to the county seat. The satellite office I visited was very tiny. The parking lot seemed bigger than the facility, which housed about six employees in small cubicles with no privacy and a tiny kitchen with retro furniture. While privacy was possibly an issue, the site's smallness seemed somewhat in proportion to its traffic, and it offered local service and a small town government feel. I also interviewed one former participant in her home and one participant at her work-study job in a community college. These interviews were some of the most relaxed, partly because they were not in the space of assessment as the others were.

Methods Employed

I chose to employ qualitative methods in part due to the many feminist critiques of quantitative methods and the correlating support for the exploration of women's experiences through qualitative research. Feminist critiques of strictly quantitative research often focus on its positivism and its presumption of objectivity (Jayaratne and

Stewart 1991, 86). Additionally, some scholars claim that quantitative research alone is not inclusive of diverse women's experiences, because data is often generalized, universalized, and oversimplified (86-87). St. Pierre and Pillow argue against humanism and positivism for their assertions of objectivity, universalization of subjects, binary thinking, progress narratives, oppressive conclusions, and most importantly because they are "clearly not in everyone's best interests" (2000, 5). Other feminists make arguments for a feminist empiricism that challenges the problematic aspects of traditional methods, such as a belief in objectivity and the exclusion of women as subjects (Jayaratne and Stewart 1991, 85, 101-103).

Going beyond a critique of positivism, Joan Scott (1999) argues against the turn in feminist methods to "the evidence of experience." Scott claims that although many scholars argue against the unquestioned "foundationalism" of quantitative methods, they end up reifying experience as foundational by relying on experience as authoritative without questioning how subjects and categories of subjectivity are produced (1999, 85). Additionally, scholars citing the authority of experience may not implicate their own role in the construction of knowledge, thereby pretending objectivity (Scott 1999, 90). These methodological arguments support my claim that in order to understand the experiences of welfare participants, we need to ask how the subject positions available to them are constructed and negotiated by the participant.

Scott argues that using experience as evidence "precludes critical examination of the workings of the ideological system itself, its categories of representation [...], its premises about what these categories mean and how they operate, and of its notions of subjects, origin, and cause" (1999, 82). It is methodologically crucial to examine the

ways that categories and subjects are constructed through welfare in order to avoid what Scott describes as the limits of the evidence of experience. Scott argues that when historians rely on the evidence of experience, they gain credibility because the authority of the subject (as evidence) implies a real truth that is discovered by the historian (1999, 81-82). Using a Foucauldian argument, Scott recommends a new methodology focused on understanding and critiquing subjectivity. She states:

> It is not individuals who have experience, but subjects who are constituted through experience. Experience in this definition then becomes not the origin of our explanation, not the authoritative (because seen or felt) evidence that grounds what is known, but rather that which we seek to explain, that about which knowledge is produced. To think about experience in this way is to historicize it as well as to historicize the identities it produces. (1999, 83)

While I look to women's experience as evidence, I understand my interviews as dialogues where welfare discourse is produced and reproduced. While I do not see the interviews as uncovering some truth about who the participants "really are," I do view them as useful locations for understanding the language that structures possibilities for understanding welfare participation. I am to some degree assigning worker and participant experience a higher degree of authority as evidence for local practice than other texts, such as the Personal Responsibility Act.

I sought to collect data on the ways that local discourse and practices incorporate and produce welfare subjectivities through the lens of deservedness. It would be possible to create a set of terms and attempt to quantify deservedness, but my difficulties in attaining a large sample would make quantitative conclusions difficult and possibly unconvincing. Perhaps more importantly, I do not attempt to make truth claims about amounts or frequencies of welfare discourses and practices; instead, I describe how deservedness is produced, defined, constrained, and resisted. Quantitative research

implies a factual conclusion, a truth uncovered through numbers. In some cases, numbers can certainly be useful. For example, the number of people living in poverty in an area can say something about quality of life, as can high unemployment rates, but these conclusions are very limited. I do not examine "truths" about welfare, but look at the ways that language shapes the possibilities for how we understand welfare participants, how they move through the system, and what services and assistance they can access.

Using qualitative research in the form of semi-structured interview allowed me to record and analyze the terms informants use to understand the welfare process. At the same time, I was obviously not just a passive or unbiased observer. My questions, assumptions about my identity and my informants, and the circumstances and environments of the interview, all come together to create specifically situated dialogues and (re)produce welfare subjectivities. I seek to expose the ways that "truth" about welfare participants is constructed through discourse in very specific ways through history, region, the law, local practice, and even through my own interviews. One goal of the project, and part of my feminist methodology, is to expose "deserving" subjectivities and to offer an alternative in my use of language about welfare subjects that rejects the punitive terms of deservedness.

Interview Procedures and Questions

I collected my data through seventeen qualitative, semi-structured interviews in five counties beginning with an initial research period in March and April of 2004, and ending with a second set of interviews carried out from August to October of 2005. I conducted six initial interviews in one county and later had to expand the research to include four more counties and eleven more interviews, due to extreme difficulties in

accessing informants. I interviewed sixteen informants using a semi-structured style, generally following the questions listed in Appendices A and B. In each interview, I changed the focus of the questions and added probes not listed in the appendix based on the different jobs or type of participation of the informants. The initial set of questions focused on the Personal Responsibility Act and how it was translated into policy, specifically elements about marriage, sexual, and reproductive behavior. When I began interviewing again, I expanded questions about assessment and added questions about citizenship, responsibility, and independence to reflect my new focus.

Most interviews lasted between one and a half to two hours. I tape recorded and transcribed fifteen interviews and I conducted two impromptu interviews, which I recorded through note-taking. One of the unrecorded interviews took place with a supervisor during an hour-long wait between other interviews, and she was the only supervisor who took that much time to speak with me. The other informal interview was a follow-up with my initial contact person, a case manager, to clarify some basic TANF policies and practices.

All interviews began with the informed consent found in Appendices C and D. The informed consent ensured complete confidentiality of individual, county, and state names. I concealed names in the transcription and destroyed the tapes upon completion of transcriptions. Job titles, agency names, and programs and service titles have also been altered to maintain confidentiality as these vary from state to state and even by county. Even with these precautions and assurances, it proved very difficult to procure informants, be they workers or participants. I discuss possible explanations for this

problem below. The informed consent forms also changed between the two periods of data collection due to approval by and requirements of the state.

The semi-structured interview fit my project because of time constraints, one-time interviewing opportunities, and the specific research focus. Since I only interviewed participants once (except one), I needed to structure interviews to take maximum advantage of the time. In the second set of interviews, the state required me to limit time spent to one hour, but this proved nearly impossible because most of my informants had a great deal to say about welfare reform. Variation in perspective, interest, employment, age, marital status, and type of participation meant that informants focused on different areas of the interview, which led to various probe directions.

In the case of welfare, the structured interview format is quite familiar as the core of the TANF eligibility and assessment process. Although TANF participants are constantly questioned by social workers, in this project social workers also became informants, and I took the role of the expert who analyzes the data. While the workers I interviewed shared a great deal of information, this role reversal may have kept some from participating. TANF participants may have refused to be interviewed for many reasons, not least of which is the constant barrage of questioning and forms they already have to endure. Participation was completely voluntary and without any form of compensation. Those who agreed to be interviewed expressed a desire to be helpful, an interest in welfare reform, and a desire for the input to be heard.

Sample

At the outset, I approached this project with a naïve excitement about the many interviews that lay ahead with welfare participants. I planned to focus on TANF

participants and to attain a snowball sample from my initial contact with one social worker. When my attempts at this type of sample failed (see below), I expanded my research to include both participants and TANF workers and I created what Russell Bernard (2002) calls a "purposive" or "judgment" sample. Bernard explains this type of sample as a "take what you can get" approach that must often be used in qualitative research with groups that are difficult to access (2002, 182-184). In this case, my research has a specific focus on welfare subjectivity in an Appalachian coalmining area, limited to one state, which created a narrow pool of informants. While I certainly sought out and found participants with extensive knowledge of welfare practices in Appalachia, in many ways my informants chose me more than I was able to choose them. The strongest reason for my specific sample comes from the red tape of state government agencies, the necessary confidentiality requirements for participants, and my lack of contact with the community, which I discuss below.

Because of my research size and method, this sample is in no way representative of participants in these five counties. My sample of workers is more representative because I interviewed a significant percentage of workers in the main county offices, but I still would not claim a representative sample. This type of sample makes sense with my research design, and it is large enough to make some conclusions and to ask questions for future research. My informants provided plenty of material for a discourse analysis that informs readers about conceptions of welfare participants and the complexity of welfare practices in this limited research area. If I conduct further welfare research, I plan to become a resident observer and extend the time period to eliminate some basic obstacles such as travel time and to make more contacts and build trust in the community.

Research Problems

I encountered many problems with my research, mainly in locating voluntary participants and navigating the bureaucracy of the welfare system. The roadblocks I encountered made the interview process daunting and exhausting, and they significantly limited my sample. Bias of the sample can be a significant problem with snowball and judgment samples. Because most of my contacts came through workers, my participant sample was already very limited. It seemed likely that workers may only refer participants who would give a positive perspective on their experience, although that was not always what happened in my interviews. Participants could also fear that I would report back to the workers, or that the small size of the study put their anonymity at risk, although no participant expressed this fear. Each time I asked for additional participant contacts I was met with hesitation. Workers claimed that they have a hard enough time getting many participants to come to their required meetings and did not seem to think it worth trying to set up meetings. Many told me that participants might not show up to a scheduled meeting.

Other times workers expressed concern for my safety (which I did not share for the most part), and they sometimes doubted my willingness to go out to remote areas for interviews. Workers also emphasized that the conditions of the homes of many participants could be shocking and disturbing, and made statements to the effect that they would not consider sending me. Some of them may have felt protective of their clients and suspicious of my intentions and potential judgment. Poor Appalachian areas have been on a kind of nationwide "poverty parade" since the War on Poverty of the 1960's and some workers and participants may have felt resistance to this voyeuristic tendency.

Workers often seemed to identify me as middle-class, which they (sometimes directly) associated with their own economic status, and many of them referred to "our lifestyle" or "our homes" or "like you and me" and made contrasts to those of participants' culture, lives, and environments. Although I always gave my "Appalachian credentials" and expressed my familiarity with the specific areas where I interviewed, I seemed to be pegged as an outsider and sometimes as an urban dweller, presumably because my accent has faded some and I'm pursuing graduate work in another state. My outsider status and an initial confusion and suspicion of just what I was doing remained fairly consistent and created some research barriers that I attempted to alleviate through developing trust in the interview, showing interest in informants' knowledge, and explaining my research and connections to the area.

I quickly found that gaining interviews with participants and social workers would prove most difficult. Additionally, trying to coordinate meetings with people I had never met in another state with significant drive time was also quite daunting, and many people did not understand why I wanted to come to their area and conduct interviews. If I had a connection with a state university in this state, I might have had an easier time making contacts and appearing credible upon first contact. As it was, it took a good deal of explaining, letter writing, phone calls, and navigating the state welfare bureaucracy to gain access to the territory of local welfare practice. Many folks seemed to hope I would go away and attempted to ignore me, while others were helpful and accommodating from the start.

During my first research period, I interviewed workers and participants in one county with Appalachian State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, but

without state approval, as I was unaware of the existence and requirements of the state's separate IRB.[14] My first contact came through a relative who put me in contact with a case manager who agreed to an interview. Of course I also received approval from the University IRB and from the supervisor of the county TANF office, Christina. Christina reluctantly approved interviews of two case managers and allowed me to distribute flyers in the local office soliciting participants to be interviewed; however, she always avoided our meetings and seemed a bit hostile and suspicious.

After the TANF supervisor approved the project, I sent her a package of 32 self-addressed stamped flyers to be distributed to participants, who would send me back a flyer to volunteer for the study (see Appendix F); I presented the study as research into participants' experiences of the 1996 reform and its new requirements. I never saw any of those flyers again. As I mentioned above, the study offered no compensation and potentially involved interviews in participants' homes. This posed a problem because participants may not want anyone else coming to their home or interviewing them, as they endure forced home visits and many interviews as a part of their TANF participation.

After about two weeks without any replies, I contacted Christina again, asking for help. At this time, I only had one willing interviewee, a case manager whom I later interviewed. The coordinator found one employee, the transitional specialist (as I will call her), who was willing to be interviewed. That interview led to a second interview with a participant. After these initial interviews, I requested more help from everyone I had interacted with. I gave my address, email address, and phone numbers. Three weeks later, after several unreturned phone calls and emails to the coordinator and a case

[14] As soon as I became aware of the state's departmental IRB, I obtained approval, as explained below.

worker, I received a cryptic phone message, from the coordinator, indicating that no one was interested in participating in my project, but I could come in anyway. What followed was a strange succession of evasions by the coordinator, and a few chance meetings with willing workers.

The coordinator did help me schedule one more interview with the work specialist, but that was after she recommended that I go to another county to interview workers. I was told to come back the next week to get more participant interviews. We had several meetings scheduled, for which I drove many hours, and she would sometimes simply exit from the back door leaving me in the waiting room without explanation. After I was left in the lobby for several hours, staring at the box of free McDonald's happy meal toys and reading posters about folic acid and heating bills, I finally asked to see a case worker I had met. Through that meeting, a few phone calls, and driving halfway across the county and back across again, I managed to get two more participant interviews.

My first set of interviews was riddled with mixed reception that included friendliness, but also suspicion and secrecy. Christina told me that case managers did not have time, but a case manager told me (off the record) that they were just "ornery" and too afraid that what they said would get back to someone and there would be retaliation. Christina also indicated that the governor had recently put out a memo essentially warning state employees "not to talk to anyone." Although I made many attempts at securing more interviews through this office through flyers, phone calls, emails, and personal visits, I only conducted six interviews with two workers and three participants in

this county. At the time, this appeared to be a major disappointment, but in the end it proved to be a "cooperative" county compared to others I contacted.

I have no way of knowing how the study was presented to workers, or if the flyers were ever distributed to participants. Most of the workers who did meet with me were very open and friendly. Workers were sometimes hesitant about giving me blank copies of the state TANF assessment forms and other program information. My experience with the CBS office and the coordinator was one of a concealed, but supposedly public, world that resisted exposure and outsider analysis. I suspect that there was some degree of sabotage or at least hesitancy to promote this study, but it is also possible that people were simply too busy, not interested, or a bit of both.

Over a year after my first interviews, I received renewed IRB approval from Appalachian State University to continue this research as a thesis and began interviewing again in August of 2005, but this time I hit the bureaucratic brick wall of the state's welfare department to a much greater degree than before. Luckily I was able to scale it fairly quickly. I initiated contact with eleven additional counties to expand my research area. I began contact with a letter to the local office supervisor in each county explaining my research and asking for permission to interview their workers and participants, and I followed up with a phone call and emails. The response varied greatly from county to county. A few supervisors appeared relaxed about the details and immediately agreed to help. Several offices were greatly understaffed and cited heavy caseloads as the reason their workers could not be interviewed—they simply said no and that was it.

When I asked for help recruiting participants, many coordinators went silent, claimed that they were not permitted to, or just flat out refused. The most common

response to requests for any interviews was to send me up the long chain of bureaucratic command searching for research approval. I started to get the sense that the supervisors were talking to each other about me and had decided as a group to send me higher to cover their backs, an understandable response in a system with rampant job cuts and extremely high demands on workers. This led me to the state's IRB and a long approval process that was mercifully expedited as much as possible by the state's IRB administrator.

The biggest obstacle to state welfare department IRB approval was one regional case manager. She complained to the state Institutional Review Board that she was too understaffed to meet her numbers and that she could not possibly allow her workers to be interviewed. After I spoke with this supervisor and the IRB administrator, it seemed certain that my research would be denied. I think they thought I would give up, but instead I wrote a letter noting the very minimal amount of time and employees that would be required for my study. Luckily, the IRB administrator worked with me, writing emails on my behalf, to convince the Secretary of the Department to approve my research with the one-hour time restriction and a limit of eight interviews per region, which they interpreted as four workers and four participants.

In the end, although I initially contacted supervisors in twelve counties, three regional coordinators, and many other workers, I was only able to attain these seventeen interviews. Certainly job cuts, early retirements, very limited staff, and the pressure of numbers requirements all played a role in hindering my research. In a broader sense, the bureaucratic hierarchy always seemed to loom ominously over my letters, emails, and

phone calls, with each employee passing me off to someone higher up and fearful that I was somehow not approved.

Even with approval, some supervisors were simply not going to allow me to conduct interviews. One even told me that her regional supervisor would not allow me to interview in her county because she was too understaffed. I was not able to attain any interviews in counties in my third desired region. As I mentioned above, the new gubernatorial administration generated some fear about bad press, or any press. The state bureaucracy was the most difficult element to overcome, but it was also local circumstances and individual personalities, because my experience differed from one region and one supervisor to the next.

The one-hour time limit and participation limits set by the state IRB were very difficult to stick to, and they discouraged coordinators from helping me find more participants or permitting their workers to participate. This only added to my difficulty in procuring voluntary informants. Another problem of anonymity arose from the requirement of state approval because each employee's copy of their consent form was filed in their record at the local office, along with a copy of the state IRB approval letter. It seems likely that this contributed to many workers' refusal to participate.

In terms of participants, I had a very difficult time recruiting informants. Even when I did have meetings set up, sometimes I would drive for hours and the informant would not come to the meeting. A sampling problem occurred in that all of the participants I interviewed came through the workers in the local offices. Usually they would refer me to a client who had agreed to be interviewed and I would make the contact, but sometimes the worker set up the meeting for me. Although I attempted to

create a snowball sample from one participant to another, none of my informants came this way. No participants recommended other participants for interviews. Communication and location were certainly obstacles. I had no local phone number and lived hours away from my research site, making it difficult to make contact and schedule meetings. Despite all of these obstacles, I conducted seventeen interviews with voluntary informants who went out of their way to be interviewed. I greatly appreciate their time and participation.

Informant Vignettes

Of my seventeen informants, I interviewed twelve workers and five participants.[15] I did not record informants' ages, but they ranged from the mid-thirties to the early sixties. All of my informants seemed to self-identify as white, and they all responded to questions about race with an initial response that their local populations are almost entirely white.[16] Six of the workers were case managers, one was a coordinator, one a supervisor, and four were specialized workers. The workers had varying levels of education, experience, and differing approaches. In the welfare process, case managers do everything from initial eligibility assessments, to creating plans for participation, making referrals, imposing sanctions, making home visits, investigating fraud claims, and making reports to coordinators and supervisors. The coordinator's job is to oversee case managers, "reading behind" their work ensure that workers follow policy. She also

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[15] The General Assistance Specialist is counted as both a worker and a participant. The participant who conducted her work study doing secretarial work at the Family Services Office was counted only as a participant. Of my two informal, unrecorded interviews, one was with an additional informant, the supervisor.

[16] The racial makeup of my informants, while typical for the area, reflects a flaw in the data. In a very rural part in one of my research counties, there is a small and unique Black community that I should have attempted to access, but I did not learn of it until late in the study. While interviews with Black workers and participants would not have provided some fictitious "Black perspective," it seems likely that these interviews would reflect different experiences in unknown ways.

handles complaints, disputes, and fraud claims. The coordinator I interviewed worked between two offices in different counties. She reports to the local (in-office) supervisor as well as the regional supervisor who oversees five counties or more. I interviewed a county supervisor informally in her office between other interviews. According to multiple workers, the supervisor and coordinator set the tone, expectation, and attitude for the style of social service provided in the office, although of course it is not always followed by all employees. Although all the workers I interviewed have fairly specific job descriptions, they also have a great deal of discretion and each worker described many tasks that they complete only for specific cases, such as finding clothes, helping with a move, or calling an employer.

Specialized Workers

The four specialized workers gave particularly interesting interviews because they do not have to deal with eligibility and they are usually more intimately involved with participants than case managers. My first interview was with Jean, the Transitional Specialist,[17] whose position was created by the 1996 reform to help transition families off of welfare who are discontinued due to the sixty-month time limit or due to a sanction (non-participation). She has held this job for three years, but has worked for the Department in the central office of County 1 for almost thirty years. When TANF participants become discontinued, Jeanie invites them to participate in her program, and if they agree, she conducts a safety net assessment to determine their goals and help them develop their own plan for how they are going to make it. The safety net program has several hundred dollars available for clients who participate to help with bills, car repairs,

[17] All names have been changed to protect the identity of the informant. All titles have been changed to protect the identity of the state because job titles and some positions are state specific.

and anything else that would "make them employable." Like other welfare workers, she is very tapped into other community agencies and works to find new resources for her clients. An example would be connecting clients to an agency that helps with electric bills in winter or one that helps families put in septic systems.

Allison, the Work Specialist, has worked in a tiny satellite office in a rural community in County 1 for about a year. Before this job, she worked in with the media for twenty years and she has many connections in the community. She had a period of unemployment for a short time and had little luck with the Department of Employment. In her current position, she works with TANF participants to help prepare them for jobs, locate jobs, and maintain jobs, and she claims to be much more involved and successful than the Department of Employment. She describes her job as that of a confidant, a parent, a teacher, and a mentor. All participants who do not have employment go through an in-depth assessment with Allison, and she will "track them" for nine months. She has also initiated a new class with community partners to help participants identify and overcome barriers, get some computer training, learn about interviewing, overcoming obstacles, and about personal hygiene and overall attitude. In addition to monitoring work status and success and leading classes, Allison might locate clothing or furniture, help participants find a home, settle employment disputes, and help them shop for appropriate clothing.

The Specialized Assessment Worker, Shelby, gave me a spontaneous and very rewarding interview. I had driven many miles to the County 5 main office twice to interview participants who never made it to the interviews. Since she had set up the interviews, I met with her and she agreed to be interviewed instead. Shelby has a

master's degree in education with an emphasis on counseling, but other Specialized Assessment Workers are clinical psychologists, social workers, or other kinds of counselors. Case managers refer participants to Shelby if they face barriers of domestic violence, learning disabilities, substance abuse, or mental health issues. She then meets with the participant and determines the appropriate referral to other counselors and resources outside of the Department, such as a local Christian organization that provides mental health counseling or the local substance abuse program. This position differs from the others because Shelby does not determine or monitor a participation plan and she does not impose sanctions. She describes her services as completely voluntary, although technically a case manager could "force" a participant to go. More than any other worker, Shelby's role is that of counselor to provide support for getting various forms of counseling for the participant. Participants will often continue to meet with her to discuss their lives and problems, in addition to meeting with their other counselor or program. Shelby conducts several in-depth assessments, one of which is more like a conversation than filling out a form. The second is a very long questionnaire for research purposes because her job is funded by a university center studying women and substance abuse.

The fourth specialized worker, Crystal, the General Assistance Specialist in County 4, is also a former participant. She participated in AFDC almost twenty years ago and in TANF eight years ago. In her second period of participation, she was working on an associate degree, and has now completed her bachelor's degree in social work. As a community member and later as a welfare participant, she was always telling everyone she could about available local services, earning her home the nickname "resource

center," so she felt destined to end up as a social worker in some way. Her job is funded by a partnership between the Department and by a local Christian non-profit, but she stated that there is not a religious component to the services. She works with participants who are referred by case managers who need help overcoming barriers to participation. She might help with applications, with getting into schools and programs, drive participants to work or school, help them move in and out of their homes (literally carrying furniture), take them to appointments, and help them find all kinds of resources. Crystal sees herself as a mentor, and she claims that her personal knowledge of where participants are coming from culturally and socio-economically makes her a better worker than those who have not "been there." Three of my other participant informants, like Crystal, were able to contrast the old welfare (AFDC) with the new system (TANF), making them ideal informants for characterizing current welfare practice and discourse.

Administrators

The coordinator in County 2, Leslie, has the enormous task of overseeing workers and helping with problems, acting as a liaison to both the local and regional supervisors, handling complaints, monitoring and enforcing policy, and helping participants get the services and support they need. She also works with many community partners to try and develop stronger networks and resources for her staff and participants. She has been working in County 2 for twenty seven years, moving from secretarial, to eligibility worker, to case manager, to coordinator. She is very passionate about her job and sees herself as a central figure in the community, as a helper to participants and to workers, as a boss, and a mentor and helper.

Considering herself to be from the "old school," Leslie claims that she or her daughter could be on the other side of her desk and that participants should be treated with respect and workers should be there to help participants in meaningful ways. She has become very frustrated with a system which she sees as tangled in bureaucracy and full of administrators who do not understand participants' lives and workers who just do not care. When she retires, she would like to be an advocate for participants, but joked that this might get her shot by "somebody higher up." Her workers seem to greatly admire and respect her for her long-term experience and old school attitudes. All three workers and the supervisor in this office told me, "you have to talk to Leslie." So although the interview was not scheduled, she made time for the interview. This is how it usually worked with my interviews. I would call and someone in the office, usually a case manager or supervisor, would tell me to be there a certain morning (hundreds of miles from my home) and that somebody would be there to be interviewed. It was very difficult to pin anyone down to a time or even a certain commitment, but the trip usually paid off.

The two supervisors I dealt with in person were strikingly different. The first woman, Nancy, runs the central office in the biggest area, County 1. As I mentioned above, I had great difficulties with Nancy who consistently demonstrated resistance to my research, but perhaps felt obligated by the fact that one of my family members knew one of her case managers. She may also have agreed to the study because she thought she could toss my flyers and be done with it. In any case, her job puts her under a great deal of pressure to protect confidentiality for participants and to ensure that her workers produce the numbers she needs, which means working hard and doing the work of

multiple people. I was told many times that in this state, as workers retire they are not being replaced and many are being offered early retirement to try and crunch the numbers further.

Because federal grants are now based largely on participation rates, if you have large numbers of people doing the education components, vocational rehabilitation, exempt for pregnancy or disability, or just plain not participating, it means that your county and your state gets less money. This is what is called the numbers game and it places a great deal of pressure on all employees in the system. Obviously, it could encourage workers to try and deny exemptions, to not tell participants about possible exemptions, and to discourage educational components, supporting only participation in wage work; however, whenever workers discussed the numbers requirements, they reiterated that they do the best for their clients, or that they find ways around the restrictions.

The supervisor in County 3, Paula, was very friendly and supportive of my research, while consistently reminding me how busy her employees were and how much pressure they faced to produce unrealistic participation percentages. In part, she emphasized the busyness because I was waiting in her office for the coordinator, who was nearly an hour late for her interview due to handling a situation. The responses from other supervisors varied widely. I spoke with two regional supervisors on the phone, one very friendly and one very hostile. This seemed to be based on differences in personality as well as perceptions about job security and performance rating (meeting the required numbers). The supervisor who was most hostile told me that she could not afford to look

like her workers had time for interviews when they could barely meet their participation rates.

Case Managers

My experience interviewing case managers varied more across counties than within. In some counties, workers described a specific approach driven by the supervisors, but in others I could still sense a similar style even if workers did not explicitly name one. Workers in the same office would often repeat a certain phrase or sentiment, and sometimes this was shared across counties. For example, several workers in County 2 stated that they were "old school." Multiple workers across counties referred to the medical card as "gold." The coordinator in County 2 described attitudes toward services (characterized as good and evil) that were so contrasting that it was hard to believe they could exist under the same seemingly rigid policy. If I had a larger sample including all the case managers in these five counties, a comparative study of their language would be very informative.

My first case manager interview was with my initial contact person, Amy, a friend of a family member whom I had never known about until I inquired about welfare contacts. Amy was crucial as my only known welfare insider in the county where I planned to do all of my research (County 1), but she was also very nervous. She had been with the Department for thirteen years and was working for the supervisor who would end up being very hostile to me. Unlike some workers who have a mixed caseload, Amy is specialized, working with the sanctioned caseload only. Because of this, she sees all the participants who are not doing what the system requires them to do, which may influence her perception of the entire caseload, although her long-term

experience might mediate this somewhat. During the two interviews, particularly the second interview, she was very hesitant to give me brochures or forms, as if there were something wrong with my seeing them. This gave me the sense that the workings of the welfare systems, its practices, forms, and language, are intended to remain hidden from the public, particularly from this graduate school researcher. Interestingly, while this case manager seemed to carefully choose her words, other workers in the same office spoke very freely, so I cannot conclude a simple relationship between the hostile supervisor and this worker. Personality, seniority, type of job, and sense of job security would all likely affect workers' responses.

Fred was my only male informant in the study. For the past eight years, Fred has worked as a case manager in County 2. Before this position, he was in the military and served in the Middle East, and he earned his associate degree. Like the two other employees I interviewed in this county, Fred complained extensively about the numbers game. He explained that policy mandates that you give exemptions from participation based on many criteria and yet the worker is punished when that participant becomes "not-countable" as participating. Again, like the other workers, Fred claimed that even though education (GED, college) is not countable as participation, he always encourages his clients to earn at least their GED and often to go on to college. Fred followed the "old school" style of this office to some degree, but had been reprimanded for sometimes getting too close to participants, which he clarified as "taking care of his clients." Fred and Amy both explained that you are accountable for each case every month, having mandatory reporting on all cases as to why they are or are not participating. If you are not meeting your numbers percentage (required fifty percent participation rate), then you

will have to create a "personal improvement plan," which requires even more reporting and monitoring and looks disturbingly (for the worker) like the process that welfare participants must go through. Now Fred carefully maneuvers through policy to have, or at least appear to have, the right number of referrals and the right percentages.

Emily works in the same office as Fred and she shared many of his sentiments about numbers. She has worked in County 2 for sixteen years. More than any other case manager, Emily expressed a philosophy to her work, which she named as "the old school, I'm talking Roosevelt days." For her, this means non-judgmental service with a focus on helping. She also interpreted this non-judgmental approach, interestingly, as Southern and contrasted it with a Northern, specifically New York, approach. Emily says that this style comes directly from her training where she has been taught to "bend over backwards to help these people." She and other workers talked about being told by administrators to call participants in the mornings to get them out of bed in order to get their participation numbers. Multiple case managers, including Emily, expressed their frustration that their work actually made people very dependent on their case managers. Hearing this, I see why administrators want to keep local welfare practices under wraps.

In County 2, the three workers I interviewed had huge personalities that came through strongly in their interviews. They were confident, vocal, direct, and opinionated. In contrast, the three workers in County 3 were more soft-spoken and subdued. In County 2, they had a new building with very bright lighting and white walls, with lots of windows. The approach was called "old school," which generally translated to individual social workers operating on the same program of non-judgment, making their percentages, but doing everything it takes to get their participants "what they deserve."

In County 3, the building was older, dingier, and darker with wood paneled walls, carpeted floors, and windowless rooms. The employees also seemed significantly older, by ten or twenty years. The contrast was very noticeable in environment, approach, and energy.

Marge is a case manager with a specialized caseload of unemployed parent cases in County 3; therefore, all of her cases are two-parent households. Marge appeared to be my oldest informant and referred to her age as a source of wisdom and experience. She has worked in the office for eleven years, but started her social work career later in life. Marge indicated, like several other workers, that she had been through some of the things that her participants go through, which makes her a better help to them. She was very cautious and did not answer some questions on the grounds that she did not have the knowledge or experience to answer them. She responded with more details and textbook answers than other workers, who were mostly very enthusiastic with their opinions, even if they were cautious. She greatly approved of welfare reform, repeatedly stated her love for her job, and praised the team-oriented environment of County 3. Marge expressed a great deal of pride in their success in helping participants find resources and jobs, and generally become more independent and responsible.

Another case manager in County 3, Pat, gave me a very short interview and seemed to be irritated by some of my questions and the length of time. Pat has worked for the Department for over fifteen years. Like most others, she shifted from eligibility worker to case manager after the reform. Pat does not have an exclusive caseload, but she mostly works cases with a disabled parent. Pat was much more critical than Marge of participants, consistently noting undeserving behaviors. In fact, she was downright harsh

and cynical about them. Like Marge, she emphasized the frequent team meetings as a strategy for participant success.

In my last case manager interview, Regina viewed herself as a helper who really likes her job. She was the youngest of the three workers in this office, and she tended to describe herself as a parent trying to properly raise children, which was not uncommon in my worker interviews. She has worked for the Department for fourteen years. Regina shared in the old school sentiment, remarking that, "the client comes first" and "treat them like you want to be treated." She and Pat, sharing language, both noted that "you can't get blood out of a turnip" in reference to being realistic about what participants can do and what your numbers will be. She praised her team for doing a great job despite the many obstacles. Regina, like *every* worker I interviewed, shared in the assumption that the purpose of the worker is to do good, to help, to better the participants who "can be helped" -- in other words, the deserving participants.

Participants

The five participants I interviewed (including Crystal) held very different jobs, had different family structures, and varied in age, education, and resources. My first participant informant, Jodi, lives in County 1 and is in her early twenties. She was working at Wal-Mart until she decided to go to the local community college to pursue a career in Radiology. She then began participating in TANF through the college's work study program, and she now does secretarial work in the TANF office while she goes to school. She is single and has a five-year-old daughter. While she fully cooperated with the mandatory paternity establishment, the state has yet to enforce child support payments on the father of her child. She has a reliable car and strong family support with

parents nearby who help her with childcare. Jodi has participated in TANF for two years and stated that she wants to make a better life for herself and her child by receiving supportive services while she is in school (until she reaches the time limit). I interviewed Jodi in a closed room in the TANF office during work hours with permission from the supervisor. While Jodi criticized individuals she has had to interact with in relation to the system, and strongly criticized some participants, she mostly praised the welfare system as a helpful and important resource in her life. Given the circumstances of her employment and our interview location, it is difficult to say if Jodi felt she could be critical; additionally, she seemed very cautious about me and reserved in her answers, but she warmed up as the interview went on and we laughed some. We were the closest in age of any of the other informants. I have no reason to believe that she was not expressing her opinions openly, but I want to acknowledge the many potential influences that shaped our interaction.

My next two participant interviews came as referrals from the Transitional Specialist in County 1. Sandy, a recent participant was very candid and bold in her interview. She laughed a lot, but the aspects of her life that she shared were very serious, from her experience with divorce and homelessness to her current husband's disability. We met at a satellite training facility on a creek out in County 1. There was some concern from Sandy and the case manager who sent me that I would be scared of the roads. They had been severely washed out some time ago by flooding, but even with large chunks missing, the county had not made any repairs. Despite having very little time to talk (40 minutes), Sandy took time to meet with me before driving an hour. Her husband is a disabled trucker who is in vocational rehabilitation to find another kind of

job. At the time, she was not participating in TANF, but was receiving monthly "reward" payments for transitioning to a job. Sandy wanted to save her time in case she needed it later, because she knows from experience how quickly things can fall apart. She and her husband have five children total from other marriages and she emphasized repeatedly their desire to work to provide the best for their family.

Rhonda was the only informant whom I interviewed in her home. This seemed to be more an issue of timing than anything else. Some other participants were willing to be interviewed in their homes, but the times I could be there made other locations more convenient. Rhonda lives in town in a small apartment with her husband and seven children. Four of the children are foster children whom Rhonda and her husband are caring for because their parents are in jail. Rhonda is an outspoken participant advocate who was discontinued due to the time limit. Her husband is on disability, which was decreased due to her TANF assistance. Rhonda is employed, but her income decreases her husband's disability amount. She is very vocal about her disdain for the new restrictions of the welfare system and for politicians who fill their pockets with money while cutting welfare funding. She also strongly critiques the medical coverage for her children who cannot get what they need in services or prescriptions. A self-identified coal miner's wife, she blames workers compensation laws and corruption in the mining industry for the difficulties facing other families in similar situations.

Jo, my final informant, participates in work study at a community college in County 2, where she is earning her library degree. Also a social work student, Jo knows the system and is an advocate for herself and others. During our interview in the college library where she works, Jo helped a young male student fill out his TANF work-study

papers. Jo sees herself as the model participant who is strongly motivated, follows the rules, and who will succeed regardless of anything standing in her way. In terms of other participants, she is very critical of some who she characterizes as undeserving. She has three children from two marriages, but has not received any child support despite following all the protocol. Jo is very critical of the system, but she praises her case manager who she views as exceptional, and as a friend. If she had her way, the welfare system would be reformed to be more of a merit system, with rewards based on compliance and hard work, in other words, deservedness.

Conclusion

When I initiated this project and developed my interview questions in 2004, I planned to collect participant responses to specific elements of welfare reform and to the effects of Appalachian and welfare stereotypes. Although I gathered data that would allow me to make these kinds of conclusions, something much more interesting emerged in my data analysis. After the first set of interviews, I rewrote my central research questions to ask how do local policies and practices produce "the welfare participant," and what does "women on welfare" mean in this small geographic area? As I completed more interviews, the language used by informants to talk about themselves and each other began to remind me of the language used in historical Appalachian reform movements. I gradually realized that bridging the scholarly and methodological divide in my project meant bringing together women's experiences with discourse analysis by focusing on the language my informants used to form their responses. By looking at how participants talked about welfare, I recognized that the connection between Appalachia and welfare is shaped through the discourses of reform and deservedness.

Chapter Two

Reforming Appalachia, Reforming Welfare: The Discourse of Deservedness and the Shaping of Appalachian Welfare Subjectivity

Most people when you say you're from [Appalachia], they want to know if you've got running water and that kind of stuff [...] Most people do consider you know, Appalachia, as a welfare area.

-- Fred, Case Manager, 2005 (on the subject of moving out of Appalachia)

Oh yeah. I mean they think people that live in [Appalachia] go barefooted and pregnant and wear overalls and you know that kind of stuff. I think everybody in the country thinks that [...] and there's a lot of situations that are like that, still like that, but that's just a few...that's a few.

-- Pat, Case Manager, 2005 (on the subject of stereotypes)

Appalachian America is a ward of the nation, such a ward as we have never had before. The mountain man is not to be compared with the Negro, except in the basal fact of need [...] The question of the method by which these contemporary [Appalachian] ancestors of ours are to be put in step with the world is an educational one [...] The aim should be to make them intelligent without making them sophisticated [...] The whole of our aid should be to make them able to help themselves.

-- William Goodell Frost, 1899, *Our Contemporary Ancestors*

Reform and Appalachia are terms that have been linked since the late 1800s when local color writers depicted a wild and rugged region, a "strange land and peculiar people" (Frost 1899). As the image of Appalachia emerged as distinct from or "other" to

the rest of the nation,[18] missionaries and social scientists sought to describe, diagnose, and reform the region, making Appalachia into a kind of "case" to be understood and fixed. While the image of the region has always been complex and changing, the idea of Appalachia as "needy" has remained constant. Appalachia needs money, it needs middle-class "American" values, and it needs to be "civilized." In other words, it needs to be assimilated, and many individuals and groups from settlement school workers, to ministers, to social scientists and VISTA volunteers have attempted this feat, but the region remains set apart, particularly in terms of poverty. The federal government has been involved in reform efforts in Appalachia since Kennedy and Johnson's "War on Poverty" of the 1960s.[19] During this period of reform, news journalists flocked to Appalachia to portray the extremes of poverty "in our own backyard" on television and in newspapers, creating support for federal relief through exploitative images that evoked shock and pity in the viewer.[20] Since the establishment of the federal Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) in 1964, the focus has been on economic development as the path to local, and thereby regional, uplift.

Not all, but certainly most, of the reform efforts in the region have imagined a fairly essentialist vision of Appalachia. The region and its people have usually been constructed by reformers as needy, but this need is very specifically defined as the need of poor white people, conceived as culturally and economically isolated in the mountains, either as victims of their culture or of industry. Whiteness, therefore, plays a key role in

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[18] See Shapiro's seminal text *Appalachia on Our Mind* (1978) for a thorough history and analysis of the "invention of Appalachia" through reform movements.

[19] For an analysis of the failings of the War on Poverty and the ARC, see Whisnant (1994, chapter 4).

[20] See Stranger with a Camera (2000) for many clips from this time period and a very sophisticated media and cultural analysis about media responsibility and the effects of exploitation by way of visual images.

the idea of Appalachian need, which has frequently been portrayed as more abject than the suffering of people of color in an appeal to white supremacy, because the "victims" are white and whites should not have to "live like this." In popular discourse one will frequently hear the statement, as I did in interviews, that "our own people right here in America" are starving and not making it. Embedded in this statement is the notion that white Americans should not have to live in poverty because they are part of the most valuable racial and national group.

While federal welfare reform is not a program specifically targeted to any region, in an Appalachian area, welfare reform and its local practices and impacts must be understood in a historical (and ongoing) regional reform context. Government regulation of anti-capitalist hillbillies who "don't want to work" is particularly essential to maintaining the infrastructure of the nation-state in an area that provides over fifty percent of the nation's energy source with its coal. The rambunctious "poor folks" in these areas have historically organized and are still organizing against the labor and environmental abuses of coal companies and federal and state governments have exerted both force and law to control this population. I look at the experiences of both case managers and welfare participants through the lens of this historical context to consider how stereotypes about Appalachian people combine with welfare discourse, and with this history of reform and resistance, to affect welfare participants in the region.

Stereotypes of the Appalachian hillbilly came into the public consciousness in the late 1800's through the writings of prominent political and educational figures, missionaries and settlement school workers, urban newspaper journalists, and local color writers, and these images remain prominent in the media today. A favorite butt of the

joke for New Yorker cartoonists and television shows like Saturday Night Live and Conan O'Brien, the ignorant, toothless, dirty (mythical) mountain man often finds himself stranded in the big city "comically" interacting with "civilized" urban folk. Hillbillies in comic illustrations might also be depicted in their homes, understood as shacks or trailers with outhouses, staring dumbfounded at the newest technology or the strange ways of outsiders. I rarely read the "News of the Weird" column in the newspaper without seeing a bizarre tale from Kentucky, Tennessee, or West Virginia. Corporate news media such as CNN also love the hillbilly story, and I see my hometown depicted with some frequency when modern day disputes are framed in the context of the Hatfield and the McCoy feuds. The toy market has even tapped into the craze with items such as "white trash" dolls sold in posh boutiques and "hillbilly teeth" being sold in grocery store toy machines. The only humor I can find in these teeth is that anyone who would put them on does not have to play at ignorance.

At the core of these images is what Ann Shelby calls "if it wasn't so funny, it'd be scary as hell" (2001, 159-160). Shelby uses this idea to explain that redneck jokes allow the teller and audience to feel relieved of their actual fears, where *Deliverance* demons haunt their imaginings of the Appalachian Mountains. She claims that the real fear at stake is one of class warfare, or what could happen in a society when a few are extremely wealthy and others are abjectly deprived. I agree with Shelby, and I think we can take this idea in another direction as well. If we do not make jokes about poverty, and we do not demonize and blame poor mothers, then we must face the reality of, and be implicated in, homelessness, hunger, the lack of health care and clean, running water, and

the many other consequences of poverty, from which most Americans distance themselves without much thought.

For example, seeing blacked-out and rotting teeth repeatedly and consistently over time as something to laugh at completely desensitizes the jokester and the audience to the reality of people who cannot afford dental care. In a nation made up largely of self-proclaimed Christians and good "united" citizens, the reality of mocking those who suffer this reality is deeply disturbing and hypocritical. And yet, many people do not make the connection between the joke and the reality it works to obscure. If poverty can be funny, then we can laugh off our social, collective responsibility. These Appalachian stereotypes serve much the same purpose as the welfare rhetoric of the PRA: to reinforce individualism and mask the fact that there is collective responsibility, privilege, and blame.

The comic hillbilly is only one of the disturbing Appalachian stereotypes still in pop culture circulation.[21] The dangerous bloodthirsty hillbilly of the feud and *Deliverance* varieties also remains prominent in news coverage of men like Eric Rudolph, and in movies like 2003's *Wrong Turn*, which depicts "gruesome [implication: inbred] mountain men" who murder and mutilate urban teens traveling through rural West Virginia (Twentieth Century Fox, 2003). Another "dangerous" form of hillbilly was created in the media of many Midwestern states, especially during periods of significant Appalachian migration after both World Wars. In this representation, the

[21] There are other, more romanticized, male stereotypes, such as the rugged mountaineer who represents the "American pioneer spirit" or the working-class hero of the coal miner (see Williamson 1995), but these mythical men have not been associated with reform movements in the same ways, so I will not discuss them here.

mountain family was sometimes depicted as violent, but the real danger lay in the possibility for the contamination of urban whites by the infiltration of mountain culture.[22]

Typically, the word "Appalachian" and the related figure of the mountaineer have been synonymous with white, working-class, or poor males (B. E. Smith 1999, 4-5). In fact, until 2002, the Library of Congress subject heading for Appalachian people was "mountain whites."[23] In the discipline of Appalachian Studies, there has been a great deal of writing that refutes male stereotypes,[24] but not nearly as much discussion of the female hillbilly. This follows the pattern of the discipline as a whole, where women have been present only as what Barbara Ellen Smith calls "walk-ons in the third act" (1998, 5). Smith calls upon Appalachian Studies scholars to do historical and contemporary research focusing on women's many varied roles and contributions in the region, and that is one of the goals of my project.

The female hillbilly has been created in various guises, such as the migrant mother, the hypersexualized Elly May Clampett, Daisy Duke, the romanticized mountain girls of local color fiction, and welfare dependent "trailer trash." All of these types reinforce the idea that mountain women are white, oversexed and/or over-reproductive, poor or working class, ditzy and/or uneducated, and all around deviant threats to society.

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[22] See Berry (2000a) for a discussion of the settlement laws of the Depression Era that were designed to keep Appalachian migrants out of Midwestern states. Berry also discusses the stereotypes about mountain culture that migrants faced in the 1960's. Obermiller, Wagner, and Tucker (2000) include a detailed history of the social constructed urban image of Appalachian migrants. Tucker (2000) explains that mountain culture was placed in a binary of dysfunction vs. the functionality of urban culture, and he describes the characteristics of this supposedly dysfunctional mountain culture. See also Batteau (1981).

[23] In 2002, Fred Hay, librarian of the W.L. Eury Appalachian Collection, Belk Library, Appalachian State University, and a group of his students successfully petitioned the Library of Congress to change the subject heading to "Appalachians (people)," on the grounds that "mountain whites" is meant to distinguish, in a pejorative way, this group from other whites, and that this term excludes Appalachians of color and perpetuates the myth of mountain racial homogeneity. A related statement by Dr. Hay can be found online at http://www.lib.odu.edu/anss/sbacquestions/saco.html.

[24] For examples see Billings, Norman, and Ledford (2001); Williamson (1995); and J. A. Williams (2002). Smith also notes this lack in Appalachian histories, see Smith (1998, 5). Elizabeth Engelhardt (2005) notes that gender is erased in discussions of hillbilly stereotypes, see Engelhardt (3).

The image of the dangerous migrant also implicates women as the carriers of culture and the center of the supposedly dysfunctional Appalachian family.

These images have multiple disturbing layers, and a long history. Race, gender, class, ability, and sexuality combine in very specific ways in these representations. I explore how welfare discourse and local welfare practices intertwine with the discourse of Appalachia to create specific welfare subjectivities mired in a history of reform and national evaluations of deservedness. Investigating the connection of welfare reform and Appalachian stereotypes raises multiple questions: is there a narrative of the white hillbilly welfare tramp? If so, what does she look like, where does she appear, and what are her effects? In other words, what frameworks do hillbilly stereotypes create for understanding welfare participants in Appalachia? And finally, how do these frameworks relate to my data from local TANF offices in five Appalachian counties?

These questions about the hillbilly welfare tramp began to emerge as I read Patricia Williams's eloquent explanation of the racist stereotype of the Black single mother as the "Black welfare queen" (1995, 169-181). I begin by discussing the narrative of the Black welfare queen as an important context for understanding how racism, white supremacy, classism, and sexism are embedded in welfare discourse. In order to understand the idea of the white Appalachian family on welfare, we must look at how this image always functions in relation to the myth of the dysfunctional urban Black family on welfare. Additionally, a third, increasingly popular stereotype exists in the narrative of the Hispanic immigrant family sucking up the nation's resources and rapidly reproducing children who are taking the money of "real Americans" and "coloring" the

population. Clearly, this stereotype is equally related to ideas about whiteness and citizenship and the notion of deservedness in terms of federal assistance.

Next, I give a brief historical context for the history of Appalachian stereotypes and specifically outline the popular stereotype of the hillbilly welfare tramp. In describing the possible frameworks for the white Appalachian woman on welfare, I attempt to always keep her in dialogue with the image of the Black welfare queen and the immigrant family. Using my interview data, I conclude that these popular frameworks affect the construction of Appalachian welfare subjectivities and the distribution of resources and services through local welfare practices.

Race, Citizenship, and Welfare Subjectivities

Understanding the racist history and ongoing white supremacy that lie closely beneath the surface of welfare reform is crucial to understanding the PRA, welfare rhetoric, and the system as it exists and functions today. It is as important to discuss this core racism in a mostly white rural area as in an urban Black area because the myth of the white hillbilly woman is always functioning in dialogue with the myth of the Black welfare queen. The white hillbilly literally "pales" in comparison to her Black counterpart in terms of blame, burden, and pathology.

Patricia J. Williams is well known for her work on racist stereotypes of the Black welfare queen. In her essay, "The Unbearable Autonomy of Being," Williams (1995) argues that Black single mothers have been demonized in America and blamed for all social problems, and she describes the stigma she has experienced as a middle-class Black single mother. Going beyond a discussion of myths about welfare, Williams uncovers the racist agenda of these myths: a full-scale attack on Black single mothers.

Summarizing the myth of the Black welfare queen, Williams states: "Most Americans still believe that blacks are having more than their fair share of babies, that blacks account for most welfare recipients, and that women on welfare are "addicted" [...] not just to drugs but to being on welfare—as though welfare were the latest fad in euphoric 'high'" (1995, 175). She consistently shifts the focus from racist myths with long and powerful histories, such as the myth of sexual depravity of Black women, onto the practical realities facing poor Black women, such as the lack of adequate health care and reproductive freedom.

The myth Williams describes appeared prominently in posters in the welfare offices I visited. Despite the fact that the vast majority of participants in my research area are white, some of the "educational" (more like threatening) posters in the offices depicted Black women as the ultimate representation of the undeserving welfare participant. One such poster, in the office of the Transitional Specialist, was a close-up photograph of a young Black mother sitting on the steps of an urban row house holding her baby. The poster made reference to criminality and the prison system with its warning: "There's a penalty for being a mother as a teen. It's 18 years hard labor." Again, it is essential to discuss the racialization of the most deviant welfare participant as the young, Black, single mother to understand welfare subjectivity, even in a mostly white area. The poster serves to make Black reproduction deviant, and to remind all participants to get within the prescribed white social norms, lest they resemble her behavior and face the related consequences.

An important question arises from this myth of the Black welfare queen that we can also ask of the hillbilly stereotypes: why do people believe these myths? Williams

asks why these ideas persist so strongly in the public imaginary despite the "facts." I would shift this question slightly to ask: why are narratives so powerful and so believable, why not another narrative, and what would the alternative(s) look like? According to Williams, the idea of the Black welfare queen validates the white supremacist desire "to make poor blacks disappear," and at the same time the myth uses race and racism to mask the massive (but invisible to many) poverty problem in the U.S (1995, 177-178).

Many other scholars have noted racism in political rhetoric about welfare, most infamously the late Daniel Patrick Moynihan's influence on welfare reform as a Senator and as the Assistant Secretary of Labor during the administration of President John F. Kennedy. While the 1965 publication *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*, (also know as "The Moynihan Report") repeatedly calls for racial equality (2-4), Moynihan perpetuated many racist views about "the Black family," and largely because of this, his report had great authority; additionally, the Report advocates male dominance as the social structure that will lead to success for Black families. White politicians of the time relied on the rhetoric and claims of the report to build policies replete with white supremacy and recommendations for women to marry and reproduce the nuclear family, and as we shall see, many still do.

Moynihan traces the roots of his claims about this "crumbling family" to slavery. He essentially argues that Black men have been castrated by racism and are unable to head the household, while domineering Black women have taken up that role, apparently to the detriment of all of society. He states, "In essence, the Negro community has been forced into a matriarchal structure which, because it is out of line with the rest of the

American society, seriously retards the progress of the group as a whole, and imposes a crushing burden on the Negro male and, in consequence, on a great many Negro women as well" (1965, 29). Here we find the ultimate abhorrence for the Black woman that Williams confronts. According to Moynihan, the Black mother on welfare is pathological--a threat to herself, to her children, to the Black community, and to white America (although this last point is indirect, it is implied). Moynihan strongly emphasized the idea that Black women have more babies, more frequently, more often "out-of-wedlock," and at a younger age than white women, all of which he claims leads to extreme welfare dependency (1965, 5-12, 25). The Report gave credibility to these ideas, perpetuating a white supremacist fear of Black reproduction and directly blaming the supposed high rate for social problems. Moynihan linked this problematic structure of the Black family to urbanization, positioning the Black welfare queen as a resident of the urban ghetto (1965, 17-19).[25]

To this day, it is unimaginable to think of public discussions of African-American fertility rates, and now more prominently Latina fertility rates, without sensing the ongoing racist fear of loss of dominance that such talk evokes in the U.S. white population. The rhetoric about family structure, reproduction, and marital status in the PRA and the debate surrounding the law reads frighteningly close to the Moynihan Report, with the explicit racial references omitted. Consider these sentences from the introduction to the 1965 Report:

> The fundamental problem [...] is that of family structure. The evidence -- not final, but powerfully persuasive -- is that the Negro family in the urban ghettos is crumbling [...] A national effort is required that will give a unity of purpose to the

[25] This stands in contrast to the narratives of the Latina/o immigrant family (or male family members) who frequently reside in rural areas as farmworkers, and the white hillbilly family who live in the (rural) mountains.

> many activities of the Federal government in this area, directed to a new kind of national goal: the establishment of a stable Negro family structure [...] But it almost certainly offers the only possibility of resolving in our time what is, after all, the nation's oldest, and most intransigent, and now its most dangerous social problem. (1965, preface)

Several introductory sentences from the PRA identify the same "threats" and fears, and the same national agenda. As I explained in the introduction, the short findings section of the PRA sets forth the key motivations, need, and reasoning for the structure of the law. The following excerpts from the findings section closely mirror Moynihan's Report (all emphasis added):

> (1) Marriage is the foundation of a successful society.
> (5) The number of individuals receiving aid to families with dependent children [...] has more than tripled since 1965 [...] *Eighty-nine percent of children receiving AFDC benefits now live in homes in which no father is present.*
> (C) *The increase in the number of children receiving public assistance is closely related to the increase in births to unmarried women.*
> (6B) [...] *if the current trend continues, 50 percent of all births by the year 2015 will be out-of-wedlock.*
> (8) The negative consequences of an out-of-wedlock birth on the mother, the child, the family, and society are well documented [...]
> (10) *Therefore, in light of this demonstration of the crisis in our Nation, it is the sense of the Congress that prevention of out-of-wedlock pregnancy and reduction in out-of-wedlock birth are very important Government interests* [...] (PRA 1996, 8-10).

While the PRA emphasizes the role of the (absent) father, the need for marriage, and the "negative consequences" of all of out-of-wedlock birth, it does so without explicit racial reference; however, the PRA cannot then be understood as having no racial reference, because it is absolutely rooted in Moynihan's Report. The reference in finding number five to the increase in "fatherless" children on welfare *since 1965* unmistakably refers to the Report and reminds America that if things were bad then, they are much worse now. Clearly, Moynihan did not set the racist agenda for the country, nor was he the first to blame social problems on Black single mothers, but as a powerful liberal figure in

American politics, he brought together these claims about the Black family, welfare, and national interest in a powerful and lasting way that significantly shaped the 1996 reform.

If this comparison is not convincing enough, one needs only to look at some comments made in Congress during the 1995-1996 reform debate. When arguing for the passage of the PRA, Representative Philip Crane (R-IL) cited and read an article by professor Walter Williams, who blamed welfare entitlement for high levels of Black illegitimacy, which he in turn blamed for social problems. Crane quoted Williams, reading: "The Black family could survive slavery and Jim Crowism but not the welfare state" (Crane 1995, E603). Representative J.D. Hayworth (R-AZ) expressed some of the same fears as Moynihan, stating: "According to some projections, only 30 percent of white children and only 6 percent of all Black children born in 1980 will live with both parents through the age of 18. Mr. Speaker, this is a recipe for social disaster" (1995, H3421).

Some white women also joined the racist campaign against the Black family on welfare, as seen in the comments of Representative Andrea Seastrand (R-CA), who argued: "How compassionate is it to continue with a system that has quadrupled illegitimacy rates over the last 25 years; where 68 percent of Black children and 23 percent of white children are born out of wedlock?" (1995, H3712). A democrat from Georgia, Senator Samuel Nunn, cited research that noted the "high illegitimacy rate" among blacks in the "inner cities," but this research claimed that the rate had no connection to welfare benefits, but to historical causes and other "cultural factors" (1995, S14562). While this congressional dialogue, like the PRA itself, does not include direct racial referents, the absence of the word "Black" does not change the racist context of the

Moynihan report, the congressional debate, and the many journalistic and social science accounts that contributed to the PRA.

In addition to these thinly-veiled white supremacist references to the Black welfare queen, the PRA also places a large amount of blame on the Hispanic immigrant family, although again the reference to race and specific nationality remains indirect. In contrast to the Black welfare queen, the Latina immigrant might be portrayed as a devout Catholic, married, and somewhat moral, but she is connected to the Black welfare queen in that she reproduces too much too fast, thereby polluting the "real American" white European racial stock. Stereotypes of Latinas also include the "Hot Tamale,"[26] the sexually promiscuous woman who always wears red, loves to dirty dance, and wants every man to pay attention to her. These gendered and racialized stereotypes of Latinas involve a class component that portrays the Hispanic immigrant family as poor workers who come to the United States to "take" jobs from the "real Americans." This idea generates an enormous amount of fear that can lead to hate groups such as the volunteer border militia, the Minuteman Project, which is quickly growing across the United States and in Appalachia (Keen 2006).[27]

The anti-Hispanic racist and xenophobic frenzy over jobs and population control in the United States is epitomized in John Gibson's recent report for Fox News entitled "Procreation not Recreation" (2006a). In his report, Gibson explains that "minorities," especially Hispanics, are reproducing much faster and more frequently than (we can only assume) white upper and middle-class (read "real") Americans. He makes the argument

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[26] Judith Ortiz Cofer (2003) refutes stereotypes of Latinas as "Marias" and "hot tamales" (109-111).

[27] Judy Keen's (2006) USA Today article, "More Call to Get Tough on Illegals," explains that the Tennessee Volunteer Minutemen have sprung up and begun patrolling in East Tennessee and across many other parts of the U.S. The claim that this group is a hate group sprung out of fear is my own.

that white Americans need to get back to having babies and he cites a similar "problem" of non-reproduction of the "native population" in Europe who are too busy with their selfish, luxury lifestyles to reproduce. Gibson states:

> Know what that means? Twenty-five years and the majority population is Hispanic. Why is that? Hispanics are having more kids and others, notably the ones Hispanics call gabachos — white people — are having fewer. Now in this country, European ancestry people — white people — are having kids at a rate that sustains the population, even grows it a bit [...] To put it bluntly: We need more babies. Forget that zero population growth stuff of my poor, misled generation. Why is this important? Because civilizations need populations to survive. So far we're doing our part here in America, but Hispanics can't carry the whole load. The rest of you: Get busy. Make babies. Or put another way, a slogan for our times: Procreation not recreation (Gibson 2006a).[28]

Gibson's call sounds suspiciously like Moynihan's warnings of the "extraordinary growth in Negro population" in the 1960's (Moynihan 1965, 25).

Popular stereotypes of Latinas and Hispanic families and the related fear and hatred stemming from these images is both reflected and perpetuated in welfare policy. The PRA drastically affects the lives of past and future immigrants without citizenship status by cutting off all access to the medical card, food stamps, and assistance check. Immigrants with children now have to wait five years and must become citizens to access any TANF or Medicaid benefits, with a few exceptions (PRA 1996, 162-162, Section 403).[29]

In my interviews, I discussed the new anti-immigrant component of the law with five informants. In terms of racial makeup, all of my informants appeared to be white. All fifteen stated that their local populations were almost entirely white or Caucasian and

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[28] Gibson (2006b) later responded to critics calling his statements racist by citing science and demographics as his emphasis and denying any racist intention. This makes his call for more European-descended babies appear even more terrifyingly eugenic. Like the many scientists in the eugenics movement, it allows Gibson to sidestep moral questions by pointing to the supposedly neutral authority of science, an authority that has historically ended in the forced sterilization and deaths of millions around the world, including the United States eugenics movement.

[29] According to section 403, examples of temporary exceptions include asylees [sic] and refugees.

that they knew of very few immigrants in their area. Three workers stated that they have only had white clients, while five workers said that they have had between one and four clients of any racial or ethnic minority. Only one said that she had ever had anyone trying to gain citizenship, but it was years ago.

Only one informant, a case manager disagreed with the new citizenship component of the law saying, "I feel like they're human beings just like anybody else. I mean if they're trying to better their selves by becoming a citizen, why penalize them until they become a citizen?" The other four argued in support of this change in the law. One coordinator and one participant presented a popular argument that the United States has too many problems of its own with poverty, homelessness, and starvation to give money to non-citizens and to other countries.

The participant had come from another southern state and she claimed that in contrast to her current home, "Nine out of ten families are Hispanic, and believe you me they burn the welfare system up there." Another case manager told me that most of the very few immigrants in his area came from the Middle East. He then stated, "I was in the Gulf [Desert Storm], and it's a personal thing. We've been spit on, shot at, that kind of thing. So yeah I think it's a good idea." Another case manager believed that immigrants should be focused on getting a job, not getting on welfare. While these answers came with a range of reasons, they all tapped into discourses of welfare, work, deservedness and citizenship.

My informants' responses, Moynihan's argument for reforming the Black family, Gibson's call for a white baby boom, the arming of the borders to keep Latino/a immigrants out, and citizenship reforms in the PRA have everything to do with the

discourse of deservedness: who deserves citizenship and the many related rights in the U.S? Who deserves to reproduce? Who deserves what jobs and what kind of wages? Who deserves privacy rights? The discourse of deservedness has powerful effects on local practices because it affects who is deemed worthy of assistance. If we want to change the practice of welfare and increase participants' (and non-citizens') access to resources, we need to challenge and change the terms of welfare subjectivity.

In the discourse of welfare in the media, in political rhetoric, and in the law itself, the single mother receiving TANF benefits is racialized as Black or Latina and demonized as the root of social problems. The idea of reform then becomes not so much the changing of law, but the reform of poor women through a system of constant monitoring and various strategies of behavior modification, such as taking away access to food and medical care to force women into wage labor. If the law conjures up the myth of the urban Black welfare queen and the Latina immigrant as its primary targets, then what does it mean for poor white women living in very rural, mostly white areas? Moynihan, Gibson, and the PRA all make arguments about deservedness that attempt to uphold white supremacy and withhold resources by blaming social problems on Black and Latino/a families; but white supremacy is also connected to class dominance, and it is through classism and racialization that the white female hillbilly becomes connected to the Black and Latina welfare queens. In order to explore this relationship further, I outline the history of Appalachian stereotypes and how they relate to dominant ideas about poverty, race, and whiteness.

Conjuring Appalachian Whiteness and Hillbilly Stereotypes

The history of popular representations of Appalachian people creates an image of Appalachia as a region full of white people. In the 2004 issue of the *Journal of Appalachian Studies,* devoted to whiteness in Appalachia, Barbara Ellen Smith demands a new understanding of race in Appalachia. Exposing the tendency in Appalachian Studies to erase and ignore historical Appalachian diversity, Smith calls for an acknowledgement that the current whiteness of most areas of Appalachia[30] is connected to a racist past and present that is often maintained through threats of violence. To initiate a dialogue on whiteness, she outlines the various inaccuracies of Appalachian Studies scholarship, including the often repeated idea that hillbillies are the last acceptable group to ridicule; the idea that race only matters when discussing people of color; and the notion that the white working class has no white privilege (2004, 38-57). In an effort to answer Smith's call for change, I consider the complex interweaving of whiteness in the history of Appalachian stereotypes and related reform efforts, in the PRA, and in the local Appalachian welfare office.

Popular images of Appalachians in history have many sources, too many to discuss in depth here, but I outline the representations most relevant to welfare reform. In the late 1800's, local color writers such as Mary Murfree and John Fox Jr. developed the fictional images of the romantic, noble mountaineer and mountain girl, as well as the more brutish figures of the violent moonshiner and rough-and-raw wench. Allen Wayne Batteau argues that these images have such enduring power that they infiltrate the work of later sociologists, another group who have made major contributions to the idea of

[30] Wilburn Hayden, Jr. (2004) compiled statistics about people of color in Appalachia, asserting that racial minorities make up 11.2% of Appalachians as defined by the ARC (293).

Appalachia (Batteau 1981, 5).[31] But, before the sociologists came in droves, the social, educational, and religious reformers shaped public perception in their fundraising efforts, crafting an image for sale.

William Goodale Frost, president of Berea College, created one of the most infamous and influential narratives of Appalachian people in his essay entitled "Our Contemporary Ancestors" (1899). He published this essay in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1899 as an appeal to philanthropists in Kentucky's Bluegrass Region and the northeast for money to support Berea's efforts to bring mountain youth to college. Frost wrote:

> Naturally, then, these eighteenth-century neighbors and fellow countrymen of ours are in need of a friendly interpreter; for modern life has little patience with those who are "behind the times." We hear of the "mountain whites" [...] as illiterates, moonshiners, homicides, and even yet the mountaineers are scarcely distinguished in our thought from the "poor white trash." When we see them from the car window, with curious eyes, as we are whirled toward our Southern hotel, their virtues are not blazoned on their sorry clothing, nor suggested by their grave and awkward demeanor. They are an anachronism, and it will require a scientific spirit and some historical sense to enable us to appreciate their situation and their character. (1899, 1)

In some ways, Frost refutes the violent stereotype of mountaineers, replacing it with a more palatable image of the poor, backwards white family in need of racial uplift. Frost and other educational reformers, such as Katherine Petit and May Stone at Hindman Settlement School, used the "myth of racial innocence"[32] in Appalachia to appeal to wealthy white donors. David Whisnant explores the perpetuation of this myth in the mountains and its charitable usefulness, stating that historically there has been an "ideological appeal to the value of mythicized old-stock mountaineer Americans who

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[31] Batteau outlines six traditions that define the history of Appalachia: literary, charitable, sociological, technocratic, journalistic, and radical organizers. Appalachia has also been constructed through four major social science surveys of the region: Campbell (1921); Gray (1935); Ford (1962); J. A. Williams (2002).

[32] Citing Whisnant (1983), Barbara Ellen Smith asserts that the myth of (white) racial innocence in Appalachia keeps discussions of whiteness out of the discipline of Appalachian Studies (2004, 42).

could be diked against the unkempt (and possibly radical) European riffraff flotsaming into the cities"[33] (Whisnant 1983, 6).

While some white philanthropists focused their reform efforts on recently freed African-Americans, many wanted their money to go to the "betterment" of whites only, and Appalachian reformers exploited this racist and eugenicist appeal whether they agreed with it or not.[34] James Klotter claims that when white reform-minded Northerners grew tired of waiting for progress for Blacks in Reconstruction, they were easily convinced that Appalachian whites held more promise for success that would be a greater benefit to the (white) nation (1980, 841-842). According to Klotter, many missionaries, philanthropists, and reformers "turn[ed] their backs on the ex-slaves, as they told themselves that Appalachians needed aid as well. To them, mountain society differed from Black society in only one important respect—it was white" (1980, 832). A large part of this effort was educational reform, especially industrial education where middle and upper class teachers were to "turn" free Blacks and poor Appalachian whites into good workers. Much like the welfare system today, Appalachian reform has long pursued the goal of creating a civilized and well-behaved working-class.

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[33] Whisnant (1983) looks at "systematic cultural intervention" of the Hindman Settlement School, the White Top Folk Festival, and the work of Olive Dame Campbell. He claims that White Top in particular enforced a white supremacist view of authentic Anglo-Appalachian culture and that a central figure there had very strong ties to the eugenics movement (241-242). At Hindman the enforcement of eugenics often came in the assertion of Elizabethan traditions in craft and dance that Whisnant claims were taught to the mountain people (57, 62, 200).

[34] I do not have evidence on the particular beliefs of the reformers in this area. Petit and Stone, however, used many tactics to raise money and exploited stereotypes that they did not necessarily subscribe to in their desperation to raise large amounts of money. According to Stoddart (2002), they believed their work would lift up the mountain people to upper middle-class, Christian, civilized, educated ways. Whisnant (1983) notes that Lucy Furman, a Hindman worker and fiction writer, wrote about the racial stock at Hindman in her novels, stating "[shut] away here in these mountains, some of the purest and best Anglo-Saxon blood in the nation is to be found" (87). Whisnant also cites the nativist views of a Hindman student, Josiah Combs, who became an English professor and wrote about his homeland with eugenic views of the source of white racial uplift in the mountains (91-92).

During the popular eugenics movement in the early twentieth century, reformers and missionaries in Appalachia helped define the region as the last "racially pure" place in America because of supposed isolation from other races. One author wrote in the 1895 *Missionary Review of the World* that although mountain people were terrible heathens, "who knows whether these people be not a reserve force that God will bring out for the coming crisis of conflict, a stalwart band to stand with us in defence [sic] of Protestantism."[35] These barbaric mountain whites simply needed to be educated about God and civilization to become the pure white Protestant race that many eugenicists envisioned.

The eugenics movement in the U.S., surpassed in popularity and influence only in Germany, led to the creation of the Eugenics Record Office in 1910 (Black 2003, 45-46) and to many laws restricting marriage, immigration, and miscegenation. The widespread acceptance of the movement and its ideals of white racial and thereby moral purity also ended in the forced sterilization of many disabled people and people of color, especially African-Americans and Latinas on welfare, and American Indians through the Indian Health Service.[36] Edwin Black also cites sterilizations in the Appalachian area of Brush Mountain, Virginia, where some mountain families were branded as "feebleminded" and sterilized without consent and against their will (2003, 4-8).[37] While Appalachia was

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[35] Mrs. S. M. Davis as quoted in Klotter (1980, 840). See Klotter for numerous citations of eugenic visions of the mountains as the purest American stock. It is interesting to note that part of the need to uplift the mountains was a need to defend Protestantism. This can be compared with the current attempt to teach and enforce Protestant beliefs about marriage and reproduction on women on welfare. Through welfare rhetoric, there is a call to Christian morality similarly conceived as a defense of Protestantism from other religions "brought in" by immigrants and from "outside threats" such as Islam.

[36] For more information on sterilization abuse see Trombley (1988) and Torpy (2000).

[37] Black (2003) buys into some of the stereotypes and the romanticizing of mountain people, making this source a bit less credible. But his chapter "Mountain Sweeps" is the only direct reference to sterilization of southern Appalachian people, although there is evidence that eugenics studies were being done in the mountains, such as the William Allan papers in the W.L. Eury Appalachian Collection. This is a eugenics

often understood by elite white supremacists as a potential white stronghold, the historical discourse of "whiteness" in the mountains is complicated by the stereotypes of "mountain whites"[38] as barbaric and genetically inferior due to supposed inbreeding.

Most social scientific studies from the late 1700s through to John C. and Olive Dame Campbell's 1921 survey determined the mountaineer to be of "pure" or mostly English or Scots-Irish "stock" (C. D. Williams 1975, 12-13). The "quality" of this stock is debated, however, and Cratis Williams cites several authors who note the presence of "mean whites," "poor whites," or indentured servants who "found their way into the mountains" (1975, 15-16). Some studies and many fictional accounts note that "racial mixing" must have occurred, but these were considered to be minimal due to the supposed isolation of "mountain whites."

A large part of Williams' 1600-page 1961 dissertation, *The Southern Mountaineer in Fact and Fiction*, focuses on the representation of Appalachians as a "pure Anglo stock" with certain distinguishing cultural characteristics (C. D. Williams 1975). Williams cites several studies of family names as efforts to determine the "racial stocks" of the mountaineer. He explains the distinction of mountaineer from pioneer as it developed in the American imagination, stating: "The insularity of the mountain region helped to preserve the static quality of its culture and society so that the whole region,

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study done in Watauga County, NC as part of a very large study done by Bowman Gray Medical School in Winston-Salem, NC. The study was conducted to determine the frequency of intermarriage and Allan concluded that is was less frequent than in other parts of North Carolina.

[38] In Laughlin (1922) the "Racial Classifications" section divides people into 65 categories of origin, such as Canadian, German Jew, American Indian, etc. These classifications come from the *Dictionary of Races or Peoples* created by the Immigration Commission. The categories also include four American regional distinctions (#61-64): Mountain White, American Yankee, American Southerner, and Middle West American (4). These categories demonstrate the ways that whiteness has been constructed through the nation and regionalism in the United States. According to eugenics practice, "Mountain Whites" was a racial category of people to be studied and assessed for racial quality. See also C. D. Williams (1975) and Kephart's (1913) "The People of the Hills" chapter for descriptions of the racial and genetic makeup of the "mountain white."

asleep culturally since the Revolution, began to attract attention to its antiquarian qualities just after the Civil War, at which time, it might be safe to say, the Southern Mountaineer was really born" (1975, 13).

A litany of degraded cultural characteristics accompanied many representations of the "pure white" mountaineer (other times the image was more romanticized). While eugenicists looked to mountain whites as a racially pure population, they also often regarded Appalachians as a backward, uncivilized, morally depraved population in dire need of reform. The stereotype of the hillbilly was therefore produced through a discourse of whiteness that distinguished "mountain whites" from other whites in the nation. Many of the negative characteristics associated with the white hillbilly stereotype come out of racist stereotypes of Blacks, which function to maintain both white racial and elite class supremacy.[39] In the racial/class hierarchy, Appalachian whites (assumed to be poor whites) are not "as white" as middle and upper-class, urban whites, but they are still ranked as "savable" because they are not Black.[40]

We can see an example of racist stereotypes shaping white hillbilly stereotypes in the hypersexualization of the mountain man. Williams claims that in the Depression Era, the birth rate continued to be high in southern Appalachia despite its decline in the larger nation. He argues that "the size of [the mountaineer's] family keeps increasing, for he

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[39] Klotter also cites racist stereotypes of Blacks as the major source for stereotypes of white Appalachians (1980, 834-836). Hartigan (2000 and 2003) explains that the hillbilly has been racialized as Black through migration to Midwestern cities.

[40] It is essential to differentiate between racialization and racism. Racism is an oppressive system of hatred, violence, and the denial of access to resources founded on the idea of the racial inferiority of people of color and superiority of whites. Racism is systematically enforced through institutions by the dominant group, whites, to maintain white supremacy. In contrast, racialization attributes negative traits to poor whites that have been historically assigned to people of color through systemic racist stereotyping. While the racialization of whites can have many harmful effects (such as class oppression, sterilization abuse and eugenics), racialization does not make whites the victims of racial oppression or racism. The racialization of whites in Appalachia makes clear the cross-racial class connections that racism works to obscure.

has time to sport with his wife" (1975, 28). In a footnote, Williams cites Gilbert Wheeler Beebe's study of "Contraception and Fertility in the Southern Appalachians," published by the National Committee on Maternal Health in 1942, which claimed that Eastern Kentuckians had sexual intercourse more frequently than "any other group of white people" and were "surpassed only by that of Negroes and Puerto Ricans" (C. D. Williams 1975, n119, 41).

In this example, we see social scientists documenting and creating poor white Appalachians as hypersexual people who cannot control their sex drives. Williams attributes the high rate of reproduction to the lack of wage labor and the supposed high amount of "free time." The study indirectly refers to the powerful racist stereotype of the hypersexual Black man and over-productive Black woman (attributed to primitive animalism) to degrade mountain whites by association, but even when poor whites are associated with the same characteristics as Blacks, they are still held up as more deserving, more savable, and as having more potential. The socially constructed idea of race as biological also reinforces the racist notion that whites have more potential to be reformed than Blacks because the "inferiority" of whites may be understood as more of a learned behavior; on the other hand, as I mentioned above there has been debate on the "quality" of the whites in Appalachia, implying a level of biological, racial inferiority. This can be understood as a questioning of the "purity" of whiteness in "poor whites" in the region. This makes sense given that the history of the idea of race has largely been created and maintained through class dominance in capitalist societies. The idea of a pure white class works to keep people of color and poor whites politically divided and

living in poverty. This is the ideology, whether blatant, subconscious, or indirect, that Appalachian reformers of the late 1800s and early 1900s tapped into.

The eugenics movement, which developed into the study of genetics, combined with the idea of race as biological gave "scientific" validity to the belief that the poor, especially people of color, have biological deficiencies and therefore should not reproduce. This biological determinism can sometimes be difficult to distinguish from the belief that a "culture of poverty" is to blame for the circumstances and behaviors of the poor. The strategies, goals, and approaches of early Appalachian reformers and contemporary welfare reformers seem to be influenced by both biological and cultural theories. The culture of poverty approach has long been used as a model for understanding abject poverty in Appalachia. It is a victim-blaming theory claiming that there are universal, identifiable cultural elements that cause poverty, as opposed to ideas such as the internal colonialism theory (Lewis, Johnson, and Askins 1978) that considers corporate exploitation and critiques of market capitalism.[41]

After Frost and the early social scientists, Jack Weller (1965), a minister, popularized the culture of poverty viewpoint in his book, *Yesterday's People*, in which he claimed that Appalachians were individualistic, traditional, male-dominated, irresponsible with money, fatalistic, action seeking, fearful, too attached to family, overly dependent, resistant to work and education, and anti-intellectual. Weller's book, infamous among Appalachian scholars, (re)produces an Appalachian subjectivity caught up in many characteristics that earlier reformers defined as Appalachian; therefore,

[41] See the preface and introduction of Billings and Blee (2000) for a thorough overview of the culture of poverty and internal colonialism models.

Weller's book perpetuates a racialized Appalachian subject, mired in negative characteristics that come (in part) from racist stereotypes of Blacks.

In Weller's argument, outsiders need to come in and "fix" the mountain family, making them more like the status quo of middle-class America. Weller's perpetuation of the culture of poverty model works to enforce norms about family, work, sexual behavior, reproduction, and religion. He goes so far as to create an appendix comparing the "Middle-Class American" with the "Southern Appalachian," (Weller 1965, 161-163) which paints a very ugly picture of the poor, deviant, dysfunctional, and always white mountain person. Most interestingly in terms of welfare discourse, Weller criticizes the mountaineer for his disregard for "expert opinions," "those in authority," "antagonism toward government and the law," and his "rejection of object goals," "no status seeking," and "detachment from work, little concern for job security or satisfaction" (161-163). Weller's production of Appalachian subjectivity relies on the same white, middle-class norms for judging the reform needs of Appalachians as the welfare system does today.

Because of the interaction of multiple Appalachian and welfare discourses over time (as presented above), it is often difficult to distinguish between biological and cultural explanations of deviance made by reformers. Even within texts written with eugenic appeals or cultural of poverty approaches, it often seems that those claiming to be criticizing "culture" are really talking about biology to some extent, and vice versa. Evidence of the influence of both types of reasoning can also by found in my interview data. My informants sometimes wavered between blaming cultural or biological reasons for "welfare dependency" and other negative characteristics they identified. For example one case manager, Fred, asserted that there was a high percentage of people seeking

disability benefits in the mountains. When asked why, he responded, "In this area, because of anything from don't want to work, to that's a way to get money in my pocket and not do nothing, to hereditary, 'I've seen it happen this way with my family, you know hey I'll try to do the same thing.'" Although hereditary is a term that tends to be associated with a biological or genetic passing on of traits, his explanation seems to imply a cultural, learned-behavior type of passing on. So I asked for clarification of the term "hereditary," and he said:

> Okay. [pauses, sits back, sighs] birth defects, um stuff that they have, characteristics, traits, that they have got from their parents, things of that nature. Now with the welfare system, by hereditary, it's a way of life. One family to another family, from mom and dad to the children, they grow up to their children, that would be hereditary with that part, but with the medical part of it, the SSI…plus people talk, this is what I done to get it, you know that's the way you need to do.

In this case, and in other examples, the idea that biological or genetic inferiority causes disability, laziness, failure to work, and other "undeserving" characteristics is often used interchangeably with the idea that these "negative" traits come from learned culture, or socialization.[42] This can also be seen in stereotypes of Appalachians where characteristics such as familism (a pathological attachment to family) are sometimes portrayed as a result of geographic isolation and learned behavior, but the underlying concept of dependency may be more ambiguously ascribed to culture and innate deficiencies. The vicious stereotype of the incestuous hillbilly with "deformed" offspring attributes some traits to genetic deficiency, while the incestuous behavior is linked to barbarism, which can potentially be understood as both inherent and learned. Again, to

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[42] In his discussion of the racialization of hillbilly migrants in Detroit, Hartigan (2000) explains that northern whites defined negative characteristics of Appalachians and attributed them to both biological and cultural differences. He claims that some northerners made little distinction between hillbilly and Black southern migrants (146-147).

understand this ambiguity between biological and cultural attribution of "deviant" characteristics ascribed to white Appalachians living in poverty, we need to look at how the mountaineer has been historically racialized as deviant, but reform-able, and useful to the nation as a (reformed) productive white, working/middle-class citizen.

In the current welfare system, and particularly in the rhetoric of the PRA, we can see that the "civilize the barbarian" notion continues to be the goal, even if it is less explicitly stated as such. Many of the same stereotypical characteristics that early reformers tried to change remain central to welfare reform: laziness, unwillingness to work, sexual promiscuity, "immoral" (unmarried) sexual intercourse and reproduction, lack of education, religion, and morality. In contrast to Appalachian reform, the current welfare system is not understood as a generous, Christian reform movement (although it still enforces Christian morality), but as a punitive control of an out-of-control population that is obligated to the rest of society to change. Most importantly, while reformers sought to change men, women, and children, the current welfare system works on the family almost entirely through the reform of women.

Hillbilly Welfare Tramps and Deserving Appalachian Mothers: Effects of Stereotypes on Workers and Participants

As I mentioned above, most scholarship on Appalachian stereotypes deals only with stereotypes of the mountain man, without taking on the question of the female hillbilly. I have not found a discussion of the stereotype of the hillbilly mother on welfare in any scholarly texts. In general, Appalachian stereotypes are very similar to stereotypes about families on welfare because Appalachia is constructed in the public imagination as a region chock full of poor whites "living on the public dole." This image has grown out of the history of reform in the region outlined above, which created an

image of Appalachia as a needy, isolated, backward passel of poor whites that the nation and wealthy philanthropists needed to save from poverty—a poverty of wealth, culture, and morality.

In addition to the more generalized "poor mountain white" or "hillbilly" stereotypes, there are specifically gendered, raced, and classed caricatures, such as the comic hillbilly, the barbaric mountain man, the heroic miner, the meth-head, the old crone, and the mountain maiden. One such fictional image of the Appalachian female is the hillbilly welfare tramp,[43] the ever-pregnant, barefoot, poor, lazy, uneducated teenage girl. The barefoot and pregnant stereotype is well-known, and its demonization of poor white women becomes justification for discrimination, abuse, and erasure of their humanity.

In this section, I give a brief explanation of the stereotype of the hillbilly welfare tramp and explore the ways that this stereotype, the discourses of welfare and Appalachia, and the history of reform in the region come together to produce the possible subjectivities for white Appalachian women on welfare. Before considering how the myth of the hillbilly welfare tramp affects welfare practices in the local office, we need to flesh out the key elements of this stereotype. If one had to tell the story of the hillbilly welfare mother stereotype, a story I have heard many times, this is what she might look like in the most vicious description:

The mother in this fictitious hillbilly family is usually not married, but she often lives with one of her baby's daddies (they all have different fathers) in a trailer or

[43] The hillbilly welfare "tramp" is differentiated from the welfare "queen" stereotype because the hillbilly is not perceived to be living "high on the hog," driving fancy cars and getting her nails done. In contrast to the myth of the Black welfare queen, the hillbilly welfare tramp is understood as someone living in extreme poverty.

ramshackle house on her family's property, and she defrauds the welfare system by not reporting his income. She is backwards in all sorts of ways, for one thing she will never move from her mountain home because of her inherent tie to the land and her deviant "familism." Her extended family members all live together and depend on each other way too much. Didn't they know that nuclear is the American way? The whole family is just plain ignorant, because they do not value education--that stuff is for city-folk--but of course their genes are also just plain inferior because you know there's some inbreeding in there somewhere. They do go to church, if you can call it that. It's the country kind, you know some strange Baptist sect or the Pentecostal snake-handling type.

That woman is dependent in every way, most importantly on the welfare system, which her family has relied upon for generations—they're addicted, in more ways than one. Neither of the parents works. They just use the medical card to feed their prescription drug habits and sit on the couch all day watching their jerry-rigged television. That welfare queen has too many kids, which she is entirely responsible for, that hussy! I mean, if you can't feed 'em, don't breed 'em, lady! And she doesn't even take good care of them because there are too many people living in that little shack they call a house. And the yard, well you know it is crammed full of yard-sale junk and rusty cars. Her family is dirty, they wear ratty clothes because they don't know how to be clean and they don't want to—slobs to the core. They don't even have indoor plumbing! Material things don't mean much to them, I mean look at how they treat what they've got. Of course since she's not married, she's promiscuous, and the kids don't have a stable father figure, so they don't learn proper morals. They'll probably turn out just like she did, or maybe they'll make a bigger income by selling Oxycontin or making

methamphetamine. Unless the government intervenes and gets these people into shape, they'll continue to reproduce like rabbits and drain our tax dollars, not to mention that they are entirely to blame for perpetuating those ugly stereotypes about the rest of us, the real Appalachians.

That is the story that is often told in popular culture about poor white women in Appalachia. Five key elements are similar to the myths about the "Black welfare queen" outlined by Patricia Williams (1995), including the notion that 1) poor white women have more babies to get more welfare money, 2) these women are stuck in a cycle of poverty that is passed from generation to generation, 3) they don't want to work (they want to take the money of the good hardworking taxpayers), 4) they are unmarried (the downfall of the American family), and 5) they are ignorant, uneducated, promiscuous, lazy, and selfish. One important distinction between the hillbilly welfare tramp and the Black welfare queen is the issue of consequences. While both are blamed for sucking up all the tax dollars, the urban Black welfare queen is understood as the cause of all social problems, namely all forms of crime. Appalachians on welfare are not imagined as criminals so much as bad citizens who do not contribute; however, this seems to be changing with the rapid rise of prescription drug abuse and crystal methamphetamine production and abuse.

Poor Appalachian women have to contend with these negative representations in their daily interactions, in the doctor's office, the grocery store, the schools, and the welfare office. In my interviews, I asked multiple explicit questions about stereotypes and received varied responses; however, even when the question was not explicit, informants tapped into dominant stereotypes of women on welfare and Appalachian

women. Informants both resisted and affirmed these types. One participant summarized this contradiction in her own thinking, stating:

> I hear [stereotypes] all over the place [laughs]. Hear them. See them. I can't even deny that I have wondered in my head myself. I look at somebody else, and I've been there before and I still, I see someone and it's a thought that's like "uh huh" cause you just know. But, you don't know. But I mean I don't think anybody is immune to doing that. It's really sad but I don't think they are. But yeah there's always a stereotype of some kind. There's always this picture of who's on welfare and what they look like. And what they're doing and x number of kids behind 'em and stuff. And that doesn't mean squat really. It may actually be the case at times, but it doesn't always mean anything. So yeah there's stereotypes everywhere, always will be I think.

Even when consistently noting how different participants are from each other, and how each circumstance is unique, stereotypes always crept into each interview.

Participants actively resisted stereotypes in their self-representations, and many of the workers also rejected stereotypes for the majority of their participants. In most of the interviews, complexity and differentiation were emphasized over universalizing participants. All participant informants repeatedly called for an increased ability to distinguish among deserving and undeserving (although they did not use these terms) individuals in determining benefits. Case managers and other workers frequently refused simple answers to my questions by repeatedly noting how different one case is from the next. They remarked on the importance of being able to use discretion in their choices about sanctioning and benefits.

Some participants noted the different ways that participants are treated based on stereotyping, and they connected this either to the deservedness of the participant (in their assessment) or to the bias of the case manager. In my data, deservedness correlates with the type and level of service, especially due to the high level of discretion allowed in current welfare policy. Although policy is fairly rigid on certain points like the time limit

or the benefit amount, most policy is open to a wide range of interpretation, participants do not have access to policy, and coordinators are too overworked to check every decision. Multiple case managers and the coordinator expressed that many workers do not know policy well, and even the ones who do often ignore policy, for better or worse.

There is an appeals process for participants who want to challenge a worker's decision. One participant, Rhonda, spoke about being discontinued, saying:

> But I mean, like I told them, hey, it didn't bother me because, yeah I went [to work] and made it work because I have to for my kids. And they're like, well you know you can appeal this decision. And I'm like, why fight, you know, the government, because basically if the government says it's gonna be that way, you might as well just say okay and let it be that way because one person's not gonna change the way the government wants to do it.

In this example and others, participants noted their inability to fight a policy they do not know and cannot control. At the same time, some also spoke of resistance to discrimination that comes through information sharing and standing up for themselves. Others said they had not experienced explicit discrimination, but did note the impact of stereotypes.

Frequently, Appalachians are represented as a people particularly tied to place. This idea emerges differently in a romantic representation (Campbell 1921; Dyer 1998) and as a kind of deviance (Weller 1965; Kephart 1913). Similarly, in my data sometimes the desire to stay in the region or in the specific small area where participants lived was viewed sympathetically and other times this was viewed as pathological. The idea that Appalachians are "tied to place" is perpetuated in both of these ways in Appalachian scholarship, very heavily in literature, and in popular discourse; however, it has also been argued that women want to leave rural parts of the region more than men (Guy 2001,

59).[44] The discussion of moving came up most often in terms of potential relocation money that TANF supportive services can offer to help participants move to gain employment. Most workers and participants stated that they do not want to leave this area, and most workers were sympathetic to participants who do not want to leave. One worker said, "One of the reasons I've found that a lot of people don't want to move is because when they live here they have extended support systems. If something happens, they'll have somebody to take care of their children. If they need extra money, and their family has it, they'll help them." The need for a support network was the reason most frequently given for staying put.

Several other informants contrasted their area with urban living outside of the mountains. Some claimed that the stereotypes participants would face if they left would be too much, and still others cited fear of the city and the fear of driving even in a slightly bigger town. One worker presented several of these reasons for participants wanting to stay put:

> Our people are not gonna [move]. No matter what [...] I think we have clients that could be more successful and better support their families in other parts of the state, but other parts of the state are some of the views that they have of this area are so far off base that they're not going to give them a chance. And they're not equipped to deal with that. And living in a city it's just not gonna work. And just the terrain, and from moving from flatter country to here, you know I see that. And I understand why the children that have grown up here, even not from wealthier families, want to be here. It's just there's something about this area that's comforting.

The reasons my informants gave for not wanting to move rejected the romantic notion that Appalachians have some inherent bodily attachment to place, even if they did

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[44] Guy claims that women were more likely than men to want to stay in the North or Midwest after migrating, mainly because of newfound freedom. We can also see this gendered difference in Elizabeth Barret's film *Long Journey Home* (1987) where male parents are depicted as the ones who want to return to Appalachia and women want to stay in the city; although this is not the case with all women in the film.

express some aesthetic love of the beautiful, unique landscape of their home. Most of the reasons pointed to class status and necessity as the source, giving explanations that refute popular myths about Appalachians. These class-based explanations, mainly needing a strong ready support network, also debunk the stereotype that it is simply "backwardness" that keeps people in the area. One worker did express this view, explaining that she had to discontinue a woman for not participating who would not move out of her holler to get a job. She just could not understand why she would not leave, and she presented the participant as backward and undeserving of assistance.

Class differences definitely play a role in many of my informants' responses. Some workers acknowledged cultural class differences, but they expressed them as a problem to be overcome, or a mystery they could not understand. Several workers and participants explained that if workers have "been there" (had a tough life or experienced economic hardship), then they are better equipped to relate to participants. Sandy, a participant said, "I think it makes a big difference if the case worker has been at the bottom and pulled themselves up. We have some, several, that have never been broke, have never been at the bottom, and I think they only show contempt for the people who come in here." One of my informants, Crystal, was a former participant during two different welfare systems (AFDC and TANF) who had become a worker. She claimed that in social work programs "they try to teach you about some of these other cultures, and then I feel like some of them's coming out and they don't even know our own culture. Or you know, especially, [looking at] poor people, I think sometimes they look at poverty almost as a crime." She gave an example of a Protection and Permanency case where a woman's house burned down, and her children were taken from her due to

overcrowding when she moved into a trailer with her extended family. This worker said, "a lot of our [poor mountain] culture, families tend to live together [...] They want to live together. They're a family [...] A couple of generations may be living together just to make it, just to be able to eat." This worker stated her resistance to stereotypes, giving class-based and cultural explanations for actions that often lead to stereotyping based on the culture of poverty model described above.

While some workers seemed to share a bit of her class awareness, often from their own experiences of poverty, other workers distanced themselves from participants by pointing out class differences. For example, the work specialist, Allison, recommended that her participants should pick up trash in the community, and implied that they were most likely the people who threw it down to begin with. This interview evoked many stereotypes of Appalachians and women on welfare, and the worker often pointed to class differences as points of presumed unity with me and difference from participants. Other workers also made this distinction. When talking about participants' housing, Allison stated:

> Possessions that you and I maybe hold dear and you know maybe like this wreath here [points to wreath on wall with fake flowers and ribbons] and that might be something that we just truly love and we want. It's nothing for a client just to get up and just move and leave all their belongings [...] And maybe that's why my life is so stressful because I hang onto stuff like that and maybe theirs isn't. But I see that they don't they don't have a lot of meaningful things or things that mean a lot to them [...] and they just live wherever. They make a career out of moving. I see that a lot.

In these examples, we can see that class differences and ideas about what is the right way to live strongly affect welfare subjectivities. The framework that a worker has available to understand cultural differences (and similarities) between themselves and a participant can dramatically affect the amount and quality of services the participant receives. The

PRA dictates much of these ideas by creating standards that value wage labor and Christian morality above all else, and state policy and law dictates other aspects such as ideas about appropriate housing conditions. While the specific relationships of my informants may come in large part from their life experiences, the discourses that we have access to shape the frameworks that we have available to understand each their identities.

The data does not reflect a simple correlation of popular stereotype to individual thinking and practice; instead, the stereotype emerges in various ways. At times, some participants made a fairly straightforward comparison of good and bad participants that strongly reflects the stereotypical frameworks for understanding Appalachian women on welfare discussed above. The need to make a case for their own deservedness leads participants to both represent and produce what deservedness looks like. Others also focused on the issue of worker bias and discretion as the major problem in relation to deservedness. One participant in particular consistently contrasted welfare participant families with the poor-parenting, outrageous behavior, and greed of wealthy families. The community she lives in, although only a few thousand people, has a sharp and vast class divide among the poor and millionaires.

Supplemental Security Income and the Stereotype of the Incestuous Appalachian

My data also shows that the concept of disability, referring to Supplemental Security Income (SSI), is a distinguishing component of welfare in this area. Disability is also a central part of popular stereotypes of Appalachians outlined above. The idea of disability in Appalachia has a complicated history that cannot be entirely separated from the notion of the pitiable inbred mountain child and the adult counterparts of the comic

hillbilly simpleton or the barbaric, deranged, and incestuous mountain man. I frequently hear references in casual conversation to incest and inbreeding in the mountains, made in jest or with some degree of sincerity. Those who perpetuate the stereotype of incestuous mountain folk usually make vague references to moral depravity, drug abuse, general backwardness, mental retardation, or laziness as their "evidence."

Work-related disability in a coalmining region also cannot be separated from the social conditions that create disability. Susan Wendell argues that disability is socially constructed in part by "social conditions [that] affect people's bodies by creating or failing to prevent sickness and injury" (2007, 110). In a region where coalmining is often the only form of a living wage with health benefits (at least in the past), and when the nation relies on coal for its massive energy consumption, we as a society create work conditions that lead to severe and widespread physical disability. Social norms about work and class differences in the type, quality, and physical demands of work also create circumstances that often lead to disability in working-class people, be it chronic pain, exhaustion, poor health, inadequate sleep and rest, and unhealthy food.

Rosemarie Garland-Thomson explains how disability and the disabled body are socially constructed, stating, "We are marked not by our bodies themselves, but by responses to our bodies: by the stares that record our otherness, by the narratives that establish our inadequacy, by the barriers that keep us out, by the norms that render us abnormal" (2000, 209). What norms are at work that render many Appalachian women on welfare and/or their family members abnormal? Stigmas about disability assistance, stereotypes about Appalachians, and conditions of low level wage labor all contribute to

the creation of disability in this area. We can see these norms at work in discussions of disability in my interviews.

Workers often noted that many people living in poverty in the region attempt to get SSI benefits, and again the concept of deservedness comes into play. This attempt to get benefits is often represented as fraud and as laziness. Jo, a participant, said:

> Well there's two different classes. One is the individual that is not of age to receive disability, social security, but at the same time they have worked in the coalmines long enough or been injured, and especially back injuries, and they have to have time to recuperate from the surgery they've had or to get back on their feet. And with the other is the people whose TANF has run out, and they still want to drink, and they still want to do their drugs, so they sign up on SSI.

In this case, we see how addiction is often integral to discussions of disability in the region, especially addiction to prescription pain pills and anti-depressants. The circumstances that lead to disability have been created socially through the wage labor system, class hierarchy, and the drug companies pushing pills in Appalachia to make billions with little public outcry; yet, at the same time, those who are produced as disabled are viewed as personally responsible because of the powerful American myth of independence, or the idea that each individual is solely responsible for everything that occurs in his/her life.

At other times, disability in Appalachia is explained as exploitation of children when parents try to apply for an "invented" disability of a child. Several informants mentioned that some participants use children to get disability benefits. One worker explained:

> Most of them have their children an application in for SSI before they're even in school. They're labeled immediately, "my child can't learn" because that's a check. I mean I used to be a kindergarten aid and I saw 50% of the kids in that class were on SSI and there was nothing wrong with their learning disability, but it benefits that parent [...] But yeah I see, I've even heard them say "my child

> can't learn" or "my child is a slow learner" and I've always, that always grates on me because it's like well you're defeating their chances of ever thinking they can do it. You tell somebody long enough they can't do something, they're gonna believe it. And I've heard kids say it "I'm a slow learner."

Another worker stated, "the children get it if they have trouble reading, hyperactive, speech problems or anything like that. You know it's kind of a retirement plan for some families." There is a great deal of animosity shown toward people who are understood as defrauding the disability system, particularly if their children receive benefits. This usually connects back to work norms that portray people who do not want to work miserable low-wage jobs as deviant, undeserving, immoral liars. Disability in Appalachia is acceptable only when it occurs from a work injury, from hard work. Even then, prevailing attitudes dictate that the person should to go back to work, usually with vocational rehabilitation.

This view of disability is shaped by the discourse of deservedness where the worthy are those who work hard, an essential American value and an obligation of citizenship. One participant talked about her husband who drove trucks, but was injured on the job, as being very deserving of assistance. In the context of the time limit, she wanted those who work hard to be able to have more time, stating:

> As long as they're making some way to get some kind of a job or career or something going. And as long as they're making that big an effort, I can see something like that just going on. I have no problem with that, but if they're not even trying, no. Because my husband is in such a shape right now. I mean I couldn't blame him if he didn't go back to work. I don't know how he's even going to even with what they're gonna train him for. But he's more than willing to try. He can't stand the thoughts of not working. Well, if somebody like that can work, then why can't other people?

As in the example above, there are a few cases where applying for disability is seen as acceptable, at least locally. In the context of the coalmines, informants seemed to agree

that this use of the system is appropriate and the recipients deserving. Similarly, with domestic violence cases, application for disability due to "real" injuries was consistently supported by workers. Thus, work norms and beliefs about honesty and legitimacy of injury played the key role in determining deservedness.

Conclusion

The idea of Appalachia has been constructed largely through a history of Christian and educational reform efforts, social science inquiry, and government aid. These movements produced the idea of the region as "needy" to promote some much needed national assistance, but this representation of the region also promoted Appalachian stereotypes, and most importantly, it justified the intrusion of many "outsiders" and federal and state governments into the lives of those who "needed fixing." Just as Appalachia has historically become a "case" for the nation to "cure," so do individual welfare participants become cases, with the supposed goal of reform, but with a certain outcome of government regulation and control of their lives and resources.

The discourse of Appalachia and welfare discourse combine to form specific gendered, racialized, and classed possibilities for Appalachian welfare subjectivities that are always in relation to constructions of whiteness in the region, the hillbilly welfare tramp, the Black and Latina welfare queens, and the correlating evaluations of deservedness of assistance. These subject positions and assessments of deservedness affect the life experiences of participants and their access to assistance and other resources; therefore, it is essential to understand the sources of these subjectivities and the ways that local practices (re)produce these interwoven discourses. When we identify the production of welfare subjectivity and expose its historical and current social

constructions, we can envision new possibilities for understanding welfare participants. In the next chapter, I look specifically at how local practices produce Appalachian welfare subjectivities through the welfare assessment process.

Chapter Three

Assessment, Confession, and the Production of Appalachian Welfare Subjectivities

We had a client that lived probably about an hour from here out in the head of nowhere. I needed her to participate. Well she's got two little younguns, a one-year-old and a three-year-old. And that little one-year-old, we had a meeting in there, and he was just as hyper as he can be. Well, I'm sitting here thinking, how am I gonna get her up here? She didn't have no transportation, but they [politicians and bureaucrats] say transportation is not a barrier. It is a big barrier. And with the cost of gas going up right now, I really and truly don't see how any of our clients at all can even participate with much, except maybe one or two days a week.

And I'm probably more sympathetic and more, gotta heart [...] I'm not aggressive enough with my workers and I probably try to see the good in everybody, but I've never been on welfare myself. I've never been poor. I've always worked, but I can just imagine what it would be like trying to raise two little kids on welfare with nobody to help me. And like this little girl, we applied a penalty to her because she was not participating.

-- Leslie, Coordinator, 2005 (on a "deserving" client)

That just kind of goes back to the skills that the woman has to begin with. Because a person with one child that's trying to really get her act together, she is probably gonna be less likely to have another baby until she's got some of this [education, getting a job] stuff out of the way. And if you have someone that is just not interested in doing anything, you know they're probably gonna end up with another one.

-- Amy, Case Manager, 2005 (on "deserving" reproduction)

The truth does not make deviants free.

-- Ladelle McWhorter, *Views from the Site of Political Oppression*

In the previous chapter, I outlined the history of reform in Appalachia and the production of the region as a place and a people "in need." In order to raise funds and to justify assistance efforts, writers, reformers, missionaries, and social scientists created an

image of Appalachians as people who deserved help. In my interviews, a central theme of "deservedness" also emerged as a fundamental element of welfare subjectivity. In this chapter, I explore this parallel discourse of deservedness in the production of Appalachian welfare subjectivities through local assessment practices. Some welfare scholars have considered the ways that the rhetoric of policymakers, the PRA, and social scientists have produced welfare subjects (Fraser and Gordon 1997; Chambon 1999; Cruikshank 1999; A. M. Smith 2001), but they have not discussed the crucial, local role of the social worker and the assessment process in forming this subjectivity.[45] Although the deviant subject has a long history in welfare reform discourse,[46] with the end of welfare entitlement, the PRA created new grounds for deservedness. Through the many additional paternity, transitional, work, and specialized assessments, deviant and normal subjects are constantly reproduced in local welfare practices.

Using Michel Foucault's concept of confession, I claim that the welfare assessment process actually produces narratives about the worthiness of welfare participants. These narratives are understood as a truth that the case manager and the specialist seek to discover. Through assessment, people begin to be understood as cases to be managed, and the extent to which they fit or do not fit definitions of deservedness affects whether or not they will be rewarded or sanctioned. Rather than viewing welfare subjects as having preexisting, unchanging, or factual characteristics and circumstances, we need to question how workers come to view participants through assessment.

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[45] My use of the term "welfare participant" does not imply a predetermined, unitary, or singular subject position. Workers and participants produce complicated subjectivities in assessment with many criteria for judgment, although the subject is still reduced on some level to their role as a "participant."

[46] For a history of the deserving/undeserving construction of welfare recipients in U.S. charitable organizations, see Mink (1998, 44-48). For a discussion of confession and the production of deviant sexualities in the reform of poor teenage girls in nineteenth century Australia, see Finch (1991, 43-50). For the construction of deserving/undeserving subjects through the British 1834 New Poor Law, see Carabine (2000, 78-93).

By interpreting assessment as confession, I demonstrate the ways that welfare subjects are produced as deviants who need to be cured through normalization. Standards for assessment of deservedness are made in the law, in popular discourse, in state policy, and in local practice. The large amount of discretion left to the case manager means that while certain boundaries (like sanction amounts or the idea that marriage should be promoted) are determined before assessment interviews, the terms of deviant and normal subjectivities are created to some degree in the interaction of social worker (confessor) and participant (case). I define the concept of "deservedness" of assistance in my data by outlining what constitutes a deserving versus an undeserving participant and the in-between, as well as some of the attitudes and effects of this concept on participants' experiences in the welfare system.

Participants are assessed to determine "who they are" when they first apply for TANF. This involves a lengthy interview that will be repeated during progress assessments, in addition to interviews conducted by other workers, such as an employment or transitional specialists. The process requires participants to answer questions about many topics including: the father(s) of their children, family size, income and property, criminal history, domestic violence, drug abuse, work history, childcare, transportation, "personal hygiene," and many more topics. Forms are filled up with information that the social worker "discovers" about the subject.

Many scholars such as the policy changers and myth busters described above, and other advocates of welfare rights make the claim that welfare participants are "deserving" of benefits in order to argue for further welfare reform. Of course participants should fight for more benefits and a better system, but I argue that judgments about participant

deservedness reify the terms of welfare subjectivity that mark welfare participants as deviant and undeserving. My approach becomes an alternative to simply proposing a "truer" welfare narrative or "better" welfare subjects, as proposed by the "back-talking" strategy.[47] If we identify the criteria for judging deservedness, we can become aware of our participation in reinforcing its norms, and we can change the language and arguments we use in order to create new possibilities for welfare subjectivities that reject the notion of deviant and normal participants.

Confession and Deviant Subject Formation

My understanding of subjectivity is influenced by the writings of Foucault and Judith Butler. Both theorists use the concept of subjectivity to understand how power works to create norms and regulate subjects,[48] particularly around issues of gender and sexuality. Foucault explains that most people conceive of power only as juridical, as state power that restricts and controls us; however, Foucault understands power as both restrictive and productive (1990, 81-91). Butler explains that while the law appears to simply restrict subjects, it also produces the subject as an intelligible person or identity through language, but this production is masked and naturalized (1990, 2). There is no substance, self, or being that exists before it is produced through language (Butler 1990, 20-21).

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[47] Back-talking is a strategy akin to myth busting where people in a group positively self-define as a method of resisting stereotypes. Although I am criticizing the limitations of that approach, I firmly believe in using multiple strategies of resistance, including back-talking, while acknowledging the limitations of each strategy. Similarly, the idea of a discursive challenge can be critiqued as too distanced from lived experience and too academic to have much success in changing the way welfare subjects are constructed.

[48] My use of the term "subject" refers to the individual welfare participant, but it also relies on Butler's understanding of the individual, the "I," as always also social and historical. The subject cannot be understood as individual apart from the social and the historical (Butler 2004, 16), so when I use "subject" I refer not only to the individual, but to the individual as constituted through the social in multiple, conflicting, and shifting discourses—in other words, the I as constituted through powerful shared language systems.

In *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault (1990) develops the theoretical concept of confession to describe the processes that "transform[ed] sex into discourse" (20). Contrary to the popular belief that Victorian society was highly repressed, Foucault argues that this period indulged in extensive amounts of talking about sex. He explains that confession became a tool of the "science of sexuality" in the nineteenth century, shifting confession from religious practice to a medical-scientific device (1990, 58-59).

Through confession, sexualities are produced and delineated into norms and "deviations" in desires, pleasures, and practices. For example, as patients reveal their seemingly innermost desires to a doctor, the doctor categorizes that patient into a sexuality. This appears to be a process of discovery of a "preexisting condition" that simply required diagnosis and treatment. Challenging this interpretation, Foucault identifies this as a process of confession that creates the subjectivity of the patient in specific ways through the confession.

We are incited to confess our sexuality as a "line of penetration," or as a tool of population control, rather than as a personal choice or sexual liberation (42). This stands in contrast to the idea that talking about sex and claiming a sexual identity are acts of liberation. In Foucault's theory, confession is a localized form of state power that can be used to more effectively regulate the population by sorting individuals into cases. In our society, we must have an intelligible sexuality that can be understood in the normal/deviant binary—confession of deviation is not an option, it is required (69). Sexuality is constantly under surveillance through the family, church, religion, medicine, and the law, and deviation from the heterosexual norm requires treatment; it needs to be

"fixed." The confession is disguised as a liberating act, where one is "unburdened" and can move towards "salvation" (60).

Nineteenth century confessors[49] believed sexuality to be hidden in the unconscious (66). The hidden truth of sex, lying within the individual, needed discovering for reform to begin, and the confessor had the questions to bring forth this truth. The idea of latency and discovery further masks the productive power of confession. If confession is understood to bring about an emergence of hidden, but preexisting desires, then the confession cannot be seen as producing these desires. Confession is understood as the unearthing of secrets, many of which are unknown to the one confessing.

Foucault describes the confessor as the "authority who requires the confession, prescribes and appreciates it, and intervenes in order to judge, punish, forgive, console, and reconcile" (62). Scientific discourse produced confessors as experts who had the power of "interpretation" (66). These new confessor/experts included medical doctors, teachers, psychologist, and reformers. Foucault writes, "The work of producing the truth was obliged to pass through this relationship if it was to be scientifically validated" (66). The truth of sex became created through the relationship of confessor and the one confessing, and through incitement, discovery, discourse, and interpretation (67).

This process of confession transforms the one who confesses because it constructs a truth about the self in the discursive framework of the confessor's expertise (63), be it psychology, medicine, Christianity, or welfare. In Foucault's analysis of the science of sexuality, the confessor "reveals" the "true desire" of the person confessing, and that person comes to understand themselves in a certain category of desire, such as

[49] The term "confessor" in this thesis always refers to one who is authorized to hear the confession.

"homosexual." In terms of welfare, a participant might come to view themselves and others in the framework of deserving/undeserving and deviant/normal.

On the surface, the PRA seems to be trying to eliminate "deviant" practices, but a Foucauldian reading rejects this idea. Foucault claims that the delineation of "deviant" sexualities actually led to the increase of "deviant" subjects and groups as people began to understand themselves through newly created sexual types (37). Citing Foucault, Ladelle McWhorter (1999) explains that the purpose of defining deviance was more about power through regulation, even though it might appear to be about annihilation (18-23). McWhorter states, "The most obvious result of this incorporation of perversions was not the control or eradication of them but the extension of power throughout the populations that harbored them" (23).

Foucault's theory of confession has proven very useful to queer scholars, particularly in understanding how power works in the debate over "coming out." McWhorter uses Foucault to challenge the idea that "coming out," or confessing your sexuality, is liberating. Writing about her personal experience of confessing her sexuality, she states, "the truth does not make deviants free" (1999, 13). As Foucault explains, everyone must confess an intelligible sexuality, and for McWhorter, this meant having her entire identity and life "reduced" to her lesbianism, understood as "sick," childish, inhuman, and "ridiculous" (2-3). Discovering the "truth of sex" for those who fall outside of social norms leads to many negative consequences. McWhorter explains the dangers of confession for queers: "Unless you're straight-straight-*straight*, if you're honest about your sexuality, liberation is not what follows; lockup is [...] For any sexual deviant, confession, whatever its benefits, comes at an extremely high price. To name

oneself queer in our society is to put one's job, one's family, one's freedom, and even one's life on the line" (13).

The importance of Foucault for McWhorter is clear: the consequences of confession can be dire. Knowing this, it becomes crucial to acknowledge and challenge the ways that language shapes our subjectivity and confessors assess our normalcy. This is equally true for welfare participants. The ways that participants are assessed as fitting or not fitting norms about work, family, reproduction, and sexuality are the ways that they become understood as deviant or normal, deserving or undeserving. These judgments, made through the assessment process, affect participants' access to important resources of food, medical care, and money.

The PRA puts forth the idea that the state seeks to place women into the workforce, and to stop out-of-wedlock births, teenage pregnancy, and poor women's reproduction; however, using Foucault we can look more carefully at the PRA as a tool for further surveillance and regulation of poor women, rather than a tool for helping them by eradicating their supposedly deviant behaviors. This perspective disputes the liberal notion that welfare is, or can be, a system of salvation or a helping system. The system's appearance of (at least) trying to move participants into the working-class masks its regulatory function. The idea of welfare participation as a process of reform fits so well with narratives of Christian charity, conversion, salvation, and the related capitalist pursuit of the American dream, that the intention and function of the system remain largely unchallenged (even though its success rate is challenged all the time).

Welfare subjects do not simply enact created subject positions. Subjects resist, contradict, and exceed constructed norms. While Foucault argues that subjects do not

exist outside of discourse or outside of power, he also states: "Where there is power, there is resistance..." (1990, 95). When we unmask norms as productions, then we can envision possibilities of resignification through disruptive performance of these identities (Butler 1990, 33-34). If we understand the cultural production of welfare subjects through the law, not as something inherent in their selves or behaviors, then we can disrupt these constructions and envision new significations of these identities. While participants cannot escape the hegemonic constructions of welfare identities as deserving/undeserving, they can challenge these narrow, rigid constructions. Denaturalizing these norms is crucial for the federally defined "poor" to combat the restrictions that these norms that affect essential, although very limited, assistance. The construction of poor women as deviant through the law attempts to justify poverty by blaming the individual, thereby masking the oppression of the unemployed and working poor through the capitalist system. Unmasking this production is a crucial part of moving towards economic equality.

Reading Welfare Assessment as Confession

The welfare system, with its myriad forms and classifications, requires constant and repeated confession and interpretation by the social worker. Confession is tightly controlled through the types of questions asked and the limited subjects created by the language of the law, its requirements, and its forms. States control the questions, which focus on certain topics, such as: educational background, job skills, medical history, mental health, family violence, relationships, and sexual behavior, but there can also be regional differences in questions or different emphases. These specific state-mandated sets of questions and their answers produce a certain type of subject and constitute a new

"case." Subjects can only be understood through certain sets of answers to these questions that the confessor might interpret as "hopelessly deviant" or "undeserving" or on the other side of the binary as "on the right track" or "wants to improve" or "reformable," which translate to "deserving." There is no subject "welfare participant" prior to the welfare system, and there are no related behavioral characteristics that exist somewhere deep within the applicant to be discovered.

When a woman enters her local Family Services office, she immediately begins the process of becoming a welfare participant. Initially, she will be assessed by a case manager for welfare eligibility, level of preparedness, and barriers to participation in wage labor. The welfare assessment process quickly turns the complex human being asking for assistance into a case to be described, managed, and evaluated. Although the forms are standardized by the state, the case manager and specialized workers have a great deal of discretion in their analyses of the participant. The participant works with her case manager to develop a plan to overcome her barriers to success, defined by the PRA as wage labor and self-sufficiency.

The case manager understands the filling out of these forms as a necessary step to gaining knowledge that exists inside the participant. The assessment process takes for granted the existence of objective truths that can be known about individuals' character traits, behaviors, tendencies that are perceived to be innate to the subject "welfare participant." As confessor, the social worker seeks out the truths that exist inside of the confessing participant, without realizing that the confessor and confessing subject construct a form of "truth" that does not have some pre-given existence, waiting to be discovered.

Foucault writes, "Combining confession with examination, the personal history with the deployment of a set of decipherable signs and symptoms [was a way] of reinscribing the procedure of confession in a field of scientifically acceptable observations" (1990, 65). The many government forms of the welfare system give the appearance of objectivity, a crucial condition of science. The participant answers the questions and the worker makes "observations and comments" and then interprets the assessment to determine requirements and needs. The worker takes the next step based on the participant's answers within a system of reform "solutions."

Forms produce subjects through the list of questions, the answers, and the interpretation, and certain sets of answers create a deviant subject. For example, if someone answers that they have a drug abuse problem, a box will be checked and they will automatically be sent to a "targeted assessment" (TA).[50] Referral to TA guarantees that participants move deeper into a system of experts and confession. The TA specialist determines program or counseling requirements for the participant to "fix" their problem, but none of these programs can count as "participation" or work hours. Again, to become deserving one has to overcome barriers to work.

The form becomes crucial to the masking of subject production in the welfare system. Forms are described as "blank" before they are "filled out," implying that the information is revealed by the person being interviewed, rather than constructed through the interaction of form, interviewee and worker. This conceals the work of subject production done in the questions themselves. As the participant provides information, it

[50] Workers only send cases to TA when the "problem" goes beyond their expertise. The TA worker is the ultimate specialist because she assesses the most "difficult" cases to reform. Things that might lead to targeted assessment include admitting to, or suspicion of learning disabilities, domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse, or mental health issues.

seems that the final image on the form describes something that exists within the participant, or that it describes a whole person that exists naturally. Foucault, however, would read the confession as a construction of a subject through the assessment process, rather than a "truth" that exists and needs only to be revealed.

Through assessment, the case manager determines the "barriers" to participation, which usually indicates a lack of something that the case manager will try to help the participant attain. Overcoming these barriers becomes a requirement for assistance. Barriers may include childcare, work skills, personal hygiene, transportation, drug abuse, and many other things. These "barriers" can be anything the worker determines that prevents the participant from the ultimate goal, which is to "leave the program and become self-sufficient" (PRA 1996, Sec.402 (A)(i)). This assumes that the low-wage, part-time jobs without benefits available to most participants will allow them to be "self-sufficient," even though most of them will still fall below federal poverty thresholds.

Following Foucault's understanding of the confession process, case workers usually present assessments as a crucial aspect of their ability to "help" a client by discovering something inherent in their behavior that needs to be fixed (overcoming barriers). One particular worker, the work specialist, repeatedly described her job function as "help" or "helping" participants, and the way she helps is to teach them "proper" behaviors ranging from work habits, to bathing, to cleaning house and spending money. Interestingly, these "helps" are actually TANF requirements, such as building a resume and getting a job. If participants do not take-up the "life skills," behaviors, and values that she teaches them, they can be discontinued for "non-cooperation." Through understanding the welfare system as "helping," the knowledge-gathering process of

assessment and the creation of cases appear to be benevolent endeavors, rather than "lines of penetration" into women's lives.

All of the workers I interviewed conceived of themselves as helpers to their clients (at least the deserving ones). Several workers in one office described their approach as "old school" or "Roosevelt" style management. Emily described this philosophy:

> Yeah I think it comes from the old school. I'm talking Roosevelt days. We're here to help people, we're not here to say, you know "hey you need to get married" you see what I'm saying, or "you need to quit having babies." I just don't feel comfortable saying that to anybody. But it's probably in New York, or should I have said the state, but they're a little more you know open with their opinions, you know what I'm saying? And I think in the South it's different. I think we hesitate to judge people lest we be judged. You know what I'm saying yeah. We're just trained to always bend over backwards no matter what you have to do to help these people.

This "helping" philosophy allows Emily to describe herself as a non-judgmental public servant to her participants. She uses the role of helper to deny the judgments implicit in the system and in her assessments.

Workers explained that policy often gets in the way of their desire to help participants, and they complained about the limits of their discretion and flexibility. Leslie, the coordinator, explained that "you got to have a little Black and white there. You've got to keep it in line [with policy]," but she also has great contempt for the bureaucracy that keeps some participants from getting help that they need when they don't quite fit the rules (as evidenced in the story at the beginning of this chapter). She lamented that in "this day and time they've made everything so sticky with policy and stuff and so strict on everything, it's a better program in a sense helping a client, but it seems like you've got too many i's to dot and too many t's to cross. You don't feel like

you're helping a client like you really used to. Maybe I've just been here too long, I don't know."

It is clear that allowing a certain amount of discretion gives case managers the freedom to give clients access to more services, and obviously I would not argue against this. As many informants pointed out, the drastic differences between family situations calls for flexibility in policy, and participants should be able to access services they need; however, I argue that the discourse of deservedness strongly influences and is produced in the spaces of discretion. Deservedness also becomes an argument for discretion and for decision-making, because case managers have to defend each decision they make in their monthly reports on each client. The concept of deservedness is so central to each process of welfare, particularly in the context of welfare as "help," that it becomes difficult to imagine alternatives.

The level of discretion over welfare processes allows workers to interpret goals and requirements for participants through assessments, and to sanction them if they do not comply. Discretion is central to the authority of the confessor because the boundaries of discretion shape the space for interpretation, the essential diagnosing act of the confessor. Most of my social worker informants repeatedly claimed that practice varied widely across regions, states, counties, and workers, indicating that welfare participants experience a broad range of interpretations of deservedness. Crystal, the General Assistance Specialist and former participant, stated that in some cases workers might have too much discretion and may abuse it, but she believed that most workers wanted to "help" their clients. Other workers varied on the issue. Regina, a case manager, stated:

> I think that basically that's the difference between case management and just regular family support is that we do have leeway [...] we have to have common

> sense to do this job. We have to assess the whole situation. And if we feel like we need to go out and see them 5 times then we can. If we feel like this person needs something more than this person, or the need is real here, and not so much here, we have to be intelligent enough to make that call. And that's what's a little bit tougher because there's a lot more responsibility laid in our laps. Not only to help this family become more self-sufficient but to make sure the decisions that we make are right.

Regina's statement demonstrates how case managers' perceptions about deservedness affect service. As confessor, the case manager has a great deal of power to determine the "realness" of the need, in other words they have to assess the "truth" of deservedness of each participant.

Emily, a case manager, explained that different workers make very different choices on what services to grant. She described workers in another county, explaining that they have told her, "'we don't issue clothing for that just because they have an interview, we tell them no, you can't have it.' They deny the service, and that is their option. It's not an entitlement really, it's your judgment. I do feel like, yeah I have seen a difference in that. From supervisor to supervisor, case manager to case manager. Sympathy-wise and all."

The power of the confessor to judge a participant as deserving or undeserving is closely tied to their ability to get to the truth within, or in how well they know a participant. Several case managers indicated that they can make a fairly accurate prediction of a client's performance in the program after the initial assessment. Some workers acknowledged their unfamiliarity with participants' lives outside of the office, pointing to the limitations of the short and infrequent interviews. Some case managers discussed a desire to really know their participants and a pride in it, while others claimed

that keeping distance was important and mandated. Different strategies for discovering the truth prove crucial for the confessor to be able to change (cure) the barriers.

When I explicitly asked her about assessment, Allison, the work specialist gave a long list of items that they "talk about" in the assessment. She said: "We talk about their housing…We talk about their basic needs…We talk about their finances…We talk about drug and alcohol abuse. We talk about…what they want to do" (these are a few examples). She explained that she gets participants to "open up" and once she does this, then they will "proceed to tell you." Her lengthy description betrays the institutional style of assessment, which she characterized as "talking" and "opening up," as you might with a new friend. But her response reads as a long list of confessional requirements, read from a government form. Participants are required to respond to these questions in order to receive assistance. Of course, all of this "talk" is necessary for her to be able to "help" the client. The confessor discovers the truth that exists inside, unknown to the client, so she can diagnose the problem and determine the cure.

Emily, a case manager, also described the importance of assessment in getting to know the client. Notice how much weight she gives the initial assessment in determining the deservedness of the participant:

> First bat out of the box you're going to know if they're going to work or not. That's how you get your idea of are they going to participate or how hard am I going to have to work with this client. You get their education level, you know what you're dealing with education level. Their work history. And usually at the beginning of the assessment, they've gotten wise to the good cause deal, they're like "now I'm not able to work." And a lot of times I'll say, "well maybe this program's not for you. If you feel like you can't overcome this, maybe you need to…" Or they'll say "I can't work because my lawyer tells me I shouldn't because I'm on SSI" or "I've applied for SSI." […] You'll know whether they have their driver's license, you know whether they have a car, you know whether they have childcare available. You know whether they have a support system. And you know if there's a drug problem if they'll answer truthfully. You can't

> force them to tell you and if they answer yes to any of those questions, you're going to have to do a referral for drug rehab. [...] It's a good tool. It is a good tool to get to know that client if they'll be candid with you. But a lot of them have learned the system and they know how to answer those questions.

Emily's suspicion about clients' honesty and insider knowledge exposes the assessment process as confession. This knowledge is supposed to be kept secret from participants because it strips some power from the confessor, who is supposed to determine the "real truth." She must be able to see through the façade of the participant and get to know her real circumstances, character, and behavior.

Pat, a case manager, also expressed the importance of assessment for getting to know her clients. She stated:

> It's important, the time that you spend with them. They told us one time that the client needed to do most of the talking. Sometimes you get clients that don't want, you know first couple times they don't open up to you. It's like pulling teeth to get information from them. That assessment paper you know after they fill it out or you ask the questions, whichever way we do it. We'll go over it and you kind of give them a chance to talk. The first time they come in and they have their children with them and it's hard to talk. It might not be 'til you've had a couple of sessions with them 'til you find out more about them [...] It's important to get to know your clients... some of them I know really good, or I think I know them, but they walk out the doors and they go back to their lives. If we do home visits, doing home visits makes me feel like I know them a little bit better. But you only know about them what they want to expose to you here in the office, or what you read in the paper about them [laughs].

Keeping secrets and being dishonest with your worker are labeled as "non-cooperative," in other words undeserving, behaviors. Workers often commented on the things that participants will not tell or the things they intuit about participants. Allison explained her intuitive abilities, saying that you can "tell who's [TANF]" in her area "by the way they live." When you go on a home visit, she says, "you get a real rude awakening ...That tells you more information than any assessment could ever tell you." So she intuits and interprets information beyond the actual information spoken in the interview assessments.

When I asked her how she decided if a certain case should be sanctioned, she replied, "it would depend on my gut feeling," in other words, her intuition.

The case manager as confessor holds a high authority, but works in partnership with others in the "helping professions," as Epstein called the doctors and therapists. As the expert, the case manager has the power to impose sanctions in order to normalize participants to the requirements. When a case manager sanctions a participant, they lose their medical coverage, food stamps, and some of their benefit amount, but their children can keep their medical cards. Many workers described the medical card as "gold" and ranked it as the most valuable piece (compared to the food stamps and the check), and several mentioned their ability to take the card and force a participant to change because "you have a lot of clients that's on every kind of pill coming and going." Eventually, participants can be totally discontinued for "non-compliance," which is determined to a great degree by the social workers. Sanctions can be based on a long list of potential "violations" of TANF requirements, including a refusal to establish paternity and assist the district attorney in seeking child support.

In the case of welfare, one can only be reformed or "cured" of deviance through the "healing effects" of confession. Presenting the assessments as the way to help clients move towards the proper way to live (re)creates middle-class values and norms as the rule for welfare participants (and for all citizens). Cultural constructions of appropriate behavior in work, sexual behaviors, childcare, and even personal hygiene become medicalized or naturalized as normal. The reform of clients is understood as healing the participants, and assessments are seen as crucial to knowing the client's barriers, in other words, their barriers to middle-class assimilation into a working-class wage job.

In criticizing this assimilationist push, I am not suggesting that wage work is a bad goal to have in a capitalist society. It is almost necessary for survival. Of course these goals are related to material conditions that affect the quality of life for people who participate in welfare: better housing, increased income, health insurance, adequate childcare, reliable transportation, and quality food are important goals for participants and workers. The issue here is not to question these needs or goals, but to challenge the ways that the system of welfare produces subjects as deserving and undeserving in ways that reinforce the essential class divisions of capitalism and therefore the inferiority of poor and working-class people.

Defining Deservedness in the Data

In my data, deservedness had very specific criteria within a wide range of possible circumstances. The criteria of deservedness in the welfare assessment process (re)produce norms about morality, work, sexuality, reproduction, family, addiction, violence, and disability. Below is a list of characteristics or situations that informants repeatedly referenced as constituting a participant deserving of assistance:

- Willingness and desire to work (every interview confirmed this)
- Honesty, following the rules of the system
- Communication with worker, filling out forms and reporting in timely manner
- Putting children first, willingness to sacrifice for children, being a good parent
- Being self-sufficient, independent, and responsible (defined in various ways)
- Circumstance evoking sympathy (varied)
- Mental illness (sometimes)
- Involved in domestic violence (sometimes)
- Legitimate disability, serious health problems, work-related injury (sometimes)
- Perceived extreme level of hardship, abject poverty, or high number of barriers
- Single mother status (sometimes)
- Having a "good marriage"
- Having a number of children that mother and father can financially support
- High degree or demonstration of effort, trying, or merit
- Participation in education components (demonstrates trying)
- Not wanting to be on welfare, but having no choice

- Having American citizenship

Although all of these criteria emerged in my data, in this section I will only give examples of the most prominent elements of deservedness. I have already discussed many examples of participants defining themselves as deserving, particularly in response to stereotypes, in the Appalachian chapter.

Sometimes informants described one criterion from the list as constituting a deserving participant, but most examples included multiple elements. Discussions of the PRA's five year time limit often evoked the question of deservedness. All of the participants I interviewed stated that the time limit should be longer for those participants who they deemed deserving. For example, Jo explained that:

> The five year time limit, I think it's very unfair, especially for those who are trying. I know it's hard to put it in there and it's hard to keep up with, but I think there needs to be exceptions for those that are trying if they prove a certain grade point average and they want to go on and they're still eligible beyond the time limit, I think the resources should be there to help them. In extenuating circumstances, some of them may get sick, and need more help, and they're not able to pursue their career for say a year. I don't think they should count that against them. I don't think it's fair to the children in the home, because they're the ones that suffer if mom doesn't get up and do somethin' within the end of that five year period then you still have babies at home. They're the ones that suffer.

Jodi, a participant who works in the Family Services office, also argued that deserving participants (like herself) should have an extended time limit:

> I think they should [impose a time limit], but to a certain point, not like 10 years or something, it should be at least in the time period of 4 years, that way somebody could get a degree. That way they *could* have a future so they *ain't* back on this program later on [...] Yeah there are [stereotypes]. A lot of times people look down on you because of it. I mean they don't understand. A lot of people's going in there to try and make a better future for their children and then there's some that's not [laughs] [...] I think a lot of them are just on it for the fact that they don't want to work. And I'm not stereotyping, it's just I've seen it both ways. There is a lot that's like me that is going to school and I see quite a few of them even in here that does that. But you can just tell that, it's like, they really don't care. I don't know if it's their self-concept of theirselves or what it is.

Jodi's statement illustrates that criteria for assessing deservedness stack up like gold stars. In Jodi's judgment, like many other informants, going to school is a mark of sincerity and working hard to support your children. People who work hard and take advantage of the many benefits of TANF programs do not really want to be on welfare. She is deserving because she has the goal of self-sufficiency, and she is working hard to attain it with medical training, which is considered a practical field with a likelihood of successful employment.[51]

All of my informants defined hard work and perceived ability and desire to participate, or working a wage job, as part of being deserving. In America, the powerful myth of meritocracy, or the belief that hard work and merit earn individuals financial success, drives our work norms (McIntosh 1988). To be a good worker means to work long hours, work hard, and most of all, to be self-sacrificing. If participants state that they do not want to work or cannot work and the case manager or medical review team determines that they can, they will almost certainly be viewed as undeserving, and they will eventually be "discontinued."

Many informants made a correlation between the desire to work hard and devotion to children. Through the work assessment, participants have to set goals and make plans for attaining them, and participants stressed meeting their children's needs as a shaping force for their work plans. Jodi viewed her goal of a job in the medical field as

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[51] As of the newest reform (effective October 2006), the law no longer allows Bachelor's or higher degrees to count towards an educational component, even in the first twelve months, as "participation." The only educational components that can count are vocational rehabilitation and technical training and certifications, GED, and Associate's Degrees. Although a Bachelor's is obviously not a guarantee of any certain income level, this change makes clear that the welfare system is training participants for working-class jobs only. In the new law, "vocational educational training means organized educational programs that are directly related to the preparation of individuals for employment in current or emerging occupations requiring training" (DHHS 2006).

the best way to provide "a better life for her child." Sandy explained that it took her some time to find a job because she and her husband have five children together and she "had to find something that would actually cover what we needed." She went on to explain, "I'm making good money, but we got five kids and we are still just scraping by, but I am paying my bills. And that counts to me."

Putting children first and making sacrifices for children were powerful ways that participants distinguished themselves as deserving. Sandy associated her deservedness with her hard work as a single mother and (later) her shared devotion to her children with her husband. She said, "I know what it's like being a single parent. I was one for nine years. And it was not the easiest thing in the world believe me. I worked sometimes, and sometimes I didn't, but I had means when I didn't. I made sure of that before I didn't work, but that's because my daughter had a lot of problems, and I had to be with her more." Rhonda repeatedly defined herself as deserving by demonstrating her devotedness to her children. She stated, "a person like me, I'm out for my children more than I am for me. [...] The way I see it and the way my husband sees it is we are the last on the totem pole. Our kids come first, the bills, and the food, then if there's anything left over, it's us, but pretty much there's usually nothin' left for us."

Sympathy was also a strong determinant of deservedness, particularly in descriptions of women living in extreme poverty or in abusive relationships. Amy, a case manager described her sympathy for hard working, very poor clients, stating, "If anything I feel like the people making the rules, you know I'd like to see some of them try it sometime. You know like I can look at my clients, the ones that struggle so hard, and I believe they want something different, but I don't know if I could do it." Many case

managers acknowledged the difficulty of making change for most of their participants. They recognized the flaws of the system, but persevered in their efforts to help the clients who they perceive as deserving to access resources.

Sometimes deservedness was defined in unexpected ways, such as acknowledging that someone who has a serious drug or alcohol addiction may need support. These "sometimes deserving" cases often involved circumstances that evoked sympathy from workers, such as mistreatment in the education system that led to participants not having adequate job skills, or a participant who had experienced childhood abuse. Jean, the transitional specialist, explained that

> We're talking people who are low level of education. And not just because, I'm not talking about people who couldn't make it in school because they weren't bright enough. [sighs, sadly] I'm talking about people who would be able to have that GED or if they had lived in a different type of family, would have had their high school diploma, and gone on to college or gone on to vocational school. And not all of our clients came from, I hate to use the word dysfunctional families, but families where education wasn't important, or there was alcohol or drug abuse, or child abuse, or domestic violence. Those are not things that can be overcome in 5 years. And I'm not in charge, so I don't know how you would determine which ones. What happened was when welfare reform, I've had several case managers tell me this, when welfare reform came into existence, they had people on their caseloads who would have been able to go for SSI, who probably should've been getting, who were, should have gotten SSI, but they had never applied for SSI. People who had been in special education classes the whole time they were in school. Obvious, obvious problems that make them eligible, so they encouraged those people to apply for SSI benefits, knowing that in 5 years most of them wouldn't have had a concept of 60 months, okay? So, the case managers were trying to help people like that. And I know that's just changing one set of federal funds to another set, but people who actually needed to have SSI.

This example demonstrates the overlap in criterion of deservedness. Jean states her sympathy for participants who did not have supportive families, who did not have equal access to education, and those who have "legitimate" disabilities.

Despite the lack of formal assessment questions about sexual behavior and relationships, case workers do ask these types of questions and judge participants' deservedness through heteronormativity. Although informants gave varied responses about the values of marriage, all of them indicated that a "good marriage" would benefit a participant. In terms of sexual behavior, most informants stated that it was "not their business" or that it was not in their job description or anywhere in policy or training, but many indicated that they still talk to participants about family planning, and they all had plenty to say on the topic. Most workers I interviewed discuss issues of safe sex, abstinence and "smart" relationship decisions with participants that will help them transition from welfare, or keep them out of further "trouble." One said she promoted abstinence, although she doubted its successful impact. Another viewed recommending abstinence as a hopeless plight and an invasion of privacy, but both perceived abstinence as the best choice for women living in poverty. Jean, the transitional specialist said, "they're not going to quit having sex, just because somebody tells them it's not a good idea."

By arguing for abstinence as the "best" solution, especially for teenage women, informants imply the many negative consequences that come from deviant (non-marital, non-monogamous, queer, and/or teenage) sex. Allison, the work specialist described a hypothetical scenario that directly associated having sex and having children with deviance. When I asked her "do you think that the number of children that a woman has is related to her participation," she stated "yes." When I asked her why, she answered "probably in her mind, she's thinking she's gonna get more money," reproducing the classic stereotype of the welfare queen. She goes on to describe a hypothetical woman

who becomes pregnant, then her man runs off and leaves her, so she goes on TANF and realizes she does not get very much, so she has more children. She presents this scenario despite the fact that women in this state receive less than forty dollars more a month for an additional child. She concluded by stating: "most of my TANF recipients, they either A) don't know or are not sure who the child's father is, B) the father of the child says it's not his, or C) the father skips town and he's not gonna pay anything." Through the process of mandatory paternity establishment, women are frequently blamed for the absence or confusion about the father. Allison's attitude, although not shared by all case managers, demonstrates how stereotypes and judgments about poor women's sexual and reproductive behavior strongly affect welfare workers' assessments about deviance and deservedness.

This state chose not to implement a "family cap," which would restrict increased benefits for additional children, but there is a seven-member cut-off for total support. In this state then, a family of eight becomes intolerably deviant, with one or more members undeserving of support, especially the mother. This large family size deviates so much from the middle-class one to two child nuclear ideal that the welfare system must discipline this family and warn others away from this level of deviance. One of the workers said that she thought two children should be the cap for benefits. Emphasizing abstinence, birth control and small family size contribute to an understanding of sex as causing deviance and multiple "negative consequences," rendering the participant undeserving.

I asked participants if they thought the family cap was a good idea. Jodi said, "if someone's already getting the [TANF], I don't think they should get any more money

because they knew it before they had more children. They need to wait until they get more financially stable before they have a bunch of children." Sandy wavered on her support of the family cap, saying "It's a two-edged sword, because… I think it's a person's choice if they want to have a bigger family or not. I feel very strongly that way…But at the same time if they can't raise them, what business do they have having them?" The same heterosexual act leading to childbirth could be "normal" if the subject fits the white, middle-class ideals of the Christian nuclear family. While this model is not the middle-class average, it remains the norm that the law continually reproduces as deserving.

A central part of the scientific transformation of confession comes in the construction of sex as "causal," or of sex as having countless consequences (Foucault 1990, 65-66). In the case of any woman receiving TANF, the sex act leading to reproduction is the cause of her participation, because having children less than eighteen years of age is a requirement for receiving TANF benefits. This sex act is constructed as socially "deviant" through the PRA framework (among others) because all women receiving TANF are receiving it because they gave birth to children that they cannot financially support on their own. In the welfare system then, the sex and reproduction of poor women, especially unmarried or teenage women, or women who already have children, becomes deviant and "irresponsible," and as Patricia Williams explains, it is blamed as the cause of all social problems.

If participants confess sexual deviation such as having unprotected or teenage sex or becoming pregnant to social workers, their lives and their homes can be more closely monitored and restricted and they can be sanctioned and discontinued. For example, the

PRA requires unmarried teenage mothers to live with their parents, or in "a second chance home, maternity home, or other appropriate adult-supervised supportive living arrangement" and to be in high school (PRA 1996, Sec.408 (4) Prohibitions). It is impossible to know what could happen in the system if queer sexualities were confessed because heterosexuality is the only "sexual type" conceivable in the framework of the system. Social workers have a strong connection with Child Protective Services, so there is always the powerful threat of taking your children if you are considered "deviant." For gays, lesbians, and other queers, this threat could be significantly higher, especially for the "queer queers," such as transgendered and transsexual people. Confessing a sexuality that is "deviant" would most likely result in intensified monitoring, possibly even forced counseling.

The welfare system begins with confession (intake/assessment), moving towards penance (reform/solutions), and then to the ultimate salvation (transition) or the alternative failure, the discontinuance of participation. Each criterion of deservedness discussed above, hard work, getting an education, sacrificing for your children, living in abject poverty, having a legitimate disability, and living a heteronormative life correlates with the final "cure" of responsibility. The PRA stresses responsibility, self-sufficiency, and independence as the highest goals of the system, and my informants, workers and participants, all shared these goals.

Defining Success: Responsibility, Self-sufficiency, and Independence

The impact of the PRA on ways of thinking about welfare participants can be seen very clearly in discussions of responsibility, self-sufficiency, and independence—all characteristics of deservedness. These criteria are presented as a moral obligation to the

nation and to participants' children. When asked what personal responsibility meant, each informant answered with the narrative of the law that has been implemented in policy—the idea that responsibility means earning enough income to adequately support your family through a waged job.

Despite the emphasis on responsibility as a central goal of the welfare system, there was a great deal of doubt about whether "responsibility" was possible for most participants. Many stated that participants could still receive some kind of assistance and be responsible, and many expressed how difficult it would be to make it without any assistance, or to make that massive of a life change in such a short time. Most workers recognized that it is just too hard to overcome the many barriers participants face and to make that much of a class shift with participants' limited access to jobs, skills, and education.

Class difference, stereotypes about Appalachians, and the limited and unreasonable definition of success led to many punitive assessments about participants' responsibility. For example, workers strongly supported the use of sanctions as a tool to force participants to be responsible, but some participants expressed this view as well. Many workers and some participants looked on other participants as children and talked about workers as parental figures. Regina said that you have to build up participants' self-esteem, "you know praise them for what they do, just like a child." Emily also described this parental relationship, stating, "Oh I think I get much more involved [than before the reform] because there are so many facets to case management. It's almost like having seventy kids or seventy families that you're working with. And you do feel

responsible for them, if they fail or if they succeed. And they do look to you, most of them."

In another example, Jo, a participant explained, "I think the majority of people want to be independent. And they should be responsible. If not, then I think someone else needs to be appointed over them to make sure that they are responsible or held responsible." When asked what responsibility would look like, she claimed: "I think they should be responsible enough to make sure their rent is paid, electric bills are paid, the essentials. That the children have what they need. That the mother's not going out and blowing it on yard sales, and well alcohol, drugs, tobacco. I think the children come first [...] Being responsible enough to see that you can survive."

My informants defined success in varying ways, but all were caught up with the notions of deservedness, responsibility, independence, and self-sufficiency. Even if participants could not survive without any assistance, their case could be deemed successful if they were reformed to move towards the norms of deservedness in some way. Some examples of successes might include: gaining steady employment, moving toward middle-class social norms (such as change in appearance), moving into town, leaving an abusive relationship, gaining confidence, getting substance abuse or mental health counseling, or the very rare case of making a major class shift with full time employment in a well paid job with benefits. As evidenced in this list, my informants gave a much larger range for declaring a case a success than the PRA's narrow definition.

Leslie, the coordinator, proudly explained one of her "success stories" where she reformed a deserving client. She had a female participant, an Old Regular Baptist, who did not dress and act according to American middle-class norms, and Leslie labeled her

as "backwards" (a common assessment by middle-class "real Protestant" townspeople in this area). Leslie recounted:

> I've had some success stories myself, like I had this one client that I worked with for a long time, and she had 3 little kids, and she's a beautiful girl. She married this little fella and he loved her dearly and they loved each other and whatever, but he was so backwards and she was too. I mean she was the type that came in here with the long hair, the long dress, little tennis shoes, never wore no make-up, which there's nothing wrong with that, that's what she chose, I respect that. But you could tell she was sooo backwards [this was said after Leslie noticed I was not wearing make-up]. And by the time I got through with that there case and just me talking to her and him both, she ended up, I sent her to school, drafting down here at the vocational school. She ended up graduating with A's. She ended up getting a job at a blueprint place making like 15 dollars an hour right off the bat. Well and now when she sees me, she'll come up to me and give me a hug. She don't even look like the same person. She is now wearing pants. She's cut her hair a little bit and highlighted it. She wears make-up now. But I'm not saying that was better, I'm saying that was a change in her. And she will tell me, she says if it wasn't for you, none of this would've happened to me. And she thanks me all the time. Well then her husband was getting disability, he went off of disability and he went back to school hisself, and now he's got his own business I think doing them air-conditionings. So that was one couple I made a change in. So their kids has got a different kind of mommy a different kind of daddy, they're both working. You know I think what you instill in your kids help out a whole lot too what they see in front of them.

Many case managers expressed stories such as these, often in terms of domestic violence cases. Allison, the work coordinator, told a particularly haunting story of a woman whose back had been broken by her abusive husband. While she was awaiting her disability determination she participated in TANF, and Allison was especially proud of the work she had done to assist this family, such as finding housing, washing and mending used clothing, and acquiring and moving furniture.

Stories like these were presented as the exception to the rule. Most case managers claimed that their success rate in achieving the goals of self-sufficiency, independence, and responsibility was very slim. Regina, a case manager, explained the path to success:

> And you eventually wean them from whatever lifestyle that they're used to where they're being dependent. And it is a lifestyle. I mean families have gone, raised their children, the next generation and the next generation, all dependent upon welfare a lot of them. And they don't know anything different, so I think the independence is freeing themselves from any kind of agencies and being able to do what they want to and to make it [...] Well. To give you a percentage, I would say at least half of them could do it. Fifty percent you know and that's just a ballpark figure. But they just need to be pointed in the right direction and need the encouragement and resources that we have to be able to pull it off. And then have to be, how can I say this, encouraged and praised for what they do. You know a lot of times in the household they don't get that praise, they get all the negative stuff, you know "while you was out doing this, so and so got hurt" or whatever. You know to praise them for what they do, it's just like a child I think. You know the more good things you can say about them, the better they'll do.

Emily, another case manager was less optimistic. She argued that "welfare reform actually made them more dependent. Because we have all these services that are available. And a lot of times before they'll try something on their own, they're like "can you do this for me?" [...] They seem to be a little more timid [...] I feel like they should have the same rights and the same respect, but they don't always get it. And they don't always demand it." Several other workers and one participant shared this assessment that the system can make participants more dependent.

Shelby, the specialized assessment worker, viewed her successes as small victories. All of the successes she listed involved participants moving towards the deserving criteria listed above. She identified the most "tangible" success as getting a participant a better education. All the case managers stressed GED attainment as a goal for their participants, and all viewed increasing education as a high measure of success.

Sometimes, participants defined success and deservedness with more strict criteria than the workers. Jo, a participant working toward advanced degrees beyond her bachelor's degree, stated: "I think my goals are actually higher than theirs [...] I think the main goal is self-sufficiency, [which means] stand on my own two feet. Be able to

provide things that my sons and I both need. In terms of medical, food, housing. A profession I'm comfortable with."

Conclusion

My informants defined success in varying ways, but all of them shared many elements of the criteria of deservedness as determinants of success. While they broadened the definition from the PRA's narrow vision, the discourse of the PRA still shaped their basic views. Attaining the goal of "personal responsibility," which the law defines as a being married, earning a high-school education, and acquiring a (usually low wage, no benefits) job, supposedly allows participants the dignity and full citizenship that a "normal" family deserves. However, the notion of a minimum-wage job as the solution to "welfare dependency" masks the workings of the U.S. capitalist system, which requires these multitudes of unemployed[52] and underpaid, exploited workers so that a few can live in luxury.[53] Poverty is not something that exists within an individual, or something that can be "overcome" or "reformed" through the welfare system, it is part of systematic oppression. The PRA blames poor women's "deviant" behavior for their poverty, thereby using the subjects it produces to justify the poverty that our capitalist state must maintain. Many critics claim that the system "doesn't work." In fact, the transformation of participants to middle-class citizens cannot work, at least not for the majority of participants.

Using the Foucauldian concept of confession to understand welfare assessment provides an alternative model that challenges the "healing" model of reform. By

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[52] Piven and Cloward (1993) explain that "capitalism makes labor conditional on market demand, with the result that some amount of unemployment becomes a permanent feature of the economy" (5).

[53] See Colker (1998) for an explanation of American "hypercapitalism" and of alternative, more "humane" versions of capitalism.

interpreting welfare processes as institutionalized regulation, I expose the ways that the PRA, welfare policy, and assessment practices attempt to naturalize, or make "true," deviant, undeserving subjects to justify their oppression. Denaturalizing welfare processes by exposing the production of subjects debunks stereotypes of participants, and provides a radical revisioning of the entire welfare system, where workers, participants, and the public can imagine new, more complex and less punitive subject positions. It is an important step to simply become aware of the boundaries created by the limited words and language systems we have available for understanding welfare participants. If we can see the limited terms for producing welfare subjectivities and understand welfare as a regulatory mechanism, we can increase awareness of individual roles in the process. Understanding welfare as confession challenges strategies for change that rely on the assumption that welfare should be, or even can be, a healing or saving process.

Conclusion

Re-visioning Appalachian Women on Welfare

I think one of the biggest things that I realize is that situations for each family are individual situations. There is a matter of a majority of things that are similar, but there are still very unique situations for every person. And that is something that's got to be dealt with. It's hard to sit back and say well you need to go out there and do this special for each family out there. Well you, basically I guess you can't in the system. But, it's still, [sighs] every situation is different. So that makes anything that any politics or any government or anything that goes on, that makes it have its drawbacks. It always will.

[TANF participants] are the people who are having to deal with it and having to struggle through whatever they're going through. And this stuff is to be there to help them. Well the people who are trying to help them need to know what kind of help they need. And the people that need the help need to be able to voice that. So absolutely, they have to have a say in it.

-- Sandy, a participant, 2004 (on the pros and cons of the system)

Because like I said, the children are the future. They are gonna be the future of this world, and if the government is doin' welfare reform, like I said it's a great idea, but they do it the wrong way. They do it with straight tunnel vision. They don't see the whole big picture. And what they're not seein' is that is the kids they are leavin' behind and knockin' over the side, what if one of those kids could've been a doctor and he could've had the cure for cancer, or leukemia, AIDS? And they left him behind and he didn't have enough money to go to college. Or his family didn't have enough money to get enough food and he ended up starvin' to death? You know what I'm sayin'? What if they're leavin' behind somethin' that could help the whole world. And they don't look at it that way. The government is just seein', oh we can save this much money down the road if we do it this way. They're not lookin' at all the little bumps in the road on the way goin', they're just seein' the road straight ahead. And it's like they've got buffers on so big, they don't even feel the bumps anymore as they go along. And I hate to say it and make it sound this way, but basically they're runnin' over children and not even feelin' 'em under the tires. And like I said, that's my personal opinion. I could be wrong, but that's what I see. Everyday all around me, that's what I see. I see the kids that are gettin' left behind. I see the kids that are sufferin' over what they're doin'.

Because I mean the parents don't see that when they start a marriage, and they start havin' kids, they don't see that maybe five to six years into the marriage or even ten to

fifteen into the marriage, that the husband's gonna get hurt at work, they're gonna have kids that they have to provide for, and the government's made it so hard for them to get workman's comp and social security benefits that their kids is left out in the open. They're left to get hurt. They're left to get disillusioned. They're left with mom and dad sayin' hey look I'm so sorry, but we just don't have the money to send you to college, you know. And I mean the state office is shoving it down your throat, education pays. Who does it pay for? You know because I mean if you do it their way, and you follow the way they're sayin' to do. This way they cut you off. But if you don't follow their rules and go this way, they cut you off. So I mean basically it's a, if you do it this way, you're hurt, and if you don't do it that way and you go this way you're hurt. So I mean it's a lose/lose situation right now basically on the people involved in it. The government is steppin' back and they're lookin' over, but they're not seein' what they're lookin' over. It's just like they don't see it. Or if they do see it, they act like they don't.

-- Rhonda, a participant, 2004 (on what is wrong with the system)

Although TANF claims to reform participants into responsible citizens and to get women into the workforce, all of my informants stressed that these goals are rarely achieved. The welfare system does not help poor women; instead, it functions as a tool of population control that allows deeper intrusion by the state into the lives of families living in poverty. The TANF program reinforces social norms about deservedness that help to justify the abject poverty created by our highly unregulated global market capitalist system. The possibilities for Appalachian welfare subjectivities created through multiple discourses of welfare, Appalachia, and deservedness allow the rest of us to dismiss those who do not "succeed" in having a good, reliable job with a living wage, decent food, and medical care as undeserving.

In this thesis, I traced the construction of Appalachian deservedness to the history of reform in the region. Like welfare participants, Appalachians had to be produced as deserving subjects through reform in order to justify "helping" them become "better" citizens. Some reformers made important changes in the region such as building schools and life-saving health clinics, but others strongly perpetuated negative, simplistic

representations of Appalachians. Stereotypes of the drunken, hypersexual, barbaric male hillbilly and the lazy, over-reproductive, drug-addicted hillbilly welfare tramp produce the undeserving subjects that justify the extremity of Appalachian poverty to the rest of the nation. Appalachian welfare participants have to continually differentiate themselves from these stereotypes using the criteria of deservedness by presenting (and producing) themselves as responsible, hard working, honest, self-sacrificing, heteronormative people with legitimate hardships.

The process of welfare assessment (re)produces the deserving/undeserving Appalachian welfare participant as it constructs the subject through its many forms and questions with related judgments about skills, appearance, behavior, and characteristics. Using Foucault's concept of confession, we can see how power works in this process to produce the deserving/undeserving subject that it claims only to discover. Workers are understood to uncover the truth of deservedness that lies hidden within the participant. They create a case with a diagnosis if undeserving that explains why this person is not succeeding in the world as a middle-class person (the ultimate American norm). The worker and participant create a plan of reform with the usual cure of employment. As Couto (2003) and many others have argued, pushing women on welfare into the service sector of the job market does not alleviate poverty. The assessment process, read as confession, presents itself as helping in order to further reinforce norms of deservedness, to regulate poor women, infiltrate their lives, and force them into the worst jobs, only to demonstrate how helpful and democratic the state is—after all, look at all the assistance and all the chances the system gives poor women. When we recognize the welfare

system as confessional, as requiring poor women to speak the "truth of deservedness," we can challenge this process and reject the truths it creates.

We need multiple strategies to make change in the lives of women living in poverty. My thesis demonstrates the pervasiveness of deservedness as a criterion for receiving assistance and as the central discourse for understanding Appalachian welfare participants. Some might use these claims to argue for stricter policy that does not allow for discretion on the part of workers. I caution strongly against this response. Deservedness fundamentally shapes the PRA and welfare policy, so turning to policy cannot be the solution. All of my informants, even when they noted the abuse of "bad" workers, argued that more discretion in the system would allow access to more resources for participants. Reforming the law and policy in a way that rejects the framework of deservedness would be an important change, but it is difficult to imagine a welfare system so drastically different. More importantly, the state works to maintain itself by protecting its interests, and helping poor women does not fit this agenda.

At the core of welfare experience, or any experience for that matter, are the words through which we understand those experiences. The ways that we understand ourselves in relationship to each other through language absolutely affects our access to resources and our sense of responsibility to each other as human beings living in community. Language can easily shut off thinking about our relationships to those people that we participate in oppressing, but it can also be shifted to focus on this connection. While identifying and changing language may seem distant and impractical when talking about access to food and health care, it is in fact very crucial to radical change, or changing the

root of the circumstances; therefore, I look to this shift in language for making necessary, effective change in the welfare system.

I recommend resisting the discourse of deservedness in providing services, performing activism, taking up participant identities, and conducting social science inquiry. The ideal revision within the system would be for workers to reject deservedness in their ways of thinking, language, and choices. Of course, workers and participants cannot simply opt out of dominant discourse. The assessment process and its forms, and the entire structure of the work program rely on deservedness, but motivations can be shifted and new language can be used. Participants take up deserving positions out of necessity in order to gain access to resources, to earn respect, and to acknowledge self-respect. If challenging poverty as a system becomes the goal, the focus can be shifted from the deserving individual to the redistribution of resources without judgment. Many workers already state non-judgment as their philosophy. Defining deservedness as judgment and exposing its pervasiveness in the system is a crucial step towards actually rejecting this framework.

I know this shift is possible, because throughout the course of this project, I have found myself noticing the discourse of deservedness all over the place and making the decision to reject its allure. Particularly in the fight for gay and lesbian marriage, activists are currently making claims to the deservedness of gay people in any way they can, mainly through stories of normalcy and assimilation. I have been increasingly disturbed by this participation in reinforcing the norms that construct queer people as deviant and deny our rights (Duggan 1995; Warner 1999). Queers and welfare participants can make other arguments, such as human rights claims, that we should all be

given the same access to resources. Queer activists and scholars have rejected strategies claiming that queers are deserving, or attempting to demonstrate normalcy and assimilation; instead, they focus on the rejection of oppressive norms, like the institution of marriage, as a determinant of deservedness for all people.

I recommend that scholars, workers, participants, and activists continue to use policy changing and myth busting strategies as long as we acknowledge their limitations and pitfalls. While these approaches can make small but important gains for participants, they both rely on reforming the welfare system, which cannot be liberating for women living in poverty; additionally, neither approach challenges the terms of welfare subjectivity that the system produces. Another problem with making rights claims is the universalization of welfare participants. Like other liberal feminism arguments, welfare rights claims usually assume a unified, easily definable (universal) group with a singular shared identity that does not exist (Butler 1990, 2-3). Because people have multiple identities, participants cannot be understood by simply one element, such as TANF participation. Participants have overlapping identity elements of race, class, gender, marital status, age, sexuality, disability, and region that may change over time and intersect to create multiple, diverse subjects with widely varied and often conflicting interests. Butler argues for a feminism of "coalitional politics" that "acknowledges its contradictions and take[s] action with those contradictions intact" (1990, 14). In welfare politics, there is not one group that has clear or unified interests. Acknowledging the problems with strategies that collapse diverse participants into the simplified identity "welfare participant" makes the argument for local change in community even more

convincing. Regional differences, such as the specific Appalachian stereotypes and locally-specific barriers that I outlined, create very different needs of participants.

Most importantly, we need to take care that our political action for welfare reform challenges and refutes the norms set out by the system, rather than working within and reproducing them; therefore, we should shift our energies from liberal, rights-based strategies to the promotion of more radical programs that expose and subvert the current power structures of the regulatory welfare system and look for alternative sites of change. Some possibilities include workshops on growing your own food, skill swaps, and driving grease vehicles as an alternative to the current "self-sufficiency" training in personal hygiene and fast food. Supporting cooperative businesses, public transportation, state-sponsored daycare, and nationalized healthcare also supports welfare participants. I do not have the answers to what these programs should look like, but more research should be done asking participants to define their needs and working in communities to develop programs to meet these needs.

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APPENDIX A
Initial set of participant interview questions

Appendix A. Initial set of participant interview questions.

1. How long have you been participating in TANF?

2. How did you come to be a TANF participant?
    a. How did you know what services you could access? If they ask what I mean, I will give examples such as: advertisement, calling community services, family, church, work, other participants, community outreach.

3. How would you describe the current amount and quality of support and services you are receiving from the state?
    a. What programs and services have you participated in?
    b. How long have you been participating in the welfare system?
    c. What changes have you seen over time?

4. Are time limits on TANF benefits a good idea? Why or why not?
    a. How have the new elements in the reform affected you personally?
    b. How do you think the time-limit will affect other women and children in this area?

5. Do you think [this state] politicians supported the welfare reform (namely time limits) to force people to leave areas with high unemployment?
    a. If yes, why would they want people to leave [this area]?
    b. Do you plan to/want to stay in this area? Why?
    c. If yes, what is it that makes you want to/have to stay?
    d. If no, when and how will you leave, where will you go, and why?

6. What do you think about the family cap (no increased support with additional children) aspect of the reform?
    a. How will this affect families receiving TANF support?

7. What services or information has been offered to help you transition from TANF?
    a. Do you feel you have reasonable access to these services? Are they helpful?

8. The new welfare policy emphasizes marriage and abstinence education as the solution to what is called "welfare dependency." This is not my choice of words—it is the language of the law. Do you see marriage and abstinence as good solutions to what is called the "welfare problem"?
    a. Should government policies be involved in issues such as marriage and sexual behavior?
    b. Are you married?
    c. If no, have you been encouraged to marry by the state? By others?
    d. If yes, how has being married affected your decision to participate in TANF or not?
    e. Do you think the number of children a woman has is related to her participation in TANF?

9. How often do you meet with your case manager? How would you describe the relationship you have with your case manager? (I will stress confidentiality again.)
    a. What services does he/she offer?
    b. What kind of suggestions or recommendations has your case manager made to you? If they say "about what," I will say "about transitioning from TANF."

10. What information are you required to provide to receive TANF benefits?
    a. What kinds of questions does you case manager ask you (in addition to what you report on the paperwork)?

   b. Do you think that these informational requirements are an invasion of your privacy? Which requirements? Why or why not?

11. How would you describe your experience with the welfare system? (practically and emotionally)?

12. What, if any, are the alternatives or additional sources of income for you right now (other than TANF)?

13. How have TANF work requirements affected you?
    a. What kind of job do you have?
    b. Are there jobs available to you in the area? Are there many options?
    c. Did you receive any job training from the state?

14. What other kinds of support do you have in your life (financial, emotional, practical, spiritual, family/friendship networks, etc.)?
    a. Do you have a church affiliation? How often do you attend church?
    b. Do you have any type of connection to other TANF participants?

15. What do you see as the biggest problem with the current welfare system?
    a. What needs for services do you have? What changes would you make?
    b. What works in the current welfare system? Why?

16. If they do not mention childcare, then: What are your current childcare needs?
    a. Are you provided with daycare of any kind by the state or by your employer?
    b. Do you have any alternatives to daycare (family, friends, church)?
    c. How would state-sponsored or mandated daycare change your work options?

17. What transportation options are available to you right now (to get to work and the community services office, etc.)?
    a. How does this affect your ability to work, get groceries, etc.?

18. Do you think there are stereotypes associated with women and families receiving welfare?
    a. Do you think these stereotypes are different for women living in [Appalachian area of state] than for other women? Are they different for women of different races (white, Black, Latina)?
    b. How do members of your family and the broader community perceive TANF participation?
    c. Have you experienced any form of discrimination within the welfare system (or outside of it) because of these stereotypes?

19. Most of these questions have focused on your personal experience of TANF. I also want to ask what you think about other TANF participants.
    a. Do you think that most participants' reasons for being on TANF are similar or different from yours? How and why?

20. Where do you see yourself in one year? In five years?

21. I came in with a list of questions about welfare reform, but they certainly did not cover all the issues involved. What are other aspects that I have missed?
    a. What other questions should I be asking?

APPENDIX B

Interview questions for workers and participants, revised for second period of interviewing

Appendix B. Interview questions for workers and participants, revised for second period of interviewing.

1. How long have you been participating in TANF?
    a. How did you come to be a TANF participant?
2. How would you describe the current amount and quality of support and services you are receiving from the state?
    a. What programs and services have you participated in?
    b. How long have you been participating in the welfare system?
    c. What changes have you seen over time?
3. How have the TANF work requirements affected you?
    a. What kinds of jobs do you think are open to most TANF participants in this area?
    b. Are the jobs high-paying enough to sustain families?
    c. Can you be completely "independent" with the jobs available to you?
    e. What, if any, are the alternatives or additional sources of income for you right now?
    d. Did you participate in job skills or life skills classes?
4. Why do you think [state] politicians supported the welfare reform (namely time limits) (?to force people to leave areas with high unemployment?)
    a. Do you plan to/want to stay in this area? Why?
    b. If yes, what is it that makes you want to/have to stay?
    c. If no, when and how will you leave, where will you go, and why?
    d. Do you think people should leave for a job?
5. Are time limits on TANF benefits a good idea? Why or why not?
    a. How have the new elements in the reform affected you personally?
    b. How do you think the time-limit will affect other women and children in this area?
6. What are your short and long term goals?
    a. Are these the same goals you set with your case manager? (What are the purpose/goals of the welfare system?)

In terms of the other emphasis of the federal law (marriage/abstinence),

7. The new welfare policy emphasizes marriage and abstinence education as the solution to what is called "welfare dependency." This is not my choice of words—it is the language of the law. Do you see marriage and abstinence as good solutions to what is called the "welfare problem"?
    a. Should government policies be involved in issues such as marriage and sexual behavior?
    b. Are you married? If no, have you been encouraged to marry by the state? By others?
    c. If yes, how has being married affected your decision to participate in TANF or not?
    d. Do you think the number of children a woman has is related to her participation in TANF?
8. What about the child support and paternity establishment being mandatory?

Assessment and case manager relationship

9. How often do you meet with your case manager? How would you describe the relationship you have with your case manager? (I will stress confidentiality again.)
    a. What services does he/she offer?
    b. What kind of suggestions or recommendations has your case manager made to you? If they say "about what," I will say "about transitioning from TANF."

   c. Has your case manager ever made a home visit? What do you think about home visits? (privacy ?)

10. What information are you required to provide to receive TANF benefits?
    a. Do you think that these informational requirements are an invasion of your privacy? Which requirements? Why or why not?

11. What other kinds of support do you have in your life (financial, emotional, practical, spiritual, family/friendship networks, etc.)?
    a. Do you have a church affiliation? How often do you attend church?
    b. Do you have any type of connection to other TANF participants?

12. What do you see as the biggest problem with the current welfare system?
    a. What needs for services do you have? What changes would you make?
    b. What works in the current welfare system? Why?
    c. What are the major obstacles to the system "working?"
    d. Do you think the system can "work?"

13. Do you think there are stereotypes associated with women and families receiving welfare?
    a. Do you think these stereotypes are different for women living in [Appalachian area of state] than for other women? Are they different for women of different races (white, Black, Latina)?
    b. How do members of your family and the broader community perceive TANF participation?
    c. Have you experienced any form of discrimination within the welfare system (or outside of it) because of these stereotypes?

14. Are any of your participants trying to get disability and they get on TANF because they can't get disability? Are there a lot of people on disability in this area?

15. Do you think this [Appalachian area of state] has a higher number of participants than other areas of the state?

16. Most of these questions have focused on your personal experience of TANF. I also want to ask what you think about other TANF participants.
    a. Do you think that most participants' reasons for being on TANF are similar or different from yours? How and why?

17. What about new citizenship law? (5 year wait)

18. Do you think welfare participants have the same rights as other American citizens?

19. Are welfare participants as free as other Americans? What does that mean?

20. What does "independence" mean for participants?
    a. What does independence mean for society/Americans in general?

21. What does "responsibility" mean?

APPENDIX C

First informed consent form, approved by Appalachian State University and used in the 2004 interviews

Appendix C. First informed consent form, approved by Appalachian State University and used in the 2004 interviews.

APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Informed Consent for Participants in Research Projects Involving Human Subjects

Title of Project: Impacts of the 1996 Personal Responsibility Act in XXX County, XXX: A Preliminary Study of TANF Participant Responses

Investigator(s): Rebecca Baird

I. Purpose of this Research Project

This project focuses on the effectiveness and reasonableness of the 1996 Personal Responsibility Act from the perspective of TANF participants in XXX. Participants will be asked to discuss the impacts of the policy on their lives. I will conduct eight interviews of women volunteers currently participating in the TANF program. I will also interview the XXX Specialist of XXX County to gain an understanding of available services and the implementation of the reform.

II. Procedures

Volunteers will be interviewed one time for a maximum of two hours. Interviews will be tape-recorded and I will take notes during interviews with verbal permission from the participant. All interviews will take place between March 1 and April 7 in the homes of participants (with permission), or in another appropriate location. There will not be any compensation for this study.

Participants may refuse to answer any question at any time during the interview.
Participants are free to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty.

III. Risks & Benefits

Participants may risk discomfort or emotional distress in discussing certain topics about their participation in the TANF program. Every effort has been made to create a set of questions that are general and open-ended to allow participants to respond with information that they feel comfortable in telling.

Subjects may benefit from the potential impacts of the project. This study will add to a growing body of research about welfare reform with the goal of increasing available knowledge and diversity of perspectives, and influencing future policy decisions. Having said this, I cannot offer any promise or guarantee of benefits to encourage you to participate. Subjects may contact me at a later time for a summary of the research results.

IV. Anonymity and Confidentiality

Complete anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained throughout this study and beyond its completion. No personal names or the name of the county or state will be used at any time in any paper, publication, or presentation. I will only keep names in a confidential file until I complete my graduate thesis. Cassette recordings will be destroyed after I transcribe the interviews. There are some circumstances under which the researcher may break confidentiality. In the unlikely event that a subject is perceived to be a threat to herself or to others, then I will need to notify the appropriate authorities.

V. Approval of Research

This research project has been approved, as required, by the Institutional Review Board of Appalachian State University and XXX County XXX.

VI. Subject's Permission

I have read and understand the Informed Consent and conditions of this project. I agree to be interviewed for this study. I have had all of my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent:

Subject signature _____ Date_____

If I have any questions about this research or its conduct, I may contact:

Investigator:

Rebecca Baird (828) 295-8586, rb58644@appstate.edu
P.O. Box 487 Telephone/e-mail
Blowing Rock, NC 28605

Faculty Advisor:

Dr. Susan Keefe (828) 262-6380, keefese@appstate.edu
Dept. of Anthropology, ASU Telephone/e-mail

Robert L. Johnson (828) 262-2692, johnsonrl@appstate.edu
Administrator, IRB Telephone/e-mail
Graduate Studies and Research
Appalachian State University
Boone, NC 26608

Subjects must be given a complete copy (or duplicate) of the signed Informed Consent.

APPENDIX D

Second, revised informed consent, approved by the state and the University and used in the 2005 interviews

Appendix D: Second, revised informed consent, approved by the state and the university and used in the 2005 interviews.

APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Informed Consent for Participants in Research Projects Involving Human Subjects

Title of Project: Impacts of the 1996 Personal Responsibility Act on Case Managers and TANF Participants in an Appalachian Area

Investigator(s): Rebecca Baird

I. Purpose of this Research Project

You are invited to participate in a research project that focuses on the effectiveness of the 1996 Personal Responsibility Act from the perspective of TANF participants and case managers in XXX. All participants will be asked to discuss the impacts of the policy on their jobs and lives. I will conduct fifteen interviews of women volunteers currently participating in the TANF program. I will also interview fifteen social workers to gain an understanding of available services and the implementation of the reform.

II. Participation Voluntary

Your participation in this research study is completely voluntary, and refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Also you may discontinue your participation at any time during the interview or refuse to answer any questions without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

III. Procedures

Volunteers will be interviewed one time for a maximum of two hours. Interviews will be tape-recorded and I will take notes during interviews with verbal permission from the participant. All interviews will take place between May 1 and December 6 in the local DCBS office, in the homes of participants (with permission), or in another appropriate location. There will not be any compensation for this study.

IV. Risks & Benefits

Although it is unlikely, participants may risk discomfort or emotional distress in discussing certain topics about their participation in the TANF program. Every effort has been made to create a set of questions that are general and open-ended to allow participants to respond with information that they feel comfortable in telling. Subjects may benefit from the potential impacts of the project. This study will add to a growing body of research about welfare reform with the goal of increasing available knowledge and diversity of perspectives, and influencing future policy decisions; however, I cannot offer any promise or guarantee of benefits to encourage you to participate. Subjects may contact me at a later time for a summary of the research results.

V. Anonymity and Confidentiality

Complete anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained throughout this study and beyond its completion. No personal names, or the name of the county, or state will be used at any time in any paper, publication, or presentation. I will only keep names in a confidential file until I complete my graduate thesis. Cassette recordings will be destroyed after I transcribe the interviews. There are some circumstances under which the researcher may break confidentiality in accordance with the rules of the Institutional Review Board. In the unlikely event that a subject is perceived to be a threat to herself or to others, then I will need to notify the appropriate authorities.

VI. Approval of Research

This research project has been approved, as required, by the Institutional Review Board of Appalachian State University.

VI. Subject's Permission

I have read and understand the Informed Consent and conditions of this project. I agree to be interviewed for this study. I have had all of my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent:

Subject signature _____ Date_____

If I have any questions about this research or its conduct, you may contact:

Investigator:

Rebecca Baird (828) 295-8586, rb58644@appstate.edu
P.O. Box 487 Telephone/e-mail
Blowing Rock, NC 28605

Faculty Advisors:

Dr. Kim Hall (828) 262-6817, hallki@appstate.edu
Dept. of Philosophy, ASU Telephone/e-mail

Dr. Susan Keefe (828) 262-6380, keefese@appstate.edu
Dept. of Anthropology, ASU Telephone/e-mail

Robert L. Johnson (828) 262-2692, johnsonrl@appstate.edu
Administrator, IRB Telephone/e-mail
Graduate Studies and Research
Appalachian State University
Boone, NC 26608

If you have any questions about your rights as a subject in this research project, you may contact the Department XXX Institutional Review Board (IRB):

XXX, IRB Administrator (XXX) XXX-XXXX, XXX@XXX [54]
[DHHS]-IRB Administrator Telephone/e-mail
XXX
XXX
XXX

Subjects must be given a complete copy (or duplicate) of the signed Informed Consent.

[54] This is the space for contact information for the state IRB administrator. I had to X-out this information to keep my confidentiality agreement.

APPENDIX E
Research Site County Profiles Table

Appendix E. Research Site County Profiles Table

	U.S.A.	State	County 1	County 2	County 3	County 4	County 5
Demographics							
Population 2000	281,421,906	4,000,000	69,000	25,000	42,000	29,400	23,400
County Seat Pop 2000	n/a	n/a	6,300	1,600	3,600	4,800	4,100
People Per Sq Mile 2000	79.6	102	87	75	108	86	90
Rural-Urban Continuum Code 2003 (9 = most rural)	n/a	n/a	7/9	9/9	7/9	7/9	7/9
Race % White 2000	75.1	90	98	99	98	97	99
Race % Black 2000	12.3	7	< 1	< 1	< 2	< 2	< 1
Race % Hispanic 2000	12.5	< 2	< 1	< 1	< 1	< 1	< 1
Economics/Employment							
Median Household Income 1999	41,994	33,700	23,900	21,100	21,200	22,000	24,900
% Below Poverty 2000	12.4	16	23	27	30	29	27
Appalachian Regional Commission Status 2006	n/a	n/a	Transitional	Distressed	Distressed	Distressed	Distressed
Unemployment Rate 2005 Annual	5.1	6.1	6.7	7.7	7.5	7.6	7
Educational Attainment Age 25+							
% with less than High School Diploma 2000	19.6	38	38	42	38	42	36
% with High School Diploma	28.6	34	34	33	30	31	35
% with Bachelor's Degree	15.5	5	5	4	5	4	5
Births and Family Makeup							
Parents Not Married Birth Rate/1000, 2000	44/1000	n/a	255/1000	270/1000	271/1000	292/1000	274/1000
Teen Birth Rate/1000, 2000 (under 18)	27/1000 (age 15-19)	29/1000 (15-19)	10/1000 (age 10-17)	12/1000 (10-17)	14/1000 (10-17)	13/1000 (10-17)	17/1000 (10-17)
% Families with Kids, Single Moms	7.2	7	6	6	7	7	6
% of these living below poverty level 1999	34.3	43	58	66	66	57	54
TANF Participation							
# TANF Recipients FY2000 average	5,146,132 (FY2002)	77,658 (FY2002)	3,930	1,896	3,593	2,451	1,598
% of County Population Receiving TANF	1.8	1.9	5.7	7.5	8.5	8.3	6.8

Table Data Sources:

1. U.S. Census Bureau. 2000. www.census.gov/main/www/cen2000.html. Population, education, race, median household income, household makeup, poverty rates.
2. U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2005. www.bls.gov/bls/employment.htm. Unemployment rates.
3. Appalachian Regional Commission. 2006. Regional data page. www.arc.gov. Persons per square mile and ARC Status.
4. U.S. Dept. of Agriculture. 2003. Economic Research Service. www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/Rurality/RuralUrbCon/. Rural-Urban Continuum Code.
5. State County Health Profiles. 2000. [cannot give site]. TANF Recipients, Birth Rates.
6. Center for Disease Control. 2000. National Center for Health Statistics. www.cdc.gov/nchs/births.htm. Birth Rates.

APPENDIX F

Flyer mailed to County One office to recruit volunteers

Appendix F. Flyer mailed to County 1 office to recruit volunteers.

Seeking women volunteers to participate in a study on welfare reform. I want to hear what you have to say.

(fold line)

Hello, my name is Rebecca Baird and I'm a graduate student at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina. I'm conducting a research project on welfare reform with a focus on the insight and personal experiences of TANF participants in XXX. Participation in the study will involve one two-hour interview in March or early April. All personal information will be kept completely confidential. No personal names of participants or the name of the county will be cited in any publications or presentations. Please contact me if you have any questions about the project.

Thank you,

Rebecca Baird
(828) 295-8586
rb58644@appstate.edu

(fold line)

If you are willing to be interviewed, please fill out the contact information below, fold the flyer, and staple or tape the edge. Please return the form as soon as possible. I will contact you to schedule an interview.

Name _____

Phone _____

Street Address _____

_____

City/Town State Zip Code

Biographical Information

Rebecca Jane Baird was born in Pikeville, Kentucky on September 17, 1977. She attended Cassidy Elementary, Morton Junior High, and Henry Clay High School in Lexington, Kentucky. In 1999, she graduated from Guilford College in Greensboro, North Carolina earning high honors and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Integrative Studies with a minor in Art. In the fall of 2001, she accepted an assistantship as a graduate teaching assistant in Women's Studies at The Ohio State University, where she completed the Master of Arts degree in Women's Studies in 2003. In the fall of 2003, Ms. Baird was awarded the Cratis D. Williams Scholarship in Appalachian Studies at Appalachian State University. She completed her Master of Arts degree in Appalachian Studies with a minor in History in December 2006. From 2003 to 2007, she taught as an adjunct instructor and faculty member in Women's Studies and Appalachian Studies.

Ms. Baird's home address is 2030 Hart Road, Lexington, Kentucky, 40502. Her parents are Patricia H. Riddle of Lexington and Charles J. Baird of Pikeville, Kentucky.