WELFARE PARTICIPATION RATES AMONG THE ELIGIBLE POOR:
A COUNTY-LEVEL ANALYSIS OF THE NORTH CAROLINA
WORK FIRST PROGRAM

A Thesis
Presented to
The Graduate Faculty of The University of Akron

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

Kasey Lansberry
May, 2012
WELFARE PARTICIPATION RATES AMONG THE ELIGIBLE POOR:
A COUNTY-LEVEL ANALYSIS OF THE NORTH CAROLINA
WORK FIRST PROGRAM

Kasey Lansberry

Thesis

Approved:

Advisor
Dr. Tiffany Taylor

Co-Advisor or Faculty Reader
Dr. Kathryn Felix

Department Chair or School Director
Dr. Matt Lee

Accepted:

Dean of the College
Dr. Chand Midha

Dean of the Graduate School
Dr. George Newkome

Date
ABSTRACT

Welfare participation has been a longstanding issue of public debate for over the past 50 years. Various public policies have come to shape and/or attempted to deal with declining public support for welfare participation. Racial discrimination, the war on poverty, fictitious political depictions of the “welfare queen”, and a call for more stringent eligibility requirements all led up to the passage of welfare reform in the 1990s and the creation of the new Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF) program. Under the new welfare program, work requirements and time limits narrowed the field of eligibility. The purpose of this research was to examine the factors that influence welfare participation rates among the eligible poor. By analyzing demographic data and semi-structured interviews with program managers in all 100 counties in North Carolina, I examined a number of factors that influence TANF participation rates among those financially eligible. Utilizing OLS regression models I found that in addition to basic gender and racial factors, counties with a more conservative political leaning had lower participation rates among their eligible poor. Perhaps, most interestingly, I found that the negative perceptions and opinions of program managers regarding TANF recipients also led to lower welfare participation among those eligible. These findings have implications not only for federal, state, and county level welfare policies, but also policies that can be implemented in the welfare office to create an atmosphere more conducive to providing aid to those in need.
DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my loving and supportive fiancé Raven, and two amazing children Justice and Kamdyn. This would not have been possible without your unconditional love and encouragement. Thank you so much for being there to support me through every step of this process and for being my motivation. I would not have been able to do this without you guys.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge and thank my advisor, Dr. Tiffany Taylor, for all of the time and support that she spent with me throughout this process. It is because of her continual excellent feedback on countless revisions and her words of encouragement that helped get me through. This thesis, very literally, would not have been possible without her guidance and support. I would also like to thank my thesis committee members, Dr. Kathy Feltey and Dr. Juan Xi for all of their expertise, feedback, and time spent on my project. Their ideas and expert suggestions were invaluable to the success of this project.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES ................................................................. viii

LIST OF FIGURES ............................................................. ix

CHAPTER

I. INTRODUCTION .................................................................. 1

II. LITERATURE REVIEW...................................................... 4

   Region and Welfare Participation ................................... 5

   Welfare Policies, Gender, and Race ............................... 6


III. METHODS ....................................................................... 12

   Data ............................................................................... 12

   Measures ........................................................................ 13

   Dependent Variable ....................................................... 13

   Explanatory Variables ................................................... 15

      Region ........................................................................ 15

      Gender and Race ....................................................... 16

      Welfare Office Effectiveness ..................................... 17

      Welfare Office Ideology ............................................. 18

   Control Variables ........................................................ 19

   Analytic Strategy .......................................................... 20

   vi
LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Descriptive Statistics</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>OLS Regression Estimates of County Characteristics, Welfare Office Dynamics and Work First Program Participation Rates</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The Mountain, Piedmont, and Coastal Regions of North Carolina</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Since the earliest colonial times in America there has been poverty and single-mother headed households in need of assistance (Handler and Hasenfeld, 2007; Gordon, 1994). In 1935 the welfare program Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) was established in the wake of the Great Depression, later called Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) (Gordon, 1994). The original program was created to help women who were deemed “deserving” poor” mothers; white widowers (Gordon, 1994; Handler and Hasenfeld, 2007; Crass 1999). In the 1950s and 60s (post-WWII) eligibility was expanded to assist all impoverished mothers of all needy children, and the welfare rolls drastically increased (Handler and Hasenfeld, 2007; Crass, 1999). With this increase in welfare participation, public opinion towards the program became negative and with the increase in Black single mothers receiving aid, the AFDC welfare program came to be seen as a “Black program” (Handler and Hasenfeld, 2007; Monnat, 2010; Crass, 1999; Schram, 2005; Monnat and Bunyan, 2008; Quadagno, 1996).

In 1996 President Bill Clinton approved a bill changing the welfare system in the United States. The welfare reform bill was called the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act (PRWORA) which replaced the AFDC program with Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF) program. The goal of the new program was to correct for an impoverished person’s missing work ethic and family values (Handler and Hasenfeld,
2007; Seccombe, 1999; Parisi, McLaughlin, Grice, Taquino, and Gill, 2003; Harris and Parisi, 2008; Soss and Schram, 2007). While these claims were not supported by research, public opinion called for reform to correct these flaws that ostensibly caused individuals to seek welfare assistance in the first place (Parisi, McLaughlin, Grice, Taquino, and Gill, 2003; Harris and Parisi, 2008; Soss and Schram, 2007).

The new TANF program carried with it a number of notable changes: funding of the welfare programs was devolved to the states, eligibility requirements became more rigorous, and time limits and work mandates were enacted (Ridzi, 2009; Seccombe, 1999; Collins and Mayer, 2010; Handler and Hasenfeld, 2007; Parisi, et. al., 2003; Crass, 1999; Albert, 2000; Soss and Schram, 2007; Monnat and Bunyan, 2008). The new welfare program is also known as the Work First program due to the emphasis placed on work requirements in exchange for assistance. The premise of the reform was to stop intergenerational welfare receipt, assist impoverished individuals in achieving self-sufficiency by requiring them to work, and increase public support for the program (Licter and Jayakody, 2002; Parisi, et. al., 2003). However, studies have found that the reforms of the PRWORA bill have not improved public opinion about public assistance for poor families (Soss and Schram, 2007), and work requirements and time limits have forced welfare participants into low-paying, dead-end jobs (Seccombe, 1999; Monnat and Bunyan, 2008; Ridzi, 2009; Handler and Hasenfeld, 2007).

There are a myriad of factors that can influence a financially eligible person from becoming a welfare participant or not. The focal influences to be examined in this paper are: region, gender, race, the perceived quality of the welfare program, and the welfare office ideology. I will examine these factors, in regards to Work First participation rates,
in order to more fully understand why some eligible individuals may embrace, or may resist, becoming welfare participants. My contribution is a quantitative analytical examination of a topic often ignored in the welfare literature: program participation among the eligible poor. The purpose of my research is to examine the variations in Work First participation rates among eligible individuals in a county-level analysis of North Carolina.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

In this paper I examine the factors that influence whether financially eligible parents (often mothers) seek cash welfare assistance. While there are a myriad reasons an eligible person may choose to, or not to, become welfare participants when eligible, the focus of this paper is on differing county characteristics (i.e. unemployment rates, county politics, region, and race) and welfare office characteristics (i.e. services offered, perceived effectiveness, sanctioning, and welfare office ideology) that may help explain seeking or avoiding assistance.

For instance, after the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) passed in 1996, the welfare system became increasingly punitive. Sanctioning and other disciplinary measures have been found to be greater in general, and specifically in counties with more conservative politics and ideals (Fording, Soss and Schram, 2007). Also, the overtly racist rhetoric that helped lead to the welfare reform may now have been replaced within the welfare office by more covertly racially and gendered charged references by program managers of clients’ “laziness” (Taylor, Samblanet and Seale, 2011). The ideology of each county’s welfare office and the county wide demographics can possibly have differing effects on eligible individuals’ willingness to participate in the welfare program.
Region and Welfare Participation

When examining welfare policy and implementation it is important to look at multiple levels. The large amount of variation, between and within states, calls for a closer look at the county level characteristics shaping welfare programs (Parisi, et. al., 2003). Since the passage of the PRWORA in 1996 the way welfare programs are funded has changed. Under AFDC welfare funding was comprised of a matching system where the federal government would match so much of each dollar that was spent by the states on each welfare recipient (Parisi, et. al., 2003; Albert, 2000). After the welfare reform, there are now block grants given to states that are then divided among the counties (Parisi, et. al., 2003; Albert, 2000). According to Albert (2000) this freedom can create the potential for a "race to the bottom." This can happen when financial responsibility is passed to the lower levels of government and it creates a situation in which each agency will continually cut benefits faster and therefore making their system more "efficient" than the next. Albert (2000) says that there needs to be some state or federal standards which hold all agencies accountable to providing reasonable assistance. If not, there may be financial incentives for reducing the rolls under the new block grant system of funding and this race to the bottom may only increase.

Another reason why it is essential to examine welfare at the county level is because the study of rural sociology and the prevalence of spatial inequalities are important to consider (Lobao, 2004; Parisi, et. al., 2003; Lichter and Jayakody, 2002). Studying phenomena at the county level allows researchers to directly examine region and the unique circumstance surrounding a particular space that may not be the same
somewhere else (Parisi, et. al., 2003; Lichter and Jayakody, 2002; Lobao, 2004). The programs and potential welfare participants can vary greatly between rural and urban areas. It is therefore essential to consider ruralness, in order to control for "the 'urban bias' that permeates much of the scholarship on poverty and welfare dependency" (Harris and Parisi, 2008:267; Parisi, et. al., 2003; Lichter and Jayakody, 2002). Debertin and Infanger (1988) confirm this point saying that welfare policies, for the most part, were designed by urban legislators at the state and federal level. These authors discuss the importance of examining the rural poor because they are faced with a unique set of circumstances and issues including seasonal work, low levels of education, and low job skills.

Welfare Policies, Gender, and Race

The rate of poverty is higher for women than it is for men (Handler and Hasenfeld, 2007; Parisi, et. al., 2003). By far, mothers in poverty have been the group most affected by the PRWORA reform. The new time limits and work requirements lessen the level of support given to our countries most vulnerable group: poor single mothers (Rana, 2000). The reform was based on stereotypical views of minorities and women as lacking a healthy work ethic (Ridzi, 2010; Rana, 2000; Handler and Hasenfeld, 2007). However, women face a unique set of labor challenges. North Carolina has been known for its' thriving agricultural sector and manufacturing industries (Parisi, et. al., 2003; Luebke, 1998). However, like the rest of the country, North Carolina is in the midst of a shift away from these industries toward higher service employment (Luebke, 1998).
The service industry has expanded substantially in North Carolina over the past 40 years. The percentage of the labor force employed in service sector jobs grew from 12% in 1970 to 20% in 1990 (Luebke, 1998), and is expected to employ over 5 million people by 2014 (SOICC website, accessed 2-29-12). This increase in service sector positions has provided multitudes of jobs for women and increased women’s paid-labor participation rates to over 60% in the 1990s (SOICC website, accessed 2-29-12). However, many of these jobs taken by women are low-skill, low-wage positions that do not offer adequate benefits (i.e. insurance) (Ridzi, 2009; Parisi, et al., 2003; Collins and Mayer, 2010; Handler and Hasenfeld, 2007).

Mothers also earn less than men in the paid labor force due to their caregiving obligations to children (Handler and Hasenfeld, 2007). Poor single mothers are confronted with the outrageous cost of child care when making employment decisions, the costs of which have only increased since the PRWORA reform of 1996 (Ahn, 2012). The new welfare requirements limit the options available to mothers seeking employment, and require them to forfeit their right to choose an occupation (Collins and Mayer 2010). Rana (2000) says that the PRWORA welfare reform is a violation of the poor single mother’s human rights because it restricts their ability to make free choices as workers, mothers, and citizens.

In addition to gender, race has continually played a large part in the construction, reform and implementation of welfare policies. Much of the reasoning that led to the PRWORA reform of 1996 was the perception that welfare had become a “Black program” (Schram, 2005; Monnat and Bunyan, 2008; Seccombe, 1999; Handler and Hasenfeld, 2007; Quadagno, 1996; Crass, 1999; Soss and Schram, 2007). Handler and
Hasenfeld (2007) discussed that after WWII the welfare rolls exploded, and it was when welfare became thought of as a “black program” that many of the issues people had with the welfare program began. Out of these racially driven objections to the welfare program, arose the social image of the “welfare queen” (Seccombe, 1999; Crass, 1999; Monnat and Bunyan, 2008; Quadagno, 1996; Seccombe, James, and Walters 1998; Taylor, Samblanet, and Seale, 2011; Handler and Hasenfeld 2007; Soss and Schram, 2007). This “welfare queen” term is credited to Ronald Reagan in a 1976 speech and the stereotype was based upon an underlying social myth that all poor people are lazy Black or Hispanic single mothers living lawlessly in the ghetto (Seccombe, 1999; Handler and Hasenfeld, 2007; Seccombe, James, and Walters 1998; Piven, 1998; Quadagno, 1996; Crass, 1999). In reality, there is a diverse population who live in poverty but this racially charged imagery of the “welfare queen” led to shifts in public opinion, and in the 1990s the welfare reform which changed government aid to the poor as it was known (Handler and Hasenfeld, 2007; Seccombe, 1999; Crass, 1999; Soss and Schram, 2007; Taylor, Samblanet and Seale, 2011).

In North Carolina, specifically, there has been a history of resisting racial integration since the 1950s. For example, all North Carolina schools did not become integrated until well into the 1970s. This resistance to integration was purposely done by the state providing financial assistance for white children to attend private schools while leaving black children segregated in the public schools (Luebke, 1998). Also, gerrymandering of voting districts diminished the voting power of blacks and legislative steps taken to inhibit black candidates from taking state political office in North Carolina (Luebke, 1998). Blacks in North Carolina have had historically very “little voting
strength and even less political power, especially in the state’s small towns and rural counties” (Luebke, 1998:130).

Schram (2005) adds the issue of race to this discussion when he talks about the fictional stereotype that blacks are somehow lazier than white recipients. He states however that this is not the case, and in fact “[Blacks] are more likely to be working when leaving welfare and working more hours at increased earnings compared to white leavers, even though they have, on average, less education” (260). Even though these references to welfare participant’s laziness have replaced the overtly racist talk that help lead to welfare reform in 1996, this type of rhetoric carries with it underlying racist tones which can be harmful to the welfare office atmosphere (Taylor, Samblanet and Seale, 2011; Taylor and Seale, 2011). If a welfare office is plagued with racial undertones such as these, it would be reasonable to understand why some individuals would choose to avoid the welfare office altogether, even if they are in need of, and eligible for, assistance.

_Welfare Office: Effectiveness and Welfare Ideology_

Fording, Soss, and Schram (2007) discuss the ways in which the devolution of welfare has come to affect programs at the county level. They say that there are some positives to the decentralized TANF program, such as counties are free for more innovation and flexibility to better meet the needs of their particular clients (286). The devolution of welfare allows for counties to decipher the specific needs of their participants as shaped by the particular obstacles unique to that county. However, in
practice, due to the decentralization, politicians and bureaucrats are more able to push their own ideologies and political agendas without oversight (Soss and Schram, 2007:286). The devolution has allowed some counties, often those with more conservative ideals about welfare, to adopt more punitive and sanction-based orientated dealings with welfare participants (Soss and Schram, 2007; Handler and Hasenfeld 2007). Sanctioning has become harsher since the PRWORA reform and there is greater incentive to sanction participants under the state block grant funding. If a participant is sanctioned and refused assistance, then the county is able to bank that money since funding from the state is fixed and not dependent on a matching system per participant (Handler and Hasenfeld, 2007).

Watkins-Hayes (2009) suggests that there is a struggle within the welfare office. This struggle is due to the desire of welfare workers to provide economic support to low-income families but that aim is undermined by an underlying assumption that welfare participants are deceitful and guilty of some personal flaw that helped get them there in the first place. Handler and Hasenfeld (2007) talk about this struggle as well, in terms of welfare workers being faced with “two inherently incompatible goals” (195) which are: to determine and monitor eligibility and deservingness of clients, and a desire to help them. Within this battle there is a role played by program managers who shape office policies, office atmosphere and possibly which goal should carry top priority (Ricucci, Meyers, Lurie and Han, 2004; Taylor, Samblanet and Seale, 2011; Taylor and Seale, 2012).

Taylor, Samblanet, and Seale’s (2011) focus on the role of program managers because “they are influential to the formal and informal implementation of welfare
policies” (3). They state that North Carolina is like many states in that each county’s
program manager is formally responsible for developing a two-year plan for their county.
Also, informally, program managers influence the office atmosphere due to their
positions of power as supervisors and evaluators. The authors states that “in both
instances, the program manager’s perceptions of clients can be very influential” to the
overall welfare office characteristics (Taylor, Samblanet and Seale, 2011:3; Taylor and
Seale 2011). They highlight the rhetoric used by some program managers in which they
refer to welfare participants as lacking motivation to become self-sufficient. This type of
rhetoric among managers can impact the welfare office ideology; consequently affecting
welfare participants. The goal of this paper is to add to the literature by moving beyond
the actual requirements and eligibility rules of TANF, and examine the factors that may
impact eligible individuals’ choices to become welfare participants or not.
CHAPTER III

METHODS

Data

For this paper, I used data collected by Dr. Tiffany Taylor and Dr. Elizabeth Seale in 2008-2009 based upon the welfare program in North Carolina (NC). Taylor, Seale, and a team of students conducted semi-structured phone interviews with all 100 county Department of Social Services Work First program managers in the state of North Carolina (NC Work First Dataset). Their responses were then coded, analyzed and compiled into a dataset with supplemental quantitative data. This supplemental data was collected from a number of sources including: U.S. Census data, data from the Management Assistance for the Work First Program, (a dataset hosted by University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Social Work’s Jordan Institute for Families), election results confirmed on CNN.com, and North Carolina regions as laid out by The State Board of Education in NC (Taylor and Seale, 2011).

This source has several advantages. First, it is a total population with all 100 county’s program managers represented. This allows me to examine the relative effects of my standardized coefficients (betas) on eligibility and welfare participation rates rather than needing to make inferences to the population that are inherently flawed. Second, the respondents of the interviews were Work First program managers whom are an essential
component of welfare implementation. Studies have shown that program managers’ views and attitudes can have a great effect on the welfare office climate and overall office ideology (Watkins-Hayes, 2009; Taylor and Seale, 2012; Taylor, Samblanet, and Seale, 2011). Third, the open ended nature of the interviews allows me to use program manager’s unsolicited opinions and responses regarding welfare recipients and the welfare office climate in which they work.

Measures

I examined welfare participation rates among the eligible poor at the county level. Due to the variation in welfare programs and policies within each state, it is best to look at the region, gender, race, welfare office and other factors that may affect welfare participation from an intrastate level (Parisi, et. al., 2003; Luebke 1998). It is important to examine issues utilizing this intermediate level of analysis (i.e. county level) to begin to uncover some of the unforeseen reasons for the socioeconomic inequalities of a region (Lobao, 2004; Parisi, et. al., 2003).

Dependent Variable

Descriptive statistics for all variables are reported in Table 1. My dependent variable for this analysis is the percentage of people in a county who are eligible to receive welfare assistance and who become welfare participants (also referred to as Work First participation). Eligibility was determined as being below the poverty threshold and
having children in the household under the age of 18. This variable ('%EligibleOnRolls') is an approximate rate of qualifying households that received Work First benefits (mean=33.47; Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for all Variables (N=100)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Variables</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Controls</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Service Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Politics-Rep.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Region</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population Density</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coastal Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piedmont Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demographics</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor Single-Mothers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Black Population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Hispanic Population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Welfare Effectiveness</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Reported Effective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referrals &amp; Coordination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Welfare Ideology</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mention of Sanctioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mention of Fraud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dependent Variable</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%Eligible on Rolls</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Explanatory Variables

Remaining independent variables include region, gender and race, welfare office effectiveness, and county characteristic controls. Region is especially important in the study of welfare due to the great variation between counties within states (Lichter and Jayakody, 2002; Parisi, et. al., 2003; Lobao, 2004; Brown and Lichter, 2004; Albert, 2000; Handler and Hasenfeld, 2007; Debertin and Infanger, 1988).

Region

I used multiple measures for region, one of which is population density to determine how rural or urban a county is. The population density measure best allocates the detailed variation in urban/ruralness within small geographical units (i.e. counties) (Long, Rain, and Ratcliffe, 2001). In my preliminary analysis, population density was the most consistent measure of place; for these reasons, I used it (‘Population Density’) in the analysis in this paper.

There are three distinct regions in North Carolina: the Mountain (western), Piedmont (central), and Coastal (eastern) parts of the state (Luebke, 1998; as categorized by the Department of Public Instruction and the State Board of Education in North Carolina, website can be found in the Data Appendix; Figure 1). I therefore, also, measured region with dummy variables indicating the Coastal and Piedmont regions, with the Mountain region as the reference category since this region has the most rural counties (Luebke, 1998).
Gender and race

Gender and race measures included the percentage of houses with poor single-mothers, the percent Black county population, and the percent Hispanic county population. Poor single-mothers are often associated with the stereotypical welfare participants and are also the majority of TANF recipients (Parisi, et. al., 2003; Lichter and Jayakody, 2002; Handler and Hasenfeld, 2007; Brown and Lachter, 2004). Low-income mothers face a unique set of challenges on the job market and are often burdened with being the sole providers for their children (Licter and Jayakody, 2002; Ridzi, 2009; Collins and Mayer, 2010; Parisi, et. al., 2003; Brown and Lichter, 2004; Handler and Hasenfeld, 2007; Ahn, 2012). Therefore, I included the percentage of households headed by single mothers in poverty for each county in this model ("PoorSingleMothers"). I calculated the percentage of houses with poor single-mothers by including the percentage.
of single female headed households with children under 18 years of age, and only those with an income below the poverty level as reported by the 2000 U.S. Census.

Also, as illustrated in the literature review, race plays a very large role in a number of aspects affecting welfare. Race is related to politics (Luebke, 1998), public opinions of welfare (Gilens, 1995; Gilens, 1996), welfare policy (Schram, 2005; Monnat and Bunyan, 2008; Handler and Hasenfeld, 2007; Soss and Schram, 2007), and possibly even welfare implementation (Schram, 2005; Taylor, Samblanet and Seale, 2011). Race was measured as the percentage of the population within a county that is Black ("%BlackPopulation") and the percentage of the population that is Hispanic ("%HispanicPopulation"). Black and Hispanic racial/ethnic groups were the focal racial categories due to their prevalence in North Carolina counties. The Black population in NC counties ranges from .2% to 62% (mean = 21.54%) and the Hispanic population ranges from .6% to over 15% (mean = 3.71%) of the total county population.

Welfare office effectiveness

Welfare office effectiveness included measures indicating the total number of services offered within a county, the quality of referrals and coordination between those services, and the self-reported effectiveness as given by the program managers. All three measures were calculated by responses given by program managers in their interviews. The total number of services ("Total Services") ranged from 9 - 24 per county (see Table 1). The quality of referrals and coordination ("Referrals & Coord.") is a composite measure consisting of the quality or amount of effort put into referrals, and the intensity
or level of coordination between services (see Data Appendix). The self-reported effectiveness measure (‘Self-Reported Effectiveness’) included a scale of program managers’ ratings of their county’s effectiveness in assisting welfare recipients in achieving self-sufficiency. The scale was then reverse coded where 1=not effective, 2= somewhat effective, 3= effective, 4= very effective.

*Welfare office ideology*

In order to encompass a county’s welfare office ideology I utilized three measures: sanctioning (‘Mention of Sanctioning’), fraud (‘Mention of Fraud’), and motivation (‘Mention Lack of Motivation’). Program managers’ ideology can affect the climate of the welfare office in both formal and informal ways (as discussed in Taylor, Samblanet, and Seale, 2011). Manager orientations toward sanctioning can have a large effect on welfare implementation (Handler and Hasenfeld, 2007). If a welfare participant does not meet one or a few of the program requirements they may have their assistance suspended or revoked by being sanctioned. Program manager who place more emphasis on this component of the welfare program may affect front-line caseworker’s implementation, and consequently affect eligible persons perceptions of participating (Brown and Lichter, 2004; Ridzi, 2009; Handler and Hasenfeld, 2007; Taylor and Seale, 2012). Program managers’ perceptions of participants trying to defraud the government, and/or opinions of them as lazy or lacking motivation, can both assist in uncovering some underlying welfare ideology (Taylor and Seale, 2012; Taylor, Samblanet, and Seale, 2011). I looked to see if the program managers mentioned issues of sanctioning, fraud, or
clients lacking motivation during the course of their interview without being asked. These unsolicited responses were then dummy coded into three different measures indicating that the Work First program manager did mention sanctioning, fraud, or client’s lack of motivation; with not mentioning them as the reference category.

*Control variables*

County characteristic controls included expenditures, unemployment rate, the percent of the county’s paid employment force in the service industry, and the county politics. Expenditures may affect the quality of services that can be provided by the county’s welfare office and therefore may affect an eligible individuals’ willingness to become a participant. Unemployment may affect Work First participation rates; if unemployment is high there may be less viable alternatives to public assistance. The percentage of service industry jobs within a county may disproportionately affect women and single mothers, who are often employed in these positions (Taylor, 2010) and also more likely than men to become welfare participants (Parisi, et. al., 2003; Luebke, 1998). County political climate was also included because of the influence politics can have on welfare reform, policies and implementation (Soss and Schram, 2007; Handler and Hasenfeld, 2007; Schram 2005; Luebke, 1998). In order to get to the intrastate political climate of North Carolina I chose to look at the political affiliation of the U.S. senator as voted for by each county (‘CountySenator’). The dummy variable indicated the majority of the county voted for a Republican U.S. Senator with counties that voted for a Democratic U.S. Senator as the reference category.
Analytic Strategy

My method of analysis was ordinary least squares (OLS) regression. I chose this method due to the relatively small population size (N=100) and my continuous dependent variable (Noreen, 1988). I analyzed eligibility and welfare participation inductively, with a final focus on the following five groupings: county controls, region, gender and race, welfare effectiveness, and welfare office ideology. I layered in each grouping sequentially. My first model includes my county characteristic controls: expenditures, unemployment rate, percent service industry, and the county politics. The second model adds region measures to the measures in Model 1, which include population density, and measures of the Coastal and Piedmont regions in reference to the Mountain region. The third model adds measure for gender and race, by including the percentage of poor single mothers, total Black population, and total Hispanic population. I add welfare effectiveness measures in the fourth model, and I examine the effect of welfare office ideology through mentions of sanctioning, fraud and lack of motivation, on Work First participation in the last model.

In all models I included both the unstandardized and standardized coefficients. I also include indications of statistical significance in all models. However, I am examining a population, not a sample and statistical significance is not as important (Cortina and Dunlap, 1997). The p-value is still included in my tables because it does illuminate the variables with the greatest explanatory magnitude. When examining a population, the standardized coefficients provide more explanatory power of my independent variables relative effect on Work First participation. The focus of my research is not to make
predictions; rather it is to understand the relationship between various independent factors and the Work First participation rate among eligible persons. Since I am utilizing a population instead of a sample, no inferences are needed to ascertain how the population would be affected by my variables. I am able to compare relative effect size without the possibility of error inherent in examining samples (Vacha-Haase and Thompson, 1998).
CHAPTER IV

EMPIRICAL RESULTS

Table 2. shows the unstandardized (b) and standardized (beta) coefficients of my OLS regression analysis. Model 1 estimates the association between the county characteristic controls and Work First participation rates among eligible persons. These control variables have a sizeable effect (R-squared=.302) on my dependent variable, and can explain over 30% of the variance in the participation rate of eligible people. The variable within this first model with the largest effect is ‘County Politics - Republican’ (Beta= -.454). This significant negative association shows that in counties where a Republican U.S. Senator got the majority of votes, the welfare participation rates was lower. Expenditures had the next largest effect size (Beta= .232), at only half that of the effect of county politics on Work First participation rates among the eligible. With the unemployment rate (Beta =.100) and the percentage of paid employment in the service industry (Beta =.167) with the smallest effects on eligible individual’s Work First participation rates.

In Model 2, I add my region variables (population density, Coastal and Piedmont regions dummy coded with the Mountain region counties as the reference group) to my control variables from the first model. The inclusion of all these variables helps to explain 38.8% of the variance in eligible person’s welfare participation rates (R-squared=.388). In this second model County politics remained largely unchanged from
Table 2. OLS Regression Estimates of County Characteristics, Welfare Office Dynamics and Work First Program Participation Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b</td>
<td>(Beta)</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>(Beta)</td>
<td>b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditures</td>
<td>.581</td>
<td>(.232)</td>
<td>-.157</td>
<td>(.063)</td>
<td>-.334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment Rate</td>
<td>.658</td>
<td>(.100)</td>
<td>.761</td>
<td>(.115)</td>
<td>.064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Service Industry</td>
<td>.254</td>
<td>(.167)</td>
<td>.197</td>
<td>(.130)</td>
<td>.099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Politics-Republican</td>
<td>-13.6***</td>
<td>(-.454)</td>
<td>-13.7***</td>
<td>(-.455)</td>
<td>-5.72**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Region</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population Density</td>
<td>.024*</td>
<td>(.341)</td>
<td>.022*</td>
<td>(.307)</td>
<td>.019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coastal Region</td>
<td>7.71**</td>
<td>(.263)</td>
<td>-3.49</td>
<td>(-.119)</td>
<td>-3.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piedmont Region</td>
<td>6.98**</td>
<td>(.231)</td>
<td>-.142</td>
<td>(-.005)</td>
<td>1.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender &amp; Race</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor Single-Mothers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>(.103)</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Black Population</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.534***</td>
<td>(.619)</td>
<td>.511***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Hispanic Population</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.745*</td>
<td>(-.138)</td>
<td>-.760*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Welfare Effectiveness</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Reported Effectiveness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.565</td>
<td>(.033)</td>
<td>-.132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Services Offered</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.166</td>
<td>(.087)</td>
<td>-.191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referrals &amp; Coordination</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.626</td>
<td>(.072)</td>
<td>-.629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Welfare Office Ideology</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mention of Sanctioning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mention of Fraud</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mention Lack of Motivation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-squared</td>
<td>.302</td>
<td></td>
<td>.388</td>
<td></td>
<td>.571</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Numbers are reported as unstandardized coefficients and standardized coefficients (Betas) in parentheses. ***p<.01; **p<.05; *p<.10
the first Model. In counties where the majority of U.S. Senator votes were for a Republican, there was a significant negative effect (the largest of all effects in Model 2) on the Work First participation rate among eligible persons (\(\text{Beta} = -0.455\)). The region variables did prove to be quite influential as well. In counties that had a higher population density (more urban, less rural), there was an increase in eligible person’s Work First Participation rate (\(\text{Beta} = 0.341\)). Both the Coastal and Piedmont regions have significantly higher participation rates among their eligible persons in reference to the more rural and often geographically isolated Mountain region counties (\(\text{Beta} = 0.263; = 0.231\) respectively).

Model 3 introduces my gender and race variables to the region and county control variables in the second model. The explanatory power of this model is quite sizeable (\(R^2 = 0.571\)) and I am able to explain over half of the variance in Work First participation rates among a county’s eligible poor. With the inclusion of these variables I found that the effect of county politics diminished drastically (\(\text{Beta} = -0.191\)) and the percent county Black population had the largest effect (\(\text{Beta} = 0.619\)) on Work First participation rates among eligible persons. Population density had the next largest effect size (\(\text{Beta} = 0.307\)). This shows in counties that are more urban and less rural there is a higher percentage of eligible persons who participate in the Work First program. Gender also had a decent positive effect on the Work First participation rate among eligible individuals (\(\text{Beta} = 0.103\)).

The percentage of a county’s population that is Hispanic has a negative effect (\(\text{Beta} = -0.138\)), showing that in counties with higher percentage Hispanic population the Work First participation rate among eligible individuals is lower. This may be due to a limitation of my dependent variable because it does not consider proper documentation as
a requirement for eligibility. Some migrants workers, while living in poverty and meeting the financial and household makeup required for Work First participation, may be lacking proper documentation to secure welfare assistance. When controlling for gender and race, the effects of the Coastal (Beta= -.119) and Piedmont (Beta= -.005) in reference to the Mountain counties decreased dramatically and changed direction. In this third model, now the Coastal and Piedmont regions have a lower Work First participation rate among their eligible citizens as compared to the Mountain region when controlling for gender and race.

Model 4 included measures of welfare effectiveness to the already present county characteristic controls, region, and gender and race variables from Model 3. The amount of explained variance increased slightly to 57.8% (R-squared=.578). The welfare effectiveness measures were the self-reported effectiveness of the Work First program as given by the program managers interviewed, the total services offered by the county welfare program, and the quality of the referrals and coordination between those services (as reported in the NC Work First Dataset). The inclusion of these three variables did not add much utility to my models (F-change =.1.027, sig=.385). While they did not have sizeable effects, I chose to keep these variables in my models because of the theoretically significant that program effectiveness did not have a sizeable effect. It would seem that if the actual or perceived effectiveness of the programs were viewed as deficient there would be less Work First participation among the eligible population. However, I found there to be no significant relationship between the effectiveness of the Work First program and the participation rate amongst the eligible people.
The fifth model is the compilation of all measures presented in the previous four models, in addition to the welfare office ideology measures (mentions of sanctioning, fraud, and client's lack of motivation). The explanatory power of this final model is substantial (R-squared = .622), with being able to explain over 62% of the variance in Work First participation rates among a county's eligible individuals. The largest effect of the welfare office ideology measures was a program manager's mention of clients lacking motivation as a major issue (Beta = -.210). There was a significant negative association shows that in counties where program managers said to interviewers that a major issue for clients is their lack of motivation there is a lower Work First participation rate among the eligible persons. The only effect in Model 5 that is larger than the mention of client's lack of motivation is the percentage of the Black population in a county (Beta = .569). The effect of population density remained relatively large (Beta = .238) which shows that more urban counties have a higher Work First participation rate among their eligible population, whereas rural areas have lower. County politics also remained a large effect (Beta = -.202), showing that in counties where the majority of U.S. Senator votes were for a Republican candidate there were lower Work First participation rates among the eligible poor.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The study of Work First participation among those who are eligible remains largely ignored in the welfare literature. By utilizing data from in depth interviews with program managers in combination with additional demographic data in North Carolina, I addressed important questions pertaining to welfare participation and eligibility in this study. I found that the Work First participation rate among eligible individuals is affected by a number of factors including: region, race, welfare office ideology and county politics. My findings showed that the Work First participation rate among eligible individuals is highest in counties that were more urban, had a higher percentage Black population, and voted for a democrat U.S. Senator.

Poverty is experienced and felt differently depending on one’s geographical location (Parisi, et. al., 2003; Lobao, 2004; Licter and Jayakody, 2002; Brown and Lichter, 2004). My findings on region add the essential, but largely missing, component of spatial inequalities to the discussion of welfare (Lobao, 2004). Lichter and Jayakody (2002) called for a focus on welfare programs in rural regions, which I examined by looking at population density and the three regions in NC: Mountain, Piedmont, and Coastal. The differences between regions are initially significant but the sizeable effect decreased dramatically when race was accounted for. The effect of population density
remained large throughout all models, showing that welfare participation among those eligible is lower in rural areas.

The effect of population density on program participation among eligible individuals may be due to a myriad of reasons. Primarily, single mothers in rural regions may face a unique set of circumstances that may inhibit their ability to become welfare participants (Brown and Lichter, 2004; Parisi, et. al., 2003). Some of those challenges are lack of transportation, increased stigma, and less knowledge of welfare eligibility (Brown and Lichter, 2004). My findings supported this and raise important questions regarding how welfare policies need to differ between regions. Every region and county is faced with unique barriers that may need to be addressed differently (Parisi, et. al., 2003; Lobao, 2004; Brown and Lichter, 2004). In areas that are more rural, greater funding for transportation may be needed. Welfare participants need to not only get to and from the welfare office, but also may need transportation assistance to get to and from job sites in order to fulfill work requirements. With the current block grant funding provided under the PRWORA reform, greater attention can be paid by county level policy implementers to address these specific issues (Parisi, et. al., 2003; Albert, 2000). Counties with higher rural or urban populations face very different obstacles to self-sufficiency. The autonomy associated with this type of funding needs to be utilized in a way to maximize the amount of assistance provided to those in geographically limiting regions: those in rural areas (Parisi, et. al., 2003; Albert, 2000).

The percentage of a county’s Black population had, by far, the largest effect on eligible person’s Work First participation. The poverty rate of Blacks is more than double that of their White counterparts. The poverty rate of Black single mothers is the highest
(Handler and Hasenfeld, 2007). Racial discrimination in employment and hiring practices is prevalent in the U.S. today (Quadagno, 1996; Kirshenman and Neckerman, 1991; Crass, 1999, Pager and Shepherd, 2008; Neckerman and Kirschenman, 1991). Blacks are twice as likely as whites to be unemployed, and both Blacks and Hispanics wages trail far behind their white counterparts (Pager and Shepherd, 2008; Kirshenman and Neckerman, 1991). Not only are Blacks in competition with whites for work opportunities, they have to compete with other racial/ethnic minorities. Blacks also experience less favorable treatment, rewards, and opportunities for advancement than other minority groups in the paid labor force (Pager and Shepherd, 2008). Finding gainful employment is especially difficult for black mothers who experience “intersecting oppression” (Collins, 1990) and discrimination due to their race, gender, and parenting responsibilities (Kirshenman and Neckerman, 1991; Khosrovani and Ward, 2011; Seccombe, 1999; Quadagno, 1996; Crass, 1999; Neckerman and Kirschenman, 1991; Handler and Hasenfeld, 2007).

Beyond workplace discrimination, Black single mothers experience less access to higher education and healthcare than their white counterparts (Handler and Hasenfeld, 2007; Crass, 1999; Quadagno, 1996). In combination with the sizeable effect found for population density, Blacks in urban areas often live in more undesirable neighborhoods that lack adequate education and affordable housing (Neckerman and Kirschenman, 1991; Handler and Hasenfeld, 2007; Quadagno, 1996; Crass, 1999; Seccombe, 1999). With greater relative need, and greater obstacles to attaining stable gainful employment, it is logical that a county’s eligible poor Black population would have higher rates of welfare participation.
A greater emphasis and knowledge, on behalf of welfare policy makers and implementers, needs to be on of how the labor force differentially affects the various groups in poverty. Whether it is region, gender, or race, not only is poverty experienced differently but all feel the impact of industry differently. In rural regions the poor population may be faced with only one or two viable paid labor options (Parisi, et. al., 2003; Lobao, 2004; Brown and Lichter, 2004). Poor women are often stuck in low-wage, low-skill, low benefits positions (Ridzi, 2009; Parisi, et. al., 2003; Collins and Mayer, 2010; Handler and Hasenfeld, 2007). Also, racial discrimination in employment and hiring practices is still a real issue in this country (Quadagno, 1996; Kirshenman and Neckerman, 1991; Crass, 1999; Pager and Shepherd, 2008; Neckerman and Kirschenman, 1991). Welfare policy makers and those implementing the welfare policies, need to recognize and account for how the differential labor markets come to affect the poor and thereby their welfare participants.

My findings showed that in counties where program managers refer to client’s lack of motivation as a major issue, the Work First participation rate among the eligible poor is lowered. The stereotype of welfare participants as lazy mothers, unwilling to work has been monumental in welfare reform, policies, and public opinion (Seccombe, et al. 1998; Schram, 2005; Taylor, Samblanet, and Seale, 2011; Handler and Hasenfeld, 2007; Ridzi, 2009; Monnat and Bunyan, 2008; Soss and Schram, 2007). However, when these stereotypes come to affect program managers’ opinions and attitudes towards clients, it can create a welfare office climate that negatively affects participation of the eligible poor (Watkins-Hayes, 2009; Taylor, Samblanet, and Seale, 2011; Taylor and Seale, 2012).
My findings are unique because this mention of client’s lack of motivation was offered by program managers without being asked. This shows that even in counties where this mention of clients lacking motivation was said only to interviewers and possibly never to clients, program managers’ negative opinions can permeate to the office front-lines and effect eligible individuals’ participation (Taylor and Seale, 2012). This provides essential support to the literature regarding the impact managers can have on caseworker implementation and/or client perceptions of the program (Watkins-Hayes, 2009; Taylor, Samblanet, and Seale, 2011; Taylor and Seale, 2012). This is a very interesting finding that the unsolicited opinions made by program managers of client’s laziness were able to affect program participation among eligible individuals. This finding raises interesting questions regarding program managers’ role in perpetuating stigma within the welfare office. Also, how this possible stigma may affect eligible persons’ willingness to participate in the current TANF welfare program. Future research is needed to examine the processes through which program managers’ opinions towards clients comes to be felt and perceived by eligible persons.

My findings also show that county politics has an effect on eligible persons’ welfare participation. I found that in counties where a Democrat U.S. Senator received the majority of votes there are higher rates of welfare participation among the eligible population. This could be for a number of reasons including race, population density and human services expenditures. First, areas with higher concentrations of Blacks are more likely to vote for a democrat elected official (Luebke, 1998). Also, voters in more urbanized areas (higher population density) are more likely to vote for democrat public officials (Schram, 2005). Third, democrats are more likely to support human services
expenditures on programs like welfare, and therefore may be more popular in urban areas with high populations of Blacks (Piven, 1998). One of the limitations of this measure is its interconnectedness with the percent Black population and population density. These measures were correlated and therefore may be measuring a cyclical relationship between race, region, and politics, and ultimately welfare.

Another limitation of my study is my inability to generalize my findings to the entire country. My study focuses on the entire 100 county population of North Carolina. I caution readers, however, about attempting to make generalizations from this population to other states. Indeed, this was not the goal of my research. Welfare research cannot and should not be generalized since programs vary considerably state to state. As illustrated in my findings, the differences in region, race, welfare office ideologies and politics can greatly affect Work First participation rates among the eligible poor differently. Therefore the study of welfare policies, implementations, and perceptions need to be examined at the intrastate level, where these differences can be more closely accounted and controlled for (Lobao, 2004).

Future Research

The study of welfare eligibility and Work First participation rates is an area worthy of further research. There are many nuances still in need of examination. For instance, in regards to region, the eligible poor in rural regions may not be as aware of the welfare programs available to help them, due to their relative geographical isolation and therefore have lower participation rates (Parisi, et. al., 2003; Brown and Lichter, 2004).
Further research is needed to uncover the processes through which knowledge about the welfare program, especially eligibility, is conveyed to the rural poor population of a county.

Also, while it is clear that racial discrimination is a very real problem in employment and hiring practices, further research is needed to uncover the best ways for welfare policies to account for this (Kirshenman and Neckerman, 1991; Khosrovani and Ward, 2011; Seccombe, 1999; Quadagno, 1996; Crass, 1999; Neckerman and Kirschenman, 1991; Handler and Hasenfeld, 2007). What programs would best help offset this additional discrimination faced by minority groups in the paid labor force? How can welfare offices create and fund programs that will better assist employers and potential employees bridge this discriminatory gap? Further research is needed on the role welfare policies and personnel can play in order to account for the differential treatment faced by minorities in the paid labor force.

My research on welfare program participation rates adds to existing welfare research by highlighting the factors that may impact welfare participation among the individuals who are financially eligible. As my research shows, program participation among eligible individuals can be affected by region, gender, race, welfare office dynamics, and other various county demographics. Focusing on welfare participation and eligibility assists in understanding the effect that the current welfare system has on those to whom it matters most: those who are actually eligible to use it. Considerations of eligibility on welfare participation in welfare research are an area in need of future examination. The study of welfare participation rates among the eligible poor can contribute greatly to the broader understanding of the welfare policies, reforms,
implementation, and how the welfare program is being perceived by the eligible poor and factored into welfare participation decisions.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX

DATA

Dependent Variable:

IV: %EligonRolls

The percentage of households with children under 18 whose 1999 income was below the poverty level that received Work First benefits in 2000.

In other words, this is an approximate rate of qualifying households that received Work First benefits in 2000. By qualifying households, I only mean those households with children under 18 years of age with an income below the poverty line. Refer to the variable Cases2000 to see how the number of taf cases in 2000 was calculated.

Source: 100*Cases2000 / HouseChildPov

Data gathered from the following web sites: http://ssw.unc.edu/workfirst/, http://linc.state.nc.us/, and https://factfinder.census.gov


Independent Variables:

County controls

IV: Expenditures

Expenditures on Human Services 2008.

Expenditures by function (human services), for the fiscal year ending June 30th, 2008. As described by the site:

Detailed county financial information is collected annually in a joint project between the US Census bureau and the State and Local Government Finance Division. The report consolidates reporting across all of the county funds with the exception of income and expenses of trust and agency funds where the county is not the beneficial owner. Bond sale proceeds that are used to retire existing debt
are also not included. The Annual Financial Information Report (AFIR) consolidates the financial information using the modified accrual mounts found in the annual audited financial statements.
Human Services - expenditures for the public health, mental health, and social services programs; veterans' service officers; legal aid; appropriations to hospitals; county's share of Medicaid payments, AFDC payments, and Special Assistance to Adults; county's share paid to multi-county health district and an area mental health authority. The amount is the sum of lines 162-170, 188C, 189C, 190C, 195C and 196C.
Source: North Carolina Department of State Treasurer Financial Information at http://www.treasurer.state.nc.us/lgc/units/unitlistjs.htm

IV: Unemployment Rate
Unemployment rate for each North Carolina county (2000)
Source: 2000 US Census

IV: % Service Industry
Low service sector size: % paid employment in retail, administration/superintendent services, health/social services, accommodation/food service, and other including public administration in 2000 (NCAIS, Census B.)
Source: 2000 US Census

IV: County Politics - Republican
Winner by county in North Carolina for U.S. Senate 2002 election.
All elected senators were either Republicans or Democrats (there were no independents or others elected). Dummy coded, 1 = Republican, 0 = Democrat
No missing values.

County Region and Demographic Variables

IV: Population Density
Population density in the year 2000
Source: 2000 US Census

IV: Region
P = Piedmont, C = Costal, M = Mountain.
Within the state of North Carolina there are three locations: Piedmont, Coastal and Mountain (as categorized by the Department of Public Instruction and the State Board of Education in North Carolina. These were then dummy coded where Mountain was used as the reference group.

Source: Department of Public Instruction and The State Board of Education in NC [http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/curriculum/socialstudies/elementary/studentsampler/20geography).

IV: Coastal Region
'Region' dummy coded 1=Coastal, 0=Piedmont and Mountain

IV: Piedmont Region
'Region' dummy coded 1=Piedmont, 0=Coastal and Mountain

IV: Poor Single Mothers
The number of single female headed households with children under 18yrs with an income below the poverty level (in 1999)
This figure DOES NOT include those households with an income AT the poverty level.
Source: Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF 3) P90, POVERTY STATUS IN 1999
OF FAMILIES BY FAMILY TYPE BY PRESENCE OF RELATED CHILDREN UNDER 18 YEARS BY AGE OF RELATED CHILDREN [41]
Universe: Families
NOTE: Data based on a sample except in P3, P4, H3, and H4. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, definitions, and count corrections see [http://factfinder2.census.gov/home/en/datanotes/expsf3.htm]

IV: Percent Black Population
% population African American (2000)
Source: Work First website: County Demographics, Table of Summary Data
http://ssw.unc.edu/workfirst/

IV: Percent Hispanic Population
% population Hispanic (2000)
Source: Work First website: County Demographics, Table of Summary Data
http://ssw.unc.edu/workfirst/
Welfare Effectiveness Variables

IV: Self-Reported Effectiveness
A measure to indicate respondent’s subjective evaluation of the Work First program in their county.
Based on question #53 from the NCSU/Kent State NC Work First Survey: Overall, how effective is your program in assisting clients in attaining self-sufficiency? Very effective, effective, somewhat effective, not effective? Originally coded in the raw data file by number, with 1 for “very effective” and 4 for “not effective”, often with accompanying text. This was reversed coded to make a higher number indicate higher level of effectiveness: 0= Don’t Know, 1= Not Effective, 2= somewhat effective, 3= effective, 4= very effective. Possible scores range from 0-4. Observed scores range from 1-4. Missing data for two counties.

IV: Total Services
A measure of the total number of services provided, counting the same service more than once if provided by different types of organizations. This is a rough indication of the density of services and agencies available to clients from the knowledge of the DSS respondent. This is based on responses to questions 9-24 in the NCSU/Kent State NC Work First Survey. Calculated by adding the measures TotalDSS, TotalOtherGovt, TotalNP, TotalFP, and TotalOther. Possible scores range from 0-80+. Observed scores range from 10-47. No missing data.

IV: Referrals & Coordination
Service Quality Composite (objective quality measure). A composite measure consisting of the sum of scores for REFERRALS and COORD. Possible score range of 0-7. Observed range of 1-7. No missing data. Where COORD is A measure to indicate the intensity or level of coordination between DSS and other organizations in the county. This is based primarily on question #26 from the NCSU/Kent State NC Work First Survey: How does your department coordinate the work of these different organizations? (Probes, if necessary, is it via phone or in person meetings, frequency of meetings, if any; who takes the lead or is in charge; how formal is the coordination.) Originally entered as text into the raw data file. However, the coder also examined other parts of the interview to determine the accurate level of coordination. Coded as follows: 0 = no coordination; 1 = some coordination by phone or occasional meetings; 2 = some coordination by phone and regular meetings with 1-2 orgs; 3 = more meetings, by phone maybe; 4 = regular meetings with community partners, or some other involved method of coordination. For counties with repeat interviews, both transcripts were used to determine score. No missing data. It would be a good idea to assess intercoder reliability if this measure is to be used.
Welfare Ideology Variables

IV: Mention of Sanctioning
Respondent mentions sanctioning or penalizing clients in some way. Dummy coded, 1 = mentioned, 0 = not mentioned.

IV: Mention of Fraud
Respondent mentions client fraud or clients taking advantage of government assistance in some way. Dummy coded, 1 = mentioned, 0 = not mentioned.

IV: Mention Lack of Motivation
Dummy code for whether or not the respondent explicitly mentioned client motivation as a major issue. Based on various questions from the NCSU/Kent State NC Work First Survey. 1 = client motivation mentioned as a major issue; 0 = not mentioned.