THE SELF-SUFFICIENCY IDEOLOGY: THE BUREAUCRATIC CONSTRAINTS
ON MANAGER IDENTITY THAT SHAPE MANAGER PERCEPTIONS OF THE
WELFARE-TO-WORK PROGRAM IN NORTH CAROLINA

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INTRODUCTION

In 1996, President William Clinton signed into law the Personal Responsibility and Work Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), a welfare reform replacing Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) with the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). TANF replaced the “entitlement program” AFDC, placing stringent requirements on time limits for benefits, family caps, state freedom to control the administration of the block TANF grant, and work requirements to receive assistance (Gilens 1999: Rogers-Dillon 2001). The intent of this program was to make individuals less reliant on the welfare system by increasing employment among recipients and collecting child support payments that would reduce the number of individuals receiving cash assistance benefits (Watkins-Hayes 2009). These new requirements supposedly combat the stereotypic view that clients lack personal responsibility and reinforce the view that individuals receiving benefits are to blame for their own impoverished state (Seale, Buck and Parrotta 2012).

This individualist ideology stems from the liberal self-sufficiency ideology, which claims that economic dependency upon other individuals and organizations is a flaw of character (Nelson 2002). American culture celebrates individual achievement and the general public wants to cut welfare spending because assisting the poor goes against America’s individualist ideologies and “surveys of public attitudes show that Americans are firmly committed to the belief that people are responsible for their own well being”
(Gilens 1999: 34). The individualistic way in which Americans view those in poverty and receiving benefits is problematic, as it is seen as a level of success. While there have been measures of “success” in the new program, the rate of poverty has not declined even though individuals are getting off the welfare rolls. Gaining low-paying jobs is not going to make people self-sufficient and move them out of poverty (Lens 2002).

Piven and Cloward ([1971] 1993) argue that a focus on work requirements does not make individuals self-sufficient, particularly because most of the jobs are in the service-sector with low wages that cannot make recipients socially mobile. Therefore, the focus of relief programs like TANF, is not to make recipients self-sufficient, just independent of government aid. The authors also indicate that relief program administrators design policies and procedures which prevent many of the very poor who apparently qualify from getting on the rolls (Piven and Cloward [1971] 1993). This is seen in the current system by the use of diversion payments, which are one-time payments of money instead of receiving on-going benefits and even deterring recipients from coming on to the rolls (Lens 2002). Finally, “relief practices enforce low-wage work” (Piven and Cloward [1971] 1993: 124) through the use of work requirements in TANF and when low-paid labor is needed women are also forced to enter the market (Piven and Cloward [1971] 1993). These practices that are now in place due to TANF were in place in earlier programs that were dismantled because they were not reducing welfare rolls. Piven and Cloward ([1971] 1993) saw that with the booming economy of the 1990s welfare reform would include work requirements for recipients. Just like
earlier programs, TANF programs are not making individuals self-sufficient, just moving
the poor off the rolls which hinders social mobility for recipients.

Hays (2003) argues that Americans are not looking enough at the factors that are
moving people off of the rolls but that are not leading to self-sufficiency, like getting
low-paying jobs, discouragement from cash assistance, and the sanctions applied due to
noncompliance with agency standards. It is not enough that recipients are getting low-
paying jobs and getting off the rolls, poverty is not disappearing. While Americans view
declining rates of TANF use due to welfare reform a ‘success’, the way this is viewed is
problematic. TANF does not assist in social mobility, and as a consequence, it is creating
a new class of working poor. Hasenfeld and Rafferty (1989) indicate that means-tested
programs such as TANF benefits are completely different than programs based on
contributory benefits like Social Security or unemployment compensation in the United
States. Means-tested programs are based on financial need while contributory programs
are seen as an entitlement to those that have paid into the system (Hasenfeld and Rafferty
1989). Therefore, the opposition to welfare is based on the notion that individuals are
receiving assistance without paying into the system while programs like unemployment
and Social Security are seen as programs that working people pay into with their wages,
which is different from the so-called dependency programs.

The goal of the current welfare state is to reduce dependency on the state by
having clients gain any kind of paid employment to move off the roles (Rogers-Dillon
and Skrentny 1999; Daughtery and Barber 2001; Loeb and Corcoran 2001; Rogers-Dillon
2001; Lens 2002; Nelson 2002; Haney and Rogers-Dillon 2005; Rogers-Dillon and
Haney 2005). This current disconnect between the ideological driven goals of administrators and policy makers with the bureaucratic goals of efficiency and neutrality create conflict workers in the implementation of services that are supposed to aid clients in achieving self-sufficiency. However, drawing from Lipsky (1980), goal conflict is created because of the multiple expectations that are placed upon workers. Particularly, these individuals have goals to follow that policy makers created with the implementation of TANF, while also striving to achieve the bureaucratic goals for implementing services. These goals do not necessarily coincide, creating consequences for service implementation, clients’ social mobility, and clients’ attainment of self-sufficiency.

Welfare policy is administered mainly at the county level but under the supervision of individual state governments which comply with the laws of the federal government. This creates a number of bureaucratic organizations that are administering welfare-to-work services to the poor. Drawing from Blau and Meyer ([1956] 1971), Watkins-Hayes (2009) and Taylor and Seale (2012) as well as organizational theories of bureaucracy, this research examines the perceptions of differing manager identities working within the welfare-to-work program in North Carolina—a state that offers less benefits that the national average to recipients and has a higher unemployment rate than the national average while limiting cash benefit use to only 24 months. Using rich qualitative data collected from telephone interviews with welfare-to-work program managers in North Carolina (N=100), I examine similarities and differences in manager identities in their perception of challenges and barriers to the program. Additionally I
examine the suggestions for changes to the system that managers would implement in order to meet the goals of TANF.
LITERATURE REVIEW

_Bureaucracy_

Merton (1940) defines bureaucracy as “a formal, rationally organized social structure” (560) that aids in the function of everyday life on a large scale. These organizations are built “to accomplish large-scale administrative tasks by systematically coordinating the work of many individuals” (Blau and Meyer [1956] 1971: 5). The basis of bureaucratic structures is efficiency in the tasks that they undertake. In American culture, bureaucracies are created to “achieve democratic objectives, be they raising the standard of living of people, distributing incomes more equitably, or increasing the influence of citizens over their government (Blau and Meyer [1956] 1971: 5). These bureaucratic undertakings are a place for welfare-to-work service implementation, as the goal of this bureaucracy is to end reliance on the welfare system by urging recipients to obtain paid employment. This goal feeds in to the liberal, American, self-sufficiency ideology by striving to reduce dependency on cash assistance in a program designed to serve the poor. The implementation of TANF in 1996 and reauthorization in 2006, according to Ridzi (2009) “can be seen as an extension of the reach of political ideology’s power into the lives of families who are regulated by this policy” (60).

Bureaucratic goals usually are written and function to achieve the daily tasks of the bureaucratic structure through efficiency and neutrality (Blau and Meyer [1956] 1971). Perrow (1961) indicates that there are two types of goals in a bureaucratic
organization: organizational and operational goals. Organizational goals are usually vague goals that are used for administrative purposes within the organization while operational goals are tied to group interests within the organization. Merton (1940) argues that organizational goals should be the primary focus of bureaucracies because they discipline the staff while being rational and efficient. Goals are difficult to research because they are often complex with different groups within the organization having different perceptions of the goals that are in place, making it difficult for organizations to achieve goal congruence among the staff (Meyers, Riccucci and Laurie 2001).

Perrow (1961) argues that the goals of an organization are created by elites and have not been clearly communicated to the organizational practices of the staff. Therefore, different groups within the organization create their own goals and sanction those in the group who fail to meet these goals (Blau and Meyer [1956] 1971: Reichers 1986). The operational goals that are created because of the absence of concrete organizational goals may or may not coincide with the abstract organizational goals (Reichers 1986). Without the clarification of organizational goals, these goals become static fixtures in the organization. The staff does not know how to change these organizational goals because they do not know what these goals are; therefore they create their own operational goals (Perrow 1961). This lack of goal congruence between the organization and staff groups creates conflict because organizational and operational groups not necessarily coincide, but it also creates conflicts for individual staff members who may belong to multiple groups with multiple goals.
Blau and Meyer’s ([1956] 1971) work examines approaches to bureaucracy throughout history and society and the rational, neutral nature that is the basic premise of bureaucratization. Particularly, in public spheres such as the welfare state, government officials are in charge of the implementation of welfare services (Perrow 1961; Watkins-Hayes 2009). These organizations are particularly vulnerable to the political climate of a society (Perrow 1961; Gilens 1999). What this means for the welfare state is that goals and rules can change for program managers implementing welfare-to-work services. This is because in public bureaucratic spheres, the efficiency and effectiveness goals of the organization can consistently change causing both goal and role ambiguity with the implementation of services. The political climate for implementing services is unpredictable and deficient of information for managers implementing services as the climate shifts, giving mixed messages to managers (Pandey and Wright 2001).

*Service Implementation in Public Bureaucracies*

In public bureaucracies like the welfare state, goals are uncertain and usually conflicting (Blau and Meyer [1956] 1971). This is because welfare goals are often ambiguous based on the decisions by Congress, states, counties, and different agencies (Lipsky 1980). These public bureaucracies respond to individual struggles and economic deprivation (Watkins-Hayes 2009). Goal ambiguity is seen in the bureaucracy three ways: (1) client-centered goals conflicting with social engineering goals; (2) client-centered goals conflicting with organization-centered goals; and (3) goals conflicting
because of the varying role expectations that are given to managers through multiple parties (Lipsky 1980).

Social service implementation, however, is a “complex, circular process in which feedback, constraints, policy redesign, leadership, and networking are important factors for success” (Arsneault 2004: 74.). Since the passing of PRWORA, the new goals of the welfare state are to relieve welfare dependency and have clients gain self-sufficiency (Austin et al. 2009) by imposing new regulations mandating that clients work (Watkins-Hayes 2011) and changing client behaviors (Ricucci, Meyers, and Laurie 2004) based on the stereotype that clients lack a work ethic. The program is designed to help those people who ‘want’ to become self-sufficient and gain a job, achieve employment (Rogers-Dillon 2001). However, TANF is structured, bureaucratically, to get clients a job through mandating work requirements that go on the workers’ resume, but with no emphasis on training or education, which makes them less likely to become ‘self-sufficient’ under the bureaucratic structure. Self-Sufficiency means that recipients no longer have a need for means-tested support from either North Carolina or the federal government.

Caseworkers within bureaucratic structures experience role strain because they struggle to help clients while also adhering to the bureaucratic rules and guidelines that must be followed (Rizzo, House and Litzman, 1970; Ridzi 2004). While they are trained to be bureaucratically minded, want efficiency and follow the directions of their supervisors (Ridzi 2004), caseworkers are responsible for making the decisions in this system which has varying objectives across not only individual states, but county
agencies within states as well (Austin et al. 2009). This gives caseworkers a great deal of discretionary power because they are supposed to carry out policy objectives (Riccucci 2005). Although they are trained to be efficient, effective, and follow the rules, they do have the power to shape bureaucracy (Watkins-Hayes 2011) and therefore, there is a lot of ambiguity within their jobs (Riccucci 2005). This ambiguity causes caseworkers to implement rules according to their own agendas while still worrying about the funding and penalty structure from the state (Ridzi 2004; Riccucci 2005).

The sanctioning structures differ according to state guidelines. In North Carolina, a family of three can only receive a maximum benefit of $272 a month working 35 hours per week at a work experience site (Rowe and Murphy 2009). If the clients fail to meet their hours for a reason that is not deemed “good cause” by the state, the clients are sanctioned (Rowe and Murphy 2009). The first sanction that a client can receive is a reduction in all benefits for one month, meaning that they get no cash assistance for 30 days until they comply with the work requirements (Rowe and Murphy 2009). The most severe sanction that can happen is that the case is closed and the clients have to reapply for assistance (Rowe and Murphy 2009). In North Carolina clients are able to receive benefits for 24 months but then are ineligible for benefits for 36 months before they can reapply (Rowe and Murphy 2009). The federal government sets out broad guidelines but states must comply with sanctioning those individuals who do not complete the work requirements because if clients are not sanctioned for noncompliance, then the state can lose between one and five percent of their block TANF grant (Rowe and Murphy 2009).
Welfare caseworkers are not the only individuals who implement services in public bureaucracies and they are not the only individuals who have problems with service implementation. In DeGarmo, Feltey, and Pendleton’s (1993) study of the homeless, the authors found that organizational assumptions dictate what model of assistance providers in providing assistance to the homeless: moral, compensatory, medical, or enlightenment models. They also found that the providers’ experiences influenced their perceptions of their clients’ needs. Other important findings from this study were that providers raised issues of only being able to provide short term care to homeless individuals and that the bureaucratic structure lacked resources to aid the clients successfully. Drawing back to the welfare literature, these are also common themes among caseworkers serving those who receive cash assistance. The organization strives to move people off the cash assistance rolls; clients are placed under a bureaucratic model to achieve this goal. Also, the different types of worker identity, created by Watkins-Hayes (2009) dictate the amount of casework and the types of services that welfare clients are given to help them attain employment. Another similarity between caseworkers and service providers is that experience is an important factor in the determination of client need (Blau 1960; Blau and Meyer [1956] 1971).

Worker Identity, Caseworkers, and Program Managers

Peter Blau’s (1960) study of employees at a federal employment agency paves the way for discussing the role of bureaucratic identity in the administration of services. Blau (1960) focuses on the organizational rules and constraints that aid in the creation of a worker identity. He mainly looks at the amount of time that the individual has spent with
the organization and the level of social support that the individual gains from their peers and how these affect worker efficiency within the bureaucratic structure.

Watkins-Hayes (2009) builds on Blau (1960), Lipsky (1980), and Ridzi (2004) by examining the role conflict that aids in the creation of worker identities, instead of looking only at the effect of tenure and social support on caseworker efficiency (Blau 1960), the discretionary power that is given to caseworkers in street-level bureaucracies (Lipsky 1980) and the performance reviews of the caseworkers in the implementation of services (Ridzi 2004). Watkins-Hayes (2009) stresses that these workers must respond to the public debate about the implementation of services to the impoverished and that because of this debate, caseworkers create identities to aid the client while using their own perceptions of the organizational goal of being efficient and detecting fraud to address client needs. Watkins-Hayes (2009) establishes a typology of caseworkers that work in the welfare system, consisting mainly of two different types of workers: efficiency engineers and social workers.

Efficiency engineers want to focus on the rules and regulations of the bureaucracy instead of getting to know their clients, becoming more like Merton’s (1940) bureaucratic personality. Social workers, on the other hand, have a more holistic approach to casework where they want to intervene with their clients and have more resources available to aid their client (Dias and Maynard-Moody 2006). Both Blau (1960) and Watkins-Hayes (2009) mention an intermediate third category of caseworker. Watkins-Hayes (2009) names these workers “bureaucratic survivalists” because they invest little of themselves in the bureaucracy and in their work toward clients. However, little is known about the
third party category except that these individuals do not invest in the bureaucratic structure like the efficiency engineers and social workers. Taylor and Seale (2012) use the term “conflicted” for their analysis of the intermediate worker category. This term is less specific to the role that these individuals have in the bureaucracy, especially since there is little literature on this category. Because there is little literature on this intermediate category, using Watkins-Hayes’ (2009) term seems too specific to their role within the bureaucracy. Taylor and Seale’s (2012) category is less specific and allows researchers to focus on concrete differences between the efficiency engineers, social workers, and intermediate, conflicted, managers. This term conflicted, indicates that these managers are unsure of how to deal with the challenges and barriers to the program. They recognize that challenges and barriers to self-sufficiency, such as economic conditions and lack of resources make it difficult for clients to achieve the self-sufficiency goal. However, they also believe that individuals are responsible for their own self-sufficiency, and thus are to blame if they are receiving resources from the government.

The literature that looks at goal and role conflict and ambiguity deals mainly with caseworkers, not program managers. Managers are a special bureaucratic entity because they supervise caseworkers that deal with clients daily. Managers affect and are more affected by the bureaucratic structure (Riccucci et al. 2004; Riccucci 2005; Watkins-Hayes 2011). The services that are offered by the welfare agencies are shaped by the managers and they also dictate which caseworkers get to use their discretionary power (Riccucci 2005). The variation among bureaucratic structures impacts the ways in which managers implement services, giving the managers discretionary power (Riccucci et al.
These managers not only deal with the administrative processes of implementing welfare-to-work services and shaping caseworker behavior, but they also have to make sure that their county is able to continue to get funding. The goals that are currently in place with TANF have created a hierarchy for funding and penalties (Ridzi 2004) which is why more managers are likely to follow bureaucratic guidelines (Dias and Maynard-Moody 2006). Managers have a lot of discretionary and decision-making power because they neither make the bureaucratic goals nor constantly deal with clients. This does however result in more ambiguity in their jobs (Ricucci 2005). The power given to managers because of their status then affects the roles of both the caseworkers they supervise and the bureaucracy that they shape through administrative duties which create role dissatisfaction, role strain and stress (Rizzo et al. 1970).

**TANF Funding and Self-Sufficiency in the Welfare State**

TANF, as explained earlier, is funded through a block grant that is sent from the federal government to North Carolina and is then distributed to the 100 counties to fund the welfare-to-work program. If the participation rates are not met by the county, or even North Carolina as a whole, there could be federally imposed sanctions that the counties and personnel have to deal with. If the counties lose funding, caseworkers could be laid off so that the program can continue. To avoid sanctions against the agency, caseworkers are encouraged to follow the bureaucratic guidelines set out by the federal government and their agencies to sanction those participants who are noncompliant with their work hours. If caseworkers do not comply with the bureaucratic standards, they run the risk of facing penalties, such as potential job loss. Caseworkers are paid by the TANF block
grant funds (Lipsky [1980] 2010) and they rely on their paycheck for their economic independence, making the caseworkers dependent on the structure that supports their clients. Without the money to run welfare-to-work, there would be no program, and without the program there would be no need for caseworkers.

Since the implementation of TANF in 1996, welfare rolls have been declining. But why have they been declining? Is the program making recipients self-sufficient? Daughtery and Barber (2001) explain that self-sufficiency does not equate to economic independence in the welfare state. Self-sufficiency is equated with making more money than before, but that does not mean that individuals are getting out of poverty (Daughtery and Barber 2001). The structure of TANF focuses on recipients obtaining employment, any employment, not to become self-sufficient (Lens 2002). The program does not focus on job training or education so that recipients can obtain better jobs, but focuses on the recipients’ work ethic, making education less important than low wages (Lens 2002). However, the focus on working does not make participants self-sufficient, it just means that recipients make more money than they did on cash assistance (Lens 2002). However, Haney and Rogers-Dillon (2005) argue that just because recipients are not dependent on the federal government does not mean that they are out of poverty or independent of other types of aid.
THE SITE: NORTH CAROLINA

Figure 1: North Carolina County Map

Map courtesy of http://www.lib.unc.edu/dc/ncmaps/browse_location.html

Based on 2000 Bureau of Labor Statistics data, North Carolina had a higher unemployment rate than the national average, 6.2% compared to 5.8% (Taylor and Seale 2012). The mean populations of North Carolina’s counties, according to the 2000 Census (92,403) are comparable to the average county populations in the United States (97,742) (Taylor and Seale 2012). The 2008 mean poverty rate in North Carolina was projected by the US Census Department to be 17% as opposed to the national projected mean poverty rate of 13.2% (Taylor and Seale 2012). The phone survey conducted by Tiffany Taylor and her team of researchers was used to calculate the caseload and the number of employees that the managers supervised Taylor and Seale (2012) found that the average caseload for caseworkers was 45 cases and the average number of employees supervised
by managers was 14.3.

Since the passing of PRWORA, states are able to implement their own policies for the welfare-to-work program. North Carolina recognizes the federal maximum lifetime benefit for recipients of 60 months, but only allows clients to receive benefits for up to 24 consecutive months (Taylor and Seale 2012; Seale et al. 2012) which is quite different than the federal guidelines, making this state an opportune place to study manager perceptions. Clients are required to participate in a work activities program in order to receive benefits from the state of North Carolina. According to Rowe and Murphy (2009) a family of three received a maximum benefit of $272 in 2008 while the average maximum benefit in the United States was $442. The polices for TANF payments in 2008 include “diversion payments, required employment search upon application, sanctions involving recall of the entire benefit for the month or at worst case closure, and exemptions from the work-related activity requirement for women with children under 12 months of age or those caring for an ill or incapacitated dependent” (Taylor and Seale 2012: 8; see also Rowe and Murphy 2009 and Seale et al. 2012).
METHODS

Data

For this project, I used qualitative data from Tiffany Taylor’s project in North Carolina that examined the implementation of welfare-to-work services. The data were collected using semi-structured telephone interviews over a duration of fifteen months from the spring of 2008 to the summer of 2009 (Taylor and Seale 2012). Using a contact list of personnel whose titles indicated that they were managers, the researchers were able to achieve a 100% response rate by interviewing one manager in each of North Carolina’s counties (N=100). The interviews typically lasted between 45 minutes and an hour and contained both open and closed-ended questions that were collected to be both qualitative and quantitative in nature (Taylor and Seale 2012). The telephone interviews allowed the researchers to ask both open and closed-ended questions and also gave the researchers the opportunity to interview managers in North Carolina from a distance in Ohio.

The study participants, program managers in North Carolina, fulfill a lot of duties to implement the TANF program. According to Taylor and Seale (2012) some of the main duties of welfare-to-work managers in this particular program are to match clients to services that they need, assist clients in finding a Work Experience Program site, making sure that the requirements for the Work First program are being met, and coordinating with other service providers to increase the self-sufficiency of recipients. Because these managers have a number of responsibilities, the interviews contained a
variety of topics including questions about service provisions, the barriers that were faced by the agency and the clients, and questions about policy implementation.

I used Atlas.ti, qualitative coding software, and used a semi-inductive coding approach to code the data (Charmaz 2001; 2006). Using a semi-inductive coding approach allowed me to examine the ways in which managers talked about the program and relate it back to relevant literature. While Blau (1960) and Watkins-Hayes (2009) examine bureaucratic identity, they examine caseworker identity, not case manager identity. Watkins-Hayes (2009) goes further to examine the differing types of caseworkers and their implementation practices, but both she and Blau mention an intermediate category of caseworker.

As well as using a semi-inductive coding approach to analyze the qualitative data, I specifically use a modified grounded theory approach, an analytic strategy for qualitative data (Charmaz 2001: 2006). Modified grounded theory is a method where the researcher starts with individual cases, and develops more abstract categories to aid in the identification of patterns across data (Charmaz 2001: 2006). Because the data have already been collected, it is impossible to do a true grounded theory application. However, this modified grounded theory approach allowed me to see patterns across data, create specific codes over time, and write memos while having an idea of the issues and themes that might be present according to relevant literature (Charmaz 2001: 2006).

The Watkins-Hayes typology, discussed in the literature review, was previously established with this data set, with a 90% intercoder reliability rate. Taylor and Seale (2012) found that eighteen program managers met the “efficiency engineer” category;
fifty eight managers qualified for the “social work” category; and twenty four managers qualified for the “conflicted” category. Watkins-Hayes (2009) called the intermediate group “bureaucratic survivalists”. I used the term “conflicted” (Taylor and Seale 2012) to refer to those managers who had characteristics of both efficiency engineers and social workers.

Using Charmaz (2001: 2006) as a guide, I began my qualitative analysis with line-by-line coding the data, also known as open coding. After I open-coded all 100 interviews, I did a second round of coding, called focus coding, that allowed me to look at the re-emerging themes within the data and these codes were used for analysis. Focus coding not only allowed me to examine the themes across manager types, but also allowed me to examine the themes across all 100 individuals in the sample. Throughout the coding process I wrote analytic memos to assist in my understanding of the data and allowing me to make comparisons across the data set. These analytic memos and subsequent free-writes laid the groundwork for the following results section.

Analysis and Measures

For this analysis, I qualitatively coded three questions in the North Carolina Work First Survey; “What are the challenges in helping people become self-sufficient?”; “What do you see as your program’s main barrier in reaching this self-sufficiency goal?”; “If you could design a completely new program to serve the poor, what would it look like?” These questions allowed me to explore manager identity and perceptions of challenges in providing help to clients, barriers in the program, and ideal program qualities. By looking at the “design a new program” question, I had the ability to see the relationship between
worker identities and perspectives about the program—but I was also able to see if any managers internalize Merton’s (1940) bureaucratic personality. The bureaucratic personality is someone who wants to make efficient, neutral, and orderly relationships within the organizational structure.
RESULTS

Identity and Perception of Challenges and Barriers to the program

Following the Watkins-Hayes typology (2009) and Taylor and Seale (2012) the coding of manager identity is comprised of three categories: Social Work-oriented, Efficiency Engineers, and Conflicted managers. The focus of this section is to discuss the ways each type of manager discussed the challenges and barriers of the programs that they supervise. During the interview the managers were asked two questions: “What are the challenges in helping people become self sufficient?”; and “What do you see as your program’s main barrier in reaching this self-sufficiency goal?” These manager responses included the role that structural challenges/barriers like the lack of employment and poor economy played, the individual level challenges/barriers, and the combination of structural and individual challenges/barriers that hinder client self-sufficiency.

The fifty-eight social-work oriented managers (58%), emphasized challenges and barriers that were oriented to three themes that hinder the success of clients in attaining self-sufficiency. The first theme is the role that the economy, a structural level challenge/barrier, has on finding gainful employment in North Carolina. Of the 58 social-work oriented managers, 22 (37.90%) managers responded that structural level phenomena were a challenge and 32 (55.20%) social work-managers responded that structural phenomena were barriers to self-sufficiency. This is compared to the one efficiency engineer (5.50%) and four (16.60%) conflicted managers who believed that structural phenomena were challenges while five (27.70%) efficiency engineers and
seven (30.40%) conflicted managers who believed structural phenomena to be barriers to self-sufficiency (See Tables 1 and 2 and Figures 2 and 3 in the Appendix).

These social-work managers did not emphasize that clients should just get ‘any job’ but realized that the economic conditions and availability of jobs in the county provided a significant challenge/barrier to clients gaining employment and supporting their families with that employment. When asked about the challenges to self-sufficiency, one social work manager indicated that the lack of jobs in the county and loss of factories were the largest challenges to client self-sufficiency.

Interviewer: What are the challenges in helping people become self-sufficient?
Respondent: The job market is a challenge. There are no jobs available. Factories have shut down in near counties (County 53).

Similarly, when asked about barriers to self-sufficiency, a social work manager indicated that the lack of jobs, another structural challenge/barrier, is the main barrier and individuals that are unqualified had no chance at success in the economy, making self-sufficiency a very hard goal to reach.

Interviewer: What do you see as your program’s main barrier in reaching this self-sufficiency goal?
Respondent: Jobs. Lack of jobs. Now it’s even worse. Right now, I know of one position available. Do you want to know how many people applied? 90! Ninety applied and they’re all very qualified. Those who applied and are unqualified have no chance. That’s when you see how hard it is to become self-sufficient in this economy. Thank goodness for some of the bail out money coming down to help with utilities (County 8).

These managers emphasized that it is not the fault of the clients that they were not self-sufficient, thus battling the notion that clients attaining ‘any job’ is enough to gain self-
sufficiency. The lack of self-sufficiency is a product of poor economic conditions in their counties.

The second theme social work managers talked about were individual-level challenges/barriers, such as lack of motivation, level of education of clients, substance abuse, mental health issues, domestic violence situations, and criminal records as challenges/barriers to client self-sufficiency, particularly when answering the question “What are the challenges in helping people become self-sufficient?” Eleven (18.9%) social-work managers indicated that individual challenges made it difficult for clients to become self-sufficient (See Tables 1 and 2 and Figures 2 and 3 in Appendix). One manager indicates:

Interviewer: What are the challenges in helping people become self-sufficient?
Respondent: Substance abuse issues, mental health issues; all those things that are kind of hidden that don’t come out until months down the road when clients are not following through (County 20).

Individual barriers are hidden to this manager until a problem arises with meeting the goals (i.e. participation rates) of the program. This manager says that these issues aren’t apparent until something goes wrong, indicating that this particular manager does not assume that clients are coming into the program with substance abuse and mental health issues. Another manager says:

Respondent: With those families with a criminal record we have some difficulty placing them in employment. Also have substance abuse challenges. There are some agencies to handle that but it may take a family 1-2 years to get self-sufficient when dealing with those issues (County 32).

This manager indicates that there are individual barriers to self-sufficiency and that there are agencies that assist in helping clients become self-sufficient, but it takes
between twelve and twenty-four months. This pushes families right up to the point of being dismissed from the program for three years before they can receive benefits.

Another social-work manager even mentions the ‘culture of poverty’ explanation to the “challenges to self-sufficiency question”:

Interviewer: What are the challenges in helping people become self-sufficient?
Respondent: This is opinion. [Considers for a while]. The ones with difficulty—not the successful clients—but the ones that have difficulty, it is like a culture of poverty. There is a milieu, like when you’re in a neighborhood where everyone is poor; it is hard to fight poverty. It is the culture, the attitudes. For example, when I was in high school, it was looked down upon if you tried to excel (County 36).

This manager places the blame of client poverty straight on the individual because it is hard to fight poverty when individuals are surrounded by it. This manager even brings in a narrative about how when they were young, if an individual tried to do everything they could to get out of poverty, it was looked down upon.

The third theme and one noticeable difference between the social work managers and the two other types of managers is that while they mentioned individual challenges/barriers, it was in conjunction with structural challenges/barriers. Fifteen managers (25.80%) discuss individual and structural challenges while twelve (20.70%) of these managers discuss these barriers together (See Tables 1 and 2 and Figures 1 and 2 in Appendix). The most common individual challenge/barrier mentioned by the social work managers is that the clients have criminal records and were hard to place in permanent jobs because employers did not want to hire them. For example, one manager indicated during the interview:
Interviewer: What do you see as your program’s main barrier in reaching this self-sufficiency goal?
Respondent: The criminal records. Haven’t found a solution to alleviate this yet. Difficult even to place these clients with Work Experience sites. Some have committed offenses at the Work Experience sites allegedly—because it didn’t happen before that person go there, they got blamed. For some clients it has happened repeatedly (County 32).

This manager realized the challenges that face these particular families, and was even willing to give them the benefit of the doubt that they were not misbehaving at the work experience sites.

Most social work managers focused on challenges/barriers that were out of the control of the clients, but others placed blame on their clients for their inability to attain self-sufficiency. This indicated that the manager identities are not concrete and those who approached their work in a social work-oriented fashion did not necessarily have identical approaches to their clients and work. While some managers still judged clients, the focus of these managers is not on the rhetoric that clients were lazy. It is rare that a culture of poverty argument was given by these types of managers.

The second manager type in Watkins-Hayes typology, efficiency engineers, saw challenges/barriers individualistically and focused on the clients themselves rather than the economy or lack of resources in their counties. These eighteen managers (18%) viewed clients as unmotivated and resistant to change while focusing on the clients’ lack of education, criminal records, low job histories, mental health issues, and substance abuse issues. Of these managers, fourteen (77.70%) indicated that individual level problems created challenges in clients attaining self-sufficiency while eleven (61.10%)
indicated that individual level problems created barriers to self-sufficiency (See Tables 1 and 2 and Figures 2 and 3 in Appendix).

These managers focused on meeting participation rates and other benchmarks for the welfare system as being efficient, effective, and the only way that clients would meet the end goal of self-sufficiency. A part of the job that they had undertaken was the sanctioning of clients who did not comply with the rules and regulation of the welfare system and emphasized the rules and regulations that clients need to follow in order to be successful. One manager indicated:

Interviewer: What are the challenges in helping people become self-sufficient?
Respondent: The biggest challenge is getting them to buy into the behavior that they need to do something for themselves” (County 39).

This manager, like others, viewed clients as a problem to the success of the program, as another manager said:

Respondent: Lack of motivation on the clients’ part. I hate to be negative but Work First participation is low because clients just don’t care” (County 55). These managers viewed clients as the main challenge/barrier to their own self-sufficiency. They argued that clients’ lack of motivation to meet requirements is the reason clients failed to become self-sufficient.

The third and final type of manager in the Watkins-Hayes typology, conflicted managers, demonstrated aspects of both the social work and efficiency engineer identity when discussing the challenges/barriers to client self-sufficiency. These twenty-four managers (24%) were contradictory in the way that they talked about clients throughout the interviews and of these twenty-four managers, thirteen (54.10%) of these managers discussed both structural and client challenges to self-sufficiency while six (26.10%) indicated a mixture of structural and individual level barriers to self-sufficiency (See
Tables 1 and 2 and Figures 2 and 3 in Appendix). Because of this, it is necessary to treat these managers as their own category as opposed to a mixture of the social work and efficiency engineer identities. When speaking about the challenges and barriers to self-sufficiency, one manager indicated:

Interviewer: What are the challenges in helping people become self-sufficient?
Respondent: Currently-economic conditions. With the loss of jobs, especially in our area, we’ve been hit hard, with manufacturing mills shut down. Jobs now are the service type, with a lot of second shift and weekends. This causes problems with daycare, etc.

…Interviewer: What do you see as your program’s main barrier in reaching this self-sufficiency goal?
Respondent: Attitude. We have resources and assistance for those that are willing. It is mainly the unwillingness of the participant (County 73).

This contradiction indicated that while this manager was aware of the economic conditions, it is only the current economic conditions that were a challenge. This current economic challenge then created challenges in other aspects of making people self-sufficient. Also, when talking about barriers, the manager explained that the attitudes of the clients were the main barrier because the county had resources for those individuals who were willing to participate and do what they were supposed to do. This manager acknowledged the challenges that were out of the control of the client but then blamed the client for their lack of self-sufficiency. When asked about the challenges in helping people become self-sufficient, another conflicted manager indicated, “Lack of jobs. A lot of people do not want to work” (County 65). Again, this manager was aware that there were not a lot of employment opportunities and yet also blamed the client for their lack of
self-sufficiency because they did not want to work. Another manager also illustrated this contradiction:

Interviewer: What are the challenges in helping people become self-sufficient?
Respondent: Greatest challenge is motivation. Also, resources such as available employment, and the economy. The textile company they had closed down and they have to seek employment elsewhere. Transportation is also a problem, as they have no transportation system, only a locally run system of a few vans.

…Interviewer: What do you see as your program’s main barrier in reaching this self-sufficiency goal?
Respondent: Resources such as transportation. Job opportunities, motivation, and education; there are a lot of participants without a high school diploma (County 87).

This manager said that the greatest challenge is client motivation, but also cited a lack of available jobs and listed numerous issues with resources as barriers to client self-sufficiency. This manager, like other conflicted managers, was aware that there were other barriers and challenges other than the clients, like the social work managers, yet they also blamed clients for their own lack of self-sufficiency, like the efficiency engineers. In short, conflicted managers contradicted themselves when talking about challenges/barriers to self-sufficiency, and yielded different answers to both questions, unlike the efficiency engineers who focused on client challenges/barriers to meeting work participation requirements, or social work managers who focused on the challenges/barriers that were outside of the control of the client, such as the economic conditions and the lack of resources in the counties.

Designing a New Program
The managers interviewed were also asked: “If you could design a completely new program to serve the poor, what would it look like?” This question gave managers a chance to voice their opinions about the changes that they would make to the current TANF program in North Carolina in order to alleviate challenges and barriers to self-sufficiency. Distinct themes emerged for different manager types. The social work managers focused on changing requirements to assist clients in attaining self-sufficiency. The efficiency engineers focused on making requirements stricter for clients, which they argued will assist clients in attaining self-sufficiency sooner. The conflicted managers, however, were both sympathetic to clients but also blamed them for their lack of self-sufficiency. These answers are important because not only are the managers asked about what they believe is wrong with the program but they are also asked how they would fix the challenges and barriers to the program.

When the social work-oriented managers were asked to design a new program, there were a range of responses dealing with what changes they would make to the program. However, the most common responses focused on improving education, training, and reevaluating requirements to assist clients in attaining self-sufficiency. Increasing education was the most common response among social workers with 20 workers (34.40%) followed by increasing training with 15 workers (25.80%) and finally reevaluating a changing requirements with 10 workers (17.20%) (See Table 3 and Figure 4 in Appendix). While these managers were focused on changing the program, it did not
mean that they are not focused on clients helping themselves through the program. One
manager responded:

Interviewer: If you could design a completely new program to serve the
poor, what would it look like?
Respondent: Make it more a combination of education and employment.
Weed people out up front that are not serious about it. Evaluate cognitive
ability up front to make better choices. It is built on self-sufficiency, but it
is reducing rolls, not making people self-sufficient, it is a creating a new
class of working poor. They need to look at what is self-sufficiency
(County 2).

This manager focused on education and employment but also wanted to make it more
difficult for individuals who did not want to participate in the program. This manager
explained that even though TANF was built on the notion that clients would be assisted
in gaining self-sufficiency, the consequence of the program and the requirements was that
it has created a new class of the working poor. Another manager indicated that there were
TANF provisions that individually, they agreed with, but that the program should be
eliminated because of the lack of resources in their county, and the difficulty that this
created in meeting their participation rates:

   It wouldn’t be Work First!! Gosh, I don’t even know what to say. In Work
First, there’s child only and I agree with that. A lot of grandparents have to
raise their grandchildren and I don’t think they should have to go out there
and do all the stuff. I do agree with people having to work that are able-
bodied. When we’re in a county like ours that’s so small, it’s really hard to
find resources to find them jobs to meet the hours. Get rid of this
program!! (County 39)

In contrast to social work-oriented managers, efficiency engineers wanted to
make requirements stricter with three out of eighteen managers (16.60%) indicating this
in their responses, and they also favored a ‘pay after performance’ change to the program (See Table 3 and Figure 4 in Appendix). One manager indicated that their new stricter program would be:

Interviewer: If you could design a completely new program to serve the poor, what would it look like?
Respondent: “Give them more money but make requirements stricter…if someone lost a job, say you have 90 days to find a job instead of 2 years or no more money, but in the mean time give them more money…clients would feel an urgency to get a job quicker and not rely on such little money” (County 96).

This manager indicates that if the clients felt urgency to get a job, then they would no longer have to rely on little government money. This manager viewed client self-sufficiency as a problem in which the client should solve on their own and that requirements should be stricter in order to meet the goals of the program. With this new program the client would be forced to enter the labor market or face no assistance from the state. Efficiency engineers also viewed clients as unmotivated and blamed clients for their own lack of self-sufficiency due to this lack of motivation.

These managers cited a “Pay after Performance (PAP)” program which requires that individuals work before receiving assistance. Managers said “The ‘pay after performance’ I would definitely do! It’s coming, I’ve already read a draft or two about it (County 56) and “‘pay after performance’—this is being discussed in the general assembly at this time” (County 76). These managers emphasized that requirements should be met before assistance is given to clients. Other efficiency engineers discussed the ways in which the pay-after-performance would simulate a ‘real world’ working environment when it comes to giving benefits. One manager says “I’d like to see pay for
performance. Have them do the work first then get a check” (County 23); while another was very adamant about doing the pay-after-performance program in order to meet participation rates:

Interviewer: If you could design a completely new program to serve the poor, what would it look like?
Respondent: We need to do away with giving people a check in the first 30 days without doing anything. We can’t reach our 50 percent goal with giving money away to people without making them work first. Redesign the Pay After Performance (PAP) program. A girl came in complaining about being in the PAP program and not getting a check without going to work. Well, neither do I (County 1).

These quotes show that efficiency engineers emphasized meeting work participation requirements before the clients could receive their benefits. To these managers it would simulate a ‘real world’ working experience, like the ones that the managers themselves go through. It would also assist managers in meeting the participation rates that are set by the government.

When asked about creating a new program, conflicted managers would create more programs to help clients, but also increase requirements to make sure that clients actually ‘need’ assistance. Five conflicted managers (20.80%) indicated that they would increase education and four managers (16.60%) said they would like to change the requirements. However, seven managers (29.20%) indicated that they wanted the program to have more personal responsibility on behalf of the client as well (See Table 3 and Figure 4 in Appendix).

Unlike the efficiency engineers who focused on meeting benchmarks, or social work managers who focused on education and training, these managers tend to focus on
both aspects of changing the program. This brings in the idea of the deserving and non-deserving clients. Deserving clients are those that will follow the program and attain self-sufficiency while non-deserving clients are the individuals who do not want to follow the program or attain self-sufficiency in the eyes of the manager. Conflicted managers focused on deserving and non-deserving clients in the ways that they discussed about them and talked about clients more harshly than social work managers or efficiency engineers. For example a manager from County 12 would design a program that helps all people and would not be based on families with children but the people that get assistance would have to be in need of help, or deserving, because the new program would not be a hand out. While this manager would create a program to help everyone, the individuals would have to be seen as ‘deserving’ which is not defined by the conflicted manager. This stressed that the conflicted manager wanted to help only the individuals that deserved help and wanted to help themselves:

Interviewer: If you could design a completely new program to serve the poor, what would it look like?
Respondent: A lot of things have come into my mind over the years. When you have young mothers that have 3 and 4 children and we’re paying so much money in daycare so that they can work at Hardee’s for minimum wage. I don’t know about redesigning the whole system, but one policy would be—that we could not count people’s SSI. We count every other source of income. The government says that based on the needs of a family of 3, they should be able to live off of $544, so if they make $545, then they’re not eligible because they’re 1 dollar over…I’ve been here 21 years. They got an increase of $1 on AFDC. They had not received an increase in over 20 years. That needs to change. The way the system works is that they can be on for 24 months and then they have to be off the system for 3 years. Then there’s a 60-month lifetime limit… Also, if when they apply they don’t have at least a 12th grade education, that it be mandatory to get a GED within the first 6 months. A lot of them say they can’t get a job without a high school education…(County 15).
This manager indicated that they did not want to redesign the entire system but that changes should be made to the current one, like increasing the dollar amount of the benefits, redesigning the eligibility requirements to get aid, and discontinue counting Social Security Income (SSI). However, this manager also discussed about the amount of money that was being paid out to the daycare centers so that mothers could work for minimum wage, which indicated that although these mothers are working, they are not self-sufficient and the state still has to pay for things like daycare. Although these mothers were deserving because they are working, this manager does not believe that these mothers deserved to have their expensive daycare paid for by the state when they were just working minimum wage—which made them undeserving recipients. This manager also indicated that they would attach an education requirement, because the clients need a high school education or equivalent to attain employment. If they do not complete the GED process then they are deemed undeserving of help, but if they do complete it, then they are deserving of help because the GED will assist clients in finding employment to get them off the rolls.

While the majority of conflicted managers spoke harshly about their clients, these managers also acknowledged that there were challenges/barriers to client self-sufficiency outside of the control of the client but also believed that clients should be held accountable for their self-sufficiency no matter the challenges/barriers. One conflicted manager says:

Interviewer: If you could design a completely new program to serve the poor, what would it look like?
Respondent: I would allow more time—more one to one with participants. I would relieve some hourly requirements. More individual planning…People should work and be held accountable, but a lack of resources makes it hard. All people are lumped under one category, with no consideration given to individual situations…can’t do what [county] can do, don’t have the growth, or transportation. Things have to change (County 87).

This manager acknowledges the barriers that are not a fault of the individual clients that make it difficult to achieve self-sufficiency. However, this manager also believed that clients should be held responsible for achieving the self-sufficiency goal. The role of the program is to help clients help themselves. While these managers are sympathetic and realizes that individuals are different, there is still a conflict between what needs to change in the county to assist in self-sufficiency and the indication that clients should work and be held accountable for their own self-sufficiency. This is similar to the challenges and barriers questions. The conflicted managers demonstrate aspects of not only the social work managers but the efficiency engineers. This means that they demonstrate knowledge of problems with the program, but also holds individuals accountable for their lack of self-sufficiency.
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In our current welfare-to-work system, the self-sufficiency ideology means clients acquire any employment to assist them in making more money than they did before assistance (Lens 2002). In other words the goal is not to get individuals out of poverty, but to get them off the “rolls” and into low-wage work (Daughtery and Barber 2001). Efficiency engineers and conflicted manager readily adopt this ideology of getting recipients into the work force, no matter the consequence. However, social work managers realize that working a minimum wage job is not going to make recipients self-sufficient. Efficiency engineers and conflicted managers prioritize the short-term aspects of recipients gaining employment while social work managers seem to be focused on the long term goals of clients gaining self-sufficiency. In this section I will discuss the key findings of this research while connecting it to the relevant literature. I conclude by offering my contributions to the literature and discussing policy implications of this research.

Consistent with Watkins-Hayes (2009) work, the social work oriented managers in this study take a more holistic approach to their duties. For instance they go against the current rhetoric of TANF implementation that clients should get ‘any job’ to support their families (Hays 2003; Ridzi 2009). These managers realize that clients cannot be independent of structural constraints such as an economic downturn. While some of these managers do mention individuals level barriers such as education or lack of
job history, they couple these individual barriers with structural constraints. So while the clients may have personal lack of self-sufficiency is a consequence of limited opportunities for social mobility.

The efficiency engineers in North Carolina stress individual level barriers that are to blame for clients’ lack of self-sufficiency. These managers view reaching participation rates as the only measure of client success in the program (Watkins-Hayes 2009; Taylor and Seale 2011). These managers “buy in” to the rational, efficient, and neutral practices of the bureaucratic structure (Merton 1940; Blau 1960; Watkins-Hayes 2009), therefore they are the managers closest to Merton’s (1940) bureaucratic personality. Efficiency engineers suggest that compliance with organizational goals (Blau and Meyer [1956] 1971; Perrow 1961) is the way to make clients self-sufficient. Clients who do not comply with organizational standards, are viewed by these managers as barriers to their own self-sufficiency (Gilens 1999; Rogers-Dillon and Skrentny 1999).

The conflicted managers in the sample show aspects of both the social work and efficiency engineer identity (Watkins-Hayes 2009; Taylor and Seale 2012). These managers contradict the ways in which they discuss challenges and barriers to client self-sufficiency (Taylor and Seale 2012). Conflicted managers are aware of structural and bureaucratic barriers to self-sufficiency but still hold clients responsible for their lack of self-sufficiency and do not buy in to the bureaucratic system of casework (Watkins-Hayes 2009; Taylor and Seale 2012). These managers face the most ambiguity in their professional careers because they walk the line of assisting clients and meeting benchmarks to keep the TANF program funded, therefore, being both social workers and
individuals engaged in social control of clients (Lipsky 1980; Taylor and Seale 2012). Watkins-Hayes (2009) indicates that conflicts between agency guidelines and case work create the disparities that shape the outcomes of clients.

When these managers were asked about designing a new program to serve their clients, the social work oriented managers, in line with Watkins-Hayes (2009) said that they would increase programs to assist clients in attaining the goal of paid employment so that they no longer rely on public assistance. Conflicted managers also said that they would increase programs as well, but the main focus of social work and conflicted managers is to increase programs so that clients attain paid employment. Conflicted managers also focused on the deservingness of clients (Hays 2003; Ridzi 2009; Rogers-Dillon 2011). Deserving clients would be the individuals who would have access to the new programs and the undeserving clients would still be penalized for not becoming self-sufficient.

Efficiency engineers, going along with Watkins-Hayes, suggested that requirements should be harsher for those individuals who do not meet the work requirements. They believe that these individuals are not trying hard enough to become self-sufficient, and therefore they need to be penalized for noncompliance. Many of the efficiency engineers cited that they would have the program become “Pay after Performance (PAP)”, simulating a ‘real world’ working environment (see Piven and Cloward 1993 and Ridzi 2009). In this type of program, the clients would work before they were given benefits, instead of the way the program is set up, where they receive benefits when they apply and then are required to participate in a work activity. The
managers’ focus on meeting benchmarks has resulted in their desire for a program where requirements are met before assistance is given to clients.

My research findings are consistent with other research examining managers’ influence on welfare-to-work programs (Watkins-Hayes 2009; Seale et al. 2012; Taylor and Seale 2012). Focusing on managers’ perceptions of challenges and barriers to self-sufficiency is important when looking at welfare-to-work programs. These perceptions of challenges and barriers to self-sufficiency affect service implementation in the welfare-to-work program. However, the data do not allow me to establish causality and my focus of this project was to look at perceptions of program challenges, barriers, and the ways in which they would change the program. The data is also only specific to the program in North Carolina, and therefore not generalizable to other states’ county agencies.

Another limitation to the study is that the study cannot be replicated. In October 2009, very shortly after this study was completed, North Carolina converted to the ‘pay after performance’ model in their state, calling the new program “Work First Benefits (WFB)” (North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services: 36). According to the North Carolina DSS website (http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dss/workfirst/index.htm#plan) and the “2010-2013 Work First State Plan” clients must now work an entire month before they receive their cash benefits. If they fail to meet their participation requirements or any other requirement that is in their “Mutual Responsibility Agreement (MRA)” (North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services: 36) they are sanctioned their cash benefits for that month, with the worst sanction being a closure of their case and reapplication for benefits. There is still a 24 month limit for benefits, just like the old
Work First program. Work First Benefits are designed so that the state meets participation rates, and sanctions noncompliant clients. The benefits for a family of three have not changed, and it is still only $272 as compared to the national average of $442 which deters eligible participants for applying for benefits and the participation requirements are difficult for this population to reach, further deterring clients from applying for benefits since assistance is not given to recipients until their work requirements are completed. Research needs to be conducted in states like North Carolina where pay-after-performance programs are in place affect the number of recipients that actually take part in the Work First program.

My research adds to Watkins-Hayes in a few ways. I look at how the manager identity affects the manager’s perception of the challenges and barriers of their program. Second, while I am looking at manager’s perceptions, I am also applying Watkins-Hayes’ theory to managers instead of caseworkers. Managers are not only affected by the bureaucracy, but they also affect how the bureaucracy operates and how services are implemented because of their administrative duties and proximity to the front lines of casework (Lipsky 1980; Riccucci et al. 2004; Riccucci 2005; Watkins-Hayes 2011). Finally, by examining managers, I examine the role and goal ambiguity because of their place within the bureaucratic structure (Riccucci 2005).

This research has policy implications as well. Since we are able to see that manager types affect the perception of challenges and barriers in different agencies, we need to look at the ways in which the program is structured within and between agencies so that clients are given equal chances for success. Also, the goal of self-sufficiency in
the welfare-to-work program needs to be re-defined and goals need to be made clearer to managers working within the bureaucratic structure so that they may assist clients more effectively.
References


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http://anfdata.urban.ord/wrd/databook.cfm


*Sociological Focus*


Appendix
(Tables and Graphs)
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Figure 2. Bar Chart for Challenges Perceived by Program Manager

Figure 3. Bar chart of Barriers by Program Manager Identity
Table 2 Types of Barriers by Program Manager Identity

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<td><strong>Bureaucratic % Total</strong></td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>57.10%</td>
<td>14.30%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Manager N</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual % Total</strong></td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Manager N</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structural/Bureaucratic % Total</strong></td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1.70%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Manager N</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structural/Individual % Total</strong></td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>5.20%</td>
<td>31.50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>% Manager N</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual/Bureaucratic % Total</strong></td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Manager N</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>All Three % Total</strong></td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>33%</td>
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<tr>
<td>% Manager N</td>
<td>3%</td>
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Data derived from 2008-09 NC phone survey
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Social Worker</th>
<th>Efficiency Engineer</th>
<th>Conflicted</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>34.40%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>20.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>25.80%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
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<td>Change Requirement</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>17.20%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>16.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stricter Requirements</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0%</td>
<td>16.60%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay-After-Performance</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td></td>
<td>12.06%</td>
<td>22.20%</td>
<td>8.30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal Responsibility</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>3.40%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>29.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response/Missing</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>24.10%</td>
<td>22.20%</td>
<td>33.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=100</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data derived from NC phone surveys.
*If number in the column does not add up to the number of individuals this is because if a manager mentioned two themes, they were counted twice.
Figure 4 Changes to Program by Manager Identity

- Education
- Training
- Change Requirements
- Personal Responsibility
- No Response/Missing

Bar chart showing changes to program by manager identity.