

GEORGIA WELFARE EXPERIENCES

by

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(Under the Direction of Corey W. Johnson)

ABSTRACT

Employing the methodology of Foucault's genealogy and the method of focus groups, this qualitative, manuscript-based dissertation provides an in-depth exploration of welfare in the United States and Georgia. The first manuscript examined the contingencies and historical eruptions that gave rise to welfare systems today. Beginning with the Equal Opportunity Act of 1964 and ending with the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, the genealogy reveals historical contingencies that created and maintain today's welfare policies. The second manuscript builds on the first as it explores how women who receive welfare navigate the processes in place and manage the perceptions of welfare. Women who receive welfare and/or housing in Georgia discussed their welfare experiences in relation to their leisure experience. Data analysis is presented through the narrative of Sharise, a composite character constructed with transcripts, fieldnotes, and observation. Sharise described her experiences receiving welfare and it was found that the White, middle class conceptualizations of leisure employed by leisure scholars do not address or describe the leisure experiences of women who receive welfare. Implications include a call for continued and more in-depth research concerning class and leisure.

INDEX WORDS: welfare, genealogy, leisure, class, gender, race, Foucault, Bourdieu

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Always and Forever.

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Thank you to those who laughed, cried, and supported me on this journey. I will never be able to express what your love has meant to me.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Demonizing welfare mothers, labeling their values and behavior as deviant and therefore distinct from American “mainstream” is an understandable cultural phenomenon in that it implicitly allows us to wash our hands of this population. It is to claim that their values, beliefs, and practices bear no relation to our own. The problems they face are therefore not our responsibility. After all, if we can say that all the difficulties they encounter are simply a result of their bad behavior and immorality then we don’t have to look their way, or see their lives. The fact that the welfare system has been judged by some to be inadequate, even harsh, is similarly washed clean by the implicit claim that the people it serves are hardly worth our time and attention. And, if all the social problems faced by welfare mothers are confined to this group, then we don’t have to reexamine our culture, or the structure of our economic and political systems. (Hays, 2003, p. 122-123)

The strong class and socioeconomic lines that separate the poor from the rest of American society reflects the value systems of the upper classes and those who desire to emulate the upper classes in America. Welfare, discussed here as a cash and housing benefit system, is a means-tested program (financial assistance to cover basic needs) available to able-bodied, working-age adults (Gilens, 1999) who meet specific federal and state criteria. Recipients of welfare are considered to be employable (otherwise they would be collecting disability), so welfare is often viewed by mainstream America as a crutch to support women and their children whose income is less than half of the federal definition for poverty (Hays, 2003). The media

images found on television and movies demonize welfare recipients as lazy women who take advantage of the “free money” provided by the government often reinforce this view.

Welfare programs, and subsequently welfare reform, reflect the current values and political undercurrents of the period (Piven & Cloward, 1993). The values of the time period are taught to the poor through federal welfare programs and then reinforced by applying disciplinary standards to the receipt of cash aid. Hays (2003) believed that the granting and withdrawing of cash benefits based on behavior standards results in a form of social control that disciplines recipients into certain, desired behaviors. This implicit type of social control operates to support and maintain specific values and discourses around welfare that are primarily middle class and White. A greater understanding of these discourses aids in revealing the institutional power of welfare programs and the ways in which welfare is used as a behavioral modification tool by the federal government and those who run welfare programs. It also helps us to understand how welfare women have been essentialized into the image of “welfare queens.”

The Research Problem

The goal of welfare programming is simply to reduce the number of welfare recipients which therefore implies the reduction or elimination of the current welfare program in the United States. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act (PRWORA) of 1996, can be considered a successful program as it has significantly reduced the number of people receiving aid. In 1996 there were 12.2 million welfare recipients in the United States. In five years that number declined to 5.3 million recipients as a direct result of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) policies (Hays, 2003), the state level program created to support the PRWORA. Despite the reduction in the number of welfare recipients, Alzate (2005) found in her study of Georgia TANF recipients that women on welfare have a lower quality of life than non-

recipients. However, TANF policymakers are not concerned with quality of life, only a reduction in federal funds spent on the unemployed poor. The definition of success comes into question here. Removing a person from the welfare rolls is a success only if that person can support themselves and their family financially and maintain a standard of living above the poverty line.

The goals of TANF operate to mold recipients into “model citizens” (Georgia Department of Human Resources Office of Communication, 2003) who do not require government aid. The placing of White, middle class values on the poor limits quality of life, identity development, and reinforces cultural meanings of work. The interpretation of other people’s needs by the state is a political determination that positions women as subjects within this welfare programs (Fraser, 1989). Underlying norms and assumptions are “processes by which welfare practices construct women and women’s needs according to certain specific and in principle contestable interpretations” (Fraser & Nicholson, 1990, p. 106). Women are collectively identified as part of a welfare system, as welfare mothers, who are passive recipients of services (Fraser, 1989). However, regardless of public perception, women are not passive recipients of services. We know that welfare recipients are compelled to have an active role in applying for and maintaining aid. The public perception of passivity is maintained in our cultural discourse regardless of the lived experience of women who receive welfare.

Welfare programs operate as vehicles of social control. Welfare recipients are denied social citizenship because they are cast as members of failed families, excluded from the market as both a worker and consumer, and are required to participate in a program that defines them only in their role as a mother (Fraser, 1989). Government programs require that women must strive to be normative mothers, but does not provide them with the tools necessary to reach this ideal. Mothers are expected to provide care for their children, limit the number of children they

have, work a job, find a male figure to participate in their daily life, and work towards attaining an education. These goals are all reflective of what it means to be a successful woman and mother from a White, middle class viewpoint. Transportation, day care, education, and cash benefits are minimal and do not meet the needs of the family. TANF programs today advise women to invite a male breadwinner into their family in order to become a “normal” family. The reinforcement of traditional family values can result in violence for women as women may return to violent relationships in an effort to support themselves and their children (Polakow, 1999). The consequences that result from attempts to maintain traditional values are often great for women and their children. The structure of the welfare system (now TANF) supports an “ideal” family comprised of two parents, a middle class income, and an emphasis on education. While useful to many families, this structure does not reflect the life situation of many Americans.

The popular discourses surrounding women and welfare does not reflect the lived experience of diverse women receiving welfare. In order to deconstruct discourses such as laziness and unworthiness that welfare recipients must negotiate, we need further exploration into the discourses and experiences around women and welfare. Discourses around welfare operate to mold the unemployed, lazy mother into a model citizen and a close look at how the power in discourse operates to control the welfare recipient is warranted.

Research Questions

Both welfare and leisure experiences are deeply imbedded with race and class influences. Race and class status helps to define the experience of welfare and leisure. Therefore, considering race and class when exploring questions around welfare and leisure allows for greater understandings, not only of individual meaning of leisure, but also of the institutions, such as welfare, that employ leisure to maintain systemic power throughout society. Greater

understandings around the way that leisure is used to maintain and support the interests of powerful groups allows us to move one step closer to minimizing the marginalization of other groups. Working towards a common understanding of leisure, as researchers have done in the past (Kivel, 2000), is no longer appropriate. Leisure research on the topic of gender has made strides in addressing individual differences found in society, but has done little to address societal issues and influence change (Parry, 2003). Work must now address the ways that institutional use of social categorization manipulates leisure for marginalizing purposes and also focus on practical change that reduces marginalization.

One's identity is a function of social and cultural influences found in society (Fry, 1996). Many middle class, voting Americans have the perception that those on welfare do not work hard and have essentialized women who receive welfare as "welfare queens." The lives of welfare recipients may not reflect mainstream American values. Family structure looks different than that of the middle class and welfare programs seek to mold the poor into the middle class vision of prosperity. To that end, this research project seeks to explore the following questions:

1. What are the multiple and complex discourses in operation regarding public welfare systems in the United States?
2. How do women who participate in welfare programs in Georgia navigate the processes in place and manage perceptions surrounding welfare?

As a manuscript style dissertation, each question will be addressed with one article. The first article addresses the first question and, following the example of Foucault, is a genealogy of welfare in the United States since Civil Rights. The genealogy explores the beginning of the "war on welfare" with Johnson's Equal Opportunity Act of 1964 and then end of the "war on welfare" with Clinton's 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act.

The second article explores today's welfare experience of women in Georgia and directly addresses research question two. It describes both the welfare experience as reported by study participants and also analyzes how welfare recipients managed the perceptions of others. In addition, it discusses the ways that leisure is conceptualized and experienced by the participants.

Literature Review

In this section, I will outline the theoretical perspectives tied to this research project, including critical theory, feminism, and Foucauldian influences; provide a review of literature on socio-economic class and motherhood from the leisure literature; and detail the history of welfare in the United States, the Deep South, and Georgia.

Theoretical Framework

When exploring complex topics such as welfare, it becomes necessary to draw from a variety of theoretical perspectives and subject areas. Welfare recipients are primarily women who are mothers and who most often belong to non-White racial groups (Gilens, 1999). They are also living well below the poverty line and are living lives that are not reflected in typical American culture. To that end, I incorporate the use of both critical and feminist theories when discussing this topic, as well as focus on the theorizations and methodological aspirations of Foucault.

Critical Theory

The goal of the work of a critical theorist is to create social change and to strive for emancipation (Gannon & Davis, 2007), which makes it an useful tool for learning about welfare. "Critical social theorists look critically at social arrangements from the point of view of the obstacles they pose to human flourishing" (Cooke, 2005, p. 379). They then turn their attention to removing these obstacles to human advancement. Critical theorists believed that radical social

change should come from the most disenfranchised groups, from those most in opposition to the established social order (Calhoun, 1996). Critical theorists sought to "...to generate knowledge in ways that turn critical thought into emancipatory action" (Lather, 1991, p. 109). Researchers were asked to "discard false consciousness, open themselves (researchers, participants, both), and take effective action for change" (Crotty, 2003, p. 157). Once social justice takes place, it is expected to lead to more critique and results in a cyclical ongoing process of analysis, social change, and further analysis and change. Critical theorists found that there are varieties of oppressions, and of the many groups that are oppressed; some of these groups accept their oppressed position. Horkheimer said that theory needs to create change, practice and service, and "...brings together philosophical construct and empirical detail" (Crotty, 2003, p. 131). Critical theorists believed actual change is possible and achievable. Change occurs when the dominant group is overturned and freedom from oppression is achieved (Gannon & Davies, 2007).

Critical theory was initially developed in Germany during the late 1920s and early 1930s as part of what came to be known as the Frankfurt School of Social Research (Gannon & Davies, 2007). Original members of the Frankfurt School included scholars and philosophers from a variety of disciplines (Crotty, 2003), working together to explore the boundaries of reason and truth (Calhoun, 1996). Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse, Lowenthal, and others were searching for a theory that required a cultural understanding of the world in addition to so-called empirical research (Calhoun, 1996). This cultural understanding is of particular importance when researching welfare since the ways in which welfare is viewed by the American public impacts how the policies are legislated. Early critical theorists sought to reject fascism and wanted to

utilize philosophy in conjunction with “empirical” research. These critical theorists were the first to bring history and context into social research (Gannon & Davies, 2007).

The early critical theorists believed that meaning is constructed, determined by society and representative of power. According to Crotty, (2003) power, in turn, needs oppression and marginalization in order to operate and, as such, critical theorists sought to question current, accepted ideology and to create social justice for oppressed groups. These critical theorists were concerned with the universal acceptance of current ideology and offered critical theory as an alternative to the “empirical,” unquestioning work they saw developed by other scholars. Horkheimer believed that current theory was not practical and critical theory was developed to weave philosophical thinking with practical implications, hence the call for social change (Walentowicz, 2006).

As meaning is constructed, it occurs in a specific time and place and as part of a specific culture. Culture “directs our behavior and organizes [sic] our experiences” (Crotty, 2003, p. 53). Habermas believed that knowledge must be centered in the time and place it was created (Calhoun, 1996). It is not possible to isolate facts; they have values, meaning, and ideology attached to them (Crotty, 2003). To accept something as fact without analyzing and exploring its historical connotations, the origin of the fact, the structure that benefits from the fact and its impact on both the individual and society, contradicts the goals of critical theorists. Objectivity is not possible for critical theorists (Gannon & Davies, 2007). “Critical theorists hold that there is no end to ideology, no part of culture where ideology does not permeate” (Lather, 1991, p. 109). Culture also reinforces oppression and therefore should be considered a site for scholarly investigation. Lived experience is simply a reflection of dominant culture; scholars must question the culture itself and its impact on the lived experience (Crotty, 2003).

Critical theorists also introduced the concept of non-identity. Society is made up of various levels of contradictions and differences that leave some individuals with a non-identity as part of the larger society. Humans develop based on social arrangements that are not natural and normative assumptions are responsible for constructing the identities and institutions of our society (Cooke, 2005). The inter-social relations that comprise the individual further this sense of non-identity. The society or culture as a whole has an identity, but the individuals that make up the greater society have no identity, hence the term non-identity. Adorno believed that the self is based in society and society prevented the individual from emerging. Critical theorists analyzed Marxism in order to further this understanding. The theorists believed that relationships moved from, with, and among humans to inhuman relationships in which people become commodities. The continued commodification of humans only enhanced the idea of non-identity as humans were reduced to material objects only capable of generating wage labor (Calhoun, 1996). The lack of wage labor produced by welfare recipients often calls into question the worthiness of the welfare recipient and leads to discourse such as laziness and a continued lack of identity as society does not consider welfare recipients to be contributing members of society. Relationships between people and structure motivated production and consumption (Crotty, 2003). Early critical theorists sought to overturn producers of power, who implied that power is maintained in a hierarchal manner and is not present in varying forms across time and place (Gannon & Davies, 2007).

The analysis of bureaucratic agencies was also important to critical theorists. Total bureaucracies, such as welfare programs, were of concern due to the power held by these agencies (Calhoun, 1996). The role of bureaucracies in society and the cultural categories

created by these bureaucracies were soundly rejected by critical theorists (Gannon & Davies, 2007).

Habermas believed that society is conceptualized by both the lifeworld and the system. The lifeworld is comprised of actors who use negotiated meaning to make sense of the world and is the backbone of civil society. The system is comprised of institutions that work to solve the social problems of advanced capitalism through the use of science, power, and capital. In opposition to other scholars at the time, he also believed that modern technology was not prepared to solve social problems. As such, Habermas advocated for communicative action (Houston & Campbell, 2001). Communicative action is the critical investigation of cultural traditions using tactics of deliberation and remembering that social relationships are coordinated by legal, political, moral norms. Humans therefore become reflexive subjects and autonomous agents (Cooke, 2005). The use of communicative action allowed for analysis of bureaucratic entities and revealed how power operated at the structural level.

Critical theory is a useful tool for exploring the lives of women who receive welfare as it allows for the exploration of both the institution of welfare and the lived experiences of those who receive welfare. Critical theory also allows for social justice change to occur and to provide a critical analysis of culture.

Feminist Theory

Feminists are concerned with freedom from oppression, which is especially important when considering welfare recipients. Similar to critical theorists goal of societal change, feminist theorists attempt to create spaces for women to exist independently of men, as a separate subject, and not to be described in relation to men (de Beauvoir, 1997). In the words of Lather (1991), feminist research puts “the social construction of gender at the center of one’s inquiry”

(p. 71). Gender is the “organizing principle” (Lather, 1991, p. 71) that shapes the lives of women in relation to power and privilege. Feminist provided the theoretical framework for critical analysis around the power that influences their daily lives. As feminism seeks to “develop new paradigms of social criticism which do not rely on traditional philosophical underpinnings” (Fraser & Nicholson, 1990, p. 19), it is especially relevant to the welfare experience. Feminist research allows us to examine intersecting or interacting social relationships from a gendered perspective.

The actual method used does not determine if research is feminist, but instead how that specific method is employed (Sprague, 2005). As Aitchison (2003) stated, “Feminism is an applied field of study and instrumental to political activism, decision-making, policy-making, planning and management. It is also an academic field of inquiry that seeks to increase knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of gender-power relations” (p. 12-13). The interdisciplinary nature of feminism allows scholars to explore a variety of topics from a woman-centered approach.

Critical Feminist Theory

Building on the tenants of critical theory and incorporating feminist theory, critical feminist theory provides space for scholars to further address institutional and structural issues within society such as welfare. There are several similarities between feminist theory and critical theory that must be understood when designing a critical feminist research project. Both theoretical perspectives seek to create change to emancipate oppressed groups and question power in a cultural context. However, feminists have made several criticisms against critical theory. These criticisms include a lack of gender analysis by early critical theorists, women’s

role (or lack thereof) in non-identity, nature, and patriarchy as described by critical theorists (or as ignored by critical theorists), and how the implications of emancipation are applied.

The largest and most vocal criticism of critical theory by feminists is the lack of gender analysis throughout critical theory. Often the main culprit discussed is Habermas, who did not include gender themes in his analysis of power. In addition, he neglected to explore the ways in which men obtained power and focused on how men alone had potential for freedom from the ideologies of the state (Marasco, 2006). As Habermas did not discuss gender subtexts behind workers and consumers, feminists therefore considered his work lacking in that he did not fully understand how capitalism is linked to the modern nuclear family. Feminists have been adamant about the inclusion of the role of women in the home in analyses of institutional structure and its requirement for gender roles in order to operate, regardless of the unawareness of these roles by prominent critical theorists (Fraser, 1985). For example, welfare programs structure the family in a particular manner, which specifically assigns gender roles based on sex.

The next concept critiqued by feminists is the concept of non-identity. Participation in society erases the individual, resulting in non-identity as an individual entity according to critical theorists. People exist to maintain capitalistic, hegemonic structures. Women's role (or lack of role), according to feminist critics, was that women have an even greater non-identity than men. And, since they have a lesser role in society, women have no way to push back against domination or oppression (Marasco, 2006). If one's role in society was not acknowledged, how could one operate to change this role, feminists asked. Therefore, feminists argued that women were not subjects of emancipation for critical theorists; they simply embodied non-identity. Women were part of civilization as Marasco said "through submission to male dominance" (2006, p. 90) and as beings of non-identity could not be released from oppression. This idea runs

contrary to the thinking of many feminists, who believe that women are able to break free of oppression and claim an identity of their own.

For early critical theorists, nature and women were closely associated. Marasco (2006) explained that critical theorists believed that men were determined to have mastery over nature, as part of reason, and the natural qualities attributed to women, such as passion, desire, and deception, corrupted the use of reason. Women should therefore be kept out of the public arena in order for man to employ reason and dominate nature. The goals of the Enlightenment included the attempt to move civilization away from nature and towards reason. All the same, Horkheimer and Adorno believed that myth played a large role in Enlightenment reason and that myth also encompassed science, culture, and morality. As both nature and women are unknown and therefore feared by reasonable man, man then attempts to domesticate both (Marasco, 2006). The move away from the natural world and the use of myths helped men to dominate and subordinate woman, while using logic and reason to reinforce this domination. Patriarchal family structure only encouraged the attempts of man to tame women and the subordination of women found in patriarchal family structure perpetuates man's desire to dominate nature. If one can control women, then they can control nature, since women and nature are synonymous. Man's desire to dominate over that which he does not understand (nature) translated into a continued oppression of women in the home, through the use of patriarchy.

Critical theorists took on a Marxist-Freudian analysis of conformity and consent when discussing patriarchy (Marasco, 2006). Horkheimer attributed women's oppression within the home to patriarchal property issues and masculine strength. Yet, this oppression is not analyzed by early critical theorists and, according to Marasco, woman is "merely conquered and remains outside the dialectic of history" (2006, p. 99). In addition, early critical theorists used both a

historical and essentialist view of gender. Analysis of patriarchal structure by Marcuse resulted in the recognition of the father as the authority in the patriarchal family, and the child, in turn, rebels against his father. Yet, in his analysis, Marcuse did not discuss the role of the mother within the scope of the father losing his authority (Marasco, 2006). The complete absence of the mother in this analysis of family structure is one reason that feminists do not view traditional critical theory as being useful in their own analysis of gender.

Marasco (2006) believed that Horkheimer's view of the family was fictitious, in that it ignored the violence and subjection that occurs in the family structure. However, this fiction was needed in order for the state to maintain its power. Horkheimer held women responsible for the collapse of the family and, in a move away from critical theorists' goal of examining social causes for cultural shifts, determined that the individual was responsible for the destruction of the family. The family's collapse was therefore rooted in women's desire to participate in wage labor. Critical theorists, in direct opposition to feminist scholars, criticized women's movement out of the sphere of the home into the public sphere. Habermas restricted power to bureaucratic organizations and overlooked the role and employment of power in the family structure. This separation also ignored the household as a site of labor. Also, upon employment, women most often occupy feminine, service-oriented positions. The maintenance of stereotypical women's jobs only resulted in the continued oppression of women in both the home and workplace.

Similar to the arguments presented by feminists that critical theorists ignored women's role in the family structure, feminists also argued that women's role in capitalism was ignored by critical theorists. Horkheimer believed that when a woman participated in wage labor, she then believed that she will become emancipated, but in actuality she becomes more and more like a man as she abandons domestic life and sisterly love (Marasco, 2006). Adorno believed that the

woman was trading one form of subjection for another. She has given up her position in the family as the “guardian of family life” (Marasco, 2006, p. 105) for a subjugated position in the business world, where she is still viewed as an object. And yet she still served a purpose for the critical theorists, who as Marasco stated, believed that women in the workplace “... always already affirm or negate the hegemonic discourses of the feminine” (2006, p. 111). Also, critical theorists employ a “generic feminine” and “...woman appears to be nothing more and nothing less than the way she has been seen through the lenses of male dominance” (Marasco, 2006, p. 108). Often overlooked is the idea that women are the primary consumers, as they purchase goods and services for the family. Critical theorists did not analyze women’s role as a purchaser and as one who maintained capitalism.

Feminists have launched several attacks against critical theorists, especially in the early development of critical theory. Despite that, upon analysis, it seemed as if the major strike against critical theorists was their lack of discussion of women. Considering the time period in which critical theory developed, this was not surprising. Women’s suffrage was only beginning to take hold in both Germany and the U.S. as critical theorists began to develop their ideas. However, the concern with a cultural understanding of power allowed critical and feminist theory to complement each other when considering complex topics such as welfare.

One theorist who has added to both critical and feminist theory and employed the concepts of discourse, ideology, and hegemony to great extent was Michel Foucault. His method of genealogy is applicable to the greater understanding of welfare programs.

A Foucauldian Influence

Foucault (1995) developed and used the method known as genealogy as a critical method to analyze a history of the present to reveal how accepted truths have become natural. History is

used in this method “as a way of *diagnosing* the present” (Kendall & Wickham, 1999, p. 4) and helps us understand the discourse around institutions, and in this case the relationship between welfare, work and leisure. Foucault believed many of our historical advances came about based on accidents (Kendall & Wickham, 1999) and he used the method of genealogy to explore these historical accidents, also known as contingencies, in an effort to reveal systems of power active in society. Foucault recognized that historical accidents are partnered with beginnings and these beginning should be revealed, not as origins, but as one of many “numberless beginnings” (1971, p. 81). Contingencies are different from causes and do not create a linear progression of history. History is not linear and does not always occur as a positive progression. Instead of revealing a cause and effect type relationship, contingencies help us to see how systems are different from one another, not better or worse (Kendall & Wickham, 1999).

Utilizing this multiple beginnings work simultaneously illustrates how institutional systems such as welfare are based on subtle interconnections that are difficult to unravel. The unraveling of multiple beginnings help genealogists to learn which values are reinforced across time and through policy. “The genealogist, then, forgoes the search for an original identity and essence unmasked; instead, [she] cultivates the disparate details, events, and accidents found at any beginning” (Mahon, 1992, p. 110). Overall, genealogy is a method that allows for a close look at how power and influence operate within the welfare system in relation to race, class, and gender.

Socio-Economic Class, Motherhood & Leisure

In order to continue to lay the foundations for this study, the discussion now turns to the relevant literature around soci-economic class and motherhood. First, the theoretical perspective of Bourdieu is reviewed, then literature on class in general. Next, the discussion turns to leisure

literature that addressed class from a non-dominant viewpoint. Finally, the leisure literature on motherhood and family is reviewed.

Bourdieu, Class, and Leisure

Undoubtedly, meanings of social class are broader than just income and economic disparity, but media images abound that focus on economic disparity. People who live in poverty are often portrayed by media accounts, which then becomes the dominant discourse, as unhappy and being either homeless or criminal (Jones, 2006). But the condition of having limited resources does not necessarily result in unhappiness or criminality. The negative and graphic images of poverty found in the media are not reflective of the actual lived experiences of those who experience poverty. However, there is much to learn from these images. The value-laden images instruct us that lazy, uneducated, unmotivated people end up poor, whereas, those who work hard receive monetary wealth and happiness. The systemic, institutionalized power structures that operate within our society are ignored in these simplistic understandings of class. Only the powerful are served by the maintenance of values that reflect the dominant ideologies of society. Those without power are taught that they, as individuals, must strive to change themselves to become “normal.”

In an effort to address the condition of normalcy that operates in society, Bourdieu investigated the origins of social capital and structure. He was interested in learning how culture and power operate invisibly within society. As “economic power is first and foremost a power to keep economic necessity at arm’s length” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 55), culture plays a large role in determining economic necessity. Differences expressed in consumption are between a taste of luxury, also characterized as freedom, and a taste of necessity. Those that have capital, have the freedom to consume luxuries, while those without capital must consume necessities in order to

survive. But those with economic power create and maintain the necessities at an affordable cost and tastes develop depending on the goods made available. Workers do not have a taste for McDonald's because it is cheap; they have a taste for it because fast food exists in a physical and economic condition that allows for it to be affordable. The workers do not have a choice to eat at McDonald's, the decision is made for them in a capitalistic market that made McDonald's accessible and affordable. The workers then develop a taste for this food and it becomes part of their identity. But the taste the workers developed could just as easily have been for a fresh food restaurant, had those with economic freedom employed the labor force to make fresh food available and affordable (Bourdieu, 1984).

The tastes that develop are also part of social identification and classification. Social class standing has a large impact on how we view the world. Money and material objects are desirable and that those who do not have economic resources are perceived as having some sort of individual flaw that keeps them from being successful. Differences among social groups lead to judgment and discrimination of those who are found lacking economic resources (Jones, 2006). As "people living in poverty are systemically and socially discriminated against because of their material living conditions" (Jones, 2006, p. xv), researchers are challenged to acknowledge their own class values that they may be perpetuating in their research. "We are from more than physical places, however, we are from people, food, objects, language, religion, recreation, institutions – and together these form our beliefs about how the world works" (Jones, 2006, p. 2). Beliefs and values are often promoted as normal and therefore invisible within society. It is important to question these invisible beliefs in order to combat the discrimination perpetuated against those who are deemed not normal, like those on welfare.

Based on Bourdieu's writing, Raey defined class as "encompassing complex social and psychological dispositions that interact with gender and race to inform and influence everyday practice" (1997, p. 226). The influence of everyday practices has large implications for researchers. Class position is deeply internalized and played out in interactions with others (Raey, 1997). When a participant labels themselves as part of a particular social class, they accept the cultural values for that class as reflected in society. These values often include negative connotations internalized by the participant as part of her identity. The internalization of negative connotations also influences how the participant responds to those in her own class and those in other classes and results in class becoming a social filter. The absence of discussions around class asserts the middle class condition as normal and invisible. While researchers must work to avoid marginalizing class when theorizing, they must also acknowledge class in their work. The development of theories that recognize social complexities, not just differences (Raey, 1997) can only work towards greater understandings of everyday practices.

Within leisure research, there are common conceptualizations attached to leisure meanings. For example, work and leisure are often viewed as dichotomous, as leisure generally involves a choice in how to spend one's non-obligated time, is primarily active, and operates to provide us with a healthier lifestyle. This common conceptualization of leisure reflects White, middle class values and ignores the experiences of non-dominant populations. There is an active normalcy that exists when researching leisure topics. Kivel (2000) demonstrated this perpetuation of normalcy in leisure research when she informed us that leisure researchers have spent the last 30 years attempting to find a "common leisure experience." The desire by researchers to find a common experience that binds us together also works to eliminate differences and promote the values of the powerful. However, "realizing that 'common' leisure

experiences are mediated by many different factors, researchers began to broaden their thinking to examine leisure across various markers of identity – race, disability, gender, sexual identity, age and class” (Kivel, 2000, p. 79). Researchers may be reinforcing markers of difference when examining the social categories that make up individual identity (Kivel, 2000). Leisure researchers must now reflect on how their research may operate to reinforce stereotypes of non-dominant groups.

The social psychology approach towards leisure research places the individual and her experience at the center of the research. Kivel (2000) asked if the experiences and identities of an individual are truly her own.

So, to ask individuals to reflect upon their experiences of leisure without understanding how various ideologies have contributed to the construction of their identities and, subsequently, their experiences, fails to recognize the discursive power of language to produce and reproduce differences in identity. (Kivel, 2000, p. 80)

Most often, social categories used to describe research participants are not defined. It is assumed that the reader already knows what it means to be a man or to be middle class or White. The social category is not questioned and universal understanding of this category is assumed. The identity categories have therefore been essentialized by the continued assumption by researchers that they are real. The essentialization of identity categories results in leisure research reinforcing marginalized positions and perpetuates hegemonies of difference. The focus on differences between groups ignores the possibility that differences are created and produced by institutions and throughout cultural ideologies. In order to understand the leisure experience and differences, we must understand how discourse around the various social categories operates in

leisure. Critical exploration of the discourses that remain at the center must take place to understand why the dominant ideology continues to thrive (Kivel, 2000).

Poverty and leisure research. Background information on a few studies that explore leisure, race, and class from the non-dominant perspective is important for framing this study of women and welfare. These studies provide the underpinnings for the construction of this study.

One study that explored leisure, race, and class in a non-traditional manner was conducted by Outley and Floyd (2002). They interviewed 43 children to learn how their parents negotiated poverty in order to provide leisure choices. They concluded that African-Americans with limited resources have developed adaptive parenting strategies to protect their children in urban environments and that parents used kinship networks to supervise children. Children often moved freely between several homes and had many other children to play with, keeping them away from undesirable children. Parents tried to arrange worthwhile activities and keep their children away from deviant activities that could lead to drugs or gang membership (Outley & Floyd, 2002).

Although the authors initially approached this study from a traditional view of family, their results led them to discuss kinship networks. The project moved away from the middle class value of raising children as a nuclear family responsibility, and instead included a more community-oriented approach. This study demonstrated leisure differences within a race and class based structure. The parents in this study made a great effort to protect their children from negative elements in their own neighborhoods. In order to combat the limited social capital available to those in inner cities, Outley and Floyd (2002) recommended that local programs offer services and activities for all members of the family, not just children, in order to increase knowledge of services and access to social capital. However, the belief that local programs can

meet the needs of inner city families should be explored. The research that created and reinforces inner city recreation programming is infused with class values that do not reflect the needs or culture of those they intend to serve.

Adding to the research base on non-traditional class values is Klitzing's (2004) research on women who are homeless and the usefulness of community recreation programs. As people who are homeless are thought to be disaffiliated or unconnected to community or social networks, scholars previously believed that community services, including recreation, can teach socialization skills that the homeless so desperately need. But this belief is value laden (Klitzing, 2004). Therapeutic recreation researchers agreed that social skills training and socialization from a community recreation setting are important for those who are homeless. The homeless, once affiliated with various social networks are therefore no longer socially isolated and then, it is implied, able to care for themselves and somehow no longer be homeless and a burden on society.

Klitzing (2004) questioned whether those who are homeless want to be a part of community recreation programs or if they really need socialization skills and training. Disaffiliation models that are used by researchers to study those who are homeless require that those who are homeless have limited or no social support that stems from childhood. Disaffiliation is considered to contribute to the condition of homelessness. Although past research had indicated that those who are homeless are disaffiliated, Klitzing found that her participants were not disaffiliated and had social support networks of their own, separate from community programs. They did participate in leisure activities, usually involving their children, but did not take advantage of traditional community recreation programming. Klitzing theorized that past researchers looked to traditional types of social activities and since women who are

homeless in this study participated in non-traditional methods of maintaining social ties, the researchers found them to be disaffiliated. Although they provided what is considered non-traditional support, the people in the lives of the study participants still provided emotional support through leisure and community.

At the conclusion of her article, Klitzing (2004) offered practical recommendations such as reconnecting those who are homeless to past members of their social groups, such as family members they no longer speak with, for therapeutic recreation specialists. However, these recommendations address ways that programming can provide socialization, in contrast to her early questions concerning the desire for such programming on the part of the participants. Interacting with others and social skills are talked about as important and valued. The values placed on the development of these specific skills that teach one how to behave appropriately and how to cultivate friendships may not be values held by this group. “Social interaction skills programs can concentrate on making and keeping friends, and strengthening family relationships” (Klitzing, 2004, p. 361). While maintaining relationships is an important part of human life, the specific skills that are being taught may reflect middle class value systems and habits.

Another recommendation concerned reconnecting those who are homeless to former members of their social groups, such as family members with whom they no longer speak. The therapeutic recreation specialist works with both groups to reestablish their lost connection. While this may be helpful in some situations, the reasons that families become estranged may include violence or abuse. For example, one of Klitzing’s study participants no longer speaks with her mother because the mother did not believe her daughter’s accusations of abuse at the hand of her stepfather. The mother chose to side with the stepfather. Reconnection between

mother and daughter, in this case, may not have positive results, especially if the stepfather is still in the picture.

Another article that explored class and gender within the leisure literature is Scott and McCarville's (2008) research on Canadian single mothers living in poverty. Since those who are poor are "constantly challenged to find ways of securing things they want and need" (p. 84), the authors wanted to know more about the challenges of single, poor mothers and the role of leisure in their everyday life. Included in this article is a focus on municipal fee assistance programs.

Subsidized programs operate to offer low fee recreation programming to attract low-income participants. Fees for municipal recreation programs are increasing, meaning that these services are becoming increasingly unavailable to those in poverty. Yet, fee assistance programs also reinforce class values. City officials determined that their programs are desired by all and can serve all of the members of their community. Therefore, they created fee assistance programs in an effort to reach all of their community members. Fee assistance programs require extensive income information and must be returned to City Hall. There was an assumption by city officials that those who would apply for the program could read, gather required documents, and travel to City Hall. The skills required and time needed to complete forms reflected class values.

Scott and McCarville recognized that leisure is a tool that can reduce "some of the more problematic consequences of poverty" (2008, p. 85). And that "leisure is often promoted as essential to the personal and collective well-being of those living in poverty" (Scott & McCarville, 2008, p. 85). Even as class was the main focus of their research, race or education level of participants was not discussed. Ignoring these factors that are wrapped up in class and gender power structures does not illuminate the findings for the authors. Not surprisingly, the

authors found that the participants faced challenges in “arranging for leisure in their lives” (p. 89). The finding of challenges simply reflects an assumption on the part of the researchers as to what leisure should look like. Why does leisure require going somewhere or do something special? Overall, it was found that “leisure suffered as a result of the limited financial resources” (Scott & McCarville, 2008, p. 89). But does leisure really require money to exist? Modern understandings of leisure include much more than paid activities. Even as the authors found that the majority of their participant’s leisure consisted of a walk with their children and renting a movie with friends, the authors seemed to believe that these activities are not “meaningful.”

Leisure service providers are asked to provide the required support so that women living in poverty can have access to comprehensive programs. They strive to meet their clients’ needs, but are they also teaching that everyone’s leisure should look similar? Leisure is an important part of each person’s life and there are many benefits that can be gained from leisure participation, but general recommendations that leisure experiences must come from an agency is dangerous. Homogeneity of leisure experiences attempts to erase differences that contribute to the individual. Determining what activity or experience is best limits individuality. The study participants were found to have control over their current leisure activities and self-regulated their activities (Scott & McCarville, 2008). Yet, how does the addition of community recreation programs impact this control? We must be careful not to assume that all community programs are positive experiences for all participants.

The work presented begins to break new ground within the leisure research, but class assumptions and values are still reinforced. Researchers must work to examine the values they are professing as they conduct their research. They also must stop attempting to separate identifying individual characteristics when studying gender. Class, race, gender, ethnicity,

among other factors, work together as part of a person's identity. Exploring one of these factors, while ignoring another, results in an incomplete picture. In order to fill in the picture, we must also understand more about the role of the mother when considering welfare.

Motherhood and Leisure

Welfare recipients are women who are mothers. The intertwining of their gender and parental status cannot be unwound. Therefore, it is important to consider the literature concerning mothers and leisure. Middle class, two parent, heterosexual families, with minor children make up the traditional family structure and represent the majority of leisure research around the family (Freysinger, 1997). These families typically include a member who is employed full time, is educated, and has some disposable income for recreation. This patriarchal, class based conceptualization of motherhood is reinforced through leisure, as leisure is a place where gender roles are reproduced (Herridge, Shaw, & Mannell, 2003) and this becomes evident when reviewing the literature on motherhood and family leisure. A brief review demonstrates to readers the values that some women express in their role of mother. Children's needs and advancement come first (Davidson, 1996) and it is the responsibility of the mother to maintain family values and to provide for their children and their success.

Leisure operates to reinforce traditional, middle class based values in many ways. For example, the literature illustrates that children need leisure in order to learn about healthy choices (Shaw & Dawson, 2001), to make positive decisions in life (Shannon & Shaw, 2008), and to strengthen family ties. A good mother works hard to provide family leisure opportunities that supports society's image of how a child should be raised. As "the ideologies associated with motherhood are powerful influences on the way women prioritize their use of time" (Brown et al., 2001, p. 140), mothers are found by leisure researchers to put their family's leisure needs

before their own. Mothers make the decisions about how their families will participate in leisure (Shannon & Shaw, 2008) and organize leisure based on the needs of their children and husband (Trussell & Shaw, 2007). However, leisure is also used as a tool to allow mothers to better fulfill their role of mother (Freeman, Palmer, & Baker, 2006).

The idea that leisure is a tool that allows mothers to refresh themselves to be the best possible mother is reinforced by the study conducted by Freeman, Palmer, and Baker (2006). Their study of mothers in Utah who are active in the Mormon Church revealed cultural and religious expectations of motherhood and family. Mormon leaders believed that leisure can strengthen family values and therefore is a valued part of family life. Also, leisure is an important means for mothers to take time for themselves, in order to be a good mother. It was found that mothering is valued, rewarded, and complimentary to leisure in this community. The use of leisure reinforced a specific family structure in this community.

Nonetheless, leisure and family are found to be completing ideologies (Bialeschki & Michener, 1994). Mothers work hard to maintain their role as caregivers to the family. Providing quality family activities is an expected part of this role. Upon becoming a mother “family leisure took priority” (Shannon & Shaw, 2008, p. 11) and women lost their entitlement to leisure. Personal leisure was no longer a main concern of women in this research; the needs of the children came first. Family leisure is purposive leisure and mothers set forth to achieve specific goals when planning activities (Shaw & Dawson, 2001).

Contrary to the literature that reduces mother’s leisure to that of facilitator of their children’s leisure, Bialeschki and Michener (1994) advised future researchers to consider mothers as independent beings when thinking about their leisure. They found in their analysis of their study of mothers in the early phases of the family cycle that mothers are not just the center

of family life; they are also independent partakers of leisure. Still, their participants viewed leisure as a tool for “bringing balance to their lives, of refreshing themselves for more effective functioning within their roles” (p. 69). The priority for participants was to be a good mother who provides for her family and leisure allows for this space.

However, mothers were found to feel guilty when they did choose independent leisure activities over the needs of their family. Although these participants believed that personal leisure was important to their role of mother, they believed that the family unit was more important. Mothers could focus on their own leisure needs once the children had left home and become independent. Bialeschki and Michener (1994) also found that adherence to society’s social construction of motherhood automatically resulted in limited autonomous leisure experiences for mothers. The authors suggested that future research move away from the traditional family structure studied here and would also like researchers to explore the leisure of mothers independent from their family. The utility of this suggestion requires further thought. If mothers were only concerned with preparing their children for future success as adults, would they be willing to discuss their need to experience autonomous leisure? Unless it was framed as a way to prepare women to be better mothers, would middle-class women who participate in a traditional family structure consider this leisure anything but purely selfish?

Assumptions of traditional family values are clearly seen in the hypothesis offered by Larson, Gillman, and Richards (1997) in their study of family leisure. They believed that because fathers worked as the primary breadwinner, they would experience their time with their children as leisure, relaxation, and an expression of freedom. Mothers, on the other hand, would experience less freedom, less enjoyment, and less intrinsic motivation than their husbands during family leisure activities. Not surprisingly, they found that mothers chose to compromise their

leisure time for the sake of the family, while the father's primary leisure experience is family leisure and it is used to balance work life. Mothers were found to have less satisfaction in family leisure because they were not able to distance themselves from their caretaker role. In contrast to their husbands, their positive leisure occurred away from their families and for some even occurred when they were at work. Experiencing leisure at paid work is contradictory to the idea of leisure as encompassing freedom of choice and discretionary time. This article demonstrated an instance where traditional family values were assumed by the authors, tested, and reinforced as the authors concluded that mothers find their leisure less fulfilling as they are always expected to maintain the caretaker role.

Reinforcing the assumption that mothers maintain the traditional family structure, Miller and Brown (2005) used the ethic of care theory and found that mothers take care of others needs before their own and sacrifice their leisure time as a result. In order to be viewed as a good mother, they must sacrifice their time and make choices to be accessible to their family. Mothers were found to strive towards reaching a gender ideology that reinforced the message that good wives and mothers must sacrifice their own leisure. Yet, does the maintenance of this gender ideology and traditional family structure really allow room for mothers to make any choices except those that lead to the label of good mother? If a mother was to choose to place her own leisure needs before that of her family, she might be accused of harming her children or the integrity of her family.

Middle class values are reinforced throughout the literature on motherhood and leisure. Shannon and Shaw (2008) included discussion of mothers explaining the importance of participating in an activity as registration day approaches. In order for a child to progress through society, they must have had certain experiences, participants believed. After school

activities are considered vital to the success of a child. Yet, money and time, at the very least, are required in order to participate in these activities (Shannon & Shaw, 2008). Trussell and Shaw (2007) found that mothers would dedicate time to make sure their children participated in sports activities. The researchers believed it was important for children to participate in athletics as a means for socialization opportunities, physical growth, development, and that athletics were important for children's success. In addition, valuable time was spent between mother and child in the car going to activities.

When researchers attempted to work with groups other than middle class participants, they still attempted to impose middle class values surrounding the importance of leisure on their participants. Scott and McCarville (2008), in their study of lone mothers in poverty, placed an assumption as to the value of leisure on their participants. The authors wanted to know more about how leisure was integrated into the everyday life of lower class mothers. They assumed that leisure had a place of importance in the daily lives of their participants and that it was a high priority. Mothers in this study were cast by the researchers as part of the family and were not viewed as autonomous individuals who might seek leisure for themselves. The study investigated how mothers needed access to leisure for their children to be successful in the future.

One notable exception to the study of traditional family structure is Bialeschki and Pearce's (1997) study of lesbian mothers. Two women households that contained minor children were studied in an effort to explore role negotiation. The authors noted there is not a standard definition for the American family and that this study provided a look at family without gendered power relations. Findings, similar to studies of heterosexual couples, revealed that leisure was used as a tool for relaxation and allowed mothers to go back to family feeling refreshed. Family

leisure was used as a means for family bonding and the reinforcement of family values. Leisure also provided a feeling of legitimacy and stability and challenged traditional family structure. Yet, similar to studies of traditional family structures, Bialeschki and Pearce found that mothers still worked to maintain the ideologies of motherhood. These families simply had two good mothers to work together to provide a standard of socially accepted leisure for their children.

Studies of mothers and family leisure have one common thread: leisure is shown by researchers to provide positive growth for the family. Mothers are willing to sacrifice their leisure on order to provide positive experiences for their children (Currie, 2004). Discussion surrounding the negative impacts of leisure for the family is absent, while discussions about the sacrifices mothers make to their families is limited. It is accepted by researchers that leisure that takes place in the family sphere is important to the positive growth of children and must be maintained as a priority of mothers. Family leisure is said to be important for family functioning and also to benefit the children, as they need to learn positive values and develop healthy lifestyles (Shaw & Dawson, 2001). The family expects a positive leisure experience (Trussell & Shaw, 2007) and it is up to the mother to provide this experience for the whole family. Shaw reminded researchers that family leisure should be viewed as contradictory, with both positive and negative experiences (Shaw, 1997). She goes on to state that there is no single reality of family life and that researchers must remember to recognize the diversity in family structure and the unique experiences of each family (Shaw, 1997), be it positive or negative.

Leisure researchers persisted in attempting to identify when and how mothers experienced leisure. Regardless of the suggestions made by a select few that leisure may be holistic (Henderson & Hickerson, 2007) and that it might be difficult for someone to identify some life activities as leisure, while others were not, researchers continued to try and label

certain activities and events as leisure. Since family leisure, as demonstrated above, serves to reinforce family values and often is purposive, it is difficult for women to identify exact moments of leisure.

Kelly and Kelly (1994) challenged leisure researchers to step away from the belief that leisure is separate and distinct from other life activities. They believed in a multi-dimensional conceptualization of work, family, and leisure. Leisure is not totally distinct from work and family and it is difficult for researchers to attempt to separate these spheres. Bialeschki and Michener (1994) agreed and said that leisure is part of the complexity of daily life and this complexity makes it tricky to label certain moments in time as leisure. Regardless of these recommendations, researchers still continued to identify various actions as leisure in the lives of women.

Shaw agreed with these researchers and stated “leisure is not an isolated aspect of life” (1997, p. 98), and followed up with a study in 2001, (Shaw & Dawson, 2001) that found that family leisure may not be leisure for mothers. Shaw’s more recent work has included elements that both reinforce and break down the leisure-work separation. Research since 2001 has demonstrated an interpretation of participant’s statements that seemed to force their words into a leisure paradigm, when in actuality these women may have been acting from the standpoint of a good mother, who wished to operate within society’s value system. Two studies demonstrate this assumption and show the contradictory nature of the belief that it is difficult to separate leisure and work for mothers, even though the authors still label certain activities as leisure and certain activities as work. First, Trussell and Shaw (2007) attempted to label leisure activities and work activities for farm women and their families. This trend continues with Shannon and Shaw (2008) in their study of mothers and daughters when the authors determined which

activities are leisure for participants and which activities are parts of the caregiver role of mothering.

Trussell and Shaw (2007) introduced their study of family leisure in the lives of farm women in Canada by stating that the farm setting is unique because work and leisure are not separated in farm life, as work takes place at home. However, many women might argue that work and leisure are not separate for them, since they are responsible for household chores that take place in the home. The expectation revealed by the authors is that mothers are responsible for the organization, facilitation, and support of family leisure. Women are main facilitator of family leisure in this study and therefore experienced an increase of time demands on them. In addition, while their husbands worked on the farm, the majority of the participants had taken paid work outside of the home. They were responsible for the home, their job, and their family's leisure, with very little time left for themselves. It is easy to see how leisure and work become interconnected in the lives of these farm mothers. Yet, the authors indicate a distinction between leisure and work for the mothers, by stating that the mothers rarely experienced leisure. Mothers were fatigued and wrapped up in ensuring that their children and husbands had quality time together, that they rarely relaxed and enjoyed their family time. Their responsibilities to their home, job, and family overshadowed any leisure in the lives of these participants. Family leisure was purposive leisure for everyone in the family to enjoy, except the mother.

Shannon and Shaw (2008) went further than the previous study by actually labeling certain activities as either work or leisure. They investigated mothers and their adult daughters to learn about how leisure values and skills are taught to children by their mothers. The authors learned that mothers teach their daughters that their personal leisure is important, until they themselves become parents. Then the child must come first and traditional values of motherhood

were reinforced by the mothers through their actions. The mothers also participated in role-determined leisure based on their title of mother. Leisure was used as a tool for gender socialization and the authors also discussed the gendering of certain activities that mothers taught their daughters. The authors also labeled these activities as leisure. For example, fishing and gardening were titled leisure activities. Given the gendered nature of leisure and the traditional family structure, fishing and gardening may be skills a good mother wished to pass to her daughter so that she can care for her family. The context of these activities was also ignored. Were the mothers raised in poor families who had to fish and garden in order to have enough food to eat? The assumption that certain activities were leisure to the mothers was made throughout this article. Removing the label of leisure and discussing these activities from the viewpoint of reinforcing traditional family values may have revealed new information about how mothers teach their daughters about leisure.

These two examples of studies demonstrate that even when authors recognize the interconnectedness of leisure and work for mothers, they still attempt to apply a leisure paradigm to the lives of mothers. Leisure is important and has a place in each person's life, but the extent that researchers work to identify leisure results in studies fraught with assumptions. Implication sections of research studies do not make suggestions for change other than saying that women need time for themselves in order to be the best mothers possible. The idea of changing the social structure of the family or re-evaluating the role of mothers is never suggested. However, researchers do suggest that other researchers explore more diverse constructions of family than they themselves reviewed. The experience of a welfare recipient, a mother who is not employed by an outside source, may not fit into the leisure work paradigms discussed by these leisure researchers. She may not see herself reflected in the current studies on mothers, since there are

such strong assumptions around what motherhood looks like. The economic privilege available to a middle class mother to raise her children is not accessible to mother on welfare. Therefore, her experience of leisure, and that of her children, is vastly different. To that end, it is now necessary to reflect on the history of welfare and the welfare experience to begin to think about how a particular ideal of motherhood becomes normal and accepted as an ingrained part of our culture.

History of the United States Welfare System

Welfare, as a broad concept, is designed to address specific needs or problems identified by society. Welfare programs also reflect the values, customs, and policies of the past. The American welfare system can trace its origins back to the Elizabethan Poor Laws of 1601. The Poor Laws were created in response to the specific problems generated by industrialization in 17th century England. As industrialization forced many people off farming land and into the cities, a growing population of homeless occupied the streets of London. The Poor Laws were designed “primarily to control the unemployed poor” (Anderson, Sundet, & Harrington, 2000, p. 1) and to handle the homeless. The Poor Laws were used to maintain a disciplined, orderly working class (Smith, 2007). As the numbers of people who were poor steadily increased in central areas, their care was transferred from the church to the state and as such, taxes were levied to care for those deemed “deserving” and who were found to be unemployed through no fault of their own. The “deserving” poor were not considered lazy or drunks, but were typically blind or widowed (Anderson, Sundet, & Harrington, 2000).

Community responsibility for the poor continued as the English immigrated to the New World. However, “responsibility” often took the form of running the poor out of town in an effort to avoid providing care (Anderson, Sundet, & Harrington, 2000). There were many

disagreements between community leaders as the Colonies developed as to who exactly should be responsible for the poor and what form this responsibility should take. Some did not want their hard earned money taxed for those who did not work, others believed that private organizations should bear the burden, and others wanted the federal government to provide for the poor. These conflicting ideas all contributed to the construction of today's welfare policies. The beginning of the nineteenth century brought about the notion that the poor were mentally and morally flawed. The poor were believed to be "lacking in moral character and [needed] institutional care" (Anderson, Sundet, & Harrington, 2000, p. 3). The poor needed to be both punished and rehabilitated to become better citizens. The ideas of punishment combined with rehabilitation link directly back to the Poor Laws and the concept of deserving and undeserving poor.

The undeserving poor were believed to be poor because of their own actions (or lack of) and since no one could agree who would be responsible for their care, they found themselves placed in poorhouses and jails. Often, women who were poor found themselves placed in poorhouses and their children given up for adoption. This breakdown of the family, however, ran contrary to the strong family centric values of the early nineteenth century. The government was left in a quandary. The poor were considered morally inferior, but so was the destruction of the family unit. This political quandary led to the creation of the Mother's Aid Pensions between 1911 and 1920. These pensions kept mothers with their children, but did not provide much government money to live. Individual states were responsible for disbursing aid and did so along the familiar lines of providing funds to those who were deemed "deserving." The majority of care for the poor fell to private charities (Anderson, Sundet, & Harrington, 2000), which continued until the Great Depression.

The overarching impact of the Depression made it impossible for private charities to provide services for all those in need. In an effort to provide some federal aid, the Emergency Relief Act was passed in 1932 and was designed to offer federal loans to the states. Many states, however, were unable to secure the loans and as a result the act was unsuccessful and the poor continued to go unaided by the government. The election of Franklin Delano Roosevelt brought change to welfare programs. Roosevelt flooded the states with grant money to provide for the poor (Anderson, Sundet, & Harrington, 2000). The passing of the Social Security Act of 1935 marks the beginning of the welfare programs found today in the U.S. For the first time, those who were previously considered unemployable were offered assistance.

After World War II, the U.S. experienced a financial boom and welfare programs were considered unnecessary by mainstream America. The country was prosperous, the thinking went, so people should not be poor and welfare money was therefore unnecessary. However, it was the White middle classes who were financially successful, as the many open jobs were only available to White citizens and those who were poor experienced prejudice and racism were essentially hidden from the rest of society.

The Civil Rights movement brought social awareness to the problems of prejudice and led to Johnson's endorsement of the War on Poverty. The premise behind the War on Poverty was that jobs and education had the power to eradicate poverty. Nixon dismantled these programs as public sentiment believed them to be insufficient in ending poverty. The Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Programs were then created to bring previously state operated welfare programs under one comprehensive agency. Reagan's election prompted an even stronger move towards individualism. Reagan believed that the government should not

provide aid to those who cannot provide for themselves. Reagan, and then Bush, placed on emphasis on private charities to provide for the poor (Anderson, Sundet, & Harrington, 2000).

In 1996, Clinton enacted the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act (PRWORA) in an effort to, as Clinton said, “end welfare as we know it.” The PRWORA put welfare funds into the hands of the states, in the form of block grants (Anderson, Sundet, & Harrington, 2000). Today, the states now have the power to determine how and when funds are given.

Welfare Programs Today

The evolution of welfare programs in the U.S. can be traced along lines of economic boom and bust, as well as public sentiment towards the poor. Today, assistance such as cash benefits, housing, and food stamps are highly restricted by policies and procedures in an effort to ensure that a recipient is “deserving” of aid. Those who are deemed “deserving” are allowed access to cash aid, and stringent policies and procedures were enacted in an effort to limit dependency on government aid. The common belief that poor, minority women could become dependent on the government to meet their needs and that it was the government’s duty to provide a safety net made up of food, education, childcare, housing, and bill assistance resulted in mainstream America viewing welfare recipients as unmotivated to work for their own money (Hays, 2003).

In addition to poor mothers being viewed as lazy, cultural meanings attached to woman working in the home shifted. Society became less willing to support poor mothers as homemakers as cultural meanings attached to work developed. Public sentiment towards welfare recipients became more and more negative and federal legislatures looked for a way to move people off of welfare and to encourage former recipients to become independent, contributing

members of society (Hays, 2003). The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996 seemed to provide the solution for government legislatures still searching to determine who was ultimately responsible for the care of the poor. The PRWORA eliminated welfare in its previous forms and created Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), which granted state control of block grant money to aid poor mothers (Johnson, Hedge, & Currinder, 2004).

Welfare recipients are no longer entitled to aid, as they were under the old system (Johnson, Hedge, & Currinder, 2004); they now have to work outside of the home in order to earn their aid. The federal government dispersed money to the individual states, which then dispersed funds and services to poor, qualified families. A “family” is very specially defined as at least one parent and one child. The parent must be willing to name the absent parent in order to receive aid (GA TANF, 2002). The individual states now determined who was in need of aid and what guidelines and timelines to best meet the needs of their state. Federal limits restricted aid to a total of 60 months over a lifetime and required work activity within a two-year period, but states had the freedom to impose their own limits or to grant extensions if they saw fit (Johnson, Hedge, & Currinder, 2004). PRWORA also reduced the availability of education to needy families and implemented a family cap for availability of aid. Money is not made available for family planning and abstinence programs are used as the sole way of preventing the birth of children. Individual states now became responsible for providing health care and childcare and the states would also determine who qualified for these programs (Alzate, 2005).

In addition to reducing and eliminating programs, all welfare dollars are now funneled through TANF and therefore through the individual states. The original goals of PRWORA and TANF were to eliminate the need for monetary aid for the poor in the U.S. and as such, TANF

was set to expire in 2002. Unfortunately, poverty in the U.S. has not been eradicated and while welfare rolls have reduced, families still require aid. Therefore, TANF has been renewed several times, each time on a short-term basis (Alzate, 2005). The federal legislation that dictates the goals of the TANF program reflects society's growing unwillingness to support single mothers and reinforces the idea that each individual person should strive to achieve White, middle class ideals (Hays, 2003). The goals of TANF include the end of dependence on federal dollars by families, the reduction of single parent pregnancies, and reinforcement of two parent families. PRWORA legislation clearly states that money spent by TANF must directly support or work towards these goals (Welsh, 2008).

The focus of TANF programs is to increase work participation ratios, which compares the number of adults receiving TANF benefits and working to those who are only receiving benefits. Success or failure of a state's policies towards TANF are measured by that state's ratio (Schott, 2007). There are several critiques of the use of the work participation ratio for determining the success of TANF programs. The first is that states decide what constitutes a work activity. Activities such as education, training, searching for work, community service hours, and actual work are all considered work activities based on state guidelines (Johnson, Hedge, & Currinder, 2004). Work participation ratios also increase as people are moved off of aid. As recipients reach state limits and are no longer eligible for aid, they are no longer counted in the work activity ratios. This results in less families receiving benefits which then increases the overall work participation ratio (Schott, 2007). Finally, many families are discouraged from applying for aid if caseworkers believe that they might be unsuccessful in contributing to an improved work participation ratio. Some states require that potential applicants attend a meeting prior to applying for aid and many choose not to apply for aid after this initial meeting (Schott, 2007).

Each state manages their welfare program differently and the Southern U.S. has a historically agrarian culture that cause welfare programs to evolve differently than the rest of the U.S.

Welfare In The Southern United States

The South (broadly considered to be comprised of 17 states but is primarily talked about here as the rural or Deep South made up of seven states; Florida, Georgia, Alabama, North Carolina, South Carolina, Louisiana, and Mississippi) managed and disbursed its welfare programs differently than the rest of the U.S.. The dual problems of agricultural modernization and systemic White racism operated to keep welfare rolls minimal (Reese, 2005). Historically based on plantation agriculture, the vast amount of laborers needed for planters to make a profit resulted in policies that kept welfare rolls very low. The cash benefits provided by Southern states were also significantly lower the rest of the U.S. In June 1951, the South paid \$14 per month, while the national average was \$22. This increased to \$21 in June 1960 and then to \$26 in February 1969, while the national averages were \$30 and \$39 respectively (Piven & Cloward, 1993).

In order to keep Black relief mothers in the labor force, they are given less money by welfare, especially in the rural South: in effect Black women are confronted with the choice of either trying to earn the difference between what they are given and what White women are given or struggle to live on the smaller amount (Piven & Cloward, 1993, p. 136).

Yet, welfare recipients faced a conundrum. Many states would deny aid all together if a woman was found to be employable. So, if she were able to find a wage paying position in order to supplement her welfare, she would then be removed from the rolls and required to live off what she was able to earn, no matter how meager.

The modernization of agriculture gradually reduced the planter's needs for unskilled laborers. In addition to a reduction in labor needs, planters faced a surplus in agriculture at the end of World War II. The combination of these two factors produced a shift in Southern labor practices. The planter controlled all aspects of life for the tenant farmer and maintained "near-feudal powers of life and death" over Blacks (Piven & Cloward, 1993, p. 212). The introduction of more farm equipment now required skilled mechanics and laborers and also allowed the planter to cover more of his land in crops. To that end, the life of the tenant farmer was severely curtailed. Tenant farmers were previously allowed to plant a small vegetable garden of their own (called a truck garden) and were often provided materials to fix and maintain their shacks. Once farm equipment was modernized, the planter no longer needed the tenant farmer and therefore no longer supplied him with building materials and often tore down his shack in order to plant more crops. In addition, the truck gardens that were previously allowed were now forbidden, again to increase the crop yields.

The elimination of the tenant farmer after World War II produced an extremely poor class of people who did not have access to welfare dollars. Welfare rolls in the South did not grow during this time period, even as the poor became increasingly poorer. In response, many of these desperately poor people migrated to Northern cities, where they continued to face discrimination and a set of new challenges (Piven & Cloward, 1993). For White Southerners, migration of Blacks to the North was a good thing; it reduced excess labor and kept welfare numbers low. "By becoming economically obsolete, people also became objects of indifference" (Piven & Cloward, 1993, p. 210).

Aid was often denied to Blacks, which in turn provided the farms a large labor pool to pull from. Agricultural workers in Georgia were 67% Black and maintaining a desperate pool of

workers kept wages low. The county welfare boards often were made up of the planters who wished to keep Blacks off welfare and as part of a low wage labor pool that was un-unionized and powerless. “Business leaders, especially farmers, claimed that public work programs drained the labor supply because they provided greater job security and higher wages than an employer could offer” (Reese, 2005, p. 76).

To appease the planters, Georgia (and other states) enacted a seasonal work policy. This policy denied welfare “during the harvest season to all mothers within reasonable proximity of seasonal farm or cannery work, had previous experience with it, and had children older than one year, and could make child care arrangements” (Reese, 2005, p. 77). The seasonal work policy was the greatest example of racism within Georgia’s welfare policy in 1952 as those women who had previous experience working in agriculture were Blacks. Whites were more likely to be exempt from this policy and “exempting women with no previous farm experience thus reinforced racial inequities between White and Black women” (Reese, 2005, p. 77), especially considering training of White women to work in the fields would have taken only a few hours. In addition, “when field hands are needed, Southern welfare officials assume that a Black woman is employable, but not a White woman” (Piven & Cloward, 1993, p. 138). Louisiana had a similar policy that required women with children older than age seven and able to work in the fields to be denied aid (Piven & Cloward, 1993).

In addition to a shift in the Southern economy, the political system in the South also impacted welfare programs differently than the rest of the U.S. Southern states had a primarily one-party political system in the 1950s. The majority of politicians came from rural areas. In Georgia, only 9% of state senators lived in urban areas. In 1948, Georgia put a freeze on number of welfare cases by placing people on a waiting list until a spot opened up, effectively declining

the person aid. Also, the policies of 1952 required women to seek support from fathers prior to asking the state for aid. Georgia also required stepfathers or any other male figure in the home to support children. In addition, those women found to be promiscuous were denied aided based on unsuitability. These policies could be enacted as Southern congressman had exerted their pressure to remove any language that may have prevented discrimination against Black from the Social Security Act of 1935. Once this wording was removed, Southern states were free to write legislation and enforce policies that kept Blacks off welfare (Piven & Cloward, 1993).

The federal government took an interest in Black voters in the 1960's as presidential candidates needed the Black vote, no matter how disorganized, and were willing to apply pressure to local governments to provide access to services in order to guarantee this vote. In turn Blacks were more likely to be allowed on welfare rolls after 1960 as their voting powers increased. Prior to 1948, Blacks were not found on welfare rolls in any significant numbers. However, pressure from the federal government to provide services to all people and migration to the more liberal North, where it was less likely for someone to be denied welfare based on race, caused significant numbers of Blacks to be on the welfare rolls by 1960 (Piven & Cloward, 1993). Yet, the federal government alone was not responsible for instigating welfare changes. Nowhere is the evidence more striking than in cities of the South that the size of welfare rolls is not a response to the needs of the poor but a response to the trouble they make (Piven & Cloward, 1993, p. 336).

The history of how welfare was disbursed (and not disbursed) in the South has an impact on today's Southern welfare system. In this section, Georgia is used as an example to illustrate how one state in the South is disbursing TANF dollars.

Georgia's Welfare Program

In Georgia, TANF programs are administered as cash benefits received on a monthly basis by families with minor children (Georgia Department of Human Resources Office of Communications, 2003). According to the Georgia TANF Plan (2002), the goal of the Department of Human Resources Division of Child and Family Services in implementing TANF programs is to

provide assistance to needy families so that children can be cared for in their homes or in the homes of relatives, end the dependency of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage...prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies and establish annual numerical goals for preventing and reducing the incidence of these pregnancies encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families...Georgia will help needy families become self-sufficient and leave the TANF program as soon as possible. There is no entitlement to any assistance under Georgia's TANF program. (p. 1)

The State of Georgia created its TANF policies in order to meet these goals and in turn to reduce the number of TANF recipients. The goal of family responsibility is demonstrated by the use of a family cap, required immunizations for children, work acceptance and maintenance, additional work activities, teen living arrangements, and strict child support enforcement for fathers. TANF recipients are limited to a total of 48 months of benefits over their lifetime, although a hardship waiver of three months is possible if the recipient is a victim of verifiable domestic abuse or rape. Georgia also allows for a one-time exemption of work requirements if there is a child under 12 months in the home. But this child must not be born while its mother is receiving TANF benefits. Children born while their mother is receiving benefits are never eligible for aid.

A hardship waiver can be applied to this situation if the woman becomes pregnant due to a verifiable rape. Support services such as transportation and child-care are provided on an as needed basis and cannot exceed federal limits for these services. In addition, Georgia encourages fathers to support their children. The Georgia Fatherhood Services Network helps fathers find jobs so they can pay child support, and also provides job training and GED classes. Fathers are required to work at least 20 hours a week and pay child support; they then receive help in finding a job that pays high enough wage to pay child support. TANF recipients are required by law to identify the father of their children.

A person who has been convicted of felony drug charges or serious violent felonies or is a parole or probation violator is not eligible for TANF services. Mothers are required to ensure that their children attend school and teenage mothers must attend school and pass their classes as well. Yet, TANF services are not given to pregnant women who do not have any other children. A pregnant woman must wait until after she has her children to apply and qualify for aid. In addition, each recipient must meet the goals outlined in their personal responsibility plan. Work activities are outlined in this plan, as are education and training goals. Georgia legislators chose not to implement any community services requirements, as some states have, although community service can be considered as a work activity, under certain circumstances. Sanctions are used by the state if recipients are not meeting work requirements or obligations outlined in their personal contract. The first sanction results in the loss of 25% of benefits. The second sanction results in a termination of benefits (GA TANF, 2002).

In order to be eligible for TANF benefits, a Georgia resident must not have any resources over \$1000, their monthly income (for a family of 3) must not exceed \$784, and those eligible to work must meet work requirements of at least 30 hours a week (Georgia Department of Human

Resources Division of Family and Children Services, 2005). One vehicle valued up to \$4650 is exempt from the resource total, but a second vehicle counts towards the total amount of personal resources (Georgia Department of Human Resources Division of Child and Family Services, 2005). Individual counties in Georgia are responsible for administrating TANF programs to their constituents. Each county is required by the State to achieve a 75% work participation ratio. This ratio is used to determine the success of each office and can directly impact the budget and staffing decisions for that office (Schott, 2007).

In 2003, there were a total of 138,609 people receiving TANF aid in Georgia, reflecting 1.5% of the Georgia population. The average monthly benefit was \$225 and the maximum benefit for a family of three was \$280. The poverty level in Georgia for a family of three is \$1272 (Georgia Department of Human Resources, 2003). Potentially, the mother of two children could receive \$280 from TANF, bring in \$784 from outside sources, totaling \$1064 a month and still not reach the poverty line of \$1272 a month. In addition, the mother is responsible for work activities of at least 30 hours a week and she may or may not qualify for support services such as child-care. TANF programs may supply much needed aid to families, yet recipients are still expected to live and maintain their families below the poverty line.

The demographics of a Georgia TANF recipient reflect a racialization of poverty. African Americans made up 77.3% of TANF recipients, Whites 20.1% and Hispanics 2.1%. These numbers are not reflective of the demographics of the residents of Georgia. African Americans are 29.9% of the Georgia population and Whites are 58.9%. In addition, 13.7% of Georgians lives below the poverty line (US Census Bureau, 2008), but only about 1.5% receive aid through TANF programs. Yet, over 60% of Georgia applicants are denied benefits based on procedural errors. Only 7% of denials are due to the family income being too high (Schott,

2007). The disconnect between the number of people living below the poverty line and the relatively small number of aid recipients, as well as a greater number of African Americans on TANF programs demonstrates a systemic policy issue. Minorities are over-represented and those who need aid the most are either not seeking it out or have been denied for bureaucratic reasons.

Welfare programs operate not only to provide cash benefits and services to recipients, but also serve to teach values and priorities of the state. Also, the procedures that deter people from applying for aid also operate as a way to maintain desired behaviors. As one begins to examine the goals of the Georgia TANF programs, it becomes apparent that the state is utilizing cash aid as a means of regulating behavior. Recipients are required to name the father of their child, participate in immunization programs, and receive prenatal care or face sanctions (Georgia Department of Human Resources Division of Child and Family Services, 2005). Paradoxically, the unborn child that they are carrying is not eligible for aid. But if a mother chooses to disregard these policies, the resulting discipline is a loss in aid from other members of the family, including other children. Decisions for the care of children are no longer the sole property of the parent. By applying for and accepting financial assistance from the state, recipients must also adhere to the social values of the state and what it means to be a member of a poor family.

Primarily women feel the impact of PRWORA policies. Over 90% of those who receive TANF dollars or services are women (Hays, 2003). The focus of TANF rules requires mothers to maintain a socially constructed ideal of motherhood. The requirements of the state reinforce traditional, American family values (Hays, 2003) and provide little room for the recipients to live out their own family values. They instead must adopt the values of the state welfare agency in order to receive money for basic survival. The goals of the TANF program directly impact

women who receive benefits. Policies created to meet these goals attempt to mold recipients into model American citizens who are able to work, care for their children, and contribute to society in a meaningful manner.

Conclusion

This literature review included information about the theoretical framework that guides this study, class and motherhood literature from a leisure perspective and background information concerning welfare in both the U.S. and Georgia. The purpose of this study is to explore the role of institutional power in the lives of women on welfare in the U.S. and Georgia and the information provided in this review grounds the study in the literature. The methods used to achieve this goal are detailed in the methodological appendix (APPENDIX A).

CHAPTER TWO

WELFARE AND LEISURE: CONTINGENCIES OF POWER¹

¹ Richmond, L. P. and C. W. Johnson. To be submitted to *Leisure Sciences*.

Foucault believed “truth, what a culture takes to be true knowledge...is intimately bound up with the fate of language” (Mahon, 1992, p. 104). The language used by leisure researchers when describing beneficial experiences and the connection of leisure to freedom implicitly reinforce discourses of privilege, power, and value. The same is true of welfare legislation as the values of society can be found in the policies passed and enforced by the government. These policies then operate to create and control the recognizable welfare subject and a recognizable and natural truth around her existence. In the United States, the policies and discourse around welfare generate an essentialized set of assumptions regarding the welfare recipient. She is a female, single, never married mother; she is not White, she does not have an education, and she is lazy. Although this characterization reflects a false image of the welfare recipient, the popular discourse connected to welfare and the legislation enacted in response to it constructs a value system that reinforces the image of an “undeserving” person taking advantage of “free” money provided by hard-working tax payers. Welfare programs aimed at assisting the poor in the U.S. are deeply imbued with judgments and edicts of those in power, corresponding to essentialized discourses abundant in our contemporary society. Using the Foucauldian method of genealogy, we identify and critically address the multiple and complex discourses in operation regarding public welfare systems in the U.S. Next, we explore the creation of a natural truth around what it means to be a welfare recipient. Finally, we contribute to the development of leisure theory as it relates to our understandings of welfare and work.

Conceptualizing Work and Leisure

Within leisure research, there are common conceptualizations around the meanings of leisure. For example, work and leisure are often viewed as dichotomous, as leisure generally involves choice in how to spend one’s non-obligated time, is primarily active, and in its positive

form operates to provide us with a healthier lifestyle. Leisure scholars have worked to develop a greater understanding of leisure for those who have access to normative, middle class based leisure; leisure that fits nicely into our current, common understandings. This normative leisure is mostly derived from a White, male, middle class point of view and excludes the leisure experiences of non-dominant people. The universal truths that many leisure scholars espouse include: the benefits are endless, recreation develops healthy children, leisure is necessary for a happy family and life, are socially constructed and not necessarily the experience of all people.

For example, the mother of two who relies on welfare and whose job requires a long bus ride each day may not have access to leisure in a way we understand or theorize. Our concern is not simply whether access to leisure is permissible and/or achievable, but if our current conceptualizations of leisure fit into the framework of a welfare mother's existence. As we will argue, the rules and regulations put into place by state governments attempting to reduce their welfare rolls result in a system designed to teach and condition certain middle class values around family and work. But if everyone needs leisure for a healthy lifestyle, how can we hope welfare recipients would reach this healthy ideal if we do not include their leisure experiences or reconceptualize the meaning of leisure from their existence? Or is leisure only "needed" (and therefore deserved) by those who can afford the luxury of free time?

Classical definitions of leisure underlie current conceptualizations are based on the Greek ideals of the good life. Leisure was achieved through obtaining the good life and was defined as contemplation and working towards an ethical life that included morality and intellectual pursuits. Greek leisure required active participation in society and was concerned with enriching both the mind and body in order to achieve the good life (Shivers & deLisle, 1997). Of course, even during the Classical Greek era, leisure and the good life were accessible solely to the upper

classes and were only achievable because of the work of slaves and slavery as an acceptable institution (Dare, Welton, & Coe, 1998). “Only after the material necessities of life have been acquired do individuals begin to have rational control of their lives” (Dare et. al, 1998, p. 32) and the work of slaves was required in order to handle the material necessities of life. Although leisure is no longer defined as contemplation or pursuit of the good life as defined by the Greeks, scholars still argue that the most appropriate use of leisure is to better ourselves and the way we think about leisure today is firmly and deeply rooted in the early conceptualizations of the Greeks. Both our work and non-work time is used to create and achieve the good life for our families and ourselves.

The sheer amount of time and work involved in creating the good life for ourselves today is often only attainable by relying on others. There are many “invisible people” such as nannies, housecleaners, or gardeners, who work extremely hard in order for a middle class family to have the freedom to secure today’s version of the good life. Employing some of these low-wage workers are luxuries only available to the upper and upper-middle classes. However, there are many other low-wage positions that the majority of society uses in order to maintain their free time access to leisure. Under-paid employees work in day-care centers, dry cleaners, fast-food restaurants, nursing homes, and car washes providing services that are deemed necessary to the middle class lifestyle and allow for the creation of more free time for the middle class. The work of under-paid laborers allows costs to be lower than they would be if the employees were paid a living wage. Under-paid employees also ensure that manufactured goods are created, make it to a store, and are sold at the lowest price possible, due in part to the payment of low wages. Much of the thinking of scholars who consider leisure in our contemporary scholarship ignores the work of those who support the middle and upper classes and without whom we would not have

the same opportunity or access for leisure (DeParle, 2004). It is just as important to uncover the power structures in place that maintain a lower class in the U.S. as it is to understand if/how leisure is experienced for those in poverty.

Access to leisure today often comes down to a work/non-work time dichotomy. For those who receive welfare (the poorest of the poor), the time spent not at work, the work of living a life under strict institutional control, results in limited access to leisure as it is currently conceptualized. At the same time, Americans have looked to welfare programs as the primary weapon in the “war on poverty” and to solve the “problem” of poor people in the U.S. However, over fifty years of legislative reform as related to the war on poverty has not resulted in the elimination of poverty; it has only shifted people on and off of government assistance. However, moving off of welfare does not mean entry into the middle class, it simply means that one is not *poor enough* or they have exceeded state mandated time limits and are no longer eligible for welfare dollars. Movement off of welfare most likely means a life spent under the poverty line, without access to upper and middle class ideals of leisure and free time. Since financial security is not secured through welfare, we intuitively believed that institutional, government welfare programs were not the best way to “treat” poverty in this country and understanding welfare amidst the work/leisure dichotomy might prove useful.

The social problem of poverty is only partially and temporarily addressed by the welfare system. Is encouraging work and work programs the best way to address poverty? If we were to overcome poverty, how would that impact the leisure of the upper and middle classes? We argue in this paper that welfare programs operate to promote and reinforce cultural discourses around work and traditional family structures. In an effort to reveal the influence of current

welfare programs on essentialized views of the welfare recipient and leisure, we must first describe the history and evolution of welfare in the U.S.

Background: Development of Welfare in the United States

The American welfare system traces its origins back to England and the Elizabethan Poor Laws of 1601. The Poor Laws were created in response to the specific problems generated by industrialization in seventeenth century England. As industrialization forced many people off farming land and into the cities, a growing population of homeless occupied the streets of London. The Poor Laws were designed “primarily to control the unemployed poor” (Anderson, Sundet, & Harrington, 2000, p. 1) and to handle the problem of homelessness. As the numbers of people who were poor steadily increased in central areas, their care was transferred from the church to the state and as such, taxes were levied to care for those deemed “deserving” and who were found to be unemployed through no fault of their own. The “deserving” poor were not considered lazy nor drunks, but instead were typically blind or widowed (Anderson, et al., 2000).

Community responsibility for the poor continued as the English immigrated to the New World. However, “responsibility” often took the form of running the poor out of town in an effort to avoid providing care (Anderson, et al., 2000). There were many disagreements between community leaders as the Colonies developed as to who exactly should be responsible for the poor and what form this responsibility should take. Some did not want their hard earned money taxed for those who did not work, others believed that private organizations should bear the burden, and still others wanted the federal government to provide for the poor. These conflicting ideas all contributed to the construction of today’s welfare policies. The beginning of the nineteenth century brought about the notion that the poor were somehow mentally and morally flawed. The poor were believed to be “lacking in moral character and [needed] institutional

care” (Anderson, et al., 2000, p. 3). The poor needed to be both punished and rehabilitated to become better citizens. One way that the poor were simultaneously punished and rehabilitated was by being held in poor houses. If a debt could not be paid or one did not have enough money to survive, one was sent to live in a poorhouse, also called a reform house. Often, women who were poor found themselves required to live in poorhouses and their children were given up for adoption. The idea of punishment combined with rehabilitation link directly back to the Poor Laws and the concept of “deserving” and “undeserving” poor. These women were deemed to have created their own situation and condition of being poor and were therefore “undeserving” of aid and the ability to make decisions about themselves and their children. The “deserving” poor, someone who lost their job through no fault of their own, were often treated much differently.

The “undeserving” poor were believed to be poor because of their own actions (or lack thereof) and since no one could agree who would be responsible for their care, they found themselves housed in poorhouses and jails. However, this breakdown of the family ran contrary to the strong family-centric and patriarchal values of the early nineteenth century. The government was left with a quandary. The poor were considered morally inferior, but so was the destruction of the family unit. This political quandary led to the creation of the Mother’s Aid Pensions between 1911 and 1920. These pensions kept mothers with their children, but did not provide much government money on which to live. Individual states were responsible for disbursing aid and did so along the familiar lines of providing funds to those who were deemed “deserving.” Only those who were White and had been previously married were able to secure cash benefits. The majority of care for the poor fell to private charities (Anderson et al., 2000), since those who were deemed “deserving” were only a small portion of the poor in this country. Private charities continued to be the sole caretakers for the poor until the Great Depression.

The all-encompassing impact of the Depression on society made it impossible for private charities to provide services for all of those in need. In an effort to provide some federal aid, the Emergency Relief Act was passed in 1932 and was designed to offer federal loans to the states. Many states, however, were unable to secure the federal loans because they could not come up with the amount of collateral required by the federal government. As a result the act was unsuccessful and the poor continued to go unaided by the government.

The election of Franklin Delano Roosevelt brought change to welfare programs. President Roosevelt flooded the states with grant money to provide for the poor (Anderson et al., 2000). The passing of the Social Security Act of 1935 marked the beginning of the welfare programs found today in the United States. For the first time, those who were previously considered unemployable were offered assistance. Aid to Dependent Children (ADC), later transitioned into Aid to Families with Dependent Children, (AFDC), provided cash benefits to widowed mothers. ADC initially provided aid to White mothers who had been widowed. Society supported the White mother working in the home and raising her children.

As the program grew and laws governing eligibility were curtailed, AFDC began providing funds primarily to single Black mothers with illegitimate children (Trattner, 1999), which resulted in a severe backlash against welfare programs. These Black mothers were considered “undeserving” as most had never been married and were uneducated. The eligibility for aid by a population deemed “undeserving” resulted in popular sentiment that looked to reduce welfare rolls in general. In addition, the financial boom impacting the U.S. after World War II caused the public to believe that welfare was now unnecessary. Jobs were perceived to be abundant; therefore those who asked for need were only doing so as a means to avoid work. The country was prosperous, the thinking went, so people should not be poor and welfare money was

therefore unnecessary. However, it was the White middle classes who were financially successful, as most jobs were only available to White citizens and the poor experienced prejudice and racism hidden from the popular discourse of the rest of society. In addition, skills and education, along with child-care and transportation were required in order to obtain and keep a job. Non-White Americans lived in segregated communities and did not have the same access to jobs and resources as mainstream Americans. Therefore, while jobs may have been abundant for White, educated men in America, they were certainly not plentiful for poor, Black mothers.

In addition, due to modernization and technological developments after World War II, the demand for agricultural labor was steadily declining (Piven & Cloward, 1993). Southern Blacks began to migrate to the cities of the North in search of jobs. Twenty million Blacks migrated North between 1940 and 1970 (Trattner, 1999). This migration resulted in large collectives of Blacks residing in dense urban areas and politicians became aware of the potential for concentrated voting power (Piven & Cloward, 1993). Democrats, in particular, made efforts to generate poor Black votes in local and federal level elections. However, Democrats had to be careful not to alienate White voters as they were simultaneously gathering Black votes. Also, residency requirements were put into place through AFDC in an effort to limit people moving to a city that had higher welfare benefits. Policies designed to limit AFDC recipients were also put into place. Houses must be “suitable” and no men were allowed to be in the house (Trattner, 1999). A man was not allowed in the house of someone receiving aid because if a man was in the house, legislatures believed, he should be supporting the household. Men were supposed to hold down jobs, bring home paychecks, and support their families and TANF policies reflect these ideas. If a welfare recipient had a man in the house, she was thought to be taking advantage of the system and collecting money from both the government and the man. In

addition, the thinking went, when men were present, more babies (that the government would have to support) soon followed. The solution to the growing problem of the suitability of the poor and voters concerns seemed to be community based programs, found in urban centers and addressed the problems of “youth delinquency” in the “inner cities” (Piven & Cloward, 1993). These community programs were early precursors to the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 and are further analyzed using the method of genealogy.

The Method of Genealogy

Foucault (1995) developed and used genealogy as a critical method to analyze a history of the present to reveal how accepted truths have become natural. History is used in this method “as a way of *diagnosing* the present” (Kendall & Wickham, 1999, p. 4) and helps us understand the discourse around institutions, and in this case the relationship between welfare, work and leisure. Foucault believed many of our historical advances came about based on accidents (Kendall & Wickham, 1999) and he used the method of genealogy to explore these historical accidents, also known as contingencies, in an effort to reveal systems of power active in society. Foucault recognized that historical accidents are partnered with beginnings (Foucault, 1971) and these beginnings should be revealed, not as origins, but as one of many “numberless beginnings” (p. 81). Contingencies are different from causes and do not create a linear progression of history. History is not linear and does not always occur as a positive progression. Instead of revealing a cause and effect relationship, contingencies help us to see how systems are different from one another, not better or worse (Kendall & Wickham, 1999). Utilizing this multiple beginnings work simultaneously illustrates how institutional systems such as welfare are based on subtle interconnections that are difficult to unravel. The unraveling of multiple beginnings help genealogists to learn which values are reinforced across time and through policy. “The

genealogist, then, forgoes the search for an original identity and essence unmasked; instead, [she] cultivates the disparate details, events, and accidents found at any beginning” (Mahon, 1992, p. 110).

Over the course of a genealogy, histories and functions of a system that are often left hidden in popular discourses, and therefore are made to become natural in their use, are unraveled and revealed. This provides us with the opportunity to “think in ways that we have not thought and be in ways we have not been” (Kendall & Wickham, 1999, p. 30). Genealogy operates to “expose a body totally imprinted by history and the process of history’s destruction on the body” (Foucault, 1971, p. 83). Genealogies place an emphasis on power and describe policies as an ongoing process, not just as a moment in time (Kendall & Wickham, 1999). To that end, a genealogy exploring welfare systems in the U.S. is both timely and warranted. Given welfare policy is grounded in historical and political systems in the U.S. and deeply embedded with racial tensions, an unraveling of the numberless beginnings of welfare policies can help us to understand the common discourses and stereotypes used around welfare and to investigate the implicit meanings put on it by our conceptualizations of work and leisure.

Across time and space, discursive practices become one with institutional practices and society begins to recognize these practices as normal, natural, and true (Mahon, 1992). Genealogy allows us “to expose a body totally imprinted by history and the process of history’s destruction of the body” (Foucault, 1971). Since welfare recipient’s lives are directly influenced by the social institution of welfare, it is important to pull apart the practices we consider to be normal and natural and explore the events and feelings occurring in society and culture at the time these pieces of legislation were conceived and passed into law. The welfare subject lives the life of a body completely imprinted by welfare. The historical eruptions that took place over the

creation and maintenance of welfare laws created a subject who knows what is expected of her and how to behave in order to receive “benefits.” The subject is also developed by welfare laws and develops her identity based on the historical progression of welfare. To that end, this genealogy is concerned with the following questions: What were some of the historical beginnings that caused the naturalization of how poverty is formulated and the poor are managed? How do we think about work and leisure as related to welfare recipients?

The Use of Genealogy in Leisure Studies Scholarship

Although a relatively untried method in many social science disciplines, there has been some work done by leisure researchers using the method of genealogy. Andrews (1993) explained that genealogy is a useful tool for learning about bodily existence in relation to critical sport sociology. He saw genealogy as a way to reveal how the body is disciplined and controlled. Similar to Andrew’s explanation for how sport is a tool for “understanding of the way power is structured and exerted within contemporary society” (1993, p. 149) an exploration of welfare can also unravel similar understandings. McGillivray (2005) used genealogy to study employees who accessed leisure at their place of work. He was primarily interested in employee’s resistance to institutional programs that promoted healthy fitness. Although McGillivray used genealogical thinking to frame his study, he primarily applied Foucault’s theories of resistance and bodily discipline. His method of data collection and analysis are closer to that of a case study, rather than a genealogy. His work might be better framed as a case study utilizing a genealogical viewpoint.

Dieser (2005) conducted a genealogy of the U.S. Therapeutic Recreation Certification process. Dieser’s goal was to demonstrate the normalizing tactics utilized by the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification (NCTRC) and the discipline and surveillance

they employed when certifying practitioners. Genealogical methods were used to unmask the naturalness and potentially harmful nature of the NCTRC. Dieser applied the NCTRC to Foucault's concept of the panopticon as a disciplinary agent and found that the naturalness of the value placed on the individual in therapy was harmful to those from non-dominant backgrounds. Dieser also created a panoptical depiction of NCTRC's discipline of the individual who wishes to become certified. The way in which Dieser defined and employed genealogical methods was useful to this study, as was the clear way he discussed how power is employed as a form of surveillance (Dieser, 2005).

These initial forays into genealogy demonstrate that this method is useful for developing critical questionings of commonly accepted beliefs within leisure studies. It is important for us to add to the body of knowledge and to question why we believe what we believe. Andrews reminded us that Foucault believed "knowledge itself is not organically grounded in the human subject but is a secular product of social intercourse between social agents; it is the human by-product of powerful social forces" (1993, p. 155). These powerful social forces, intertwined with historical precedence, have come together to create today's conceptualization of leisure, a conceptualization that leaves out a large segment of our population. The use of genealogy allows us to access information in a new way in order to expand our understanding and knowledge of the institutional power and the impact this power has on those outside of our current concern.

Genealogy Put to Work: Welfare and Leisure

"Genealogy is gray, meticulous, and patiently documentary. It operates on a field of entangled and confused parchments, on documents that have been scratched over and recopied many times" (Foucault, 1971, p. 76). In order to conduct this genealogy, historical documents, legislation, and other policy information concerning welfare in the U.S. and Georgia since the

1960's were read and reviewed. We began by focusing on the policies enacted by the federal government that impacted the country as a whole. We then narrow the discussion down to the state level, with a focus on Georgia, as the federal government moved away from managing welfare programs and instead moved to state level programs. In addition to convenience, Georgia was chosen as a focus for the genealogy because, as a state in the deep south, Georgia has a long history of racial tensions and oppression revealed when looking at its' aid programs. These oppressions have gone a long way in influencing our current conceptualizations of what it means to be a welfare recipient and greatly influence current legislation around welfare recipients and participation.

The focus of this genealogy begins with what President Johnson declared as the “war on poverty,” the Economic Opportunity Act (EOA) of 1964, and ends with what President Clinton called the “end of the war on poverty,” the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA). Finally, the genealogy focuses on how one state, Georgia, managed the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program (created by the PRWORA). The method of genealogy intentionally focuses on specific instances, in this case these pieces of legislation, in order to reveal the local and personal influence of institutional power (Wang, 1999). Our goal is to demonstrate the historical contingencies found in thinking around welfare policies. In addition, first person accounts, policy analyses, and historical documents were also read and reviewed in order to generate a sense of the historical happenings and contextual influences of these policies (McGillivray, 2005). As “the role of genealogy is to record its history” (Foucault, 1971, p. 86), the first author kept detailed notes as she read, consumed, and thought about these documents. Information about federal policy was recorded separately than information about Georgia. The notes were then used to generate an initial analysis and

subsequently the development of critical arguments around the policies and also to trace thinking around the contingencies of welfare policies. The second author monitored the rigor and systematic way to ensure the data and the contingencies were managed and discussed. The contingencies and unravelings presented here are by no means final and absolute, but grounded in authorial interpretation. History is local and contingent and this genealogical moment is a systematic interpretation of the unquestioned naturalness in this moment in relation to welfare, work and leisure.

Contingencies and Historical Unravelings of Welfare²

The ways that we think about and treat welfare recipients can be traced back to the way that the English treated the destitute in sixteenth century England. Mass movements of people, technological revolutions, and how women's work is defined and valued all contributed to early welfare programs in the U.S. and reflect the use of disciplinary power as described by Foucault (1995). When we think about current welfare programs, we do not stop to consider the events of ten or twenty years ago on our policies, let alone the role of the Great Depression or the movement from the rural fields of the North and South into the urban Northern factories as described in background section. Yet, all of these events, and many, many more accidental happenings have intertwined to create the naturalized, normalized, and unquestioned system of welfare operating in our country today. The contingencies presented here reflect a core set of values and beliefs, what Foucault called normalizing judgments, that describe how people must behave in order to receive welfare assistance. The primary contingencies revealed by this genealogy and discussed in detail include individualism, racism, the loss of entitlement, and the desire to reduce welfare rolls. These contingencies are located across time and locale when

² The "findings" of this study are presented in the following sections as contingencies.

welfare legislation is deconstructed. The primary pieces of legislation discussed and frayed in this analysis have historical linkages to the legislation and common discourses that came before them. The focus on the EOA and PRWORA unraveled here aim to present a more current understanding of the histories at play when thinking about welfare as related to work and leisure. The four contingencies that operate as natural within welfare programming are discussed. Individualism, racism, (loss of) entitlement, and reducing welfare rolls are each unraveled as they erupted and became an unquestioned part of welfare laws today.

Economic Opportunity Act of 1964

The Civil Rights movement brought social awareness to the problems of prejudice and led to President Johnson's declaration of "war on poverty" with his introduction of the Economic Opportunity Act (EOA). The premise behind the war on poverty focused on jobs and education as they had power to eradicate poverty. Specifically, Title II of the EOA

allocated 350 million dollars to community action programs which President Johnson said would 'call on all resources available to the community-Federal and State, local and private, human and material' to strike at poverty at its source, in the streets of the cities.

(Piven & Cloward, 1993, p. 257)

The EOA created the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) headed by Sargent Shriver. In addition, the Volunteers in Service to America, Job Corps, Upward Bound, Neighborhood Youth Corps, Operation Head Start, and Community Action Program were all created in an effort to combat poverty. Trattner (1999) suggested that the EOA was doomed for failure as it was a large collection of bureaucratic programs with little political support and "was designed not to change society but to change its victims" (p. 323). The EOA provided education and training, but no money for the poor and no jobs were included. The poor continued to be seen as

“undeserving” and needed to be trained and educated. Money was not the solution to developing skills to become self-supporting. “[The poor] needed to be forced to change their outlook and their lifestyle” (Trattner, 1999, p. 329). The EOA was designed, albeit poorly, to provide skills for the poor to become self-sufficient. Even after acquiring jobs based on the skills taught by EOA programs, most participants were still living below the poverty line, as their training was geared towards low-paying jobs with little opportunity for advancement. Participants were not able to become self-sufficient, even after they had been trained and educated because there were limited jobs available.

Welfare recipients were expected to change themselves, to become normal, to transform into socially constructed ideas of what it meant to be a citizen of the U.S. The first major contingency, individualism, is demonstrated through the passage of the EOA. Self-sufficiency and independence were taught through EOA programs. “[Welfare recipients] needed to be forced to change their outlook and their lifestyle” (Trattner, 1999, p. 329). But the programs were not enough to educate recipients, place them into jobs that could become careers, or to save enough money to move out of poverty.

The push towards individualism was strong throughout the EOA. Davies (1992) believed the EOA was designed to “allow the poor to engineer their own path to affluence” (p. 205). Davies also believed that the EOA itself “was the autonomous expression of a genuine faith in the traditional American ideal of equal opportunity” (p. 206). The EOA, with its creation of education and training programs, attempted to mold the individual into a subject ready for work. Yet, the skills that were taught by the government reveal a set of power and assumptions around what jobs were deemed acceptable for the poor. Programs taught participants how to work in factories, as day care workers, in fast food restaurants, and as nursing assistants, for example.

These jobs kept the poor in the condition of being poor and did not provide opportunity for promotion and increases in wages. By ignoring the many reasons people are poor, including accidents, health reasons, low wages, lack of jobs (Iceland, 2006), racism and public sentiment, the EOA was unable to win the any battles or the war—on poverty.

Prior to the passage of the EOA, the U.S. was experiencing mass migration from rural areas to urban areas and from the South to the North. Blacks primarily moved North and Whites moved within the states they already resided, mostly to villages or towns, not to large cities (Piven & Cloward, 1993). Notions of racism, the second contingency, were already strongly linked to AFDC (the welfare program that the EOA was supposed to combat in the war on poverty), as the program moved from supporting the women’s work of widows mothering legitimate White children, to supporting Black, illegitimate children. Blacks who migrated North were often unable to find full time jobs and ended up becoming employed as laborers or domestic servants (Iceland, 2006). This resulted in Blacks being poor more often than Whites and requiring welfare assistance, with the numbers increasing as migration continued. Poor Blacks were deemed “underserving” of aid as they were capable of working, they just could not find any steady employment.

The value of the stay at home mother was reduced as the public sentiment shifted about who was deemed “deserving” of aid. Race was highly influential in the creation and design of the EOA. The Democrats were in search of political votes and the ability to provide local programs in the inner cities reinforced a Democratic Black voter base. In an effort to appease White voters, the EOA programs were designed to address concerns such as delinquency and laziness in the inner cities. Still, the EOA programs neglected to provide cash benefits and continued to reinforce the individual as able to overcome poverty. Social influences on poverty,

such as race, were largely ignored. Providing training for jobs is not effective if there are no jobs, if the jobs are not accessible or if non-Whites have a difficult time getting hired.

President Nixon dismantled the programs created by the EOA as public sentiment and beliefs determined the EOA insufficient and/or ineffective for ending poverty. Middle class values, such as thriftiness, working hard, and individualism had been attacked by the community-based programs of the EOA (Trattner, 1999). The contingency of individualism is still a core value and it became necessary to disable a program that does not support that core value. Therefore, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Programs were created to bring previously state operated welfare programs under one comprehensive agency and to reassert the role of individual desire for success. President Reagan's election prompted an even stronger move towards individualism. President Reagan believed that the government should not provide aid to those who cannot provide for themselves. President Reagan, and then President Bush, placed a greater emphasis on private charities to provide for the poor (Anderson, et al., 2000). The movement away from government aid and towards the care of the poor by charitable institutions eventually led to President Clinton's support for a different approach to managing welfare in the U.S.

Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996

In 1996, President Clinton enacted the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act (PRWORA) in an effort to, as Clinton said, "end welfare as we know it." The PRWORA put welfare funds into the hands of the states, in the form of block grants (Anderson, et al., 2000) and ended entitlement programs. Currently, the states have the power to determine how and when funds are dispersed and no one was entitled to receive welfare dollars. PRWORA seemed to provide the solution for government legislatures still searching to determine who was

ultimately responsible for the care of the poor. The PRWORA eliminated welfare in its previous forms and created Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), which granted state control of block grant money to aid poor mothers (Johnson, Hedge, & Currinder, 2004).

The third major contingency was that welfare recipients were no longer *entitled* to aid, as they were under the old system (Johnson et al., 2004); they now had to *work* outside of the home in order to earn their aid. The implication that the work of mother in the home caring for children and family members as no longer valued by the government is clear. The values and conceptualizations of motherhood for those who were believed not to be worthy of motherhood since they could not support their children, was shifting. The previous patriarchal definitions of family and motherhood no longer applied to those who could not support themselves. The federal government dispersed money to the individual states, which then dispersed funds and services to the poor, or those qualified families. A “family” is very specifically defined as at least one parent and one child. The parent (almost always a mother) must be willing to name the absent parent (the father) in order to receive aid (GA TANF, 2002). Each state now determines who is in need of aid and what guidelines and timelines to best meet the needs of their state. Federal limits restricted aid to a total of 5 years over a lifetime and required work activity within a two-year period, but states had the freedom to impose their own limits or to grant extensions if they see fit (Johnson, et al., 2004). PRWORA also reduced the availability of education to needy families and implemented a family cap for availability of aid. Money is not made available for family planning and abstinence programs are used as the sole way of preventing the birth of more children. The restriction of sexual activity placed on the unwed mothers who receive welfare is a clear indication of the government’s views of sexual activity and who is allowed to have sex and who is not (Smith, 2007). Individual states now became responsible for providing

health care and childcare and the states also determine who qualified for these programs (Alzate, 2005). However, marriage is temporary and puts an end to upward mobility, Edin and Kefalas (2007) found, but the tie to a child is permanent and enduring. Therefore poor women are likely to choose to have children long before they make a decision to be married (Edin & Kefalas, 2007). The decision to carry and keep a child is one that TANF policies work to sway. The goal is to limit the number of children born to unwed mothers receiving welfare. Simply working to prevent unwed mothers from having more children only creates continued sexual regulation (Smith, 2007).

In addition to reducing and eliminating programs, all welfare dollars are now funneled through TANF and therefore through the individual states. The original goals of PRWORA and TANF were to eliminate the need for monetary aid for the poor in the U.S. and as such, TANF was set to expire in 2002. Unfortunately, poverty in the U.S. has not been eradicated and while welfare rolls have reduced, families still require aid. Therefore, TANF has been renewed several times, each time on a short-term basis (Alzate, 2005). The federal legislation that dictates the goals of the TANF program reflects society's growing unwillingness to support single mothers and reinforces the idea that each individual person should strive to achieve White, middle class ideals (Hays, 2003). The goals of TANF include the end of dependence on federal dollars by families, the reduction of single parent pregnancies, and reinforcement of the value in two parent families. PRWORA legislation clearly states that money spent by TANF must directly support or work towards these goals (Welsh, 2008).

The focus of TANF programs is to increase work participation ratios, which compares the number of adults receiving TANF benefits and working to those who are only receiving benefits. Success or failure of a state's policies towards TANF are measured by that state's ratio (Schott,

2007). There are several critiques of the use of the work participation ratio for determining the success of TANF programs. The first is that states decide what constitutes a work activity. Activities such as education, training, searching for work, community service hours, and paid employment can be considered work activities based on state guidelines (Johnson, et al., 2004).

Work participation ratios also increase as people are moved off of aid. As recipients reach state limits and are no longer eligible for aid, they are no longer counted in the work activity ratios. The movement off of welfare resulted in less families receiving benefits which then increased the overall work participation ratio (Schott, 2007). Finally, many families are discouraged from applying for aid if caseworkers believe that they might be unsuccessful in contributing to an improved work participation ratio. Some states require that potential applicants attend a meeting prior to applying for aid and many choose not to apply for aid after this initial meeting (Schott, 2007). Each state manages their welfare program differently and the Southern U.S. has a historically agrarian culture that caused welfare programs to evolve differently than the rest of the U.S.

Georgia Temporary Assistance to Needy Families

In Georgia, TANF programs are administered as cash benefits received on a monthly basis by families with minor children (Georgia Department of Human Resources Office of Communications, 2003). According to the Georgia TANF Plan (2002), the goal of the Department of Human Resources Division of Child and Family Services in implementing TANF programs is to

provide assistance to needy families so that children can be cared for in their homes or in the homes of relatives, end the dependency of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage...prevent and reduce the incidence of out-

of-wedlock pregnancies and establish annual numerical goals for preventing and reducing the incidence of these pregnancies encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families...Georgia will help needy families become self-sufficient and leave the TANF program as soon as possible. There is no entitlement to any assistance under Georgia's TANF program. (p. 1)

The State of Georgia created its TANF policies in order to meet these goals and in turn to reduce the number of TANF recipients. The overall goal of reducing TANF recipients, by teaching family responsibility, the fourth contingency discussed, is not new to welfare programs, as they all seek to push people off of welfare and mold recipients into responsible, contributing members of society. The assumption that welfare recipients are not responsible or contributing simply because they cannot find a well paying job is another major contingency identified throughout welfare legislation.

The goal of family responsibility is demonstrated by the use of a family cap, required immunizations for children, work acceptance and maintenance, additional work activities, teen living arrangements, and strict child support enforcement for fathers. TANF recipients are limited to a total of 48 months of benefits over their lifetime in Georgia, although a hardship waiver of three months is possible if the recipient is a victim of verifiable domestic abuse or rape. Georgia also allows for a one-time exemption of work requirements if there is a child under the age of 12 months in the home. But this child must not be born while its mother is receiving TANF benefits. Children born while their mother is receiving benefits are never eligible for aid. A hardship waiver can be applied to this situation if the woman becomes

pregnant due to a verifiable rape³. Support services such as transportation and child-care are provided on an as needed basis and cannot exceed federal limits for these services. In addition, Georgia encourages fathers to support their children. The Georgia Fatherhood Services Network helps fathers find jobs so they can pay child support, and also provides job training and GED classes. Fathers are required to work at least 20 hours a week and pay child support; they then receive help in finding a job that pays a high enough wage to pay child support. TANF recipients are required by law to identify the father of their children.

A person who has been convicted of felony drug charges or serious violent felonies or is a parole or probation violator is not eligible for TANF services. Mothers are required to ensure that their children attend school and teenage mothers must attend school and pass their classes. Yet, TANF services are not given to pregnant women who do not have any other children. A pregnant woman must wait until after she has her child to apply and qualify for aid. In addition, each recipient must meet the goals outlined in their personal responsibility plan. Work activities are outlined in this plan, as are education and training goals.

Georgia legislators chose not to implement any community services requirements, as some states have, although community service can be considered a work activity, under certain circumstances. Sanctions are used by the state if recipients are not meeting work requirements or obligations outlined in their personal contract. The first sanction results in the loss of 25% of benefits. The second sanction results in a termination of benefits (GA TANF, 2002).

In order to be eligible for TANF benefits, a Georgia resident must not have any resources over \$1000, their monthly income (for a family of 3) must not exceed \$784, and those eligible to

³ The idea of suffering a large emotional and physical violation such as rape and then having to prove to the federal government that the rape was “real” and “verified” in an effort to receive cash benefits for that child is unfathomable.

work must meet work requirements of at least 30 hours a week (Division of Family and Children Services, 2005). One vehicle valued up to \$4650 is exempt from the resource total, but a second vehicle counts towards the total amount of personal resources (Division of Child and Family Services, 2005). Individual counties in Georgia are responsible for administrating TANF programs to their constituents. Each county is required by the State to achieve a 75% work participation ratio. This ratio is used to determine the success of each office and can directly impact the budget and staffing decisions for that office (Schott, 2007).

In 2003 (the most recent year statistics are available⁴), there were a total of 138,609 people receiving TANF aid in Georgia, reflecting 1.5% of the Georgia population. The average monthly benefit was \$225 and the maximum benefit for a family of three was \$280. The poverty level in Georgia for a family of three is \$1544 (Georgia Department of Community Health, 2011). The cash benefits received placed recipients at 22% of the poverty line, providing so little money that recipients have no hope of moving out of poverty while receiving TANF (Atlanta Community Food Bank, 2010). Potentially, the mother of two children could receive \$280 from TANF, bring in \$784 from outside sources, totaling \$1064 a month and still not reach the poverty line of \$1544 a month (US Census Bureau, 2010). In addition, the mother is responsible for work activities of at least 30 hours a week and she may or may not qualify for support services such as child-care. TANF programs may supply much needed aid to families, yet recipients are still expected to live and maintain their families below the poverty line. This is not an opportunity to overcome poverty, but an exercise in managing bills and expenses so not to lose everything. The government is not supporting a move out of poverty, they are simply

⁴ The unavailability of current welfare statistics makes it difficult to comment on the “success” of this program.

working to move people off the welfare rolls and to cost the federal government less money in welfare benefits.

The demographics of a Georgia TANF recipient reflect a racialization of poverty. African Americans made up 77.3% of TANF recipients, Whites 20.1% and Hispanics 2.1%. These numbers are not reflective of the demographics of the residents of Georgia. African Americans are 29.9% of the Georgia population and Whites are 58.9%. In addition, 13.7% of Georgians lives below the poverty line (US Census Bureau, 2008), but only about 1.5% receive aid through TANF programs. Yet, over 60% of Georgia applicants are denied benefits based on procedural errors. Only 7% of denials are due to the family income being too high (Schott, 2007). The disconnect between the number of people living below the poverty line and the relatively small number of aid recipients, as well as a greater number of African Americans on TANF programs demonstrates a systemic policy issue. Minorities are over-represented and those who need aid the most are either not seeking it out or have been denied for bureaucratic reasons.

Welfare programs operate not only to provide cash benefits and services to recipients, but also serve to teach the values and priorities of the state. Also, the strict procedures and policies that must be followed in order to receive aid often deter people from applying for aid and also operate as a way to maintain desired behaviors. As one begins to examine the goals of the Georgia TANF programs, it becomes apparent that the state is utilizing cash aid as a means of regulating behavior. Recipients are required to name the father of their child, participate in immunization programs, and receive prenatal care or face sanctions (Division of Child and Family Services, 2002). Paradoxically, the unborn child that they are carrying is not eligible for aid. But if a mother chooses to disregard these policies, the resulting discipline is a loss in aid

for other members of the family, including other children. Decisions for the care of children are no longer the sole property of the parent. By applying for and accepting financial assistance from the state, recipients must also adhere to the social values of the state and what it means to be a member of a poor family.

Primarily women feel the impact of PRWORA policies. Over 90% of those who receive TANF dollars or services are women (Hays, 2003). The focus of TANF rules requires mothers to maintain a socially constructed ideal of motherhood. The requirements of the state reinforce traditional, American family values (Hays, 2003) and provide little room for the recipients to live out their own family values. They instead must adopt the values of the state welfare agency in order to receive money for basic survival. The goals of the TANF program directly impact women who receive benefits. Policies created to meet these goals attempt to mold recipients into model American citizens who are able to work, care for their children, and contribute to society in a meaningful manner.

TANF legislation addressed similar contingencies as the EOA. Race was still a primary concern as the racialization of poverty continued in the U.S. TANF was passed during a time of economic prosperity. When there are plenty of jobs it is easier to move people off of welfare and to believe that the individual can be successful and no longer requires welfare dollars. This resulted in the end of “entitlements” to welfare as the focus on the individual was reinforced through TANF legislation.

Taken together, the contingencies of individualism, racism, loss of entitlement, and reduction in welfare rolls, reflect Foucault’s theory of normalizing judgments (1995). People are judged against one another on a scale of success (Gutting, 2005). Those who follow the rules and are normalized are rewarded by being placed in the top tenth percentile or in the upper 50%

of their class. Those who are not normalized, who do not follow the rules, find themselves judged as abnormal and unsuccessful. Welfare recipients, those who are at the lowest of the poverty scale, are judged to be abnormal and are therefore subjected to a set of rules and guidelines in an effort to move them up the scale of normal. TANF guidelines operate to mold the welfare recipient into an embodied person who represents the ideals and values of American society. The normalizing judgments, such as rules around working and the definition of family, impose a set of disciplinary actions to regulate and to create a condition of normal (Foucault, 1995). Normalizing judgments also create space to measure differences within the normal and to establish when it is acceptable to operate outside of the normal and when it is not. The exception made for cases of verifiable rape demonstrates a time in which an exception can be made to the determination that a woman must not create another child while receiving government benefits. The disciplinary power imposed by normalizing judgments serves to regulate welfare bodies into contributing members of society, who reflect the contingencies of individual, wage workers, who no longer need to avail themselves of government dollars.

Implications for Leisure Research

It is hard to be poor in the U.S. and it costs money to hold a job. It may be even harder to apply for and then receive TANF funds. The sheer amount of time and effort necessary to normalize one's self into one of the few "deserving" poor that receives cash benefits strips one of the time, effort, and energy for the common conceptualizations of leisure. When leisure is conceptualized as free time, unobligated time, or time away from work, there is a disservice to those whose lives are deeply embedded with meeting welfare standards. When leisure is conceptualized as a state of mind, there is a disservice to those who are consumed by thoughts of paying bills or those who spend countless hours worrying about being evicted. Welfare and

common conceptualizations of leisure are not complementary ideals. Access to opportunities that determine life trajectories take place at birth and one does not have control over the life situation they are born into. Quality of education, access to career and job skills, health care, and nutrition are all determined by the class one is born into, regardless of our success at navigating the quest for the American dream. Most of leisure conceptualized in current literature is that of a privileged group who has had access to upper or middle class opportunities. As theorists and scholars we have a responsibility to ensure that those who were born into life situations that have insecure access to education, nutrition, and access to good jobs are not subjected to continued scrutiny as they attempt to lead meaningful lives and raise their children. Our literature must now be broadened to include leisure as conceptualized by those outside of our current understandings—especially the poor.

Conclusion

Neither the “war on poverty” nor the “end of the war on poverty” delivered us from poverty in the U.S. However, the discourse of war was used in an attempt to bring people together to fight against our welfare recipients—not poverty. This war pitted those who have the label of normal (those who can achieve) against those who are abnormal (those who cannot). War is a collective term, implying people band together for the liberation of a common cause. Yet, this common cause was people who have money attempting to stop those who do not from “taking advantage of the system” and instead mold them into individuals who reflect the values of a middle class citizen, able to pay her bills.

The unravelings and discussion of contingencies presented here demonstrate only a few of the many, multiple historical accidents occurring simultaneously that are put to work to address what we cast as the individual problem of living poverty. The policies in place today to

govern welfare programs grew out of a desire to normalize and discipline the poor. The poor in this case, a mother and a person who is not White, must conform to the cultural values of what it means to be a welfare recipient in order to receive money from the state. She must not have sex, she must be prepared to provide the name of her child's father, she must strive to provide a recognizable family structure and work to educate herself for a job that probably does not exist.

However, poverty is not an individual problem that can be overcome with job training programs and cash benefits. As Shipler (2005) wrote, "The entire burden rests on the trainee to be good enough to get a job, not on the employer to be good enough to provide decent pay and working conditions" (p. 263). And if a job *is* obtained, it often comes with low wages, no potential for promotion, and little or no benefits (Shipler, 2005). It also costs money to have a job, once transportation and child-care cost are considered. In some cases jobs do not provide a way out of poverty, only a way temporary move off the welfare roll. The discourse around war used so often when discussing welfare brings to mind violence and a collective fight against a common enemy. But who is the common enemy? Is it the condition of being poor or the poor themselves? This genealogy of welfare legislation points to the individual as the decision maker who created his or her own condition of being poor. And once they became poor (or were more likely born into poverty) they have the responsibility to pull themselves out of poverty by working hard. Shipler (2005) found in his study of the working poor that the poor work very hard, they just can not overcome the conditions of being poor for long enough to get ahead.

This genealogy of welfare in the U.S. addressed Foucault's (1971) three types of genealogies in an effort to reveal the how the "Truth" around welfare today was developed through a collection of accidental beginnings.

First, a historical ontology of ourselves in relation to truth through which we constitute ourselves as subjects of knowledge; second, a historical ontology of ourselves in relation to a field of power through which we constitute ourselves as subjects acting on others; third, a historical ontology in relation to ethics through which we constitute ourselves as moral agents. (p. 351)

As Americans, we have a common knowledge base around welfare, built primarily on popular culture images and discourse. The development of this knowledge base, also known as the truth of welfare is brought forward by genealogy. Genealogy is a tool that allows us to describe the effects of welfare both for those who receive it and also for society as a whole (Gutting, 2005). The relationship that each of us has with welfare may be enacted primarily through cultural discourse, not through actual lived experiences with those who operate within the system of welfare. Therefore, we must consider the ethical implications of combating poverty at the individual level while ignoring the societal impacts of poverty in this country.

We as leisure researchers are also present in the genealogy of welfare. The Greeks needed slaves in order to be at leisure; we need poor Americans in order to experience our low cost, consumption-based leisure of today. The values we expect welfare recipients to honor and that we in turn scrutinize these efforts demonstrates the value system of our society. As one welfare mother said, “Welfare is a system is to help, but what it does is it also hinders. And it can immobilize you, make you more, more dependent you know because it’s nothing to really to get you to stand up.”

This critical analysis attempted to isolate a few of the contingencies and historical eruptions that are often hidden in our discussions of welfare today. Foucault would call these eruptions an effort to detangle the messiness of the truth we know as welfare. Each of these

eruptions could as be further detangled individually as each historical accident is teased apart into another series of decisions and minute events that leads towards a better understanding of the naturalness of poverty in the U.S. When considering the state of welfare today, we must question why we believe what we know to be true and reflect on the historical accidents that created that truth—however, we usually do not, as it is much easier to just keep the way it is.

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CHAPTER THREE

“AS LONG AS ME AND MINE EAT, I’M ALL RIGHT”: EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN ON WELFARE IN GEORGIA⁵

⁵ Richmond, L. P. To be submitted to *Journal of Leisure Research*.

Sharise pushed the cart around the brightly lit supermarket. She looked at the list in her hand and then at the box of Oreos her son was holding. "Put those back," she said harshly. She softened her tone as he flinched slightly. "I know you want those, but the stamps won't cover them and we don't have enough left over to buy them. How about these cookies instead?" she asked as she pulled the store brand from the shelf. He shrugged and walked to put the Oreos back. It's the end of the month and Sharise had just received her allotment of food stamps. The stamps are on a card that makes it hard for the person standing in line behind her to know she is on food stamps unless they recognize the distinctive Georgia peach on the front. She used to be ashamed that she needed food stamps to feed her children, but her feelings on that matter have changed. Her job as a mother is to take care of her children and it doesn't really matter where and how she gets the money to do it.

Sharise doesn't go to the grocery store very often. She has to arrange for rides or take the city bus. Public transportation with two small children and a month's worth of groceries is a chore she tries hard to avoid. She also has to organize her coupons, check the store flyer and write her list so she can stretch the stamps as far as they will go. A month's worth of foodstamps is great if you only need to eat for three weeks, so the saying goes. Sharise also has to make sure she has cash to cover items that foodstamps won't, like a treat for her children or household supplies. She once accidentally had some imported food in her cart and she had to have the cashier remove those items from the tally because the stamps don't cover food processed outside of America. Removing those items took longer than usual and the people in line behind her grumbled about welfare queens. It even costs money to use coupons. The store charges five cents a coupon, so she has to calculate that into her budget. And at the same time, deny her

children the treats they want at the store. But they will eat!!! Sharise does what she needs to to provide for her kids.

Since the early 1990's, many leisure researchers and service providers have operated under a benefit based approach to leisure services (Driver & Bruns, 1999) that focuses on the positives of leisure. This approach used clear objectives to reach desired outcomes for the population being served. The leisure service delivery system under question must determine the best result for the participants served when considering which leisure programs or opportunities to offer. Positives and negatives of each program must be carefully weighed so that dollars are spent to generate the greatest amount of value for the population served. Driver and Bruns explained that there are many benefits that an individual and community can gain from leisure experiences (1999). Personal benefits such as self-confidence and self-reliance; health benefits such as greater cardiovascular strength, and social benefits such as tolerance of others, reduced health costs, and preserving the environment are just a few of the many potential benefits gained through intentionally designed leisure experiences. Non-critical scholars and institutions such as the National Recreation and Park Association and many public leisure service agencies employed models similar to the benefits based approach as they delivered services for the common and public good. On the surface, this way of thinking about leisure provided justification for spending tax dollars and undertaking research necessary to reinforce the positive benefits of leisure. However, if one looks deeper and more critically at benefits-based policies, it becomes obvious that certain groups (or classes) of people's interests are being served. Samdahl reminded us that values are inherent in leisure service delivery systems and they reflect institutional power structures (2000). Therefore, when research is conducted that seeks to

promote the benefits of leisure, are we also promoting the values of the institution and people that hold the most power?

Leisure is often defined as freedom, as time away from work, or as recuperation and relaxation. But for those who receive welfare, these types of leisure are not valued or accessible. The public perception of the “welfare queen” as a lazy, uneducated woman having children for the sole purpose of receiving more money from the government does not correspond to free-time as/for leisure. Instead, public discourse demands that the welfare recipient look for a job, not find or take time for herself and certainly she should not have the money to participate in consumptive leisure as she has not earned the right to experience leisure. In this situation, we see leisure and access to leisure as behavior modification tool of the powerful. If a mother receives government assistance, she should not have any free time. She should be constantly spending her time working to move off of government welfare rolls. Given this contradictory discourse, we begin to see that the benefits of leisure are available only to those who have earned them based on the values of normative society. Welfare recipients reflect a segment of our society for which free time is not accessible or beneficial and instead stand in the way of looking for, traveling to, or maintaining a job. Common conceptualizations of leisure are simply not available to those who receive welfare. For welfare recipients, the meaning and purposes, including positive benefits, of leisure are not operational and we must consider the values that are normalized and what is made invisible as a cost to keeping those values maintained (Richmond & Johnson, in process⁶) when we explore leisure for those who live in poverty.

To that end, this qualitative investigation considered the question: How do women who participate in welfare programs in Georgia navigate the processes and manage the perceptions

⁶ This citation reflects the first article in this dissertation.

surrounding welfare? Using focus groups as a method for data collection, I explored the welfare experience with a focus on meanings of leisure for women, who are Black, poor mothers accessing welfare benefits in Georgia. The composite character, Sharise, introduced in the first narrative, provides a representational strategy for the data analysis alongside a discussion of the welfare experience as reported by the participants (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). The narratives that comprise Sharise's story also illustrate how welfare recipients manage the perceptions of others as recipients of welfare. Finally, Sharise's character forces us to (re)conceptualize leisure and its essentializing irrelevant meaning for one marginalized group in American society—women living in poverty.

Leisure: Class Based Values

Undoubtedly, meanings of social class are broader than just income and economic disparity, but when we think of class, we look to media images that focus on economic disparity. Those of us who do not live in poverty, including myself, learn about those who do from these media accounts. People who live in poverty are often portrayed by media accounts as unhappy and being either homeless or criminal (Jones, 2006) and we easily adopt these accounts into popular discourse. However, the condition of having limited resources does not necessarily result in unhappiness or criminality. The negative and graphic images of poverty found in the media usually do not reflect the actual lived experiences of those who experience poverty. The value-laden media images teach us that lazy, uneducated, unmotivated people end up poor, whereas, those who work hard receive monetary wealth and happiness. The systemic, institutionalized power structures that operate within our society are ignored in these simplistic understandings of class. Only the powerful are served by the maintenance of middle class values that reflect the dominant ideologies of society. Those without power, such as the women who

receive welfare, are taught that they, as individuals, are somehow wrong and must strive to change themselves to become “normal.”

In an effort to address the normalcy of the maintenance of class-based values that operate in our society, Bourdieu (1984) investigated the origins of social capital and structure. He believed differences expressed in consumption were between a taste of luxury, also known as freedom, and a taste of necessity. Those who have capital, have the freedom to consume luxuries, while those without capital must consume necessities in order to survive. But those with economic power create and maintain the necessities at an affordable cost. Workers do not have a taste for fast food because it is cheap; they have a taste for it because fast food exists in a physical and economic condition that allows for it to be affordable. The workers do not have a choice to eat fast food; the decision is made for them in a capitalistic market that made fast food accessible and affordable. The workers then develop a taste for this food and it becomes part of their identity. But the taste the workers developed could just as easily have been for a fresh food restaurant, had those with economic freedom employed the labor force to make it so, since Bourdieu instructed us that tastes develop depending on the goods made available (1984).

The tastes that we develop are also part of our social identification and classification, known by Bourdieu as *habitus* (Bourdieu 1984). Habitus is the space we occupy within a social hierarchy where our values, rooted deeply in our cultural history, condition us how to react to situations across contexts. We respond to situations based on our ingrained knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs in an unconscious manner thought to be natural and which goes unquestioned (Bourdieu, 1984).

Habitus focuses on our ways of acting, feeling, thinking, and being. It captures how we carry within us our history, how we bring this history into our present circumstances, and how we then make choices to act in certain ways and not others. (Maton, 2008, p. 52)

Our experiences and conditioning within habitus result in a variety of levels of comfort when we access social situations. The social field (or class level) in which one was raised conditions one's behavior within that class. If a person moves across class lines or social situations, their habitus has not conditioned them for how to react appropriately and they are therefore uncomfortable as they do not know the rules of the game or *doxa* (Maton, 2008). Habitus provides us with a way to think about how social classes are structured and have been made natural in our daily thinking and experiences.

Our social class standing has a large impact on how we view the world and how we interact with others within our world. Similar to the development of a taste for luxury, habitus is the system that structures our decision-making and is comprised of history and conditioning. We in the United States are socialized very early in life that money and material objects are desirable and that those who do not have economic resources have an individual flaw that prevents them from being successful. Our differences lead to judgment and discrimination of those who are found lacking economic resources (Jones, 2006).

It is important to recognize historical contexts and structural systems that impact one's own value system and place within the habitus. "We are from more than physical places, however, we are from people, food, objects, language, religion, recreation, institutions – and together these form our beliefs about how the world works" (Jones, 2006, p. 2). Beliefs and values are often promoted as normal and therefore invisible within society. Bourdieu's use of habitus helps to reveal the social condition one encounters on a regular basis within social space.

Exploring leisure research and practice with a critical eye towards the making and reinforcing of normalcy reveals to us the values that we, as researchers/practitioners, are perpetuating within the field.

Based on Bourdieu's thinking, Raey defined class as "encompassing complex social and psychological dispositions that interact with gender and race to inform and influence everyday practice" (1997, p. 226). The influence of these everyday practices has implications for leisure researchers and practitioners. Class position is deeply internalized and played out in interactions with others (Raey, 1997). When a participant labels themselves (or is labeled by others) as part of a particular social class, they willingly and unquestioningly accept the cultural values for that class as reflected in society. These values often include negative connotations that are internalized by the participant as part of their identity. This internalization also influences how the participant responds to those in their own class and those in other classes and results in class becoming a social filter. The absence of discussions around class asserts the middle class condition as normal, invisible, and unquestioned.

Kivel demonstrated this perpetuation of normalcy in leisure research when she proposed that leisure researchers have spent the last 30 years attempting to find a "common leisure experience" (2000). The desire by researchers to find a common experience that binds us together also works to eliminate our differences and promote the values of the powerful. However, "realizing that 'common' leisure experiences are mediated by many different factors, researchers began to broaden their thinking to examine leisure across various markers of identity – race, disability, gender, sexual identity, age and class" (Kivel, 2000, p. 79). Yet, Kivel was also concerned that we may be reinforcing these markers of difference when we examine the social categories that make up individual identity. Instead, she argued that there is an overall

need to examine leisure's role in reinforcing these social categories that result in markers of difference. Researchers have addressed race, gender, and sexual identity (c.f. Henderson & Hickerson, 2007; Johnson, 2005; Outley & Floyd, 2002) but there is still a lack of attention brought to social class and the impact of classism on our understandings of the leisure experience.

The social psychology approach towards leisure research places the individual and their experience at the center of the research. But Kivel (2000) wondered if the experiences and identities of an individual truly their own.

So, to ask individuals to reflect upon their experiences of leisure without understanding how various ideologies have contributed to the construction of their identities and, subsequently, their experiences, fails to recognize the discursive power of language to produce and reproduce differences in identity. (p. 80)

Most often, social categories used to describe research participants are not defined. We assume that the reader already knows what it means to be a man, gay, or White. The social category is not questioned and universal understanding of this category is assumed. The identity categories are naturalized and essentialized by the continued assumption by researchers that they are real resulting in leisure research that reinforces marginalized positions and perpetuates hegemonies of difference. The focus on differences between groups ignores the possibility that differences are created and (re)produced by institutions and cultural ideologies. In order to understand the leisure experience in and of difference, we must understand how discourse around the various social categories, such as motherhood, operates during leisure. Critical exploration of the discourses that remain at the center must take place to understand why the dominant ideology continues to thrive (Kivel, 2000).

Leisure: Motherhood and Family

Welfare recipients are almost/always mothers and it is therefore important to examine the literature on mothers and leisure to ground ourselves in previous research. Conceptualizations of motherhood, similar to conceptualizations of leisure, are class based and value laden and easily recognizable in popular discourse. Leisure and motherhood are places where gender roles are reproduced (Herridge, Shaw, & Mannell, 2003) and are deeply embedded with patriarchal ideals. Children's needs and development come first (Davidson, 1996) and it is the responsibility of the mother to maintain family values and provide for their children and the child's success. Leisure, as it is a powerful tool, operates to reinforce traditional value of motherhood in a variety of ways. For example, scholars suggested that children need leisure in order to learn about healthy choices (Shaw & Dawson, 2001), to make positive decisions in life (Shannon & Shaw, 2008), and to strengthen family ties. A "good" mother works hard to provide family leisure opportunities that supports society's image of how a child is raised. As "the ideologies associated with motherhood are powerful influences on the way women prioritize their use of time" (Brown et al., 2001, p. 140), mothers are found by leisure researchers to put their families leisure needs before their own. Mothers make the decisions about how their families participate in leisure (Shannon & Shaw, 2008) and organize leisure based on the needs of their children and husbands (Trussell & Shaw, 2007). Nonetheless, leisure is also used as a tool to allow mothers to better fulfill their role of mother (Freeman, Palmer, & Baker, 2006).

However, leisure and family are also found to be competing ideologies (Bialeschki & Michener, 1994). Mothers work hard to maintain their role as caregivers to the family and providing quality family activities is an expected part of this role. Upon becoming a mother "family leisure took priority" (Shannon & Shaw, 2008, p. 11) and new mothers lost their

entitlement to leisure. Personal leisure was no longer a main concern of women; instead the needs of the children came first. Family leisure is purposive leisure and mothers set forth to achieve specific goals when planning activities (Shaw & Dawson, 2001).

Middle class values are also reinforced throughout the research literature on mothers and leisure. For example, Shannon and Shaw (2008) included discussion of mothers explaining the importance of participating in an activity in order for their child to be successful in the future. In order for a child to progress through society, they must have had certain leisure experiences and after school activities are considered vital to the future success of a child. Yet, money and time, at the very least, are required in order to participate in these activities (Shannon & Shaw, 2008). Trussell and Shaw (2007) found that mothers would dedicate time to make sure their children participated in sports activities. Mothers believed it was important for children to participate in athletics as a means for socialization opportunities, physical growth, development, and that athletics were important for children's success. In addition, valuable time was spent between mother and child in the car going to these leisure-based activities.

Class based assumptions around what it means to be a mother and the importance of leisure can still be found in studies comprised of non-middle class participants. Scott and McCarville (2008), in their study of lone mothers in poverty, placed an assumption as to the value of leisure on their participants. The authors wanted to know more about how leisure was integrated into the everyday life of lower class mothers. They assumed that leisure had a place of importance in the daily lives of their participants and that it was a high priority. Mothers in this study were cast by the researchers as part of the family and were not viewed as individuals who might seek leisure for themselves or not desire it at all.

One notable exception to the study of “traditional” family structure is Bialeschki and Pearce’s (1997) study of lesbian mothers. Despite its potential, the findings were similar to studies of traditional family structures, whereas Bialeschki and Pearce found that mothers still worked to maintain the dominant’s ideologies of motherhood. These families simply had two “good” mothers to work together to provide a standard of socially accepted leisure for their children.

Common messages can be located in the literature on mothers and family leisure. Leisure provides positive growth for the family and mothers are willing to sacrifice their leisure in order to provide positive experiences for their children (Currie, 2004). Discussion surrounding the negative impacts of leisure for families and mothers is absent from this body of knowledge as is discussion about the sacrifices mothers make for their families. Leisure is also conceptualized from a White, middle class viewpoint, ignoring and making assumptions about those who might exist (or want to) outside of this paradigm. Shaw reminded researchers that family leisure should be viewed as contradictory, with both positive and negative experiences (1997). She then argued that there is no single reality of family life and that researchers must remember to recognize the diversity in family structure and the unique experiences of each family (Shaw, 1997), positive and negative.

Leisure: Interplay of Mothers and Class

Few studies focus on socio-economic class and leisure. One of those few is Outley and Floyd (2002), who found that African-Americans living in poverty developed adaptive parenting strategies to protect their children in urban environments and that parents used kinship networks to supervise children. Parents tried to arrange worthwhile activities and keep their children away from deviant activities that could lead to drugs or gang membership (Outley & Floyd, 2002).

Also worth noting and discussed previously, is the study by Scott and McCarville (2008) that examined the challenges of single, poor mothers and the role of leisure in their everyday life. Overall, it was found that “leisure suffered as a result of the limited financial resources” and participants faced challenges in “arranging for leisure in their lives” (Scott & McCarville, 2008, p. 89). But does leisure, conceptualized as free time, really require money to exist? Even Scott and McCarville found that the majority of their participant’s leisure consisted of walks with their children and renting movies with friends, and they subsequently argued that these activities were not “meaningful.” The labeling of an activity as meaningful or not indicates a value judgment drawn from the assumptions that leisure is to be beneficial and that some activities are more beneficial and worthwhile than others.

Homogeneity of leisure experiences and the ranking of leisure in terms of its potential benefits works to erase differences that contributes to the development of the individual. Determining what activity or experience is best limits choice, individuality, and identity development. Nearly two decades ago, Kelly and Kelly (1994) challenged leisure researchers to step away from the belief that leisure is separate and distinct from other life activities and argued for a more multi-dimensional conceptualization of work, family, and leisure. Leisure is not completely distinct from work and family and it is difficult for researchers to attempt to separate these spheres. Bialeschki & Michener (1994) agreed and said that leisure is part of the complexity of daily life and this complexity makes it tricky to label certain moments in time as leisure. Yet, how is leisure conceptualized for someone whose life is under constant surveillance and whose housing and income is determined by adherence to normalizing judgments (Foucault, 1995) such as welfare’s rules and regulations?

Welfare in the Southern United States

A greater understanding around the way that leisure is used to maintain and support the interests of powerful groups allows scholars to move one step closer to minimizing the marginalization of other groups. Powerful government institutions, like U.S. welfare programs, reflect the value systems of a nation in their policies. U.S. welfare, discussed here as a cash benefit and housing system, is a means-tested program (financial assistance to cover basic needs) available to able-bodied, working-age adults (Gilens, 1999) who meet specific federal criteria. As recipients are considered employable, welfare is frequently understood by mainstream Americans as a crutch to support a woman and her children whose income is less than half of the federal definition for poverty (Hays, 2003). The unemployed are also considered to not have the right to access leisure, as they are assumed to be lazy, stupid, or immoral and therefore undeserving of leisure.

Welfare programs, and subsequently welfare reform, reflect the current values and political undercurrents of the time period (Piven & Cloward, 1993). The values of the time period are also taught to the poor through federal welfare programs and then reinforced by applying disciplinary standards to the receipt of cash aid. Hays (2003) believed that the granting and withdrawing of cash benefits based on behavior standards results in a form of social control that disciplines recipients into certain, desired behaviors. This implicit type of social control operates to support and maintain specific values and discourses around welfare and leisure.

In order to be eligible for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) assistance (the cash based benefits program known as welfare), a Georgia resident must not have any resources (owned property or cash) over \$1000, their monthly income (for a family of 3) must not exceed \$784, and those eligible to work must meet work requirements of at least 30 hours a

week (Division of Family and Children Services, 2005). Individual counties in Georgia are responsible for administrating TANF programs to their constituents. In 2003, there were a total of 138,609 people receiving TANF aid in Georgia, reflecting 1.5% of the Georgia population. The average monthly benefit was \$225 and the maximum benefit for a family of three was \$280. In addition, recipients are limited to receiving benefits for no longer than 36 months over their lifetime. The poverty level in Georgia for a family of three is \$1272 (Georgia Department of Human Resources, 2003). Potentially, the mother of two children could receive \$280 from TANF, bring in \$784 from outside sources, totaling \$1064 a month and still not reach the poverty line of \$1272 a month. In addition, the mother is responsible for work activities of at least 30 hours a week and she may or may not qualify for support services such as child-care. TANF programs may supply much needed aid to families, yet recipients are still expected to live and maintain their families living below the poverty line.

The demographics of a Georgia TANF recipient reflect a racialization of poverty. African Americans made up 77.3% of TANF recipients, Whites 20.1% and Hispanics 2.1%. These numbers are not reflective of the demographics of the residents of Georgia. African Americans are 29.9% of the Georgia population and Whites are 58.9%. In addition, 13.7% of Georgians lives below the poverty line (US Census Bureau, 2008), but only about 1.5% receive aid through TANF programs. Yet, over 60% of Georgia applicants are denied benefits based on procedural errors. Only 7% of denials are due to the family income being too high (Schott, 2007). The disconnect between the number of people living below the poverty line and the relatively small number of aid recipients, as well as a greater number of African Americans on TANF programs demonstrates a systemic policy issue. Minorities are over-represented and

those who need aid the most are either not seeking it out or have been denied for bureaucratic reasons.

Methods and Data Development

In this study I recruited 13 participants who received welfare benefits from Georgia. Welfare was defined in this study as receiving cash benefits or housing assistance from the state of Georgia within the last three years, for at least three months. The time periods were set so that memories and experiences with welfare were relatively recent and that the women were part of the system for enough time to learn and engage in the policies and procedures of their particular system. Participants were incentivized to participate with a \$20 gift card to a local grocery and were also offered childcare during the time of participation. All of the participants had received TANF and were currently receiving both housing assistance and food stamps. All of the participants self-identified as Black or African-American and were mothers. As I suspected, I did not have to purposefully sample for these criteria.

Each of the three focus group sessions lasted approximately one hour and was audio recorded and transcribed. The focus groups took place in a local community center and at a Boys and Girls club. As participants arrived they were introduced to the child-care providers, undergraduate recreation students who planned activities and supervised the children. Once the children were settled, I gave the participants informed consent forms, explained the purposes of the study, and we established ground rules for our conversations. Although an interview guide was used to direct and prompt the women, they mostly guided the conversation speaking to and off of one another. In addition to guiding the conversation, I took fieldnotes during the session to capture characterizations, non-verbals, and other contextual factors.

After each focus group, I transcribed, read and reviewed the data. The data were then coded using open coding techniques and logical sequencing strategies (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Once early themes were identified, the data were revisited and themes were reconnected back to the literature on class, motherhood, and leisure. The composite character Sharise, introduced in the opening narrative and used in subsequent data narratives was created from the transcripts, main themes, and researcher observations during the focus groups. Sharise's narrative is constructed directly from the transcripts and fieldnotes taken during the focus groups and describes the welfare experience as the participants talked about it. Data analysis produced data points and themes that were then embedded into Sharise's story. The descriptions and experiences, including the emotions expressed by Sharise, were all represented in the data. Sharise represents an assembly of the study participants and allows me to describe a variety of experiences through the use of a single character (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995; Johnson, 2005). Sharise's story represent the women in my study and also allows the reader to trouble some of their own assumptions and apply some of their own interpretations about the welfare and leisure experience as they engage with the text. Like some recent forms of critical and poststructural qualitative inquiry, my discussion and connections to theory are paired alongside Sharise's story.

Sharise's Journey

The bus doors opened slowly, letting in the thick, hot, humid summer air. Sharise stood up slowly and moved towards the exit, gathering her bulky tote bags and ushering her two small, babbling children. She asked the bus driver for a receipt so she can get reimbursed for the ride today. It will take over a month to get her money back, but every cent makes a difference, she thought as she shoved the receipt into her back pocket. Her cell phone trilled as she stepped onto

the sidewalk. She dug around in the small, faux Coach purse, pushing aside her wallet and keys as she reached for the phone. "What's up," she said tiredly into the phone. Even though it was only ten o'clock, Sharise felt as if she had been awake for days. She started her day by making sure that she had her social security card, income tax statements, the birth certificates and vaccination paperwork for each of her children, along with her record of job applications, tucked into a tote bag. She had to travel to the health department a few days ago and pay twenty dollars for each of the vaccine reports for her children because she had misplaced the original copies. While she was gathering the documentation that tracked her short life, she managed to dress her children, put together money for the bus ride, make breakfast, and bring laundry in from the line outside. She probably would have let it hang, but the news indicated that rain was expected later that afternoon. She sighed as she silently wished for a dryer to accompany her washing machine. The washing machine she saved and saved for so she wouldn't have to haul her laundry and her children to the Cash and Spin once a week. But a dryer wasn't permitted in public housing unless you had a doctor's note saying you were too disabled to go outside.

Today she was visiting the Department of Family and Children (DFCS) office to reapply for her TANF benefits because she had lost her job. New policy changes made it possible to renew her food stamps over the computer, meaning a short walk up a steep hill to the local library and only a short wait in line. Meanwhile, the kids could look at the picture books in the children's section while she entered the required information into the computer. But applying for TANF meant a trip on the bus to the DFCS office to wait in the cramped waiting room for an unknown number of hours. Cutbacks meant that Sharise was no longer assigned a caseworker and had to speak with whoever was available that day. Lacking a long term relationship with a caseworker meant starting at the beginning of the process every time she had to apply, reviewing

material again and again as she hoped that she would be eligible for her \$280 a month. The last time she received TANF she had been sanctioned and she prayed that the sanction would not carry over. Sharise wanted that 20% put back onto her check. She had missed a job training class because her son was sick and the daycare wouldn't take him in. Plus she couldn't imagine getting on the bus with a child who kept on throwing up. Missing one lousy class because of a sick child and there goes a portion of her already small check for three months! But she had been to every single class since then and she diligently applied for four jobs a day, even when it meant spending her lunch money on bus fares to the other side of town. And then when she finally found a job working in a fast food restaurant, her TANF check stopped immediately. But that job did not last. She was assigned to the night shift after a few weeks of working during the day. Her child-care was inconsistent and the buses did not run as often at night. So that job didn't last too long. The gap between her last paycheck and her next TANF check loomed large. Sharise was really worried about how she would make ends meet this month. She wondered which bill had the cheapest late fee.

As she stepped off the bus onto the hot sidewalk, she glanced down the street towards the DFCS building a few blocks away. Her children jumped up and down around her, full of animated energy. She started moving slowly towards the building, juggling her overstuffed bags and keeping a close eye on the kids as they skipped ahead of her. Add a car onto the list, she thought. Well, if she held down a job for six months, the state would help her purchase one, but they required she have a bank account. Ha, she thought, a bank account! Having one of those was just about as improbable as having enough money to buy a dryer or a car. She would continue to cash her checks at the grocery store just like everyone else in her position!

She returned her thoughts to the phone in her hand. “What do you want?” she asked, “I only have so many minutes on this phone and I don’t want to waste them!” She listened for a minute. “No, I don’t want you to come down here and talk to the caseworker. Barb had her boyfriend come down and all that happened was she lost her benefits. They don’t want you to say you are trying to help and trying to find a job. Either you have a job and take care of your kids by paying child support and they cut my check cause I don’t need it or you don’t show up. I don’t need you keeping my kids from getting benefits.” She shook her head in frustration and shifted the phone to her other hand. “I know you want to help, but the state don’t want your kind of help! I’m not trying to keep you from your kids – I just don’t want you down here! I need this money; the light bill is due soon. I have to go, I don’t want to be late. Yes, I’ll call you later.” Sharise snapped the phone closed sharply and looked down at her kids. “Let’s go,” she said and ushered them towards the front door of the DFCS office.

Sharise knows that she needs to follow the rules set in place by the Department of Family and Child Services (DFCS – the government office responsible for administering TANF) office in order to receive the monthly check she needs to pay her bills. Her children’s father gives her small amounts of money when he has it and he occasionally brings by some groceries. He used to bring diapers, but the children no longer need them. Sharise appreciates his help and knows he is trying, but if he went with her to apply for welfare, he would be required to go to court and pay her child support. This child support would then be deducted from her check, whether he actually paid the child support or not. It is not worth the legal trouble and she knows in all likelihood he would not be able to pay consistently. So Sharise tells the welfare office she does not know where the father of her children could be found.

Welfare programs operate as vehicles of social control. Welfare recipients are denied social citizenship because they are cast as members of failed families, excluded from the market as both a worker and consumer, and are required to participate in a program that defines them only in their role as a mother (Fraser, 1989). Government programs require that women must strive to be normative mothers, but do not provide recipients with the tools necessary to achieve this ideal. Sharise is expected to provide and care for her children, limit the number of children she has, work a job, acquire a male figure to participate in their daily life, and work towards an education. These goals are all reflective of what it means to be a successful woman and mother from a White, middle class viewpoint and does not leave any opportunity or access for leisure. Sharise also has to prove that she is working towards these middle class goals with documentation of vaccines, residency, and job searches. Transportation, day care, education, and cash benefits provided by welfare programs are minimal and do not meet the needs of the family or aid them in reaching the government's goals (Richmond & Johnson, in process). The consequences that result from attempts to maintain traditional values are often great for women and their children who receive welfare. The reinforcement of traditional family values can also result in violence for women as they may return to violent relationships in an effort to support themselves and their children (Polakow, 1999). The structure of the welfare system in the United States supports an "ideal" family comprised of two parents, a middle class income, and an emphasis on education. While useful to many families, this structure does not reflect the life situation of many Americans, including Sharise.

Sharise had so much to do! Her TANF application had been approved and she was expecting her check by the end of the month. Her children were in school, so as long as the TANF classes met in the morning, she would be able to make them. She was upset that her

daughter was not going to be able to enroll in Head Start. Although Sharise qualified for the program, the Head Start building was not on a bus line and they did not offer transportation. She was unable to find anyone who could take her daughter and pick her up everyday, so Sharise had to enroll her in a preschool program closer to home. In the meantime, she had a resume class, an interview class, and an application class coming up. She was grateful for the bus passes she had been given. They would make it easier to get to class. But once she finished these classes she would have to start applying for jobs. That meant a trip to the unemployment office to get a list of who is hiring and then traveling around filling out applications. She would need some interview clothes and more bus passes. It costs a lot of money to find a job, Sharise thought to herself. And the caseworker would call each place she said she applied to and ask if she had actually submitted an application. Sharise had to be careful when filling out her work activity log and make sure there were no mistakes on it. The last thing she needed was some potential employer saying that Sharise never applied for a job with them. She really couldn't handle another sanction applied to her already meager TANF check.

But Sharise didn't really want to find a job; she wanted to go to school. She had finally passed her GED last year and she really wanted to attend the local technical college to get her nursing certificate. Her caseworker had told her this would not be possible; she would be better off finding a job now. She could put her in more GED classes (even though she already had her degree), but she could not go to college. Sharise had been talking with her neighbor, who told her that it was possible for her to go to school. She would have to insist that she be allowed to attend and still receive her TANF check. Her neighbor said that the DFCS people don't like to tell you can do both because the student loan grants impact your TANF check, but it could be done. She advised her on what to say to the caseworker and who she needed to speak with at the

technical college in order to enroll and apply for student loans. She told Sharise to insist that she be able to go to school and have the schoolwork listed as her work activity. She also told her that the caseworkers help out people they like and she knew a girl that received TANF and school grants. But Sharise was nervous about all of this. She didn't like making a fuss at the DFCS office and the women there were always so proper and sure of themselves. When they said something couldn't be done, it was really hard to argue with their statements, especially given their tone and confidence. But, as her neighbor reminded her, without people like Sharise, the caseworkers wouldn't have jobs, cars, or incomes of their own. It was their job to help Sharise out, even if she had to fight for her education. And fight she would.

Meritocracy is the social system that subscribes to the belief that the individual earns financial rewards based on individual effort (McNamee & Miller, 2009). Most Americans believe that the system of meritocracy should and does work. This is troubling as we know it is not how hard one works that gets them ahead, but who they know and what kind of early access they had to education, nutrition, and safe living situations. Meritocracy works to maintain a system of inequality. Fundamental to meritocracy is that if anyone works hard enough, they can and will be successful. However, since everyone is not successful, it must be because some people are unwilling to work hard (they are lazy) or are not smart enough to be able to work hard (they are stupid). This makes invisible the life situation individuals are born into, but assures they are responsible for the situation they end up in (McNamee & Miller, 2009). A belief in the ideology of meritocracy may be one of the reasons Sharise wants a degree so badly. If she works hard, manages her family and her life, she will be successful with her nursing certificate. But given her experience with the caseworkers in that they were unwilling to allow her to go to

school and receive welfare dollars and that they helped out the people they liked, working hard alone cannot overcome these stumbling blocks to success.

The habitus Sharise lives in has also influenced how she deals with the DFSC caseworkers. She has been taught they have power and they do, in fact, control her welfare check. But she also knows that she must argue to get her way and achieve her goals. The argumentative behavior leads many of the caseworkers to stereotype their own clients as difficult people not worthy (in this situation) of a college education. Cultural history and habitus has socialized Sharise on how she must deal with the caseworkers and that same history has socialized the caseworkers for dealing with clients like Sharise. The continued conditioning does not cause the habitus to evolve, but to halt.

The knock sounded loudly at the door. Sharise jumped at the harsh noise, even though she was expecting it. She glanced around quickly, one last time. The children were at school and the small apartment, though worn and filled with heavily used furniture, was clean. All traces of her children's father had been erased; even the pictures on the small refrigerator had been put away. Sharise closed her eyes and hoped she remembered to put them back up before he came to visit on Friday. She opened the door and nervously greeted her visitor. The woman standing before her held a clipboard stuffed with a clutch of paper that she was briskly thumbing through. She was tall, with nicely cut and colored hair swept back into a chignon. Pearl studs were at her ears and her heels clicked as she strode hurriedly into the apartment. She peered intently around at the contents of the room as she pulled out a checklist. "Let's get started," she said, brushing off the welcome squeaked out by the nervous Sharise. And so the semi-annual reexamination visit has begun.

The woman looked down at her clipboard and said, "I see you got a job and didn't report it to our office."

"Well, yes, but I only had it for a few weeks. And I'm not working there any longer," Sharise hastily replied.

"Your failure to report your job to our office means you owe us back rent for the time period you were working. You will need to bring copies of your paystubs into the office so we can calculate the amount due and set up a payment plan. You will also need to demonstrate that you no longer have this job."

Sharise sighed and looked down. More money she will need to pay. Her rent is 30% of her income, when she has one and that isn't too bad when she has a small job. But when she isn't working, she was still charged fifty dollars a month, plus excess utilities. And fifty dollars is a lot of money when she doesn't have a paycheck. And now she will have to pay back rent! Where was she going to come up with this money? Maybe she can sell some of her foodstamps to her neighbor.

"Last time I was here you did not have this washing machine. I will have to calculate it into your excess utilities. Did you buy it with your income tax check," the woman asked.

"No, I saved for it and found it for cheap at Sears. They delivered it and set it up."

Public housing pays a portion of the utility bills for Sharise's apartment. But anything over and above the refrigerator and stove were calculated in excess utilities above and beyond the utility allowance. It was well known that most home inspections, called reexaminations, took place after income tax refund checks had been received. Flat screen televisions used a lot of power and were a common purchase this time of year. Sharise had been warned that her visitor

would be counting how many tvs she had. Luckily, Sharise was not too interested and had little time to watch tv. She only had the one in the big room so the kids could watch cartoons.

The woman next asked who was staying in the small apartment.

“Just me and my two kids” Sharise replied. Rules were very strict about who could stay in public housing. Each occupant had to be listed on the lease and go through an extensive background check. People could live together only if they were related or married. Someone with a felony conviction or a history of legal trouble was not allowed to live in public housing for fear that they would cause more trouble. Visitors could only stay for 12 days a year and it must be reported to the housing office that they were visiting. The kids’ father did not live with Sharise, but she did not want to give even a hint that he came around, so she removed his pictures and made sure any trace of him was put away. Sharise didn’t need more trouble with the housing office and having to explain that her children’s father only stopped by and did not sleep at her place was not worth it.

The goals of TANF operate to mold recipients into “model citizens” (Georgia Department of Human Resources Office of Communication, 2003) who do not require government aid. The placing of White, middle class values on people who are poor limits quality of life, identity development, and reinforces cultural meanings of work and removes leisure from the life experience. The interpretation of other people’s needs by the state is a political determination that positions women as subjects within welfare programs (Fraser, 1989). Underlying norms and assumptions are “processes by which welfare practices construct women and women’s needs according to certain specific and in principle contestable interpretations” (Fraser & Nicholson, 1990, p. 106).

In this case, public housing rules only allow for a certain amount of money to be paid on utilities and that a dryer is only available to a disabled person who has the means to obtain a doctor's note. The dryer is not a "need" according to the housing rules. It has been determined as a luxury and people are expected to hang their wet laundry outside or visit a Laundromat. But, this rule only adds to the negative perceptions held by those who do not receive welfare. Clothes hanging on the line are often considered an eyesore by those who drive by and only add to the continued stereotyping that Sharise has experienced. The habitus that Sharise is a member of is forced to use a clothesline, but the tastes of those with higher class status have moved away from hanging clothes on a line. Instead, middle and upper class people hide their drying clothes away from public view. The tension between these two structures of social classes results in a struggle. Dryers should not be given to those in public housing; they are not deserving—they are not employed regularly. They can hang their clothes outside to dry, where the drying is free. But at the same time, the visual representation of the poor found in the clothes flying in the breeze is an unacceptable sight. Sharise, regardless of her desire for a dryer, would not be able to have one even if she saved the money, as she needs a doctor's note to state she is disabled and unable to hang her clothes out. Disability would be the only acceptable reason for a public housing resident to own a dryer—a taste of luxury.

Women are collectively identified as part of a welfare system, as welfare mothers, who are passive recipients of services (Fraser, 1989). However, regardless of public perception, Sharise is not a passive recipient of services. Welfare recipients are required to have an active role in applying for and maintaining aid. The public perception of passivity is maintained in our cultural discourse regardless of the lived experience of women who receive welfare. Sharise must work hard to maintain the perception that she is playing by the rules, even when she is not

breaking them. Her children's father does not live with her, but she does not want the inspector to even wonder if she has a man in the house.

The indoor playground at the fast food restaurant was full of running, giggling, shoeless children. Sharise sat back and sipped on her soda as she watched her son and daughter play. Her friend Barb had a car and she drove Sharise and her children, along with her own small children, to the restaurant for a half hour of playtime and French fries. This was a special treat for the kids and Sharise was glad they were enjoying it. Her son, especially, loved to play and run. Since Sharise was busy with school and job applications, in addition to keeping house and making sure everyone got on the right bus, her son was never able to make it to the local Y. He would prefer to be playing basketball at the Y, but the Y staff required that a parent be present while the boys played ball.

Sharise explained the rule to her friend, "In order for my son to play basketball, I have to be there. So I have to sit on the bleachers and watch them play. I can't believe this rule. I don't understand why the staff can't call me if there is an emergency or if he isn't minding them. The Y is close enough to walk and he is old enough to know how to behave. The kids should have the opportunity to play before they get labeled as troublemakers. That's why kids get in trouble. There is no place for them to play safely and I don't have time to watch him at the Y!"

Her friend shook her head in disbelief. "We need our children to be doing activities! I heard that kids who have activities outside of school are more likely to graduate. And my children will graduate high school," she declared.

"Mine will too," Sharise said quietly, "but it seems like they don't bring home hardly any homework. My son should be doing reading and math and he never has any homework. I asked

his teacher and she said that she doesn't assign any because the kids never do it. But how is he supposed to get ahead and learn if he doesn't have any homework?"

"My oldest doesn't even have his own textbooks. The school has a copy in the classroom, but he can't bring it home. So his work doesn't get done. And he tells me that he can't have his own book because the teachers think he will lose it. I didn't lose my books when I was young. And if someone lost theirs, they had to be responsible for it. But not anymore – now we just won't have books! I want to help my child be successful, but if I can't see the book, I can't help him."

"It's a big problem," Sharise replied. "But look at these kids. They want to go to the park and play and run. My daughter is getting interested in shopping and keeps asking me to take her to the mall. But I don't want to take her to the mall if I don't have some money to spend. I would like to save up some money and take her shopping. Give her a little bit of her own type of fun."

Barb nodded. "I know, it's all so expensive. My middle daughter wants a pool party for her birthday. Now, how am I going to swing that? I think we are going to have to grill at the park instead. What about you; do you get any time to yourself?"

"Well, with my mother moving in, it's difficult. Her doctor wants her to walk thirty minutes a day so the kids and I walk with her, which is nice. But I really want to work on my quilts and I can't with these kids running around. If I can find the space to lay my pieces out, someone will walk by and mess them all up. So I put that project away until the kids are big enough not to mess with my things. It might be a long time before I can finish it!" Sharise smiled. "But I've been able to keep Friday nights as my time. Once the kids go to bed and my Mom goes next door to talk with the neighbor, I have some space to myself. But you know how it

is. You don't want too much time to yourself and you get to thinking about how things might have been, and I don't have time or energy for that. There are too many depressed people living around me and I won't let myself get that way too!"

"I get you! I just try and keep busy. I make sure my kids have what they need and that the house is clean, but then I watch a television or go to the library and check out Facebook. I could play Farmville for hours!" Barb confided. She glanced down at her watch. "Time to go, kids," she called out. The two women collected their reluctant children, threw out their garbage, and made their way towards the exit.

Researchers acknowledge that leisure and free time are needed for healthy lifestyle and identity development, and are also tools to allow mothers to better fulfill their role of mother (Freeman, Palmer, & Baker, 2006). The criteria for a healthy lifestyle, how to develop an appropriate identity, and what it means to be a good mother are all social constructions accepted by society and reflected in our middle class value systems. The value and benefits of appropriate leisure behavior is also accepted as normal and natural. However, as Sharise's story demonstrates, welfare recipients do not believe that these characteristics or criteria pertain to their lived experiences. They are not able to access normative leisure as they exist in a system that regulates daily behavior. In addition, welfare policies require that time is spent in specified manner that does not leave adequate time or attention to devote to middle class leisure. And as participants discussed, even if time was available, the resources to access the leisure desired by the participants is not available. There is no time or money for shopping and for Sharise to watch her son play basketball. Welfare recipients must be allowed to access free time in order to access leisure and potentially obtain the positive benefits that leisure might provide.

Bourdieu, through his use of habitus, believed that individuals are positioned within a particular social space (Crossley, 2008). The social space that Sharise lives in is influenced by the habitus of those in other social classes. Therefore, the values of others are embedded within the strict rules that she must abide by in an effort to feed and shelter her children. The fears of others are also embedded in her daily life. The stereotype that young Black males rowdy and out of control has influenced recreation facility policies. Therefore, Sharise must attend the Y to supervise her son playing basketball and to control him when (not if) he gets into a fight. Social groups that are members of specific habitus' are formed by establishing superiority over one another (Crossley, 2008). This way of managing Sharise and her son, in addition to prohibiting items such as dryers and making college difficult to access, helps one social class maintain its position of superiority over those who receive welfare. Social classes are evolving structures, according to Bourdieu, that exist in historical contexts and are categorized by the space and structure of society. The habitus one operates within then determines one's lifestyle (Crossley, 2008). In Sharise's case, her lifestyle becomes one where she hangs her clothes outside to dry, she must closely supervise her son's recreation, and she must fight to access educational opportunities to improve her conditions.

If we acknowledge leisure as an important part of our lives and then structure a federal program designed to aid women and children without the inclusion of accessible, desired leisure or even free time, what message are we sending about the value of the life of a welfare recipient? The contradiction found in discourse and policy combat accepted definitions and operations of leisure. The experience of a welfare recipient does not fit into the leisure/work paradigms discussed by leisure researchers and she may only see herself reflected in some of the current studies on mothers, those that research the lack of leisure for mothers creating a better life for

their children. However, there are still strong assumptions and values around what motherhood should look like and the access to opportunities and resources that a mother receiving welfare does not share. The economic privilege available to a middle class mother to raise her children is not accessible to a mother on welfare. However, mothers of all classes make sacrifices for their children to have better lives. Therefore, the complicated leisure experience of a woman who receives welfare, and that of her children, is vastly different than our White, middle class values and ideologies keep us from considering.

Conclusion

The community meeting was about to begin. Sharise glanced around at the other women sitting in the conference room. They had all been invited to this meeting to discuss changes that could be made to the welfare system. The small group was sitting in a brand new building that Sharise didn't know was available for community meetings. The women were quietly chatting about how they have never been in here and what a shame that no one knew it was for them. Sharise thought this should be the first thing they talk about. How could government money be spent to build this place and then it not get used? One more example of the problem, she thought.

Sharise reflected back on her years in this neighborhood as she waited for the meeting to begin. She was still living in public housing and received food stamps, but she has not been eligible for TANF money for a long time. Her time limit ran out years ago. She has seen people come and go from the neighborhood. She knew she has been invited here today because the public housing office sees her as a "success." She paid her rent on time, followed the rules, and raised her children right. Her daughter is in college and her son has a good job fixing cars. She also knows almost everyone in the neighborhood. Sharise frowned briefly. Because she had to take care of her disabled mother, she never got her nursing degree. Her mother passed away six

months ago and Sharise knows she still has time to go to school. She is getting ready to check the school schedule. Who cares if she will be the oldest one in the class? What else can she do but work towards her goals, she asked herself.

The moderator bustled in and began the meeting. An efficient young White woman with long blond hair, she placed a large stack of forms on the table and began unpacking her overflowing backpack. Sharise hoped she remembered to bring the gift cards she promised for their participation. Once forms are signed and the tape recorder turned on, the moderator jumped right in and asks the group what changes they would make to the welfare system. The room as a whole hesitated and then responses came fast and furiously. Everyone had an idea or opinion for how to improve the system so the cycle of poverty can be broken.

In the future, leisure research must acknowledge the class positioning and values systems of both the researcher and the participants. What hidden values, those we might currently deem normal or natural, are we trying to reinforce through our research? How does our positioning and conditioning within habitus impact what we deem to be normal and acceptable for leisure practices? This study offered a unique look into a class based system of welfare and offers a glimpse of what it means to be poor in a society that highly values affluence. Sharise has the desire to succeed, which in this country is measured through conspicuous consumption, but her ability to succeed is stymied by her lack of resources and by the structure of our class based society. Rojek, Shaw and Veal reminded us that leisure “can be disempowering and dehumanizing” (2006, p. 18) and that leisure is positioned and not necessarily reflective of autonomous practices. Research that further explores the class-based values taught through leisure will help us to begin to address the normalcy of our class system. Leisure is a tool that helps us to grow, but it also helps us to maintain our class positions within the habitus.

Understanding the power employed through leisure may allow for the breakdown of the practice of class behaviors.

Leisure programs have attempted to address racism and we now understand that it is no longer acceptable in this country to be overtly racist. Programs promoting diversity and multiculturalism are common and are now part of our daily existence, discourse and programming. However, that is not to say that racism no longer exists, just that it is more subversive within society. But with the decline of overt racism, classism has emerged as the new, prominent, cultural scapegoat. It is easy to blame the government's (and our own) problems on the poor. The "welfare queen" image is not combated with any vigor and is used by many politicians as a reason to dismantle welfare programming. The rules and regulations set forth by welfare regulations operate not only to create the image of a middle class citizen, but also to maintain that being poor is wrong and that one can be ostracized for a lack of money under the myth of meritocracy. Unfortunately, classism also provides an opportunity to return to racist behaviors in the guise of class-based assumptions. Leisure programs have the potential to address classism, but first we must acknowledge that our society is classist in its behaviors and that many of those classist behaviors are drawn across racial lines.

We understand that gender, race and class help to shape and define leisure experiences (c.f. Henderson & Hickerson, 2007; Johnson, 2005; Outley & Floyd, 2002). Therefore, considering gender, race and class when exploring leisure questions allows for greater understandings, not only of individual meaning of leisure, but also of the institutions that employ leisure to maintain systemic power throughout society. Greater understandings around the way that leisure is used to maintain and support the interests of powerful groups allows us to move one step closer to minimizing the marginalization of other groups. Working towards a common

understanding of leisure (Kivel, 2000) is no longer appropriate. Parry (2003) found that leisure research on gender has made strides in addressing individual differences through change, but has done little to address societal change. Work must now address the ways that institutional use of social categorization manipulates leisure for marginalizing purposes and also focus on practical change that reduces marginalization. We must broaden our conceptualizations of leisure into practice and work to unearth the ways in which we are using leisure to marginalize or control others. Common practices, such as requiring a parents' participation in their children's sports activities, work to marginalize both the parents and children who cannot meet the demands of the agency or our middle class social script, meaning the benefits of leisure are only available to those who can follow the rules.

But, as Kelly reminded us leisure is “a social construction that is composed of elements of a particular culture” (1997, p. 403). He asked us to take into account past research, making sure that we build on work that still makes sense, and to offer a critique of the work (Kelly, 1997). We can learn and grow from past research, even as we find it tinged with assumptions. Its existence teaches us how to move forward and how to develop future research that works to limit marginalization for all groups. While the use of a benefits based model reflects dominant ideologies that are often fueled by money and neo-liberal concerns, the research around this model still provides us with a starting point for research today. We need the benefits based information in order to demonstrate and learn from the values infused in it. We look to that research to teach us how to move forward and how to create research that limits value judgments and works to reduce marginalization without imposing the same value system on diverse groups.

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CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

“[Welfare] means a struggle. And hard times. It’s like a step to find something else. It’s not the end, but it can be the beginning of something. I mean, you gotta start somewhere. It can be a beginning to an end”. – Sharise

The two manuscripts that make up this dissertation needed to be written together. My understanding of welfare increased as I read texts, articles, legislation, historical accounts, and statistics about the system in the U.S. My indignation also grew as I began to unravel the historical eruptions that now make up our current welfare policies as I conducted the genealogical project. I could not have achieved the rich depth of the exploration that materialized in my focus group interviews without solid grounding in the historical exploration of welfare. The second article brought all these historical eruptions into focus as I met and talked with the people who are most oppressed by welfare policies. No longer were welfare recipients statistics or payouts, they were real women, sitting down with me, telling me (and each other) their stories of struggle, their stories of resilience. These women who are much more than a bureaucracy’s end of year report and they, more than most, know what it means to be poor in Georgia. The two methods used in this dissertation were quite different, but they resulted in a unique and complimentary focus of qualitative inquiry.

The Eruptions of a Research Journey: More on Methods

“You never know what circumstances you’re gonna get.” – Sharise

My own journey as a researcher has profoundly shaped both of these projects. The methodological journey I embarked on has implications for this research project and my future research projects as well as my decisions regarding classroom teaching and service. I describe this journey in an attempt to reveal my feelings, thought processes, and the impact of both on this dissertation.

When thinking of the numerous things, people, or ideas I could research over the course of my dissertation project, I only knew that I wanted to learn more about the power institutions hold over marginalized people. My thesis research (Richmond & Johnson, 2009) addressed the power of institutions by researching men in prison. The great amount of learning that occurred through this process regarding the construction of our identities and the role of powerful institutions that govern our lives in the development of this identity built my interest in this topic. Throughout this line of inquiry, there is almost always a common concern that while the research topic sounds interesting and meaningful, how will I recruit and secure participants? Similar concerns were raised prior to my thesis research, but after more than 50 phone calls I received from interested participants, former prisoners, my fears were alleviated. I realized that these sorts of concerns might be why marginalized people remain understudied.

I thought about the many institutions that influence daily behavior including prisons and jails, educational entities such as universities, unemployment offices, and health care systems. I was unfamiliar with most of these institutions, having never needed to apply for their services. Despite the diversity of my interests, I kept coming back to welfare programs as institutions in need of scrutiny. Attending the University of Georgia in Athens, it is easy to forget that Clarke

County is the poorest in the State, with 16.6% of the population living below the poverty line (U.S. Census, 2010). The images seen on campus, the cars students drive around town, and the conspicuous consumption that marks a college town masks the poor, non-White population that surrounds the university. When taking a closer look at the housing around campus, it soon becomes obvious that the small brick buildings that all look the same are actually part of the Housing Authority and house families who live in poverty. I felt that welfare, defined by receiving cash benefits or housing, provided a venue to learn about marginalized people under the influence of a powerful organization that regulates daily behavior. I also knew that people who receive welfare are primarily women, non-White, and mothers. The race, class, and gender perspectives that welfare brought together was especially interesting as I considered this to be the most powerful way to understand more about the social conditioning I imagined welfare to have on the daily lives of poor, primarily Black, women. In addition, I believed that normalizing conceptualizations of motherhood were rampant in welfare policies. My research journey, detailed below, reveals the process I engaged in, as well as my thoughts and concerns about conducting research with a group very different than myself.

In an effort to become more connected with the people I was interested in knowing about and to stop thinking about “those people” in an abstract manner, I decided to conduct focus groups with welfare recipients in Georgia. The method of focus groups was chosen because I wanted to be privy to a conversation that welfare recipients had among themselves about welfare. I wanted to hear different and differing viewpoints, and allow participants to reinforce statements or correct misunderstandings. I felt that in an individual interview situation, my class and education status would greatly impede the conversation and that participants would not be as willing to answer my questions. The focus group format allowed me to ask questions and to

listen to what each person had to say, as well as to capture conversations between women with struggles different than my own. My participants were not just answering my rather uncomfortable questions about welfare, they were talking to each other about their welfare experiences and I was fortunate enough to listen.

Once I had decided on a topic and the methods, I obtained committee and IRB approval and began to recruit participants. I did not know anyone who received welfare, nor did I initially realize that I knew people who had access to this population. I later realized that one of the Department Administrators with Athens-Clarke County Leisure Services, who had been my supervisor in a previous employment situation, oversaw facilities that were located in the poorest sections of town. I asked for permission to post flyers on her facilities. She denied me permission because she had had problems in the past with her customers becoming upset when anyone assumed they were poor or used welfare programs. Even at the facilities that were surrounded on all sides by public housing. However, she was willing to allow me to use her facilities to conduct the focus groups. She also provided me with what I initially thought was an unhelpful suggestion. She gave me the name of a Director at the local Housing Authority. I thought she was just trying to make me feel better by suggesting I call this woman. If Leisure Services was unwilling to help with participant recruitment, why would the Housing Authority be interested? I hate making phone calls and after being turned down once, I did not think this Director would be willing to help me, but I forced myself to call.

After talking with my research participants, I learned that if I needed to receive welfare I would quickly have to get over hating to make phone calls and hating to plead my case to those in power. Calling the Housing Authority to ask for help with participant recruitment can in no way be related to needing to apply for cash assistance and/or housing, but I learned that if you

need something, you have to force yourself to be assertive and strong to get it. The participants I talked with explained how people at the Department of Child and Family Services often viewed them as “crazy and pushy.” I asked if you had to become crazy and pushy if you didn’t know how you were going to pay for food and housing. The resounding answer was “yes!” My fear of calling someone I did not know to help with recruitment is nothing compared to laying out all of your income and eligibility documents to receive food stamps or a roof over your head. In their situation, I would have a hard time humbling myself to get what I needed to survive. This realization greatly impacted my own views of those on welfare and was something I kept in mind over the course of my data analysis.

The Housing Authority Director returned my call 45 minutes after I left her a rather tentative, garbled message. I was surprised to learn that she had recently finished her own PhD and that it took her over fifteen years to do so. She knew and understood the research process and was willing to help me recruit participants to learn more about welfare and leisure. She only asked a few questions about my study and if I had committee and IRB approval. I offered to send her a copy of my IRB so she could see the official plan for the study, but she declined. She asked me send her an email of my flyer and then she told me she would enclose it with all of the rent notices she sent out in March to over three neighborhoods. These flyers would reach a large portion of people who receive public housing in the county. Participant recruitment was underway, thanks to the generosity of the Director and a research insider!

The research plan included participants calling, listening to a voice mail message about the study, and leaving a message if they were interested in participating. I set up the answering machine and waited. No phone calls. I waited a few more days. No phone calls. And then

finally, the phone started ringing! Rent notices had gone out. In total, I received approximately 40 phone calls from interested parties.

Next, I set up meeting times and locations in community centers located within walking distance of the neighborhoods targeted with my flyers, as I was concerned about work schedules and transportation. The facility I was most interested in holding my focus groups, also right down the street from the Housing Authority, was Rocksprings Community Center. The community center is located right in the middle of a housing project and is surrounded on all sides by assisted housing. The community center is also not open on the weekends and it closes at 6pm on weekdays. These hours both disappointed and concerned me. I was afraid participants would not be available during the day on weekdays to participate in a one to two hour focus group meeting. I chose a late afternoon Friday and mid-morning Monday time at Rocksprings. I then scheduled one meeting on Saturday evening and another on Sunday afternoon at two other city recreation centers.

I had written down the name (as best I could) and phone number of each person who left me a message. I decided to call people back in the order that they called me in an effort to be as fair as possible. I was giving out a twenty-dollar gift cards to a grocery store for participating, so I knew that people were calling out of a desire to receive the card. Again, I was concerned about being as ethical as possible with the few gift cards I could afford. I would not just call the people who I could easily understand or those who I thought would be “good” participants. And then I realized the first phone call was from a man. I was researching women and their welfare experience! Why did I have a phone call from a man? I went back and looked at the recruitment flyer and then listened to my voice mail message. There was nothing in either location about needing to be a woman. The vast majority of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

recipients are women, so it was an embedded assumption of mine that a welfare recipients would be female. But I had expanded the definition of welfare to include public housing, as it is only possible to be on TANF for no longer than four years in one's lifetime. And while the majority of those that live in public housing are women and children, there are still men who live in housing, usually with their wife and children. The easy thing to do would be to ignore his call. But I was trying really hard to be ethical. I would have to call him back, explain my mistake and ask if anyone in his household was female and willing to participate. I tried calling him twice, but he did not have voice mail and I was never able to get ahold of him. I learned a lesson for next time.

As I began to call participants, I realized that some of them did not live near the facilities. They lived in the Pauldoe neighborhood and did not have transportation. The third time this happened, I told the woman that I would try to find a place in Pauldoe to hold the meeting and that I would call her back. She told me to call the woman who ran the Boys and Girls Club in Pauldoe. She was certain I would be given space there. I did not have the same confidence, but nonetheless, I called over to the Pauldoe Boys and Girls Club. I explained what I wanted to do and the woman told me I could have space anytime I needed it. In shock, I asked for some time Wednesday afternoon. She told me she would be there early to let me in so I could hold my focus group before the children got out of school and the building got too loud. I thanked her and hung up. Then I had to call her back and ask which Wednesday we had just agreed to – the one in two days or the one next week? She said either would work for her. In an effort not to schedule meetings so far off that people might forget I scheduled for the Wednesday in two days.

I called the women back who lived in the Pauldoe neighborhood and over the course of the next few days I had three focus groups scheduled. I had to cancel the weekend meetings. I

can only guess that my flyers did not go to the neighborhoods surrounding the other two recreation centers and that might be why no one wanted to visit those facilities. Or perhaps the weekend times were not convenient to the participants.

Since the groups were scheduled, I next needed to purchase the grocery store gift cards. I decided to get them from Kroger, since there was a Kroger located close to both of the neighborhoods that the focus groups would take place. I purchased ten gift cards to start. I did not want to buy too many because they were expensive, but I also wanted to make sure there was enough. I could always buy more for my last focus group. I could not afford to pay cash for \$200 worth of gift cards, so I planned to charge them. I then learned that Kroger does not allow you to buy gift cards with a credit card. You must pay with cash, debit, or a check. I was surprised as I know Kroger accepts credit cards for everything else in the store. The cashier found a manager for me, who made a “special exception” for me to pay with a credit card. I was ready for my first focus group.

I write about my journey before the focus groups even began to demonstrate a couple of things. First, I hate to make phone calls, but I had to get over that or I would not have a dissertation to write. Second, the process of research takes place before and after the actual method of research (in this case the focus groups), and this journey has vast implications on the project. My experience buying gift cards, the position of the county administrator, and the suggestion by a participant that I hold a focus group in a place I never before had heard of all impacted this study. Third, my reflection back on my field notes and the methodological implications of this study helped to develop and reveal my subjectivity about who I am as a researcher now and in the future.

The methodical implications of my research journey influenced the final product of the research. My fears about recruiting participants impacted the requirements I set around participation. IRB guidelines required that people call me and then I return their call, which made it difficult to reach people who do not have secure and constant access to a phone or message service. This limited participation greatly. I was also limited by the hours that the community centers are open. I needed to hold the focus groups in a public place and I also had to consider child-care and transportation issues. Again, this began to limit participation and how the focus groups were managed. This also resulted in my audio recordings being very difficult to transcribe, as the culture around group meetings in community centers resulted in people talking over one another and children walking into and out of the room. Each methodological decision that I made had implications on recruiting participants as well as on how I thought about my participants and their stories. But without all of these facets, my study would not be as rich as it is, nor would I have had such an extensive learning process. My experience and growth as a researcher was impacted before research even began and continued once the data has been analyzed and written up.

Implications and Future Research

In addition to my methodological journey, the goal of my research encompassed two major areas of understanding. First, to learn about the multiple and complex discourses in operation regarding public welfare systems in the U.S. Second, to learn how women who participate in welfare programs in Georgia navigate the processes in place and manage perceptions surrounding welfare. The manuscripts presented in chapter two and three accomplish these goals. Chapter two discussed the accidental occurrences that make up our welfare system today and revealed some of the contingencies in place that maintain our welfare system. Chapter

three presented composite narratives about what it means to receive and live on welfare in Georgia. These manuscripts are complimentary and connect Sharise's experience with the welfare policies developed accidentally and historically.

My dissertation also attempts to address leisure differently – critically. Common conceptualizations of leisure stem from a White, middle class value system and can ignore the experiences of those outside that structure. People who live outside of this structure are also studied from this same White, middle class viewpoint and for those living in marginalized groups, their leisure behavior (or lack of) is theorized as different and therefore not normal and lacking.

Leisure scholars understand leisure to be important to and for all members of our society. Yet, as discussed in chapter three, leisure as free time is not often accessible to those who do not have the money to be free enough to enjoy leisure. Building off this line of thought, welfare recipients live in a condition of unfulfilled citizenship with the U.S. Based on the U.S. Constitution, Americans are citizens due rights and privileges. The Declaration of Independence includes the statement, “Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” The restrictions placed on welfare recipients, combined with media images and popular discourse around what it means to be poor, have resulted in a condition in which those who live below the poverty line are unable to fully embrace their citizenship in this country. The restrictions that make it difficult for welfare mothers to participate in leisure also inhibit their abilities to participate in American society as full and complete citizens. The qualities of citizenship including “personal responsibility, mutual respect and tolerance in the form and conduct of public life” (Rojek, Shaw & Veal, 2006, p. 12) are not bestowed on welfare participants as evidenced by negative media images. Personal responsibility is not granted to welfare recipients, as they are required to live

within the oppressive structure of TANF regulations. They have been determined to lack personal responsibility; otherwise they would not require welfare assistance. In order to be a complete U.S. citizen, one must achieve meritocracy. The lack of money and resources, in addition to a life lived within the institution of welfare, excludes welfare recipients from society as a whole and therefore citizenship. The marginalization experienced by welfare recipients as unfulfilled citizens is fueled by the conditions and moral judgments placed on them regarding how to behave appropriately when collecting welfare dollars. The contingencies discussed in chapter two are reflective of the systems that work to manage welfare recipients and maintain their position as unfulfilled citizens.

The implications that grow from this project are many. I have learned and developed as a researcher and this growth impacts my line of inquiry for the future. The methods I used to both research and to present my findings have revealed new ways for me to work and develop as a scholar. In addition, my participants taught me about the expectations they have for research. They were not shy in telling me what they thought should be done to improve the welfare system and how I should go about getting these changes started. They wanted more classes in their communities and mentors for their children who would not leave after the school semester finished. They also wanted those who had made it off welfare and were now “successful” to visit and speak with the young women in the community who were just now beginning to apply for welfare. The ideas they had were not a list of demands for themselves, but to help those in their community struggling as they did or had.

My learning about welfare and leisure has revealed to me the power we employ when we research. My role as a researcher is a powerful one. My participants believed that I could make the changes they suggested happen. This belief has long-term implications for me as I consider

how to connect my research with service in the future. If I am to learn from participants, I also must work to create social change. To that end, I believe that my participant's suggestions of long term, permanent work within their community is necessary. An after school program that does not follow the university schedule, but the local school schedule, is needed in neighborhoods served by the Housing Authority. Transportation to (or a change in location) for Head Start programs is also necessary. The women in my study strongly believed that it was necessary to educate and support their children in order to break the cycle of poverty. GED and other job training classes are also necessary and they must be offered in local community centers, not across town. Finally, there must be long-term, accessible jobs available once training has completed. These goals are large, but creating partnerships between teacher training programs, recreation programs, and other such University programs, as well as soliciting the support and work of the people who live in these neighborhoods, can begin to create local change.

In addition, my learning about methods over the course of the research process has implications for future researchers. Thinking through and addressing ways to make sure that every person who wants to participate is able to do so is very important. My mistake of assuming no men would want to participate might result in a study about men who live in poverty. Welfare programs attempt to support women and children and men are often ignored and not able to receive state support. Men's experiences with poverty are equally important and valuable, especially if we believe that young boys need male role models and father figures in order to be successful.

My conceptualizations and understandings of motherhood have changed over the course of this project. The mothers who I talked with parent their children, cousins, neighborhood children, and younger siblings. The ways that the U.S. government discussed families and

mothers in welfare legislation are not reflective of the experiences of the woman I researched. TANF is used to promote marriage and a patriarchal family structure. There is research to be done to understand how motherhood and family is understood for those who receive welfare and how these concepts are used by legislatures to regulate welfare recipient's behavior.

Further research that investigates the role and maintenance of various classes of people within our society is necessary. We must continue to challenge the accepted and natural truths of what it means to be poor or what it means to be at leisure. Poverty and leisure do not fit together well, especially when we define leisure as freedom, consumption, or time. However, when we view leisure as developing one's identity, welfare and leisure inform each other in creating a stereotypic view of what it means to collect welfare and be poor. Future research needs to examine poverty and the leisure experience closely with a focus on classism. Learning more about how leisure is perceived and managed forces us to reconceptualize leisure. Researchers must address the middle class, White assumption that leisure is necessary and looks a certain way. My participants did not want more free time and we need to focus more on this to learn about the negative ways that leisure can operate. In addition, we need to learn more about how leisure teaches values. If we are to address classism in this country, we need to know how these values are passed through leisure, especially consumptive leisure. Leisure is used as a tool of the powerful, but the ability to make choices and have opportunity within one's own life is necessary. And we as researchers must acknowledge the wide variety of ways that leisure could and should be accessed.

Finally, we cannot forget that someone experiencing poverty is still a person deserving of our attention and respect. My leisure may not be their leisure, but their life is as valuable as

mine. Classism must no longer be ignored and we must work to provide access to opportunities for advancement, as well as reflect on the power we employ when trying to help someone else.

I have to pay what I can so I can live, you know. And like my grandchildren are not second hand people. I have a problem with people that try to make you feel like that. I'll tell a person in a minute, don't do that cause people usually say "oh, you're on welfare, oh you talk so proper" and I say you know everybody on welfare's not lazy and just sitting at home to do drugs. Some of us are on it because we have situations you know – I want the best for my children just like you want the best for yours. – Sharise

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APPENDIX A

METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX

Purpose: The purpose of this critical feminist study was to explore the role of institutional power in the lives of women on welfare in the United States and Georgia.

Significance of the Problem: Cultural discourse creates and maintains stereotypes that many people who do not receive traditional welfare benefits believe about those who do receive welfare. These same discourses have an impact on the lives of both the women and their children who are part of the welfare system. Those who are privileged control the production of knowledge (Sprague, 2005) and in doing so may work to maintain their privileged position. In addition, “Power determines who has the resources to offer help, who needs help, and who cannot turn down help” (Sprague, 2005, p. 15). This power also influences the work of leisure researchers. As “writing leisure shapes the world to fit a vision of reality” (Stewart, Parry & Glover, 2008, p. 366) and “writing leisure constructs a reality about ways in which life should be lived” (p. 375), allows us to be cognizant of the power we employ when researching. Research reflects value orientation and therefore research questions must be written explicitly to reflect the intended vision of the researcher (Stewart, Glover & Parry, 2008). To that end, learning more about the ramifications of welfare from those who experience the system of welfare provides us with more information that questions the normalization of the stereotypes surrounding welfare.

The popular discourses surrounding welfare are vast and are always/often negative. Those who apply for welfare do so out of a need to survive and provide for their children. A welfare recipients’ freedom is severely limited by the state and federal guidelines for aid.

Requirements around education, job searches, childcare, and available dollars all operate to create the subject of a welfare recipient. Their time is no longer theirs to schedule; they must do as their caseworker says or their aid will be reduced or cut off all together. This is extremely problematic for people who operate within the welfare system. If they exercise freedom or agency they are likely to face discipline within the welfare structure. Choice and freedom, two elements strongly tied to modern definitions of leisure, are not universal concepts accessible by all people. Welfare shapes the lives and leisure of the study participants and is therefore an important topic to consider.

Research Questions:

1. What are the multiple and complex discourses in operation regarding United States public welfare systems?
2. How do women who participate in welfare programs navigate the processes in place and manage perceptions surrounding welfare in Georgia?

Methodology: The methodology used stems from a social constructivist perspective, which acknowledges that individuals look for meaning in their world. As meaning is varied, fluid, and multiple; participants construct meaning for themselves, not the just researcher. The researcher works with the participants to organize and make sense of the experience within a larger context. This results in research that looks at the places people work and live, which is especially important when considering woman who receive welfare assistance (Creswell, 2009).

Following the social constructivist perspective, qualitative methods were used to conduct this study. Data are presented in a two article manuscript style dissertation. The method of genealogy was used to address question one. The second article used the method of focus groups and explored today's Georgian welfare experience. This methodological appendix is split into

two sections to illustrate the rationale and guidelines for the genealogy and the focus group method.

Genealogy Methods

The first article in this dissertation addressed the first research question: what are the multiple and complex discourses in operation regarding United States public welfare systems? The Foucauldian method of genealogy was used and the article consisted of a genealogy of welfare in the U.S. and Georgia since Civil Rights. The first question was suited for genealogical methods, as it required the use of policy and popular media documentation in order to investigate the discourses and power in operation around welfare policy.

Genealogy is a method that analyzes a history of the present and was developed and used by Foucault (1995). History is used in this method “as a way of *diagnosing* the present” (Kendall & Wickham, 1999, p. 4) and helps us understand the discourse around institutions such as welfare. Foucault believed that many of our historical advances came about based on accidents (Kendall & Wickham, 1999) and he used the method of genealogy to explore these historical accidents, also known as contingencies, in an effort to reveal systems of power active in society. Foucault recognized that historical accidents are partnered with beginnings (Rabinow, 2010) and must be revealed, not as origins, but as one of many “numberless beginnings” (Rabinow, 2010, p.81). Contingencies, a large part of these numberless beginnings, are different from causes and do not create a linear progression of history. History is not linear and is not always a positive progression. Instead of revealing a cause and effect type relationship, contingencies help us to see how systems are different from one another, not better or worse (Kendall & Wickham, 1999). The multiple beginnings that create a system are based

on subtle interconnections that are difficult to unravel and also help genealogists to learn which values are reinforced across time and through policy.

Over the course of a genealogy uncover the origins and functions of a system that are often left hidden and made to become natural in their use are attempted to be revealed. This provided us with the opportunity to “think in ways that we have not thought and be in ways we have not been” (Kendall & Wickham, 1999, p. 30). Genealogy operates to “expose a body totally imprinted by history and the process of history’s destruction on the body” (Rabinow, 2010, p. 83). Genealogies place an emphasis on power and describe policies as an ongoing process, not just as a moment in time (Kendall & Wickham, 1999). To that end, this genealogy exploring cash benefits welfare systems in the U.S. and Georgia was warranted. As welfare policy is grounded in historical and political systems in this country, an unraveling of the numberless beginnings of the policies helped us to understand the common discourses and stereotypes used around welfare.

Foucault did not leave his readers with an outline or plan for how to construct a genealogy. Instead, we must read and analyze his own genealogies and genealogies of others who follow his tradition to learn the basic steps of genealogy. “Genealogy is gray, meticulous, and patiently documentary. It operates on a field of entangled and confused parchments, on documents that have been scratched over and recopied many times” (Rabinow, 2010, p. 76). The genealogist must work to look underneath these scratches to detangle the discursive origins of history. In order for this researcher to begin to untangle the historical origins of welfare policy in the U.S. and Georgia, I will outline my genealogical project.

This genealogy was concerned with welfare in the U.S. and Georgia since Civil Right legislation was passed in 1964. In order to conduct this genealogy, I read and reviewed historical

documents, legislation, analyses, and other policy information concerning welfare in the U.S. and Georgia since the 1960's. The paper began with a detailed background on welfare in the U.S. and Georgia, including the history of politics and race in the Georgia, the rationale for the selection of Georgia as an illustration of welfare policies, and a specific look at welfare policies in the U.S. and Georgia. Next, the paper included information around the grounds for choosing to look at cash-benefits based welfare programs since the Civil Rights era. Finally, two specific pieces of legislation concerning welfare were studied to learn more about how Georgia impacted or was impacted by the passing of these policies. The first policy was the 1964 Economic Opportunity Act under Johnson (documenting the change in welfare policies after the passage of Civil Rights) and the other was the shift from traditional welfare to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) policies under Clinton. These policies indicated the beginning of the "War on Poverty" and then the end of this "War." Each of these policies were looked at from a federal point of view and then from the perspective of Georgia.

The original policy for each time period was read and examined, as well as first person accounts, other policy analyses, and historical documents in order to generate a sense of the origins and influences of these policies. The policies were considered first from a federal standpoint and then from the regional standpoint of the state of Georgia. I kept detailed notes as I read, consumed, and thought about these documents. Information about federal policy was recorded separately than that of Georgia. I used these notes to generate an initial analysis and development of themes around the policies. Key words and themes were noted and revisited and as the documents were reread. Critical analyses took place over the course of reading and consuming these policies. The notes were used to track thinking around the origins of the policies and to demonstrate the development of main ideas and themes. In addition, I had ongoing

discussions with my major professor as I wrote about the main contingencies related to welfare. The analysis of the contingencies of welfare developed across writing, thinking, and discussing the main ideas of this article.

Focus Group Methods

The method of focus groups was used to generate data to address the second research question: how do women who participate in welfare programs navigate the processes in place and manage perceptions surrounding welfare in the U.S. and Georgia? Focus groups were chosen as the primary qualitative research method for several reasons. First, the group environment decenters the researcher perspective. Second, focus groups help to maintain the subjectivity of the participants (Sprague, 2005). The role of the researcher in focus groups is to guide the conversation and ask initial questions, but also to let the conversation flow. The less structured questioning used over the course of focus groups produces more data than individual interviews (Kleiber, 2004). Group participants often ask questions of one another or ask for more detail and clarification during the session. The story or description that one's participation provides may also trigger a memory for someone else or elicit another story that may have been missed in an individual interview situation. The strength of focus groups is that they "elicit opinions, attitudes, and beliefs held by [participants]" (Kleiber, 2004, p. 97)

In addition, it is important to minimize the researcher's power and authority as much as possible. Focus groups allow this to occur by allowing the participants, not the researcher, to dominate the conversation. Trustworthiness and validity checks occur during the course of the focus group meeting. Participants agree or disagree with one another and ask questions concerning the meaning of the stories. Focus group settings also acknowledge the participants' standpoint of the topic. Participants can see similarities or differences in their experiences

compared to others in the group. The design of a focus group allows for member checking over the course of the discussion, as participants build on each other's stories or disagree with someone's experience. "Consensus is never the goal of focus groups" (Kleiber, 2004, p. 91), but trustworthiness is gained as the discussion evolves and develops around the topic. In addition, triangulation occurs as data is collected across the focus groups. Information gathered in one focus group may be triangulated if it is repeated or reinforced in another focus group.

Focus groups are used as a method because they elicit stories that help us to find meaning (Johnson-Bailey, 2004). Narrative also provides a venue for those who have traditionally been invisible in research to become visible (Johnson-Bailey, 2004). Finally, stories demonstrate individual knowledge and awareness and link the individual to the community, culture, and nation (Johnson-Bailey, 2004). Also, as research is inherently not neutral, in an effort to minimize the researcher as authority, participants will be interviewed in a group setting (Johnson-Bailey, 2004). Talking with welfare recipients acknowledges their position as agents and expands them from bits of demographic information into human beings with stories, feelings, needs, and desires. The reduction of individuals into demographic categories breaks down social relationships and minimizes the impact of the social and institutional conditions that created the behavior that is deemed problematic (Sprague, 2005). Collecting data and listening to stories in focus group settings illuminates the power and agency of the participants.

Sample Selection: Participants were limited to those who have received TANF or housing benefits from the state of Georgia. Welfare policies in the Southern U.S. have a history of race-based policies that demonstrate abject racism in government policies. The remnants of this history are found in the overall policies for welfare recipients in Georgia today. The dual problems of agricultural modernization and systemic White racism operated to keep welfare rolls

low in the South (Reese, 2005). Historically based on plantation agriculture, the vast amount of laborers needed for planters to make a profit resulted in policies that kept Southern welfare rolls very low. The cash benefits provided by Southern states were also significantly lower than the rest of the U.S. In June 1951, the South paid \$14 per month, while the national average was \$22. This increased to \$21 in June 1960 and then to \$26 in February 1969, while the national averages were \$30 and \$39 respectively (Piven & Cloward, 1993). Aid was often denied to Blacks, which in turn provided the farms a large labor pool to pull from. Agricultural workers in Georgia were 67% Black and maintaining a large pool of unemployed workers kept wages low. To appease the planters, Georgia (and other Southern states) enacted a seasonal work policy. This policy denied welfare "...during the harvest season to all mothers within reasonable proximity of seasonal farm or cannery work, had previous experience with it, and had children older than one year, and could make child care arrangements" (Reese, 2005, p. 77). The seasonal work policy was the greatest example of racism within Georgia's welfare policy in 1952 as those women who had previous experience working in agriculture were Blacks. Whites were more likely to be exempt from this policy and "exempting women with no previous farm experience thus reinforced racial inequities between White and Black women" (Reese, 2005, p. 77), especially considering training of White women to work in the fields would have taken only a few hours. Georgia was chosen as an example of a Southern state that utilized race-based welfare policies in the past as there is a strong history of racism embedded in government welfare policy.

Welfare was defined in this study as receiving cash benefits or housing assistance. All the participants had received benefits within the last three years, for at least three months. The time periods were set so that memories and experiences with welfare are relatively recent and that the person was part of the system for enough time to learn the policies and procedures. It

was not necessary to outline that the participants must be female, have children, or be of a specific race. The demographics of welfare recipients in Georgia resulted in participants who were all Black women with children. Participants were also provided with an incentive in the form of a \$20 gift card to a local grocery store.

Entry into Research Site: Flyers were posted in local recreation centers, Child and Family Services offices, and the Housing Authority offices. In addition, word of mouth and snowball sampling techniques were used. Finally, flyers were distributed in rent notices from the Housing Authority. The flyers contained study requirements and contact information for the researcher. The flyers distributed in the rent notices garnered the majority of participants. Potential participants were asked to call a local phone number if they were interested in participating in the study. The voice mail message of the number on the flyer also stated the requirements for the study. Potential participants were asked to leave their contact information if they wished to participate in the study. The researcher then called back the potential participants to verify that they met the study requirements and to set up a focus group meeting time.

Site of Research: Meeting space in local neighborhood recreation centers was secured to hold the focus groups. All of the recreation centers reserved for the study were within walking distance of public housing neighborhoods. A Boys and Girls Club location was also used based on the suggestion of a participant who did not have transportation to another meeting site. Meeting in neighborhood recreation centers meant that participants did not have to travel far to participate in the focus group. Childcare was provided for the duration of the focus group.

Method of Data Collection: A demographic questionnaire (APPENDIX B) was used to collect basic information from each of the participants. Semi-structured interview questions were discussed over the course of focus group meetings. Three focus groups consisting of a total of

13 participants took place at two local recreation centers. The interview questions were used to elicit stories surrounding the welfare experience. Feelings and experiences related to welfare were also discussed.

At the start of each focus group, the participants were welcomed and met both the researcher and the childcare provider. If they chose to leave their children with the childcare provider, they were shown where their children would be playing and have an opportunity to ensure that their child is safe. Once all participants arrived, I explained the purpose of the study, the risks involved and the expectations of the research process. The informed consent form was read and reviewed and if participants wished to continue to participate, and agreed to be audio recorded, they then signed the informed consent form. Participants were then asked to fill out the demographic questionnaire. Once this was completed, the researcher discussed the ground rules for participating in a focus group. The ground rules included confidentiality, respect of others' opinions, how information will be used and represented, and responsibilities of moderator and expectations of participants (Kleiber, 2004). I followed the interview guide in an effort to learn more about the welfare experience. At the conclusion of the interview, participants were offered a gift card to a local grocery store.

Interview Guide: The following questions were asked in order to elicit memories and stories of these welfare experiences. These questions are asked to the group as a whole and the word “you” is addressed to the large group, not an individual person.

Primary Questions:

Use welfare to mean either housing or TANF.

1. How do you feel when you hear the word welfare? (probes: Can you tell me if you remember when you first heard the word welfare? Can you describe the circumstances? How was it used? What was happening at the time?)
2. Can you walk me through the process of applying for welfare? (probes: how did you feel, how did people in the welfare office respond to you? Were all of your questions answered? Did you feel informed about what was expected of you?)
3. What is your opinion of the welfare system? What changes would you make to the system?
4. Can you tell me what, if any, influence welfare has on your daily life? Can you describe a typical day to me? Can you tell me about any leisure you experience? Do you feel that you have time for yourself?
5. How do you think the general public views you as a woman on welfare? How does this (or does it) impact how you view yourself? (probe: What are some words you would use to describe yourself?)
6. Do you talk about welfare in your home? How? How do you (or do you) talk about welfare with your children?

Secondary Questions:

7. Can you talk to me about your race and how you think that influences your welfare experience? Can you talk about what it means to be a woman who receives welfare?
8. Can you tell me how welfare is talked about on television, movies, newspapers, etc? Is this an accurate portrayal?
9. What advice would you give to someone considering applying for welfare?

Data: Data consisted of focus group interview transcripts, observation, and documents from welfare programs, and field notes including a reflexive journal.

Data Analysis: Data was coded and reviewed throughout the course of this project. Data analysis is an ongoing process that occurs over the course of the study (Creswell, 2009). After each focus group, I transcribed the interviews. As the study developed, the focus group interview guide was revisited and updated to reflect the responses and potential data saturation of a particular topic. The transcripts were reviewed in order to generate “a general sense of the data and to reflect on its overall meaning” (Creswell, 2009, p. 191). Then I coded the data by cutting and pasting main ideas, quotes, and observations into a document that includes potential main themes or ideas. The codes were revisited many times and reorganized as themes become more clear and relevant to the study (Creswell, 2009). These main themes were then used to create narratives and a composite character named Sharise to tell about the data and information gathered by the study.

In addition, I maintained a journal of observations and notes over the course of the study. This journal aided in data analysis and also worked to keep researcher bias apparent and as obvious as possible throughout this study. Recording unedited thoughts allowed the researcher to see and think through the research process and its impact on participants and researcher alike.

The data collection and analysis processes were designed not to eliminate bias (as that is impossible from an interpretiveist perspective), but to reveal and think through any biases that became apparent over the course of the research process. The use of a reflexive journal helped to reveal bias that might influence the creation of codes and themes. Talking and writing through why each code was created and if the codes’ creation is related to some sort of researcher bias was an attempt to maintain both a trustworthy and transparent data analysis process from my

perspective. However, trustworthiness is also gained through the use of focus groups, as participants agree or disagree with one another and then discuss each other's viewpoints. The bias of the participants was important this study as the participant's opinions and experiences of the welfare system generated information about possible changes needed for the potential success of the welfare system. Trustworthiness was also gained by reaching data saturation over the course of the focus group experience and by ensuring that bias is revealed and limited. Rich, thick descriptions were used to describe the data so that someone reading the research can make their own opinions about the data analysis. All of these strategies are employed together in order to ensure trustworthiness of the data and analysis.

Potential Risks to Participants: The risks for participants were minimal. They were willing to give of their time, which may have impacted finishing required tasks over the course of the day. As part of the ground rules for focus groups, confidentiality was discussed with each participant. Participants were asked not to share the information they learned over the course of the focus group with anyone not present in the room. Their names and identifying information was changed in any publication of information. It was also explained that I was using this information for a dissertation project and am not interested in reporting their stories to any government agency.

Additional Considerations for the Overall Study

Presentation of Findings: The findings are presented in a manuscript-style dissertation that consists of an introduction, review of the literature, two articles, and a conclusion.

Subjectivity Statement: Richardson believed that "we are always present in our texts" (1997, p. 2) and that writing shapes the narrative (Richardson, 1997). Therefore, my voice is not the authority, as I can never truly know the lives and struggles of my participants. I can only know

what they are willing to share with me. I then used my own thinking to analyze and apply theoretical influences to the data. The information gathered and then reported in an effort to tell my participant's story to various audiences who may not have exposure to this group.

However, my experience with this group is not void or unimportant. As I am the author, I decide what to write and how to write. My decision-making demonstrated what I believe to be important and therefore reported. My values and beliefs are intertwined within the stories of the women. I cannot remove myself from this work. I have reflected often on what I bring and do not bring to this work and why I am interested in the topic.

I have never had the experience of true poverty. I do not understand not being able to eat or having utilities turned off because of non-payment. Yet, I have been poor in that I have had no money in the bank and was not able to pay my bills. But I was still eating and still living in a heated home with a working television. I did feel the pain and fear of wondering what I was going to do to survive, but not for very long. I briefly considered dropping out of school in order to get a full time job so that I could pay my expenses. But the fear of dropping out of school when I had only a short time left kept me from making that move. The resources and opportunities available to me as a White student, on a college campus, allowed me to push through, even as bill collectors called and I wondered how I would pay for gas to get to my part time job. What do you say to a creditor who wants payment on a card you used only to buy groceries and gas to get to work?

My experience and situation as a poor college student is very different than that of welfare recipients. But it makes me wonder about how access to resources and opportunities create very different experiences with poverty. I was poor, in that I had no cash, but I was not experiencing poverty. I was afraid, but I knew I would have some place to sleep and soon I

would have a college degree that allowed me to apply for a multitude of jobs. The only similarity I can imagine I had with welfare recipients is that I had no one who would bail me out or save me. I had friends and family, but those who would be willing to give me money had none to give. And those who had money were not willing (and I knew better to ask!) to help. When I reflect back on that time, I think about how the poverty experienced by women on welfare is invisible. We do not see or interact with those who live well below the poverty line. We also do not know who is poor and struggling in our daily lives. Money is not a topic discussed openly and there may be many people who experienced a similar time when they did not know how they would survive. I do not need to know how much money my friends have or about the financial choices they have made, but I do think it is important to be able to provide support to one another in times of need. My interest in this project grew out of my reflection about what it means to have cash, access to resources that can operate as cash, and access to opportunities. Survival is difficult, especially in our consumer and image based society. We do not spend much time reflecting on the impact our culture has on those who do not have the resources to keep up with media images and who still desire nice things. Poverty does not kill desire and pretending that the poor should not have wants others than food and shelter has resulted in an invisible population who is struggling to pay bills and struggling to satisfy their own desires.

This work has the potential to become a political story that can bring a change in attitudes towards welfare programs. The discourse surrounding welfare brings to mind many stereotypes that are not reflective of the welfare experience. Learning about the welfare experience from the narratives of women embedded in the system can lead to a shift in stereotypes and discourse and also in how we think about poverty in our own lives.

APPENDIX B

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Please provide the following information:

What County and State do you currently live in?

How long have you lived there?

Where did you grow up?

What is your age?

What is your race or ethnic identity?

What level of education have you completed?

How many people live in your household?

How many children do you have? How old are they?

How many children live in your household?

What is your monthly income?

Do you work outside of the home?

What kind of work do you do?

What type of aid do you receive? (TANF, housing, unemployment, etc.)

How long have you received these benefits?