HOWARD UNIVERSITY

**Assessing Attributions for Poverty-Welfare Reliance
Between TANF Service Recipients and
Social Welfare Service Workers: Implications for
Co-cultural Consensus Building and Advocacy**

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate School

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the requirements for the
degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

School of Social Work

by

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i

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i

DEDICATION

All that I do is for God's glory. He blessed me with a loving, supportive and inspiring family. My life is shaped immensely by my parents, Maurice H. Wadley, Sr. and Eugenia Scott Wadley, and my grandmothers. I am thankful to share my life with my husband, Allen Young, Jr. and my daughter, Sierra Nicole. Such blessings are my source of purpose and momentum.

My father was an educator, political activist, athlete and organized sports promoter for disadvantaged youth, and he cared deeply about all of his family. My mother was a political activist, committed to ensuring women's rights, and a human services administrator who so significantly created opportunities for disadvantaged youth in New Haven, Connecticut that an official "Wadley Street" is designated in her honor. She worked hard and managed to thoroughly enjoy friends and family. My parents were deeply committed to community service and held public office on the Board of Aldermen, collectively, for more than a decade. My father was my biggest fan, my mother my toughest critic. My father taught me about complexity and intensity, my mother simplicity and immensity.

My grandmother, Carrie Bell Wadley, was a strong woman with no tolerance for disrespect of family or women. I knew her for 8 years of my life, but the impression she left was infinite enough for me to consider the byproducts of disrespect and afford them no influence over how I value myself and my place in this world.

My grandmother, Adele Dixon, understood her purpose in God and lived it every moment of her life. In her presence, I understood that I am part of something unique to me and God and blessed by her. In her absence, I understand that I am part of something unique to me and her and blessed by Him. That is her legacy, and it is why I know her to be Saint-like.

I describe myself as a student and teacher of life with critical roles: Christian, wife and mother, and social worker. I am most thankful to my husband, Allen Young, Jr., for walking with me through this life, as a student, teacher, partner, parent and best friend. It is a blessing for me to have him by my side. Nothing has taught me more about life, love, compassion, purpose, patience and humility than being blessed with my daughter, Sierra Nicole. I also highly value my role as an Aunt to many: children and grandchildren of my brother and sister, cousins and close friends, and others who affectionately regard me as "Aunt Barb". Those who appreciate me in this role have my nephew, Reginald Wadley, to thank. It is in my relationship with him that I have always sought to perfect the role. Through Him, in Him, with Him. Amen.

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My experience at the Howard University School of Social Work, in the MSW and PhD programs, has had such a positive impact on my personal, social and professional growth that it is a permanent part of my identity in which I take great pride and that I will forever cherish.

Many people volunteered their time and efforts to make this research possible, Marshall Cupe and Jeanne Cooper, among them. I am grateful for all of them, and they are too many to mention. I am especially indebted to the administrators, service recipients and service workers that supported my study for the sake of education, research and simple human kindness.

None supported and sacrificed as much as my husband, Allen, and my daughter, Sierra. For many years they took care of me and each other, and encouraged me incessantly, while I focused on finishing the PhD program. There are no words to express my appreciation for my husband, for enduring my growing pains and being a constant support. My daughter witnessed my experience, visiting the campus with me over the years, and having met most everyone personally mentioned in this acknowledgement. I can't help but believe that she is as inspired by what she has witnessed as I am grateful for what I've experienced, shared and accomplished.

ABSTRACT

This descriptive, relational research explored and compared similarities and differences between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers regarding attributions for poverty-welfare reliance. Attributions were considered within personal, structural and cultural contexts. Demographic variables were also considered. A sample of 64 TANF recipients and 64 service workers were recruited from agencies in the Washington, DC Capital Area of Maryland. Participants completed surveys on personal, structural and cultural features and provided demographic data. Descriptive statistics emphasized: similarities between groups on gender, race, childhood family income, and religion; and differences on age, marital status, length of service system association, education, number of dependents, employment and income. The analysis included multivariate and repeated analyses of variance. No significant mean differences were found between groups on personal or structural attributions or cultural beliefs. For the purpose of this study, this means that consensus between groups was statistically significant. Neither group tended to assign personal over other attributions. This is significant given research that indicates that service workers, in particular, may harbor hatred towards and potentially mistreat service recipients if they tend toward personal attributions. Both groups assigned structural attributions over personal attributions. Regardless of group association, participants with moderate lengths of service system association (6 to 24 months) reported higher agreement with cultural beliefs than those with longer lengths of association (> 24 months). Findings have implications for agency representativeness, consensus building and increased need for advocacy at social, economic and political levels. Research on groups in agencies with greater diversity between workers and recipients remains a gap. Further exploration of perceptions and experiences related to cultural features are also needed.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

You will find, as a general rule, that the constitutions
and the habits of a people follow the nature of the land where they live
      -   *Hippocrates*

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

This is a study of TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers in the Washington, DC Capital Area of Maryland. The major goal of the study is to explore similarities and differences in perceptions of what causes and perpetuates poverty and welfare-reliance across personal, structural and cultural domains by surveying service recipients and service workers. The following section of the chapter includes the background, statement of the problem, the significance of the study to social work, and the purpose of the study. Finally, an overview of research questions and hypotheses is presented.

Background

Causes and perpetuators of poverty in the US have been a topic of debate among policy makers, scholars and American citizens for centuries. Attitudes about the source of poverty and consequent reliance of millions of America's poor upon welfare programs shape patterns of support or opposition to the American welfare state (Gilens, 1995). Ng & Allen (2005) reference a number of previous studies on poverty attribution and welfare opposition that have shown the following: 1) those who attribute poverty to internal/personal challenges of the poor - the most common poverty attribution of the American general public - tend to support conservative welfare programs; and 2) those who attribute poverty to external/structural challenges of communities and/or society tend to support comprehensive welfare programs (Allen & Ng, 1999; Caplan & Nelson, 1973; Feagin, 1975; Feather, 1985; Furnham, 1982; Townsend, 1979). The largest gaps in attribution comparison among homogenous groups within the American population, such as males and females, blacks and whites, affluent and poor, union and non-union households, occur along lines of race and income (Epstein, 2004).

Some literature has noted that affluent and white Americans tend to attribute personal challenges as the cause of poverty and they support a conservative welfare state (Epstein, 2004; Gilens, 1995). Conversely, poor and black Americans are noted to attribute structural challenges for poverty and they support comprehensive welfare programs (Epstein, 2004; Gilens, 1995). Gilens (1995) found that racial attitudes, stemming largely from negative perceptions of Blacks, are the most important source of opposition to welfare among Whites (p.1011). Both Epstein (2004) and Gilens (1995) found that white Americans in general (who comprise the majority of Americans) do not attribute poverty to historical or prevalent systems of inequality or injustice toward underclass citizens, despite literature and numerous studies that denote their prevalence (Brosio, 2000; Cotter, 2002; Duberman, 1976; Handler & Hasenfeld, 2007; Hudson, 2004; Johnson & Schwartz, 1998; Massey & Fischer, 2000; & Williams, 2003). Departure from greater societal structural factors of poverty attribution impact funding and focus of welfare policies. Further, departure from actual poverty-contributing factors, which contrasts with perceptions of the poor, silences the voices of the oppressed and, consequently adversely contributes to an already nebulous future for the poor and particularly black Americans living in poverty in the United States (Crewe, 2004; Williams, 2003).

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (hereinafter PRWORA), marked the emergence of federal government expectations of the poor to immediately assume "personal responsibility" for themselves through focused employment attainment activities (Public Law 104-193). PRWORA, also termed the "War on Welfare", at face value in the very least, aligns with the attitude of the general public attributing poverty-welfare reliance to personal challenges of the poor. Specifically, the policy and the pervasive public attitude offer that the lack of personal responsibility of the poor to seek self-reliance

(among other personal challenges such as decisions to have children out-of-wedlock) is a root cause or perpetuator of poverty and reliance upon welfare (Gilens, 1995). This study acknowledges the empirically supported link between the American general public's perceptions of poverty as consistent with welfare reliance (Gilens, 1995). Certainly, not all people living in poverty seek or receive cash assistance or other welfare services targeting provision to individuals with insufficient means to meet their basic needs. However, this study acknowledges that poverty exists along a continuum that also includes welfare reliance and henceforth references poverty within the narrow social context of poverty-welfare reliance.

Under PRWORA, welfare-reliant individuals are recipients of Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF). Since the enactment of PRWORA, studies have been published that focus on personal and/or structural perpetuators of poverty in general (Abramowitz, 1998 & 2005; Adelman & Jaret, 1999; Buell, 2000; Cancian, 2001; Cotter, 2002), welfare reliance in particular (Bullock, 1999 & 2004; Cancian, Meyer & Wu, 2005; Epstein, 2004; Handler & Hasenfeld, 2007; Lee, Slack & Lewis, 2004; Seefeldt & Orzol, 2005), and the impact of welfare policy implementation on the lives of people who are welfare reliant (Crewe 2004; Massey & Fisher, 2000; Rehner, Ishee, Salloun & Vasquez, 1997; Ridzi, 2004; Ruspini, 2004; Taylor & Barusch, 2004). Policy and public opinion align to conserve public resources for the poor, based on the belief that poor Blacks' economic problems are of their own making (Gilens, 1995). However, the profusion of research emphasizing personal and/or structural challenges and quality of life issues of TANF recipients calls for a focus broader than the one that personal poverty-welfare attribution alone will allow. This research compares attributions for poverty-welfare reliance between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers with whom they interact in

agencies that provide a range of income-based supports and services. These services may include: cash assistance, food and/or food stamps, employment training/services, and shelter.

Policy and general public opinion neither reflect the broader personal and structural focus nor the perceptions of the poor, in general, nor poor Blacks in particular. It is imperative to explore similarities of perceptions between groups, where they may exist, for their potential to promote shared understanding and purpose, particularly in democratic processes (Chen & Starosta, 2005). It is also critical to consider the complex realities that culture inserts in social and political circumstances where diverse groups are required to coexist and cooperate, particularly to share space and resources (Farmer, 2003). Dynamics are further amplified when "co-cultural" group members – members of an underrepresented group in mainstream society such as the poor who are welfare reliant - interact with members of another group that has achieved a more dominant social status such as social welfare workers at income-based services agencies (Orbe, 1998). This research compares perceptions of groups that interact at the service level of social welfare policy implementation: where 1) social welfare policies that reflect dominant social perceptions and impact the lives of the poor in general and poor black Americans in particular are enacted; 2) interactions occur in the course of service delivery between service workers that hold a more dominant social status than service recipients; and 3) the voices of members of both groups are readily accessible.

African-American female heads of household are disproportionately prevalent among the poor consistent with United States poverty statistics (US Census 2013; US Census 2010; US Census 2008). Therefore, African-American female heads of household living in poverty are a particular focus of this study given their current at-risk status for lifetime poverty, as well as their historical and prevalent underclass status in the United States class system.

Statement of the Problem

Research is insufficient regarding how social welfare service workers perceive causes and perpetuators of poverty and subsequent welfare reliance. TANF service recipients may be at risk of mistreatment by workers whose perceptions are consistent with those of the American general public (Zucker & Weiner, 1993) and based on racial stereotypes of poor Blacks (Epstein, 2004).

America's social welfare policies are shaped by perspectives of the oppositional general public (Epstein, 2004). Proponents of welfare policies tend to attribute personal attributions for poverty and seek to assist the poor-welfare reliant in conservative measures. Opposition to welfare is largely based on the belief that the poor are contained by a self-perpetuated culture of poverty that is associated primarily with pathologies of poor Blacks (Gilens, 1995). Studies show that those who attribute personal attributions for poverty can feel anger towards the poor (Zucker & Weiner, 1993) which has serious implications for how the poor and especially poor Blacks may be treated by the people with whom they must interact to receive needed services. In fact, studies support that Black welfare recipients are discriminated against by welfare service workers which results in provision of misinformation, exclusion of proper information and higher sanctioning than white recipients when TANF guidelines are not followed (Crewe, 2004). This raises critical questions:

1) How do welfare service workers perceive causes and factors that perpetuate poverty-welfare reliance?

2) Do they share the same perceptions of the general public and tend to assign personal attributions for poverty-welfare reliance? Or do they differ?

Contrary to the general public, people living in poverty who are reliant upon welfare offer a perspective that fully captures their status as underclass citizens in the United States,

recognizing both personal and structural poverty attributions (Bullock, 2004; Epstein, 2004). At present, the perspectives of the poor hold little weight, if any, to influence the scope or reach of the US Poverty Reduction Safety Net (Bent-Goodley, Mayo & Gonzalez, 2004; Epstein, 2004; Gilens, 1995). The general public maintains a skewed perspective of causes and factors that perpetuate poverty-welfare reliance that does not reflect the full realm of empirically supported factors (Handler & Hasenfeld, 2007). There is evidence to support that Blacks receive unfair treatment in the process of receiving welfare services (Crewe, 2004). Consequently, America's poor and particularly America's poor Blacks need greater advocacy (Bent-Goodley, 2003; Hasenfeld, 1992). Advocacy is needed specifically for political leverage regarding the scope and reach of welfare policies. Advocacy is also needed to better articulate the ideology of poverty-welfare reliance to the general public. Further, advocacy is needed to ensure proper support to TANF service recipients in the course of service delivery. Yet research is insufficient to determine whether social welfare service workers share the broad and empirically supported perceptions that include both personal and structural causes and perpetuators of poverty-welfare reliance. Lack of sufficient research is a significant problem since social welfare service workers and TANF service recipients interact in the course of service delivery. Lack of sufficient information regarding all factors that can potentially perpetuate the circumstances of the poor can compromise social welfare service workers' and agencies' capacities to advocate for and promote self-advocacy of TANF service recipients (Barusch, 2006; Narayan, Patel, Schafft, Rademacher & Koch-Schulte, 2000). This raises other critical questions:

1) How do attributions for poverty-welfare reliance between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers compare within the broad scope of causal and perpetuating factors?

2) What are the similarities and differences?

3) Does poverty-welfare attribution and beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients between and among groups change as length of interaction with the service system increases?

4) Is there more or less consensus or divergence over time?

5) How may demographic characteristics like age, race, income, education level, gender, marital status, religious affiliation, employment status, service type(s) and length of time receiving or providing services interact with attributions for poverty-welfare reliance and beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients, both between and among the study groups?

Findings specific to the questions raised herein can support targeted consensus-building activities geared to improve the culture and practice of quality service delivery to TANF service recipients (Chen & Starosta, 2005).

Significance of the Study to Social Work

The purpose of this study is to contribute to practical and theoretical discourse regarding the challenges that TANF recipients can experience as a result of narrow perceptions of poverty-welfare attribution. At minimum, these challenges have potential quality of service implications if narrow perceptions about poverty-welfare reliance are held by social welfare service workers. These challenges also have socio-political implications when the same narrow perceptions about poverty-welfare reliance are held by the general public (Epstein, 2004). Consideration of opportunities to promote advocacy around areas of consensus is also a focus.

Practical

This study intends to contribute to practical discourse specific to improving the culture and quality of service delivery to TANF service recipients. As previously stated, poverty

attribution studies indicate that individuals who attribute personal factors as causes of poverty-welfare reliance can feel anger toward the poor (Zucker & Weiner, 1993). Hatred and anger are the words used in literature to describe the sentiments that impact behaviors towards the poor. This research, regardless of word choice, acknowledges a broad range of negative sentiments that workers can experience – from hatred, to anger or disdain to a general dislike – which can adversely impact service provision. In any event,, social welfare service workers who maintain that poverty-welfare reliance is the result of personal shortcomings of the poor can potentially create further barriers for TANF service recipients. Identifying similarities and differences in perceptions provides opportunity to promote mutual understanding between groups through targeted consensus-seeking and educational interventions (Chen & Starosta, 2005). Consensus-seeking supports cultural acuity between groups as well as potential improvement in service quality (Chen & Starosta, 2005). Advocacy and promotion of self-advocacy is a focus of many social welfare service agencies. From an advocacy standpoint, this study is important given that: 1) TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers are likely to engage around barriers to overcoming poverty-welfare reliance; and 2) failure to initiate and promote advocacy that is based on empirically supported factors can potentially lead to further alienation of the poor.

Theoretical

This study also intends to contribute to theoretical discourse specific to poverty-welfare reliance by illustrating how its guiding theories collectively support clarity of poverty ideology, acknowledgement of potential adverse policy and service implications for service recipients, and opportunity to identify and target areas where consensus-seeking interventions may ultimately improve service delivery and further opportunities to promote advocacy. The three theories

include: The Ecological Perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1995), Attribution Theory (Heider, 1958) and applied Co-Cultural Theory (Orbe, 1998, Orbe & Spellers, 2005).

The Ecological Perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1995) ensures a broad, empirically supported scope that characterizes poverty-welfare reliance within structural and personal domains. Attribution Theory (Heider, 1958) focuses the study on perceptions of poverty-welfare reliance within the context of the broad, empirically supported scope. It offers socio-political implications for poverty-welfare attribution specific to the scope and reach of welfare policies (Epstein, 2004; Gilens, 1995). Additionally, it offers practice implications specific to perceptions and feelings that can impact how service workers treat service recipients (Ng & Allen, 2005). Finally, applications of Co-Cultural Theory (Orbe, 1998, Orbe & Spellers, 2005) highlight opportunities to promote cultural acuity between TANF service recipients and social welfare service providers by identifying similarities that support cross-group consensus (Chen & Starosta, 2005).

A descriptive, relational study supports comparison of poverty-welfare attribution between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers. Further, it supports clarification of similarities and differences between the study groups centered on structural and personal factors that cause and/or perpetuate poverty-welfare reliance. Further consideration is also given to: a) group characteristics that may impact perceptions of poverty-welfare attributions between and among groups, as well as b) perceptions of cultural features that may impact welfare and welfare recipients.

Summary

Objective social reality and symbolism contribute to attribution (Ng & Allen, 2005). Understanding poverty and welfare attribution between groups can offer a first step toward

promoting collective understanding of causes and perpetuators of poverty and welfare reliance, particularly as it is experienced by the poor and welfare reliant, and poor Blacks at-risk of lifetime poverty – or at-risk Blacks - in the United States. Advocacy that is symbolic of mutual understanding around the reality of factors that perpetuate poverty and welfare reliance can be built on cultural acuity and consensus (Chen & Starosta, 2005). Identifying similarities and differences for further study and/or practical intervention can potentially lend itself to elevating the voices of the poor and welfare reliant through increased advocacy from TANF service recipients and welfare service providers around empirically supported attributions for poverty and welfare reliance. Further, it is important to ensure that service delivery to TANF recipients is not an impediment to poverty reduction efforts.

Debates regarding structural versus personal poverty-welfare attributions overshadow focus on the risks associated with lifetime poverty. Therefore, they contribute to the challenges of social welfare programs to specifically meet the needs of the poor-welfare reliant in general and poor Blacks in particular (Crewe, 2004). The risks associated with lifetime poverty become more severe over time. This progressive risk calls for increased understanding of the historical and prevalent circumstances that influence policies and poverty reduction interventions that ultimately affect marginalized groups whose lives would otherwise be ignored.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to explore and compare similarities and differences between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers around structural and personal causes and factors that perpetuate poverty-welfare reliance. Cultural features perceived to impact welfare and welfare recipients are also a focus. Of concern is how TANF service

recipients and social welfare service workers attribute poverty-welfare reliance; whether attributions are consistent with empirical studies that support structural and personal factors for poverty-welfare attribution, as well as cultural features; whether social welfare service workers tend to attribute personal causes for poverty-welfare reliance which could have adverse implications for how they treat the poor-welfare reliant; whether certain demographics offer predictability of attribution; how these groups' perceptions compare to each other; and what are the similarities and differences that can lend themselves to further clarification for purposes of consensus building and advocacy.

TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers interact with each other under circumstances that are influenced by: personal choice to receive or provide services; mandated public policy requirements, and/or because of social, economic or personal circumstances that may have drawn or lead them to a specific service arena. This study acknowledges that groups are comprised of individuals in subgroups with characteristics that may or may not bear on how they perceive the phenomenon of poverty-welfare reliance and its socio-political, cultural, economic and personal elements. Therefore, research questions identified below also focus on which demographic variables are the best predictors of poverty-welfare reliance and beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients between and among groups.

Principal Research Questions & Hypotheses

Research Question No. 1

Is there a significant difference in perceptions of poverty-welfare reliance and cultural beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers?

Ho1:   There is no statistically significant difference in personal perceptions of poverty-welfare reliance between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers.

Ha1:   There is a statistically significant difference in personal perceptions of poverty-welfare reliance between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers.

Ho2:   There is no statistically significant difference in structural perceptions of poverty-welfare reliance between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers.

Ha2:   There is a statistically significant difference in structural perceptions of poverty-welfare reliance between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers.

Ho3:   There is no statistically significant difference in cultural beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers.

Ha3:   There is a statistically significant difference in cultural beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers.

Research Question No. 2

Are poverty-welfare attributions and cultural beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients statistically significant predictors of group association (service recipient or service worker)?

Research Question No. 3

Is there a significant difference in attributions for poverty-welfare reliance and beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers given their length of time associated with the service system?

Ho1:   There is no statistically significant difference in attributions for poverty-welfare reliance and beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers given their length of time associated with the service system.

Ha1:   There is a statistically significant difference in attributions for poverty-welfare reliance and beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers given their length of time associated with the service system.

Research Question No. 4

Is there a significant difference in perceptions of poverty-welfare reliance and cultural beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers at little, moderate or longer lengths of time associated with the service system?

Ho1:   There is no statistically significant difference in personal perceptions of poverty-welfare reliance between study groups at little, moderate or longer lengths of time associated with the service.

Ha1:   There is a statistically significant difference in personal perceptions of poverty-welfare reliance between study groups at little, moderate or longer lengths of time associated with the service.

Ho2:   There is no statistically significant difference in structural perceptions of poverty-welfare reliance between study groups at little, moderate or longer lengths of time associated with the service.

Ha2:   There is a statistically significant difference in structural perceptions of poverty-welfare reliance between study groups at little, moderate or longer lengths of time associated with the service.

Ho3:   There is no statistically significant difference in cultural beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients between study groups at little, moderate or longer lengths of time associated with the service.

Ha3:   There is a statistically significant difference in cultural beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients between study groups at little, moderate or longer lengths of time associated with the service.

Research Question No. 5

Which of the following sets of factors best predict how TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers assign attributions for poverty-welfare reliance and cultural beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients: length of time services received, length of time as service worker; age; race; gender; marital status; number of dependent children residing with respondent, under age 18 for whom the respondent is legally responsible; highest level of education completed and type of college degree earned; income status; perception of family income status as a child; employment status; religious affiliation; and household income.

Summary

This is a cross-sectional, relational study with components shaped by theories and related studies that impact the manner in which study hypotheses are presented. The Ecological Perspective is the overarching theory that provides the scope of each research question and associated hypotheses (Research Question No.1 through Research Question No. 5) around structural and personal factors, and potential cultural features of poverty-welfare reliance.

Attribution Theory focuses each research question and associated hypotheses on the phenomenon of poverty-welfare reliance and its perceived causes and perpetuators within the comprehensive context that the overarching theory provides.

Rehner, Ishee, Salloum & Velasquez (1997) found that social worker's positive attitudes towards low-income populations correlate with number of years on the job, training and experience working with poor. This finding is relevant to this point-in-time, exploratory study for two reasons. First, it is important to explore whether change over time holds true for the social welfare service workers, as the outcome can have implications for training, as well as the frequency and length of time of future studies. Second, uncovered differences in attributions over time can inform the need for more targeted future studies that consider how and why attributions change, as well as the possible need for related training interventions. Research Question No. 3 and Research Question No. 4 and their associated hypotheses are presented to explore the statistical significance of this finding for study participants.

Co-cultural Theory (CCT) provides a lens that guides the researcher to consider that co-cultural, marginalized groups experience and negotiate their own life circumstances when interacting with members of more dominant groups to such a degree that they should not be regarded against a traditional backdrop of social dominance but one that offers a more

democratic, non-dominant perspective (Chen & Starosta, 2005; Orbe, 1998; Orbe & Spellers, 2005). Consequently, general public opinion is not the backdrop for the study. Rather, the broad range of statistically supported factors that contribute to poverty-welfare reliance serves as the backdrop for this research. Culture, personal and structural attributions for poverty-welfare reliance and the welfare policies influenced by these factors converge when TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers interact. Therefore, it is important to explore perceptions of these groups in particular for their potential to reverse the trend that allows racial stereotypes and other biases – instead of facts - to shape social welfare policies and impact interactions between key players in poverty-welfare reliance reduction efforts.

CCT shaped each research question and related hypotheses to consider the perceptions of marginalized TANF service recipients along with social welfare service providers because of the rich information that can be gained from recipients' lived, actively negotiated experiences. Unlike the scope of this study, previously mentioned poverty-welfare attribution studies (Bullock, 1999 & 2004; Epstein 2004) do not consider the co-cultural dynamic. The co-cultural dynamic emphasizes how culture can influence group perceptions of other groups as well as attitudes and behaviors of groups towards each other (Chen & Starosta, 2005; Orbe, 1998; Orbe & Spellers, 2005). The exploratory features of this research as well as gaps in existing research related to the study groups, supported non-directional hypotheses. The directional hypotheses that could have been presented based on prior research are readily characterized against a backdrop of socio-cultural dominance with a particular focus on identifying popular perceptions of the majority and how they are shaped. As an alternative, in this research, non-directional hypotheses are presented to fully honor an exploratory and nonbiased lens.

Babbie (2001) emphasizes exploratory research for the purpose of learning more about a new interest, such as a social movement. Epstein's (2004) study referenced a social trend in the US, where gaps along racial lines regarding predominantly personal attributions for poverty are closing, and where a general disregard for inequality and discrimination as causal or perpetuating factors of poverty is noted. Studies that reference US recipient versus worker attributions are seriously limited, as are attribution studies that include cycle of poverty- and US culture on poverty-focused cultural features. Given the gaps in research, and the need to ensure that potential allies of the poor-welfare reliant are not ignored or otherwise lumped in with the US general public, it is appropriate and necessary to use an exploratory approach that grounds the study within the context of the perceptions of TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers (Babbie, 2001). This further supports non-directional hypotheses as there is not enough data available to support predictability of the direction of relationships between variables.

It is particularly within this non-biased context that exploration of factors that influence democratic, consensus-building processes between groups with differing cultures should begin (Chen & Starosta, 2005; Orbe & Spellers, 2005). Further, a context representative of the cultural, social, political, economic and personal realities that impact poverty-welfare reliance offers a proper foundation for advocacy efforts (Bent-Goodley, Mayo & Gonzalez, 2004; Narayan, Patel, Schafft, Rademacher & Koch-Schulte, 2000; Windsor, Dunlap & Golub, 2011).

CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature on attributions for poverty-welfare reliance is limited. Epstein (2004) asserts that antagonism toward welfare and welfare programs has been widely supported. Likewise, literature on causes and perpetuators of poverty-welfare reliance is abundant (Handler & Hasenfeld, 2007; Mead, 1994; US Department of Health & Human Services, 2014).   This study explores and assesses poverty-welfare attributions between social welfare service workers and TANF service recipients, ultimately for its future potential to build consensus and promote greater advocacy to elevate the voices of the poor-welfare reliant in the poverty reduction process.   Perceptions and empirically supported factors impacting causes and perpetuators of poverty-welfare reliance are represented in this literature review. Through comparison of perspectives of TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers, the researcher identifies similarities and differences in attribution for potential consensus-building activities. For instance, Orbe and Spellers (2005) identify how co-cultural approaches such as use of non-dominant perspectives to understand social phenomena promote a better understanding between groups. Similarly, Chen & Starosta (2005) identify co-cultural listening as a co-cultural approach that furthers positive relationship development between people from different cultures by creating a non-dominant, non-judgmental space between groups to promote mutual understanding. Further, exploration and comparison of dissimilarities in perceptions across groups, as well as comparison of perceptions versus empirically supported factors influencing poverty-welfare reliance helps to identify areas where additional focus is needed to promote consensus and advocacy and to honor the voices of TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers directly impacted by their participation in poverty-welfare reliance reduction efforts.

Background: Poverty Attribution, Oppression, and the Faces of Poverty-Welfare Reliance

Historically, United States Census reports have supported that African-American female heads of household and their children are more likely than other groups of individuals to remain in poverty (US Census, 2013; US Census, 2010; US Census, 2008; Mead, 1994). (African-American refers to Blacks born in America.) This statistic prescribes a socio-economic "at-risk" profile for African-American female heads of household and their dependent children. This particular at-risk population, with its multiple ascribed characteristics, will be the focus of the first two sections of this chapter for the purpose of illustrating how group characteristics can relate to disproportionate underclass social status in the United States.

Causes and perpetuators of poverty-welfare reliance, particularly for the population of African-American female heads of household living in poverty are debated around personal factors of the individuals and/or structural factors of the institutions that serve them. African-American female heads of household living in poverty in the US increasingly present with a unique assignment of life factors that compound their challenges of overcoming poverty (Bould, 1997; Johnson & Schwartz, 1998; Marrity Madalena, 2013; Reingold & Smith, 2012; National Poverty Center of the University of Michigan, 2008; Stokes & Chevan, 1996; Windsor, Dunlop & Golub, 2011). These life factors may be personal and include race, gender, family poverty status at birth, family structure characterized by ability to remain married, child-bearing while unmarried, number of children, number of children living in household under age 18, child-bearing while unemployed or underemployed, work status, income level, income source, work ethic, level of education, mental and emotional health, spirituality, and substance abuse. Factors of poverty may also be structural. These include housing, healthcare, education, transportation,

childcare, employment including labor market shifts, and spatial segregation, as well as institutional factors like social/racial inequality and injustice.

Personal and structural factors and the interplay between them are considered relevant to the understanding of poverty-welfare reliance in the United States and are represented continually in research on the subject. Any combination of factors, personal or structural, creates a unique condition for African-American female heads of household living in poverty. Specifically, the combination of the personal characteristics of race and gender predisposes African American females to the affects of socio-political and economic inequality and injustice due to structural characteristics of institutionalized racism and sexism. These historic and prevalent structural factors have adversely impacted African American females in the United States for centuries (Brosio, 2000; Duberman, 1976; Franklin, 1997; Handler & Hasenfeld, 2007; Hudson, 2004; Massey & Fischer, 2000; Windsor, Dunlop & Golub, 2011). African-American female heads of household living in poverty in the United States bear the socially-imposed oppressive double-burden of being both female and black. Since negative public perceptions of the welfare-reliant poor are primarily the result of Whites' perceptions of poor Blacks (Gilens, 1995), and particularly poor, unwed Black mothers (Franklin, 1997; Marrity Madalena, 2013) no other group of individuals living in poverty in the United States carries the weight of such a deep-seated debate around poverty-welfare attribution as African-American female heads of household living in poverty (Mead, 1994; Williams, 2003). Furthermore, census reports support that this particular population is at significant risk of continuous deprivation of quality of life, particularly due to their poverty status (US Census, 2013; US Census, 2010; US Census, 2008; US Census, 2003).

The United States Class System on Race, Gender, Family Structure and Poverty

Along with their at-risk status for lifetime poverty, African-American female heads of household living in poverty are also the perpetual underclass in American society which impacts their odds of overcoming poverty (Williams, 2003). In fact, the United States social class system has historically offered predictability of the faces of its underclass. Predictably, the affluent are disproportionately white males and their heirs, and the at-risk poor are disproportionately African-American female heads of household and their dependent children. Underclass status is inevitable for African-American female heads of household living in poverty given that relegation is based on the combined characteristics of race, gender, family structure, and economic status (Duberman, 1976; Handler & Hasenfeld, 2007; Windsor, Dunlap & Golub, 2011). In the United States social class system, groups of individuals may be classified using one or a number of different factors such as physical ability, race, age, socio-economic status or class, sexual orientation, physical attractiveness, gender, family structure, etc. Individuals who are ascribed multiple factors that are unfavorable to those in power face compounded, unfavorable odds due to oppression (Brosio, 2000; Croteau, Talbot, Lance & Evans, 2002; Smith College, 1991; Windsor, Dunlop & Golub, 2011). As the underclass on a broad socio-economic and political scale, African-American female heads of household living in poverty in America are likely to experience racism, sexism, classism, and discrimination based on stereotypes of immorality due to their unwed or never-wed parent status.

Table 1 illustrates a simplified formula for understanding the disproportionate underclass status of African-American female heads of household living in poverty - the black face of poverty - based on the structure of the United States social class system.

Table 1: The Simple Formula for US Social Class System Underclass Output

	Race	Gender	Family Structure	Economic Status
Privileged in US	White	Male	Married, Head of Household	Stable to Wealthy
Oppressed in US	Black	Female	Unwed/Single Head of Household	Unstable to Poor

Multiple factors deemed unfavorable to the general American public can amplify challenges for African American female heads of household and their children living in poverty in the United States. A fact for all of America's poor, whether they are ascribed one or more unfavorable characteristics, is that living in poverty can and often does seriously compromise the quality of life of those who experience it. Compromised quality of life associated with living in poverty is reflected in: health, mental health, education, housing, job security and earning potential, marriage, and raising healthy children (Aldeba, 2011; Grady & Darden, 2012; Handler & Hasenfeld, 2007; World Health Organization, 2011).

Poverty encompasses the many distinct facets that are imposed or otherwise perpetuated by personal and structural factors. These facets impact individuals in ways that are as unique as the individuals themselves. These individuals have faces unseen due to high levels of segregation (Grady & Darden, 2012; Massey & Fischer, 2000), and voices unheard due to a lack of sufficient representation in the United States mainstream (Davis & Bent-Goodley, 2004; Johnson, 1965; Nandy, 2001; Reingold & Smith, 2012). The exclusion of structural poverty attributions deemphasizes the struggles and silences the voices of the oppressed. The United States' social, economic and political culture on poverty is heavily weighted in America's historic and prevalent attitudes, behaviors and policies toward its unworthy poor. Consequently, to disregard the United State's historic and prevalent impact of inequality and injustice toward

oppressed populations - its role in the cycle of poverty and its impact on the culture of the poor - would also be socially, economically and politically irresponsible.

Culture versus Cycle of Poverty

Literature on personal causes and perpetuators of poverty appear to center on identification and exploration of the extent to which they may perpetuate poverty-welfare reliance (US Department of Health & Human Services, 2014; US Department of Health & Human Services, 2005). There is no apparent argument in literature that debates the existence of personal factors of poverty-welfare attribution. Debates on personal attributes for poverty-welfare reliance center on the terms culture versus cycle of poverty. The culture of poverty emphasizes attitudes and behaviors of the poor that are character flaws that perpetuate poverty-welfare reliance, with no acknowledgement of the role of United States culture on poverty. The culture of poverty is generally supported by affluent people and White Americans - the conservative majority - and reflected in conservative welfare policies (Epstein, 2004; Gilens, 1995). The cycle of poverty emphasizes historic and prevalent attitudes and behaviors of the general public and its oppressive political, economic and social structures that shape American culture on poverty and influence attitudes and behaviors of the poor that make it difficult for the poor to improve their circumstances from generation to generation. The cycle of poverty is generally supported by poor people and Black Americans who acknowledge structural attributes for poverty-welfare reliance (Epstein, 2004; Gilens 1995). Personal attributes for poverty withstand on both sides of the debate. The more pressing issue is that the role of structural factors in perpetuating poverty in the United States can't be ignored, particularly in policy. In order to understand and address the increasingly complex problem of poverty and poverty-induced suffering in the United States, particularly through the nation's poverty reduction

programs, the following must occur: 1) the impact of historical and prevalent structural factors, along with personal factors must be understood as legitimate attributes of poverty-welfare reliance (Crewe, 2004; Goldsmith & Blakely, 2010); 2) efforts to ensure representation of the perspectives of oppressed populations must be increased (Bent-Goodley, Mayo & Gonzalez, 2004; Reingold & Smith, 2012); and 3) understanding the role that group cultures play in pursuit of democratic processes between interacting groups must factor significantly in successful communication strategies (Chen & Starosta, 2005; Windsor, Dunlop & Golub, 2011).

The History of American Culture on Poverty-Welfare Reliance

<u>**United States Policies: Fusing Poverty, Race, Gender & Family Structure**</u>

Problems of poverty in the United States are not new. English Poor Laws influenced treatment of the poor as early as the Colonial Period. Literature on the Colonial Period in American history presents with consistent themes reflecting the culture, attitudes and policy-influencing social values of the time. Attitudes toward the poor varied for those perceived as deserving versus undeserving. Policies reflected the assumption that poverty stemmed partly from unwillingness to work rather than from inadequate employment opportunities (Trattner, 1979). The poor who could but did not contribute to society through work were beaten and/or imprisoned. Those who could not contribute, typically widows, orphaned children and the mentally ill were better tolerated and supported through public funds from taxpayers (Dilger, 1985; Quigley, 2004; Trattner, 1979). Blacks, unwed mothers and illegitimate children were excluded from such support (Crewe, 2004; Dilger, 1985; Franklin, 1997, Trattner 1979).

The characteristics of gender and family structure, specifically, "female head of household" is an attribute that has historically and continually contributed to prolonged poverty (Mead, 1994; US Census, 2013). Statistics presented by US Census (2013) support that poverty

rates are highest for families headed by single women. In 2013, 30.6% of female-headed families were poor versus 5.8% for married couples.

Since policies reflect social values, and United States policies have historically served to protect the interest of white male privilege in America, policies have not historically been race-neutral (Goldsmith & Blakely, 2010; Williams, 2003) or gender-neutral (Buvinic, 1997; Franklin, 1997; Ruspini, 2004; Windsor, Dunlop & Golub, 2011). The nation's leadership was clear on the matter of sustaining white male privilege. When President Andrew Johnson addressed the 28th Congress in April of 1844, he stated his interests plainly, "This is a country for white men and by God, as long as I am President, it shall be a government for white men" (Congressional Globe, 28th Congress, 1844).

United States policies assured that Blacks, although emancipated from slavery, would remain socially and economically disenfranchised. President James A. Garfield would later characterize the circumstance of Blacks in the United States as the promise of emancipation betrayed by the creation of segregated and unequal society, leaving Blacks on the "middle ground between slavery and freedom" (Hudson, 2004, para 4). In fact, emancipation granted Blacks in the south the same freedoms experienced by Blacks in the north: the freedom to be ignored and oppressed by white America's policies and practices of institutional racism. This period following emancipation represented the first possible assault on white privilege given its potential to offer full, equitable inclusion of Blacks into the American mainstream. White America, quite naturally some would argue, sought to protect its own interests. As a result, the overall disregard for the social, economic and political plight of Blacks marked the foundation of Black Poverty in America as it is known today, as well as poor Blacks' reliance upon the American welfare system.

Intolerance for poor Whites identified as the unworthy poor and welfare reliant existed prior to post-slavery consideration of welfare provisions for poor Blacks (Crewe, 2004). More recent studies suggest that negative attitudes towards welfare reliance, based largely on racial stereotypes about black Americans, are so strong that many Americans would continue to support conservative welfare policies even if it meant that the needs of some of America's poor white population would go unmet (Epstein, 2004; Gilens, 1995; Zucker and Weiner, 1993). Racism, sexism and the American public's general disdain for unwed parenting are cultural factors that further complicate United States poverty ideology, welfare policy, and the plight of America's poor and welfare-reliant (Aldeba, 2011; Franklin, 1997).

Early United States Poverty Programs

The establishment of the Civil War Veteran's Pension of 1862 (Pension Program) and the Freedman's Bureau of 1865 (Bureau) reflect the duality of post-war politics in the United States: a divided nation with separate rules and rights for Whites and Blacks. White male Civil War veterans and their families were regarded as the deserving poor and received benefits from the Pension Program that were "honorable and generous" (Williams, 2003, p. 57). Conversely, society's perception of the Bureau was that it offered a disincentive for able-bodied Blacks to work. To reduce the perceived waste due to abuse of the system by what Whites perceived as lazy Blacks seeking handouts, funds to the Bureau were cut and eligibility criteria was restricted. Social policies managed race and economic security by gearing Whites toward hope through opportunity and resources and Blacks toward shame and degradation through restriction. This practice would fuse race and social policy in a manner that would secure white privilege in the United States (Davis & Bent-Goodley, 2004; Williams, 2003).

Wedemeyer & Moore (1966) reference post-war economic protections for the worthy versus unworthy poor and the Great Depression's responsibility for "growth of preferential assistance" (p.326). The Social Security Act of 1935 (SSA) was initiated and enacted for the general welfare of the American mainstream in a depression-era climate characterized by inequality and discriminatory economic practices against women and Blacks (Williams, 2003). Despite enactment of the policy with the intentions to meet the needs of the deserving poor, the Social Security Act became a significant source of public assistance to all of America's poor, with increases noted particularly between 1960 and 1971 (Gilens, 1999). Programs like Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) which later became Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) were stigmatizing and economically insufficient sources of economic support to America's poor, and poor Blacks in particular (Williams, 2003). Until at least a decade later when additional amendments were enacted, the primary jobs to which Blacks were relegated, such as agricultural labor, domestic service and casual labor, were excluded from benefits (Crewe, 2004). Discriminatory actions based on family structure and stereotypes of Black women on welfare also led to denial of SSA benefits to unwed mothers and their children (Franklin, 1997).

The Pension Program and the Bureau, the first government welfare agencies designed to support the deserving white versus the undeserving black poor, and the Social Security Act of 1936 both illustrated and telegraphed the duality of purpose in US political policies that continues to persist to date (Crewe, 2004; Franklin, 1997). Some may debate the fortitude of centuries' old sexism toward women and racial hatred toward Blacks in the US and its bearing on today's social policies, practices and the socio-economic and political circumstances of the poor. Yet, the obstinate weight of the issue, specific to racism, managed its way into a nationally

televised, 21st Century public speech by then democratic presidential candidate, Senator Barack Obama. Senator Obama referenced slavery and Jim Crow as an explanation for educational and socio-economic disparities between whites and blacks "then and now" (Obama Speech: A More Perfect Union, 2008). Interestingly, Senator Obama's statements regarding the centuries' old pervasiveness and impact of institutional racism and discrimination against Blacks were not publicly debated.

Characterizing the Cultural Debate on Poverty-Welfare Reliance

The War on Poverty

America's subsequent policies on Social Welfare further characterize the nation's divide on personal versus structural poverty-welfare attribution. The War on Poverty, initiated under the Equal Opportunity Act of 1964, offered a structural approach to poverty reduction. Specifically, President Johnson referenced the causes of inequality between Blacks and Whites in the United States, the special nature of African American poverty in the United States, and the roots of injustice towards African Americans in the United States (Johnson, 1964). The overall impact of the Equal Opportunity Act on poverty in the US was grossly insufficient. Census Bureau and research statistics support that poverty levels had not significantly decreased despite marked increases in government spending from 1965-1995 (Grier & Jonsson, 2004; The President's Welfare Reform Proposal, 2004).

The War on Welfare

The TANF program, enacted in 1996 under PRWORA, marked the formality of the United States government's approach to combat increased government spending on welfare programs as a symptom of poverty that it would no longer tolerate. It also clearly served as a public proclamation that aggressive measures would be used to ensure that public funding would

no longer support personal causes and perpetuators of welfare reliance. The 7% decrease in overall poverty levels from 1996 to 2002, a reduction of 1.5 million people, is important but marginal given that there remained nearly 35 million people living in poverty in 2002 (US Whitehouse: The President's Welfare Reform Proposal, 2004). Congress' claim of success regarding the well-being of the poor as a result of PRWORA is arguable. No empirical research assessing the quality of life of the individuals who are no longer on welfare was offered to support the government's claim. Crewe (2004) asserts that "the thousands of individuals who left welfare rolls without finding work and the thousands who have found work with little or no hope of self-sufficiency" (p.198) are the true barometer by which PRWORA success should be measured.

Culture, Poverty & Welfare

It can be argued that proponents of the War on Poverty and proponents of the War on Welfare grossly underestimated the impact of culture on broad scale successful policy implementation. Racist attitudes and discriminatory behaviors/practices towards Blacks thwarted progress on both accounts (Davis & Bent-Goodley, 2004; Handler & Hasenfeld, 2007; Williams, 2003). Likewise, certain attitudes and behaviors of some poor Blacks can be counterproductive to their progress toward economic independence (Mead, 1994). In fact, Farmer (2003) identifies cultural resistance and the number of entities involved in policy implementation as the primary factors that have historically complicated policy implementation at the federal level (p.18). Farmer specifically references the impact of cultural resistance on school desegregation implementation practices in the United States as an example of such complication. This clash of cultures that occurs as dominant populations fight to maintain their position in society and oppressed populations fight to survive in a society that has hated,

resented, aggressed against and/or ignored them, must be factored into equations formulated for positive change (Windsor, Dunlap & Golub, 2011).

Progressive activity and long-held attitudes toward poverty underscore the conflict that will continue to complicate the United States' approach to poverty-welfare reliance. This conflict is inherent in America's political and social structures, and clearly depicted in literature. Empirical studies identify both personal and structural factors, including inequality and social injustice, as perpetuators of poverty-welfare reliance. In fact, poverty and affluence and oppression and opportunity in the United States coexist. Poverty and oppressive policies and institutional practices are historic and prevalent problems and they are as much a valid measure of the character of the nation as is its affluence and opportunity. As such, the cultural influences of dominant and oppressed populations on the prevalence of poverty-welfare reliance in the United States must be collectively acknowledged. Focus on Americans impacted by poverty-welfare reliance appears to be secondary to the conflict regarding its causes and perpetuators. Solutions to overcoming poverty-welfare reliance must include an understanding of all of the actual and potential realities of the nation's institutions, how they come to bear on those relied upon to carry out policies and practices in the course of service delivery, and those receiving services. Actual and potential realities include cultural dynamics and their potential to influence personal and structural strengths and challenges of individuals, groups, organizations, communities, institutions and society as a whole.

Poverty Culture: Its Barriers, Risks and Consequences

Personal versus Structural Barriers

There is substantial literature that exists regarding the causes and perpetuating factors of poverty (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2014; Handler & Hasenfeld, 2007).

Complicating the conflict of structural versus personal poverty debates is that for findings identified in many studies, whether personal or structural, there is often a counter theory or study that exists to oppose them. Zuckerman (2001) further asserts that research outcomes are often manipulated to support opposing positions on welfare. The inconsistencies and challenges mimic the historic and perpetual political debates regarding poverty and its causes. Mead (1994) suggests that competing personal theories - theories that focus on behavioral and other personal attributes of the poor - and the structural barrier theories that followed have come full circle. He identifies and then discounts theories that are based on historic structural factors of poverty stating that they are unlikely to influence the fact that people living in poverty today are not employed. Although Mead acknowledges that race and gender complicate poverty studies, his work clearly emphasizes a return to personal barriers, such as unwillingness to work and women choosing to become unwed parents, as critical factors impacting poverty. He references a 1991 study reporting that unskilled Blacks are unreliable employees, suggesting that their lack of reliability is a perpetuating factor of poverty. Buell (2000) references the 1999 study conducted by Rutgers University's Center for Workforce Development which found that "the working poor and the unemployed are in large numbers seeking a better life and willing to work for it" (p.35). The same study found that some 81% of the working poor sought to increase their education or improve upon their skills, but only 18% worked for employers who paid for them. Buell also references the conclusions of a 1993 study indicating that, contrary to stereotypes, food stamp recipients are smarter shoppers and they eat 20-50% less junk food than other people. Buell states that the failure of the corporate political economy to meet the employment and educational needs of the working poor perpetuates poverty. More recent studies echo the findings of Buell

regarding single-mothers on welfare wanting to improve their family financial circumstances through improving their education (Aldeba, 2011; Katz, 2013).

There are increasing reports identifying social structures that perpetuate poverty. Examples of these social structures include: labor markets (Cotter, 2002), spatial segregation (Grady & Darden, 2012; Massey & Fischer, 2000), political economy (Aldeba, 2011; Williams, 2003), and health care systems (World Health Organization, 2011). Nandy (2001) identified development and globalization as structural perpetuators of poverty that also have a social psyche protective element. Globalization in particular allows the majority culture to ease its ego around poverty and support for the poor through language by shifting its focus to global destitution at the expense of those living in poverty in the United States (Nandy, 2001).

Cotter (2002) utilized the labor market ecology perspective, a multilevel labor market analysis model, to determine whether individual versus structural characteristics could explain metro versus non-metro area differences in poverty rates. In this study, individual factors were described as personal and the structural factor was identified as local labor market characteristics. Data from three hundred and ninety four (394) labor market areas (LMAs), of which one hundred and thirty two (132) were non-metropolitan, were analyzed. Cotter examined the impact of labor market characteristics and personal characteristics of individuals living above and below the poverty line on employment in particular areas. Findings and implications are as follows:

1) Some labor market characteristics are powerful predictors of poverty. Although household level/personal predictors were not as strong, they maintained the same effect on poverty after the introduction of labor market characteristics. This suggests, as Cotter states, that individual and structural factors are complementary versus competing predictors of poverty.

2) The effects of non-metropolitan area status on poverty are stronger and more consistent than household/personal or labor market/structural characteristics. This suggests that metro versus non-metro area differences in poverty levels have more to do with area composition than with the personal characteristics of the individuals living in these areas.

3) The effect of unemployment on likelihood of poverty is greater in non-metropolitan areas than in metropolitan areas. The implications of this finding as well as the others suggest that individual and structural characteristics need to be considered simultaneously when addressing the impact of poverty in the United States.

Despite Mead's (1994) clear leanings towards personal barriers as primary causes of poverty, his concluding statement was that "the most persuasive constructions of the evidence (in poverty research) will be those that combine a point of view with recognition of multiple causes (p.344)." More recent studies support this, as the inclusion of personal and structural barriers provide a more accurate picture of the problem (Crewe, 2004; Goldsmith & Blakey, 2010).

Many studies have been published on TANF outcomes and the multiple barriers that impact long-term reliance on welfare. One such study by Taylor & Barusch (2004) offered that long-term welfare recipients faced the following barriers to self-sufficiency: physical health problems that prevent work, severe domestic violence, educational deficits, substance abuse, learning disabilities, child behavior problems, generalized anxiety disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder, and clinical depression. Seefeldt & Orzol (2005) investigated personal characteristics and low, medium and high accumulation of time on TANF, given the 60-month lifetime limit of benefits. They found that presence of a partner and lower numbers of children factored significantly in determining whether recipients were at low or medium versus high accumulation levels. Limited education, limited work experience, illiteracy, child and maternal health

problems and domestic violence were found to greatly increase the likelihood of high accumulation. Crewe (2004) identifies structural barriers for African American welfare recipients since TANFs' enactment. These include: discriminatory practices of welfare workers, employment discrimination, lack of transportation, health problems, overaggressive sanctioning of people of color, misunderstanding benefits, and systematic patterns of discrimination within social service agencies (p.198).

Risk Factors

The Annual Report to Congress on Indicators of Welfare Dependence (2005) asserts that "welfare research has not established clear and definitive causes of welfare receipt and dependence. Instead, it has identified a number of risk factors associated with welfare use" (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2005, Chapter 3, p.3). Risk factors in this report are identified under three headings:

1) Economic Security Risk Factors identified as poverty rates, deep poverty rates, experimental poverty measures, poverty rates with various means-tested benefits included, poverty spells, child support, food insecurity, and lack of health insurance;

2) Employment & Work-Related Risk Factors identified as labor force attachment, employment among low-skilled, earnings of low-skilled workers, educational attainment, high school dropout rates, adult alcohol and substance abuse, adult and child disability, and labor force participation of women with children under 18; and

3) Non-marital Birth Risk Factors identified as non-marital births, non-marital teen births, non-marital teen births within age groups, and never-married family status.

Neither this report nor subsequent annual reports include historical and prevalent structural factors of inequality and discrimination against oppressed populations as a perpetuator of welfare

reliance. Also, race and gender are not identified as risk factors, despite evidence to support that policies, practices, attitudes and behaviors inherent in American culture are neither race- nor gender-neutral (Franklin, 1997; Handler & Hasenfeld, 2007; Marity Madalena, 2013; Windsor, Dunlap & Golub, 2011; Williams, 2003).

Consequences

Poverty has serious consequences for the individuals that experience it, and for the societies it pervades, irrespective of its causes and perpetuators. The World Health Organization (2011) reports that poverty is associated with: greater personal and environmental health risks, insufficient nourishment, and higher risk of illness and disability coupled with a lesser degree of access to healthcare than others. On experiencing poverty, Handler & Hasenfeld (2007) identify the following hardships: higher eviction rates and homelessness, hunger, higher risk of being victimized by crime, inadequate childcare, being forced to make decisions about foregoing needed medical care or food to pay utility bills during winter, increased risk of separation and divorce, and higher stress, particularly in single-parent families. Illness is identified as a consequence and a perpetuator of poverty illustrating the role of poor health in the poverty cycle. Specifically, poor health results in reduction of household savings and productivity, lower learning ability and overall diminished quality of life (World Health Organization, 2011).

The poor in the United States are also segregated from the mainstream. As a consequence, Massey and Fischer (2000) report that segregation is "uniquely deleterious" for large numbers of poor African-Americans who were more likely to live in segregated areas with high levels of poverty than their counterparts (p. 147). For African Americans, structural changes like rising inequality, falling average incomes and increasing class segregation translated very strongly into greater spatial isolation of the poor. Researchers summarized that residential

segregation is the key factor differentiating the experience of racial and ethnic groups in the US. A later study by Grady & Darden (2012) supports the Massey & Fisher report, identifying healthcare and housing policies as a manifestation of institutionalized racism in the US that compromise healthcare access for those living in low-income, racially segregated communities.

Rank (2004) found that children growing up in poverty in single-parent families experienced compromised cognitive development, verbal ability, and mental health. The impact is progressive when combined with less stimulating home, school and neighborhood environments, as poor children experience lower productivity and greater risk of substance abuse upon entering adulthood.

The outcomes of the afore-mentioned studies underscore the position that the interplay of multiple factors upon an individual need to be considered for a real understanding of life in poverty. For more than a decade, researchers have concluded that more studies are needed to consider the adverse interplay between poverty and stigma associated with the welfare system (the macrosystem), individual psychological effects on the mother (the microsystem), and the potential impact on family functioning (the mesosystem) (Aldeba, 2011; Bould, 1997; Crewe, 2004; Handler & Hasenfeld, 2007; Marity Madalena, 2013).

How Culture and Co-culturalism Complicate Poverty-Welfare Reliance: Undercover Dimensions with Consensus-building Practice Improvement Considerations

Defining Culture & Cultural Ecology

Stella Ting-Toomey (2005) defines culture as "a learned system of meanings that fosters a particular sense of shared identity and community among its group members. It is a complex frame of reference that consists of patterns of traditions, beliefs, values, norms, symbols, and

meanings that are shared to varying degrees by interacting members of a community" (pp. 71-72).

As culture relates to group identity and community, its ecology is vast. An Ecological Perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) on cultural ecology would include structural and personal contexts that consider culture at societal, community and personal levels. For example, the myriad of different cultures within the United States, which has its own national culture, include: social, political, educational, economic and other types of institutions with their own institutional cultures; specific geographic regions, large and small, with their own regional cultures; public, private, non-profit, for-profit, and other types of organizations with distinct organizational cultures. Additionally, distinct groups in the United States have distinct group cultures that may be identified by one or more group characteristics, such as age, gender, race/ethnicity, education status, socio-economic status, and religious affiliation; and any number of groups that may be formed around shared interests, opinions or associations with certain phenomena in American culture like sports, music, poverty, and any number of other possibilities.

Individuals factor in cultural ecology not only because groups are comprised of individuals, but also because they have the capacity to mentally interpret the culture of any one or number of cultural groups in which they may be a part and with a high degree of idiosyncratic discretion (Sperber, 1975). Given the actual and potential intercultural interplay within and between every level of American society, it can be argued that the cultural ecology of the United States and its inhabitants is complicated.

Defining Co-Culturalism and Promoting Co-cultural Evolution

Another facet to United States poverty culture considers the co-cultural dynamic. Specifically, marginalized groups, or co-cultural groups like Blacks, women and those from a

lower socioeconomic status, that each have their own culture and co-exist within a larger culture use communication strategies to negotiate power relationships. Such strategies reflect the field of experience of marginalized individuals, particularly when functioning within the confines of public communicative structures that reflect, reinforce and promote the dominant field of experience (Orbe, 1998, p.11). Orbe (1998) uncovered a repertoire of tactics that co-cultural groups utilize to survive and succeed through communication processes that would otherwise silence their own experiences. These tactics include, but are not limited to: avoiding, ridiculing self, developing positive face, attacking, dispelling stereotypes, and confronting. They exist along two axes of orientation that influence tactic selection: one that ranges from aggressive to assertive to nonassertive; and another that ranges from separation to accommodation to assimilation. The co-cultural feature of poverty lends itself to studies involving co-cultural groups by acknowledging that perceptions and orientations influence verbal and nonverbal communication tactics used, for example, by poor mothers receiving TANF services, to manage interactions with social welfare service workers. It offers that there are unique and complex perspectives of marginalized groups, such as poor mothers receiving TANF services, and they are actively applied in response to an oppressive dominant poverty culture. These psyche preserving tactics need to be considered as part of the equation to understand the true dynamics of poverty culture – "from the perspective of those in positions of power who are on the outside looking in and from the perspective of those without power who are on the inside looking out" (Orbe, 1998, p.9).

Promoting Co-cultural Evolution

Orbe (1998) uses the term co-culture to describe a particular group as non-dominant when interacting with a different cultural group that holds a more dominant status in society. In

an attempt to ensure that intercultural interactions evolve from a framework of dominance and non-dominance to one that seeks to level the playing field, Chen and Starosta (2005) reframed Orbe's use of the term co-culture to include all interacting cultural groups regardless of their socially ascribed status. In so doing, Chen and Starosta (2005) evolved consideration and use of the term within a democratic framework to ensure that cultural dynamics are considered as Orbe (1998) cautioned that they should…equally, from the perspectives of all culturally distinct interacting groups. An example of promoting evolution through reframing that relates to the post-TANF era American welfare state is movement from the term welfare to use of the term social and economic support (Narayan & Kapoor, 2005).

How Culture & Co-Culturalism Complicate Delivery of Social Welfare Services

Societal, group and individual perceptions on what causes or perpetuates poverty-welfare reliance, one or more cultural group associations, co-cultural dynamics and personal choice, are all factors that can influence interactions between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers.

Both service worker and recipient groups are exposed to aspects of the American culture on poverty that generally attributes poverty-welfare reliance to personal challenges of the poor (Epstein, 2004), based on negative stereotypes of Blacks (Gilens, 1999). Also inherent in American poverty culture is a general lack of acknowledgement of inequality and injustice as factors that perpetuate the economic circumstances of the poor (Epstein, 2004). American poverty culture can influence organizational culture through prescribed policies and practices (Hasenfeld, 1992). Further, it can influence group culture and individual choice in a variety of ways. Since providers and recipients may have multiple group characteristics, such as age, gender, race, and socio-economic status, trying to decipher the impact of American culture on

group perceptions for their potential to influence group attitudes and behaviors can prove challenging, to say the least. Studies of in-group and between-group comparisons on similar concepts, such as attributions for poverty-welfare reliance, can support clarification (Bullock, 2004) and promote positive interactions between groups (Chen & Starosta, 2005).

Social welfare service workers hold positions of power in organizations where they are expected to carry out policies that reflect the poverty culture of the American general public (Orbe, 1998). Service worker assignment of personal attributions for poverty can equate to worker feelings of hatred towards the poor and an unwillingness to help (Zucker & Weiner, 1993). Further, social welfare service workers exercise opportunities to implement agency policies and practices at their discretion, which can result in discriminatory practices (Crewe, 2003; Lipsky, 1984). However, socialization in an oppressive society and negative or narrow perceptions do not necessarily equate to adverse actions of service providers (Hasenfeld, 1992) or service recipients (Orbe, 1998). The following structural, organizational and personal controls can be utilized to protect against such adversities: federal sanctions against agencies that discriminate against service recipients; organizational controls that use supervision, training and case reviews, to promote a positive organizational culture; and personal controls of individuals that support appropriate actions and interactions despite internal feelings and perceptions that could compromise interactions with others (Chen & Starosta, 2005; Hasenfeld, 1992).

Co-cultural dynamics between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers can be influenced by a myriad of perceptions: how these groups perceive each other, how they perceive themselves, and how they choose to respond to their perceptions (Chen & Starosta, 2005; Hasenfeld, 1992; Orbe, 1998). Perceptions are not always consistent with reality, so the potential for perceptions to impede judgment and foster misrepresentation and

misunderstanding is significant (Chen & Starosta, 2005; Franklin, 1985; Orbe, 1998). Potentially negative influences on interactions between service workers and service recipients may also involve factors such as protective behaviors of either group that involve psyche-defenses that foster mistrust, disdain and/or poor communication between groups (Crewe, 2003; Orbe, 1998.) The potential for a clash of cultures is amplified when service worker discrimination is also a factor (Crewe, 2003; Lipsky, 1984). Co-cultural dynamics can combine to adversely shape or define organizational culture and the overall nature of interaction in the course of service delivery in human service organizations (Chen & Starosta, 2005; Hasenfeld, 1992).

Potential to Mediate Culture & Co-cultural Complications in Practice:

Culture and intercultural dynamics permeate and influence beliefs and behaviors in a variety of ways that come to bear to potentially complicate interactions between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers in the course of service delivery. Chen & Starosta (2005) consider applications of Co-cultural Theory, such as Co-Cultural Listening that can be used to promote "effective and satisfactory" intercultural interactions (p133). In the process of developing a common ground of mutual understanding or consensus between co-cultures, the authors identify new skills in language, new attitudes and a deeper sense of prejudice and history as subjects to reconsider when seeking to promote a smooth interaction. This highlights a particular need to ensure that co-culture groups such as social welfare service workers and TANF service recipients collectively develop consensus around the empirically supported personal and structural factors and cultural features that perpetuate poverty-welfare reliance, as it undergirds the very reason why the two groups interact.

Conceptual Framework

Chen & Starosta (2005) identify intercultural sensitivity as a quality that is: a precondition to intercultural competence, essential for survival in a multicultural world, and key to positive outcomes in intercultural interactions. Consideration of cultural sensitivity and how it can be achieved between co-cultures is therefore important for identifying and maximizing opportunities to ensure positive interactions between co-cultures such as social welfare service workers and TANF service recipients. Cultural influences on perceptions of others based on race, gender, unwed/never wed parental status, and/or socio-economic status come into play at varying levels of complexity in the social welfare service delivery arena (Handler & Hasenfeld, 2007). This has serious implications for TANF service recipients in the United States who have one or multiple characteristics that are subject to prejudice and who are disproportionately represented among the poor-welfare reliant. Cultural variability regulates improvement of co-culture interactions where gender, ethnicity and organizational impact are particularly notable (Chen & Starosta, 2005). Therefore, the implications for focus on intercultural sensitivity to ensure positive interactions between co-cultures such as TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers, particularly in the course of service delivery are merited. Chen & Starosta (2005) identify training programs such as T-groups, critical incidents, case studies, role playing, and cultural education programs as potential interventions to promote a positive organizational culture and improve interactions between co-cultures, particularly in organizational settings. In this way, activities that intentionally seek to promote a positive organizational culture between co-cultural groups can mediate potential adverse affects of culture and co-cultural dynamics in practice.

Cultural factors that influence poverty-welfare reliance that should also be considered as part of consensus-building activities include:

1) the history of United States culture on poverty and its prejudicial social, political and economic influences on general attitudes towards and support for the poor (Davis & Bent-Goodley, 2004; Handler & Hasenfeld, 2007; Williams, 2003);

2) elements of the culture of poverty that feed stereotypes of the poor and especially poor Blacks and place greater emphasis on personal attributes for poverty-welfare reliance with no regard for structural causes and perpetuators (Handler & Hasenfeld, 2007);

3) cultural dynamics of poverty and the potential to influence attitudes and behaviors of the poor when interacting with people in positions of power (Orbe, 1998); and

4) cultural dynamics of poverty and the potential to influence attitudes and behaviors of service workers when interacting with service recipients in the course of service delivery. Figure 1 illustrates the link between theories and the conceptual framework for the study:
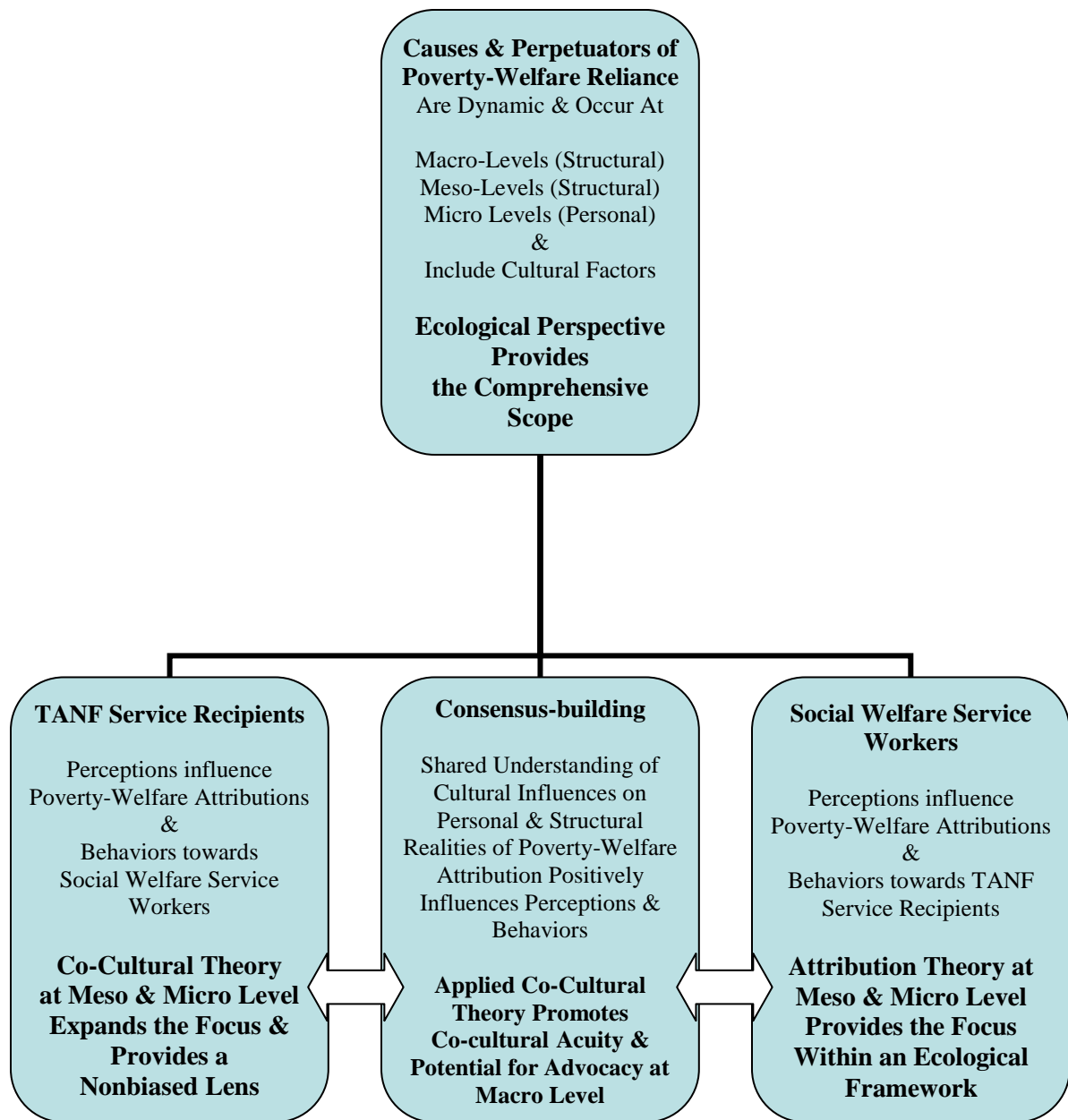
Figure 1: Link between Theories and Conceptual Framework of the Study

Cultural and co-cultural complications for practice highlight a need for organizations to increase preventions, scans and interventions to promote desired interactions (Chen & Starosta, 2005). Intentional interventions promote assurance of controls against potential co-cultural adversities that can permeate and adversely impact organizational culture and service-level

interactions that can compromise service quality. Organizations that actively seek to recognize and measure cultural features, build on their strengths and protect against their adversities have a greater opportunity to continuously promote and maintain a positive organizational culture that supports service delivery in positive ways (Chen & Starosta, 2005; Hasenfeld, 1992).

This study explored consensus and divergence between TANF recipients and social welfare service workers on poverty-welfare attributions to gain a better understanding of whether perceptions differ by group and whether perceptions are consistent with empirical studies regarding its causes and perpetuators. The study is intended to inform future research by emphasizing the need for nonbiased group comparisons that give voice to the lived experiences of people directly impacted by poverty-welfare reliance by supporting cultural acuity through increased understanding, and also by promoting advocacy. The premise for future development of methods for group interventions is as follows: where there is significant divergence in perceptions between groups there is opportunity for education focused on objective reality and socialization, and where there is significant consensus in perceptions between groups there is opportunity for advocacy. The intentions and premises of this study are consistent with accepted general purposes for exploratory social science research (Babbie, 2001).

Policy, Practice and Perceived Advocates of the Poor

The poor in general and poor people of color are underrepresented and misrepresented in American mainstream (Davis & Bent-Goodley, 2004). Consequently, the poor need increased advocacy. Advocacy is critical for its potential to promote social, political and economic leverage, shared understanding, shared focus, and purposeful activity (Brents & Hausbeck, 1991). These activities are necessary to improve upon conditions within poor communities in

the United States (Bent-Goodley, Mayo & Gonzalez, 2004; Williams, 2003). Efforts to identify portions of the nations' demographic that have historically or otherwise reliably taken action to improve the circumstances of poor people in America are needed.

Faith-based & Community-based Organizations

The United States government has taken action to strengthen the Poverty Reduction Safety Net by recognizing and seeking to include non-traditional advocates as stakeholders. Faith-based and Community Organizations (FBCOs) have maintained a longstanding and vital role in serving individuals in need and impoverished communities (Handler & Hasenfeld, 2007). Language supporting government collaboration with FBCOs has been included in federal legislation, including PRWORA, to promote federal, state and local government administrators' capacity to engage organizations with religious affiliations in collaborative social service efforts. As supporters and advocates for the poor, to varying degrees, FBCOs employ or otherwise utilize individuals who interact directly with the poor for temporary or longer-term help.

Social Workers

Social workers are presumed to be advocates of the poor. The National Association of Social Workers' Code of Ethics preamble specifies its position that "The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty" (NASW, 2008). Social workers tend to attribute structural/external causes for poverty versus personal/internal causes (Bullock, 2004). A study conducted by Rehner, Ishee, Salloum & Velasuez (1997) identified the following factors correlating social workers' positive attitudes towards low-income populations: experience working with the poor, training, and number of years on the job. These elements combine to

position social workers as advocates for America's poor. Social workers are presumed to have the capacity to understand positive and negative structural and cultural influences on the circumstances of the poor, and to understand the challenges of the poor that are portrayed as their personal and cultural strengths and weaknesses. They presumably have the capacity to understand and explain what survival looks like for those fighting for status quo and those fighting to survive. They are also relied upon to help the poor navigate through personal, social, political and economic circumstances to improve upon their lives. Given the macro-level and micro-level relevance of understanding poverty ideology in support of the poor, the potential implications of exploring poverty within a more comprehensive theoretical frame that can also reveal potential allies of the poor is an important consideration for the field of social work.

Support for Poor Blacks At-Risk of Lifetime Poverty

Poverty attribution studies suggest that middle-class Blacks are potential advocates of poor Blacks given similarities in poverty-welfare attribution (Epstein, 2004). In fact, both poor and middle-class Blacks have a rich history of promoting improvement in Black communities and impacting the quality of life of poor Blacks, particularly through mutual aid activities, whether independent or collaborative (Carlton-LaNey, 1999). Black churches and programs and students associated with Historically Black Colleges and Universities have also historically and continually supported the poor black communities within geographic regions where they may reside (HBCU Faculty Development Network, 2006; Redd, 2004; Sutton & Kimbaugh, 2001). In general, poor Blacks have been supportive of each other and middle-class Blacks have been supportive of the poor, albeit to varying degrees. The varied degrees of uncertainty around continuing advocacy of poor Blacks by middle-class Blacks warrants further exploration.

Summary

Attributions can and do change over time. Epstein (2004) asserts that the gap between poverty attributions of middle-class Blacks and the general public is closing, resulting in an increasing number of the public assigning personal causes for poverty-welfare reliance. Some studies support that social welfare service workers discriminate against poor people that they perceive as lazy and otherwise undeserving, such as the way that they may perceive poor Blacks (Crewe, 2004). More studies are needed that consider factors that can influence service delivery to and advocacy for the poor-welfare reliant. Change in perceptions over time, evidence of discrimination in service delivery towards Blacks, and insufficient research specific to assessment of factors that influence service delivery to the poor-welfare reliant assure that advocacy cannot be taken for granted. Social workers and other service workers have a presumed commitment to help and not hinder service recipients. As such, assessment and opportunity to influence their potential for forging a cooperative interaction in the social service arena is clearly merited.

Poverty Culture & Welfare Attribution Studies

Earlier studies of individual and societal attributes for poverty found that most study participants believed that poor people were responsible for their own poverty (Feagin, 1975; Smith & Stone, 1989). The scale used in these studies was created by Feagin and identified individual attributes such as: lack of thrift, lack of effort, lack of ability, loose morals, sickness, and physical handicaps. Societal attributes identified included: low wages, inadequate schools, prejudice and discrimination, scarcity of good jobs, and rich people's exploitation of the poor. Kluegel (1987) adapted the Feagin scale to study poverty-welfare attributions using individual

and structuralist scales. Kluegel found that individual attributions for poverty dominate, and that opposition to welfare directly correlates with personal attribution of poverty.

Epstein (2004) studied attitudes toward social welfare adding income as a variable not previously studied. He found that the majority of participants attributed poverty to personal problems of the poor, and that differences between groups attributing personal versus structural causes of poverty did not vary at high levels of significance. Specifically, he reported that cleavage, or difference in overall responses, was minimal (30%-40%) between: 1) middle – low income Blacks versus Whites of every socio-economic status, and 2) the wealthy versus the poor. Epstein's study also found that affluent Blacks attribute personal causes for poverty.

Gilens (1995) conducted a study on the impact of racial stereotypes and welfare, and found that white Americans' opposition to welfare is largely based on the long-held stereotype that Blacks are lazy. Consequently, "anti-poverty policy in the US has become hostage to white Americans' cynicism toward poor Blacks and specifically to the belief that Blacks' economic problems are of their own making (p.1011)".

Ng & Allen (2005) assessed the power of predictability of four theories regarding individual's perceptions of economic distributive justice. These four theories included: Self-interest Theory, Belief in a Just World, Attribution Theory and Ideology. The study found that Attribution Theory and Ideology were the strongest predictors of economic distributive justice perception, with Attribution Theory being the strongest predictor overall. Self-interest Theory and Belief in a Just World were found to be moderate predictors. Interestingly, authors note that factors influencing Attribution and Ideology are rooted in symbolism and socialization, respectively, and not necessarily in understanding of social facts. Consensus-seeking, advocacy-

supporting activities should be aimed at changing such roots, particularly where such symbolism and socialization feed oppressive policies and practices.

Large gaps in attribution studies of social workers, social welfare service workers and social welfare recipients exist. Bullock (2004) conducted a study comparing poverty attribution of social workers and welfare recipients; however her sample included only 4 Black welfare recipients. The study found that social workers and welfare recipients did not differ for individualistic attributions, but welfare recipients indicated that prejudice factored more significantly as a cause of poverty than social workers. Likewise, social welfare recipient attributions have been measured and compared to the middle-class (Bullock, 1999). Findings indicated that welfare recipients were more likely to identify structural factors as causes of poverty than middle–class respondents and they were also more likely to regard welfare recipients as dishonest and idle (p.2059). Social workers' poverty attribution has also been measured and compared to other middle-class professionals with populations in Israel (Weiss & Gal, 2006) and among social work and non-social work students in Croatia (Ljubotina & Ljubotina, 2007). Attribution studies by profession and social class are few and offer uncertain insight into poverty attribution between or among TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers.

Summary

Literature on poverty-welfare reliance reflects the complexities of analyzing a multitude of causes and perpetuating factors. The facts about its causes are broad in scope: personal, interpersonal, and structural at individual, family, community and greater societal levels. Facts about poverty-welfare reliance have multiple facets. Facets are psychological, social, cultural,

co-cultural, political, and economic. Facets may be influenced by psyche-defenses of the poor and the dominant culture, as well as symbolism, socialization, and/or objectivity. People's perceptions about support for the poor may be predicted by self-interest, belief in a just world, ideology, and/or attribution theories. Researchers and experts are careful to acknowledge that considerably more research is needed to offer empirical support that includes analysis of both personal and structural factors, including cultural features.   Einstein (2004) asserts that "Americans, by their very actions, opinions, and codified intentions have cancelled the notions of class and caste in subverting a generous welfare state" (p.177). US Department of Health and Human Services, Annual Report to Congress: Indicators of Welfare Reliance (2008), generated to inform politicians on perpetuating factors of welfare reliance, excludes inequality and discrimination as factors. These reports telegraph an alarming trend in US culture on poverty where there is an apparent disconnect between public perspectives and empirically supported social realities. This disconnect disregards the impact that centuries of inequality, discrimination and hatred have had and continue to have on shaping Black Poverty in America (Crewe, 2004). Further, the implications of a disconnect between perception and reality, if realized and maintained by social welfare service workers, can have an adverse impact on service delivery to social welfare service recipients. This study offers an ecological approach to poverty-welfare attribution with a comprehensive perspective of the broad scope in which the oppressed poor-welfare reliant are to be considered, and the cultural influences that can come into play when TANF service recipients and social welfare service providers interact.

The study is structured to explore and inform on similarities and differences between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers. In concert with the democratic principles of applied Co-Cultural Theory, the study identifies areas where additional research

may be needed to align attributions for poverty-welfare reliance with its empirically supported causal and perpetuating factors. This method has the potential to improve interactions between social welfare service workers and TANF service recipients through consensus building, where needed. Additionally, it has the potential to inform efforts to improve and promote increased advocacy for the poor on social, economic and political levels.

CHAPTER III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The poverty landscape in the United States is far too vast to capture from any single angle. The three theories/perspectives from which assumptions for the study were drawn provide the scope, focus, and cultural lens to capture an inclusive, measurable and unbiased snapshot of poverty-welfare reliance. Collectively, they provide a framework for the study of poverty specific to attributions for poverty-welfare reliance between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers. Specifically, the theories as a group define the scope of poverty-welfare reliance that is encompassed in the study. They provide a clear and measurable focus that is compatible with the identified comprehensive scope. They have supported implications for study participants that are relevant to their interactions with each other. Further, they offer a lens through which interactions potentially weighted down by cultural influence and differences can be considered without bias to build consensus and potentially promote advocacy.   These theories/perspectives include: 1) The Ecological Perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1995) - the scope - which guides understanding of poverty and welfare reliance within a span of personal and structural contexts; 2) Attribution Theory (Heider, 1958) – the focus - which guides understanding of how specific causes and perpetuators of poverty-welfare reliance are perceived within personal and/or structural domains, and supports that those who assign personal attributions feel anger toward the poor and oppose welfare programs (Ng & Allen, 2005); and 3) Co-Cultural Theory (Orbe & Spellers, 2005) – the lens - which guides understanding of how complex cultural dynamics can mediate interactions between the oppressed poor-welfare reliant and social welfare service workers who hold a higher social status in a society with historic and prevalent oppressive features. Evolutions of applied Co-Cultural Theory such as co-cultural listening (Chen & Starosta, 2005) eliminate the backdrop of socially-imposed dominance and

53

require democratic communication between groups with differing cultures that builds on consensus toward development of a mutually understood third culture. These combined theories/perspectives are compatible promoters of a comprehensive, targeted, exploratory and informative, unbiased approach to this study.

The Ecological Perspective

The Ecological Perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1995) provides a theoretical framework to analyze a phenomenon or problem with its many layers and contexts. Studies shaped by the Ecological Perspective focus on person-in-environment and how people and their environments influence each other, recognizing their history and cultures within the complex context of the phenomenon. It provides a scope deep and wide enough to capture the big picture of how individuals, families, peer groups, communities, organizations, institutions, media and culture relate and impact perceptions and behaviors. Further, it recognizes that neither personal nor environmental scans can be conducted responsibly unless all contexts of the person-in-environment relationship are given a place to inform the study. Bronfenbrenner (1995) captures contextual features within three levels: micro or personal/interpersonal, meso or community and organizational, and macro or institutional and greater societal. Meso and macro levels are regarded as structural. The following studies offer a sample of the myriad uses of the Ecological Perspective.

McElroy, Bibeau, Steckler & Glanz (1988) used an ecological framework to study health promotion programs, health education and behavior. They sought to balance their approach to health education and intervention by targeting individual and social environmental factors that contribute to unhealthy behaviors. They found that previous studies that focused solely on

behaviors of individuals were increasingly contentious given their narrow scope that excluded the role of organizations, communities and public policy in shaping unhealthy behaviors. By using an ecological framework, these researchers broadened the scope of the problem and were thereby able to consider solutions that involved a more complete realm of the actual players.

An ecological framework was utilized by Steinberg, Dornbusch & Brown (1992) in a study that revealed the role of peer support in influencing adolescent academic achievement across ethnic groups. The revelation added a new and important context to the theretofore inadvertently incomplete understanding of explanations for superior school performance of Asian-American adolescents and the inferior performance of African- and Hispanic-American adolescents. They identified previous studies that held parental practices, familial values and education, and youngsters' beliefs about the occupational rewards of academic success as key explanations for school performance. However, their study revealed additional factors supporting the following relationships between peer support and authoritative parenting: a) positive consequences of authoritative parenting and positive peer support have a positive influence on academic achievement for white adolescents; b) low academic achievement of Hispanic-American adolescents is influenced by low peer support and limited authoritative parenting; c) positive peer support offsets negative consequences of authoritative parenting to influence high academic achievement for Asian-American adolescents; and d) the absence of peer support undermines positive authoritative parenting to influence inferior academic achievement for African-American adolescents. Steinberg, Dornbusch & Brown (1992) broadened understanding of the scope of factors that influence academic achievement through use of an ecological perspective.

These examples illustrate how the Ecological Perspective can be used to frame a study when previously identified contexts are considered, and also how contexts can otherwise be broadened within the ecological scope. An ecological framework for this study on poverty-welfare reliance provides a responsible scope by categorizing poverty-welfare attribution within empirically supported personal and structural contexts. Personal/interpersonal, community and greater societal factors have proven impacts on poverty. Personal and structural factors of poverty in the United States are considered within the broad context that the ecological perspective supports (Adelman & Jaret, 1999; Brosio, 2000; Croteau, et. al., 2002; Harley, et. al., 2002; Martin, 2001; McConkey, 2004; Susser, 1996). Important to the scope of this and other poverty studies utilizing an ecological framework is that oppression, characterized by social inequality and injustice, is considered as a greater societal, structural factor of US culture that perpetuates poverty (Creswell, 2003; Crewe, 2004; Davis & Bent-Goodley, 2004; Duberman, 1976; Johnson, 1965; Williams, 2003).

Attribution Theory

Attribution Theory (Heider, 1958) guides the understanding that people will try to attribute causal relationships to events in their lives in order to make sense of their surroundings. Causal relationships are attributed from the point of view – observation, experience, socialization, interpretation – of the assigner. Further, one's point of view can impact one's behavioral tendencies. One guided use of Attribution Theory focuses on people's perceptions of intent as motivators for attributing cause (Robert & Rossiter, 1974). Another use of Attribution Theory is as a guide to uncover contextual factors that can complicate or bias causal inferences. This can be done primarily for the sake of discovery or it can be done for the purpose of

discovery to support an immediate plan for behavioral adaptation. DeJoy's (1994) study on managing safety in the workplace aimed for the latter. DeJoy identified that attributions for actions taken to manage workplace safety were based on perceptions about causes versus actual causes. He analyzed links between attribution for events and attribution for remedies and examination of these linkages were used to provide recommendations to improve the organizations' safety program.

Another use of Attribution Theory is illustrated in the 1990 study by Sharrock, Day, Qazi and Brewer. Outcomes in the study supported that helping behaviors of professional care staff were determined in part by their optimism associated with their attributions of a patient's problems. This study supports that professional staff's attributions for the circumstances of the people they serve can be a determinant of their behaviors toward service recipients. Similarly, Ng & Allen (2005) reported that people who attribute poverty to the poor may feel hatred towards them and those who attribute personal causes for poverty and welfare reliance support conservative welfare programs.

Attribution Theory focuses this study on perceptions of the causes and perpetuators of poverty-welfare reliance. Further, the theory informs the study on how perceptions of poverty-welfare reliance can potentially impact how social welfare service workers interact with TANF service recipients. Attribution Theory scales used to assess poverty-welfare attribution focus measurement of perceptions of causes and perpetuators of poverty-welfare reliance within an ecological framework. Specifically, personal attribution items for poverty listed on attribution scales are consistent with the micro, personal/interpersonal level of the ecological model. Likewise, structural attributions for poverty listed on attribution scales are consistent with the meso and macro, community and greater societal levels of the ecological model. Since the

survey design for measurement of poverty-welfare attribution allows for clear distinction of assigned factors within personal and structural categories, the poverty attribution assessment, guided by Attribution Theory, offers an important opportunity to identify specific similarities and specific differences of comparison groups across personal and structural domains. Such specificity facilitates discovery to promote consensus-seeking activity between these groups.

Co-Cultural Theory - Applied

The central assumption of Co-Cultural Theory (Orbe & Spellers, 2005) is that societies are hierarchically structured and hierarchy creates positions of dominance for some and marginalization for other cultural groups. Marginalized cultural groups are considered co-cultural. Use of ethnographic methods offered "insight into the processes by which co-cultural groups negotiate their cultural differentness with others" (Orbe & Spellers, 2005, p.174). He uncovered communication strategies used by co-cultural groups to cope with and to resist oppression. Identified tactics were used: to assimilate, accommodate or separate from the dominant culture; completely or solely while interacting with others; and in aggressive, assertive or non-assertive ways. These tactics influence behaviors of co-cultural groups – cultural features that are influenced by historic and pervasive oppressive actions of the dominant culture as well as perceptions of the low regard in which the dominant culture is understood to hold the co-cultural group. As such, behaviors of co-cultural groups are influenced by conscious choices that members make and these choices, in turn, are influenced by an oppressive social relationship and perceptions of and interplay between the dominant culture and the co-culture. Orbe (1998) illustrates how crucial proper context is when seeking to understand culture, perceptions and behaviors of co-cultural groups, particularly as they choose to interact with others. Interrelated

58

factors that influence selection of tactics include: preferred outcome, field of experience, abilities, situational context, perceived costs and rewards, and communication approach. Orbe and Spellers (2005) highlight the theory's use to understand culture, power and communication of: underrepresented populations in organizational settings; African Americans in general; African-American women in particular; African Americans and Latinos; and multi-racial groups.

Co-Cultural Theory (CCT) was used to explore tactics of underrepresented groups as they try to negotiate their differences within a dominant cultural context, and other approaches involved uncovering organizational features that potentially promote a negative environment for co-cultural groups. Orbe & Spellers (2005) offer an example of co-cultural negotiation through tactical communication in a 2003 study that they conducted. The study regarded how African-American women, aware of their co-cultural status, negotiate the corporate work environment specific to their choices of hairstyle and dress. They found that three communication orientations were utilized: nonassertive assimilation characterized by dressing more formally than others to avoid reinforcing negative stereotypes about Blacks and black women; assertive accommodation characterized by educating others about the differences in black hair and the black body in general; and assertive assimilation characterized by downplaying aesthetic differences between themselves and others and blending in "to reduce the potential for material consequences" (p.182).

Allison and Hibbler (2004), conversely, used a co-cultural framework to uncover organizational barriers to including diverse cultural participants in community recreation programs. Perspectives of recreation professionals uncovered organizational features that inhibit access and attractiveness to ethnic minorities, in particular. Features included: changing faces of the community; changing faces of management and staff; deferred program response; language

barriers; and negative attitudes and stereotypes held by some management and staff. In this instance, CCT was used to uncover organizational features that not only alter how co-cultural groups engage but can also significantly deter engagement of co-cultural groups entirely.

Offshoots of CCT – applications of CCT in practice – seek to promote knowledge and understanding of others. Orbe & Spellers (2005) speak to their "great success in using CCT to facilitate an understanding of the centrality and connectedness of racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, and ableism for [their] students" (p.183). With such a focus on understanding, Chen and Starosta (2005) make an important connection between co-cultural listening as an applied CCT concept and intercultural relationship development and third culture building. They acknowledge that "the practice of relationship development is regulated by the cultural variability" (p.124), and that "...a successful intercultural relationship is based on the effort of culturally different interactants to achieve a common goal. This collaborative effort requires the culturally different persons to recognize and be alert to similarities and differences among their cultures" (p.133). Uncovering similarities and differences, and consensus building toward a third culture of mutual understanding furthers positive development of relationships between intercultural groups.

The concept of a third culture developed through conscious efforts toward cultural acuity focuses on culture and communication and in the process, releases the intercultural dynamic from the weight of dominance and cultural bias. It does so because it decenters communication – moves the communication from a focus that is within groups to a focus that is between groups or "to a wider horizon in order to view [their] own cultural grounding as relatively accidental" (p.197). CCT seeks to recognize co-cultural groups as viable players in social interactions, players whose voices are part of an influential context within the scope of research – or

considerations of systems - that involves them. Co-cultural listening provides a tool to promote an unbiased approach to positive relationship development between cultural groups through consensus building. Co-Cultural Theory provides the proper lens through which multi-group interactions that include oppressed and dominant populations should be considered (Orbe & Spellers, 2005). CCT informs this study on how the US Culture on Poverty and the Cycle of Poverty can potentially impact how TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers perceive and interact with each other. Specifically, CCT "is designed to speak to the issues of traditionally underrepresented group members as they function within societal structures governed by cultural groups that have, over time, achieved dominant group status" (Orbe, 1998, p.9). The theory offers proper dimension to the study of poverty culture in the United States by illustrating that members of oppressed populations are negotiating, influential players in social situations.

In practice, Co-Cultural Theory guides an approach that fosters democratic communication between interacting groups of various cultures, toward the evolution of mutual understanding, through greater clarity and resolution (Chen & Starosta, 2005). A co-cultural approach guides the co-cultural - democratic - communication process and explains the presence or absence of activities that promote democracy. Consequently, it offers a framework for development, implementation and evaluation of democratic communication processes that align with the manner in which the United States characterizes itself and its activities of government. Understanding CCT factors and orientations facilitates multi-group engagement and promotes effective communication and cooperation (Orbe & Spellers, 2005). Co-Cultural Theory supports an ecological approach that includes oppression as a structural factor impacting America's marginalized populations. It offers significant insight into a spectrum of behaviors and attitudes

of oppressed populations seeking to manage oppressive circumstances, behaviors and attitudes that are often misinterpreted or otherwise misunderstood by the general public. Attitudes, behaviors, and statistics neither tell a complete lie nor do they tell the whole truth about social circumstances. Consequently, they can feed stereotypes without an opportunity for explanation. CCT helps to clarify what survival looks like for the poor and poor Black people in particular in the US. Further, it promotes mutual understanding through analysis of similarities and differences between groups by promoting consensus as a viable means to level the playing field between the groups of participants. In short, it excludes the backdrop of cultural bias by focusing interactions of players on a canvas that has no backdrop beyond mutual understanding.

For this study, CCT clarifies that there are at least two sides to the culture of poverty in the US, and it lends itself to an understanding of how interactions between the subjects of the study may potentially be played out in office environments providing social welfare services in the US. Equally important, a CCT approach requires a clean, nonbiased canvas upon which to present outcomes when comparing co-cultural group perceptions. Specifically, the CCT lens functions as an aperture when seeking to capture a snapshot of the interplay between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers. It sheds light where it might not otherwise exist to allow the cloudy dimensions of cultural dominance and co-culturalism to dissipate for a cleaner, clearer picture of consensus-building and positive relationship developing opportunities.

Summary Statement

Assumptions drawn from identified theories/perspectives and literature, frame the approach of this research. Understanding the comprehensive scope of poverty-welfare reliance requires consideration of personal and structural contexts that include cultural and intercultural

features. This dynamic has implications for the scope, focus and funding of social welfare policy; service delivery; and the perceived and actual life circumstances of people who are poor and welfare reliant. Conservative support for welfare programs in the United States is based on Whites' belief of the negative stereotype that poor Blacks are responsible for their own poverty (Epstein, 2004; Gilens, 1995); and US systems of oppression and inequality are not acknowledged as having a role in the current socio-economic circumstances of the poor in general, and poor Blacks in particular (Epstein, 2004). When dominant social perceptions are shared by social welfare service workers there is risk of mistreatment of service recipients. Where there is divergence between service recipients and service workers around personal, structural and cultural attributions for poverty-welfare reliance there is opportunity for educational intervention to promote consensus around facts about causes and perpetuators. Where there is consensus between groups, there is opportunity to promote advocacy to counter social perceptions based on stereotypes. The aim of this study is to uncover similarities and differences between social welfare service recipients and service workers to uncover opportunities to mediate cultural adversities, support positive interactions between intercultural groups, and promote increased advocacy, within organizations where they interact and in broader socio-political arenas.

CHAPTER IV. METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter is divided into seven sections. The first section describes the research design as well as the supporting methods used to quantify specific data. A review of research questions and hypotheses and how they relate to variables in the study and items within the measurement tool are provided in sections two and three. Section four describes the target population, selection criteria for study participation and the sampling procedures utilized. Data collection procedures that include recruitment and human subject considerations are addressed in section five. Section six describes how data are measured and section seven concludes the chapter with a description of the data analysis process.

Research Design

This descriptive, relational study used a cross-sectional design to explore a two group comparison of poverty-welfare attribution. It fits the model explained by Anastas (1999) where a relational study is built on a descriptive research design. Specifically, this study explores and describes how the causal characteristics of poverty-welfare reliance are perceived by TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers and then addresses how the perceptions of one group relate to the other. A survey method was chosen to support this design specifically to quantify the perceptions of the two study groups around factors of poverty-welfare reliance (Anastas, 2009; Creswell, 2003). A cross-sectional, point-in-time survey method is optimal for time and cost efficiencies given that the geographic area for the study is large and given that a longitudinal study would have been cost prohibitive. A survey also offered privacy and relative

freedom from judgment for members of both participating groups given the assurance of anonymity. However, this point-in-time cross-sectional design – as a consequence of such design - does not account for the fact that perceptions can change over time (Anastas, 1999).

Review of Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Question No. 1

Is there a significant difference in perceptions of poverty-welfare reliance and cultural beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers?

Ho1:   There is no statistically significant difference in personal perceptions of poverty-welfare reliance between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers.

Ha1:   There is a statistically significant difference in personal perceptions of poverty-welfare reliance between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers.

Ho2:   There is no statistically significant difference in structural perceptions of poverty-welfare reliance between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers.

Ha2:   There is a statistically significant difference in structural perceptions of poverty-welfare reliance between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers.

Ho3:   There is no statistically significant difference in cultural beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers.

Ha3:   There is a statistically significant difference in cultural beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers.

Research Question No. 2

Are poverty-welfare attributions and cultural beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients statistically significant predictors of group association (service recipient or service worker)?

Research Question No. 3

Is there a significant difference in attributions for poverty-welfare reliance and beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers given their length of time associated with the service system?

Ho1:   There is no statistically significant difference in attributions for poverty-welfare reliance and beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers given their length of time associated with the service system.

Ha1:   There is a statistically significant difference in attributions for poverty-welfare reliance and beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers given their length of time associated with the service system.

Research Question No. 4

Is there a significant difference in perceptions of poverty-welfare reliance and cultural beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers at little, moderate or longer lengths of time associated with the service system?

Ho1:   There is no statistically significant difference in personal perceptions of poverty-welfare reliance between study groups at little, moderate or longer lengths of time associated with the service.

Ha1:   There is a statistically significant difference in personal perceptions of poverty-welfare reliance between study groups at little, moderate or longer lengths of time associated with the service.

Ho2:   There is no statistically significant difference in structural perceptions of poverty-welfare reliance between study groups at little, moderate or longer lengths of time associated with the service.

Ha2:   There is a statistically significant difference in structural perceptions of poverty-welfare reliance between study groups at little, moderate or longer lengths of time associated with the service.

Ho3:   There is no statistically significant difference in cultural beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients between study groups at little, moderate or longer lengths of time associated with the service.

Ha3:   There is a statistically significant difference in cultural beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients between study groups at little, moderate or longer lengths of time associated with the service.

Research Question No. 5

Which of the following sets of factors best predict how TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers assign attributions for poverty-welfare reliance and cultural beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients: length of time services received, length of time as service worker; age; race; gender; marital status; number of dependent children residing with respondent, that are under age 18 for which respondent is legally responsible; highest level of education completed and type of college degree earned; income status; perception of family income status as a child; employment status; religious affiliation; and household income.

Variables in the Study

The variables in the study are as follows: 1) association in a group (0 = TANF service recipients and 1 = social welfare service workers); 2) poverty-welfare attribution (distinguished by personal and structural categories); and 3) cultural beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients (distinguished by 3 items within the cultural beliefs category). Association in a group is the predictor/antecedent variable and poverty-welfare attribution and cultural beliefs are the criterion variables.   Data for the following variables of interest were gathered and included in the survey. These variables include: length of time associated with the service system (distinguished by length of time service(s) received for TANF recipients, and length of time as service worker for service workers), length of time associated with the service system (distinguished by little=0-6 months, moderate=7-24 months, and longer=25 months or more), age, gender, marital status, race, number of dependent children residing with respondent, that are under age 18 for which respondent is legally and/or otherwise responsible, highest level of education completed and type of college degree earned, perception of family income as a child,

income status and length of time in current income status, employment status and length of time in current employment status, religious affiliation, and annual household income. Table 2 illustrates how variables are defined for purposes of measurement.

Table 2 – Variable Definitions for Measurement Purposes	
Variable	**Scale**
Group Association (IV)	0=TANF service recipients 1=social welfare service workers
Poverty-Welfare Attributions: Personal Structural (DV) (Family/Fatalistic)	1-Strongly Disagree 2-Disagree 3-Neither Agree Nor Disagree 4-Agree 5-Strongly Agree
Cultural Beliefs About Welfare & Welfare Recipients Cultural (DV/Criterion)	1-Strongly Disagree 2-Disagree 3-Neither Agree Nor Disagree 4-Agree 5-Strongly Agree
Age	18+
Race	0-Black 3-Asian/Pacific Islander 1-White 4-Native American 2-Latino/Latina 5-Other: Specify
Gender	0-Female 1-Male
Number of Dependents under age 18 residing with respondent	0+

Length of Time Associated with Service System
  How Long Service Received
  Length of Time as Service Worker
	0months+ (as a continuous variable)
	
	0-little time (0-6 months) (as a categorical variable)
	1-moderate time (>6 months to 24 months)
	2-longer time (> 24 months)

Marital Status	0-Single/Never Married 3-Widowed 1-Married 4-Other (Specify) 2-Single/Divorced
Highest Level of Education Completed	0-Highest Grade Completed/Elementary- 0-8 1-Some High School 2-High School Graduate/Diploma Earned 3-GED Earned 4-Some Undergraduate Studies 5-Associates Degree Earned 6-4 Year Undergraduate Degree Earned (Specify Type) 7-Some Post Graduate Studies 8-Post-Graduate Studies Degree Earned (Specify Type)
Income Status	0-Solely Reliant upon TANF/Other Resources 1-Partially Reliant upon TANF/Other Resources & Employment Wages 2-Solely Reliant upon Employment Wages

How long in current income status?	0+months/years	
Perception of Family Income Status as a Child: Did you grow up poor?	0-yes 1-no	
Employment Status Currently Employed? How Long?	0-Yes 1-No 0+ months/years	2-If no, reason for unemployment?
Religious Affiliation	0-None 1-Atheist 2-Catholic 3- Jehovah's Witness 4-Jewish	5-Muslim 6- Non-denominational Christian 7-Protestant 8-Seventh Day Adventist 9-Other (Specify)
Annual Household Income	0-<$5,000 1-5,001-19,999 2-20,000-39,999 3-40,000-59,999	4-60,000-79,999 5-80,000-99,999 6->100,000

Table 3 illustrates how study variables relate to specific research questions and identifies specific

items in surveys that support measurement of the variables.

Table 3 - Relation of Variables to Research Questions		
Research Questions	**Variables**	**Item(s) on Survey**
		See Appendix: A1a/A1b/A2
RQ.1 – Is there a significant difference in perceptions of poverty-welfare reliance and beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers?	**Independent Variables:** *#1: Association in a Group* where the 2 groups in the study are a) TANF service recipients *or* b) social welfare service workers. **Dependent Variables:** #1: *Poverty-Welfare Attribution* distinguished by personal and structural categories. – criterion #2: *Beliefs about Welfare & Welfare Recipients* distinguished by cultural factors	See Demographics Survey (Item 1 - "respondent status") for distinction of group association. See Attributions for Poverty & Beliefs about Welfare & Welfare Recipients Survey: Personal Items are captured within an *Individualistic Subscale (Items 1-8)* Structural Items are captured within an *Economic/Structural Subscale (Items 9-13) & a Prejudice/ Structural Subscale (Items 14-19)* Cultural Items are captured as *Cultural Beliefs (Items 24-26)*.
RQ.2 - Are poverty-welfare attributions and cultural beliefs about welfare recipients statistically significant predictors of group association?	**Predictor/Antecedent Variables:** #1: *Poverty & Welfare Attribution* distinguished by personal and structural categories. – criterion	See Attributions for Poverty & Beliefs about Welfare & Welfare Recipients Survey: Personal Items are captured within an *Individualistic Subscale (Items 1-8)*

	#2: *Beliefs about Welfare & Welfare Recipients* distinguished by cultural factors	Structural Items are captured within an *Economic/Structural Subscale (Items 9-13) & a Prejudice/ Structural Subscale (Items 14-19)* Cultural Items are captured as *Cultural Beliefs (Items 24-26)*. See Demographics Survey (Item 1 - "respondent status") for distinction of group association.
	Criterion Variable: *#1: Association in a Group* where the 2 groups in the study are a) TANF service recipients *or* b) social welfare service workers.	See Demographics Survey (Item 1 - "respondent status") for distinction of group association.
RQ.3 – Is there a significant difference between TANF service recipients and social welfare service worker attributions for poverty-welfare reliance and cultural beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients with regard to length of time associated with the service system?	**Independent Variables** RQ#3: How Long Service(s) Provided or Received: 0+ months	See Demographic Survey (Item 2)
RQ#4 – Is there a significant difference in overall attributions and beliefs about poverty welfare reliance between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers at little, moderate or longer length of time associated with the service system?	RQ#4: Further distinguished by 3 levels: 0=little time (0-6 months) 1=moderate time (7 - 24 months) 3=longer time (>24 months) **Dependent Variables:** #1: *Poverty-Welfare Attribution* distinguished by personal and structural categories. – criterion	Continuous data was recoded into categorical data using SPSS See Attributions for Poverty & Beliefs about Welfare & Welfare Recipients Survey: Personal Items are captured within an *Individualistic Subscale (Items 1-8)*
	#2: *Beliefs about Welfare & Welfare Recipients* distinguished by cultural factors	Structural Items are captured within an *Economic/Structural Subscale (Items 9-13) & a Prejudice/ Structural Subscale (Items 14-19)* Cultural Items are captured as *Cultural Beliefs (Items 24-26)*.
RQ.5 – Which of the following sets of factors best predict how TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers assign attributions for poverty and welfare reliance and cultural beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients: length of time	**Predictor/Antecedent Variables:** #2: How Long Service(s) Received or Provided #3: Age #4: Gender #5: Marital Status	*See Demographics Survey (Items 2-13).*

71

received or provided; age; race; gender; marital status; number of dependent children residing with respondent, that are under age 18 for which respondent is legally responsible; highest level of education completed and type of college degree earned; income status; perception family income status as child; employment status; religious affiliation; household income.	#6: Race #7: Number of Children residing with the respondent that are under 18, for whom Respondent is legally responsible #8: Highest Level of Education and type of college degree earned, where appropriate #9: Income Status & How Long in Status #10. Perception of Family Income Status as a Child #11. Employment Status & Length of Time in Current Employment #12. Religious Affiliation #13. Annual Household Income	
	Criterion Variables: #1: *Poverty & Welfare Attribution* distinguished by personal and structural categories. – criterion	*See Attributions for Poverty & Beliefs about Welfare & Welfare Recipients Survey: Personal Items are captured within an Individualistic Subscale (Items 1-8)* *Structural Items are captured within an Economic/Structural Subscale (Items 9-13) & a Prejudice/ Structural Subscale (Items 14-19)*
	#2: *Beliefs about Welfare & Welfare Recipients* distinguished by cultural factors - criterion	*Cultural Items are captured as Cultural Beliefs (Items 24-26).*

Target Population and Sampling Procedures

The target population for the study was TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers (in social welfare service agencies that provide income-based services to populations that include TANF service recipients) in the Washington, D.C. capital area. This included: Washington, D.C., Northern Virginia and Southern Maryland. Eligibility criteria for the study population were as follows:

1) Group 1: current recipients of TANF services who are at least 18 years old, English speaking, and who reside in the Washington, D.C metropolitan area at the time of the study; and

2) Group 2: workers in social welfare service agencies at the time of the study who are at least 18 years old, English speaking, and who also provided TANF or other income-based social welfare services to populations that include TANF recipients who reside in the Washington, D.C. capital area at the time of the study. Other income-based social welfare services include: cash assistance, financial management, food stamps/services, employment training/support and/or shelter.

Individuals within the immediate support network of study participants, the communities in which they reside at the time of the study, and the larger society of which these communities are a part were also de facto units of analysis given their presumed interplay with and influence on participants. Anastas (1999) identifies this as a delimited selection technique that is common to relational research. The researcher sought access to the target population through offices, departments and agencies providing Family Services and Social Services who provided income-based services to residents in the Washington, D.C. capital area.

The study was conducted to survey poverty and welfare attribution and cultural beliefs of 128 individuals - 64 TANF service recipients and 64 social welfare service workers - who met the identified selection criteria for participation in the research. G*Power 3, a statistical power analysis program for social, behavioral and biomedical sciences supports that the sample size of N=128 is sufficient for the study (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang & Buchner, 2007). Parameters for the G*Power 3 computation reported a sample of N=100 is needed for the following: a) test family = F-test, b) statistical test = MANOVA special effects and interactions, c) type of power analysis = A priori: compute required sample size given effect size of 0.25, a significance level of 0.01, and a power level of .99. For MANOVA, a sample size of 128 satisfies that requirement.

Organization Sampling

The researcher compiled a list of potential service organizations in the Washington, D.C. capital area by contacting local government TANF service agencies, private providers of income-based social welfare services to populations that included TANF service recipients and by using telephone books and the internet to identify organizations that met identified eligibility criteria. From the generated list, potential participant organizations were selected by convenience sampling and selected to participate based on eligibility and willingness to participate. (Despite efforts to include Washington, DC and Virginia agencies, Maryland agencies were the only agencies willing to participate in the study.) Snowball sampling methods were also used to identify other agencies providing TANF services and/or income-based social welfare services to populations that include TANF recipients, in order to obtain the identified sample size of service recipients and service providers.

Efforts were made to ensure representative sampling from provider sites that serve representative populations by considering Tier One programs. A Tier One approach involved seeking access to study populations primarily through core agencies such as TANF programs that are government operated or contracted. All participants of this study were accessed through Tier One core agencies.

Study Group Sampling

Participating organizations were asked to support solicitation of TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers interested in volunteering for the study. Eligible participants participated on a first-come first-served basis. Efforts were made to solicit participants until such time that the desired number of participants who provided complete surveys was reached. This was achieved from August, 2012 through January 31, 2014. Delays occurred associated

with gaining permissions from legal counsel needed at various sites to access TANF service recipients.

Recruitment & Selection

The researcher sought voluntary participation of organizations meeting identified selection criteria by phone and by email, personally contacting area TANF and income-based social welfare service providers of Washington, DC capital area residents. Agencies willing to participate in the study received packets of information containing general study and recruitment information, as well as survey materials and fliers. Selection to participate was determined by willingness to participate and communicated ability to provide access to eligible TANF service recipients and service workers who interact with service populations that include TANF service recipients. The solicitation packet used for this process is provided in Attachment A. The packet included an introductory letter to potential participating organizations, fliers for posting at participating sites, a Preamble that identified the rights and affirmed the confidentiality of survey participants, and survey materials. Recipient and provider participants received $10.00 for participating in the survey. At sites where administrators and/or organizational policy would not permit distribution of funds to service workers, food and drinks were provided for staff as an alternative. Site-specific liaisons were requested to support the study as identified below.

Role of Participating Site-specific Liaison

Identified representatives of selected agencies – or liaisons - were asked to post study solicitation materials in common areas of their organizations. Liaisons recruited individuals who met participant criteria, informed these individuals of study participation requirements including offering assurance of anonymity, and selected participants who otherwise met eligibility criteria

for participation based on their voluntary interest. They also referred inquiring or interested potential participants to the researcher for further information. Where site-specific liaisons could not be provided at a given site, the researcher completed the above tasks, with the exception of identifying TANF recipients which was always done by staff at participating sites.

The researcher was solely responsible for communicating assurances specific to the purpose of the study, Institutional Review Board and organization-specific research requirements, recruitment, selection, coding to ensure agency and participant anonymity, survey distribution and administration, survey collection and review, compensation, and security of documents.

Data Collection

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher initiated research upon approval of and in accordance with the requirements of the Howard University – Institutional Review Board (HU-IRB), as well as the IRBs and research policies and practices of participating organizations. Organizations willing to participate in the study by allowing the researcher to access recipients and providers of their services, received a solicitation packet that explained the purpose and processes of the study. Those who opted to participate in the study were asked to provide documentation indicating their intent to participate in the research as indicated in the solicitation letter and as otherwise agreed upon by the organization or institution and the researcher. Eligible participants received a Study Participant Preamble Form that identifies the rights of individuals participating in the study specific to: the right to participate voluntarily and the right to withdraw at any time; the purpose of the study and its likely impact on participants; the right to ask questions and to have their

privacy assured; and the benefits of the study to the individual. (A copy of this form is included in the Appendix.)

The researcher or liaison informed each study participant of the purpose of the study, provided a researcher introduction and researcher's professional interest in conducting the study, as well as the role of the liaison when appropriate. As indicated in the solicitation packet, participating sites and individuals were informed that this study would be conducted only as authorized by the Howard University – Institutional Review Board (HU-IRB) as well as the IRB or other research requirements of participating agencies authorizing access to their service recipient and service provider populations. Each participant was reminded that their name and the name of the agency that facilitated the connection between them and the researcher would remain confidential. Participant and center names were not collected or otherwise identified on survey materials, therefore they could not be directly associated with responses. Center names were coded to allow the researcher opportunities to coordinate efforts to complete the study and to support study methodology.

Efforts were made to allow for on-site completion of materials at the time that inquiries were made by eligible volunteers and compensation could be given at the time that survey materials were completed. Two forms of data collection were used. These included: self-administered questionnaires and researcher administered questionnaires, as requested. Since literacy was an issue for some service recipients, and any process to discern whether recipients could read may have caused undue discomfort for those who could not, each participant was informed that two forms of data collection were offered to every participant and each participant could choose the form of data collection that they preferred.

Survey administration and instructions for survey completion occurred as follows. Once participant volunteers were determined to be eligible to participate in the survey, the researcher or liaison provided participants with general information about the study, the researcher, and the voluntary and anonymous aspects of the study. The researcher or liaison then scheduled a time for participants to come take the survey, as appropriate, particularly when requests to participate could not otherwise be accommodated on the spot.

For Self-Administration: Eligible participants were handed a survey packet containing the preamble and the 3 page survey. Participants were asked to review the Preamble first and then read survey instructions and complete both forms, leaving no unanswered questions. They were instructed to promptly return the survey documents once completed. Timely completion was defined for participants as "within 45 minutes of the time that materials are issued". This timeframe was applied to promote timely completion, to offer participants immediate compensation for participation within a reasonable timeframe, and to allow the researcher to coordinate review of completed documents and issuance of monetary compensation at times that were not disruptive for the organization. Upon completion, the researcher scanned surveys to ensure completion of all items. Respondents were asked to answer any uncompleted items on the spot. Upon assurance that all items were completed, participants received $10, or as per participating agency policy some service workers were provided food and beverages, and the researcher thanked each respondent for their participation.

For Researcher Administration: – Surveys were administered to eligible participants by the researcher either one-on-one or in small groups. The researcher reiterated general study and researcher information, as well as provided reassurance of anonymity. The researcher distributed, read and discussed the preamble first. The researcher announced that the process of

reading each survey item and all of the potential answers was part of the administration method. The researcher then administered page 1 of the survey containing demographics information, reviewed instructions for completion and then read each item, as well as all available options for answering. The administrator administered page 2 & 3 of the survey containing the poverty questionnaire next and reviewed instructions with the respondents. Respondents were asked to judge the following reasons "what are the causes of poverty and why does it continue to exist in the US". The researcher read one question at a time, as well as potential responses and asked respondents to place an "X" in the box that corresponded most accurately with their perception of the specific explanation given. Explanations were not clarified by the researcher, and respondents were instructed to respond to each item to the best of their ability. Surveys were collected by the researcher following completion of the last item on the poverty survey. The researcher quickly reviewed each completed survey document in front of the respondent to ensure that answers were given for each item. Respondents were asked to provide a response, to the best of their ability, for any unanswered items which were re-read by the researcher. The researcher covered questions and scanned response columns quickly but thoroughly, where possible, solely for the purpose of ensuring that all items were answered. Once survey documents were completed and reviewed, the researcher issued $10 to the appropriate respondent, or otherwise provided food and beverages to service workers where agency administrators and/or policies disallowed monetary compensation, and thanked them for their participation.

Summary of Role of Participating Site-specific Liaison

Site-specific liaisons supported data collection procedures by identifying service recipients and service providers eligible for the study according to study eligibility criteria. As previously stated, the researcher performed all other survey administration tasks. Provider sites supported the study by properly identifying eligible participants and by providing on-site space for survey administration. Some liaisons also identified and coordinated researcher survey administration at other agency locations.

Measures

Instrument

The survey instrument used to collect attribution data in this study is Bullock's (2004) adaptation of the Furnham (1982) Attributions for Poverty scale (Appendix A). The Furnham instrument was designed for poverty and welfare attributions along personal and structural domains, and was adapted by Bullock (2004) to include new structural items assessing sexism and family composition. The scale comprises four subscales: individualistic factors (eight items), and economic/structural factors (five items), prejudice/structural factors (six items), and family factors/fatalistic factors (four items). A five point Likert rating scale is used where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree Nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. The individualistic subscale measures the belief that the cause of poverty is the poor people themselves (sample items: "Lack of motivation and laziness", and "Lack of ability and talent") Chronbach alpha is .83. The economic/structural subscale measures the belief that economy features cause poverty (sample items: "Low wages that some businesses pay", and "absent fathers who do not pay their child support"). Chronbach alpha is .75. The

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prejudice/structural subscale measures the belief that prejudice and discrimination cause poverty (sample items: "Prejudice and discrimination against the minorities and the poor" and "lower wages women are paid compared to those received by men") Chronbach alpha is .75. The scale also includes a family factor/fatalistic subscale (sample items: "bad luck" and "break-up of families and single women having babies outside of marriage"). Chronbach alpha is .62. Feldman (1999) asserts that the Structural Explanation scale is a consistent predictor of opinion on social welfare and racial issues, and that the Individualistic Explanation scale strongly predicts preferences on welfare and certain racial policy preferences (p.180). Feldman's (1999) assertion is offered in Volume 2 of Measures of Psychosocial Attitudes and was based on outcomes of numerous studies using the Furnham Attributions for Poverty Scale which have been tested as valid with a broad range of populations in the United States, differentiated by race, socio-economic status, voting preferences, gender, religion, religious affiliation, and job affiliation, among others.

The researcher also uses Furnham's (1985) Attitudes to Social Security Scale, as adapted by Bullock (2004) to gather data on 2 items. These 2 items capture perceptions specific to the cycle of poverty and they are captured within a cultural beliefs subscale. The two items have a Chronbach alpha of .60 and were utilized by Bullock on social worker and service recipient populations. Items included: "children who grow up in welfare families are more likely to be on welfare as adults" and "most people on welfare are caught in a cycle of poverty that is responsible for poor work habits, laziness and low self-esteem". A separate item followed the cultural subscale created by the researcher to gauge attitudes towards welfare and welfare recipients, specific to the US culture on poverty. It read "families, communities, society and the media teach people to discriminate against welfare recipients based on negative stereotypes

about the poor, and especially poor Blacks". The item was added to introduce and include culture as a factor at structural and personal levels. Responses to this separate item may also have implications for further study. A factoral analysis for this item along with the other cultural items has been completed to determine its reliability for the study and the results are presented and discussed in the next chapter.

The existing, identified survey supports the study because it offers measures that reflect identified concepts and theories (Anastas, 1999). Information recorded by participants on self- and/or researcher-administered questionnaires is explored and compared to identify group similarities and differences around poverty-welfare attributions and beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients categorized within the context of the aforementioned personal, structural and cultural domains. Furnham's (1982) Attributions for Poverty scale, as adapted by Bullock (2004), offers an assessment of poverty-welfare attribution along personal and structural domains, consistent with the study-guiding ecological, attribution and co-cultural theories. Cultural Beliefs items from Bullock's (2004) Beliefs About Welfare & Welfare Recipients Scale (an adaptation of Furnham's (1985) Attitudes towards Social Security scale) captures specific culture-based factors about participant attitudes towards welfare and welfare recipients that are also consistent with the aforementioned theories. Demographic data also lends itself to measurement of cultural features, some of which relate to poverty-welfare attributions and cultural beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients (Appendix A).

Data Analysis

This section provides a general description of the process for analyzing data. Specific details of data cleaning and the analyses used are provided in the following chapter. Once data

was collected it was entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for computerized statistical computation. Alphanumeric codes were used to satisfy confidentiality and anonymity assurances made to provider sites and participants. Data cleaning was conducted to identify and remove incomplete data and to check for normality.

Descriptive Analysis

A descriptive analysis of data for identified variables in the study is presented. Descriptive measures of central tendency and variability were used, as they are essential to describing characteristics of each group independent of the other. These included, but were not limited to means, standard deviations, frequency distributions, and grouped frequency distributions. Graphs were also used to present an organized and simplified picture of what the data presented about each group independent of and in comparison to each other. Descriptive statistics generated by data gathered for the study helped to determine whether certain assumptions or requirements of inferential statistics identified for use in the study, such as normal distribution, were met (Anastas, 1999).

Chi Square tests were used to examine whether statistically significant associations between groups and other categorical demographic variables existed (Abu-Bader, 2006). Categorical demographic variables include: gender, race, level of education, perception of family income, length of time associated with the service system (little, moderate, longer), employment status, marital status, income reliance, religious affiliation and household income. A 1-way MANOVA was used for descriptive purposes, specifically to consider whether statistically significant differences between groups existed regarding the three continuous demographic variables: length of time associated with the service system (0 months+), age, and number of dependent children. A 1-way MANOVA supported this by comparing the mean differences of

each level of the dichotomous, categorical variable groups on overall continuous demographics, as well as between subjects effects on each variable that comprised the overall demographic (Abu-Bader, 2011).

Inferential Analyses

This study was designed to make inferences about two particular groups in a particular geographic region based on data collected from a sample of those groups. Data were collected and analyzed to support decisions to reject or fail to reject identified hypotheses. Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) and within groups repeated measures analysis of variance (RANOVA) tests were conducted using SPSS for computerized statistical computation. These statistical analyses were utilized primarily to analyze data for hypothesis testing specific to group differences, including differences defined by demographic variables, on causes and perpetuating factors of poverty and welfare reliance, as well as cultural factors specific to beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients. Specifically, differences of mean scores on attributions for poverty-welfare reliance and culture-related beliefs about welfare were assessed for significance between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers. Both groups are exposed to America's culture on poverty and interact with each other in organizations that employ culture-influenced policies and practices of the larger society. Mean distributions of these groups were inspected and tests for normality were conducted prior to inferential analysis. Where the assumption of normality was not met then the square root method was used (Abu-Bader, 2011). Additionally, to reduce the risk of Type I errors that can occur with multiple tests, Bonferoni post hoc tests were used to pinpoint which groups are significantly different.

The Attributions for Poverty and Beliefs about Welfare & Welfare Recipients surveys used in this study measure perceptions of attributions on 5 subscales containing a total of 23 items using an interval-level, 5 category Likert rating scale.

A one-way MANOVA was conducted for Research Question No.1.: Is there a statistically significant difference in perceptions of poverty-welfare reliance and cultural beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers? The purpose of MANOVA is to examine the levels of one or more categorical, independent variables on two or more continuous, dependent variables (Abu-Bader, 2011). In Research Question No. 1, groups defined by TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers, is the categorical independent variable, and the continuous dependent variables are personal, structural and cultural features of poverty-welfare reliance. Although not a specific focus of the study, mean differences of groups on family/fatalistic attribution for poverty between the two groups was also analyzed. Findings specific to the family/fatalistic category are presented as relevant to capturing a full range of poverty-welfare attributions assigned by participants.

Additionally, a within group RANOVA was conducted to determine whether the aggregate group of study participants differed at statistically significant levels in their assignment of personal versus structural versus cultural perceptions. Specifically, did participants tend to assign higher levels of personal attributions over others? This question relates to Research Question No. 1 and is of interest to the study given research that indicates that those who assign personal attributes for poverty-welfare reliance may harbor hatred toward the poor. The purpose of a within-subjects repeated ANOVA is to examine the views of the same subjects on 3 or more related topics, where the topics are identified as 2 or more continuous dependent variables to

which each subject is exposed (Abu Bader, 2011). In this analysis the aggregate group of study participants is the subject group that serves as the independent variable and the dependent variables for which each subject has expressed a view are the personal, structural and cultural attributions and beliefs. Mean scores of personal attributions, structural attributions and cultural beliefs were compared. (The appropriateness of analyzing means of the aggregate group versus disaggregated means of independent groups on views is discussed in the Results section.)

Logistic regression analysis was planned for Research Question 2: Are poverty-welfare attributions and cultural beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients predictors of group association? Logistic regression analysis is used to examine the probability that an individual will fall into one of two groups, defined by a dichotomous variable, based on other factors (Abu-Bader, 2011). Group association is the dichotomous criterion variable and attributions/beliefs about poverty-welfare reliance are the factors. This analysis was not conducted. The reason is discussed in the Results section.

A Spearman's Rho correlation was conducted for Research Question No. 3: Is there a significant difference in perceptions of poverty-welfare reliance and cultural beliefs about poverty between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers with regard to length of time associated with the service system? The purpose of a Spearman's Rho correlation is to determine whether a continuous independent variable correlates with other continuous dependent variables (Abu-Bader, 2006). Length of time associated with the service system, defined by number of months reported by study participants, is the continuous independent variable and personal, structural and cultural attributions/beliefs are the continuous dependent variables.

Research Question No. 4 asks: Is there a statistically significant difference in perceptions about poverty-welfare reliance and beliefs about welfare recipients between study participants at little, moderate or longer lengths of time associated with the service system? A one-way MANOVA was conducted to examine the mean differences between levels of one categorical, independent variable on two or more continuous dependent variables. Participant lengths of time associated with the service system, defined as little, moderate and longer is the categorical independent variable. Personal, structural and cultural attributions/beliefs are the continuous dependent variables.

Multiple regression analysis was planned for Research Question Nos. 5. The question considers which sets of the identified demographic factors best predict attributions for poverty-welfare reliance and beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients. The following tests are used to determine whether variables of interest captured as demographic data in the survey show the required bivariate relationship with the three continuous dependent variables defined as attributions for poverty-welfare reliance and beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients (Abu-Bader, 2011). Spearman's Rho bivariate analyses were conducted using continuous demographic variables and the three identified continuous dependent variables. Number of dependents, length of time associated with the service system, and age are the independent variables in the Spearman's Rho analyses. Independent samples T-tests were conducted using dichotomous independent variables and the three identified continuous dependent variables. Gender, perception of family income, and employment status are the independent variables in the T-test analyses. 1-Way MANOVAs were conducted using categorical variables with 3 or more categories and the 3 continuous dependent variables. Race, marital status, education level, income status, religious affiliation, and household income are the independent variables in the 1-

Way MANOVA analyses. The multiple regression analysis was not conducted. The reason is discussed in the Results section.

Factor Analysis

A factor analysis was conducted to reaffirm that scales in the survey remained consistent for populations participating in the study at the point in time that it was administered. The instrument identified for use in this study was used in Bullock's 2004 cross-sectional study on social worker and welfare recipient attributions for poverty. This study acknowledges that perceptions and opinions can change over time. Therefore, further analysis was conducted to consider how participants in this study understand and relate specific items of poverty-welfare attributions and cultural beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients. Chronbach alphas identified in the factor analysis for this study's data set are compared to those identified in previous studies and the results are presented in the Results section.

Summary Statement

This descriptive, relational study utilized a cross-sectional design to examine the mean differences in attributions for poverty-welfare reliance and cultural beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers in the Washington, DC Capital Area of Maryland. Participants were recruited from public and private social service agencies utilizing convenience and snowball sampling techniques. Furnham's (1982) Attributions for Poverty Scale, as adapted by Bullock (2004) was used to assess attributions for poverty-welfare reliance along personal and structural domains. Furnham's (1985) Attitudes Towards Social Security scale as adapted by Bullock (2004) was used to assess cultural beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients. A factoral analysis was conducted to assess

reliability of scales. Additionally, descriptive statistics, bivariate and multivariate statistics were used to describe the study population and to examine research questions.

CHAPTER V: RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter consists of the following five sections: data evaluation, a discussion of validity and reliability of the survey instrument; descriptive characteristics of the sample; findings specific to Research Questions 1 through 5 as well as related hypothesis testing; and a summary of the results.

Data Evaluation

Data were entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). In preparation for the analysis, the data were examined to ensure proper entry, and to check for missing data and outliers. Evaluation of missing data indicated a pattern of predictability for the following demographic items: #7b) number of dependent children residing with the respondent that are under 18, for which the respondent is responsible through informal arrangement; #8a) highest grade completed; #9) Income Status had three categories and the first two categories had the follow-up question "how long in current status" which had high frequencies of missing responses, as did the third category "other" and it's follow-up question, "specify". These items were excluded from the study. Item #11) Employment Status had high frequencies of missing data for the follow-up questions "how long" for both of its categories. These items were excluded from the study. The pattern of missing data for other items was unpredictable with relatively few occurrences and therefore no further action was required. Elimination of descriptive items did not result in reduction of sample size. Measures of central tendency, variability, frequency distributions, computations for skewness, histograms and Q-Q plots were

performed using SPSS. Three variables for poverty-welfare reliance were created using the personal attributions, structural attributions, and cultural beliefs variables. Upon examination of the distributions for newly created variables, it was determined that the distribution for the personal and structural attribution variables was negatively skewed. Raw scores for both variables were reversed and transformed using the square root method (Abu-Bader, 2011). The square root for both variables was used in subsequent analyses.

Analytic strategies used to test assumptions for specific statistics, including data recoding and transformation are identified along with the results for each test in the Research Questions and Hypothesis Testing section of the chapter.

Reliability of the Survey Instrument

Factor Analysis

Reliability coefficients for scales used in the survey were analyzed to determine if they were consistent with the literature. The Chronbach's alpha computed for all scales and the coefficients are illustrated in Table 4: Reliability Coefficient Comparison. Nunally & Bernstein (1994) indicate that internal consistency is adequate at Chronbach's alpha values of .70 or greater. The factor analysis for this study indicated adequate reliability for individual/personal and structural scales, but not for the cultural scale.

Table 4 - Reliability Coefficient Comparison		
Scale	Alpha	
	Literature	Current Study
Individualistic/Personal	.83	.71/.76*
Structural: Economic	.75	.77
Prejudice	.75	
Cultural	.60	.59/.54**

Note: Current Study Combined Economic & Prejudice Items in the Structural Scale
  * .76 denotes the adjusted alpha with "lack of ability and talent" removed.
 ** .59 is direct comparison of same items from literature and current study; .54 includes an additional item added by the researcher.

91

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The individualistic/personal scale for the current study remained adequately reliable. However, the scale may be a bit less reliable for participants in this study. Combined structural scales in this study were consistent with the structural scales in the literature. Cultural scales in the literature and in this study were both less than adequate indicating that further development of the cultural construct is needed. An explanation of differentiated reliability is offered in the Limitations of the Study section.

Descriptive Characteristics of the Sample

Demographics of Overall Study Population

This section describes the specific demographic features of the study population upon which this exploratory, relational study was built. There were a total of 128 participants in the present study. Participants were accessed through Maryland, Tier One core agencies directly operated by or under contract with local or state government. Programs were located in the following counties in Maryland: Montgomery, Prince Georges, Howard, and Caroll. Agencies in Washington, DC and northern Virginia were solicited to participate in the research but none of the contacted agencies in these areas agreed to participate in the study. Most of the participants were female (89%), single (at 50% with 21% married and 19% single/divorced), and Black (at 67% with 21% White and 12% all other races). The average age was 35 years and ranged from 20-64 years. The average length of association with the service system was 44 months or 3.7 years and ranged from 0 months (<30 days) to 35 years. The average number of children for whom respondents were legally responsible was 1 with a range from 0-5. Twenty five percent (25%) of the participants completed four years of college with 21% having completed some college and 15% indicating receipt of a high school diploma as their highest level of education.

Most respondents reported their religious affiliation as non-denominational Christian (at 46% with 16% Protestant, and 15% no affiliation). Sixty five percent (65%) of respondents indicated that they did not grow up poor as a child (versus 35% who did). Household Income levels were bi-modal, with <$5,000 and $20,000-$39,999 at 25% each (and with $5,000-$19,999 at 19% and $40,000-$59,999 at 16%).

Demographics by Group

When the demographics are examined by group, 64 are TANF service recipients and 64 are social welfare service workers. The average age of service recipients was 32 years. Many of the recipients are female (94%), Black, (62%), and single (56%). Fifty percent of recipients also shared that their income was below $5,000 and 23% shared that their highest level of education completed was either some college, some high school, or a high school diploma was earned. Service workers average age was 38 years. Most of the workers were female (84%), single (42%) and Black (72%). Almost 40% of the service workers had an income within the range of $20,000 - $39,999. Twenty-eight percent had an income within $40,000 - $59,999.

When asked if they grew up poor as a child, 62% of service recipients said no, and 70% of service workers reported that they did not grow up poor as a child. Service recipients were employed at 10% and all 64 service workers were currently employed at the time of survey completion. Eighty nine percent (89%) of service recipients reported being unemployed at the time of survey completion. Table 5: Descriptive Data on Demographics by Group offers a side-by-side comparison of groups on all demographic variables. Percentages are provided for categorical variables and means, standard deviations and ranges are provided for continuous variables.

Table 5: Descriptive Data on Demographics by Group

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES		TANF RECIPIENTS	SERVICE WORKERS
Length of Association w/Service System		Mean=19.6 months/SD.=23.47 Range=0-120 months	Mean=59.9 months/SD=71.89 Range=0-300 months
	Little	39%	22%
	Moderate	42%	22%
	Longer	19%	56%
Age		Mean=33years/SD=8.33 Range=20-54 years	Mean=38 years/SD=12.27 Range=22-64
Number of Legal Dependents		Mean=2 children (1.85) SD=1.21 Range=0-5	Mean=1 child (.58) SD=.91 Range=0-3
Gender	Female	94%	84%
	Male	6%	16%
Marital Status	Single/Never Married	56%	50%
	Married	11%	32%
	Single Divorced	23%	14%
	Widowed	3%	8%
	Other (Specified as Separated)	6%	5%
Race	Black/African American	63%	67%
	White	20%	21%
	Latino/Latina	6%	3%
	Asian/Pacific Islander	2%	2%
	Other	9%	6%
Childhood Family Income	Poor-Yes	38%	34%
	Poor-No	62%	65%
Employment Status	Employed	11%	100%
	Unemployed	89%	0%
Highest Educ. Level	Some High School	24%	12%
	GED Earned	10%	6%
	High School Diploma Earned	24%	15%
	Some College	24%	21%
	Associate's Degree Earned	7%	5%
	4 Year Degree Earned	10%	25%
	Some Post Graduate Studies	0%	4%
	Graduate Degree	7%	2%
Religious Affiliation	None	16%	15%
	Atheist	3%	2%
	Catholic	3%	5%
	Jehovah's Witness	3%	2%
	Jewish	2%	0%
	Muslim	2%	5%
	Non-denominational Christian	50%	42%
	Protestant	9%	23%
	7th Day Adventist	2%	0%
	Other	11%	6%
Reliance	Solely TANF or Solely Wages	83%	83%
	TANF & Wages or Wages & Other Sources	16%	14%
	Solely Wages or Solely Other Sources		3%
Household Income	<$5,000	50%	0%
	$5,000-$19,999	34%	3%
	$20,000-$39,999	11%	40%
	$40,000-$59,999	3%	29%
	$60,000-$79,999	2%	6%
	$80,000-$99,999	0%	16%
	≥$100,000	0%	6%

Statistical Analyses Identifying Demographic Similarities & Differences between Groups

Similarities and differences between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers are a particular interest of this study. The chi square statistical analysis was conducted to consider the association between groups and other categorical demographic variables. A 1-way MANOVA was conducted to consider mean differences of groups on the overall continuous demographic variables, as well as between subjects effects of the continuous variables.

Association between Groups and Categorical Variables

The purpose of chi square (X^2) is to determine if there is a statistically significant association between levels of one categorical variable and levels of another categorical variable (Abu-Bader, 2006). X^2 assumptions were tested using groups and: gender, race, level of education, perception of family income, length of service system association (little, moderate, longer), employment status, marital status, income reliance, religious affiliation, and household income. Population representation was supported by using a tiered sampling approach. All participants were accessed through Tier One core agencies such as TANF programs that were government operated or contracted. All other assumptions of the bivariate nonparametric test were met including: nominal level measurement of independent and dependent variables, variable independence, and a minimum of 5 cases per cell. Race, marital status, education level, religion and household income required recoding and combining levels with fewer frequencies.

Groups and Gender, Race, Perception of Family Income and Religion

There was no statistically significant association between groups and: gender (X^2=2.887, p=.089), race (X^2=3.722, p=.155), childhood family income (X^2=.876, p=.349), or religious affiliation (X^2=4.644, p=.200).

Groups and Income, Education, Length of Service System Association & Marital Status

As anticipated, statistical significance was indicated regarding income and education levels, as well as length of service system association between groups. Additionally, statistically significant association was indicated between groups and marital status. Table 6: Results of Chi Square Test of Association by Group illustrates results of each test. Further explanation of statistically significant associations is also presented.

Table 6 - Results of Chi Square Test of Association by Group

Variable		TANF Recipients N	%	Service Workers N	%	Total N	%	X^2	p
Gender	Male	4	6.3	10	15.6	14	10.9	2.886	.089
	Female	60	93.8	54	84.4	114	89.1		
Race	Black	40	62.5	46	71.9	86	67.2	3.722	.155
	White	13	20.3	14	21.9	27	21.1		
	Others	11	17.2	4	6.3	15	11.7		
Highest Education Level									
	Some HS	15	23.4	0	0	15	11.7	46.17	.001
	HS Dipl.	15	23.4	4	6.3	19	14.8		
	Some College	15	23.4	11	17.2	26	20.3		
	4 Year Deg.	6	9.4	26	40.6	32	25		
	Grad. Deg.	1	1.6	14	21.9	15	11.7		
	Others	12	18.8	9	14.1	21	16.4		
Childhood Income Level									
	Poor-Yes	24	21.5	19	29.7	43	33.6	.876	.349
	Poor-No	40	62.5	45	70.3	85	66.4		
Service System Assoc.									
	Little	25	39.1	14	22.2	39	30.7	18.473	.000
	Moderate	27	42.2	14	22.2	41	32.3		
	Longer	12	18.8	35	55.6	47	37		
Employment Status									
	Employed	7	10.9	64	100	71	55.5	102.761	.000
	Unemployed	57	89.1	0	0	57	44.5		
Marital Status									
	Single/Never Married	36	56.3	7	10.9	63	49.2	9.331	.025
	Married	7	10.9	20	31.3	27	21.1		
	Single/Divorced	15	23.4	9	14.1	24	18.8		
	Combined Others	6	9.4	8	12.5	14	10.9		
Income Reliance									
	Solely: TANF or Wages	53	8.2	2	3.1	55	43	97.418	.000
	TANF/Wages or Wages/Other Source	10	15.6	9	14.1	19	14.8		
	Solely: Wages or Other Source	1	1.6	53	82.8	54	42.2		
Religious Affiliation									
	None	10	15.6	9	14.1	19	14.8	4.644	.200
	Non-denom. Christian	32	52	27	42.2				
	Protestant	6	9.4	15	23.4				

							X²	p
Others		16	25	13	20.3			
Household Income	<$5,000	32	50	0	0	32	25	87.992	.000
	$5,000-$19,999	22	34.4	2	3.1	24	18.8	
	$20,000-$39,999	7	10.9	25	39.1	32	25	
	$40,000-$59,999	2	3.1	18	28.1	20	15.6	
	$80,000-$99,999	0	0	10	15.6	10	7.8	
	Others	1	1.6	9	14.1	10	7.8	

TANF is a time-limited, income-based program, so it was anticipated that TANF recipients would have lower income, employment, education levels and length of association with the service system than social welfare service workers. The results showed a statistically significant association between group and income reliance (X^2=97.418, p=.000). Only 15.6% of TANF recipients (n=10) relied on TANF and wages for income. As anticipated, service recipients had a lower percentage of reliance upon wages only (n=0) than service workers (n=64, 100%). Cramer's V indicated that 87.2% of variance in reliance was due to group association. The results showed a statistically significant association between group and employment status (X^2=102.761, p=.000). TANF recipients were employed at a rate of 10.9% (n=7). By design, workers were employed at 100% (n=64). The phi results indicated that 89.6% of the variance in employment was due to group association. The results showed a statistically significant difference between group and household income (X^2=87.992, p=.000). Again, as anticipated, TANF recipients had lower levels of household income. Eighty four percent (84%, n=54) of TANF recipients reported household income levels at ≤ $19,999. Workers had higher levels of household income with the highest percentages for $20,000-$39,999 (39.1% with n=25) and $40,000-$59,999 (28.1% with n=15). Cramer's V results indicated 82.9% of variance in household income is explained by groups.

In general, lower levels of education are associated with lower levels of income. Therefore, lower levels of education were also anticipated for service recipients and the results showed a statistically significant difference between groups and education level which supported

the general expectation (X^2=46.179, p=.000). TANF recipients reported equal percentages of 23.4% (n=15) for completion of some high school, high school diploma, and some college. Service workers indicated highest levels of education completed for 4 year degree (40.6%, n=26) and graduate degree (21.9%, n=14). Cramer's V results indicated 60.1% of variance in education level is explained by group association.

TANF is a time-restricted program, so it was also anticipated that TANF service recipients would have lower lengths of association with the service system than social welfare service workers. (X^2=18.473, p=.000). TANF recipients were highest in frequency at 42% (n=27) in the moderate length of time level defined as 7 to 24 months, and 39.1% (n=25) at the lower level defined as 0-6 months. Service workers had equal frequencies of 22.2% (n=14) at little and moderate time, and 55.6% at longer time defined as 25 months or longer (n=35). Cramer's V results indicated 38.1% of variance in length of time associated with the service system is explained by group association.

The results also showed statistically significant associations between groups and marital status (X^2=9.331, p=.025). Both groups had highest frequencies in the single/never married category with TANF recipients at 56.3% (n=36) and service workers at 42.9% (n=27). Second highest frequencies for TANF recipients were 23.4% (n=15) at the single/divorced level. Second highest frequencies for service workers were 21.1% (n=27) at the married level, and 18.8% (n=24) at the single/divorced level was a close third. Cramer's V results indicted just 27% of variance in marital status is explained by group association.

Mean Differences between Groups and Descriptive Continuous Variables

For group descriptive purposes, a 1-way MANOVA was conducted to consider whether there were statistically significant differences between group association and the 3 remaining

demographic variables: age, number of legally dependent children residing with respondents, and length of time associated with the service system (defined in months from 0+). The purpose of a MANOVA is to examine the mean differences between one or more categorical, independent variables on two or more continuous variables (Abu-Bader, 2011). For this test, groups defined as TANF service recipients or social welfare service workers was the categorical independent variable, and age, number of dependents and length of service system association were the continuous dependent variables. Prior to the analysis, data were evaluated to ensure that assumptions were met. First, frequencies of the independent variable were considered and the lowest cell has 64 cases, thus showing a large enough sample size for MANOVA. Measures of skewness, histograms and Q_Q plots were examined for independent variables. The distribution was normal for number of legally dependent children. Age and length of service system association were severely positively skewed and required transformation using the Log10 method. Skewness was computed for the transformed variables and no major departures from normality were found. Thus, both assumptions for univariate and multivariate normality were met. Transformed variables were used for homogeneity of variance, linearity, homoscedasticity and multicollinearity tests which were also met.

Groups and Age, Number of Legal Dependents & Length of Service System Association

Results of the 1-way MANOVA of groups on age, number of legal dependents and length of service system association showed an overall significant difference between TANF service recipients and service workers on overall descriptive dependent variables tested (Wilks' lambda D=.000, $F_{(3, 115)}$= 17.928, p<.05). Group association accounted for 99.4% of the variance in the overall descriptive variable (n^2=.994). The results of the post hoc between-subjects effects

indicated significance on all three levels of the dependent variables: age ($F_{(1,118)}$=7.2, p<.05, n^2=.058) with $\overline{X}$=1.49 for TANF recipients and $\overline{X}$=1.56 for service workers; number of legal dependents($F_{(1,118)}$=31.70, p<.05, n^2=.252) with $\overline{X}$=1.82 for TANF recipients and $\overline{X}$=.571 for service workers; and length of service system association ($F_{(1,118)}$=10.741, p=.001, n^2=.083) with $\overline{X}$=1.04 for TANF recipients and $\overline{X}$=1.43 for service workers. Partial eta (*n2*) results indicated that group association explained only 5.8% of the variance for age; 25% of the variance for number of legal dependents; and only 8.3% of the variance for length of service system association.

Personal Attributions by Group

Overall differences between groups on personal attributions for poverty-welfare reliance are as follows: TANF service recipients had $\overline{X}$= 3.11 and a SD=.839; service workers had $\overline{X}$= 3.21 and SD=.701. The distribution was negatively skewed indicating that more than 50% of scores fell to the right of the mean in overall agreement with personal items listed in the survey. Table 7: Personal Attributions by Group presents percentages by group of each item in the personal scale. In the table, strongly disagree and disagree are combined, and agree, strongly agree are combined.

Table 7 - Personal Attributions by Group

	SD/D		NAND		A/SA	
Personal Items	TR	SW	TR	SW	TR	SW
1. Lack of motivation and laziness	2%	17%	22%	17%	56%	66%
2. Lack of effort among the poor to improve themselves	27%	22%	16%	33%	58%	45%
3. Anti-work attitudes and a self-defeating psychology (self-defeating mindset and associated behavior) among the poor.	2%	9%	20%	23%	66%	67%
4. Lack of intelligence	45%	55%	27%	30%	28%	16%
5. Inability to budget money	11%	13%	16%	19%	73%	69%
6. Babies having babies	9%	9%	8%	8%	83%	83%
7. Alcohol and drug abuse	11%	6%	19%	16%	70%	78%
8. Lack of ability and talent	44%	64%	23%	22%	33%	14%

SD/D=Strongly Disagree & Disagree combined, NAND=Neither Agree Nor Disagree, A/SA=Agree & Strongly Agree combined
TR=TANF Recipient, SW=Service Worker

As stated previously, more than half of all participants tended to agree with overall personal items in the survey. More than half of all participants disagreed with the following attributions: lack of intelligence, and lack of ability and talent.

Structural Attributions by Group

Overall differences between groups on structural attributions for poverty-welfare reliance are as follows: TANF service recipients had $\overline{X}$=3.53 and SD=.956; service workers had $\overline{X}$=3.81 and SD=.849. The distribution was negatively skewed indicating that more than 50% of scores fell to right of the mean in overall agreement with structural items listed in the survey. Table 8: Structural Attributions by Group presents percentages by group of each item in the structural scale. In the table, strongly disagree and disagree are combined, and agree, strongly agree are combined.

Table 8 - Structural Attributions by Group

Structural Items	SD/D		NAND		A/SA	
	TR	SW	TR	SW	TR	SW
1. Low wages that some businesses pay	11%	16%	8%	17%	81%	67%
2. Sluggish economy and failure of society to provide enough good jobs	11%	17%	11%	14%	78%	69%
3. Absent fathers who do not pay child support	14%	20%	16%	34%	70%	45%
4. Inadequate job training	22%	9%	17%	23%	61%	67%
5. Corporate downsizing and US companies relocating to foreign countries so they can pay lower wages	14%	6%	14%	23%	71%	70%
6. Prejudice and discrimination against minorities and the poor	14%	33%	23%	20%	44%	47%
7. Failure of society to provide good schools	39%	28%	19%	23%	42%	48%
8. Weak unions that don't protect workers	23%	38%	42%	44%	34%	19%
9. High taxes that take money away from the poor	25%	24%	17%	33%	58%	43%
10. Being taken advantage of by the rich	33%	47%	23%	28%	44%	25%
11. Lower wages women are paid compared to those received by men	36%	27%	22%	25%	42%	48%

SD/D=Strongly Disagree & Disagree combined, NAND=Neither Agree Nor Disagree, A/SA=Agree & Strongly Agree combined
TR=TANF Recipient, SW=Service Worker

As stated previously, more than half of all participants tended to agree with overall structural items in the survey, with 4 of the 11 items at overall agreement percentages ranging 61%-81% for both groups. Groups differed in their responses to the statement that the poor are taken advantage of by the rich, with TANF recipients in overall agreement at 44% and service workers in overall agreement at only 25%.

Cultural Beliefs by Group

Overall differences between groups on cultural attributions for poverty-welfare reliance are as follows: TANF service recipients had $\overline{X}$=10.10 and SD=2.539; service workers had $\overline{X}$=10.48 and SD=2.560. The distribution was normal indicating scores fell fairly evenly around the mean. Table 9: Cultural Attributions by Group presents percentages by group of each item in the cultural scale. In the table, strongly disagree and disagree are combined, and agree, strongly agree are combined.

Table 9 - Cultural Attributions by Group

Cultural Items	SD/D		NAND		A/SA	
	TR	SW	TR	SW	TR	SW
1. Children who grow up in welfare families are more likely to be on welfare as adults	50%	16%	14%	23%	36%	61%
2. Most people on welfare are caught in a "cycle of poverty" that is responsible for poor work habits, laziness, and low self-esteem	28%	31%	16%	16%	56%	53%
3. Families, communities, societies and the media teach people to discriminate against welfare recipients based on negative stereotypes about the poor and especially poor Blacks	9%	25%	14%	16%	77%	48%

SD/D=Strongly Disagree & Disagree combined, NAND=Neither Agree Nor Disagree, A/SA=Agree & Strongly Agree combined
TR=TANF Recipient, SW=Service Worker

Percentages indicate that groups differed in their beliefs about children being more likely to be on welfare as adults if they grow up in welfare families, with a majority of TANF recipients in overall disagreement with the statement and a majority of service workers in overall agreement with the statement. Groups had similar beliefs about people on welfare being caught in a "cycle of poverty" with greater than 50% of respondents in overall agreement with the statement. Both groups had higher percentages in overall agreement with the social and institutional perpetuation of stereotypes about the poor and poor Blacks that teaches people to discriminate against welfare recipients. While 63% of all participants are in agreement with the statement, TANF recipients indicated a significantly higher percentage than service workers at 77% versus 48%. Twenty five percent of service workers disagreed with the statement while only 9% of TANF recipients disagreed with the statement.

Family/Fatalistic Attributions by Group

Family/fatalistic attributions were not a focus of this study. However, as stated previously, the means and standard deviations by group are presented as they are relevant to capturing the full range of poverty-welfare attributions by survey participants. The distribution for overall family/fatalistic items was normal. For TANF recipients, $\overline{X}$=13.24 with SD=2.94. For social welfare service workers, the $\overline{X}$=12.58 with SD=2.39.

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Hypothesis Testing

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Research Question No. 1

Is there a significant difference in perceptions of poverty-welfare reliance and cultural beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers?

Ho1:   There is no statistically significant difference in personal perceptions of poverty-welfare reliance between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers.

Ha1:   There is a statistically significant difference in personal perceptions of poverty-welfare reliance between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers.

Ho2:   There is no statistically significant difference in structural perceptions of poverty-welfare reliance between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers.

Ha2:   There is a statistically significant difference in structural perceptions of poverty-
            welfare reliance between TANF service recipients and social welfare service
            workers.

Ho3:   There is no statistically significant difference in cultural beliefs about welfare and
            welfare recipients between TANF service recipients and social welfare service
            workers.

Ha3:   There is a statistically significant difference in cultural beliefs about welfare and
            welfare recipients between TANF service recipients and social welfare service
            workers.

A one-way MANOVA was conducted to determine the effect of groups on the set of poverty-welfare reliance variables comprised of personal and structural attributions and cultural beliefs. Prior to the analysis, data were evaluated to ensure that the eight assumptions for MANOVA were satisfied. First, this sample is representative of the population of TANF recipients and social welfare service workers in the Maryland sector of the Washington, DC Capital Area. Efforts to ensure representative samples included accessing only Tier One core agencies where services were either provided or contracted by local and state governments. Second, levels of measurement for MANOVA were met given that this study uses one categorical independent variable (group association) and 3 continuous dependent variables (personal attributions, structural attributions and cultural beliefs). Third, the sole independent variable, group association, has a minimum of 62 cases per cell reflecting a large enough sample for MANOVA execution.

Fourth, measures of skewness and kurtosis, histograms and Q-Q plots were examined for all three of the dependent variables. The distribution for cultural beliefs was normal. The

distributions for personal and structural attributions were negatively skewed and required reversal and transformation using the square root method. Following transformation, skewness and kurtosis, histograms and Q_Q plots were examined for the transformed variables with no major departures from normality found. Univariate normality was fulfilled for all three dependent variables. Multivariate normality was assumed given fulfillment of univariate normality, consistent with traditional research practices (Abu-Bader, 2011).

Fifth, homogeneity of variance was determined by inspecting Levene's test of equality of variance. All three dependent variables had p values >.001 which satisfied the assumption (personal: $p=.485$; structural: $p=.110$; and cultural: $p=.958$). Sixth, results of the Bartlett's test of sphericity at $p<.05$ were examined along with scatter plots of each dependent variable on the other dependent variables. The relationship between all dependent variables was linear which indicated that the assumption of linearity was met. Seventh, the results of the Box M test were examined at $p>.001$. At $p=.540$, the assumption of homoscedasticity was met. Finally, multicollinearity was examined by inspecting the results of the residuals Sum of Scores Cross Products (SSCP) matrices at r>.80 and none of the correlation coefficients between any of the dependent variables were greater than .80 indicating that the assumption was satisfied.

Mean Differences of Groups on Personal, Structural & Cultural Perceptions

The results of the Wilks' lambda showed no significant differences between groups on overall perceptions ($F_{(df3,122)}=1.786$, $p>.05$, $n^2=.042$). Between subjects effects showed no significant difference between groups on personal attributions ($F_{(df1,125)}=.826$, $p>.05$, $n^2=.01$); structural attributions ($F_{(df1,125)}=3.747$, $p>.05$, $n^2=.03$); and cultural beliefs ($F_{(df1,125)}=.465$, $p>.05$, $n^2=.00$). Table 10 and Table 11 display descriptive statistics and a summary of MANOVA results.

Table 10 - Results of MANOVA – Descriptive Statistics

Variables	M	SE	N
Personal			
TANF Recipients	3.09	.83	64
Service Workers	3.21	.10	62
Structural			
TANF Recipients	3.50	.11	64
Service Workers	3.81	.12	62
Cultural			
TANF Recipients	10.17	.32	64
Service Workers	10.48	.33	62

Table 11 - MANOVA Summary Table

Source	Dependent Variable	SS	df	MS	F	p
Groups	SQRT_Personal	.49	1	.49	.83	.37
	SQRT_Structural	3.10	1	3.10	3.75	.06
	Cultural	3.07	1	3.07	.47	.50
Error	SQRT_Personal	73.54	124	.59		
	SQRT_Structural	102.58	124	.83		
	Cultural	816.59	124	6.59		
Corrected Total	SQRT_Personal	74.03	125			
	SQRT_Structural		105.68	125		
	Cultural	819.66	125			

Wilks' lambda=($F_{(df3,122)}$=1.786, $p>.05$, $n^2=.042$)

A within subjects repeated ANOVA (or RANOVA) was also conducted to examine mean differences between subjects' perceptions on personal and structural attributions and cultural beliefs. For this test, each subject was measured on three related topics ($\overline{X}_p \neq \overline{X}_s \neq \overline{X}_c$). The primary purpose of within subjects RANOVA is to examine whether significant differences exist between the subjects' own scores (Abu-Bader, 2011). This examination was of interest to the study and was a relevant follow-up to Research Question No. 1, given literature that indicated that people who tend to assign personal attributions for poverty-welfare reliance over other attributions may harbor hatred towards the poor. A within subjects test was determined appropriate for consideration given the results of the one-way MANOVA for Research Question No. 1. Since there was no statistically significant difference between groups on attributions and beliefs, aggregated group data was determined to be appropriate for this examination.

Prior to testing, the 7 assumptions for RANOVA were considered. Sample representativeness, levels of measurement, sample size and normal distribution were the same for RANOVA as for the one-way MANOVA for Research Question No. 1. Each of the assumptions was satisfied. Sphericity was evaluated by inspecting the Mauchly's W test at $p>.05$. This test was not met, as significant differences between the variances of the three measures were found (Mauchly's W=.308, chi square$_{(df=2)}$=146.155, $p<.05$). The Huyn-Feldt alternative was used as it was nearest to 1.0 of all other corrections computed. Since the Huyn-Feldt alternative would be reported to overcome violation of sphericity, examination of the assumption for compound sphericity was not needed. Huyn-Feldt would also overcome violations of this assumption, if they were found (Abu-Bader, 2011). The same instrument was used to measure the dependent variables on all topics so the Range of Scores assumption was satisfied.

Mean Differences between Personal, Structural & Cultural Perceptions

The corrected results of Huyn-Feldt test for RANOVA showed an overall significant difference between personal and structural attributions and cultural beliefs among a sample of 128 TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers ($F_{(df1.186, 148.311)}$=697.388, $p<.05$, n^2=.85). In this study, the results of the Bonferoni pairwise comparison showed that all three measures of attributions and beliefs were significantly different from each other (p=.000 for all 3 comparisons with $\overline{X}_p$=3.150 with SE=.069; $\overline{X}_s$=3.651 with SE=.082; and $\overline{X}_c$=10.325 with SE=.228). Examination of mean differences indicates that the study group does not assign personal attributions over other attributions. Finally, results of the RANOVA show that 85% of the variance in overall attributions and beliefs is accounted for by within-subjects differences in the three measures. Table 12, Table 13, and Figure 2 display results of RANOVA.

Table 12 - Results of RANOVA – Descriptive Statistics

Attributions/Beliefs	N	M	SE
Personal	126	3.15	.07
Structural	126	3.65	.08
Cultural	126	10.33	.23

Table 13 - RANOVA – Summary Table

Source	SS	*df*	MS	F	*p*
Occasions	4044.32	1.19	3408.64	697.39	.000
Subjects	247.47	125	2.196		
Residuals	724.90	148.31	4.89		
Total	5043.69	274.5			
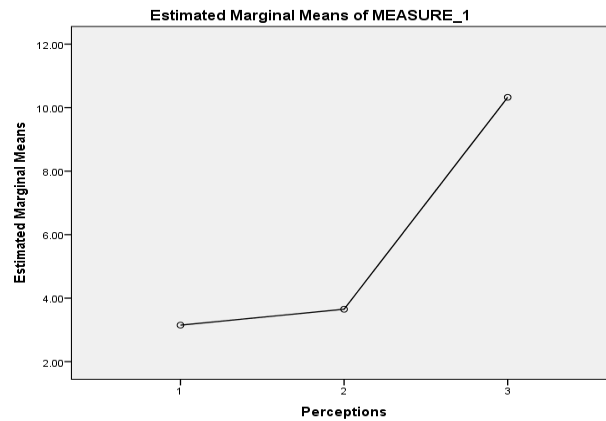
Figure 2: Means Plots

Research Question No. 2

Are poverty-welfare attributions and cultural beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients statistically significant predictors of group association (service recipient or service workers)?

Assumptions for the planned linear regression analysis were not explored. The results of the one-way MANOVA for Research Question No.1 indicated no statistical significance between groups on poverty-welfare attributions or cultural beliefs, thus this research question is not valid.

Research Question No. 3

Is there a significant difference in attributions for poverty-welfare reliance and beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers given their length of time associated with the service system?

Ho1:   There is no statistically significant difference in attributions for poverty-welfare reliance and beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers given their length of time associated with the service system.

Ha1:   There is a statistically significant difference in attributions for poverty-welfare reliance and beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers given their length of time associated with the service system.

A bivariate correlation was conducted to examine the relationship between group association and length of service system association. Assumptions for dependent and independent levels of measurement, sample size>30 subjects, and paired observations were satisfied. However, the distribution of length of service system association was positively skewed, so the nonparameric Spearman's Rho correlation was used.

Correlation between Groups and Length of Service System Association

The results showed no significant correlation between groups and length of service system association: personal (r_p=.758, p>.05); structural (r_s=.586, p>.05); and cultural (r_c=.277, p>.05).

Research Question No. 4

Is there a significant difference in perceptions of poverty-welfare reliance and cultural beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers at little, moderate or longer lengths of time associated with the service system?

Ho1: There is no statistically significant difference in personal perceptions of poverty-welfare reliance between study groups at little, moderate or longer lengths of time associated with the service.

Ha1: There is a statistically significant difference in personal perceptions of poverty-welfare reliance between study groups at little, moderate or longer lengths of time associated with the service.

Ho2: There is no statistically significant difference in structural perceptions of poverty-welfare reliance between study groups at little, moderate or longer lengths of time associated with the service.

Ha2: There is a statistically significant difference in structural perceptions of poverty-welfare reliance between study groups at little, moderate or longer lengths of time associated with the service.

Ho3: There is no statistically significant difference in cultural beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients between study groups at little, moderate or longer lengths of time associated with the service.

Ha3: There is a statistically significant difference in cultural beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients between study groups at little, moderate or longer lengths of time associated with the service.

A one-way MANOVA was utilized to examine the effects of length of time associated with the service system on overall attributions for poverty-welfare reliance and beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients among a sample of 128 TANF recipients and social welfare service workers.   For this study, attributions and beliefs was conceptualized as a composite. Prior to the analysis, data were evaluated to ensure that assumptions for multivariate tests were fulfilled. Levels of measurement were satisfied as the independent variable of length of service system association (defined as little=0-6 months; moderate=7-24 months; and longer≥25 months) is categorical, and the three dependent variables are continuous. A cross-tabulation of the independent variable on the dependent variables showed that the smallest number of cases per cell was 39, indicating a sample size sufficient for MANOVA. Normality for the dependent variables was satisfied in prior tests for Research Question No.1 using the same 3 dependent variables. The Levene's test of equality of variance was satisfied with dependent variables equal across all groups at $p>.001$. The Bartlett's test of sphericity at $p≤.05$ was satisfied, indicating that the dependent variables were significantly correlated. Scatterplots also indicated linearity. The Box M test at $p>.001$ was also satisfied. Finally, no issues of multicollinearity were identified upon inspection of residuals SSCP matrix at $r>.80$, indicating that none of the relationships between any pair of the dependent variables was too high.

Mean Differences between Different Lengths of Service System Association on Perceptions

The results of the one-way MANOVA showed no overall significant difference between respondents at little, moderate and longer lengths of time associated with the service system on overall attribution and beliefs about poverty-welfare reliance (Wilks' lambda=.02, $F_{(6,110)}=1.75$,

p>.05). Length of time differences accounted for only 4% of the variance in overall attributions/beliefs (n^2=.04).

Lengths of Service System Association & Cultural Beliefs

Post hoc between subjects effects indicated statistical significance between lengths of time on cultural beliefs ($F_{(df2,122)}$=1.10, p<.05, n^2=.07). In this study, length of time associated with the service system accounted for only 7% of variability on cultural beliefs. In this study, participants at moderate levels of time associated with the service system ($\overline{X}$=11.24, SE=.39) had higher agreement with cultural beliefs than participants at longer lengths of time associated with the service system ($\overline{X}$=9.69, SE=.37).

Lengths of Service System Association & Personal & Structural Attributions

The post hoc between subjects effects indicated no significant statistical differences between lengths of time on personal or structural levels of the composite variable: lengths of time on personal attributions ($F_{(df2,122)}$=1.24, p>.05, n^2=00); lengths of time on structural attributions ($F_{(df2,122)}$=.34, p<.05, n^2=.07). Table 14 and Table 15 display descriptive statistics and results of the MANOVA.

Table 14 - Results of MANOVA – Descriptive Statistics

Attributions/Beliefs	N	M	SE
Personal	125	3.14	.07
Structural	125	3.64	.08
Cultural	125	10.35	.22

Table 15 - MANOVA Summary Table

Source	Dependent Variable	SS	df	MS	F	*p*
Lengths of Time	SQRT_Personal	1.47	2	.73	1.24	.29
	SQRT_Structural	1.87	2	.93	1.10	.33
	Cultural	54.76	2	27.38	4.37	.02
Error	SQRT_Personal	72.36	122	.59		
	SQRT_Structural	103.81	122	.85		
	Cultural	764.80	122	6.27		
Corrected Total	SQRT_Personal	73.82	124			
	SQRT_Structural		105.67	124		
	Cultural	819.55	124			

(Wilks' lambda=.02, $F_{(6,110)}$=1.75, p>.05)

Research Question No. 5

Which of the following sets of factors best predict how TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers assign attributions for poverty-welfare reliance and cultural beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients: length of time associated with the service system; age; race; gender; marital status; number of legally dependent children residing with respondent; highest level of education completed; income reliance; perception of childhood family income; employment status; religious affiliation; and household income.

The sample size for this data set was 126 and there were 12 possible factors for this test. Abu-Bader (2011) indicates that a sufficient sample size for multiple regression should be equal to or greater than 50+8m, where m = number of factors. Therefore, the sample size for this test given 12 possible factors should be at least 146. Given the low sample size, and the fact that some variables have missing values, it was determined that the selection of possible factors step would precede other assumptions tests. Results of factor selection would result in reduction of factors where variables showed no bivariate relationship with the criterion, and reduction(s) would decrease the sample size required for the test.

Bivariate Analysis of Age, Number of Legally Dependent Children & Perceptions

The first sets of tests involved bivariate correlations for continuous factors and the continuous criterion variables. Continuous factors were age and number of legally dependent children. The distribution of the SQRT_personal, SQRT_structural and cultural criterion variables were normal. Histograms and Q-Q plots revealed distributions for both factors that were positively skewed, so the nonparametric Spearman's Rho correlation was used. The results showed no significant correlation between age and any of the three criterion variables: personal (r=.12, *p*>.05); structural (r=-.04, *p*>.05); and cultural (r=-1.54, *p*>.05). No significant

correlation between number of legal dependents and any of the three criterion variables was shown: personal (r=-.09, *p*>.05); structural (r=.00, *p*>.05); and cultural (r=-.05, *p*>.05).

Bivariate Analysis of Gender, Childhood Family Income, Employment & Perceptions

The second set of tests examined mean differences of the continuous criterion variables and the dichotomous, categorical variables: gender, perception of childhood family income, and employment status. Specifically, three sets of independent t-tests were conducted for each dichotomous variable. All 6 of the t-test assumptions were met for gender. Upon inspection of the Levene's test of equality of variance, it was determined that the assumption for homogeneity of variance was not met for childhood family income or employment status and structural attributions. Consequently, the "equality of variance not assumed" value was reported for those tests. No significant mean differences were shown from results of the t-tests of males and females with regard to levels of the three criterion variables: personal ($t_{(df=125)}$=-1.26, *p.*>05); structural ($t_{(df=125)}$=-1.62, *p*>.05); and cultural ($t_{(df=126)}$=1.20, *p*>.05). No significant mean differences were shown from results of the t-tests of respondents whose families were poor when they were children and those whose families were not poor when they were children with regard to levels of the criterion variables: personal ($t_{(df=125)}$=1.45, *p*>.05); structural ($t_{(df=83.61)}$=.91, *p*>.05); and cultural ($t_{(df=126)}$=.78, *p*>.05). Finally, results of the t-tests showed no significant difference between unemployed and employed respondents with regard to levels of the criterion variables: personal ($t_{(df=125)}$=1.08, *p*>.05); structural ($t_{(df=109.77)}$=1.74, *p*>.05); and cultural ($t_{(df=126)}$=.13, *p*>.05).

Analysis of Race, Marital Status, Education, Income, Religious Affiliation, Household Income & Perceptions

The third sets of tests used one-way MANOVA to examine mean differences of each independent variable with 3 or more categories and the three criterion variables. Specifically, categorical variables included: race, marital status, education level, income reliance, religious affiliation and household income. All of the categorical variables except income reliance required recoding to combine cells where fewer than 10 cases were observed. Once recoding was completed to satisfy MANOVA sample size requirements, further inspection of data occurred and it was determined that all 8 assumptions for MANOVA were satisfied. Results of Wilks' lambda showed no significant mean differences between the categorical independent variables on the overall composite of attributions and beliefs. Further, results of the post hoc between subjects effects showed no significant mean differences of independent variables on personal, structural, or cultural levels of the composite dependent variable. Table 16 displays the Wilks' lambda and between subjects results for the set of MANOVA tests conducted.

Table 16 – Summary of One-way MANOVA Equations of Independent Variables on Dependent Variables

Independent Variables	Criterion Variables	Results
Race	Overall Attributions & Beliefs	Wilks' lambda=.03, $F_{(6,242)}$=.54, p>.05
	Personal	$F_{(df2,123)}$=.89, p>.05, n^2=.01
	Structural	$F_{(df2,123)}$=.41, p>.05, n^2=.00
	Cultural	$F_{(df2,123)}$=.25, p>.05, n^2=.01
Marital Status	Overall Attributions & Beliefs	Wilks' lambda=.95, $F_{(9,292)}$=.74, p>.05
	Personal	$F_{(df3,122)}$=.33, p>.05, n^2=.01
	Structural	$F_{(df3,122)}$=1.43, p>.05, n^2=.03
	Cultural	$F_{(df3,122)}$=.78, p>.05, n^2=.02
Education Level	Overall Attributions & Beliefs	Wilks' lambda=.02, $F_{(3,118)}$=2200.71, p>.05
	Personal	$F_{(df5,120)}$=1.83, p>.05, n^2=.07
	Structural	$F_{(df5,120)}$=.81, p>.05, n^2=.03
	Cultural	$F_{(df3,120)}$=7.65, p>.05, n^2=.05
Income Reliance	Overall Attributions & Beliefs	Wilks' lambda=.95, $F_{(6,242)}$=1.12, p>.05
	Personal	$F_{(df2,123)}$=.65, p>.05, n^2=.01
	Structural	$F_{(df2,123)}$=2,14, p>.05, n^2=.03
	Cultural	$F_{(df2,123)}$=1.24, p>.05, n^2=.02
Religious Affiliation	Overall Attributions & Beliefs	Wilks' lambda=.92, $F_{(9,292)}$=.36, p>.05
	Personal	$F_{(df3,122)}$=.04, p>.05, n^2=.00
	Structural	$F_{(df3,122)}$=2.41, p>.05, n^2=.06
	Cultural	$F_{(df3,122)}$=1.01, p>.05, n^2=.02

115

Household Income	Overall Attributions & Beliefs	Wilks' lambda=.89, $F_{(15,326)}$=.53, p>.05
	Personal	$F_{(df5,120)}$=1.47, p>.05, n^2=.06
	Structural	$F_{(df5,120)}$=1.47, p>.05, n^2=.06
	Cultural	$F_{(df5,120)}$=.24, p>.05, n^2=.01

Summary of Factor Selection

Results of factor selection for multivariate regression analysis showed no significant bivariate relationships between identified criterion and continuous factors. Assumptions for the multivariate regression planned for Research Question No. 5 were not explored further.

Summary Statement

In this section, a summary of the results of multiple statistical analyses is presented. First, a factor analysis was completed to assess the internal reliability of the scales used in the study to measure personal and structural attributions for poverty-welfare reliance and cultural belief about welfare and welfare recipients. Chronbach alphas indicated reliability of personal and structural scales at.70 or higher that were consistent with prior use of the scales indicated in literature. The cultural scale had a Chronbach alpha lower than .70, also consistent with literature on prior use, and requires further development to increase its' internal reliability.

Chi square and one-way MANOVA tests were conducted to identify statistically significant similarities and differences between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers in the study. There were no statistically significant differences between groups regarding gender, race, perceptions of family income as a child, or religious affiliation. Statistically significant differences between groups were indicated for income and employment measures, education level, length of time associated with the service system, number of legally dependent children residing with respondents, and marital status.

A one-way MANOVA of mean comparisons of groups on attributions and beliefs showed no statistically significant difference between TANF recipients and service worker on overall personal and structural attributions for poverty-welfare reliance and cultural beliefs or on any of the three levels of the composite. A subsequent within-group repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to determine whether the aggregate tended to assign any one attribution or belief over another. Results showed that mean differences of the group were statistically significant and that the group means were higher for structural beliefs than personal beliefs.

Results of Spearman's Rho correlations showed no statistically significant correlation for length of time associated with the service system (measured as a continuous variable) and personal, structural or cultural perceptions about poverty-welfare reliance. A one-way MANOVA was conducted to compare mean differences of the aggregate group at little, moderate and longer lengths of time associated with the service system on attributions and cultural beliefs about poverty-welfare reliance. Results showed no statistically significant mean differences of length of time on the composite variable. However, post hoc between subjects differences were statistically significant for groups at moderate and longer lengths of time and cultural attributions. Specifically, the mean for groups at the moderate level was significantly higher on cultural beliefs than the mean for those with longer lengths of time associated with the service system.

Finally, results of a series of tests conducted to determine factor selection for a multiple regression analysis with demographic variables as potential factors and personal, structural and cultural attributions/beliefs as criterion variables showed no statistically significant bivariate correlations.

117

CHAPTER VI: DISCUSSION

Introduction

This descriptive, relational study explored and compared perceptions on poverty-welfare reliance between 64 TANF service recipients and 64 social welfare service workers in the Washington, DC Capital Area of Maryland. The study was guided by implications in literature regarding an overarching social trend toward exclusion of inequality and injustice as structural attributions for poverty-welfare reliance and the risk associated with overall tendencies toward assignment of personal causes and perpetuators of poverty-welfare reliance. As poverty-welfare reliance is a culture-laden phenomenon, cultural features from an ecological – person in environment – perspective are also included. This discussion section includes: an overview of the findings specific to the guiding research questions and hypotheses tested, as well as related supplemental tests; consideration of major findings within the context of the study's theoretical framework; implications of the study for social work; limitations and strengths of the study; and recommendations for future research.

Overview of Findings

Research Question No. 1

The first research question asked if there is a significant difference in perceptions of poverty-welfare reliance and cultural beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers. There were three hypotheses used to answer this question. The first hypothesis was concerned with personal attributions (H1) of TANF recipients and service workers and no evidence was found to support mean differences

between groups on personal causes and perpetuators of poverty-welfare reliance. Means for both groups indicated that they tended to agree with personal items identified in the survey.

The null hypothesis (H2), concerned with structural attributions for poverty-welfare reliance, was supported that there is no statistically significant difference in how TANF recipients and service workers assign structural causes and perpetuators for poverty-welfare reliance. Means for both groups indicated that they tended to agree with structural items in the survey. Also, examination of frequencies indicated that both groups had higher agreement than disagreement on inequality and discrimination as a causal structural factor in poverty-welfare reliance.

The third hypothesis (H3) examined differences in cultural beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients. No evidence was found to support mean differences between TANF recipients and service workers regarding cultural features of poverty-welfare reliance. Means for both groups indicated that they tend to agree with cycle of poverty and US culture of discriminatory practices impacting welfare and welfare recipients.

Supplemental Analysis

Mean differences of overall perceptions/beliefs were examined to determine whether groups tend to assign one attribution more than another. Of particular interest was whether groups assigned personal attributions more than structural attributions, given implications for the potential to harbor hatred towards those that are perceived to be responsible for their own poverty. There were statistically significant mean differences between personal attributions, structural attributions, and cultural beliefs of the aggregate study group ($\overline{X}_\mathrm{p} \neq \overline{X}_\mathrm{s} \neq \overline{X}_\mathrm{c}$). Means for each of the attributions/beliefs indicated higher assignment of structural attributions for poverty-welfare reliance than personal attributions.

Research Question No. 2

The second research question was concerned with whether poverty-welfare attributions and cultural beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients are statistically significant predictors of group association (service recipient or service worker). This question was made invalid with the results of Research Question No. 1 indicating no statistically significant differences between groups on the overall composite of attributions and beliefs, or its' personal, structural or cultural levels.

Research Question No. 3

Possible correlations between attributions for poverty-welfare reliance and beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients and length of time associated with the service system were examined. Length of time as a continuous variable was defined as 0 months+. This question had one hypothesis (H1) which was supported by results of the Spearman's rho correlation indicting no statistically significant correlation between length of time associated with the service system and attributions/beliefs about poverty-welfare reliance.

Research Question No. 4

Three hypotheses were used to answer the question of whether mean differences existed in study participants' perceptions and beliefs at little, moderate or longer lengths of association with the service system. Little was defined as 0-6 months, moderate was defined as >6months- 24 months, and longer was defined as >24 months. There were no statistically significant mean differences in the three distinct lengths of service system association on the composite variable perceptions and beliefs about poverty-welfare reliance. Post hoc between subjects results were examined to determine support for or rejection of null hypotheses. The null hypothesis (H1) was supported. There were no statistically significant mean differences on personal attributions at

little, moderate or longer levels of service system association. The null hypothesis (H2) was also supported. There were no statistically significant mean differences on structural attributions at little, moderate or longer levels. The null hypothesis (H3) was rejected for cultural beliefs, as statistically significant differences in means on cultural beliefs were indicated at moderate and longer lengths of time associated with the service system. Specifically, participants at the moderate level tended to agree with cultural beliefs more than participants at the longer level.

Research Question No. 5

The fifth research question was concerned with identifying which of the following sets of factors best predict how TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers assign attributions for poverty-welfare reliance and cultural beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients: length of time associated with the service system; age; race; gender; marital status; number of dependent children residing with respondent, that are under age 18 for which respondent is legally responsible; highest level of education completed and type of college degree earned; income status; perception of family income status as a child; employment status; religious affiliation; and household income. Factor selection eliminated all potential factors for consideration in a multivariate regression analysis, as there was no statistically significant bivariate correlation between possible factors and the personal, structural or cultural criterion variables.

Supplemental Analyses of Interest to the Study

Mean differences of overall perceptions/beliefs were examined to determine whether groups tend to assign one attribution more than another. Of particular interest was whether groups assigned personal attributions more than structural attributions, given implications for the potential to harbor hatred towards those that are perceived to be responsible for their own

121

poverty. There were statistically significant mean differences between personal attributions, structural attributions, and cultural beliefs of the aggregate study group ($\overline{X}_p \neq \overline{X}_s \neq \overline{X}_c$). Means for each of the attributions/beliefs indicated higher assignment of structural attributions for poverty-welfare reliance than personal attributions.

Similarities and differences between groups was a focus in literature and of this descriptive, relational study. Bivariate tests were conducted to consider whether there were statistically significant associations between groups and each of the demographic items in the study. There were no statistically significant differences between groups and: gender, race, perception of family income as a child, or religion. Statistically significant differences were indicated for group association and: income measures, employment status, education, number of legally dependent children, length of association with the service system, and marital status.

Major Findings

The central aim of this research was to examine whether social welfare service workers in the Washington, DC Capital Region - though ultimately specific to Maryland due to contacted agencies' willingness to participate: shared the perception of the poor-welfare reliant, attributing both personal and structural factors for poverty-welfare reliance; or if they shared the perception of the American general public, as represented in literature, primarily attributing personal attributions for poverty-welfare reliance based on racial stereotypes (Epstein, 2004; Gilens, 1999; Handler & Hasenfeld, 2007; Windsor, Dunlop & Golub, 2011); or if exploration and examinations would reveal something entirely different than what is indicated to date in literature. Findings in this study indicated no statistically significant differences in relationships

between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers on personal, structural and cultural factors of poverty-welfare reliance.

For purposes of this study, the null hypotheses which signified no statistically significant differences between groups, in turn, signified statistically significant consensus between groups. Results from this research provide context for dimensions of poverty-welfare reliance shared by service recipients and service workers who interact at the service-level on poverty-welfare reliance reduction efforts. Discussion of these findings within the context of the theoretical framework that shaped the study is presented in this section.

Group Consensus on Poverty-Welfare Attributions

Findings in this study support use of the comprehensive scope of the Ecological Perspective as its' overarching theory. Results of the one-way MANOVA of group association on personal, structural and cultural features indicated no statistically significant mean differences in perceptions between groups. Consequently, statistical significance of consensus between TANF recipients and social welfare service workers on personal, structural and cultural features of poverty-welfare reliance is supported. Specifically, on average, predominantly Black female social welfare service workers share the same perceptions of causes and perpetuators of poverty-welfare reliance and beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients as the predominantly Black female individuals that experience living in poverty and subsequent reliance upon welfare. More than half of participant responses were in agreement with personal and structural items as causes or perpetuators of poverty-welfare reliance. These findings indicate that participants in the study assign causes and perpetuators of poverty-welfare reliance consistent with the myriad of empirical studies that offer both personal and structural causes and perpetuators of poverty-welfare reliance in the US (Handler & Hasenfeld, 2007). Consensus on cultural features supports

further exploration of US culture on poverty and the cycle of poverty within the ecological context of causes and perpetuating factors of poverty and welfare reliance.

Applied Co-Cultural theory supported the revelation of consensus between groups around structural, personal and cultural attributions about the phenomenon by providing the impetus to conduct a nonbiased between group comparison that includes and also gives voice to the individuals who experience poverty-welfare reliance. Further, CCT and its applied interventions regarding consensus between participants in this study suggest that cultural acuity exists between TANF recipients and social welfare service workers and would also emphasize the provision of consensus-reinforcing interventions as well as targeted opportunities toward advocacy involving study participant groups. While not conclusive for organizations that participated in this exploratory study, actual consensus around social facts and suggested cultural acuity between study participants reflect positively on the features of organizational culture that are defined by interactions of service providers and service recipients (Chen & Starosta, 2005).

Attributions for poverty-welfare reliance revealed in this study support a persistent need to bridge the gap between the reality-influenced personal and structural factors impacting the poor and welfare reliant, and the stereotype-influenced perceptions of those who conserve welfare resources for people in need (Epstein, 2004). Social welfare service workers could play a critical role in promoting socialization and symbolism around social realities. This could be achieved through targeted opportunities to educate the public and reframe the picture of the broad range of challenges that TANF recipients experience that perpetuators their socio-economic circumstances. This study and prior studies support that social welfare service recipients and service workers collectively agree on personal attributions for poverty-welfare reliance and this aligns with dominant public perceptions. Consensus between workers and the general public in

this area is far from ideal, given that one group's perceptions are not predominantly personal and also likely include their experiences interacting with the poor in the process of promoting economic self-sufficiency and the other group's perceptions are likely rooted in racial stereotypes (Epstein, 2004; Gilens, 1999 & 1995; Handler & Hasenfeld, 2007; Windsor, Dunlap & Golub, 2011). However imperfect, consensus in modest measure around personal attributions still presents service worker advocates a gateway opportunity to engage targeted groups within the general public and to work to broaden the scope of understanding around personal, structural and cultural challenges of poverty-welfare reliance in public and political arenas. This can occur by utilizing attribution studies that also include CCT consensus-building interventions. Study outcomes identify social welfare service workers as potential allies of the poor-welfare reliant. Raising awareness of advocacy needs, engaging service workers in advocacy efforts, and promoting opportunities for their interaction with the general public and policy makers in pursuit of reality-based socio-economic and political processes are challenges for the social work profession (Chen & Starosta, 2005; Bent-Goodley, Mayo & Gonzalez, 2004; Epstein, 2004).

Tendencies toward Personal versus Structural Attributions and the Perceived Role of Prejudice and Discrimination

Results of the within-subjects RANOVA indicated statistically significance mean differences of study population perceptions of personal, structural and cultural features. The study population did not perceive personal attributions at the same level of agreement as they perceived structural attributions. The mean for structural attributions was higher than the mean for personal attributions, indicating that TANF recipients and social welfare service workers generally assign structural attributions over personal attributions.

Literature suggests that service workers who attribute personal attributions for poverty-welfare reliance may harbor hatred toward the poor, which could lead to adverse treatment of the poor by workers in the course of service delivery (Zucker & Weiner, 1993). Higher agreement on structural items over personal items indicated in this study is significant given these implications, as it suggests a lesser risk of adversity than may occur if opposite results were found. However, the suggestion is not to be confused with a statistically significant finding regarding actual feelings and actions of social welfare service workers towards TANF service recipients, as actual feelings and actions of workers were not a focus of this study. (The significance of results on cultural features is discussed later in this section.)

Epstein (2004) indicates that past and prevalent perceptions of the general public that the poor are responsible for their own poverty, based on stereotypes about the poor and poor Blacks in particular, show trends that disregard injustice and discrimination as possible structural causes and perpetuators of poverty-welfare reliance. This particular item in the survey - prejudice and discrimination against minorities and the poor - indicated a nearly 2:1 ratio in percentages on general agreement (46%) over general disagreement (24%) for this study population. Between group comparison of percentages indicated lower general disagreement for TANF recipients (14%) than for service workers (33%). General agreement on the item indicated closer percentages for recipients (44%) and workers (47%), with workers at a higher percentage of agreement than recipients. This suggests that the predominantly Black and female study population tends to acknowledge prejudice and discrimination as a structural attribution for poverty-welfare reliance. These finding supports literature that identifies Blacks in general as allies of poor Blacks (Carlton-LaNey, 1999). Descriptive data also suggests that Black female TANF recipients and service workers include prejudice and discrimination against the poor as

structural features of poverty-welfare reliance. These findings are not so surprising, given the likelihood that Black women in the US have been exposed to or otherwise personally experienced forms of prejudice and discrimination in their lifetime. However, the connection that Blacks may make between prejudice and discrimination in the context of structural poverty-welfare attribution should not be assumed. Epstein (2004) noted that the gap between Blacks and Whites in the general population on poverty-welfare attribution is closing and leaning more towards personal versus structural attributions, in deference to a conservative welfare state. Larger studies and more frequent studies are needed to maintain an accurate picture of targeted educational and advocacy efforts to improve circumstances of the poor-welfare reliant in general, and to decrease risks of life-time poverty for poor-welfare reliant Blacks, in particular.

Inclusion of and Consensus on Culture-laden Features at Personal and Structural Levels

As previously stated, results of mean comparisons of TANF recipients and social welfare service workers indicated that consensus between groups on cultural features of poverty-welfare reliance are statistically significant. Nearly 60% of participants agreed or strongly agreed with overall cultural items identified in the survey. Scores were similarly high at 70% agreement with the cycle of poverty item "most people on welfare are caught in a "cycle of poverty" that is responsible for poor work habits, laziness, and low self-esteem", and at 68% agreement for the US culture on poverty item "families, communities, societies and media teach people to discriminate against welfare recipients based on negative stereotypes about the poor and especially poor Blacks". Since participants included cultural features as factors in attributions for poverty-welfare reliance, development and inclusion of this feature in future studies should be considered.

There was less consensus between groups on the cycle of poverty item "children who grow up in welfare families are more likely to be on welfare as adults" with TANF recipients at 50% overall disagreement and 36% overall agreement. Workers were at 16% overall disagreement and 61% overall agreement. Data suggests that TANF recipients have a greater sense of hope or possibly a more positive experience than social welfare service workers of children from "welfare families" not ending up on welfare later in life. Since groups held similar perceptions regarding the more targeted item specific to the cycle of poverty, the item specific to children should be explored further.

Serious debates in literature persist regarding the culture versus the cycle of poverty (Williams, 2003), personal versus structural attributions for poverty-welfare reliance (Bullock, 2004; Crewe, 2003; Handler & Hasenfeld, 2007; Windsor, Dunlap & Golub, 2011), and US culture on poverty that includes historic and prevalent, racially infused discriminatory policies and practices (Goldsmith & Blakely, 2010; Handler & Hasenfeld, 2007). TANF recipients and social welfare service workers are key players in poverty-welfare reliance reduction efforts and they acknowledge culture as a part of the overall US poverty-welfare reliance equation. Their perceptions are likely to include their experiences of interacting with each other around realities impacting economic self-sufficiency. Results of this study emphasize the need to continue to recognize and further explore the impact of US culture on poverty and the role that it plays in the cycle of poverty-welfare reliance. Specifically, further development and strengthening of US culture on poverty and cycle of poverty features of the cultural construct of beliefs about welfare and welfare recipients is needed. Descriptive statistics in this attribution-focused study support that these features play a role in poverty-welfare reliance at both structural and personal levels and should be considered within the ecological context of the phenomenon. Efforts to increase

its' internal statistical validity is needed to support use in future studies. There remains a critical need to explore opportunities to shift the US social, political and economic culture on poverty that is heavily weighted in America's historic and prevalent attitudes, behaviors and policies toward its "unworthy poor" (Handler & Hasenfeld, 2007), and to break the debilitating cycle of poverty of which too many poor-welfare reliant people, and particularly poor Blacks, are a part.

Demographic Similarities & Differences

Demographic characteristics of the study group, their relationship with group association, and their potential relationship with perceptions and beliefs about poverty-welfare reliance were a focus in literature and of this descriptive, relational study. Bivariate test results indicated no statistically significant differences between groups and: gender, race, perception of family income as a child, or religion. Consensus on poverty-welfare attributions between groups was revealed despite statistically significant differences between groups and: income measures, employment status, education, number of legally dependent children, length of association with the service system, and marital status. None of the demographic characteristics of the study were found to have a statistically significant relationship with attributions and beliefs about poverty-welfare reliance.

Literature suggests that the greatest differences in attributions for poverty-welfare reliance between groups exist along lines of race and income (Epstein, 2004; Gilens, 1999), but Epstein (2004) also cautions that gaps are narrowing (Epstein, 2004). Historically, blacks and the poor have supported structural attributions for poverty-welfare-reliance, and whites and the affluent have supported personal attributions for poverty-welfare reliance. In this study, social welfare service workers in the Washington, DC Capital area of Maryland were representative of the service population with regard to race as both groups were predominantly black. Also despite

differences on income measures, neither group could be considered affluent. In Bullock's (2004) study on poverty-welfare attribution with social workers and welfare recipients in the Midwest, social workers were also representative of service recipients with regard to race, but both groups were predominantly white. Beyond distinction of welfare recipients as low-income and social workers as not receiving welfare benefits, income distinctions were not further clarified. Regarding income distinctions, no comparison could be made. Despite distinctions in US regions and race, outcomes on poverty-welfare attributions of this study and the Bullock (2004) study were consistent with each other and inconsistent with the literature. In these studies both black social welfare service workers and white social workers and the poor tended toward agreement with structural attributions over personal attributions for poverty-welfare reliance. The researcher acknowledges that there are distinct differences between social workers (as referenced in the Bullock, 2004 study) and social welfare service workers in this study. The Bullock (2004) study identifies social workers as having a "structural understanding of social problems" (p.574) given their structured education and field work that is guided by the principles of the profession through the Council on Social Work Education, the sole accrediting agency of social work programs. Social welfare service workers in this study may not have had any formal higher education guided by structured professional social work philosophy. Comparison is made based on the fact that both studies intentionally center on the interaction between workers and service recipients in welfare programs that serve TANF recipients. Comparison is also relevant given the potential for social worker and social welfare service worker alliance around advocacy for the poor people who are reliant upon welfare.

Studies where greater racial diversity exists between workers and recipients would be necessary to determine if racial representativeness may have been a factor in this and the 2004

study compared to broader studies in literature. Additionally, as there was no statistically significant variance in gender, perception of family income as a child and religious affiliation between groups, additional studies where greater diversity exists in these areas should also be considered.

Also relevant for future research related to study outcomes on similarities and differences between groups is whether events at the ecological chronosystem level have had any bearing on shared demographic characteristics (as well as statistically significant but otherwise non-drastic demographic differences) of the poor-welfare reliant and social welfare service workers. "Chronosystems incorporate the time dimension of Bronfenbrenner's model" (Eamon, 2001, p.262). For example, consideration of poverty-welfare reliance at a chrono-ecological level lends itself to the potential relevance of pre-TANF versus post-TANF economic shifts from PRWORA's enactment in 1996 to the present and how these shifts may explain demographic similarities and differences between people living in poverty and the people that work directly with the poor in welfare service agencies within a particular geographic region. This potential factor, particularly given the extent of economic shifts in the US in the past two decades (Goldsmith & Blakely, 2010), should be considered in future studies for what it may reveal about shared and differentiated demographic characteristics of representative study populations.

Summary

Statistically significant consensus between groups on poverty-welfare reliance acknowledges both personal and structural attributes and cultural-laden features at personal and structural levels. This is significant as it is an indicator that service workers, through advocacy efforts in social and political arenas, can promote the reality of poverty as experienced by the poor-welfare reliant, and as supported in literature. The reality, as perceived by those who engage to combat

poverty-welfare reliance is that the poverty equation includes personal, structural and cultural elements. All elements need to be emphasized in advocacy efforts focused on shifting US culture and policies on welfare away from racial stereotypes and toward the real life circumstances experienced by the poor and welfare reliant.

Implications for Social Work Practice and Theory

The purpose of this study was to contribute to practical and theoretical discourse regarding the challenges that TANF recipients can experience given the narrow perceptions of poverty-welfare attribution held by the general public and their resultant conservative welfare policies. The one-way MANOVA revealed consensus between social welfare service workers and TANF recipients in the Washington DC capital region of Maryland on the broad range of personal, structural and cultural features. These combined features define the actual scope of causes and perpetuators impacting the lives of people who are poor and reliant upon welfare in the US. The within subjects, repeated measures ANOVA indicated higher levels of structural versus personal attributions for both groups, revealing service workers and social welfare recipients as potential allies at the service level and possibly at other social and political levels. Chi square bivariate analyses provided implications for representativeness in service delivery given descriptive similarities indicated between groups. Challenges with socio-political implications remain despite the possible alliance of workers and recipients, given the prevalent gap in perceptions between those engaged in service and the narrow perceptions about poverty-welfare reliance held by the policy-influencing general public (Epstein, 2004). These challenges call for increased support within the field of social work to consider representativeness, to promote co-cultural acuity in social and political arenas, and to increase advocacy efforts.

Macro-Practice, Research & Education

Results of this study have implications for social work at the macro level specific to: representativeness, co-culturalism and consensus-building activities, advocacy and education. Consensus between groups on poverty-welfare reliance was statistically significant. Representativeness was revealed as a statistically significant descriptive feature of this study given group similarities in: race, gender, religion and perception of childhood family income. Implications of representativeness in welfare organizations and how it relates to consensus on poverty-welfare attribution warrants further exploration.

From a human services organizational focus, significant differences, even when they're not statistically supported, can be very important. For example, as few as ten employees in an organization who harbor ill will towards the poor-welfare reliant based on racial stereotypes can adversely impact the lives of many service recipients in the course of service delivery. Organizations interested in developing and maintaining positive service interactions between TANF recipients and their service workers should incorporate applied CCT interventions, such as ongoing assessment and monitoring of interactions, policies and practices that reinforce positive customer service, and training and supervision of workers, as well as orientation and education of service recipients towards development of cultural acuity (Chen & Starosta, 2005).

Exploration and examination of perceptions, regardless of frequency, can reveal areas where education is needed to promote and sustain a service environment that functions within the actual realities impacting service recipients. Group consensus was indicated despite statistically significant differences in age, income, education, marital status, length of service system association, and number of legal dependents. Co-cultural consensus, despite statistically significant differences between groups, reveals opportunities to build alliances (Chen & Starosta,

2005). Increased efforts in macro-practice social work are needed to explore and cultivate alliances between professional social workers, social welfare service workers and the poor toward collaborative advocacy efforts. Increased advocacy in arenas where policy and funding decisions are influenced and made, including media, is a critical need if culture-shifts at social and political levels are to occur (Bent-Goodley, Mayo & Gonzalez, 2004; Epstein, 2004).

Implications for Social Work education regarding advocacy is vital, particularly given that the profession urges its professionals to pay "particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed and living in poverty" (NASW, 2008). Such a directive calls for a targeted focus within Social Work curricula that arms social workers with a comprehensive understanding of: historic and prevalent issues of poverty and oppression in the US; and its effects on oppressed populations, and particularly on poor Blacks given its' race-based adverse nature (Goldsmith & Blakeley, 2010; Williams, 2003). Further, Social Work curricula and field work must increasingly enhance efforts to provide social workers with opportunities to gain cultural acuity around poverty and the ability to utilize tools needed to empower poor people, and particularly poor Blacks, towards self-advocacy. It is disconcerting that any graduate of an accredited school of social work would exclude oppression – via exclusion of discrimination and inequality - as a cause or perpetuator of poverty in the US (Bullock, 2004), particularly given US culture on poverty (Crewe, 2004; Goldsmith & Blakeley, 2010; Handler & Hasenfeld, 2007; Williams, 2004). Studies that link divergent perceptions of poverty to empirically-supported education, and consensus in poverty perceptions to effective advocacy are seriously limited. Thus, a call for increased efforts to ensure that professional social workers fully understand the oppressive circumstances of poverty and the poor, that social workers have acquired the skills needed to empower the poor, and to form alliances with others

who are empowered to develop and further advocacy efforts in a broad range of settings is warranted.

This study revealed consensus on attributions and beliefs between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers who are representative of each other regarding race, gender, religious affiliation and childhood family income. While their household income levels were statistically different, they were not on opposite ends of the spectrum from each other, as no household income indicated would have been considered affluent. One might assume, particularly given the fairly narrow geographic region from which the sample populations came, that some workers and recipients may come from the same communities and attend the same churches. Further, it's likely that recipients and workers, being predominantly Black and female US citizens, have had similar, adverse, racially-gendered social experiences. Despite their higher social status and ascribed position of power over welfare recipients, it is likely that the workers have experienced discrimination and inequality in their lifetime, and that they are aware of their ascribed lower social status within the agencies where they work, as well as in society in general. Social workers seeking to explore and forge alliances with black, female social welfare service workers as potential advocates would need to be armed with the tools to empower social welfare service workers to advocate for themselves as knowledgeable, experienced and capable of giving voice to the needs of the poor - in agencies where they work, in communities where they reside, and on broader socio-political fronts where their own voices are underrepresented.

Implications for social work education regarding poverty, the Black Face of poverty in the US, and promoting empowerment towards self-advocacy and ally-focused advocacy are critical. The poor and poor Blacks in particular, have little voice in American mainstream. They and their children are oppressed, isolated, living in substandard housing, and are vulnerable to

health issues and social ills such as violence and crime as a byproduct of poverty (Davis & Bent-Goodley, 2004; Grady & Darden, 2012; World Health Organization, 2011). Enhancing acquired knowledge and skills in advocacy should be a targeted focus for all social work programs, given the NASW charge to improve the life circumstances of the poor.

The Howard University School of Social Work (HUSSW) teaches from the Black Perspective that emphasizes understanding of the historic and prevalent circumstance of Blacks in America first and foremost. The guiding principles of the Black Perspective include: affirmation, strengths, diversity, vivification, social justice and internationalization. HUSSW (2014) asserts that its own sensitivities and strengths in this area position the school to inform policy and practice regarding other oppressed populations in America and on a global level. The principle of vivification purposes to orient all social workers to the Black Perspective, regardless of their color, to promote education and preparation to better meet the needs of oppressed populations. The HUSSW program is one of a number of social work programs that intentionally integrate poverty in the US and its impact on historically oppressed populations, the strengths perspective, and social action, towards educating and developing graduates to advocate for the poor within the context of US culture and given the resilience of the poor. More studies are needed to consider how such programs can inform social work education guidelines to continuously strengthen and arm all of its professionals toward an advocacy-focused output that benefits vulnerable, oppressed and poor populations (Meier, Wrinkle & Polinard, 1999).

Theory & Research

Poverty-welfare attributions and culture-laden social beliefs and patterns play a critical role in conserving funding for welfare policies that adversely impact the poor and welfare reliant, and especially poor Blacks (Crewe, 2004; Epstein, 2004; Ng & Allen, 2005). The Ecological

Perspective, Attribution Theory and applied Co-cultural Theory informed the study regarding the co-existence of personal, structural and cultural features that are the causes and perpetuators of poverty-welfare reliance in the US. Statistically significant consensus on comprehensive, theory-supported features of poverty-welfare attribution between groups of people who engage at the service level advances theories, as well as their associated research methodologies and interventions. For example, the Ecological Perspective emphasizes the interplay between person and environment on person-in-environment for an all encompassing perspective that fosters approaches to change at personal, structural and cultural levels. Poverty-welfare attribution studies reveal socialization and symbolism as critical influencers of attribution which should be a focus of future studies and interventions that seek to change social perceptions of poverty-welfare reliance. Finally, Co-cultural Theory and its applications offer understanding of cultural dynamics between groups that differ on social levels and also offer consensus building as a tool to promote cultural acuity and advocacy. These theories can and should inform future studies and interventions needed to improve the circumstances of the poor and welfare-reliant, and especially poor Blacks, within the complicated scheme of US poverty and poverty-reduction efforts. Improving the plight of the poor is a focus of the Social Work profession. Thus, the role of social work researchers, administrators and managers is critical in exploring, utilizing and emphasizing theories and statistically significant interventions toward that aim.

Policies and research suggest that a critical approach to forging consensus between those who experience life in poverty and reliance upon welfare and those who conserve policies and funding for poverty-welfare reduction efforts should: identify and promote opportunities for consensus building around the facts of attributions for poverty-welfare reliance (Chen & Starosta, 2005); address the assault on general public sensibilities and funding patterns bred by

stereotypes about poor Blacks, through increased socialization and symbolism emphasizing facts (Ng & Allen, 2005); and building alliances and increasing collaborative advocacy efforts at the political level (Bent-Goodley, Mayo & Gonzalez, 2004; Epstein, 2004). The poor and welfare-reliant in this country are still very isolated in the US, limiting opportunities for consensus building efforts with the majority of policy and funding influencers. This study emphasizes a comprehensive ecological scope, focused on attributions, and co-cultural theory-driven approaches that can support the role of professional social workers to bridge gaps, build alliances and increase advocacy to improve the circumstances of the poor and welfare-reliant, and poor Blacks in particular.

Limitations of the Study

Methodological limitations of the study are identified in this section. First, this study used a cross-sectional design offering a point-in-time examination of descriptors and relationships that can change over time (Anastas, 1999).

A second limitation is specific to use of an existing survey. Existing surveys can limit the study in the following ways: despite that the Furnham survey was widely used with people of various backgrounds, and its adaptation has been fairly recently used with groups similar to the groups for this study, since attributions can and do change over time, measures should have been taken upfront to ensure current validity; and generally, Chronbach alphas should be .70 or higher as a rule and that remained the case for individualistic subscale items at .71, and structural subscale items at .77, but alpha scores were lower for cultural subscale items at .54, indicating that further development of the construct is needed (Nunnaly, 1978).

Third, sampling limitations also existed as follows: a convenience sampling method was needed to ensure a sufficient number of participants for a study with time and resource limitations; with multivariate ANOVA, RANOVA and t-test statistics a convenience sample versus a random sample affects the ability to generalize outcomes from the sample to the general population within the Washington, D.C. capital region of Maryland.

Finally, the inability to access Northern Virginia and District of Columbia agencies limited the intended regional scope of the study.

Some key steps were implemented to reduce the effects of certain limitations and these included: a) the researcher read the survey to participants at their request (this occurred for 4 participants in total) to reduce any potential anxiety for those who may not have been able to read the survey for any reason; b) on-the-spot completion occurred at all sites which afforded quick returns; the researcher made a significant effort to assure responses to all questions prior to compensating respondents which resulted in relatively few occurrences of missing data; c) targeting Tier One core community programs providing TANF services that were operated or contracted by government agencies resulted in a participant pool from Tier One agencies only and offered assurance that sample populations were representative of the larger populations, and descriptive tests for sample group normality supported this.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Agencies that Participated in this Study

This study revealed consensus between TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers on attributions for poverty-welfare reliance that are consistent with empirical studies that identify both structural and personal causes and perpetuators, with structural factors

featured more prominently in group perceptions. These findings are important for participating agencies as they offer data-informed talking points to further a collective understanding of poverty based on perceived and actual realities. It can be helpful for service recipients and service workers to know that they share perceptions on poverty-welfare reliance as it can clear up misunderstandings or misconceptions between groups in that area. Further, revealed consensus supports ongoing, reinforcing consensus building activities, as well as advocacy planning and implementation efforts.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study revealed between group representativeness as a feature requiring further studies to consider the association between representativeness and consensus, as well as greater diversity and consensus. For example, racial diversity, gender diversity, and diversity of religious affiliation between groups on perceptions and beliefs about poverty-welfare reliance could not be examined because they did not exist in this study in statistically significant measures. The Bullock (2004) study which indicated similar results between groups, particularly with regard to racial and gender representation supports this need. Participants in this study were predominantly Black and women and participants in the Bullock (2004) study were predominantly white and women. Affluence was not a descriptor of social welfare service workers who participated in this study. Given its relevance to poverty-welfare attributions based on racial stereotypes and subsequent conservation of funding to support the poor, a larger sample of organizations within regions that afford greater racial, gender, religious and socio-economic diversity is needed.

Research efforts that explore and strengthen the cultural scale for poverty-welfare reliance is needed. While between group consensus on cultural items was statistically significant, and more

than 50% of data supported agreement for some items, development of items that offer greater predictability of other items in the cultural scale are needed to improve internal reliability. Culture, characterized by the cycle of poverty and the US culture on poverty, is a factor of poverty-welfare reliance for black, female, non-affluent TANF service recipients and social welfare service workers in the US capital region of Maryland. This is a feature that warrants further exploration and discussion.

Further, studies that purposefully engage groups with divergent poverty-welfare attributions, who do not otherwise interact, particularly to consider such a complex phenomenon are needed. Targeted studies should also test the introduction of interventions that emphasize socialization and symbolism to promote consensus around the facts of poverty-welfare reliance versus stereotypes about poor Blacks. Such studies are needed to inform socially responsible policy-making and policy implementation practices, toward a more comprehensive understanding of the causes and perpetuators of poverty-welfare reliance in the US.

Finally, research that explores and advances links between consensus, alliance and collaborative, effective advocacy efforts on behalf of the poor-welfare reliant, and especially poor Blacks are vital to improvement of circumstances of poor people living in the US.

APPENDIX

Demographics Survey – Service Recipient

1) Respondent: [X] Service Recipient (To Be Distinguished by Green Paper)

2) How Long Services Received: Specify How Long in Months or Years _____

3) Age of Respondent: Actual Age in Years Only _____

4) Gender: [ ] Female [ ] Male

5) Marital Status: [ ] Single/Never Married [ ] Married [ ] Single/Divorced [ ] Widowed [ ] Other: _____
<div align="right">(Specify)</div>

6) Race: [ ] Black [ ] White [ ] Latino/Latina [ ] Asian/Pacific Islander [ ] Native American
   [ ] Other - Specify: _____

7) Number of Dependent Children Residing with Respondent that are under Age 18 for which Respondent is:
Legally Responsible: Specify Number:_____
Responsible for by Informal Arrangement: Specify Number:_____

8) Highest Level of Education Completed:
   Highest Grade Completed _____ (specify) [ ] GED Earned
   [ ] Some High School   [ ] High School Graduate/Diploma Earned
   [ ] Some Undergraduate Studies   [ ] Associates Degree Earned
   [ ] 4 Year Undergraduate Degree Earned/Specify Type of Degree_____
   [ ] Some Post-graduate Studies
   [ ] Post-graduate Degree Earned/Specify Type of Degree_____

9) Income Status: Denote Length of Time in Status by Actual # of Months or Years Only
Do Not Include Child Support
   a) [ ] Solely Reliant Upon TANF - For How Long: _____
   b) [ ] Partially Reliant Upon TANF & Employment Wages - For How Long: _____
   c) [ ] Solely Reliant Upon Employment Wages - For How Long: _____

10) Perception of Family Income Status as a Child:
   Did you grow up poor as a child? _____Yes _____ No

11) Employment Status:
   Currently Employed: [ ] Yes - Number of Months or Years: _____
                       [ ] No - Number of Months or Years Unemployed:_____
                        [ ] If No: Reason for Unemployment _____

12) Religious Affiliation:
   [ ] None   [ ] Atheist   [ ] Catholic   [ ] Jehovah's Witness [ ] Jewish   [ ] Muslim
   [ ] Non-denominational Christian   [ ] Protestant   [ ] Seventh Day Adventist
   [ ] Other: Specify:_____

13) Annual Household Income:
   [ ] <$5,000   [ ] $5,001-$19,999   [ ] $20,000–$39,999   [ ] $40,000-$59,999
   [ ] $60,000-$79,999 [ ] $80,000-$99,999   [ ] <$100,000

142

Demographics Survey – Service Worker

1) Respondent: [X] Service Worker   (To Be Distinguished By Blue Paper)

2) Length of Time as Service Worker: <u>Specify</u> How Long in Months or Years _____

3) Age of Respondent: Actual Age in Years Only _____

4) Gender: [ ] Female   [ ] Male

5) Marital Status: [ ] Single/Never Married [ ] Married [ ] Single/Divorced   [ ] Widowed [ ] Other: _____
<div align="right">(Specify)</div>

6) Race: [ ] Black   [ ] White [ ] Latino/Latina   [ ] Asian/Pacific Islander   [ ] Native American
   [ ] Other - Specify: _____

7) Number of Dependent Children Residing with Respondent that are under Age 18 for which Respondent is:
   Legally Responsible: Specify Number:_____
   Responsible for by Informal Arrangement: Specify Number:_____

8) Highest Level of Education Completed:
   Highest Grade Completed _____ (specify)   [ ] GED Earned
    [ ] Some High School   [ ] High School Graduate/Diploma Earned
    [ ] Some Undergraduate Studies   [ ] Associates Degree Earned
    [ ] 4 Year Undergraduate Degree Earned/Specify Type of Degree_____
    [ ] Some Post-graduate Studies
    [ ] Post-graduate Degree Earned/Specify Type of Degree_____

9) Income Status: Denote Length of Time in Status by Actual # of Months or Years Only
   Do Not Include Child Support
    c) [ ] Solely Reliant Upon Employment Wages - For How Long: _____
    b) [ ] Partially Reliant Upon Employment Wages & Other Source of Income (Specify) _____
       - For How Long: _____
    a) [ ] Solely Reliant Upon Other Source of Income (Specify) _____
       - For How Long: _____

10) Perception of Family Income Status as a Child:
    Did you grow up poor as a child? _____Yes   _____ No

11) Employment Status:
    Currently Employed: [ ] Number of Months or Years: _____
                         [ ] No - Number of Months or Years:_____
                          [ ] Other: Specify _____

12) Religious Affiliation:
    [ ] None   [ ] Atheist   [ ] Catholic   [ ] Jehovah's Witness   [ ] Jewish   [ ] Muslim
    [ ] Non-denominational Christian   [ ] Protestant   [ ] Seventh Day Adventist
    [ ] Other – Specify_____

13) Annual Household Income:
    [ ] <$5,000 [ ] 5,000-19,999 [ ] $20,000–$39,999   [ ] $40,000-$59,999 [ ] $60,000-$79,999 [ ] $80,000-$99,999
    [ ] >$100,000

143

Attributions for Poverty & Beliefs about Welfare & Welfare Recipients Survey
Respondent Status: [ ] Service Recipient   [ ] Service Provider

Response Categories: Write the number that best describes your beliefs in the Response column.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

SCALE	ATTRIBUTIONS FOR POVERTY (WHAT ARE THE CAUSES OF POVERTY & WHY DOES IT CONTINUE TO EXIST IN THE US?)	RESPONSE
Individualistic	1. Lack of motivation and laziness	
	2. Lack of effort among the poor to improve themselves	
	3. Anti-work attitudes and a self-defeating psychology (self-defeating mindset and associated behavior) among the poor	
	4. Lack of intelligence	
	5. Inability to budget money wisely	
	6. Babies having babies (i.e. teenage pregnancy)	
	7. Alcohol and drug abuse	
	8. Lack of ability and talent	
Economic/Structural	9. Low wages that some businesses pay	
	10. Sluggish economy and failure of society to provide enough good jobs	
	11. Absent fathers who do not pay their child support	
	12. Inadequate job training	
	13. Corporate downsizing and US companies relocating to foreign countries so they can pay lower wages	
Prejudice/Structural	14. Prejudice & discrimination against minorities and the poor	
	15. Failure of society to provide good schools	
	16. Weak unions that don't protect workers	
	17. High taxes that take money away from the poor	
	18. Being taken advantage of by the rich	
	19. Lower wages women are paid compared to those received by men	
Family Factors/ Fatalistic	20. Break-up of families and single women having babies outside of marriage	
	21. Lack of childcare	
	22. Sickness and disability	
	23. Bad luck	
SCALE	BELIEFS ABOUT WELFARE & WELFARE RECIPIENTS	RESPONSE
Cultural Beliefs	24. Children who grow up in welfare families are more likely to be on welfare as adults.	
	25. Most people on welfare are caught in a "cycle of poverty" that is responsible for poor work habits, laziness, and low self-esteem.	
	26. Families, communities, societies and media teach people to discriminate against welfare recipients based on negative stereotypes about the poor and especially poor Blacks.	

144

(For Distribution to Study Participants, Reformatted for Ease of Response and Unbundled Items)

Respondent Status: [ ] Service Recipient [ ] Service Provider

<u>**Directions for Completion**</u>: Place an "X" in the column that best describes your beliefs about each statement. Please make sure that you provide only one answer for each item and that you provide a response for every item in the survey.

WHAT ARE THE CAUSES OF POVERTY & WHY DOES IT CONTINUE TO EXIST IN THE US?	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
1. Sickness and disability					
2. Lack of effort among the poor to improve themselves					
3. Failure of society to provide good schools					
4. Lack of intelligence					
5. Absent fathers who do not pay their child support					
6. Lack of childcare					
7. Alcohol and drug abuse					
8. High taxes that take money away from the poor					
9. Inability to budget money wisely					
10. Sluggish economy and failure of society to provide enough good jobs					
11. Low wages that some businesses pay					
12. Break-up of families and single women having babies outside of marriage					
13. Bad luck					
14. Prejudice & discrimination against minorities and the poor					
15. Anti-work attitudes and a self-defeating psychology (self-defeating mindset and associated behavior) among the poor					
16. Weak unions that don't protect workers					
17. Lack of ability and talent					
18. Being taken advantage of by the rich					
19. Lower wages women are paid compared to those received by men					
20. Inadequate job training					
21. Babies having babies (i.e. teenage pregnancy)					
22. Corporate downsizing and US companies relocating to foreign countries so they can pay lower wages					
23. Lack of motivation and laziness					

145

Respondent Status: [ ] Service Recipient   [ ] Service Provider

<u>**Directions for Completion**</u>:   Place an "X" in the column that best describes your beliefs about each statement.
Make sure that you provide only one answer for each item and that you provide a response for every item in the survey.

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE ABOUT THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS?	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
1. Children who grow up in welfare families are more likely to be on welfare as adults.					
2. Most people on welfare are caught in a "cycle of poverty" that is responsible for poor work habits, laziness, and low self-esteem.					
	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
1. Families, communities, societies and/or media teach people to discriminate against welfare recipients based on negative stereotypes about the poor and especially poor Blacks.					

146

Preamble
For Investigative Procedures

Howard University
Washington, DC 20059

This is an investigation in the Department of Social Work. This study is being conducted by Dr. Tricia Bent-Goodley, PhD and Barbara Wadley-Young, a doctoral candidate. You will be asked to complete a 3 page questionnaire - the Attributions for Poverty & Beliefs about Welfare and Welfare Recipients survey - which requires up to 45 minutes to complete. This questionnaire may be self- administered on-the-spot or investigator/liaison/assistant administered in person at _____.

The benefit to you for participating in this study is that your responses support studies in humanities. We anticipate minimal psychological risks, and personal time inconvenience. You will be given a $10 gift card as a result of your participation in this study.

The results of this research will be useful to future studies in humanities. Procedures for maintaining confidentiality are as follows. No names or other personally identifying information such as social security numbers, employee, student or service recipient identification numbers will be written on the survey.   Individual results will be pooled with group results. You may withdraw from this study at any time without jeopardizing your standing with the above organization or your relationship with Howard University or Howard University Hospital.

The participants should be 18 years of age or older and in good health. If you are younger than 18, please contact the investigator immediately.

If you would like any further information about this study, please contact Dr. Tricia Bent-Goodley at (202) 806-4729. You may also call the Howard University Institutional Review Board at 806-4759, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, if you would like to discuss this study with someone other than the investigators.

Barbara Wadley-Young, MSW, PhD Student
Email: bewy@verizon.net / Phone: (703) 328-0320

Re: Research Support Request

Dear Ms./Mr.:

I am a PhD student at Howard University's School of Social Work. I am seeking permission and support to complete a study involving TANF service recipients and service workers at agencies providing income-based social welfare services to populations that include TANF recipients. The focus of my study is on recipient and worker perceptions of what causes or perpetuates poverty-welfare reliance. Through use of a 3 page survey, the study will compare perceptions of these two groups to consider where similarities and differences exist. The ultimate aim of the study is to consider implications for promoting consensus and greater advocacy around the personal, interpersonal, social/institutional and cultural dimensions of poverty-welfare reliance that can come into play to perpetuate poverty-welfare reliance and devastate the outlook for those who are at risk of lifetime poverty. A potential organizational gain is that attribution studies may be used as tools to gauge organizational culture that supports proactive, intentional actions to improve the quality of service recipient/service worker interactions in the course of service delivery.

The 3 page survey, the preamble addressing participants' rights and fliers to solicit participation at identified sites are attached for your review. Participation for service recipients and service workers, as well as participating organizations is to be absolutely voluntary and personal information will be kept confidential (i.e. no identifying information would be included in the study beyond "aggregate groups" of social welfare service workers and/or TANF recipients in the Washington, D.C. capital area and further distinguished by specific demographics like education level, income level, race, gender, length of time service provided/received, etc.).

Participating organizations would support participation by identifying a liaison to support the researcher to recruit potential participants, confirm participant eligibility for the study, coordinate and facilitate completion of survey materials, and issue gift cards to all participants who complete surveys. Participants completing surveys would each receive a $10 Visa gift card for timely completion and return of survey materials.

All aspects of this study, including documents, methodology and responsible efforts to protect human research participants will receive full consideration of *and* is subject to approval by the Howard University Institutional Review Board (HU-IRB) prior to initiation. Should you opt to support this study pending approval of the HU-IRB, I would need a letter indicating your willingness to do so. Please note that study coordination through an identified liaison and the data gathering portion of the study for which your participation is sought would begin once appropriate authorizations are acquired from your organization as well as the HU-IRB. The process would end prior to or no later than January 31, 2012. Specifically, a maximum of participants comprised of up to 62 service recipients and 62 service workers, as appropriate, would be sought. Numbers may actually be smaller for sites with limited numbers of accessible participants.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this request. I look forward to hearing from you soon. Feel free to contact me directly using the letterhead contact information, or my HU Faculty Advisor, Dr. Tricia Bent-Goodley, PhD, at (202) 806-4729 to clarify any questions or address any concerns you may have.

Sincerely,

Barbara Wadley-Young, MSW, PhD Candidate

148

Seeking Study Participants to
Complete a 3 Page Survey

If you are:

- **currently receiving** TANF services,
- at least 18 years old.
- English speaking and
- currently residing in the Washington, D.C. capital area

then you may be eligible to participate in this brief survey.

If eligible, your opinions are needed to support a study that seeks to ultimately improve services to people who need them. Participation is voluntary and confidential. A $10 Visa gift card will be provided to eligible participants who successfully complete the study. It is anticipated that the study will take no more than 45 minutes to review and complete. If you're interested in participating, please contact:

Barbara Wadley-Young, MSW
Howard University PhD Student
Phone: (703) 328-0320

      Or

Contact at Participating Site:
Title:
Phone:

Seeking Study Participants to
Complete a 3 Page Survey

If you are:
- **currently working for a provider of** income-based services to populations that include TANF recipients who are residents of the Washington, D.C. capital area,
- English speaking and
- at least 18 years old

then you may be eligible to participate in this brief survey.

Income-based services include: TANF, cash assistance, financial management, food stamps/services, employment training/assistance, and shelter.

If eligible, your opinions are needed to support a study that seeks to ultimately improve services to people who need them. Participation is voluntary and confidential. A $10 Visa gift card will be provided to eligible participants who successfully complete the study. It is anticipated that the study will take no more than 45 minutes to review and complete. If you're interested in participating, please contact:

Barbara Wadley-Young, MSW
Howard University PhD Student
Phone: (703) 328-0320

    Or

Contact at Participating Site:
Title:
Phone:

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158

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