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What Do Young Adults Think of Welfare?

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine young adult's knowledge and attitudes of the welfare system. Undergraduate students ($N=619$) at a major state university in the midwest responded to a survey consisting of both quantitative and qualitative questions about their knowledge and attitudes of welfare. Results indicated that while the students had an average amount of knowledge about welfare, they were fairly negative in their attitudes toward the system and its recipients. Analysis of the qualitative questions also revealed that a majority of the respondents' attitudes were negative and derogatory. One clear message that came from the qualitative findings was that not only the recipients are to blame but also the welfare system itself. When respondents were asked where they learned about welfare, over 50% of the responses indicated mass media as a source of information. Policy makers should be concerned that 84% of the young adults in the sample were registered voters and 50% of them had already voted in an election. As the push for welfare reform continues, young adults who vote are sure to have a major impact on policy making.

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What Do Young Adults Think of Welfare?

"Relatively little is known about the normative judgments of the public on the subject of welfare benefits" (Groskind, 1991, p. 446). This perceived lack of knowledge has prompted a number of researchers (Burton, 1992; Golay & Rollyson, 1996; Jencks, 1992; Wolfe, 1998) to study public attitudes regarding welfare and welfare recipients. Thus, there is a growing body of knowledge regarding the normative attitudes of the American public towards the welfare system. However, there is a scarcity of information and studies that measure the attitudes and knowledge of young adults (aged 18-24) regarding public assistance. The current study was conducted in order to help bridge this gap. As those who have recently gained the right of full participation in the political process, these young voters and policy makers are certain to participate in the national welfare debate, and in the effort to reshape the perception and purpose of public assistance policy (Kleniewski, 1995). This may be especially true of those college students poised to enter the political government and human service related fields after graduating.

History of the Welfare System

The 1970s and early 1980s were characterized by a stagnant economic climate in which wages, benefits, and job opportunities declined while taxes increased (Burton, 1992). It was a period marked by ideological attacks on the welfare system from the political right (Burton, 1992; Jencks, 1992). These attacks on welfare programs and policy received sufficient attention from the media, politicians, and voters to lay the foundation for the aggressive attempts at welfare reform in the 1980s (Jencks, 1992).

As the push for reform continues, the focus of poverty and public assistance policy has been an ongoing attack on the welfare system and the blaming of individual behavior (Wolfe,

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1998). This push takes a decidedly punitive approach at times and appears to ignore evidence suggesting the need for structural changes.

In general, popular conservative viewpoints appear to be largely unhindered by empirical evidence, often failing to acknowledge the findings of social scientists who study poverty, the poor, and welfare recipients. Yet, regardless of whether research supports or contradicts the conservative view, the fact remains that the dominant political voice today is conservative. This ideology is what the majority of young adults have heard through the media, political campaigns, and education during their lifetimes. With these popular images, one would expect today's young adults to hold some very negative ideas of the welfare system and poor people in America.

While recent studies have been conducted on public attitudes of welfare and its recipients, the study of young adults is lacking. Thus, the purpose of the current study was to examine young adult's knowledge and attitudes of the welfare system. The relationship between one's actual knowledge of welfare and their attitudes of the system and its recipients were investigated through both quantitative and qualitative questions.

Method

Respondents

Respondents were 619 undergraduate students at a midwestern state university. Entry-level courses were chosen to provide the researchers with an opportunity to survey students with a wide range of backgrounds and areas of study. The sample of students was not random as the authors were required to have cooperation from course instructors.

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Instruments

A 10-minute written survey was developed after perusing the literature on welfare knowledge and attitudes. The survey asked for demographic information (e.g., gender, age, ethnicity), voting information (e.g., political party identifies with, ever voted), experiences with the welfare system, and knowledge and attitudes of the system and its recipients.

Quantitative information. Attitudes toward the welfare system were assessed through 36 questions (e.g., people on welfare are lazy, welfare keeps families together) answered on a 4-point Likert-type scale (1=strongly disagree, 4=strongly agree). A factor analysis done on 619 surveys yielded two factors. The first factor, pertaining to attitudes toward recipients (named People), included 16 items; the second factor, containing systemic attitudes (named System), included 11 items. A higher score on the People factor indicated more negative attitudes toward welfare recipients. A higher score on the System factor indicated more positive attitudes toward the welfare system. The People factor had a Cronbach alpha of .86; the System factor had a Cronbach alpha of .79.

Knowledge of the welfare system and programs was assessed through 9 closed-ended (e.g., the poverty rate in the US is ...) and 2 open-ended questions (e.g., name the two major public health insurance programs in the US). Perceived knowledge in comparison to others also was measured.

Qualitative information. The survey contained two open-ended questions designed to elicit respondents' thoughts and experiences regarding welfare: "When you hear the word 'welfare', what thoughts come to mind?" and "Please list some of the positive and/or negative interactions you have encountered with the welfare system."

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To analyze, each response was synthesized to capture the essence of what the respondent wrote. Synthesis statements were then grouped into clusters which were thought to have logical relationships. The clusters were then titled according to the essential meaning of each. Each cluster then became a unique “theme.”

Procedures

The survey was piloted with several small groups (e.g., graduate students, lay people) to ensure that it was addressing the pertinent issues. After several revisions, the final survey (described above) was administered to the 619 undergraduate students in the fall semester of 1998.

Results

Quantitative Results

Frequencies. Frequencies for the quantitative variables are presented in Table 1. The respondents were evenly distributed across the four years of undergraduate study. A majority of the respondents were female (82%) which is fairly representative of the classes surveyed. Ninety-four percent of the students were Caucasian which also is representative of the university where the survey was conducted. Respondents were fairly evenly distributed across the political parties (29% Republican, 27% Democratic, 17% Independent, and 27% none). A surprising result was that 84% of these young respondents were registered to vote and that 49% of them had already voted in a city-wide, county-wide, state-wide, or national election.

Experiences with the welfare system and information regarding where they learned about welfare also are presented in Table 1. Surprisingly, 41% of the students had either personal or professional experiences with the United States welfare system. Of that 41%, 59% also had experiences with the Iowa welfare system. When survey respondents were asked what their

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experiences were in both state and federal systems, the top four answers were: a friend was on welfare, a family member was on welfare, they were a child on welfare, and/or their parent was on welfare. When asked where they learned about welfare programs, the top five responses were television, newspapers, classes, friends, and family, respectively.

Students were asked to respond to 5 true/false, 4 multiple choice, and 2 open-ended questions to assess their knowledge of the welfare system. Of the 9 closed-ended questions, the average number answered correctly was 5.0. Only 64% answered more than 4 questions correctly (14% of the 64% respondents were correct on 7-8 questions; no one answered all 9 questions correctly). The first open-ended knowledge question asked the respondent to “Name as many welfare programs as you can.” The top 6 programs named in rank order were as follows: WIC (N=110; 25% of all responses), Food Stamps (N=107; 24%), Medicaid (N=41; 9%), Title XIX (N=31; 7%), AFDC (N=27; 6%), and Medicare (N=25; 6%). Other programs were named but only by a few respondents each. Many respondents were not able to name any programs. The second question asked the student to “Name the two major public health insurance programs in the United States.” Medicaid was correctly named by 140 of the students; 129 students correctly named Medicare. Other respondents either named incorrect programs or did not respond to the question at all.

Correlations. Pearson product-moment correlations are presented in Table 2. Being older was positively correlated with having ever voted in an election, having experience with the United States welfare system, identifying with the Democratic political party, and having more actual and perceived knowledge of the welfare system. Being older also was related to having more negative views towards the welfare system but more positive attitudes towards its recipients. Having ever voted in an election was related to having experience with the U.S.

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welfare system, having more actual and perceived knowledge, and possessing more negative views about the welfare system. Respondents having some experience with the U.S. welfare system were democratic in their views and perceived that they knew more than others about welfare as well as actually did possess more knowledge. Having more positive views of welfare recipients was related to having experience with the system, identifying with the democratic party, having more positive views of the system, and possessing more knowledge of welfare. Those respondents who perceived that they knew more than others about welfare actually answered fewer knowledge questions correctly as well as had more negative views towards the welfare system.

Qualitative Results

Personal interactions with the system. Responses to the question "Please list some of the positive and/or negative interactions you have encountered with the welfare system" yielded six themes: (a) Inherent structural problems with the welfare system; (b) Negative consequences to being on welfare; (c) Welfare recipients as a source of problems; (d) Concern over the systemic effects of welfare; (e) Beneficial aspects of welfare; and (f) Miscellaneous statements. Each theme and examples from respondents will be discussed below.

Theme 1 pertained to inherent structural problems with the welfare system. This theme contained statements critical of the welfare system in terms of how it operates and what it lacks in its design. Criticisms were targeting the need for the welfare system to put more pressure on welfare recipients to get off welfare. Specific criticisms were that the welfare system needs more restrictions, more work requirements, and time limits on benefits.

Another set of criticisms under this theme was aimed at the impediments to getting off welfare. Specifically, criticisms were that there were no incentives to get off of welfare, the

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welfare system hurts those who are trying to get off and there are disincentives to recipients working. Other comments were that the welfare system does not help people take care of themselves financially, needs to be customized to the needs of the individual, and creates dependency and intergenerational dependency.

Finally, there were criticisms about how the welfare system is organized, how people are treated and criticisms of who the system assists. Specific critiques were too much bureaucracy, the system is inefficient, benefits go to the wrong people, the system is too harsh, there is inconsistent application of rules and treatment, and the welfare system needs to help more people.

Theme 2 consisted of statements regarding the negative consequences to being on welfare. Comments falling under this theme highlighted the negative consequences the welfare system creates for recipients. As opposed to the welfare system itself, these comments focus upon the outcome of receiving welfare benefits. The two main areas of concern focused upon the negative values which welfare promotes in welfare beneficiaries and the negative personal experiences of those receiving welfare benefits. Respondents felt welfare promotes laziness, instills an entitlement mentality, creates and promotes stereotypes, and harms the children of welfare beneficiaries.

Other respondents commented upon the negative personal experiences of those who receive welfare benefits. Specifically, respondents indicated that being on welfare is a shaming and degrading experience, and that there is hostility directed toward those who are on welfare. Also, negative experiences with welfare workers were reported. These statements tended to focus upon their own personal experience, or on the experience of others whom the respondents knew.

Theme 3 embodied the idea that welfare recipients are a source of problems. Comments in this theme were directed at the recipients of welfare. The people receiving welfare were viewed as the cause of problems with welfare. Respondents felt that recipients abuse, misuse, and commit

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fraud while on welfare, take advantage of the system, are lazy and refuse to work, and have children for increased benefits. Furthermore, some respondents detailed their personal experiences with recipients who abused the welfare system. A final category of comments indicated that those who are abusing the system are hurting those who truly need the benefits.

Theme 4 was related to the concern over the systemic effects of welfare. A further set of statements centered upon the impact of welfare to others than the recipients. The first category of responses in this theme indicated that welfare is a burden to those funding the program. Specifically, respondents felt that welfare is an inherently unfair system, a drain on tax payers, and a waste of taxpayer money. Another response category in this theme was that some respondents felt that welfare has a bad reputation and that the public needs to be educated about welfare.

Theme 5 consisted of the beneficial aspects of welfare. This theme was the only one which pointed out positive attributes of welfare. Some respondents indicated that welfare is a good concept, if it is used properly. Others felt that welfare is helpful to those in need, provides needed benefits, and is humane. Others highlighted the fact that welfare is temporary. Some detailed their own personal positive experiences with welfare, or the beneficial experiences of those they know.

Theme 6 was comprised of miscellaneous statements. This category included responses which were somewhat varied and did not fit into other themes. In general, responses in this theme indicated no knowledge or experience with the welfare system, neutral or factual responses, and disdain for the system.

Thoughts on welfare. Responses to the question "When you hear the word 'welfare,' what thoughts come to mind?" yielded seven themes. These themes were: (a) Providing assistance and those in need of assistance; (b) Negative and derogatory attitudes toward welfare recipients; (c) Welfare is the cause of problems and an inherently unfair system; (d) Positive aspects of

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welfare; (e) Welfare programs and services; (f) Personal or emotionally focused experiences related to welfare; and (g) Specific groups of recipients.

Theme 1 was comprised of statements about providing assistance and those in need of assistance. Respondent's statements that fit into this theme focused upon those needing aid and the act of providing formal assistance. Some respondents focused upon giving or receiving aid in general, without elaborating specific components. In addition to this general notion of providing and receiving aid, some respondents specifically focused upon those living in poverty or in lower socioeconomic classes, upon the working poor who receive welfare, and on the temporary nature of welfare.

Theme 2 pertained to negative and derogatory attitudes toward welfare recipients. Several respondents had derogatory or critical views of those on welfare. These views included the perception that welfare recipients are undeserving and abuse the system. Others had disparaging views of welfare recipients in terms of race and lifestyle characteristics. Finally, other respondents had negative views towards families and parents receiving welfare.

Theme 3 contained statements about welfare being the cause of problems and an inherently unfair system. This theme highlighted a systemic view of welfare. Respondents in this theme indicated that welfare is an unfair transfer of income, an undeserved gift to the poor, and a drain on society. Others highlighted the negative aspects of welfare and the problems resulting from the welfare system.

Theme 4 embodied positive aspects of welfare. Some respondents highlighted the beneficial aspects that welfare provides. Statements were focused upon the notion that welfare is a way for people to help themselves and the assistance it provides to families.

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Theme 5 was related to welfare programs and services. Respondents who had comments in this theme focused on specific welfare services and programs (e.g., WIC, food stamps) when thinking of "welfare."

Theme 6 contained personal or emotionally focused experiences related to welfare. This theme highlighted the experience of living on welfare, of knowing someone on welfare, and interacting with those on welfare. In addition, some respondents focused on the emotional aspect of living on welfare.

Theme 7 named specific groups of recipients. This theme identified the specific types of people believed to be welfare recipients. The types of individuals identified by respondents were: single parents (most often mothers), teenage mothers, large families, minorities, those with low levels of education, the disabled, the elderly and those who are unemployed (but not by choice).

Discussion

The aim of this study was to investigate the knowledge and attitudes of young adults. The students who completed this survey were for the most part native citizens of a mostly rural and conservative state. Therefore, it is not surprising that many of the views held by them reflect a politically conservative perspective.

Both democratic and republican philosophy has become more conservative in the last twenty years. Welfare tends to now be viewed as a corrupt and immoral institution in need of reform and restrictions by contemporary political thought. This legacy appears to live on in the views of many of the respondents in this study. Several themes to the two open-ended questions attack welfare and the problems it is perceived to create. Respondent's statements such as "People that go on it and have a lot of children don't show children good (any) work ethic" and

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"People become lazy and dependent on the government" reflect the idea that welfare itself is the cause of recipient poverty, not the answer for economic sufficiency.

Ronald Reagan's election to the presidency coincided with the publication of three influential conservative books: Wealth and Poverty (Guilder, 1981), Losing Ground (Murray, 1984), and Beyond Entitlement (Mead, 1986). In significant ways, these events shaped the philosophy and methods of conservative attempts to reform welfare and cast welfare recipients in a decidedly negative light. Kleniewski (1995) states the aforementioned books carried the basic message that "Welfare encourages low income individuals to accept inappropriate alternatives to work and marriage, creating a cultural subclass that is unable to integrate itself into the mainstream of society. The policy prescription 'for the good of the poor' then becomes reduce the number of welfare participants, limit the time families can receive welfare, and make welfare less attractive by requiring work of all able bodied adults except mothers of the youngest children. In their view, only by cutting back welfare programs can government eliminate the culture of welfare dependency" (p. 197). Again, these sentiments are echoed in large part by the respondents of our survey: "I have seen individuals abuse welfare by selling their benefits for illegal substances", "Seems like unwed moms have children purposely just to get more money", and "Charity to the poor, upper class money going to lower class."

The solution of reducing the numbers on welfare also was reflected by our respondents: "Welfare should have a time limit of how long you can be on the program" and "It's very helpful but there should be more restrictions. If you have more children they need to go to school or have a job to receive welfare services." These statements exist despite the national welfare reforms that occurred in 1996 (replacing the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program with the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, "TANF", program). Additionally, Iowa had a

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forerunner to the TANF program, the Family Investment Program ("FIP") which contained many of the provisions of TANF and was enacted in 1993. Despite over 5 years of welfare reform in Iowa, many of the respondents were not aware of the changes made and the requirements placed on welfare recipients. Researchers and politicians alike should be concerned that while young adults have very strong attitudes (mostly negative) toward welfare and its recipients, they do not have accurate knowledge of the system. If politicians want to sway the voters toward their political view, then they need to make honest efforts at educating the people about the welfare system and who the recipients are.

Wolfe (1998) notes that as the push for reform has continued, the focus regarding the problems of poverty and public assistance policy has been a continued attack on the welfare system that blames individual behavior. Once again, these sentiments are echoed by the comments of many of our survey respondents: "Most of the people I've encountered in my mom's office are horrid, lazy people" and "Some people take advantage and do enjoy living that way." Many of our respondents viewed individuals as being the cause of their situation, as well as believing the welfare system encourages corruption and abuse.

As a result of the events of the 1980s, three predominant myths have arose which also are reflected in our survey: An individual's behavior, and not the context in which they live, is largely responsible for their status ("I know a lot of people use welfare so they don't have to work"); poverty and welfare dependence is evidence of individual and societal moral decay ("Our whole country is on welfare" and "We pay for women to get pregnant again and live off the state"); and the creation of a welfare culture in which there is a permanent subclass ("Non-educated, not working" and "Families whose caretakers do not have a job or are stuck in a low-paying job"). These myths are in fact not supported by empirical evidence (Chamberlain, 1997;

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Edin, 1991; Golay & Rollyson, 1996; Greenwell, Leibowitz, & Klerman, 1998; Jencks, 1992; Rank, 1994; Will, 1993; Wolfe, 1998) but persist none the less.

Young adults have grown up hearing strong negative messages regarding the welfare system and recipients which are based on a moral viewpoint that casts the poor as lazy, fraudulent, and undeserving. These views are supported by the results of the survey which contain the following themes from the two broad qualitative questions: “Inherent structural problems with the welfare system,” “Negative consequences to being on welfare,” “Welfare recipients as a source of problems,” “Concerns over the systemic effects of welfare,” “Negative and derogatory attitudes toward welfare recipients,” “Welfare is the cause of problems and an inherently unfair system,” and “Specific groups of recipients.” Based on the closed-ended questions, there is support for the notion that attitudes can be divided into systemic attitudes and attitudes toward recipients. The ramifications of these attitudes toward welfare and welfare recipients are fairly self-evident. Now that states are given much more authority in running welfare programs (through the use of block grants and mandates to reduce the number of recipients on the welfare roles) it is anticipated that even more restrictive and hostile attitudes and practices against welfare and welfare recipients will ensue. These findings suggests that to change the public’s attitudes, there needs to be education aimed at two very different areas of welfare - the system and the recipients. These views hold despite the almost equal number of students identifying themselves as Republican, Democratic, Independent, and none. Thus conservative views and practices are being espoused without regard to party affiliation.

There are some counter trends shown in this survey, however. The themes, “Beneficial aspects of welfare,” “Providing assistance and those in need of assistance,” and “Positive aspects of welfare,” tend to show that some respondents see the need for and support the purpose of

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welfare programs and services. Many respondents made comments in response to the qualitative questions that included both positive and negative statements. One may infer that while there are many hostile attitudes from our respondents toward some recipients and toward some programs, there is an underlying foundation of support for those recipients in the most dire circumstances and for those programs that meet the most essential needs. What appears to be the most disturbing aspects of welfare are what the respondents see as those who receive some type of unearned gain from welfare, or the destruction of the philosophy of self-sufficiency. This notion may stem from the view that welfare is a form of perpetual charity.

Findings from the quantitative questions indicated that those with more positive views of the welfare recipients also had more positive views of the welfare system. Furthermore, those respondents expressing positive views identified themselves with the democratic party and indicated that they had had some experience with the welfare system. These findings suggest that the experience of receiving welfare or working for the system leads a person to support the more liberal politicians. In addition, those who have experience with the system not only possess more knowledge of welfare but also are more likely to have voted in an election. Thus, experience seems to play an important part in the lives of these young voters in terms of attitudes and behaviors.

The theme, "Negative consequences to being on welfare," highlights a viewpoint that welfare is a cause of problems which contributes to recipients being on welfare. Quotes such as "As long as people get food stamps they don't work" and "People become lazy and dependent on the government" supports the popular notion that individuals needing assistance would fare better if they were given little to no assistance to increase their motivation. The related theme, "welfare recipients as a source of problems," compliments the aforementioned theme. Not only is the

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system a contributor to the downfall of the poor, the poor themselves are to blame for their poor economic state ("Seems like unwed moms have children purposely just to get more money.").

Additionally, some respondents generalized to the whole population of recipients based on a few personal instances of improper usage of benefits: "See people (neighbors) with brand new cars go to the store with food stamps."

Because recipients, are viewed as immoral, self-centered, and being supported by a system that creates dependency and laziness, a natural outcome is the feelings of unfairness of such a situation. The theme, "Systemic effects of welfare," focuses upon the harm done to those who are not receiving benefits. Statements such as "I don't like working hard to pay for people who can just as well go out and get a job. What makes them any different?" and "If you have too many kids, give them up because you can't fully support them and everyone else is stuck paying for them" reflect feelings of contempt, unfairness, and futility of the situation and the anger that arises because people are forced to contribute to such a system.

It appears that the shift toward conservative views of welfare have spread to the next generation of voters and policy makers. Although there are some exceptions, many of the responses in this survey indicated a negative and somewhat hostile attitude toward welfare and its recipients. Despite this, our respondents also saw the need for such programs, even if they are "a necessary evil."

Limitations of this study should warrant caution in interpreting the results and implications. First, although the respondents were mostly white, which is representative of the region where the study was done, caution should be taken when applying the findings to other racial backgrounds. Secondly, the majority of respondents were female. This was an artifact of the classes the survey was administered in. As stated above, caution needs to be taken when

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generalizing to the general public. Lastly, the sample was drawn from a university population.

Knowledge and attitudes of those less educated may be different than those found in the current study. A more diverse sample is needed to better generalize the knowledge of and attitudes toward the welfare system to young adults across the nation.

Conclusions

What will the future hold for welfare? If this survey is any indication, it is likely that welfare will certainly undergo further changes. Eighty-four percent of our respondents were registered voters, and 49% have voted in a city, state, or national election. These young people are politically active and have some degree of knowledge on the basics of welfare, although they appear to be unaware of the sweeping changes already made to welfare programs and recipients. In this environment, there should be concern over the future of welfare. Because states have much discretion on how to spend their block grant funding which covers welfare programs, the rising political voice of these young voters will most likely clamor for further restrictions. Because their most influential source of information is mass media, the accuracy of the information they receive and the philosophical messages about the purpose and consequences of welfare will shape the future direction of welfare "reform."

It will be especially critical for policy makers to make the facts about welfare known to the general public. Policy makers must make a stronger effort to view welfare from a systemic perspective, moving beyond the simple view that welfare recipients and politicians are the target audience of their efforts. Without such a view, potentially significant welfare programs and ideas are doomed to be wounded ducks, easy pickings for those who wish to spread their political philosophy based upon misinformation and unsupported claims of "facts." Under these conditions, welfare recipients also are destined to be viewed with contempt and disdain.

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Table 1

Percentages on Selected Variables

Characteristic		Percentage
Year in School	First year	32%
	Sophomore	24%
	Junior	21%
	Senior	23%
	other	4%
Gender	male	18%
	female	82%
Age	18	22%
	19	23%
	20	20%
	21	15%
	22-24	14%
	25-57	6%
U.S. Born	yes	97%
	no	3%
Ethnicity	Caucasian	94%
	African-American	2%
	Hispanic	1%
	Asian	2%
	other	1%
Marital Status	never married	91%
	married	5%
	divorced	2%
	separated	0%
	widowed	0%
	other	2%
Parenting Status	yes	5%
	no	95%
Political Party	Republican	29%
	Democratic	27%
	Independent	17%
	none	27%

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Table 1 (Continued)

Characteristic		Percentage
Registered Voter	yes	84%
	no	16%
Ever Voted	yes	49%
	no	51%
Experiences with U.S. Welfare System	yes	41%
	no	58%
Experiences with U.S. Welfare System were as:	parent on welfare	5%
	child on welfare	10%
	family member on welfare	25%
	friend on welfare	45%
	you were/are employed by system	1%
	family member employed by system	4%
	friend employed by system	6%
	other	4%
Experiences with Iowa Welfare System (of those who said Yes to U.S. Welfare Experiences)	yes	59%
	no	41%
Experiences with Iowa Welfare System were as:	parent on welfare	6%
	child on welfare	11%
	family member on welfare	23%
	friend on welfare	44%
	you were/are employed by system	1%
	family member employed by system	5%
	friend employed by system	6%
other	2%	
How Much Know About Welfare	less than most people	31%
	about the same	59%
	more than most people	10%

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Table 1 (Continued)

Characteristic	Percentage	
Where Learned About Welfare Programs	television	19%
	books	3%
	classes	14%
	radio	5%
	magazines	6%
	friends	10%
	newspapers	16%
	family	10%
	personal experiences	6%
	work	6%
	movies	3%
	don't know anything about welfare	2%
	other	1%

Table 2

Pearson Product-moment Correlations on Selected Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1 Age	1.00	.27**	.22**	.11*	-.10*	-.11*	.21**	.30**
2 Ever Voted		1.00	.08*	.04	-.16**	-.04	.13**	.22**
3 U.S. Welfare Experience			1.00	.18**	-.05	-.12**	.15**	.33**
4 Political Party				1.00	.07	-.35**	.07	.04
5 System (attitudes factor)					1.00	-.26**	-.06	-.15**
6 People (attitudes factor)						1.00	-.18**	-.00
7 Total Knowledge Score							1.00	-.19**
8 Knowledge Level Compared								1.00

Note. Coding of variables for correlations were as follows: ever voted and U.S. Welfare Experience (0=no; 1=yes); political party (1=Republican, 2=Democratic); System factor (higher score is more positive attitudes); People factor (higher score is more negative attitudes); total knowledge score and knowledge level compared (higher score means more actual and perceived knowledge). * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.