

Everyone Is Still on Welfare – Reading Response

Alexander Wang, 23744665, Nov 5, 2014

- 1) **What are the main points of one of the weeks reading?** Explain the thesis in three sentences or less.

There are three welfare systems and the way they are currently set up favors the middle and upper classes. The state described in the 1983 paper “Everyone is on welfare” is outdated and a re-examination shows that the people who are truly in need of welfare are being overshadowed.

- 2) What theories or arguments does the author criticize or engage with? How is this author in conversation with other authors from this course?

The author criticizes how the government is giving more money and benefits to the affluent as opposed to the poor. It could be that, or it could be a case for renaming fiscal and corporate welfare to something other than welfare because welfare should be targeted towards improving the lives of the poor. In any case, his views are quite different from that of Nancy Fraser and Linda Gordon’s, who believe that dependency is to be avoided at all costs and welfare is just feeding the mentality of dependency.

- 3) What questions, ideas, or disagreements does this reading bring up for you?

One of his points is that because fiscal welfare is proportional to your income, this tends to favor the wealthy. Isn’t this how capitalism works though? He seems to be opposed to the idea of rewarding power and privilege, but what he describes as “real distributive justice for all” leans oddly close to sounding communist. Not that this is a contradiction or anything, it was just my thought while I was reading it.

I agree that welfare should be focused on giving money to the poor so they can, at minimum, live. I don’t agree that just because it’s called welfare that it should be thought of as welfare. Fiscal and occupational welfare shouldn’t really be attacked for not helping the poor, because I don’t believe that’s their purpose. From what it seems, their purpose is more of a long-term investment. The high earners have higher potential to be earning even more in the future, while giving starting money to the poor doesn’t invoke the same optimism. Half the article was the author arguing a point that I don’t think anyone is opposing, he just laid out a bunch of facts and numbers and said, “look. This bad” except with much larger words.