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The Role of Race and Birth Place in Welfare Usage among Comparable Women: Evidence from the U.S.

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Abstract:

There is evidence that women are more likely to live in poverty than men. Given the fact that the poor are more likely to use welfare, it becomes useful to consider welfare usage among women. A-priori welfare programs are set up in such a way that welfare usage should be based primarily on economic needs and health concerns. However, it is possible that an individual's experiences could affect their perception and preferences for using government assistance. In this scenario, differences in welfare usage will exist for individuals with similar characteristics but different experiences. We explore this possibility among women and investigate if race/ethnicity and birthplace still have a role to play in the decision to use welfare even after controlling for income, health and other demographic factors like employment. We find that race does not matter for welfare usage among comparable women. In addition, we do not find any significant differences in welfare usage among women based on birthplace suggesting that comparable naturalized and native born women share similar preference for welfare. The only exception is women born in U.S territories. Our results suggest that among comparable women, women born in U.S territories seem to be more inclined to welfare usage in comparison to U.S born White women.

Text: See [Discussion Paper No. 5668](#)



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