

## A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE UPPER AND LOWER INCOME GROUPS IN THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARD RELIEF POLICIES

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The purpose of this brief paper is to report some of the differences in attitudes toward specified relief policies found in upper and lower income groups in Tulsa.

The data used in this study are part of those which were collected approximately a year ago by Katherine K. Dayton and used in her M. A. thesis entitled *A Study of the Attitudes Toward Relief of Selected Public in Tulsa*. Results from only two parts of the seven aspects of relief policies studied are reported here. These concern (1) the source of relief funds and (2) the way in which relief is given. The answers given by persons in the upper income brackets are compared with those of persons at the other end of the income scale.

Each person was asked the following questions concerning the source of funds for relief:

"Do you believe that aid should be secured by:

1. The individual in need who appeals directly to financially able near relatives?
2. The individual in need who appeals directly to people for work, food, clothing or money?
3. Private social agencies which appeal to the public for voluntary contributions?
4. The local government (city or county) through taxes?
5. The state government through taxes?
6. The federal government through taxes?"

and instructed to answer "yes" or "no" to each. Further, if more than one question was answered "yes" the person was asked to number the "yes" answers 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. in order of desirability or preference. A distinction was made between the *unemployable* and the *unemployed* and the same questions were asked of each.

Each person was also questioned regarding the way to distribute relief, as follows:

"Do you believe that aid should be given as:

1. Food, clothing, shelter, medical attention, etc.? (No money given)
2. Money to be spent as specified by the relief administrator?
3. Money to be spent as desired by person on relief with certain restrictions, such as, for liquor?
4. Money to be spent in any way desired by person on relief?"

The same instructions as indicated in the previous section were given.

All persons in the upper income group in this study received incomes of \$400 or over per month and can properly be referred to as business executives. On the other hand the persons from the lower income group

were "on relief" and received less than \$100 per month. Although the samples were small, only 25 in each, the writer believes that they are probably representative; because Mrs. Dayton, who is a case worker in a private agency in the family welfare field, had ready access to the latter group. Through her family connections and her husband's business associates she was able to secure records from the former, the higher income group.

TABLE I

*Comparison of attitudes of upper and lower income groups toward source of funds for relief for the unemployable*

Source	Upper income Order of preference			Lower income Preferences	
	1	2	3	Total	Total
	25	23	20	68	75
Relatives	12	2	2	16	5
Citizens — direct appeal	0	0	0	0	0
Private social agencies	4	8	3	15	13
Local government	4	8	6	18	17
State government	2	5	7	14	20
Federal government	3	0	2	5	20

With regard to the source of funds for relief the two income groups differed widely. The upper income group favored securing aid for the unemployable, in order of preference, from (1) relatives, (2) the local government, (3) private agencies, and (4) the state government. A few favored securing funds from the federal government but none approved of the direct appeal to citizens by those in need. There was no material difference with regard to the unemployed except that a number favored the direct appeal to citizens by those in need.

On the other hand the lower income group did not seem to care so much where the money came from so long as they did not have to appeal directly to citizens or depend on relatives. The order of their preferences was substantially the same for the unemployed as for the unemployable.

TABLE II

*Comparison of attitudes of upper and lower income groups toward distribution of relief funds to the unemployable*

Distribution	Upper income Order of preferences			Lower income Preferences	
	1	2	3	Total	Total
	25	14	1	40	25
Direct — no money	19	4	0	23	3
Money — spend as specified	5	9	0	14	3
Money-spend but with prohibitions	1	1	1	3	17
Money — "no strings attached"	0	0	0	0	2

The data on the way to distribute relief are much easier to summarize. The upper income groups favored giving goods and services but no money as their first choice and "money to be spent as specified by the relief administrator" as their second choice.

On the basis of the first choices the lower income group approved of given money to be spent as desired by the person on relief but with certain prohibitions. Six voted with the upper income group, but two went so far as to favor a "no strings attached" policy.

While the results of this study are not conclusive, they certainly are suggestive. This study should be carried further to see if the same results would be found on the basis of a larger sample. There are a number of questions which might be examined, a few of which are as follows: Have the attitudes of these and other groups in society changed recently? If so, how? Have the changes in administrative policy tended to conform with the attitudes of the upper income, or those of the lower income group? Are these two groups, and others, aware of differences in attitudes?