



The Welfare Trait: How State Benefits Affect Personality

By Adam Perkins

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The welfare state has a problem: each generation living under its protection has lower work motivation than the previous one. In order to fix this problem we need to understand its causes, lest the welfare state ends up undermining its own economic and social foundations. In *The Welfare Trait*, award-winning personality researcher Dr Adam Perkins argues that welfare-induced personality mis-development is a significant part of the problem. In support of his theory, Dr Perkins presents data showing that the welfare state can boost the number of children born into disadvantaged households, and that childhood disadvantage promotes the development of an employment-resistant personality profile, characterised by aggressive, antisocial and rule-breaking tendencies. The book concludes by recommending that policy should be altered so that the welfare state no longer increases the number of children born into disadvantaged households. It suggests that, without this change, the welfare state will erode the nation's work ethic by increasing the proportion of individuals in the population who possess an employment-resistant personality profile, due to exposure to the environmental influence of disadvantage in childhood.

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The Welfare Trait: How State Benefits Affect Personality By Adam Perkins Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #1229147 in Books
- Published on: 2015-11-12
- Released on: 2015-11-12
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.49" h x .52" w x 5.50" l, 1.00 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 201 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

“A courageous and carefully researched book teeming with novel insights and highly original sweeping syntheses. It deserves to be an integral part of the political debate on welfare, as we struggle to construct sustainable structures that can survive the demographic demands of the 21st century. It is also a model of clear writing that is easily accessible to the layman and the policymaker alike. I recommend it to readers in the confident expectation that they will think likewise.” (Andrew Sabisky, Adam Smith Blog, adamsmith.org, January, 2016)

“The central thesis of the book is that the benefits of a generous welfare state erode work ethics, and that the longer people live under welfarism, the more they depend on those benefits, and the more likely they are to cheat to obtain them. ... This book deserves to be read. ... it is worth buying and sending to your elected representative, with the key findings underlined.” (James Thompson, Psychological Comments, drjamesthompson.blogspot.co.uk, January, 2016)

'The Welfare Trait is electrifying energising and shocking. Dr Perkins, an expert in the neurobiology of personality, argues that a generous welfare state can proliferate employment-resistant personality characteristics. The scientific discharge of this new theory is sure to spark high voltage debate be prepared for a jolt!' Philip Corr, Professor of Psychology, City University, London, UK

Review

About the Author

Adam Perkins is Lecturer in the Neurobiology of Personality at the Institute of psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience, King's College London, UK. He brings to this book a wealth of scientific knowledge about personality, gained during more than 15 years researching the topic. Before he became established as a scientist, Adam spent years working as an unskilled labourer and has also claimed welfare when unemployed.

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