

THE ROLE OF INTERGROUP RELATIONS AND EMOTION IN PREDICTING  
THE DESERVINGNESS OF WELFARE AID

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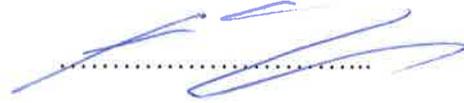
THE ROLE OF INTERGROUP RELATIONS AND EMOTION IN PREDICTING  
THE DESERVINGNESS OF WELFARE AID

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## ABSTRACT

### THE ROLE OF INTERGROUP RELATIONS AND EMOTION IN PREDICTING THE DESERVINGNESS OF WELFARE AID

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Keywords: Social policy, welfare aid opinions, political psychology, deservingness, intergroup relations.

Previous literature suggests that the welfare policy judgments are often explained by psychological mechanisms, such as the deservingness heuristic which describe that people evaluate if the potential recipient deserves the benefit or not when they formulate welfare policy decisions. The present study aimed to investigate whether people favor their in-group members, and endorse the idea that their in-group members to deserve to receive welfare aid more compared to the members of other groups. The role of emotional reactions in the formation of people's social welfare opinions towards different social and political groups were also considered as an additional factor. The findings demonstrated that deservingness heuristic operates as a major factor for explaining welfare aid opinions in the Turkish context. The results are discussed within the framework of in-group vs. out-group distinction literature.

## ÖZET

### SOSYAL YARDIMIN HAK EDİLME ALGISINDA GRUPLAR ARASI İLİŞKİLERİN VE DUYGULARIN ROLÜ

TENNUR KATGI

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Anahtar Sözcükler: Sosyal politika, refah devleti görüşleri, siyaset psikolojisi, hak etme algısı, gruplar arası ilişkiler.

Mevcut literatüre göre refah politikası yargıları hak etme bilişsel kestirme yolu gibi psikolojik mekanizmalar yoluyla açıklanmaktadır. Buna göre vatandaşlar bir diğer kişinin sosyal yardım alması ya da almaması kararını verirken o kişinin sosyal yardımı hak edip etmediğini değerlendirir. Bu çalışma kişilerin kendi grup üyelerinin sosyal yardım almasını diğer grup üyelerinin sosyal yardım almasına göre daha çok onaylayıp onaylamayacaklarını araştırmaktadır. Farklı sosyal ve etnik gruplara karşı oluşturulan sosyal refah politikaları görüşlerindeki duygusal tepkilerin potansiyel rolü de ayrı bir faktör olarak incelenmektedir. Sonuçlar hak etme kestirme yolunun Türkiye'deki sosyal yardım görüşlerini açıklamakta temel bir faktör olduğunu göstermiştir. Sonuçlar iç grup ve dış grup ayrımı literatürü çerçevesinde tartışılmıştır.

*Anneme*

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

AKP: Justice and Development Party

CHP: Republican People's Party

MHP: Nationalist Movement Party

BDP: Peace and Democracy Party

EU: European Union

METU: Middle East Technical University

## **1. Introduction**

Public opinion is the driving force of democracies. Politicians are responsible for planning and implementing policies based on the public opinion. People's attitudes, ideas, beliefs, and emotions towards social welfare assistance also form a part of the public opinion.

Public opinion and citizen's attitudes towards welfare state policies received remarkable attention from scholars. This is not surprising because the structure of welfare state directly influences the lifestyles of citizens. The scope of welfare assistance is so wide; it can include citizen access to public health services, unemployment benefits, free education, childcare services, and benefits for elderly people depending on the type of the welfare state. Thus, many industrialized countries spend considerable amount of public budget for welfare policies.

Survival of millions of people in the world depends on the generosity of others. How should we define responsibilities of citizens towards people in need? Moreover, how can we define "a person in need"? In terms of interconnection of public opinion and social welfare aid, people's beliefs of which people deserve help for what reason is transformed into practice with implementations of social policies. It was assumed that people formulate their opinions with reason while considering the outcomes. However, this view was challenged by Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes (1960) and Converse (1964) claiming that citizens most of the time do not have sufficient information to decide upon political issues. People do not formulate their opinions on welfare policies by evaluating the content and the economic effectiveness, as it can be expected by them due to the political and fiscal importance of such policies. Instead, citizens rely on simple and relevant shortcuts for the formulation of their opinions and decisions which are called heuristic mechanisms in the recent psychological and decision-making literature (Iyengar & Valentino, 2000). Relevant research demonstrates that people use a particular type of heuristic mechanism while evaluating welfare policies, and people primarily pay attention to cues of if the recipient deserves the benefit or not (Oorschot 2000; Petersen, Slothuus, Stubager & Togeby, 2010; Petersen, 2012). This mechanism is defined as deservingness heuristic.

The ways that deservingness heuristic operates might be diverse. The major one among the potential variables that influence how it functions is evaluation and judgement of responsibility. Other important factors such as religiosity, socio-economical status, ideology and level of empathy can affect the operation of

deservingness heuristic and people's welfare opinions; thus, their role is under investigation for the current research. Another major variable can be the ingroup and outgroup distinction that is introduced in the current study for the measurement with the operation of deservingness heuristic. Current study assesses the importance of the group identity of the benefiter for the evaluation of the deservingness of the welfare assistance.

Another factor that affects the welfare aid opinions can be emotional reactions of the citizens towards welfare aid beneficiaries. Study of emotions is also a fast growing research topic in the field of political psychology. Political psychologists demonstrated how emotions interact with political attitudes, political preferences and decisions in several ways in the last 20 years (e.g., Conover & Feldman, 1986; Marcus, Neuman & Mackuen, 2000; Marcus, Mackuen, Wolak & Keele, 2006). The earlier political psychology research was based on the cognitive, rationalist actor assumption that was able to calculate the outcomes of possible actions, and made the best choice which has the maximum utility (McDermott, 2009). However, Damasio's research (1994) explored the central role of emotions for the rational decision making claiming that it was not possible to achieve to the best choice without any reliance on emotions. Thus, emotions are also accepted as an important aspect of political life as well as cognition. Moreover, it was also demonstrated (Sears, Huddy & Jervis, 2003) that emotions are not secondary aspects to political decisions; in fact they constitute a direct source in the political information processing, in the political decision making, and formulation of political preferences. The current study aims to incorporate the exploration of the role of emotional reactions in the formation of people's social welfare opinions towards social and political groups. A review of relevant literature shows that there are two relatively independent research lines regarding the effects of incidental emotions on the formation of welfare opinions (e.g., Bodenhausen, Sheppard & Kramer, 1994; Small & Lerner, 2008) and the effects of emotional associations of specific social groups regarding the evaluation of relevant policies in the aforementioned literature (e.g., Cottrell, Richards & Nichols, 2010). However, to our knowledge, there is no study which measures if the ingroup-outgroup distinction can shape the emotional reactions of people which are assumed to have a role in the people's evaluation of the deservingness of welfare aid.

The number of research in Turkish politics and public opinion is extensive; however, the focus has not shifted to understand the differences in individual factors. The amount of research on individual dynamics of public opinion and the analysis of psychological determinants of political behavior research is limited for Turkish politics. In short, the present project aims to investigate the evaluation of welfare aid from a political psychological perspective by examining the influence of the deservingness heuristic, intergroup relations and emotional reactions in Turkish context. It adopts an experimental design by utilizing a survey methodology.

### **1.1. Welfare Policy Support Analysis: The Individual Level, the Meso Level, the Macro Level Analyses and Role of Deservingness Heuristic**

Welfare policy opinions towards potential recipients can be understood both with an analysis of individual level, and an analysis of the macro level variations.

Individual level studies usually incorporate the current interests of the individual regarding their socio-economical status, ideological standpoint for explaining welfare policy opinions (e.g., Hasenfeld & Rafferty, 1989; Pettersen, 2001).

Meso level constitutes the intergroup relations which the ingroup-outgroup distinction is used for the analysis in the current study.

Macro level differences regarding welfare policy opinions are explained by institutional structure of the welfare state, cultural differences, and socio-structural differences (e.g., Aarge & Petersen, 2014; Svallfors, 1997; Twigg, 2010).

How do deservingness heuristic studies intersect with or deviate from other alternative explanations? The next section portrays the literature that deservingness heuristic accounts for the analysis of welfare policy opinions.

### **1.2. The Individual Level Analyses for Welfare Policy Support**

Literature of welfare state policy attitudes mostly focused on the individual characteristics that shape the attitudes towards polices. Traditionally, content of individual level differences was portrayed on the basis of self interest to a particular social policy, and outcome of an ideological predisposition (e.g. Cook and Barrett, 1992; Hasenfeld and Rafferty, 1989; Pettersen, 2001) and individual differences in gender, religiosity and empathy (e.g. Arıkan, 2013; Trobst, Collins & Embree, 1994).

Recent literature (Oorschot, 2000; Petersen et al., 2010; Petersen, 2012; Petersen, Sznycer, Cosmides & Tooby, 2012) suggested that citizens did not formulate

their welfare opinions based on rational calculations of self interest. Instead, they relied on deservingness heuristic.

In the current study, welfare aid opinion formation based on the evaluation of the deservingness of the recipients is proposed as an alternative argument to the self interest calculation based argument. At first, this section portrays individual level explanation for evaluation of welfare aid recipience with a literature review in terms of self interest based arguments. Then, the suggestion of deservingness heuristic based arguments for the explanation of welfare aid opinions is discussed under the light of relevant literature.

The self interest argument claimed that people who were needier for welfare aid, who had more potential to become recipients were the ones that supported the welfare programs positively. In contrast, people with a lower possibility of benefiting from the welfare programs acted as contributors not recipients, and they did not support the welfare benefits as much as the recipients did. This view was partially supported by empirical findings. Cook and Barrett (1992) pointed out that people with low income provided more support for welfare aid programs compared to higher income profiled people. Hasenfeld and Rafferty (1989) reported that people who were economically most needy, and who could form target group for welfare policies favored the programs more. However, there is controversy about whether socio-economical status made a difference in people's support for welfare policies or not (Petersen, 2012). As cited in Oorshot (2000), Golding and Middleton (1988) found that lower socio-economical groups were less supportive of support for groups that are similar to their status, and exhibited more negative feelings towards similar groups. People with lower socio-economical profiles did not favor welfare policies much more compared to the higher socio-economically profiled ones.

Petersen (2001) found evidence regarding the age related differences for specific social policies. To clarify his research more, the rest homes were favored by old people, while child care services were favored by young people. Young people with low income status composed the main supporter group for policy programs. However, according to interest based argument, one would expect that younger people to support childcare benefits, while the elder people to support old age benefits such as pensions. Ponza, Duncan, Corcoran and Grosking (1988) who tested this argument came up with a contradictory result which yielded that older people supported low income families

with children from other age groups to receive more welfare aid. However, there was a mutual acceptance towards the necessity of health policies and old age pensions from all age groups.

Regarding gender as a factor, limited evidence pointed out to the fact that men were less supportive of welfare policies compared to women (Svallfors, 1997). In line with self interest argument, this might be due to the fact that women were more potential welfare recipients since they had much more responsibility for childcare, and a higher risk of becoming a single parent which is in line with the self interest principle. Along the same lines, Arts and Gelissen (2001) argued that women stressed the importance of equality and need while men stressed the importance of merit.

In terms of potential effects of religiosity on welfare attitudes, Arıkan's article (2013) analyzed the data coming from European Social Surveys that were conducted in 2008. The study pointed out that social religious behavior reduces the redistribution and support for government responsibility while self identified religiosity had a positive effect on government responsibility to implement welfare policies in Turkey.

As another individual level analyses factor, empathy as a concept became very popular in applied and basic decision making literature (Rumble, Lange, Parks 2010). Empathy can roughly be defined as the ability to perceive the feelings of other people and being able to share their emotional states which makes us to react appropriately to the social situation (Tangney, Stuewig, & Mashek, 2007). Empathic people were assumed to show more sympathy to the people in negative situations, and they could also take the perspective of another person easily (Cassels, Chan, Chung & Birch 2000). Empathic concern was found to be positively associated with altruistic help and prosocial behavior, particularly because it involved a focus on other's situation, people aimed at changing the situation by helping (Eisenberg & Miller, 1987). On the other hand personal distress did not trigger prosocial acts, since the individual turned inward and tried to alleviate his or her negative emotions. It is important to make the distinction between understanding the other person's situation and giving emotional reactions to that situation. High levels of empathy were related with better emotion management, and could promote increasing valuation of others' welfare (Eisenberg et al., 1998). High empathic concern was found to be correlated with increased pro-social behavior (Eisenberg et al., 1989). The article by Cassels et al. (2000) also found that higher empathic concern could predict prosocial behavior.

Political ideology was also proposed as a factor that can affect welfare policy opinions and decisions (e.g., Feldman, 1992; Kluegel, 1990; Stitka and Tetlock, 1992). Many governments enact policies for welfare aid in contrast to free market policies which believes in the regulatory power of the market itself. As the research from the US demonstrated, social welfare attitudes largely correlated with ideological standpoints towards poverty (Sniderman, Hagen, Tetlock & Brady, 1986). Based on this distinction, conservatives evaluated poverty as a result of self indulgence, and lack of morality. On the other hand, liberals tended to see the poor as victims of unjust social system. In accordance, liberals supported for expansion of social welfare programs while conservatives were critical of them (Kluegel, 1990). Feldman (1992) found that US liberals lacked an ideological explanation even for the policies that they approved the implementation. On the other hand, conservatives opposed to such policies with a clear ideological standpoint with their emphasis on limited government. Another US based evidence showed that people from right wing ideology were more likely to consider welfare recipients as lazy (Skitka & Tetlock 1993), and they were more likely to punish the violators of societal norms, and discourage free riders. The study also pointed out that liberals were not simply egalitarian, but they emphasized not making decisions on monetary values on human life. In their previous research, Skitka and Tetlock (1992) found that the role of ideology on social welfare attitudes depended on the availability of resources. In case of a scarcity, both liberals and conservatives did not favor social assistance to people who were responsible for their situation. However, when there was no scarcity, liberals supported social assistance to everybody. Moreover, they found that conservatives were more likely to punish violators of the status quo, since they had more negative emotions towards potential recipients which made them to link the situation of the potential recipients with more personal responsibility. Liberals who denied the social assistance to personally responsible in the scarcity condition did not show any signs of anger or punitiveness. Tomkins and Izard (1965) also studied the role of affect on the political ideologies and concluded that political ideologies included affective dimensions. Based on his research, while conservatives had lower thresholds for negative emotions, liberals had lower thresholds for positive emotions. However, Arkan's (2013) research showed that there was no link between ideological standpoint and support for social welfare policies in Turkey. This might be caused due to lack of

sufficient information in Turkish context for citizens to make connections between their ideologies and welfare policies.

Iyengar and Valentino (2000) claimed that majority of the voters were not even motivated to learn the basic level of knowledge related to candidates in the context of a political campaigning. How can people formulate their welfare policy judgments in a context that they lack basic political knowledge? They rely on deservingness heuristic. The next section discusses the individual level explanations for welfare aid decision making in the light of deservingness heuristic.

### **1.2.1. Individual level analyses and deservingness heuristic**

Deservingness is a criterion that we use in daily life to judge if a person is worth for help. Should we pay money for a child in the street who asks for it? Should we lend money to a relative who is in need? Literature of deservingness studies also researches the phenomena both in the field of social welfare attitudes, and also for the other psychological concepts such as role of values, evaluation of achievement. Coughlin (as cited in, Oorshot, 2000) proposed a “universal dimension of support” which citizens do not endorse the idea that all target groups should be supported, but they rank the target groups for receiving the welfare aid. In the modern Western welfare states, people supported welfare aid recipients of sick and disabled most. Secondly, families with children were highly supported. Unemployed people were third group that were supposed to receive welfare support, lastly followed by people who were on social assistance. Will’s research (1993) showed us that individuals who were members of larger families, unemployed and disabled received more generosity. Moreover, people who “tried enough” to deal with negative circumstances were imagined by the respondents as more deserving. Finally, Weiner (2006) puts that deservingness attributions change as a function of whether people think the cause of the “need” is internal or external based. That is, if a misfortune happened to a person, individuals thought that society should support the person if the cause of misfortune lied in external factors rather than the factors that the individual could control.

What criterion distinguishes the deserving people from undeserving ones in the eyes of the public? What can be the factors that account for the differences of conditionality for the support of people in need?

Cook (1979) investigated the evaluations of American poor to find out which characteristics of citizens altered the public evaluation of welfare support. The criteria of deservingness that her research brought as follows:

1. Need: The criterion of need implied that the more a person were in need, the greater support would she or he receive.
2. Locus of responsibility: It referred to role of individual control for the situation. If citizens could control their situations, they were seen as responsible for their own conditions and did not deserve the welfare assistance.
3. Gratefulness: People who responded thankfully to help were thought as more deserving. Human beings used value reciprocity in social life when they thanked to each other. However, in case of poor people they could act reciprocally, if they look for a job or can compensate for the times that they were active in society which is valid for old people.
4. Pleasantness: The criterion implied that we help more to people who are similar.

De Swaan (1988) established three criteria which he thought to be presented for all portrayals of deserving and undeserving citizens as “disability, proximity, docility.”

1. Disability: De Swaan thought the criteria of disability was the most important, since it connoted an incapacity for one to live with mere his or her efforts. People who tried hard enough but could not control their circumstances were thought as deserving. In contrast; people who had the chance to control their neediness were identified as undeserving.
2. Proximity: The criterion referred to definition of an accountable social area. Deserving citizens were the incapable poor who lived in this area, and undeserving citizens’ responsibility belonged to other since they were outside. De Swaan associated social area with any kind of identity; it could be blood tie, neighborhood ties, religious ties, nationality ties.
3. Docility: It is defined as the passivity of the poor to point out the inequality of redistribution. According to this criterion, deserving people were the ones who did not show their misery, and did not ask for anything. Undeserving people were more demanding and portrayed their neediness.

Oorshot (2000) synthesized the existing criteria of deservingness and presented five criteria for evaluating the deservingness of a potential social policy receiver.

1. Control: People who can control their neediness are thought as less deserving compared to people who lack control on their neediness. This criterion is similar to locus of control criterion of Cook (1979), and disability criterion of De Swaan (1988).

2. Need: Level of need of the potential welfare aid recipient positively correlates with the deservingness perception. This concept is similar to Cook's criterion of need (1979).

3. Identity: Level of shared identity affects the degree of deservingness. If the identity of the potential recipient is similar to us, it means that they deserve the social assistance more compared to people who belong to other groups. Pleasantness criterion of Cook (1979) and proximity criterion of De Swaan (1988) also pointed out to the importance of similarity for influencing the level of deservingness.

4. Attitude: Oorshot (2000) linked De Swaan's (1988) docility criterion and Cook's gratefulness criterion (1979) into the criterion of attitude. Citizens' attitudes toward welfare support matters, since more compliant people are perceived as more deserving.

5. Reciprocity: Reciprocation is associated with deservingness. Past payback or potential future payback increases the level of deservingness. Oorshot links De Swaan's docility criterion and Cook's gratefulness criterion which he thought to be as similar into the concept of reciprocity.

Oorshot (2000) introduced an additional criterion to his design which he called as "social risk." Modern life introduces some predetermined risks which if people's neediness can be attributed to one of them, and they are perceived as more deserving. Social risks include; illness, disability, old age, divorce. If the neediness of the potential recipient cannot be associated with already defined risks, level of deservingness decreases.

In short, deservingness criteria paved the way for us to understand the differences in the social support levels towards specific policies targeting specific groups by explaining us why certain groups were considered as more deserving. As the universal dimension of support stated (Coughlin, 1980) older people, followed by large families with children were evaluated as more deserving compared to unemployed people, or people on social assistance. The criterion of reciprocity can explain that the

elderly was seen more deserving due to their preexisting contribution to the society as a result of their active life. On the other hand, unemployed young people are still expected to make contributions to the society. Moreover, elder people are usually docile; they do not act as demanding. Large families with children had the second rank in terms of their perceived deservingness level. Being a family with children requires more resources to make a living. Thus, they can be perceived as more needy. However, since it can be perceived as the own responsibility of family to make a living, it can reduce their deservingness level.

Role of heuristic also seek attention from researchers in the field of political psychology which were demonstrated that they have a role for the political attitude formation. Heuristics can be defined as time saving mental shortcuts (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). Heuristics enable people to vote for a specific group without making an in depth analysis of the alternatives. When citizens make their political decisions, they need to unite the values and policies. Deservingness makes them able to formulate consistent opinions under circumstances that they lack necessary information for connection (Petersen et al., 2010). As Druckman, Kuklinski and Sigelman (2009) concluded usage of a heuristic is a secondary alternative to rational democratic decision making, since citizens can generate consistent opinions to their values under circumstances that they cannot link their values to policy alternatives. Neuroscientific research (Zak, as cited in Petersen et al., 2010) revealed that human brain included systems for evaluating the intentions of other people and these systems acted below the level of consciousness. That is why we make our decisions of help giving, but we find it hard to explain the rationale behind our helping behavior. In line with the neuroscientific evidence, deservingness heuristic also works automatically, and effortless (Petersen et al., 2010).

If deservingness heuristic makes people to formulate value consistent opinions in the absence of necessary relevant information, does it imply that deservingness heuristic also majorly used by least politically aware to balance differences in political sophistication? Petersen et al. (2010) pointed out to the revisionist line which claimed that heuristic cannot be assumed to have a role of automatic processes that could be ill adapted to democratic processes. Since heuristic are mental shortcuts that are not possible to control, occur outside of awareness, and reduce time of making decisions. Being automatic means that deservingness heuristic is not triggered to compensate the

lack of knowledge. In fact, it takes action whenever deservingness related cues are present. Thus, all citizens who are surrounded with information that can fit deservingness heuristic should be sensitive to relevant information (Petersen, 2009). Since, deservingness heuristic operates by separating people as deserving or undeserving based on the effort of the potential recipient. It only requires two distinct categories, and people are considered as belonged to one or another. People do not support the welfare policies which they think the policies benefit the lazy individuals, and they support the policies which the unlucky people are benefited who try enough but cannot obtain because of the external conditions that they cannot control.

To sum it up, there is evidence that many factors can affect the welfare aid opinions. Self interest based arguments are based on calculations of interest to influence welfare aid opinions. Deservingness heuristic is an alternative source of explanation for understanding why some people in need are perceived to constitute target groups for welfare aid and some or not. Current research investigates the operation of deservingness heuristic while keeping some other individual level factors such as age, income level, and gender as control variables for being able to achieve to a conclusion of which explanation accounts for the welfare aid opinion formation in Turkish context. The next section introduces another variable of the current study in the meso level; intergroup relations which the influence ingroup-outgroup distinction on deservingness and welfare policy opinions will be a point of investigation.

### **1.3. The Meso Level Analyses for Welfare Policy Support: Intergroup Relations and Deservingness Heuristic**

When a specific situation is presented to people, they evaluate two kinds of information as being the situation itself, and the person or the group who involved in the act. Thus, people evaluate the situation as a result of lack of effort or as a result of lack of chance when it is asked for them if another person deserves the welfare aid, they also evaluate who the person is, and to which group the person belongs. A possible explanation which is also useful for the operation of deservingness comes from social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). People tend to favor their ingroup members, and discriminate the outgroup members according to the theory. Regarding the social identity theory, an ingroup member may be judged as more deserving of a positive outcome, and as less deserving of a negative outcome when compared with an outgroup

member. De Swaan's (1988) proximity and Oorshot's (2000) identity criteria also supported that group ties can affect the operation of deservingness heuristic.

Levels of ethnic homogeneity also had a role in explaining cross cultural differences in social welfare attitudes (Alesina & Glaeser, as cited in Aarge & Petersen, 2014). This explanation claimed that high support for welfare states in Scandinavian countries was linked to ethnic homogeneity of the countries which the citizens distributed the benefits to their ingroup members. In contrast, USA was an ethnically heterogeneous country which the support for welfare state was low, and there was a controversy among attitudes towards redistribution.

The deservingness heuristic works as the primary basis which people formulate their welfare opinions. People can favor their ingroup members, and can perceive them more deserving, but their evaluation of deservingness of the outgroup depends on how they evaluate the other group. Group cues are effective for simplification of complex information, since when there is information regarding the social group of the target social policy recipient, it becomes easy for people to rely on their existing attitudes, emotions, and beliefs about the group. If a group is showed as a recipient of policy, it triggers attitudes and stereotypes related to the group for social policy evaluation (Nelson & Kinder, 1996). Social psychologists depict stereotypes as resource saving tools that we use to easily process information and formulate attitudes.

Stereotypes are used for judgment under information insecurity. When no other cues are available, they are used to assign other people to social categories which help them to simplify judgment while providing alternative source of information. A line of research of welfare state attitudes questioned people's opinions on a given welfare benefit without specifying the target characteristics (e.g., Blekesaunne & Qudagno, 2003; Feldman & Steenbergen, 2001). However, people's welfare policy opinions might be guided by the current image of welfare aid recipients at the time of the research, and can change when the dominant public image changes. If specific informational cues are not present, citizens make their opinions relying on their general perceptions of the deservingness of the potential recipients. For instance, they can associate a certain group with being lazy or hardworking but unlucky, and can make their opinions based on this general image. There can be stereotypes associated with the group such as the group can be seen as lazy or hardworking. It can influence people's emotions towards the specific group. For instance, if the group is evaluated as hardworking, people can be

much more supporter of social welfare assistance due to feelings of sympathy and support. For example, Gilens (1999) found that the white American people opposed welfare not because they seen black people as violent, but because they viewed them as lazy. However, studies might not be able to capture aggregate public perception without presenting specific recipient features. If the dominant view of the recipient group changes, public opinion towards the welfare recipient of the target group can also shift. Researches which do not specify the target characteristics might not capture the exact image of people's support for welfare aid. When faced with clear cues about the specific groups, people relied less on their stereotypes (Crawford et al., 2011). Study of Gollust and Lynch (2011), investigated the reasons for American citizens' health policy preferences in an internet based nationally representative survey while presenting both target characteristics and deservingness cues. They found that when both behavioral and group cues are present; behavioral cues are more important than group based cues for the prediction of whether society is responsible for health care assistance.

#### **1.4. The Macro Level Analyses for Welfare Policy Support and Deservingness Heuristic**

Different governments have different welfare state institutions and varying amounts of welfare benefit support. Current literature focuses on explaining such massive differences of welfare support with institutional structure of the welfare state, cultural differences, and sociostructural differences (e.g. Arts & Gelissen, 2001, Svallfors, 1997). Some researchers found strong linkages (Larsen, 2006), while others pointed out to weak relationships (Gelissen, 2000; Svallfors, 1997) between the level of popular support to a welfare policy and proposed explanation. The differences were assumed to be obtained as a result of a conceptualization and measurement problem in terms of defining and measuring the proposed factors and also the conceptualization and measurement of components of welfare state (Aarge & Petersen, 2014). However, Larsen (2006) and Jordan (2010) pointed out that the differences for the findings in the literature of comparative welfare states can be due to the absence of a grasp of the complexity of public opinion in the research of welfare state.

Esping-Andersen (1990) separated liberal welfare states which have low benefit programs, and social democratic welfare states which have high generous programs and benefits as parts of rights. Social democratic welfare states such as Scandinavian

countries have strong governmental intervention in terms of welfare support, while liberal welfare states such as US have limited support for governmental redistribution. Institutional line of explanation proposed the welfare regimes as the factors that constitute socializing forces that affect the welfare opinion. Welfare institutions can create large majorities that support the development or opposition to the welfare state. Scandinavian benefit programs included the middle class while producing broad interest that fostered the expansion of the welfare state (Pierson, as cited in Aarge & Petersen, 2014). On the other hand, in the US, middle class opposed to the programs towards needy which they did not benefit (Korpi and Palme, 1998).

Researchers investigated the role of cultural values and religion and level of ethnic homogeneity for the development of distinct welfare state patterns and welfare state attitudes across countries. Culture of collectivism can be more supportive of welfare state policies with its egalitarian components just like in the case of Scandinavia, while a culture of individualism can be more suspicious of them (Twigg, 2010). The sociostructural explanation for cross national variation emphasized the levels of ethnic homogeneity within a country for having a role in explaining cross cultural differences in social welfare attitudes (Alesina & Glaeser, as cited in Aarge & Petersen, 2014).

Political psychology research proposes a micro oriented research agenda which focuses on the psychological underpinnings of public opinion for the understanding of welfare state. This approach focuses on the similarities in the psychological underpinnings of welfare state support rather than focusing on the cross national differences which is the main subject of macro oriented welfare state researches. Deservingness heuristic is thought to be operating regardless of cultural differences, welfare regime types, ideological differences which the only operating factor is the deservingness of the recipient who is perceived as lazy or hardworking. Aarge and Petersen (2014) found that the deservingness heuristic operated in a statistically similar fashion in both the United States and Denmark regardless of the cultural differences, ethnic homogeneity differences and distinct type of the welfare states.

### **1.5. Emotions as Factors that Mediate Political Opinions**

For a long time, political science research ignored the vital role of emotions while focusing on more rationalistic explanations of political behavior. Citizens thought to be rational decision makers who calculated cost and benefits of their actions, and

behaved accordingly (Lupia et al., as cited in Erişen, 2013). In parallel with this, political psychological research also disregarded the role of emotions while focusing on cognitive paradigm. It was assumed that decision making involved cold processes, which was based on reason; in contrast, the hot process which included emotions and biases would lead to irrational behavior (Elster, 1999). Thus, emotions acted as an impediment for the citizens to achieve rational political decisions, and acted in accordance with their civic duties (McDermott, 2009).

In the literature, the major work, *American Voter* (Campbell et al, 1960) also included the study of emotions with their analysis of emotions in the general level. However, authors did not focus on emotions as important parts of American political behavior. The findings in the neuroscience (Damasio, 1994) showed how emotions are essential parts of decision making which cannot be eliminated, and the effects should not be disregarded. It marked the beginning of interest on emotions for the political behavior research.

Political psychology research analyzed the ways which emotions affect the political attitudes, political preferences and political decisions. Emotions has gained a central role to understand psychological underpinnings of public opinion, and the number of well cited scholarly work increased while contributing to the role of political psychology as part of political science research.

Public opinion research in Turkey mostly concerned with analysis of political behavior in an aggregate level while ignoring the psychological underpinnings. Emotions and affect serve as integral parts of decision making, and there is no need for controlling their effects. Instead, we need to explore, and investigate their effects on researches of Turkish political psychology.

### **1.5.1. Theories of emotions**

How to accurately conceptualize emotions is a topic of debate in the literature. Hence, there are various conceptualizations of emotions which the literature on political psychology mostly focused on three of them which are valance approach, discrete emotions approach and two dimensional model (Erişen, 2013; Marcus, 2003; Neuman et al., 2007).

In the valance approach, emotions are separated as being positive or negative, and the initial emotional reaction to the target is assumed to be fast and automatic which is the first step of the information processing (Marcus, 1988). The approach claims that

people who evaluate the information based on their emotions while asking the question of how I feel about it. People do not engage in effortful thinking to feel an emotion towards an object, and come to a decision. Such an approach reduces the role of rational calculation for the decision-making. The negative or positive feelings towards a political issue determine the appraisal of the event. People can evaluate a political issue, a political party, or a leader simply by thinking if they like it or not, and make a decision.

The discrete emotions approach highlights the different behavioral outcomes of different emotions. It does not only separate emotions based on their positivity and negativity as the valence approach does, but it claims that different positive and negative emotions can trigger different behavioral tendencies (Davies, 1980). Thus, there can be differences in the negative emotions such as sadness, anger, anxiety which are caused by different physiological and psychological basis of such emotions. The discrete emotions theory claims that each emotion has its discrete role. Each emotion serves for a different behavioral outcome. The approach does not separate emotions as being positive or negative as in the valence approach, or does not relate emotional responses with surveillance and dispositional systems; rather it focuses on the different nature and response of each emotion (Roseman, 1984, as cited in Marcus, 1988). For instance, anger and fear as being both negative emotions can have different behavioral outcomes.

The discrete emotions approach does not focus on the dimensionality or interconnection of emotions; it tries to establish a link between identifiable emotions for unique circumstances. Two dimensional models which are recent in the literature build a multidimensional model of valence approach with its extension and reinterpretation and reflect a better account of human emotional response. Marcus et al. (2000) offered a two dimensional theoretical approach for the study of emotions which is named as affective intelligence model. The model has two dimensions which both refer to valence and the strength of the emotion. Based on the model, emotion is to be defined by the disposition system which emotions serve as guides for approach based behaviors. People simply rely on their habits while making decisions and formulate their political preferences based on their preexisting tendencies. The surveillance system forces the individuals to reassess their existing beliefs and collect cues for new decisions from their environments.

The three approaches are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and one cannot be defined as superior. According to Neuman, Marcus, Crigler & Mackuen (2007), a fourth model can be created with the convergence of the existing three.

The theories can also be classified as varying for the causal primacy or affective primacy (Marcus et al., 2000). Theories of cognitive primacy claim that cognition activates the affect, the situation is at first evaluated and then the affective response triggered. Affective primacy argument claims that emotional evaluations and reactions to symbols, people, groups and events which are generated before conscious awareness. Emotions in this sense prepare and direct conscious awareness.

According to recent developments in the neuroscience, emotional systems evaluate sensory information before and without the inclusion of conscious awareness behavior (Zajonc, 1980). Brain understands the objective world with sight, sound, smell, touch and taste. However, only sufficiently robust and stable sensory signals can be manifested as self consciousness feelings. If the emotional processing of sensory stimuli is too weak to be experienced subjectively, they can be still influential. Thus, emotional processing which is below the level of consciousness is still effective. If they can achieve to conscious attention, they are manifested as feelings. The experience of changes in the emotion which is at the boundary of conscious awareness is labeled as moods, and intuitions. This approach is empirically supported by showing that unnoticed emotional cues can influence the conscious considerations in accordance with the affective congruence. The conscious decisions are directed with the emotional biases which emerged before the conscious processing (Erişen, Lodge & Taber, 2014). However, most of the emotional processing never achieves to the conscious awareness level. On the other hand, most of the research on political science depends on surveys and interviews that we ask to citizens to activate and interpret emotional cues, and it can lead the respondents try to tell more than they can know (Marcus et al., 2000).

### **1.5.2. Measurement of emotions**

A line of research focuses on the role of incidental emotions on the political judgments and opinion formation. The background emotions of the participants are manipulated to be directed towards to feel a specific emotion. Then, effects of the emotions are measured on decision making to be able to understand if arbitrary events from one's past can influence welfare policy preferences. In the literature, the focus was on the separation between negative and positive emotions, and the differences among

negative emotions. The literature mostly focused on emotions of anger, fear and worry. For instance, research by Lerner and Keltner (2000) showed how fear and anger generated different risk assessments. The study of Small and Lerner (2008) investigated the role of incidental emotions on welfare judgments and found that anger decreased the support for welfare aid, while sadness increased it.

Another line of research investigated not the effects of background emotions, but the role of emotional reactions towards political issues in the political decision making. Conover and Feldman's (1986) research focused on the emotional reactions to economic performance of Ronald Reagan and his administration, they found that emotional reactions were important for explaining political evaluations. Participants of the panel study chose their affective reactions to economy from a list of positive and negative emotions. They also showed that anger and fear had distinct effects on political evaluations.

In terms of the role of affect in the intergroup relations, the researchers showed that there were emotional responses towards social groups which were associated with the groups, and contributed to the opinions towards them (Nelson, 1999 and Cottrell et al., 2010). Cottrell et al. (2010) found that feelings towards social groups could predict social policy attitudes better than general prejudice towards that group. They expanded their focus for the specific emotion that was associated with each group rather than measuring the general emotions as the earlier research had done (Nelson, 1999).

Group cues can include emotional processes since thinking about social groups can trigger emotional reactions, and they can also activate non-cognitive mechanisms such as anxiety and threat which can affect political attitudes and behaviors. According to Kinder and Kam (2009) people felt more solidarity and empathy toward their group members, and they showed more negative feelings toward the outgroup members. It can help us to explain the public attitudes in the issues of terror, immigration and gay rights.

Schmidt and Weiner (1988) found that anger was associated with the undeserving of the welfare aid, while sadness could be associated with the deserving of the welfare aid by the poor people. Bodenhausen et al. (1994) claimed that sad people used more systematic and detailed information processing strategies, and they were more careful about varied information. In contrast, angry people could not make systematic and detailed information processing.

Petersen et al. (2012) investigated the role of anger and compassion in their evolutionary psychology driven research of deservingness heuristic which they found that the participants felt more anger and less compassion towards lazy recipient, and participants reported more compassion and less anger towards unlucky recipient. Weiner (1995) (as cited in Petersen et al., 2012) found in his cross cultural study that participants responded with high levels of anger and low levels of compassion to people who asked for help if the potential recipients had a lack of effort.

Previous research on political psychology focused on emotional valence (the positivity or negativity of emotions). Marcus et al. (2006), differentiated among negative emotions. Anxiety received a great deal of attention from scholars as a precautionary emotion (Marcus et al., 2000); Neuman et al., 2007). Most of the time, distinct emotions were not incorporated into researches and their effects on opinion formation and decision making were limitedly investigated. Although there is sufficient amount of research on Turkish public opinion, the focus has not shifted to the analysis of psychological basis of public opinion, and political behavior. In the Turkish context, Erişen's (2013) experimental study showed how incidental emotions could shape individual foreign policy attitudes of Turkish people on Syrian issue. Erişen's study (2013) could not demonstrate the distinct effects of manipulated anger and fear which elicited same responses towards Syrian issue for Turkish sample in opposition to discrete emotions approach. However, role of emotional reactions for the social policy decisions still remains unexplored.

### **1.6. Case of Turkey: A General Look on Social Policy**

As it can be seen, the literature on welfare policy attitudes are mostly USA based. This section is indented to briefly summarize the case of Turkey in terms of social policy to familiarize the context that the current study is conducted. After portraying the historical and current structure of welfare assistance in Turkey, focus will be on unemployment issue in Turkey which the current study has chosen as the case of investigation.

Social policy can be broadly defined as the intervention of government or other public institutions to promote well being of its members, and they intend to recover perceived social problems (Kittay, 1998). Rules and regulations related to public institutions such as universities and healthcare institutions which aim to promote a larger body of social institutions are parts of social policies. In the narrow sense, social

policy can be defined as the intervention of the state to the domain of redistribution where there is an instability or need for change in the social structure.

Governmental policies can be related with legislative, executive and judicial actions. Social policy traditionally focuses on the paid employment while it also subjects the reproduction of labor within social relations (family, market, state relations) (Metin, 2011). It promotes policies in the fields of social security, industrial relations, business law, social services (education, health, housing policies), and social assistance.

Social policies are mostly produced by the government which can be evaluated as a part of being a welfare state. They are born due to the responsibility of the government to ensure equality and justice. They acquired a quality which can promote social equality and social justice, because it is related with the definition of citizenship that also includes a societal aspect. As Marshall and Bottomore (2006) pointed out citizenship also includes social policies as parts of citizenship rights.

The foundation of modern Turkey had considerations of development and nation building which were driven by populist policies (Boratav and Özuğurlu, 2006). In the early years of the Turkish Republic, the emphasis was on the economic growth and settling the tired population as a result of wars. Social security programs included especially firm workers and government officials, and the majority of the population who was engaged in agriculture was left outside of any coverage. Social policies were implemented with a top down approach without a societal demand.

1961 Constitution declared Turkey as a social welfare state, and the worker rights such as right to strike, paid leave, and unionization were constitutionalized. In practice, social policies were implemented as limited to the areas of free education, public health and employment based pension system. Social security organizations for wage earners (Sosyal Sigortalar Kurumu) and for civil servants and military personnel (Emekli Sandığı) were founded which the institution for self employed people (Bağkur) were introduced later in 1971. The economy was largely unregistered, it was dominated by agriculture which the existing social security system excluded a large percent of population. No formal measures were taken for high unemployment or to reduce the existence of poverty in this period. Family ties were the informal relief for the existing social problems which supported by the clientelist governmental practices.

The period following 1980 military coup witnessed a major shift from an inward looking economic regime to neo-liberal policies and financial liberalization (Buğra &

Keyder, 2006). The welfare state which was complementary to Keynesian state lost its importance due to privatization and market oriented policies in the period after 1980s (Buğra, 2007).

1990s was shaped by populist social policies which triggered economic instability which then led to several financial crises followed by measures of IMF and World Bank to sustain budgetary discipline.

AKP which is the political party that has been in power since 2002 embraced neo-liberalism, but also had its agenda an universal social policy frame which was not limited to formal workers (Buğra, 2010) due to European Union accession process, and erasing the negative effects of 2001 economical crisis (Bakan & Özdemir, 2012). In the domain of social security, there was a need for reform due to high percentage of pension receivers compared to active workers, and a need for universal coverage. The need for reform emerged from "a lack of compatibility between the corporatist character of the formal social security system and the current structure of the labor market" (Buğra & Keyder, 2006) which was characterized by a very high incidence of informal employment and very low levels of female participation. As a result, minimum retirement age increased and minimum contribution period extended. A single pension system was built, and a consensus was formed for the gradual increase of retirement age. Three social security institutions were united under the Ministry of Labor and Social Security.

Health care benefits were tied to employment status and it was leading to variations related to the existence of different social security institutions which amended with the unification of the social security institutions. However, it provided no solution for the informal workers who assumed to constitute the half of the labor force (Yakut-Cakar, 2007). A Compulsory Universal Healthcare System was introduced in 2002 which classified people based on the proportion of their income to minimum wage, and required to pay premiums to benefit from the healthcare services. However, this system was also criticized for its requirement for people to pay premiums to benefit and because people who do not pay cannot benefit from the healthcare services (Türk Tabipler Birliği Merkez Konseyi, 2005).

Based on the information that was provided from the website of AKP (Aile ve Sosyal Politikalar, n.d.), proportions of social spending to GDP increased from 0.5% to 1.3% under their government. Nearly 10 million people were benefited from

the social spending. More than 2.5 million mothers received education and health aid in cash for their children. More than 3 million people were benefited from the social housing projects. Moreover, free book aid, education material aid, lunch aid for children were introduced.

However, the nature of the social spending was criticized as being extensions of clientelist policies which the political authorities demand political support in return of the services or commodities which were granted. For example, as cited in Metin (2011), there was an increase in social spending in the months prior to the elections in 2008. Green cards were cancelled due to expiration dates which were provided to poor and unemployed people to grant them free access to health services actualized right after the General Elections of 2007 were held.

While increasing the social aid, AKP government also emphasized the importance of charity and voluntary help giving. The attitude of the political party was criticized by and the quality of welfare aids were limited and not implementing policies which could fight the poverty but containing poverty as a tool for political sustainability (Metin, 2011).

Turkish welfare system is associated with Southern European model (Ferrera, 1996) in the literature (Gough, 1996). The model relies on family for welfare provision, and government social expenditure level remains as low. The male and strong breadwinner figure supports low levels of women employment, and status-based distribution of welfare benefits. The welfare distribution is made based on patronage and clientelism. The insiders of the groups receive greater benefits where the political parties are the basic aggregators of social interests which the case is worse in Turkey with the unregistered economy and high uninsured employees.

Based on TÜSEV's research (TÜSEV, 2006), it was found that fight with poverty was thought to be the duty of the government with 38%, the duty of rich people with 31%, all citizens with 21%, and non-governmental organizations with 5%. Analysis of World Values Survey data showed us that for Turkey, the perception that poverty was caused by laziness and opposition to government efforts to reduce poverty was positively correlated (Petersen et al., 2012). Although aforementioned researches did not focus extensively focus on unemployment, they had the potential to show us Turkish citizens' perspective on welfare policies.

### **1.6.1. Unemployment policies in Turkey**

Unemployment is a social problem which emerged with the beginning of using labor to produce, and which could not be ultimately prevented in spite of the existence of various societal and economical precautions (Kumaş, 2001). Unemployment cannot be reduced to the ineptitude of the person but it is an outcome of the political and societal factors which led to the unemployment of people who look for a job but cannot find one. International Labor Organization (ILO) ( As cited in Sorrentino, 2000) defines criteria of unemployment is based on three criteria which can be listed as not to have a job, being ready to start a job, and looking for a job.

Turkey has a structural unemployment problem due to its partly agricultural economy, and there are not enough job opportunities for the increasing youth population. The main problems of Turkish labor market could be listed as high number of informal jobs, increasing long the term unemployment levels, and low employment rates among groups such as women, young people, disabled people, and young people (Glynos et al., 2008) in the post 1980 period.

Turkey has one of the highest levels of unemployment in the OECD countries. However, the definition of unemployment which is used for the calculation of unemployment level is narrow (Uyar-Bozdağlıoğlu, 2008). The measurement of unemployment level only includes people who are actively in the search for a job. Also, the number does not include people who do not have any job or income, and do not look for a job such as house wives which the population is very high in Turkey. Moreover, it excludes people who are no longer searching for jobs due to their hopelessness about finding a job. If such numbers are to be included for the unemployment rate, the number would be higher. It is also not possible to reach the ultimate percentage of unemployed people in Turkey. The country does not have the unemployment insurance system in the same procedure that the developed Western countries apply which the exact number of people who benefit resembles the actual number of unemployed people. That is why there is a lot discussion over the numbers of unemployment in Turkey, and its reflection of the actual numbers.

As a result of the unemployment problem, Turkey introduced an unemployment insurance system which is only open to application of people who have just lost their jobs within a month that they report it to the government. Based on the information taken from the website of Turkish Labor Institution (Türkiye İş Kurumu, n.d.), if a

person worked for 600 days prior to unemployment in the last three years, he or she can receive unemployment salary for six months, if a person worked for 900 days in the last three years prior to unemployment, he or she can receive the salary for eight months, if a person worked 1080 days in the last three years prior to unemployment, he or she can receive the salary for ten months. The maximum time duration for the unemployment salary is ten months and the minimum duration is six months. The amount of money that the person will receive is equal to 40% of the unemployed citizen's latest total salary. Only precondition for benefiting from the unemployment insurance is not to be fired due to any defects of the worker.

In 2013, 422.334 people received unemployment salary (Türkiye İş Kurumu, 2013) which the unemployment rate was 9.7% and the number of unemployed people was 2.747.000 people (Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, 2014). Turkish system does not offer benefits to people who did not previously work, or did not work on a predetermined amount of time prior to the unemployment. This implies the view that a person who did not work previously cannot fulfill the criterion of deservingness.

The public's view of deservingness of social aid can influence the legitimacy of social benefit systems and arrangements. If certain people can be blamed by their circumstances, benefits regarding them cannot be implemented or can be cut in the time of a budget decision. Deserving people (Oorshot, 2000) are the ones who cannot control the circumstances although trying enough, who is in need, who is similar to us, who is grateful for the support, and reciprocation by the poor. Thus, a person who enters into a job, then cannot work for a sufficient amount of time, and then leaves the job can be seen as undeserving, and a person who was fired and cannot find a job even if he or she actively looks for can be seen as deserving.

### **1.7. Overview of Current Research**

The current study investigates the role of intergroup relations for the operation of deservingness heuristic to the existing religious differences, ethnic differences and political party preferences differences in Turkey with an experimental methodology.

It incorporates the effect of discrete emotional reactions of anger and sadness on the dependent variable of individual's support or opposition for other people to receive the welfare aid. Such emotions are chosen among the list of negative emotions based on the measured emotions on the researches of Schmidt and Weiner (1988) and Petersen et al., (2012) on welfare aid.

Gender, socio-economical status, religiosity level and empathy level which are assumed to have an effect on the welfare opinions are controlled.

### **1.8. Design and Specific Predictions**

Different scenarios on ethnicity, religious sect and voting preference related to welfare aid were presented to the participants and measured if people agree with the described person with the described situation to receive welfare aid. In terms of ethnicity, Turkish-Kurdish distinction was the main point for investigation. Religious differences are measured by the different sects within Islam such as Alevi sect and Sunni sect. Differences of voting preference were measured with AKP, CHP and BDP voter cases.

In general, the support for a person to receive welfare aid would be expected to vary based on the congruence and likeability of the participants towards the ethnicity, religious belief, and voting preference.

**Hypothesis 1:** There will be mean differences for welfare support rates between different ethnic groups. Support for welfare aid would be lower for the group which is different than participants' own ethnicity.

**Hypothesis 2:** There will be mean differences for welfare support rates between different religious sect groups. Support for welfare aid would be lower for the group which is different than participants' own religious identity.

**Hypothesis 3:** There will be mean differences for welfare support rates between different political party voters. Support for welfare aid would be lower for the group which is different than participants' own voting preference.

**Hypothesis 4:** A mean difference would be observed between deservingness and undeservingness cases. Deservingness groups are expected to receive higher rates of welfare aids.

**Hypothesis 5:** Deservingness cases with a similar identity to the participants are expected to receive higher rates of welfare aid compared to deservingness cases which are presented with a different identity group.

**Hypothesis 6:** Undeservingness cases with an identity that is different than a participants' own identity would receive lower support of welfare aid compared to undeservingness groups with a similar identity than a participants' own.

In terms of the mediatory role of emotions on the evaluation deservingness of the welfare aid of the social and political groups, it is expected that the emotional

reactions of anger and sadness would have a predictive value. Since, emotions are vital parts of political opinions and judgments.

**Hypothesis 7:** Individuals would react with more sadness to their ingroup members compared to the outgroup members, thus they will favor ingroup member to receive welfare aid more compared to the outgroup members.

**Hypothesis 8:** It is predicted that individuals would react with more anger to the outgroup members compared to ingroup members, and they will not agree on outgroup members to receive welfare aid compared to ingroup members.

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Participants

The sample consisted of 278 undergraduate students. Data was collected from a foundation university in Istanbul, Sabancı University and a public university in Ankara, Middle East Technical University (METU) in order to increase variance in demographic characteristics. One hundred fifty three students participated from METU, and 125 students participated from Sabancı University.

Participants from METU were enrolled in Mathematics, Space Engineering, Chemistry Engineering, Mechanical Engineering major programs. Similarly, the majority of the participants from Sabancı University were enrolled either in Faculties of Engineering or Management Faculty. Demographic characteristics of the sample can be seen below in Table 1.

As can be seen in Table 1, 51.4 % of the 266 participants were female, and 44.2 % of them were male. Twelve participants did not indicate their gender.

Table 1  
*Demographic Characteristics of Participants*

Variable	<i>N</i>	%
Gender		
Female	143	51.4
Male	123	44.2
Total	266	95.7
No answer	12	4.3
Age		
17-20	161	57.9
21-25	107	38.5
26-30	3	1.1
Above 40	1	0.4
Total	272	97.8
No answer	6	2.2
Language		
Turkish	262	94.2
Kurdish	3	1.1
Other	3	1.1
Total	268	96.4
No answer	10	3.6

The majority of the participants were between 17 to 20 years old. Only 1.5% of the participants were above 26 years old. Six participants did not state their age.

The great majority of the participants indicated that they mainly spoke Turkish. Only 1.1% participants stated that they spoke Kurdish at their home, and only 1.1 % of the participants stated that they spoke a language rather than Turkish and Kurdish. Such responses were English and Persian. Ten participants did not state the language that they speak at their houses.

The last general election before the data was collected was held in 2011; thus, the participant voting preferences were asked for the previous election to gain insights about voting behavior of the participants. As Table 2 depicted, 59.4% of the participants indicated that they did not have the right to vote for 2011 General Elections. Since the majority of the participants were below 21 years old, they were probably below 18 years old at the time of the elections which is the legal age for the right to vote. Only 38.8% of the participants were above the legal age to vote in 2011, and 28.4% of them indicated that they voted for the previous elections.

Table 2  
*Voting Rates for 2011 General Elections*

<i>Vote</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	79	28.4
No	29	10.4
No right to vote	165	59.4
No answer	5	1.8
Total	278	100

As Table 3 displayed, among the people who voted for the 2011 General Elections, 50.6% of them voted for Republican People’s Party (CHP), 32.9% of them voted for Justice and Development Party (AKP), 8.9% of them voted for Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), and 2.5% of them voted for other parties, (Turkish Communist Party, and Liberal Democrat Party). Four people did not answer the question. The sample result did not match with the results of the general elections of 2011 which AKP received 49.95% of the votes, CHP received 25.94% of the votes, and MHP received 12.98% of the votes. The difference can be caused due to usage of a student sample, and due to the high percentage of people who did not have the right to vote.

Table 3

*Participants' Political Party Preferences for 2011 General Elections*

Political Parties	<i>n</i>	%
AKP	26	32.9
CHP	40	50.6
MHP	7	8.9
Other	2	2.5
No Answer	4	5.1
Total	79	100

Participants' feelings of attachment to political parties were questioned with consecutive three questions. The first question asked if they felt close to political party compared to other political parties. Depending on their yes responses, people answered to which party they felt close and what was the strength of their attachment.

One hundred and seventy people stated that they felt close to party. Seven people who stated attachment to a political party did not specify the party name. People who felt close to party indicated they felt close to CHP by 57.7%, to AKP by 24.5%, to MHP by 10.4% as it is displayed in Table 4. There were also 14 participants who reported no attachment towards a specific party in the first question, but indicated a specific party name and/or attachment level. Such responses were not listed.

Table 4

*Attachment towards Political Parties*

Political Parties	<i>N</i>	%
AKP	40	24.5%
CHP	94	57.7%
MHP	17	10.4%
BDP	5	3.1%
Other	7	4.3%
Total	163	100

161 people reported attachment towards parties while stating the party that they felt attached and indicated their attachment level. People who reported as feeling close to AKP majorly felt very close by 57.5% as Table 5 showed. The majority of people felt close to CHP felt somewhat close by 71% like the majority of MHP supporters who also felt somewhat close by 62.5%. It is an interesting finding to see that the supporters of the party in power generally felt very close to their party, while the supporters of the opposition party generally felt somewhat close. The sample for the supporters of BDP

was very low ( $n = 5$ ), but they felt somewhat close or very close. Only 10 people reported other parties, and they generally felt very close and somewhat close to them.

Table 5  
*Strength of Attachment to a Political Party*

Political Parties	Feelings of Close				Total
	Not close at all	Not close	Somewhat Close	Very Close	
AKP	5%	10%	27.5%	57.5%	100%
CHP	3.2%	12.9%	71%	12.9%	100%
MHP	12.5%	12.5%	62.5%	12.5%	100%
BDP	0%	0%	40%	60%	100%
Other	14.3%	0%	42.9%	42.9%	100%

Table 6 showed the answer for the question of which party would they vote for if an election occurred today. Fifty five percent of the participants would vote for CHP which was the main opposition party, 18% of the participants would vote for AKP which was the party in power at that time. The voting preferences of the participants were opposite of the Turkish electoral choice. It can be caused due to nature of the universities which the data was collected. Sabancı University was a foundation university which the students from high economic status can attend. Moreover, percentage of people who chose not to answer the question was 13.7%. It can be related to concerns of privacy in the current political environment of Turkey. However, the percentage of people who stated that they did not know which party to vote was low as 1.8% as, some of people who did not know which party to vote may choose to remain silent while giving no answer.

Table 6  
*Electoral Preferences of the Participants*

Political Parties	N	%
AKP	50	18
CHP	153	55
MHP	19	6.8
BDP	7	2.5
Other	6	2.2
NA/ DK	43	15.5
Total	278	100

Note. NA=No answer. DK=Do not know.

The political ideology level of the participants was obtained with a 10 point ideology scale which left, right and middle were specifically denoted. The results

pointed out a left oriented tendency ( $M = 3.92$ ,  $SD = 2.03$ ), but it was also close to the center.

In terms of the government evaluation of the participants, the table showed that the average rating for economical performance was 3.2 ( $SD = 2.7$ ), and for the political performance was 2.2 ( $SD = 2.9$ ) on a ten point scale. Thus, government performance evaluation of the participants was quite low. The results were in accordance with the political alignments of the participants who reported themselves as supporters of opposition parties.

Table 7

*Current Government Performance Evaluation of the Participants*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Economical Performance	3.21	2.74
Political Performance	2.23	2.91

The decisions of the participants for various social policies were asked. As Table 8 displayed, participants decided that it was the duty of the government to ensure healthcare service for the patients, and ensure living standards for the old people more compared to the responsibility of the government for ensuring employment for citizens, and ensuring living standards of the unemployed people. Thus, it can be said that the social policy decisions of the participants were case specific. However, the overall support for social policy responsibilities of the government was quite high on a ten point scale.

Table 8

*Social Policy Decisions*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Duty of the government to ensure employment.	7.37	2.53
Duty of the government to ensure health service for the patients.	9.44	1.16
Duty of the government to ensure living standards of the old people.	9.04	1.66
Duty of the government to ensure living standards of the unemployed people.	7.45	2.43

Seventy nine percent of the participants reported that they had religious affiliations. In terms of the religions and religious sects of the participants, 69.2 % were Sunni, 5.9 % of them are Alevis, and 16.3 % of them were Muslims who did not want to

specify their sects as we see in Table 9. Only 5.9 % of the participants were affiliated with other religions.

Table 9  
*Religions of the Participants*

Religion	<i>N</i>	%
Muslim No Sect Specified	36	16.3
Muslim-Sunni	153	69.2
Muslim-Alevi	13	5.9
Jewish	1	0.5
Christian Other	4	1.8
Other	8	3.6
No answer	6	2.7
Total	221	100

For the participants who had religious identifications, average religiosity level on a 10 point scale was 4.01 (*SD* = 2.67) as Table 10 presented.

Table 10  
*Religiosity Level and Religious Activities of the Participants*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Religiosity Level	4.77	2.33
Religious Practice in Temple	3.29	2.00
Religious Practice outside of Temple	4	2.23

Note. Religiosity level scale ranges between 0 to 10. Responses for religious practice in and outside of temple ranges between 1 to 7.

As Table 11 displayed, there were two different questions for measuring religious practice as the practice in temple which was calculated based on the people who declared an affiliation to a religion. The percentage of participants who everyday individually pray was 21.3, and the number of participants who never prayed in a temple was 24.9.

Table 11  
*Religious Activities in and outside of their Temples*

Religiosity Practice	Practice in Temple		Practice Outside Temple	
	N	%	n	%
	Never	55	24.9	32
Sometimes	140	63.4	122	55.2
Everyday	18	8.1	47	21.3
NA / DK	8	3.7	20	17.1
Total	221	100	221	100

Note. NA=No answer. DK=Do not know.

Data on income level of the participants were obtained as Table 12 portrayed. 38.5% of the participants reported that their income level was above 5000 TL. 1.8% of the participants indicated their income level below 1000 TL.

Table 12  
*Income Level of the Participants*

Income Level	N	%
0-1.000 TL	5	1.8
1.001-2.500 TL	16	14.5
2.501-4.999 TL	76	27.4
More than 5.000 TL	107	38.5
NA / DK	45	16.2
Total	278	100

Note. NA=No answer. DK=Do not know.

In terms of the income evaluation of the participants, as Table 13 showed 44.6% of them stated that they lived comfortably with their budget, and 36.3% of them stated that they could manage to live with their budget. Only 15.8% of the participants featured that it was very hard or hard to live with their budget.

Table 13  
*Income Evaluation of the Participants*

Income Evaluation	N	%
It is very hard to live on this budget	10	3.6
It is hard to live on this budget.	34	12.2
We can manage with this budget.	101	36.3
We live comfortably with this budget.	124	44.6
No answer	9	3.2
Total	278	100

## **2.2. Procedure**

### **2.2.1. Recruitment of the participants**

The present study utilized an experimental design by manipulating deservingness conditions and emotions. The choice of sampling type is convenience sampling. The usage of convenient samples for the experimental studies is very common in the literature. Erişen (2013) claimed that there would be no threat to validity and inferences of the study if an experimental research was conducted with a convenient sample. Lerner and Keltner (2001) also pointed out that experimental studies with convenient samples could display the same results with the representative samples. It is a frequent practice to use undergraduate populations in experimental designs with multiple variables in contemporary political science and psychology literature (Druckman & Kam, 2011). Similarly, there are examples of student samples in the literature not only in the experimental studies but also for the survey designs in the intergroup relations. Nelson (1999) used a student survey due to lack of a national survey that combined role of affect and public opinion items towards social groups. He compared the sample of his study to the general demographics of Ohio population. The sample only included the general emotional responses of non-poor whites towards blacks and poor. Cottrell et al. (2010) also used a student sample which the participants rated various social groups, related government policies, and they indicated how much they felt negatively for each group. Since the study was in a correlation form, they called for the usage of experimental designs to test the predictive potential of emotions for the support of policy decisions.

### **2.2.2. Pilot Study**

Prior to actual data collection, a pilot study was conducted with 25 undergraduate students from Sabancı University. The reason was to make necessary modifications, if any needed. The participants completed the study, and they discussed the questions with the experimenter in detail for nearly 40 minutes. In general, arrangements planned on wording, timing, and general design issues based on the comments received from pilot study participants.

Student evaluations were used to make some changes for the design of study. For instance, since some students finished the study in 15 minutes and some students finished in 5 minutes, time limitation of 7-8 minutes was set. Instructions for some of the scales were found to be confusing; thus how to fill out the scales were decided to be

clarified in more detail. In addition, some wording changes were done due to participant comments.

Moreover, the comments of pilot participants pointed out the issue of respondent bias. Due to our design, they reported that they tried to guess the research goal, and answered appropriately not to be seen as a prejudiced person. Based on this feedback, “dummy” questions were introduced in order to distract the respondents from estimating the predictions, and respond honestly.

### **2.2.3. Data collection**

A survey experimental design is used in the study. The study was presented in a paper and pencil format, and it was administered in the classrooms of the students in the presence of the researcher in April 2014. The experimental sheets were collected sharply in 7-8 minutes. The late arrived sheets did not exceed 2% of the data.

At the beginning of the study, the researcher briefly explained the aim of the study, collected the informed consent, and announced the time duration for the study. Informed consent could not be taken in METU due to political environment of Turkey which the students could feel reluctant to give their names to the researcher. However, it was announced that it was voluntary for the students to participate to the research that no personal information was going to be collected in both METU and Sabancı University. After the research, the researcher explained the research question in more detail, and handed the debriefing form which there was contact information of the researcher in case of any possible questions that could come from the participants in the future.

### **2.2.4. Materials**

Two separate sheets were given to the participants. The first sheet included the experimental tasks. Below each variable and its operationalization is described in detail. Experimental Task:

Deservingness Allocation: Different stories presented to the participants for them to evaluate the deservingness of the welfare aid. The undeservingness condition was provided with the vignette of *"Imagine a young man. He has never had a regular job. He sometimes finds a job, but works for a short amount of time, and then quit."* The undeservingness condition was in the format of *"Imagine a middle aged man. He always had a regular job. Lately, the company that he worked for years bankrupted. He looks for a new job, but cannot find a suitable one."* In the literature, deservingness

increases with age and being unemployed due to unfortunate conditions. That is why the stories are framed with the age and cause of unemployment differences. The stories were similar to the ones that Petersen et al., (2012) used in his experimental research, but they were not directly same.

Ethnicity & Religion Sect & Political Party Preferences Cases: Ethnicity was added to the story by saying "*He speaks Kurdish or Turkish at home.*" Religion sect was added to the story by saying "*He goes to the mosque for praying or he goes to the Cem House for praying.*" The political groups were created by adding to the story "*He is a voter of Justice and Development Party, Republican People's Party, or Peace and Democracy Party.*" The parties were chosen since they had the representatives in Turkish Parliament. However, Nationalist Movement Party was not included.

Emotion: Emotions were measured by asking which emotion they felt towards such people. They chose sadness or anger. Then, they were asked how much they felt angry or sad towards such people, and the responses were given on a three point scale of a little, some, and very.

Welfare Aid Evaluation: Participants' opinions towards if a person deserved welfare aid or not measured with the question of "*Do you think such people should receive unemployment aid?*" The respondents indicated their choices in a 5-point Likert Scale format.

There were three main different groups which had two different sub-groups, thus we had six different groups at the end. The three different groups received ethnicity difference based, religion difference based, and voting differences based questions. However, the stories also framed for the deservingness heuristics. Each participant received either deserving or undeserving condition. However, participants were only assigned to one of the ethnicity, religious groups, or political party preference groups. Thus, we can see how a participant's evaluation on the deservingness of welfare aid changes towards in group-out group distinction.

Additional questions were also added to the design between the ethnicity difference, religious difference, and political party differences questions for the participants not to try to guess the research question and try to manipulate their responses while hiding their prejudices due to respondent bias. The questions were in the topics of healthcare and childcare policies. The healthcare questions were also consistent with our study. They linked the healthcare with the deservingness hypothesis.

It presented stories related to an illness. In one case, the illness was caused by unhealthy behavior, and the other case was caused by genetic factors. The childcare policy story was framed with the gender issues. It was asked for a mother and father to receive paid vocation in case of the birth of a baby to the family. The case was not related with the research question of the current study, but it was given not to emphasize on the ethnicity, religion and political party affiliation differences, and the participants to give a pace before they responded to the question which was framed according to aforementioned differences. Thus, the participants at first answered the first ethnicity or religious difference story, and they responded to healthcare and childcare policy questions, and then they answered the other ethnicity or religious difference story. In the political party affiliation groups, the participants received the story with the first party, and healthcare policy questions, then they received the story with another party, and gender questions, and they finally responded to the last story with the other political party.

Survey questions: In the second sheet, there were demographic questions, and a number of questions which measure their political party affiliations and political ideologies, and the participants also answered scales which measured general social welfare attitudes, empathy, and religiosity. Except for the empathy scale, all questions regarding the political party affiliations and political ideologies, general social welfare attitudes, and religiosity were taken from European Social Survey 2008 questions which were the last wave of European Social Survey that data was collected in Turkey, and there was a pool of general welfare questions which were relevant for our research question. The respondents also answered questions which measured their satisfaction level with the policies of government and also with the current economical conditions.

Empathy: Empathy is also controversial for its conceptualization and measurement like emotions (Preston & de Waal, 2002). Davis' (1980) Interpersonal Reactivity Scale is one of the most used measures of emotions that has both good internal and external validity. The scale defines empathy as the “reactions of one individual to the observed experiences of another” (Davis, 1983). There are 28 items in the scale in the 5 point Likert scale format which also had four sub units. Only two subunits are used for the current study which are the perspective taking and empathic concern scales. Perspective taking is defined as the tendency to be able to adopt the

psychological points of other people. Empathic concern is the feelings of sympathy and concern for other people who are unfortunate.

### **3. Results**

#### **3.1. General Aim**

The study aimed to explore the operation of deservingness heuristics and the role of intergroup relations on welfare aid opinions. In general, deservingness heuristics was expected to operate as a major factor which would shape welfare aid opinions. Ingroup – outgroup distinction was also predicted to influence welfare aid opinions. In addition, emotional reactions of sadness and anger which were given to the welfare aid neediness vignettes were also expected to have a mediatory role for predicting the welfare aid opinions.

Three major groups existed as ethnicity differences, religious sect differences and political party differences in the study which the sample sizes differed. Thus, the results were grouped under the sections on ethnicity differences, religious sect differences and political party preferences. Specific predictions and related findings will be discussed under each heading below. Finally, a potential mediating role of emotions will be discussed.

#### **3.2. Ethnicity Cases**

Participants who were in the group that received ethnicity cases were assigned to either deservingness or undeservingness conditions. A participant received both Kurdish and Turkish ethnicity cases, and rated their desired level of welfare support for the characters in the vignettes.

Four people were excluded, since they did not give information on their mother tongue. Three people who stated that their mother tongue was a language other than Turkish were accepted as outliers, and also they were not included into the analysis. Only people who stated that their mother tongue as Turkish were included to the analysis. Sample size, means, and standard deviations for the group which received ethnicity related case are displayed in Table 14.

Table 14  
*Descriptive Statistics for the Group that Received Ethnicity Cases*

Variable	<i>n</i>	Welfare Aid Support			
		Turkish Case		Kurdish Case	
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Deservingness Condition	32	4.06	1.01	3.56	1.26
Undeservingness Condition	37	2.24	0.89	1.97	0.957
Total	69	3.087	1.31	2.71	1.362

For the analysis, 2 x 2 mixed factorial ANCOVA was conducted to assess the effects of deservingness and intergroup relations on the welfare aid support. As Hypothesis 1 stated, a statistically significant mean difference was expected to be observed between cases of different ethnic groups which the support for welfare aid would vary based on the similarity between person's own identity and the group identity of the offered case. There was no significant main effect for the ethnicity differences on people's welfare aid giving decisions when deservingness was not taken into account. As noted, since the great majority of participants were Turkish, people from different ethnic backgrounds were not included into analysis as a separate variable due to lack of sufficient sample size. Thus, there was no difference of Turkish people's level of welfare support for their ingroup members, and Turkish people's ratings of welfare aid towards outgroup members, in this case for Kurdish people, when the effect of deservingness was ignored.

Hypothesis 4 pointed out that deservingness and undeservingness conditions were expected to have different means, and deservingness condition was expected to receive more support for the welfare aid. As Table 15 depicted, the effect of deservingness condition was significant regardless of the ethnicity based differences in the welfare aid support questions  $F(1,63) = 48,807$ ,  $p < .001$  when controlled for age, gender, income level, and empathy level. It means that the conditions had different ratings regardless of which ethnicity related question was answered. This leads to the conclusion that deservingness ( $M = 3.81$ ) condition was supported more by the participants than undeservingness ( $M = 2.105$ ) condition to receive welfare aid.

Table 15  
*Results of Analysis of Covariance for Ethnicity Cases*

Variable	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	P Value
Ethnicity	0.017	1	0.017	0.111	0.74
Deservingness	94.79	1	94.79	48.807	<.001
Ethnicity x Deservingness	0.38	1	0.38	2.507	0.118
Ethnicity x Age	0.196	1	0.196	1.292	0.26
Ethnicity x Gender	0.001	1	0.001	0.008	0.93
Ethnicity x Income Level	0.053	1	0.053	0.347	0.558
Ethnicity x Empathy Level	0.471	1	0.471	0.31	0.083

Both Hypothesis 5 and 6 predicted an interaction between deservingness and group identities. Deservingness cases with an ingroup identity was expected to receive more welfare aid while undeservingness cases with an outgroup identity was expected to receive less amounts of welfare aid. In this case, it was suggested that Turkish ethnicity vignette in deservingness condition to receive higher amounts of welfare support, and Kurdish ethnicity vignette in undeservingness condition to receive lowest amount of support. As Table 15 presented, no statistically significant interaction reported between welfare aid questions and deservingness. Welfare aid decisions based on different ethnicity related questions did not statistically differ for deservingness and undeservingness cases.

### **3.3. Religious Sect Differences Cases**

A group of participants was assigned to religious sect differences cases which they received both Alevi sect and Sunni sect cases. Participants were allotted to either

deservingness or undeservingness conditions. Participants rated their welfare aid support to the cases in the vignettes.

Nearly 15% of the participants in the group did not have a religious affiliation or chose not to answer the question. Nine per cent of the participants identified themselves as Muslims but did not specify their sects. Only 3.4% participants were Muslim-Alevi. They were all not included into analysis due to low representation. Table 16 shows sample sizes, means and standard deviations for participants who were assigned to the religious sect differences cases.

Table 16  
*Descriptive Statistics for the Group that Received Religious Sect Differences Cases*

Variable	n	Welfare Aid Support			
		Sunni Sect Case		Alevi Sect Case	
		M	SD	M	SD
Deservingness Condition	20	3.85	1.11	3.42	0.92
Undeservingness Condition	28	2.5	0.827	2.2	1.005
Total	48	3.29	1.202	2.91	1.126

In line with Hypothesis 2, a statistically significant main difference of religious sect differences was observed  $F(1,41) = 5.77, p < .05$  on people's welfare aid decision making when the effects of deservingness were omitted, and when it was controlled for age, gender, income level, empathy level and religiosity level. Support for welfare aid was higher for the group which was similar to participant's own identity. In this case, the majority of participants defined themselves as belonging to Muslim-Sunni sect. Thus, the support for welfare recipience of Muslim-Sunni sect case ( $M = 3.29$ ) was higher compared to Muslim-Alevi sect case ( $M = 2.91$ ).

Table 17  
*Results of Analysis of Covariance for Religious Sect Differences Cases*

Variable	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	P Value
Religious Sect	1.064	1	1.064	5.77	0.021
Deservingness	31.413	1	31.413	19.85	<.001
Religious Sect x Deservingness	0.105	1	0.105	0.57	0.455
Religious Sect x Age	0.116	1	0.116	0.627	0.433
Religious Sect x Gender	0.009	1	0.009	0.051	0.823
Religious Sect x Income Level	0.464	1	0.464	2.516	0.12
Religious Sect x Empathy Level	0.119	1	0.119	0.645	0.426
Religious Sect x Religiosity Level	0.002	1	0.002	0.009	0.925

Deservingness and undeservingness conditions were expected to have a statistically significant difference as Hypothesis 4 predicted. As Table 17 portrayed, the effect of deservingness on welfare aid decisions were significant  $F(1,41) = 19.85$ ,  $p < .001$  regardless of religious sect base case differences when it was controlled for age, gender, income level, empathy level and religiosity level. The conditions received different ratings without taking the effects of religious sect differences. The deservingness ( $M = 3.635$ ) condition was supported more by the participants than undeservingness ( $M = 2.35$ ) condition for the welfare aid recipient level as it was predicted.

Interaction effects were expected between deservingness and religious sect differences as Hypothesis 5 and 6 suggested. Deservingness condition with similar

religious sects for the participants was expected to receive more welfare aid, and undeservingness case with a different religious sect identity was expected to receive less amounts of welfare aid. In this specific case, Alevi sect under undeservingness condition was predicted to receive lowest level of support, while Sunni sect in deservingness condition to receive highest level of support. Although deservingness and religious sect differences had independent main significant effects; no interaction effects observed between deservingness conditions and religious sect differences. Welfare aid decisions based on religious sect differences did not statistically differ for deservingness and undeservingness cases.

### 3.4. Political Party Preferences Cases

Since the other party voters including MHP and BDP constituted only 10%, and AKP voters only constituted 15% of the participants of political party supporters group, they were not included into the analysis. Sample size, means and standard deviations which were derived from CHP voters can be seen in Table 18.

Table 18

*Descriptive Statistics for the Group that Received Political Party Preferences Cases*

Variable	N	Welfare Aid Support					
		AKP Supporter Case		CHP Supporter Case		BDP Supporter Case	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Deservingness Condition	24	3.79	0.779	4.45	0.58	3.54	0.93
Undeservingness Condition	26	2	0.89	2.53	0.947	2.04	0.916
Total	50	2.86	1.229	3.46	1.248	2.76	1.188

As depicted in Table 19, there was no evidence regarding Hypothesis 3 which proposed that there would be mean differences for welfare support rates for different political party voter groups when the effect of deservingness was not taken into account. As shown in table 18, mean assistance rate for CHP supporter case was higher than the AKP supporter case and BDP supporter case. However, such difference was not statistically significant. Results indicated that CHP voters did not differentiate their level of welfare support based on their voting preference. They did not discriminate against voters of other parties.

Effect of deservingness was expected to be significant as Hypothesis 4 suggested. Welfare aid assistance was higher for deservingness condition than the

support for undeservingness case,  $F(1,44) = 67.005$ ,  $p < .001$  when the effects of political party voter groups were not regarded, and when it was controlled for age, gender, income level, and empathy level. As Table 18 portrayed, support for deservingness condition ( $M = 3.93$ ) was higher compared to undeservingness condition ( $M = 2.18$ ).

Table 19  
*Results of Analysis of Covariance for Different Political Party Preference Cases*

Variable	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	P Value
Political Party Preferences	0.376	2	0.188	0.883	0.417
Deservingness	112.534	1	112.534	67.005	<.001
Political Party Preferences x Deservingness	1.134	2	0.567	2.665	0.075
Political Party Preferences x Age	1.088	2	0.544	2.556	0.083
Political Party Preferences x Gender	0.534	2	0.267	1.253	0.291
Political Party Preferences x Income Level	0.326	2	0.163	0.767	0.468
Political Party Preferences x Empathy Level	0.108	2	0.054	0.254	0.776

Interaction effects were expected to be observed between deservingness conditions and political party supporter cases. However, there was no evidence regarding Hypothesis 5 which claimed that deservingness condition with a shared ingroup identity to be perceived as more deserving compared to deservingness condition with an outgroup identity. Hypothesis 6 was not supported which claimed that undeservingness cases with a different political party supporter identity than participants' own would receive lower support of welfare aid compared to undeservingness groups with a similar political party supporter identity.

### 3.5. Analysis of Mediatory Role of Emotions on Welfare Aid Support

For all cases, participants were asked which emotion they primarily felt towards people that they read in the vignettes. They could only choose one emotion among sadness and anger. In addition, it was asked them to rate their level of emotion as being a little, moderately, and a lot. Two emotions were coded under different columns. The reported emotion was coded on a three point scale (1 = *a little*), (2 = *moderately*) and (3 = *a lot*). The unreported emotion was coded as 0 into its separate column.

In terms of mediation analysis, Baron and Kenny's (1986) causal steps were attempted to be used with ANCOVA analyses. Mediation test should be actualized with the estimation of three steps which the independent variable should affect the mediator in the first analysis. The independent variable should have an effect on dependent variable in the second analysis. Both the effect of independent variable and mediator should be assessed in the third analysis which the mediator should influence the dependent variable. When the conditions are met, the effect of independent variable in the third analysis should be smaller than its effect on the second analysis.

The first step in mediation analysis which measured the effect of independent variable on mediator can be seen in Table 21 for the group that received ethnicity cases, in Table 23 for the group that received religious sect case, and in Table 24 for the group that received political party preferences cases.

Table 20  
*Descriptive Statistics of Emotional Reactions for the Group that Received Ethnicity Cases*

Variable	n	Welfare Aid Support							
		Turkish Case				Kurdish Case			
		Anger		Sadness		Anger		Sadness	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Deservingness Condition	32	0.843	0.954	0.937	0.981	0.968	1.121	0.843	0.919
Undeservingness Condition	37	0.837	0.957	0.864	0.947	0.973	1.013	0.738	1.057
Total	69	0.84	0.949	0.898	0.957	0.971	1.056	0.811	0.989

Sample size, means and standard deviations for ethnicity case are shown in Table 20. For the cases of ethnicity differences, results of ANCOVA showed no statistically significant differences in emotional reactions when the effects of deservingness were not taken into account and when the results were controlled for age, gender, income level, and empathy level. The results of the analysis can be seen in Table

21. The main effect of deservingness was also not significant when the effects of ethnicity differences were not regarded and age, gender, income level, and empathy level were controlled. No interaction effects were observed between ethnicity cases and deservingness.

Table 21  
*Results of Analysis of Covariance for Ethnicity Differences Cases*

Variable	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	P Value
Ethnicity	5.625	2.179	2.581	1.5	0.226
Deservingness	0.023	1	0.023	0.101	0.752
Ethnicity x Deservingness	0.572	2.179	0.263	0.153	0.875
Ethnicity x Age	1.568	2.179	0.719	0.418	0.677
Ethnicity x Gender	10.404	2.179	4.774	2.774	0.061
Ethnicity x Income Level	1.377	2.179	0.632	0.367	0.711
Ethnicity x Empathy Level	5.776	2.179	2.65	1.54	0.216

Table 22 showed the descriptive values for emotional reactions in the religious sect differences cases. Table 23 portrayed the effects of deservingness on emotional reactions for different religious sect cases. There was no significant main effect of religious sect differences cases and deservingness on emotional reactions. No interaction effects were reported among emotional reactions and deservingness as well.

Table 22  
*Descriptive Statistics of Emotional Reactions for the Group that Received Religious Sect Differences Cases*

Variable	N	Emotional Reaction							
		Sunni Case				Alevi Case			
		Anger		Sadness		Anger		Sadness	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Deservingness Condition	28	0.964	1.23	1.178	1.055	1.03	1.17	1.071	1.15
Undeservingness Condition	20	0.95	1.9	1.05	0.94	1.05	1.14	0.9	1.07
Total	48	0.958	1.2	1.125	1	1.04	1.14	1	1.11

Table 23  
*Results of Analysis of Covariance for Religious Sect Differences Cases*

Variable	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	P Value
Religious Sect	9329	2.1	4.422	2.08	0.129
Deservingness	0.243	1	0.243	0.656	0.423
Religious Sect x Deservingness	0.095	2.1	0.045	0.021	0.982
Religious Sect x Age	22.598	2.1	10.712	5.038	0.008
Religious Sect x Gender	3.379	2.1	1.602	0.753	0.48
Religious Sect x Income Level	0.077	2.1	0.036	0.017	0.986
Religious Sect x Empathy Level	1.732	2.1	0.821	0.386	0.692
Religious Sect x Religiosity Level	3.039	2.1	1.441	0.678	0.518

As it can be seen in Table 24, there was no statistically significant main effect of neither deservingness nor political party preferences cases. Also an interaction effect was not observed. In general, no evidence was reported regarding Hypothesis 7 and 8.

Table 24  
*Results of Analysis of Covariance for Political Party Preferences Cases*

Variable	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	P Value
Political Party Preferences	3.403	3.055	1.114	0.55	0.651
Deservingness	0.953	1	0.953	2.725	0.106
Political Party Preferences x Deservingness	3.105	3.055	1.016	0.504	0.684
Political Party Preferences x Age	2.33	3.055	0.76	0.378	0.772
Political Party Preferences x Gender	2.961	3.055	0.96	0.48	0.7
Political Party Preferences x Income Level	3.947	3.055	1.292	0.64	0.593
Political Party Preferences x Empathy Level	3.105	3.055	4.02	1.99	0.117

In sum, no statistically significant effect for any of the independent variables on mediator was found for neither of the cases. Baron and Kenny's (1986) first step could not be confirmed. Although there is evidence for second step which there is an effect of deservingness on welfare aid opinions, the mediation analysis could not be progressed for further steps due to lack of evidence regarding the first step.

#### **4. Discussion**

The present study investigated the operation of deservingness heuristic and role of in-group vs. out-group distinctions for the welfare aid opinions. The role of in/out group relations were measured for the changing welfare support rates towards different ethnicities, religious sect affiliations and voting preferences. In addition, mediatory role of emotional reactions were incorporated into the design.

The findings yielded that the deservingness heuristic as the significant factor for the welfare aid opinions. People who were seen as more deserving (unlucky people who show effort, but cannot change their situation as a result of external circumstances) were rated to receive more welfare aid compared to undeserving people (people who are seen as having the chance to control their own circumstances but prefer not to do). Deservingness conditions were granted with more welfare aid support compared to undeservingness groups regardless of ethnic differences, religious sect differences and political party preference based differences.

Of all the group membership related factors that were explored in the study, only the religious sect differences had a significant effect on welfare aid support. Muslim-Sunni participants approved their ingroup members to receive welfare aid more compared to outgroup members who were the members of Alevi sect in the study. No significant differences observed for welfare support rates for different ethnic groups, and for different political party preferences. Thus, people who identified themselves as Turkish did not rate for Kurdish people to receive a different amount of welfare aid compared to their ingroup members. In terms of political party preference based differences, voters of CHP did not discriminate against welfare support recipients of other political party voters.

Regarding the role of emotions, no significant effect of deservingness and intergroup relations on different emotional reactions was found.

##### **4.1. Significance of Deservingness Heuristic for Welfare Aid Opinions as a Point of Discussion**

Deservingness heuristic was assumed to have a vital role for citizen's welfare aid opinions. As discussed in detail, the reason for deservingness heuristic to operate for people's welfare aid opinions was explained by either individual level factors such as ideology, religiosity or as a result of macro level factors such as institutional structure, ethnic homogeneity level, and culture. Which explanation regarding the current study

can form the basis for the central role of deservingness heuristic for shaping people's welfare aid opinions?

The macro level explanations focused on the role of institutions or culture to clarify the operation of deservingness heuristic in welfare aid opinions across different countries. Deservingness heuristic was assumed to be an outcome of individualistic cultures like in the case of USA (Gilens, as cited in Petersen, 2012) which there was no universal welfare aid vision and policy implementation, and welfare aid opinions were tied to deservingness of people. In contrast, Turkish culture is classified as an example of collectivist cultures. Based on well known research by Hofstede (2001), Turkey defined as a collectivist society which "we" is more important than "I". People define themselves with group identities such as their families or organizations and avoid conflicts in their groups for the sake of keeping the harmony in collectivist cultures. It follows from this definition, then, individuals who adopt collectivistic values should not rely on individual based evaluations of what is deserved. Based on this theoretically guided assumption, one can expect Turkish culture to support welfare policies without a prerequisite of deservingness. In line with this, as discussed in the methods section and displayed in Table 8; the idea that the duty for ensuring employment, and ensuring life standards of unemployed people were seen as the responsibility of the government by the participants of the current study. However, Göregenli (1997) claimed that it was not possible to classify Turkish people as being individualistic or collectivist. In countries like Turkey, personal cultural tendencies can vary due to containing people with various backgrounds and being exposed to rapid change (İmamoğlu & Karakitapoğlu-Aygün, 2004). In contrast to such controversial explanations, evidence was found on the operation of deservingness in the study.

Institutionalist explanations linked the importance of deservingness heuristic to the existence of means-tested welfare policies in a country (Rothstein, 1998). Turkey also has a means-test related welfare policy program for the healthcare benefits, and education aid for children. However, the country does not have a means-tested policy program for unemployment insurance which was the investigated case in the current research. Support for welfare policy programs are case specific which support levels for each program can substantially differ. Thus, not having a means-tested policy program for unemployment could influence the outcome in this manner.

Individual factors such as the role of age, empathy, income level, and gender can

also account for the differences in welfare support rates due to operation of deservingness heuristic. Current design of the present study controlled for the many of the individual level explanations of the deservingness heuristic. Empathy, income level, age and gender were controlled in all analysis. Self identified religiosity which found to be acting as a positive factor for welfare aid support (Arıkan, 2013) was also controlled only for religious sect differences case. However, deservingness was still found to be significant. Consequently, the study pointed out the primary role of deservingness which can affect the welfare aid opinions even when the other factors which were highlighted as determinants of welfare aid support in the literature were controlled.

How can we interpret the significance of deservingness for the welfare aid opinions in Turkey when there is a lack of explanation in the cross national level, and in spite of the control for the factors that were found to be important in the literature? The current study pointed out as a confirmation for the deservingness to have a primary role in the formation of welfare policy opinion. It supported the idea that citizens separate people as being deserving (people who are lazy, who have the potential to change the external circumstances but not) or undeserving (the ones who are the victims of the external circumstances) even when it was controlled for the individual level variances in age, gender, income level, empathy level and self identified religiosity level. On the other hand, Aarge and Petersen (2014) claimed that it was the deservingness that could explain the differences in cross national differences regarding welfare aid support. Whether welfare recipients are perceived as having the chance to change the circumstances or not can account for the differences in welfare policies across countries. As the analysis of Petersen et al., (2012) using the data from World Values Survey for 49 countries portrayed, Turkish citizens also proposed that governments were not responsible for the poverty which was caused by lack of motivation like the citizens of other 47 countries. Thus, the research supported this finding with an experimental design which deservingness operated as the primary factor that participants segregated needy citizens based on their effort.

#### **4.2. Role of Intergroup Relations for Welfare Aid Opinions as a Point of Discussion**

Based on the Social Identity Theory, it was expected citizens to increase their level of support to ingroup members and decrease it towards their outgroup members (Tajfel and Turner, 1978). De Swaan's (1988) proximity and Oorshot's (2000) identity criteria also paid importance to the group ties as a factor which can affect the operation

of deservingness heuristic. The study used preexisting differences in the Turkish society. However, group membership was only found to be effective for the religious sect differences. Which factors could explain the non significant results obtained from the ethnic and political party preference based differences?

Influence of different group identities on people's opinions can vary. There is a need to discuss the results of cases of ethnicity related differences and political party preferences separately. In regard to ethnicity based differences, is it possible to conclude that Turkish people did not discriminate against Kurdish people's welfare aid recipience based on the results of the study? Survey results related to stereotyping and discrimination against Kurdish people can provide us a general vision. Based on the report of Konda Research and Consultancy in 2011, 47.4% of the Turkish people did not want a Kurd as a neighbor ("Kürt Sorununda", 2011). However, based on survey results by SETAV in 2009 only 82.7% of Turkish people admitted that it would not be a problem to have a Kurdish neighbor ("Kürt Sorunu", 2009). Thus, different studies portray controversial results. Şen's research (2014) demonstrated that both Kurdish and Turkish people's perception of individual discrimination rates were found to be high towards Kurdish people compared to Turkish people. Thus, both Kurdish and Turkish people were perceived Kurds as more discriminated compared to Turks. How could we link these inputs into the topic of welfare aid distribution and opinions of deservingness? Saraçoğlu's (2010) data showed the existence of common stereotypes among Turkish against Kurdish people in İzmir who immigrated to the city, and mostly lived in shanty houses which Turkish people believed that Kurdish people were "benefit scroungers and disrupters of urban life". Kurdish people's image of benefit scroungers could provide us an insight that they could be seen as not deserving due to their image of exploiters of the existing benefits. However, current study could not find evidence regarding the effect of Kurdish ethnicity on deservingness opinions. In their healthcare policy oriented research, Gollust and Lynch (2011) found that people reduced the level of governmental role to provide healthcare due to behavioral causal attributions of illness. If the illness was perceived to be caused by individual circumstances, ill people were perceived as undeserving of healthcare support. However, participants did not reduce their ratings level of governmental support when racial and class based cues presented instead of behavioral causal cues. Thus, current study also specified the cases by providing the information on the cause of misfortune but also provided information

on the ethnicity, religious sect, and political party preferences based on the differences in the vignettes. Support for welfare policies regarding different social groups can be affected by the dominant image in the society regarding the group at the time. A target group can be stigmatized with laziness, or misfortune which can directly affect the support for policies. Lack of support to people's welfare assistance recipients might cause from such stereotypes associated with the groups. Current research prevented the interference of perception of causes of neediness and stereotyping against certain groups while providing deservingness based causal cues. Portrayal of causes of unemployment can be one of the reasons why ethnicity based differences could not alter welfare aid support rates. Thus, it can be concluded that it was the deservingness heuristic which primarily influenced citizens' welfare aid opinions.

Although religious sect differences cases were framed with similar deservingness conditions, their effect was found to be significant on welfare aid opinions. How can we explain the significance of religious sect based differences while the other cases, ethnicity and political party preferences were not determinants of welfare aid evaluations? Starting with the general perception of Alevi people from the perspective of Sunni community, research by Akyürek and Koydemir (2014) showed that 38.5% of the Sunni sample declared that it would be a problem to get married to an Alevi person. However, only 7.3% of them stated that it would be a problem to become neighbors with Alevi people. From the Alevi point of view, one third of Alevis indicated that they were exposed to discrimination in the last one year, and 90% of them featured religion based discrimination as a widespread problem in Turkey (Erdemir et al., 2010). Although discrimination against Alevi people is a well known issue of Turkey, how it is different than the other cases, so that only it created significant results remained unexplored in the study. As a limitation, religious sect differences had the smallest sample size compared to other cases. Thus, the research should be replicated with more data to come to a more reliable conclusion.

Political party preference cases also could not alter the welfare aid opinions. A point of debate is the relationship between political party preference and group identity. It is possible to accept political party attachments as an indicator of group identity in a similar fashion to ethnic or religious group identities? If not, the reason for the political party preferences not to create a difference in welfare aid opinions might be resulted by this distinction. In the American voter, Campbell et al., (1960) clarified that people

wanted to form their attachments with a political party just like their attachments with ethnicities, and religion. They defined party identification with an affective component. Greene (1999) introduced social identification concept as a vital element for political party identification in addition to the affective perspective. None of the participants in the current study had formal membership to a political party. Social identity theory clarified that there was no need for a formal membership to a group, it was sufficient to have a self perceived membership to a certain group. In addition, Tajfel (1982) stated in the minimal group studies that the assumptions of social identity theory could be observed even in the lack of strong group identification. Thus, political identifications could form group identities, and there is no need for a formal membership. Despite the fact that voting preferences can form group identities, the effect of such group membership did not create a significant effect on welfare aid opinions.

In a more polarized political environment, one can expect many people express their identification with a certain political party while declaring their opposition to another one. In Turkish context, oppositions between parties became prominent due to high political polarization which the AKP was seen as the responsible of the situation (Keyman, 2014). Moreover, the level of patronage and clientelism is discussed to be high under AKP period which the supporters of AKP were criticized to receive benefits more compared to other citizens. It could be expected CHP voters to discriminate against AKP voters under these circumstances. However, they did not. The results can be interpreted similar to the results of ethnicity cases which the given causal attributions could prevent homogenization of the outgroup. In the absence of deservingness cues, a participant could reduce all AKP voters faced with unemployment to a position which they were seen as ultimate beneficiaries of clientelist policies. Current study design could have prevented this while providing more specific cues on the cause of neediness.

#### **4.3. Role of Emotional Reactions for Welfare Aid Opinions as a Point of Discussion**

Despite the fact that emotions were recognized as central features of political decision making, the study could not find any effect of deservingness conditions and intergroup relations cases on different emotional reactions of anger and sadness. Small and Lerner's study (2008) on incidental emotions demonstrated that anger and sadness could form the welfare opinions. On the other hand, Erişen's study (2013) showed that anger and fear could not form distinct political evaluations regarding Syrian issue in Turkish context. Cottrell et al.'s research (2010) found that the specific emotions rather

than the general prejudices had the ability to predict the social policies affecting the group. Emotions were mediating the relationship between perceived threats and policy attitudes. There was no research on the effects of deservingness on welfare policy decisions regarding different ethnic, social and political groups which investigated the mediatory role of emotions in the literature. Contradictory results can be caused due to distinct effects of distinct emotions, the type of emotional reaction used in the studies (incidental emotions vs emotional reactions to the manipulation of investigation), and also for the case specificity of welfare policy programs which support level can vary based on the type of the policy under investigation.

#### **4.4. Limitations & Future Directions**

The study inquired psychological factors affecting Turkish citizens' welfare aid evaluations. Since number of studies which investigated the role of underlying psychological determinants of public opinion in Turkish context is low, there is a need for research in the other areas of interest for political opinion and decision making.

Support for welfare programs can change on the basis of distinct policy cases. The study was only interested in unemployment policies. As a result of case specific nature of welfare policy opinions, there is a need for research for other welfare policy issues such as healthcare benefits, childcare benefits, policies regarding poor, and old age related pensions.

Ethnic homogeneity was defined as a factor that influenced the welfare opinions which the welfare state policies are more universal in countries with high level of ethnic homogeneity as in the case of Scandinavian countries (Larsen, 2006). Current study was conducted in a highly heterogeneous country, and was also confirmed the hypothesis that deservingness operated in segmented countries. On the other hand, ethnic and political group differences were found to be ineffective for the explanation of welfare opinions in contrast to homogeneity based explanations. The study is only limited to the investigation of welfare policy decisions based on the both intergroup cues and deservingness cues. In general, citizens could be against for the welfare assistance towards some groups, since they had prejudices regarding deservingness of such groups. The study prevented the operation of such stereotypes while proposing the deservingness cues at the beginning and how the welfare policy decisions would change in the absence of deservingness cues would be an interesting topic of inquiry. Since, it would provide us the knowledge on general perception of the target groups regarding

welfare aid recipience.

As a limitation, the research could not demonstrate the welfare opinions of other ethnic, social and political groups. It could only portray Turkish people's opinions towards Kurdish people, Muslim-Sunni people's opinions towards Alevi people, and CHP voters opinions towards AKP and BDP Party voters. It would be insightful to see the welfare aid opinions towards Kurdish people, Alevis and voters of other parties such as AKP which received the highest amount of votes in the 2015 General Elections towards other groups.

The current research focuses on two negative emotions which are anger and sadness by questioning if the participants felt any for making their welfare aid opinions. Although they are both negative emotions, the behavioral reactions triggered by them were supposed to be different. However, current research design could not demonstrate such distinct effects. Due to lack of studies that focus on the effect of emotions in Turkish political psychology literature, there is an obvious need for investigation of emotions other than sadness and anger.

As a note on methodology of the research, experimental methodology is a powerful tool for achieving internal validity. Although the current project improves the external validity of existing researches on deservingness while providing data from Turkish context, further collection of data from different settings would improve the external validity of the study.

#### **4.5. Concluding Remarks**

The study is the first attempt in literature which aimed at investigating the psychological determinants of welfare policy opinion and opinions with an experimental methodology in Turkish context. Regarding the aim, it has a broad vision with an exploratory role which incorporated the research of different ethnic, social and political groups into its design along with the investigated operation of deservingness heuristic and emotional reactions.

Researches on welfare policy opinions were mostly conducted in US context. In addition, Scandinavian countries were also targets of interest. However, the study also provided insight from another context as being a research conducted with a Turkish sample. There was evidence in the literature which deservingness heuristic operated in the similar fashion both in USA and Denmark which are totally different countries for their institutional structure, homogeneity and culture. Turkish welfare state is different

from both USA and Denmark by its culture and homogeneity; it is more similar to Southern European model institutionally. As cited in the literature section, government expenditure for welfare is low while the responsibility for welfare provision mostly provided by the family. The study tested a different model of a welfare state in the light of how the citizens evaluate other citizens' reciepience of welfare aid.

The research design included many proposed factors affecting the welfare policy opinions in the literature as control variables to demonstrate the effect of deservingness heuristic if remains any after such controls. Consequently, deservingness heuristic remained as a central factor that individuals make their opinions of whether recipients merit welfare aid.

Turkey is a country which is possible to observe distinct effects of different ethnic, religious and political group memberships on welfare policy opinions. The study could only portray the influence of religious sect differences on welfare policy decisions.

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