

**MULTIDIMENSIONAL APPROACHES TO FAMILY WELFARE:
AMERICAN DILEMMA AND GLOBAL IMPLICATIONS***

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When a tiny minority is involved, the crack-up of their families may reflect individual failures. But when divorce, separation, and other forms of familiar disaster overtake millions at once in many countries, it is absurd to think the causes are purely personal. – Alvin Toffler

INTRODUCTION

The objectives of this paper are fourfold: 1) to formulate a conceptual basis for family social welfare; 2) to examine the U. S. social welfare policies and programs that are specifically tailored to the family system from both descriptive and critical assessment of the field of social welfare; 3) to identify American dilemma with regard to family welfare policies; and 4) to propose global implications for future debates and discussions. In this section, an attempt is made to present the theoretical foundation for formulating and conceptualizing family welfare policy from multidimensional and global perspectives.

Family System as the Basic Foundation for Social Welfare Structure

Family still plays a significant role in sustaining the social safety net by securing both economic and emotional needs and resources essential to social well-being throughout the life cycle from its inception to end. Although most Americans still live in the traditional nuclear family structure, with two parents to share in producing income, raising children and caring for the elderly, and maintaining a home, there are increasingly more single parent headed families that may find it much harder to cope.¹ Changes in labor market demands widen the division between those who are well educated, along with the commensurate rewards, and those who are not so prepared for more highly skilled employment. These and other problems (e.g., marital instability, domestic violence, alternative styles of living, etc.) deepen the conflicts in American society today (Ford Foundation, 1989). The Executive Panel for the Ford Foundation Project on Social Welfare and the American Future underscores the importance of family formation as an essential principle in approaching social welfare policy for future Americans. It states: *“For the vast majority of Americans, the family plays the most important role in nurturing individual growth and protecting people in times of adversity. Many of today’s most urgent social problems are the direct result of family breakdown². Government policy should strengthen the family rather than undermine it”* (Ibid, p. 86).

¹ In 1990, married couple families accounted 56% of all U.S. households, decreased from 76.5% in 1970 (Berns, 1993, p. 90).

² For the last four decades, this author as a marital and family therapist and clinical social work educator in U.S. and overseas has dealt with multiple family issues that are linked to external forces of socioeconomic demands, social

American family policy specialist, Sheila Kammerman (1996), underlines the necessity of family policy when she wrote, *“The premise undergirding family policy, wherever it develops, is that society needs children and needs them to be healthy, well-educated and eventually, productive workers, citizens and parents. There is no generally accepted substitute for the family in its child protection and socialization role, and there is increasing evidence that nurture and care in a context of love and individualization are essential to achieving the results the society values. The increased attention to family policy in the latter period of the twentieth century derives from developments that either threaten this role of the family or are believed to do so”* (p. 32). And yet, this institution of family has been treated with far less importance than other institutions (Donati, 1993; Lee, 1998).

Italian family sociologist Pierpaolo Donati (1993) notes pointedly that, *“human well-being is not an individual or collective condition abstracted from the concrete community we live in, but a relational process of mutual reciprocity between Ego and Alter in any field and at a level of social interventions. It starts in the family. Generational equity signifies all of this; it may well be a key target for what social policies ought to bring to maturity in the 1990s as our legacy to the third millennium”* (p. 64). This author certainly agrees with his foresight.

Conceptualization of Family Welfare Policy from Three Dimensional Perspectives

Family welfare policy is here defined as institutional efforts to provide publicly needed services to families, as outlined by the governing society, to preserve and strengthen both structural and functional aspects of the family system in meeting the basic needs of protection, nurturing, affiliation and care, and the socially desirable expectations of socialization, productivity and citizenship (Lee, 1996, P. 4). Family health as a value criterion is a social goal which needs to be achieved personally and which collectively reinforces the synergy of collaborative and shared processes of generating social outputs that are beneficial to humanity. In approaching such a goal of family welfare policy, three types of social measurements need to be considered: 1) preventive measurements; 2) intervention (curative) measurements, and 3) restorative measurements. These three dimensional measurements are conceptually advanced from the integration of both ecosystems and shared care model perspectives. The strength of the

injustice, and changing dynamics of interpersonal relationship in gender role conflict and cross-cultural adaptation processes.

ecosystems perspective in developing a comprehensive family welfare policy lies in its conceptual tools in the assessment and analysis of the multidimensional elements of the family system as well as its interfacing and interacting forces of various institutional environments. The shared family policy model underlines the importance of a collaborative role both the family and the societal systems play in generating and mobilizing the needed resources to meet an optimal level of family functioning (Constable & Lee, 2004; Ford Foundation, 1989; Lee, 1998).

1) Preventive Measurements in Family Welfare Policy. Several principles underlying this approach stress the important role family advocacy plays in terms of developmental mastery and relational matrix. Society needs healthy families which generate both productive and contributing citizens from whom it receives benefits. Caring children and elderly parents when they are in need of adult protection shall not solely left as wards of government where families function as their primary place for locus of control (e.g., family preservation). Where extra external supports are needed for the families to carry out their responsibilities in caring for children and other needy family members including the disabled and those unable to care for themselves, the provision for adequate resources must be sought out to alleviate burdens and any threat to family stability. Intergenerational continuity needs to be strengthened where such connections provide the mastery of cultural wisdom and the mobilization of stress reducing resources. Prevention measurements are also critical for those families where contagious intergenerational pathology needs to be contained or altered to minimize its impact from its transmission to a larger society. Such measurements, however, require an integrative approach from a wider spectrum of biopsychosocial dimensions, particularly attending to the majority of social membership. Material distribution systems, including the minimum wage, tax systems, health care, housing, and other social provisions, must be synchronized in yielding the decent living standards for all families. Preventive measurements aim at all families with the primary focus being placed on the quality of family living across all ages groups (Donati, 1993). Here, the central theme is: Promoting and maintaining the strength of families as the solid foundation for a healthy society.

2) Intervention Measurements in Family Welfare Policy. To revitalize families at risk, and to generate social energy for the development of healthier families, a desirable standard for the decent living for all families must be first established through the prevention measurements. However, there still exist multiple social forces (e.g., discrimination, relational conflicts,

violence, unemployment, war, etc.) and disabling conditions (e.g., inadequate income, poverty, disability, alcoholism, etc.) that deter family health throughout life cycle stages. Society needs continuously to assess these forces and conditions so that effective public counter measurements be developed at various levels for early detection of high risk families and social conditions that deter family health.

3) *Restorative Measurement*. Family disintegration when the former measurements failed to produce outcomes in the prescribed period and the impact of family deterioration fatal to both the affected members and society at large, restorative measurements provide specific resources needed to revitalize the capacity of family functioning either internal or external to the family systems by mobilizing appropriate resources. Both structural and functional levels of restoration need to be considered. For instance, the abandoned children are placed in the nurturing homes of adoptive or foster families. Tour of duty soldiers' families are assisted with supportive networks of military and civilian neighbors curing their prolonged absence. Incarcerated families can be helped to preserve family connection rights. Dispersed families who are suffering from a prolonged trauma of loss from war, economic or political forces, need to be assisted to resolve both structural and functional issues inherent in their relational systems. Family therapy approaches in addition to other sensitive social provisions including legal, religious, and medical services can play instrumental roles to heal many family emotional scars and wounds, causing family systems dysfunctional.

The current political climate in the U. S. is on debate for family policy as one of national political agenda. Although both sides of liberal and conservative political communities agree the importance of healthy families for children, there are many conflicting arguments about the definitions of families, structural restoration vs. equality advocacy debate, and critical debate among family policy scholars and practitioners on the issues of adoption, placement of children, gender role, and family violence (Zimmerman, 1992). The absence of comprehensive family policies in the U. S. and conflicting debate on family matters is still reflective of American dilemma in defining the family system and in advancing social policies in support of families (Ford Foundation, 1989).

Family Systems Theories as the Guiding Frameworks for Family Welfare

The global transition of the family and the issues that are challenging families today indicates that new social and technological realities continually force the family to adapt (Anderson, 1997). Multicultural family structure, changing socio-demographical trends in America, and diverse family theories in sociological and psychological literature make it more complex to come up with a unified definition of family system (Ingoldsby & Smith, 1995).

For the purpose of this paper's frame of reference on family systems, three theoretical frameworks are selected in understanding its contextual, ecological and developmental perspectives: Family System Theory (Broderick, 1993), Human Ecology Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1986), and Family Development Theory (Duvall, 1988; Rodgers and White, 1993).

The Family System Theory encompasses the processes of connectedness and transactional permeability between the family internal subsystems (i.e., an individual family member, marital and/or parental dyadic system, and sibling relationships) and the external larger social systems such as the extended kin networks, neighborhood, school, workplaces, and other institutions (economic, legal, health, religion, social welfare, and like). This perspective allows not only the application of micro problem solving approaches to family issues, but also emphasizes macro social policy undertakings in strengthening the family in order that the integration of family members and units into the larger community and culture can be facilitated (Ingoldsby & Smith, 1995; Keeling. & Piercy, 2007).

Human Ecology Theory focuses on human-environment linkages that sustain the "life support system dependent on the natural environment for physical sustenance and on the social environment for human contact and meaning" (Bubolz & Sontag 1993 in Ibid, p. 13). Unlike other theories, it posits that "all human populations are interdependent with the earth's resources, so human quality of life cannot be considered apart from the health of the world's ecosystem" (Bubolz-Sontag, 1993 in Ibid, p. 13). The components of this theory consist of the natural physical-biological environment (e.g., climate, animals, water, and plants); the social-cultural environments encompassing human social networks --neighbors and community, cultural constructions (e.g., laws, values, and norms), and social and economic institutions; and the human-built environments (e.g., roads, farms and cities) (Ibid, p. 14). This theory upholds a social commitment toward 'human betterment' in terms of economic adequacy, justice, freedom, and peace. It also provides "a framework to analyze the interactions between human

development and social conditions such as poverty at all eco-systems levels, including the individual, family, community, and society,” thus, it “could result in public policies, institutional programs, and community action plans at each level to alleviate such problems” (Ibid, p. 15).

Family Development Theory provides a framework to understand the process of change in families as they go through a predictable sequence of family life-cycle stages that are precipitated by family members’ biological, social, and psychological needs. It also recognizes the importance of social and historical context for family development. Most families go through the following seven family life-cycle stages: (1) Newly established couple (Childless); (2) Childbearing families (infants and preschoolers); (3) Families with school children (one or more of school age); (4) Families with secondary school children (one or more in adolescence); (5) Families with young adults (one or more over 18); (6) Families in middle years (children launched); and (7) Aging families (parents in retirement) Family role changes emerge to help families make transition to new stages and to meet the needs and developmental tasks at each stage. A crisis may result from the significant role alterations and family reorganization (Mattessich & Hill, 1987 cited in Ibid, p. 15). Because this model was based on a ‘model’ course of family development, it is criticized for not considering the enormous variation in family structure and experiences. However, there is “cross-cultural evidence that the ordering and sequencing of family development is universal, whereas the content of family roles and social expectations of families may vary culturally and historically” (Ibid, p. 16).

From the lenses of the aforementioned family systems framework, it is important to recognize the emerging concept of family resilience from a strengths perspective in order to deconstruct the prevailing negative views on ailing, dependent and vulnerable families affected by the destructive forces of natural and social economic environments, neglect of public commitment, and personal accountability. Masten (2001) contends that children sustain resilience from a set of global factors including “connection to competent and caring adults in the family and community, cognitive and self-regulating skills, a positive view of oneself, and motivation to be effective in the environment” (cited in Golbenberg & Golbenberg, 2008, p. 10). Walsh (2003) identifies some key family processes of resilience including a positive belief system, organizational processes, and communication and problem-solving processes. Even in poor families, resilience is facilitated if the family members maintain positive self regard (e.g., self worth, dignity and purpose) and a sense of self-control rather than viewing themselves as

helpless victims of an uncaring society (Aponte, 1999, cited in Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2008, p. 12).

THE U. S. SOCIAL WELFARE POLICIES IN SUPPORT OF FAMILIES

Major Family Welfare Policies in the U. S.

The following chart contains public social welfare policies at a federal level in support of families and children.

Year	Law	Objective
1911	(no federal law but all states have Workers' Compensation laws)	Since 1911, every State has adopted a workers' compensation law, but there are no national standards for this system. The goal of workers' compensation programs is to provide prompt, adequate benefits to injured workers' while at the same time limiting employers' liabilities. Workers' compensation has become a substantial component of the U.S. social insurance system and a significant element of the overall cost of employment.
1930's and on	Federal Housing Assistance	
1935	Old Age, Survivors and Disabled Insurance Program Social Security Act	The passage of the Social Security Act (the Act), signed into law August 14, 1935. This law established two social insurance programs on a national scale to help meet the risks of old age and unemployment: a Federal system of old-age benefits for retired workers who had been employed in industry and commerce, and a Federal-State system of unemployment insurance. The choice of old age and unemployment as the risks to be covered by social insurance was a natural development, since the Depression had wiped out much of the lifetime savings of the aged and reduced opportunities for gainful employment. The Act also provided Federal grants-in-aid to the States for the means-tested programs of Old-Age Assistance and Aid to the Blind, which were replaced by the Supplemental Security Income program that was enacted in 1972. These programs supplemented the incomes of persons who were either ineligible for Social Security (Old-Age and Survivors Insurance (OASI)) or whose benefits could not provide a basic living. The intent of Federal participation was to encourage States to adopt such programs. The law established other Federal grants to enable States to extend and strengthen maternal and child health and welfare services. These latter grants became the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program, which was replaced in 1996 with a new block grant program, Temporary Assistance for

		Needy Families. The Act also provided Federal grants to States for public health and vocational rehabilitation services. Provisions for these grants were later removed from the Social Security Act and incorporated into other legislation.
1935	Unemployment Insurance (Public Law 74-271) Part of OASDI	The program has two main objectives: (1) to provide temporary and partial wage replacement to involuntarily unemployed workers who were recently employed; and (2) to help stabilize the economy during recessions.
1956	Disability Insurance	Benefits were provided for severely disabled workers aged 50 or older and for adult disabled children of deceased or retired workers.
1958	OASDI	In 1958, the Social Security Act was further amended to provide benefits for dependents of disabled workers similar to those already provided for dependents of retired workers.
1960	OASDI	In 1960, the age 50 requirement for disabled worker benefits was removed.
1964	Food Stamp Act (there had been some pilot programs previously)	Food stamps are designed primarily to increase the food purchasing power of eligible low-income households to a point where they can buy a nutritionally adequate low-cost diet. Participating households are expected to devote 30 percent of their counted monthly cash income to food purchases. ¹ Food stamp benefits then make up the difference between the household's expected contribution to its food costs and an amount judged to be sufficient to buy an adequate low-cost diet. This amount, the maximum food stamp benefit, is set at the level of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's lowest cost food plan (the Thrifty Food Plan or TFP), varied by household size, and adjusted annually for inflation. Thus, a participating household with no counted cash income receives the maximum monthly allotment for its household size while a household with some counted income receives a lesser allotment, normally reduced from the maximum at the rate of 30 cents for each dollar of counted income.
1967	OASDI	The 1967 amendments provided disability benefits for widows and widowers aged 50 or older.
1972	OASDI	The 1972 amendments provided for automatic cost-of-living increases in benefits tied to increases in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and created the delayed retirement credit, which increased benefits for workers who retire after the full retirement age (FRA) (then age 65).

1972	Supplemental Security Income	<i>Replaced Old Age Insurance and Aid to the Blind.</i> These programs supplemented the incomes of persons who were either ineligible for Social Security (Old-Age and Survivors Insurance (OASI)) or whose benefits could not provide a basic living.
1974	Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act P.L. 93-247	<i>From www.childwelfare.gov</i> CAPTA provides Federal funding to States in support of prevention, assessment, investigation, prosecution, and treatment activities and also provides grants to public agencies and nonprofit organizations for demonstration programs and projects. Additionally, CAPTA identifies the Federal role in supporting research, evaluation, technical assistance, and data collection activities; establishes the Office on Child Abuse and Neglect; and mandates Child Welfare Information Gateway. CAPTA also sets forth a minimum definition of child abuse and neglect.
1974	Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act	<i>From www.buildingblocksforyouth.org</i> The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDPA) of 1974 provides the major source of federal funding to improve states' juvenile justice systems. The JJDPA was developed with a broad consensus that children should not have contact with adults in jails and other institutional settings and that status offenders* should not be placed in secure detention. Under the JJDPA and its subsequent re-authorizations, in order to receive federal funds, states are required to maintain these core protections for children.
1974	The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)	The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (the WIC Program) provides food assistance, nutrition risk screening, and related services (e.g., nutrition education and breastfeeding support) to low-income pregnant and postpartum women and their infants, as well as to low-income children up to age 5. Participants in the program must have family income at or below 185 percent of poverty, and must be judged to be nutritionally at risk.
1974	The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)	The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (the WIC Program) provides food assistance, nutrition risk screening, and related services (e.g., nutrition education and breastfeeding support) to low-income pregnant and postpartum women and their infants, as well as to low-income children up to age 5. Participants in the program must have family income at or below 185 percent of poverty, and must be judged to be nutritionally at risk.

1975	Earned Income Tax Credit EIC; Code sec. 32	<p>From the Center on Budget Policy and Priorities:</p> <p>“One of the key goals of the EITC is to “make work pay” to reward low-wage work by reducing the taxes that low-wage workers pay on their earnings and by supplementing their wages, and to bring a family with a full-time minimum-wage worker to the poverty line so the family does not have to raise its children in poverty.”</p> <p>The EIC is available to low-income working taxpayers. Three separate schedules apply. Taxpayers with one qualifying child may claim a credit in 2003 of 34 percent of their earnings up to \$7,490, resulting in a maximum credit of \$2,547. The maximum credit is available for those with earnings between \$7,490 and \$13,730 (\$14,730 if married filing jointly). The credit begins to phase down at a rate of 15.98 percent of earnings above \$13,730 (\$14,730 if married filing jointly). The credit is phased down to \$0 at \$33,692 of earnings (\$34,692 if married filing jointly). Taxpayers with more than one qualifying child may claim a credit in 2003 of 40 percent of earnings up to \$10,510, resulting in a maximum credit of \$4,204. The maximum credit is available for those with earnings between \$10,510 and \$13,730 (\$14,720 if married filing jointly). The credit begins to phase down at a rate of 21.06 percent of earnings above \$13,730 (\$14,730 if married filing jointly). The credit is phased down to \$0 at \$33,692 of earnings (\$34,692 if married filing jointly). Taxpayers with no qualifying children may claim a credit if they are over age 24 and below age 65. The credit is 7.65 percent of earnings up to \$4,990, resulting in a maximum credit of \$382. The maximum credit is available for those with incomes between \$4,990 and \$6,240 (\$7,240 if married filing jointly). The credit begins to phase down at a rate of 7.65 percent of earnings above \$6,240 (\$7,240 if married filing jointly) resulting in a \$0 credit at \$11,230 of earnings (\$12,230 if married filing jointly).</p>
1975	Child Support Enforcement Act	<p>The Child Support Enforcement (CSE) and Paternity Establishment program, enacted in 1975, was a response by Congress to reduce public expenditures on welfare by obtaining support from noncustodial parents on an ongoing basis, to help non-AFDC families get support so they could stay off public assistance, and to establish paternity for children born outside marriage so child support could be obtained for them.</p> <p>The 1975 legislation (Public Law 93-647) added a new part D to title IV of the Social Security Act. This statute, as amended, authorizes Federal matching funds to be used for enforcing</p>

		support obligations by locating nonresident parents, establishing paternity, establishing child support awards, and collecting child support payments. Since 1981, child support agencies have also been permitted to collect spousal support on behalf of custodial parents, and in 1984 they were required to petition for medical support as part of most child support orders.
1975	Education for Handicapped Children Act Not clear when this switched to... Individuals with Disabilities Education Act	It is the purpose of this Act to assure that all handicapped children have available to them, within the time periods specified in section 612(2) (B). a free appropriate public education which emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs, to assure that the rights of handicapped children and their parents or guardians are protected, to assist States and localities to provide for the education of all handicapped children and to assess and assure the effectiveness of efforts to educate handicapped children. Idea added the IEP: The act requires that public schools create an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for each student who is found to be eligible under the both the federal and state eligibility/disability standards. The IEP is the cornerstone of a student's educational program. It specifies the services to be provided and how often, describes the student's present levels of performance and how the student's disabilities affect academic performance, and specifies accommodations and modifications to be provided for the student.[
1977	OASDI	The 1977 amendments changed the method of benefit computation to ensure stable earnings replacement rates over time.
1978	Indian Child Welfare Act	Congressional declaration of policy The Congress hereby declares that it is the policy of this Nation to protect the best interests of Indian children and to promote the stability and security of Indian tribes and families by the establishment of minimum Federal standards for the removal of Indian children from their families and the placement of such children in foster or adoptive homes which will reflect the unique values of Indian culture, and by providing for assistance to Indian tribes in the operation of child and family service programs.
1980	Adoption Assistance and	From the Library of Congress summaries:

	Child Welfare Act	A bill to amend the Social Security Act to make needed improvements in the child welfare and social services programs, to strengthen and improve the program of Federal support for foster care of needy and dependent children, to establish a program of Federal support to encourage adoptions of children with special needs, and for other purposes.
1993	Family Preservation and Support Services	<p>From www.archerspite.org</p> <p>The Family Preservation and Support Services program is the first major change to Title IV-B since the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980, P.L. 96-272, which was intended to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevent the unnecessary separation of children from their families • Improve the quality of care and services to children and their families • Ensure permanency for children by reunifying them with their parents or through adoption or another permanent living arrangement <p>For a wide variety of reasons, these goals have not been fully realized. Social, cultural, and economic changes have affected the number of families referred to child welfare agencies and the severity of their problems. Among these changes are an increase in substance abuse, community violence, poverty, and homelessness. Reports of child abuse, particularly child sexual abuse, and neglect have also risen dramatically.</p>
1994	Multi-Ethnic Placement Act	<p>From www.acf.hs.gov</p> <p>The Multiethnic Placement Act (MEPA) was enacted in 1994 amid spirited and sometimes contentious debate about transracial adoption and same-race placement policies. At the heart of this debate is a desire to promote the best interests of children by ensuring that they have permanent, safe, stable, and loving homes that will meet their individual needs. This desire is thwarted by the persistent increases in the number of children within the child protective system waiting for, but often not being placed in, adoptive families. Of particular concern are the African American and other minority children who are dramatically over-represented at all stages of this system, wait far longer than Caucasian children for adoption, and are at far greater risk of never experiencing a permanent home. Among the many factors that contribute to placement delays and denials, Congress found that the most salient are racial and</p>

		<p>ethnic matching policies and the practices of public agencies which have historically discouraged individuals from minority communities from becoming foster or adoptive parents. MEPA addressed these concerns by prohibiting the use of a child's or a prospective parent's race, color, or national origin to delay or deny the child's placement and by requiring diligent efforts to expand the number of racially and ethnically diverse foster and adoptive parents.</p>
1997	<p>Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 Public Law 105-89</p>	<p>ASFA embodies a number of key principles that must be considered in order to implement the law:</p> <p>The safety of children is the paramount concern that must guide all child welfare services.</p> <p>Foster care is a temporary setting and not a place for children to grow up.</p> <p>Permanency planning efforts for children should begin as soon as a child enters foster care and should be expedited by the provision of services to families.</p> <p>The child welfare system must focus on results and accountability.</p> <p>Innovative approaches are needed to achieve the goals of safety, permanency and well-being.</p>
1997	<p>State Children's Health Insurance Program</p>	<p>From www.ncls.gov</p> <p>The State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), created by the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, enacted Title XXI of the Social Security Act and allocated about \$20 billion over ten years to help states insure more children. The law authorizes states to provide health care coverage to "targeted low-income children" who are not eligible for Medicaid and who are uninsured. States receive an enhanced federal match (greater than the state's Medicaid match) and have three years to expend each year's allotment.</p>
1999	<p>OASDI</p>	<p>The 1999 amendments reformed certain provisions under the DI Program, specifically to create stronger incentives and better supports for individuals to work.</p>

1996	Temporary Aid to Needy Families	<p>Enacted in August 1996 after three years of debate, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) (P.L. 104-193) repealed the 61-year old program of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and created the block grant program of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in its place. The law entitles States to fixed block grants (\$16.5 billion annually) through fiscal year 2002, to operate programs of their own design, but imposes work-trigger time limits, lifetime benefit-cutoff time limits, and minimum work participation rates. Within limits, it allows States to reduce their own spending on behalf of needy children. The 1996 law also sharply expands funding for childcare.</p> <p>Frustration with the character, size, and cost of AFDC rolls contributed to the dramatic decision by Congress to “end welfare as we know it.” Enrollment had soared to an all-time peak in 1994, covering 5 million families and more than one-eighth of U.S. children. More than half of AFDC children were born outside marriage, and three-fourths had an able-bodied parent who lived away from home. Almost half of the families had received benefits for more than 5 years, counting repeat spells. Benefit costs peaked in fiscal year 1994 at \$22.8 billion (\$12.5 billion in Federal funds, \$10.3 billion in State/local funds). Some policymakers urged that Congress put a cap on AFDC funds to control costs. Some maintained that offering permanent help for needy children in single-parent families had encouraged family breakup, enabled non-marital births, and fostered long-term dependency.</p> <p>The size and character of the welfare rolls have changed under TANF. This is illustrated by comparing FY1996 AFDC data with FY2001 TANF data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Caseload size in terms of families dropped 53 percent, from 4.5 million to 2.1 million (see Table 7-7). □ The number of child-only cases dropped from 978,000 to 787,000, but their share of all cases climbed from 21.5 percent to 37.2 percent (see Table 7-29). <p>7-4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ The share of adults with paid jobs more than doubled, from 11.3 percent to 25.8 percent (see Chart 7-5). □ The share of non-Hispanic white adult recipients declined from 39.7 percent to 32.2 percent (see Table 7-30). □ The number of teen parents who receive welfare declined 50 percent, from 242,913 to 122,265, but their share of all

		<p>recipients rose from 1.9 percent to 2.3 percent (see Table 7-29).</p> <p>□ The share of AFDC/TANF dollars spent on cash welfare declined from about 73 percent to 44 percent. (Chart 7-3 shows 2001 spending breakdown.) The caseload now includes many families who receive services, including work support, rather than cash.</p> <p>Section 401(a) of the Social Security Act says that the purpose of TANF is to increase flexibility of States in operating a program designed to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives; 2. End the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage; 3. Prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies and establish annual numerical goals for preventing and reducing the incidence of these pregnancies; and 4. Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.
2001	No Child Left Behind	<p>From www.ed.gov</p> <p><i>No Child Left Behind</i> is based on stronger accountability for results, more freedom for states and communities, proven education methods, and more choices for parents.</p> <p>Stronger Accountability for Results</p> <p>Under <i>No Child Left Behind</i>, states are working to close the achievement gap and make sure all students, including those who are disadvantaged, achieve academic proficiency. Annual state and school district report cards inform parents and communities about state and school progress. Schools that do not make progress must provide supplemental services, such as free tutoring or after-school assistance; take corrective actions; and, if still not making adequate yearly progress after five years, make dramatic changes to the way the school is run.</p> <p>More Freedom for States and Communities</p> <p>Under <i>No Child Left Behind</i>, states and school districts have unprecedented flexibility in how they use federal education funds. For example, it is possible for most school districts to transfer up to 50 percent of the federal formula grant funds they receive under the Improving Teacher Quality State Grants,</p>

		<p>Educational Technology, Innovative Programs, and Safe and Drug-Free Schools programs to any one of these programs, or to their Title I program, without separate approval. This allows districts to use funds for their particular needs, such as hiring new teachers, increasing teacher pay, and improving teacher training and professional development.</p> <p>Proven Education Methods</p> <p><i>No Child Left Behind</i> puts emphasis on determining which educational programs and practices have been proven effective through rigorous scientific research. Federal funding is targeted to support these programs and teaching methods that work to improve student learning and achievement. In reading, for example, <i>No Child Left Behind</i> supports scientifically based instruction programs in the early grades under the Reading First program and in preschool under the Early Reading First program.</p> <p>More Choices for Parents</p> <p>Parents of children in low-performing schools have new options under <i>No Child Left Behind</i>. In schools that do not meet state standards for at least two consecutive years, parents may transfer their children to a better-performing public school, including a public charter school, within their district. The district must provide transportation, using Title I funds if necessary. Students from low-income families in schools that fail to meet state standards for at least three years are eligible to receive supplemental educational services, including tutoring, after-school services, and summer school. Also, students who attend a persistently dangerous school or are the victim of a violent crime while in their school have the option to attend a safe school within their district.</p>
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Characteristics of the U. S. Family Welfare Policies: A Critical Assessment

Based on literature review, the characteristics of American family welfare policies are critically examined.

- Moralistic Assumption. Social policy regarding families reflects the long-standing

assumption that individuals and families experience hardship primarily due to fault of their own, and this assumption continues to restrict public spending on social programs to support families (Ozawa, 2004). The U.S. has not developed a comprehensive or integrated family social policy (adopting an incremental approach instead), and spending on family support programs remains inadequate to meet needs. Compared to Sweden (a nation known for its comprehensive family social policy as well as substantial expenditure on family benefits), the U.S. spends only a fraction on family support programs. Moreover, Swedish family policy is “inclusive, enabling, developmental, and nonmoralistic” focusing on “horizontal equity” (equality between gender and among children, regardless of family structure) in order support individuals in the roles of parent and worker, to the benefit of all of Swedish society. In contrast, U.S. family policy centers on “vertical equity” and tends to deal with social problems after they arise (e.g., providing benefits after a family has become poor), rather than anticipating and addressing them proactively (Ozawa, 2004).

- Curative Approach. Other characteristics of U.S. family policy are its limited scope and expenditure, reliance on income and earnings testing (which results in stigmatized, rather than universal, programs), and lack of core family supports, including family allowances for children and paid parental leave (Ozawa, 2004).

- Accessibility Barriers. Low-income families are increasingly dependent on government supports, but significant barriers exist that limit eligibility and accessibility. Simplifying application procedures, increasing families’ knowledge through outreach, and coordination across programs could effectively reduce some of these barriers (The Urban Institute, 2007).

- Variability. There is wide variability across states in terms of the implementation of welfare programs, including eligibility rules, application procedures, and accessibility for supportive services (Bok & Simmons, 2002; The Urban Institute, 2007).

- Discrepancy. After the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, individuals and families transitioning from the welfare system (due to the implementation of time limits and sanctions) experienced increased financial hardship and decreased resources and access to medical care (Lindhorst & Mancoske, 2006).

- Punitive Sanctions. The 1996 welfare reform laws introduced sanctions (e.g., reduction or termination of cash benefits) for failure to comply with the new work requirements. States have considerable flexibility in the nature (e.g., partial versus full) and implementation (e.g.,

strict versus discretionary) of sanctions, and so these can vary widely. The philosophies underlying welfare sanctions include both *incentives* (e.g., assumed to motivate recipients' personal responsibility and compliance with work requirements) and *punishment* (e.g., designed to diminish noncompliance, as well as motivation to apply for benefits) (Wu, 2007). Because welfare recipients who have been sanctioned—particularly those receiving more severe sanctions—are more likely to leave the welfare system without a job (or at most, with a low-earnings job), sanctions appear to function more as punishment than to function as incentives to work.

- *Paradoxical Consequences.* Focus is often on reducing welfare caseloads and increasing work participation, and (often due to lack of information or accessibility) families often lose their income as well as other supportive services (e.g., health insurance, food stamps, childcare) at the same time upon the transition from welfare to work (Bok & Simmons, 2002).

- *Lack of Continuity.* In both the U.S. and Japan, welfare policies have been successful in increasing work participation rates in single mothers. However, there is a great need for continued supports as former welfare recipients merge with the working poor. As illustrated in Japan, high work rates do not tend to lift these families from poverty, and there is still a need for supportive programs—so the form of support merely changes from cash assistance to supportive services and in-kind benefits (Ezawa & Fujiwara, 2005). Reducing cash assistance is not adequate in the absence of a continued safety net of support, as well as policies to address the causes of continued low incomes.

- *Disconnectedness.* Coinciding with the significant decreases in welfare caseloads since the 1996 welfare reforms has been an increase in “disconnected” individuals (often single mothers), or those who are neither receiving welfare nor working (Blank, 2007). Often, these individuals face significant barriers to employment, yet receive neither adequate employment supports nor flexibility regarding work requirements.

- *Lack of Empowerment.* Women moving from welfare to work have identified both benefits (increased income; increased self-esteem, feelings of independence, and social integration; and the ability to model work and self-sufficiency values for children) and costs (working without increased income; overload, exhaustion, and stress; and less time and energy to be with, supervise, and support children) associated with this transition (London, Scott, Edin, & Hunter, 2004). New policy initiatives should address these costs and benefits in order to develop

programs that will allow parents to work as well as meet their family obligations and maintain a healthy family life.

- *Inadequate Provision for Quality of Living.* Although governmental supports for low-income, working families increased following welfare reform, families with children headed by low-income, single females subsequently had more expenditures on materials necessary for working rather than on those that could support child well-being, such as childcare or learning/enrichment activities (Kaushal, Gao, & Waldfogel, 2007).

- *Unclear Definition.* As noted by Hawkins (2005), “using self-sufficiency as a social welfare policy goal results in programs and evaluations that are unclear, inequitable, dichotomous, and limited in scope. There is little agreement in how “self-sufficiency” should be defined or measured. Further, although welfare caseloads have decreased, there has been less success in helping low-income people obtain appropriate, stable employment and improve their educational and socioeconomic circumstances—perhaps more appropriate indicators of “self-sufficiency” (Hawkins, 2005).

- *Need for Comprehensive Goal.* Most social welfare policies have emphasized the goal of self-sufficiency. However, a more holistic and lasting alternative is the notion of Personal and Family Sustainability, which aims for sustainable communities and “*maximiz(es) full human potential to establish long-term economic, physical, psychological, and social well-being for individuals and their families*” (Hawkins, 2005).

AMERICAN DILEMMA

The United States is relatively a young nation, 260 years old, when compared to the long history of European (United Kingdom or Sweden) and Asian countries (Japan and Korea), and yet she has maintained the third largest population (303 million, today) after China and India. The changing makeup of the U. S. population from 2005 to 2050 (projected) largely driven primarily by immigration is as follows (USA Today, 2/12/2008, 3A):

Race/Ethnicity

- White (non-Hispanic) 67% to 47%
- Hispanic 14% to 29%
- Black (non-Hispanic) 13% to 13%
- Asian (non-Hispanic) 5% to 9%

Like other countries cited above, America is aging with fast growing elderly, thus the gap between the number of working-age people and the children and seniors who depend on them will widen as boomers age (Ibid).

As a superpower, militarily and economically, the U. S. consumes its vast resources in the operations of war, national security, and global defense infrastructures, in addition to expanding the capital economic structures worldwide. Since the 9/11 attacks, the Bush Government has adopted a more repressive and reactive stance toward alien, legal or illegal immigrants, and has alienated her allies from her lack of cooperative and diplomatic engagement in resolving cultural conflicts in the Arab region of Islam and elsewhere (e.g., the war in Iraq, Iran, N. Korea, Middle East.). While it is essential to secure economic stability and growth, social welfare issues and challenges are complex in nature as they are interwoven with dominant economic, political and ideological forces and priorities. It requires a high level of integration and cooperation between and among different systems of Government and various sectors of voluntary and civic organizations in establishing national and global strategies in ameliorating social conditions of poverty, disparity, oppression, violence, hate crime, indulgence, inequality and injustice, and destruction. The most compelling dilemma facing American society with regards to family welfare policies and practices includes:

- Exclusive Individualism out of balance with Inclusive Communalism
- Fragmentation of Family and Social Welfare Systems without Coordinated Comprehensive Social Policies
- Crisis Based Reactive Approaches rather than Promoting Preventive and Proactive Approaches to Solution.

The policy recommendations of the Executive Panel of Ford Foundation Project on Social Welfare and the American Future (Ford Foundation, 1989) are transformative and visionary as they provide what American policy makers need to consider in building a more comprehensive family welfare policy for all ages.

LIFE CYCLE

Infancy and Childhood: A Time to Sow

RECOMMENDED POLICY AREAS

- Investing in Infants
- Extending Prenatal Care
- Better Nutrition for Young Children
- More and Better Preschool Program
- Improving Day Care
- Stronger Child Welfare Services

Young Adulthood: Preparing for a World of Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Reducing School Dropouts Rates Collaborations Between Schools and Businesses -Integrating Remedial Education, Work Experience, and Life Options Services -Reducing the Number of Teen Pregnancies -Coordinating Efforts
The Working Years: Increasing Economic Opportunity and Social Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Economic Growth: A Necessary but Not Sufficient Condition -Improving the Return on Work -Assuring Health-Care Coverage -Reducing Unemployment and Welfare Programs -Welfare That Assure Adequate Incomes and Work -Community Programs
Old Age: A Time to Reap and Sow Again	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Protecting the Weakest Today -Protecting the Many Tomorrow -Rescuing Medicare -Creating Protection for the Long-Term Care

The Panel in its summary of recommendation states: “There is no lack of sound ideas. All that is needed is the political will (Ibid, p. 87).

GLOBAL IMPLICATIONS

Building a Global Agenda for Family Welfare Policies

We need to ask public policy makers and our students: How can we better socialize and care for our succeeding generations to circumvent the misuse of global resources and to redirect the social agenda in building the global community of healthy children, youth, and families into the third millennium?

Child and family welfare is no longer the domain of any single state as the world is increasingly becoming interconnected in governing human affairs from economic to political realities. John Naisbitt (author of *Megatrends 2000*), in his recent book, *Global Paradox* (1994), shed his optimism towards people’s greater participation in economic growth and sharing the wealth in lifting people out of poverty in the case of Argentina (p. 352). While such a view is promising, the recent economic collapse in Asia, including Indonesia and S. Korea, clearly demonstrated how the global economic realities (e.g. the International Monetary Fund) have

brought devastating impact on the lives of many nations, and particularly on those who lost their livelihood (e.g., increased rate of suicide in case of S. Korea, and civil disorder in Indonesia). Ethnic bashing and religious conflicts in the Middle East, natural disasters and famine, chemical toxins and environmental hazards, HIV/AIDS epidemics, forced migration and refugees in Africa Asia, and South America, war and territorial conflicts, effects of global warming, poverty and other emerging issues continue to challenge the credibility of dominant paradigms in governing the world resources and the priorities of public policies across nations.

The survival of the human race ultimately rests with reshaping the global order to preserve and promote the well-being of human families and children, and is the most valued institutional goal for all people of all nations.

Raising Collective Conscience of Human Families in Crisis

Over the years those who have contributed to the promotion of family health—family life educators, family therapy practitioners, family researchers and theorists—have all advanced our knowledge and skills in reshaping human families when there exist paradoxical dilemmas or dysfunctional patterns within or outside of the family system. From an ecosystems perspective, families become vulnerable when they are interfaced with outer forces including economic realities (e.g., unemployment), cultural change (e.g., intergenerational value conflicts), or political pressures (e.g., geographical relocations, migration).

While these efforts at micro and mezzo levels do serve certain societal purposes (social production and control), what we are witnessing in current global trends is generational discontinuity among highly industrialized societies (Donati, 1993) and an intergenerational derailment phenomenon among the migrating families across different geographical and cultural environments as they pursue opportunities and better life (Lee, 1989).

Eliminating Toxic Elements from Family Environments and Social Conditions

To reshape human families from a family work perspective, reduction and alteration of at least the following patterns of human behaviors and social conditions are strongly indicated (Downs, Costin & McFadden, 1996).

- Violence, whether it is domestic or not
- Abuse of sexual, conjugal incestuous, or other type

- Neglect of parental/guardian responsibility, primary or substitute
- Transmission of pathology, physical or psychological
- Unplanned pregnancy, minor or adults
- Infant mortality
- Poverty, both levels of subsistence and economic structure
- Gender inequity, overt or covert
- Generational inequity, between generations and for different age groups
 - Discriminatory culture/environments, toward race, nationality, religion, gender, disability, etc.
- Ecological malaise, toxic, unsafe environments
- Public policies and laws detrimental to children and family health
- Violation of child rights, parental rights and human rights

Developing Collaborative Strategies to Promote Global Family Welfare

Donati (1993) addresses a number of new perspectives in promoting the welfare of children and families which can serve a wider global community. These include, but are not limited to:

- Promotion of better communication on family policies, again including, but not limited to: interventions on women's condition and motherhood; income and social security, particularly in cases of broken and at risk families; child-care services and provisions.
- Creating social designs for family- and children-focused policies:
 - 1) The general goals aimed at the reform of social security systems according to family life cycle and with respect to the number of social conditions of their members;
 - 2) The strategies designed to community-based intervention with collaboration of both statutory and informal aid, the development of social organizations mediating the linkages between families and political authorities, intersections in social policies in meeting different needs, and relational guidance to design plans of intervention;
 - 3) The specific measures for the intervention in favor of young couples, the economic support of families, family and work, family and welfare services, the enlargement of social entitlements for children, and the institution of political bodies which represent family associations at the regional, state, and community levels (pp. 59-63).

Many countries including the U. S. have tested various policies and measures aimed at promoting family and child welfare, but few efforts have gone into promoting a global perspective in integrating various social policies aimed at strengthening the family system as the central focal point. Hong (2008) formulates a framework to incorporate global economic realities in mobilizing social welfare sectors to build a global scheme of balancing the demands of economic and social developments.

CONCLUSION

Social welfare is an instrumentation of societal responses to perverse the most precious social unit worthy to be supported in caring the generations to come. Still, many social issues such as poverty, violence, unemployment, disability, substance abuse, aging, disease, the effects of global warming and other disruptive forces including technology and culture may continue to weaken family stability, as Alvin Toffler predicted. In this era of electronic revolution, he also saw the need for solving the prevailing problem of human alienation in the context of revolution of love, that is, caring for others in need. Government alone cannot provide adequate resources and mechanisms, as witnessed in the social welfare systems of the United States. We need to invest our resources more towards preventive social measures rather than spending them more expensively and inadequately in dealing with the after-fact problems in residual and fragmented ways. National as well as global priority settings in allocating public resources are often reflected in the mindset of politicians and lawmakers, while economic and social realities put pressures on the decision making processes of public policies including social welfare. Advocacy for the promotion of healthy family systems and institutional support in meeting societal purposes of families is an important mission of social welfare sectors including professional education, academic research, practice and policy developments.

In defense of the family system as the foundation of humanity, wherever it exists, families must be preserved and strengthened in order that human spaces protect their survival, provide socialization, and produce responsible and healthy living on the globe. Family welfare then becomes a primary source of societal provision in supporting family to function productively for the common good. When special needs that requires external intervention arise,

the ethical balance must be exercised to the extent that human dignity, rights and responsibilities of family members are duly observed while any harmful consequences must be altered in the works of intervening mechanisms of society. In a final analysis of this paper, the author believes in the divine mystery of creation that family is still the best gift for humanity, where the genesis of caring relationship is rooted in the fulfillment of a societal goal that is safe, just, inclusive, and purposeful toward building a global community of peace, harmony and prosperity.

Political leaders need to come together at a World Summit for the well-being for families and address the economic, social and political problems which made the well-being of families so difficult to achieve. The insights of social scientists and religious leaders could shape the agenda for this important world summit.



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