



UNIVERSITY OF ORAN 2 - MOHAMED BEN AHMED

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**Race, Class, Gender, and the American Welfare State
(1930s-1990s)**

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American Studies

By the doctoral candidate: Aziza TAHAR DJEBBAR **University of Oran 2**

Under the Supervision of: Prof. Belkacem BELMEKKI **University of Oran 2**

Board of Examiners:

President: Neema GHENIM	Professor	University of Oran 2
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Declaration

I, hereby, declare that this work has not already been accepted in substance for any degree, and is not concurrently being submitted in candidature for any other degree.

Aziza TAHAR DJEBBAR

*In the memory of my grandmother Meriem,
and my nephew Wassim, who passed away
because of the Kawasaki Disease
during the pandemic (July 2020).*

To my beloved parents,

To my lovable and lovely three children,

To ALL those who supported me financially and morally since my childhood.

To ALL my teachers: those who are still alive, and those who passed away.

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My Lord! Increase me in knowledge.

— *The Holy Quran* 20: 144.

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine to what extent issues related to gender, class, as well as race have influenced the structure and the evolution of the welfare state in the United States of America by focusing on the Bill Clinton presidency. Simply put, I have attempted to explore implications of racist, classist, and sexist prejudices in Bill Clinton's decision to sign the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), known as "welfare reform", in 1996. That law was passed by the 104th Congress and it was the key domestic policy achievement of the Bill Clinton Administration. Throughout my analysis, I have drawn upon primary sources, written documents, or records such as President Bill Clinton's autobiographical memoir *My Life*, his speeches, radio, or press releases using archives from the Clinton Presidential Library. Besides, I have used passages from his memoir *My Life* and *Putting People First* (with his co-author Al Gore). I have attempted to explain Bill Clinton's approach towards the poor and investigate his arguments, as a "New Democrat", to sign welfare reform by paying particular attention to biased statements or arguments, if any. This dissertation is divided into two main parts. Part one deals with the historical development of "welfare" and the welfare state before the 1990s: from the colonial times to the late 1980s. The second part deals with the development of welfare during the 1990s and throws particular light (in the last chapter, which is the key one) on Bill Clinton's motivations for signing the welfare reform. In sum, this dissertation represents an attempt to problematise the existing academic narratives on welfare policy-making in the United States and provides some nuanced depiction of the ways in which policies are discussed and implemented by state authorities. My contribution to knowledge appears in *Chapter Five*.

Key Words: Bill Clinton's Administration; classism; document analysis; New Democratic Party; racism, sexism, U.S. welfare state; welfare reform.

List of Acronyms

AB: Aid to the Blind

ADC: Aid to Dependent Children

AFDC: Aid to Families with Dependent Children

APTD: Aid to the Permanently and Totally Disabled

BLM: Black Lives Matter

CES: Committee on Economic Security

CVS: Consumer Value Stores

DLC: Democratic Leadership Council

FAP: Family Assistance Plan

FBI: Federal Bureau Intelligence

FSA: Family Support Act

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

GNP: Gross National Product

MNF-I : Multi National Force – Iraq

NORC: National Opinion Research Center

NWRO: National welfare Rights Organisation

OAA: Old Age Assistance

OAI: Old Age Insurance

OASI: Old Age and Survivors Insurance

OCED: The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

OEO: Office of Economic Opportunity

PRWORA: Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act

SSA: Social Security Act

SSI: Supplemental Security Income

SNAP: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programme

TANF: Temporary Assistance to Needy Families

TARP: Toxic Asset Relief Programme

UPS: United Parcel Service

VISTA: Volunteers in Service to America

WIN: Work Incentive Programme

WRA: Work and Responsibility Act

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ملخص

هدفنا في هذه الدراسة هو معرفة مدى تأثير المسائل المتصلة بنوع الجنس والطبقة والعرق على هيكل وتطور دولة الرفاهية في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية بالتركيز على رئاسة بيل كلينتون. بعبارة أخرى، نحاول، نشرح مدى تأثير التحيزات العنصرية أو العرقية أو الطبقيّة أو التعصّب والتمييز بين الرجل والمرأة على القرار الذي اتخذته بيل كلينتون بالتوقيع على قانون التوفيق بين المسؤولية الشخصية وفرص العمل (PRWORA)، المعروف باسم "إصلاح الرعاية الاجتماعية" في عام 1996. أقر الكونغرس الرابع بعد المائة هذا القانون الذي كان بمثابة الإنجاز الرئيسي الذي حققته إدارة بيل كلينتون في مجال السياسة المحلية. نعتد في دراستنا التحليلية المدققة على المصادر الرئيسية والوثائق الخطية والسجلات مثل مذكرات الرئيس بيل كلينتون الذاتية عن سيرته الذاتية وكذا خطاباته في النشرات الإذاعية أو الصحفية باستخدام محفوظات من مكتبة كلينتون الرئاسية الإلكترونية. حيث نستخدم نصوص من مذكراته "حياتي" و"وضع الناس أولاً" (مع مؤلفه المشارك آل غور). نحاول أن نوضح النهج الذي يتبعه بيل كلينتون في التعامل مع الفقراء ونشرح حججه باعتباره "ديمقراطياً جديداً" للتوقيع على إصلاح الرعاية الاجتماعية وإيلاء اهتمام خاص للتصريحات أو الحجج المتحيزة، إن وجدت. تنقسم هذه الأطروحة إلى جزأين رئيسيين. يتناول الجزء الأول التطور التاريخي "Welfare" (و الذي يشير إلى برامج عامة مدعمة من طرف هيكل مؤسسات الحكومة لمساعدة المحتاجين) ودولة الرفاهية الاجتماعية قبل التسعينيات: من العصور الاستعمارية إلى أواخر الثمانينيات. يتناول الجزء الثاني تنمية الرفاهية الاجتماعية أثناء التسعينيات ويلقي الضوء الخاص (في الفصل الأخير، وهو الفصل الرئيسي) على دوافع بيل كلينتون للتوقيع على إصلاح الرفاهية الاجتماعية. وخلاصة القول، هذه الأطروحة محاولة لاضافة للبحوث الأكاديمية القائمة بشأن وضع سياسات الرعاية الاجتماعية في الولايات المتحدة كما تقدم بعض الصور الدقيقة للطرق التي تناقش بها سلطات الدولة السياسات وتنفيذها. ترد مساهمتنا في المعرفة في الفصل الخامس.

الكلمات المفتاحية: بيل كلينتون، التحيز الطبقي، تحليل الوثائق، الحزب الديمقراطي الجديد، العنصرية، التحيز الجنسي، دولة الرفاهية الاجتماعية في الولايات المتحدة، إصلاح الرعاية الاجتماعية.

General Introduction

In 1996, President Bill Clinton, a Democrat and a son of a widowed mother¹ signed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) into law² which ended the sixty-year-old Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). AFDC was replaced by Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), which dictated time limits, work requirements, and block grants for the states.³ Hence, government assistance to the poor through cash assistance, housing, healthcare, and food stamps was brought to an end and the poor were obliged to work. In other words, President Bill Clinton ended Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) a small programme that provided cash assistance for needy families and their children and had been in effect since passage of the Social Security Act of 1935 during the New Deal, the cornerstone of the American welfare state.⁴

The American welfare state is “exceptional” and many scholars believe that its architecture is unique.⁵ The most distinguished American social scientist Harold Wilensky

¹ Bill Clinton, *My Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 1: 4.

² Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, Public Law 104–193.

³ See “Remarks by the President at the Signing of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act,” *Public Papers of the Presidents, William J. Clinton, 1996* (Washington, CD: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1997), 2:1328. See also Bill Clinton, “The New Covenant: Address to Students at Georgetown University,” (October 23, 1991), www.dlcppi.org/speeches/91newcov.htm.

⁴ On the historical origins of the American welfare state since the Colonial Period, see Walter I. Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State: A History of Social Welfare in America*, 6th ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1999). See also, Michael Katz, *Improving Poor People: The Welfare State, the “Underclass”, and Urban Schools as History* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995), 23.

⁵ For a detailed examination of the architecture of the American welfare state, see for example Michael B. Katz, *The Price of Citizenship: Redefining the American Welfare State* (New York: Metropolitan Books, Henry Holt and Company, 2001).

declared in 1965 that, unlike its Western counterparts,⁶ the American welfare state is a “reluctant welfare state.”⁷ It has been described as follows: an “incomplete welfare state”, a “semi-welfare state”, a “welfare state laggard”, a “residual welfare state”, and a “truncated” welfare state.⁸ The United States of America is exceptional because it lacks national health insurance and universal family allowances or paid parental leave.⁹ Besides, it “resembles a massive watch that fails to keep very accurate time. Some of its components are rusty and outmoded; others were poorly designed; some work very well. They were fabricated by different craftsmen who usually did not consult with one another; they interact imperfectly; and at times they work at cross-purposes.”¹⁰ Furthermore, the American welfare state is best described as a “liberal welfare hybrid”.¹¹

There is a large body of literature on the implications of social divisions such as race, gender, and class in the structure and the evolution of the U.S. welfare state. Many scholars believe that race, gender, and class have shaped the formal structure, as well as the development of the American welfare state since the Progressive Era¹² and during the New

⁶ For more details about the European welfare states, see, for instance, Mel Cousins, *European Welfare States: Comparative Perspectives* (London: Sage Publications, 2005).

⁷ See Christopher Howard, *The Welfare State Nobody Knows: Debunking Myths about U.S. Social Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 13.

⁸ Michael Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse: A Social History of Welfare in America*. 2nd ed. (New York: BasicBooks, 1996), x. In his works Christopher Howard challenges the idea that the U.S. welfare state is “unusually small” see Christopher Howard, “Is the American Welfare State Unusually Small?” *Political Science and Politics* 36, no.3 (2003): 411–16; Christopher Howard, *The Welfare State Nobody Knows*, 13. For more details see for example Bruce S. Jansson, *The Reluctant Welfare State*, 4th ed. (Belmont, Wadsworth, 2001); Diane Sainsbury, *Gender Equality and Welfare States* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Robert T. Kudrle and Theodore R. Marmor, “The Development of Welfare States in North America,” in *Development of Welfare States in Europe and America*, eds. Peter Flora and Arnold J. Heidenheimer (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1981); and see also Charles Lockhart, *Gaining Ground: Tailoring Social Programs to American Values* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); Charles Noble, *Welfare as we Knew it: A Political History of the American welfare State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

⁹ Noble, *Welfare as we knew it*, x.; Jill Quadagno, *The Color of Welfare: How Racism Undermined the War on Poverty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 4.

¹⁰ Katz, *The Price of Citizenship*, 10.

¹¹ Anne Daguerra, *Obama's Welfare Legacy: An Assessment of US Anti-Poverty Policies* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2017), loc. 453.

¹² See Linda Gordon, *Pitied but not Entitled: Single Mothers and the History of Welfare, 1890–1935* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1994), 37; see also Deborah E. Ward, *The White Welfare State: the Racialization of U.S. Welfare Policy* (University of Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 2.

Deal¹³. They also mattered during the legislation of welfare reform in 1996.¹⁴

The attack against welfare and the social welfare state has a long story in the United States of America.¹⁵ According to traditional political theorists such as Roy Lubove, Gaston Remlinger, and Seymour Martin Lipset, Americans oppose all kinds of government interventionism as they tend to hold a “liberal” culture and because they are firm believers in individual rights and private property.¹⁶ Thus, early reformers’ attempts to create an American welfare state before the 1930s failed because of such obstacles as “liberal values” or “business power.”¹⁷ American early reformers attacked the intervention of the government to provide social welfare assistance to the poor. Hence, the American welfare state developed, as Daniel Levine puts it, “(its) own version of the capitalist welfare state,” during the New Deal.¹⁸

In the mid–1970s, the assault against welfare had become more and more intense and both conservatives and liberals attacked it.¹⁹ The American welfare state has been

¹³ Throughout this dissertation, I will use the following terms interchangeably: the “welfare state”, the “social welfare state”, and the “social welfare system”.

¹⁴ See Mimi Abramovitz, “Welfare Reform in the United States: Gender, Race, and Class Matter,” *Critical Social Policy* 26, no.2 (May 2006): 336.

¹⁵ See Mimi Abramovitz, *Regulating the Lives of Women: Social Welfare Policy from Colonial Times to the Present*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2018), Abramovitz, “Welfare Reform in the United States,”; see also Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse*. For a more detailed study of the role of gender in welfare policy see Felicia Kornbluh and Gwendolyn Mink, *Ensuring Poverty: Welfare Reform in Feminist Perspective* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania University Press, 2019).

¹⁶ Quadagno, *The Color of Welfare*, 5 ; for the political theorists who defend this liberal view, see for instance, the work of Roy Lubove, *The Struggle for Social Security, 1900–1935* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1986), 2 ; see also Gaston Rimlinger, *Welfare Policy and Industrialization in Europe , America and Russia* (New York: John Wiley, 1971), 62. See also Seymour Martin Lipset, *The Continental Divide: The Values and Institutions of the United States and Canada* (London: Routledge, 1990), 136.

¹⁷ Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and their Mothers: The Historical Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 228. See also, Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse*.

¹⁸ Daniel Levine, *Poverty and Society: The Growth of the American Welfare State in International Comparison* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1988), 283.

¹⁹ A kind of competition took place between the Republican Party and the Democratic Party over women’s issues and women’s votes (over gender in general). See Anne N. Costain, “After Reagan: New Party Attitudes toward Gender,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 515, no.1 (May 1991) :114–25 in *American Feminism: New Issues for a Mature Movement*, ed. Janet K. Boles (Wisconsin : Marquette University, 1991).

criticised by conservative, liberal, as well as radical theorists.²⁰ For conservatives, generous welfare benefits during the 1960s encouraged crime, drug addiction, school dropout, out-of-wedlock births, and laxness among adult men and led to the emergence of the “urban underclass”.²¹ Thus, the welfare state contributed to poverty and moral decay: laziness, dependence, corruption, illegitimacy, and divorce. Charles Murray, an American political scientist, sociologist, and conservative commentator pointed out: “We tried to provide more for the poor and produced more poor instead.” He also claimed: “We tried to remove the barriers to escape from poverty, and inadvertently built a trap.” From Charles Murray’s perspective, welfare or AFDC enables “the poor to behave in the short term in ways that . . . [are] destructive in the long term.”²²

On the other hand, liberals believe that the government must provide equal opportunities for all citizens to access free education, healthcare, employment, as well as income; besides, the state must not intervene in poor peoples’ private lives.²³ Put it in the simplest of words, liberals ask the government to treat all citizens as “equals” and preserve the “human dignity” of poor people.²⁴ Radicals, unlike conservatives and liberals, argue that the fiscal policies of a capitalist welfare state contradict their own purposes.²⁵ For them, capitalism and welfare are a “socially unsavory” and also an “economically unstable” combination.²⁶

Bill Clinton was born and raised in the South, in Arkansas. His five years of political experience as the governor of Arkansas—in a period during which the Jim Crow system of racial segregation was banned—equipped him with the essential strategies to

²⁰ Amy Gutmann, ed., introduction to *Democracy and the Welfare State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 4–5.

²¹ Michael B. Katz, ed., *The “Underclass” Debate: Views from History* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993), 15.

²² Charles Murray, *Losing Ground: American Social Policy, 1950–1980* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 9.

²³ For the liberal arguments of the welfare state see for instance Ronald Dworkin, *A Matter of Principle* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), 181–211; see also Carl Wellman, *Welfare Rights* (Towota, N.J.: Rowman and Allanheld, 1982).

²⁴ Gutmann, *Democracy and the Welfare State*, 5.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ For the radical ideas about the welfare state see for instance Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, *Democracy and Capitalism: Property, Community, and the Contradictions of Modern Social Thought* (New York: Basic Books, 1986).

prepare the groundwork for the presidency.²⁷ As a “New Democrat”, he strongly advocated the idea of welfare reform. He also played a central role in the design of this legislation; therefore, he is recognised as the principal architect of welfare reform.²⁸ Bill Clinton succeeded to tackle the issue of welfare which had been attacked for centuries by Republicans by signing PROWORA. Hence, he made a turning point in the American social welfare policy.

Many scholars have tried to explain Bill Clinton’s objectives in his support and focus on welfare reform. For instance, Martin Carcasson reveals that there were three main interpretations concerning his welfare rhetoric against welfare: the institutional weakness of his presidency because of congressional opposition; his opportunist strategy to win the elections in 1992 and 1996; and finally his law which transformed the “anti-welfare culture” by pushing people on welfare to work.²⁹ The latter strongly attacked the welfare system, partially supported its clients, and emphasised the importance of work and opportunity strategies.³⁰ Mimi Abramovitz demonstrates that race, gender, and class issues mattered in welfare reform during the 1990s. For her, welfare reform legislation was not accidental but a part of the neo-liberal attack against the state.³¹

Michael Nelson draws upon oral history records to explain President Bill Clinton’s objectives behind reforming welfare. Oral history interviews of administration alumni organised by the University of Virginia’s Miller Center as part of the Willam J. Clinton Presidential History Project provide, to some extent, a clearer idea about Clinton’s administration and his contribution to welfare reform.³² Two main advantages of oral history, written materials or documents lack: scholars can ask questions of interviewees,

²⁷ Patrick J. Maney, *Bill Clinton: New Gilded Age President* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2016), 9.

²⁸ Philip A. Klinkner, “Bill Clinton and the Politics of the New Liberalism,” in *Without Justice for All: The New Liberalism and our Retreat from Racial Equality*, ed. A. Reed (Boulder, CO.: Westview Press, 1999), 19.

²⁹ Martin Carcasson, “Ending Welfare as We Know It: President Clinton and the Rhetorical Transformation of the Anti-Welfare Culture,” *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 9, no. 4 (2006): 657.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 656.

³¹ Abramovitz, “Welfare Reform in the United States,” 336.

³² See Michael Nelson, “Bill Clinton and Welfare Reform: A Perspective from Oral History,” *Congress & the Presidency* 42, no.3 (2015): 243.

seeking explanations, clarifications, and comments on contradictions with the written records or the accounts of others; fewer written materials concerning sensitive matters exist—such as the issue of welfare reform.³³ Nelson believes that President Bill Clinton did not sign welfare reform legislation in 1996 for immediate political considerations but for long-term ones.³⁴ For the latter, there were two important facts about his concern vis-à-vis welfare policy: first, welfare reform had deep roots in his life and career; second, his political considerations were long-term and not immediate ones merely because he wanted to restore the Democratic Party competitiveness in presidential elections by getting rid of the long-damaging issue of welfare from the national political agenda.³⁵

From ancient times to modern times, political leaders have managed to leave some record of their deeds called *resgestae* and that would make future generations remember their names and accomplishments.³⁶ Written records are important in interpreting events and important matters which took place in the past. Political memoirs, in which history and politics are narrated in a personalised version have attracted historians across many centuries.³⁷ Initially, historians viewed post-World War II American Presidents' memoirs as "mediocre".³⁸ However, this claim was challenged after the establishment of presidential libraries. Presidential libraries provide historians with the necessary tools to deeply analyse, explain, as well as interpret what is declared in political memoirs.³⁹

This study investigates different written records and throws more light on President Bill Clinton's memoir *My Life*. In 1994, he published that autobiographical memoir in which he tells the story of his life from childhood to his presidential days. This written record is useful because it provides me with interesting details, data, facts and pieces of

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid., 244–45.

³⁶ George Egerton, "Politics and Autobiography: Political Memoir as Polygenre," *Biography* 15, no. 3 (1992): 221.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ William C. Berman, "Reading Bill Clinton's 'My Life'," *Reviews in American History* 33, no. 1 (2005):126.

³⁹ Ibid.

information that I cannot find in other written or oral records. His memoir may serve me in my inquiry, seeking answers to questions related to the issue of welfare reform.

My work sheds particular light on Bill Clinton’s rationale for defending welfare reform. It endeavours to demonstrate to what extent racist, classist, as well as sexist prejudices influenced his attack against welfare and welfare recipients. The main questions that I try to answer in this paper are the following:

- Did President Bill Clinton lack compassion for the poor? Does his decision put into question the following expressions employed by the Founding Fathers in the Declaration of Independence: “. . . all men are created equal”?
- How far were such issues as race, gender, and class implicated in Bill Clinton’s attitude in tackling welfare reform? In other words, were his arguments to substitute AFDC—namely welfare, whose main clients were considered as single “mothers of colour”⁴⁰ and their dependent children—by the tough TANF programme influenced by racist, classist, sexist ideas or opinions?
- How can we prove his sexist, classist, or racist biases using documents?

I initially need to give definitions of what I think are key terms in my dissertation. The first term that I need to define is “politics.” The modern word “political” derives from the Greek *politicos*, which means “of, or pertaining to the polis,” and the word *polis* is translated as “city-state.”⁴¹ According to Aristotle, a politician is a “law giver” (*nomothetês*) to frame the suitable constitution of the city-state (*polis*), which includes stable laws, customs, as well as constitutions, including a system of moral education for citizens.⁴² Besides, the politician takes necessary measures to preserve the constitution and introduces necessary reforms.⁴³ For Isabela Fairclough and Norman Fairclough, politics is “most fundamentally about making choices about how to act in response to circumstances

⁴⁰ I consider such terms as “black”, “white”, “mothers of colour”, “women of colour”, “males of colour” as unfair and injurious ideological constructs. Thus, they appear within quotation marks in my paper.

⁴¹ Fred Miller, “Aristotle’s Political Theory,” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edwards N. Zalta, at <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2017/entries/aristotle-politics/>

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

and goals, it is about choosing *policies*, and such choices and the actions which follow from them are based upon argumentation.”⁴⁴ In Aristotle’s words, argumentation is “deliberation”.⁴⁵ According to him, most political systems agree on the importance of distributive justice and equality and emphasise on the fact that distribution should be equal to “worth”; however, they disagree on the nature of “worth”, which may be relevant in fair distribution of powers.⁴⁶

The term “welfare state” is controversial, ambiguous and it has no precise definition in economics.⁴⁷ The term welfare state first appeared in Germany, and its German version *Wohlfahrstaat* in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century.⁴⁸ When scholars use it, they refer generally to a comprehensive system whereby the state undertakes to protect the health and well-being of its citizens, by providing pensions, hospitals, sickness, and unemployment benefits.⁴⁹ Scholars define the American welfare state as the set of direct expenditure programmes such as Social Security and AFDC.⁵⁰ For others, the American welfare state is a combination of direct and indirect spending such as loans, loans guarantees, as well as tax expenditures (indirect spending forms the so-called “hidden welfare state”).⁵¹ Some scholars refer to the experience of the welfare state in the United States of America as the evolution of “the New Deal Order” namely “liberalism”.⁵²

⁴⁴ Isabela Fairclough and Norman Fairclough, *Political Discourse Analysis: A Method for Advanced Students* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 1.

⁴⁵ See for instance Terence Irwin, *Aristotle and the Nicomachean Ethics* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1999).

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 230.

⁴⁷ See Nicholas Barr, *Economics of the Welfare State*, 5th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 7. See also Wallace C. Peterson, *Transfer Spending, Taxes, and the American Welfare State* (New York: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1991), 1.

⁴⁸ Mel Cousins, *European Welfare States: Comparative Perspectives* (London: Sage Publications, 2005), 4.

⁴⁹ Katz, *The Price of Citizenship*, 2.

⁵⁰ Based on works of such scholars as Abramovitz, *Regulating the Lives of Women*; Roy Lubove, *The Struggle for Social Security, 1900–1935* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968); James T. Patterson, *American’s Struggle against Poverty, 1900–1985* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986).

⁵¹ See, for instance, Christopher Howard, introduction to *The Hidden Welfare State: Tax Expenditures and Social Policy in the United States* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 5.

⁵² Alice Kessler-Harris and Maurizio Vaudagna, eds., introduction to *Democracy and the Welfare State: The Two Wests in the Age of Austerity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 5.

The term “welfare” generally means “well-being”⁵³ and it appeared in the U.S. Constitution: “the general welfare” and it referred to providing well-being by the government (national or local) for all citizens, “The Congress shall have Power to lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States.”⁵⁴ The meaning of “welfare” has changed drastically in the contemporary United States. Michael Wiseman defines welfare as follows: “By convention, “welfare” is applied to all programs of public assistance that give aid to individuals or families on the basis of need and means.”⁵⁵ Noam Chomsky provides a deep explanation of the notion of welfare in the U.S.: “What is called “welfare” is public programs that provide funds for poor people . . . Public programs that provide funds for rich people are not called “welfare”, but in fact, that is what most of the public funds are.”⁵⁶ For Premilla Nadasen and her co-authors, welfare is “virtually synonymous with federal cash aid to poor single mothers and their children: Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) before 1996 . . .”⁵⁷ Linda Gordon points out that:

In two generations, the meaning of “welfare” has reversed itself. What once meant prosperity, good health, and good spirits now implies poverty, bad health, and fatalism. A word that once evoked images of pastoral contentment now connotes slums, depressed single mothers, and neglected children, and even crime. Today “welfare” means grudging aid to the poor, when once it referred to a vision of a good life.⁵⁸

Michael Katz affirms that “*Welfare* had lost (its) inclusive and positive meaning . . . now it signif (ies) only public assistance programs—which to most people meant Aid to Dependent Children.”⁵⁹ According to Anne Daguerre, welfare has two meanings in the U.S.: “it can refer to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), a cash assistance program for single-parent families; or it can refer to other means-tested programs such as housing assistance, health care (Medicaid), food stamps (ie the Supplementary Nutrition

⁵³ Katz, *The Price of Citizenship*, 2. See also Gordon, *Pitied but not Entitled*, 1.

⁵⁴ U.S. Constitution, art .I , sec.8, cl.I.

⁵⁵ Michael Wiseman, “Welfare Reform in the United States: A Background Paper,” *Housing Policy Debate* 7, no. 4 (1996): 598.

⁵⁶ Noam Chomsky, “Welfare,” *Free Will*, December 13, 1993, *Convert Action Quarterly* (Anniversary Dinner), 0:22 to 0:35, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YIuU3rBdlr4>

⁵⁷ Premilla Nadasen, Jennifer Mittelstadt, and Marisa Chappell, introduction to *Welfare in the United States: A History with Documents, 1935–1996* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 1.

⁵⁸ Gordon, *Pitied but not Entitled*, 1.

⁵⁹ Katz, prologue to *The Price of Citizenship*, 4.

Assistance Program [SNAP]) and social assistance for people with disabilities (Social Security Income [SSI]).”⁶⁰

In the present dissertation, when I use the term “welfare”, I refer to the public assistance programme AFDC. Even though there are many assistance programmes for the poor, when people refer to “welfare,” they mean Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC)—the programme designed for single mothers and their dependent children.⁶¹ Welfare reform is the name given to 1996 changes made in the U.S. public assistance programme designed to provide cash benefits to single mothers.⁶²

I define welfare as follows in this research paper: welfare is the set of public programmes that were designed for the white deserving poor. Those programmes, unfortunately, have acquired a pejorative meaning through time in the U.S. A stigma is attached to their recipients—namely “non-white”, unmarried women and their young, dependent children. Welfare equals AFDC, the most disliked programme in the U.S. by the poor themselves (who believe that it is degrading), as well as right-wing politicians or commentators (at the beginning) and then left-wing ones.

“Race”⁶³ is a political construct that has been used to classify humans into ethnic groups based on socially significant, as well as identifiable characteristics.⁶⁴ For Jennifer Hochschild, “People identify themselves and others as ‘white’ or ‘black’ and they hold views and take actions as a consequence of these identifications. Races may not be biologically distinct; what matters here is that, to a greater or lesser degree, people perceive

⁶⁰ Daguerra, introduction to *Obama’s Welfare Legacy*, loc. 183–86.

⁶¹ Joel F. Handler, *The Poverty of Welfare Reform* (Yale University: Yale University Press, 1995), 1.

⁶² U.S. Congress, 1996.

⁶³ In this research paper, I use “race” as a social and psychological phenomenon rather than a biological one. Americans’ conception of race changed thanks to such scientific research projects as the research on human DNA, and Stephen Oppenheimer’s study of mankind. Today, human race is viewed as one race in America. Thus, the conception of race as well as its usage in American society has been questioned and challenged. See Paul R. Lehman, *America’s Race Problem: A Practical Guide to Understanding Race in America* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 2009), 1–3.

⁶⁴ Race and ethnicity are often used interchangeably by scholars, see Darnell Hunt, “Race and Ethnicity,” in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Sociology*, ed. Bryan S. Turner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 490.

“blacks” and “whites” as different and act accordingly.”⁶⁵ The word “race” originally referred to humankind because mankind consists of one “race”, i.e., *Homo Sapiens*; however, in the present time, the use of the term “race” has changed as it carries with it separation, stigma, stereotype, separateness, and division.⁶⁶ Traditionally race has been considered the most important variable for determining the lives and experiences of “black”: blacks at all levels have been subjected to racism and discrimination.⁶⁷

“Racism” is the “enduring, salient aspect of social and global structures. It is based on demonstrably false theories of racial differences appropriated by a culture to deny or unjustly distribute social privileges, economic opportunities, and political rights to the racially stigmatised groups.”⁶⁸ Racism is, “the system of ignorance, exploitation, and power used to oppress African Americans, Latinos, Asians, Pacific Americans, Native Americans, and other people on the basis of ethnicity, culture, mannerisms, and color.”⁶⁹

“Stereotype” is an activator of racism. For Manning Marable stereotype is “the device at the heart of every form of racism today.”⁷⁰ He also states that, “Stereotypes are at work when people are not viewed as individuals with unique cultural and social backgrounds, with different religious traditions and ethnic identities, but as two-dimensional characters bred from the preconceived attitudes, half-truths, ignorance, and fear of closed minds.”⁷¹

There are different meanings and definitions of “Class”. Broadly speaking class indicates the economic stratification created by wealth and privilege. As an analytical device class is “. . . a way of making sense of a person’s economic position and the

⁶⁵ Jennifer L. Hochschild, “Race, Class, Power, and the American Welfare State,” in *Democracy and the Welfare State*, ed. Amy Gutmann (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 158.

⁶⁶ Paul R. Lehman, *America’s Race Problem*, 21.

⁶⁷ Joe R. Feagin, “The Continuing Significance of Race: Public Discrimination,” *American Sociological Review* 56, no.1 (1991): 101.

⁶⁸ Charles Lemert, “Racism,” in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Sociology*, ed. Bryan S. Turner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 496.

⁶⁹ Manning Marable, “Racism and Sexism,” in *Race, Class, and Gender in the United States: An Integrated Study*, Paula S. Rothenberg, 6th ed. (William Paterson University of New Jersey: Worth Publishers, 2004), 161.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 162.

inequalities that this may generate.”⁷² Class divisions “refer to people’s socioeconomic circumstances, whether in labour market or in the production process.”⁷³ Class, is believed to be both “central and marginal to social policy” in the U.S.⁷⁴

Sociological explanations of “class” take their starting point from either Karl Marx or Max Weber. The two theorists’ approaches share the same belief that classes are real and have a significant impact on people’s life chances.⁷⁵ “Classism” refers to the number of attitudes, beliefs, behaviour, assumptions, and institutional practices that maintain class-based power differences, favour the upper and middle classes, and neglect the poor and working classes.⁷⁶

Unlike the concepts of race and class, the history of the concept “gender” can be traced back to the mid–1960s. Thanks to second-wave feminism the idea of gender emerged.⁷⁷ Feminists succeeded in making a difference between sex and gender in sociology during the 1970s. For instance, the sociologist Ann Oakley stated that the biological differences between males and females in a given society do not contribute to the definition of masculinity and femininity; however, what makes the difference is the social construction of masculinity and femininity in that society. Gender is “the cultural definition of behaviour defined as appropriate to the sexes in a given society at a given time. Gender is a set of cultural roles. It is a costume, a mask, a straitjacket in which men and women dance their unequal dance.”⁷⁸ Gender is a key factor in figuring out poverty,

⁷² Gerry Mooney, “Class and Social Policy,” in *Rethinking Social Policy*, eds., Gail Lewis, Sharon Gewirtz, and John Clarke (London: Sage Publications, 2000), 158.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 158.

⁷⁴ Mooney, “Class and Social Policy,” 156.

⁷⁵ Karl Marx, “A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy,” in *Marx and Engels: Selected Works* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1968); Karl Marx, “The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte,” in *Selected Works*, eds. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977):1 ; Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, eds. G. Roth and C. Wittich (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978).

⁷⁶ See Heather E. Bullock, “Classism” in *Poverty in the United States*, eds., Gwendolyn Mink and Alice O’Connor, 190.

⁷⁷ Mary Evans, “Gender,” in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Sociology*, ed. Bryan S. Turner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 228. There are other waves of feminism which emerged in the U.S. such as third-wave feminism, see for instance, R. Claire Snyder, “What Is Third-Wave Feminism? A New Directions Essay,” *Signs* 34, no.1 (Autumn 2008): 175–196 ; on the fourth-wave feminism, see, for example, Ealasaid Munro, “Feminsim: A Fourth Wave,” *Political Insight* 4, no.2 (2013): 22–25.

⁷⁸ Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 238.

employment, and social welfare in a given society.⁷⁹ Another term that I will deal with in this dissertation is “intersectionality”. In chapter two, in part two, I have tried to explain this concept (see *Chapter Two, Part Two*) and its role in shaping social welfare policy in the U.S throughout its historical development, structure, and function.

In general terms, sexism is a “form of oppression that results in the subordination of women and girls on the basis of their biology or gender.”⁸⁰ The term “sexism”—which replaced the term “male chauvinism”—refers to the “inferiorization (attitudinal and actual) of one sex by another. A society divided, divisively, along sex lines.”⁸¹ Sexism also refers to the belief that a person’s ability, intelligence, as well as character are shaped by biology and not external forces. Therefore, males are naturally superior to women because they possess certain desired traits that make women inferior; hence, they are legitimately denied equal rights and opportunities.⁸² “Patriarchy” is another term that I will encounter in my study of the American welfare state. Kate Millett develops in her book *Sexual Politics* a theory of “patriarchy” and according to her work, the term patriarchy is “the rule of men” rather than the rule of the father.⁸³ For her, the notion of “patriarchy” is a “universal (geographical and historical) mode of power relationships” and domination.⁸⁴ She defines patriarchy as the sexual politics whereby men establish their power and main control.”⁸⁵ In her book *The Creation of Patriarchy*, Gerda Lerner provides the following definition of patriarchy:

Patriarchy in its wider definition means the manifestation and institutionalization of male dominance over women and children in the family and the extension of male dominance in society on general. It implies that men hold power in all the important institutions of society

⁷⁹ Carl H. Nightingale, “Gender Discrimination in the Labor Market,” in *Poverty in the United States: An Encyclopedia of History, Politics, and Policy*, eds. Gwendolyn Mink and Alice O’Connor vol.1, A–K, (California: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2004), 333.

⁸⁰ Anna Marie Smith, “Sexism,” in *Poverty in the United States: An Encyclopedia of History, Politics, and Policy*, eds. Gwendolyn Mink and Alice O’Connor vol.2 (California: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2004), 657.

⁸¹ Juliet Mitchell, *Woman’s Estate* (New York: Pantheon Books, Random House, Inc., 1971), 64.

⁸² See Mimi Abramovitz, *Under Attack, Fighting Back: Women and Welfare in the United States* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000), 87–88. See also Mary Evans, “Sexism”, in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Sociology*, ed. Bryan S. Turner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 546–47.

⁸³ Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 80–100.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 95.

⁸⁵ See Mitchell, *Women’s Estate*, 82.

and that women are deprived of access to such power. It does *not* imply that women are either totally powerless or totally deprived of rights, influence, and resources.⁸⁶

This study aims to demonstrate to what extent issues related to gender, class, and race have influenced Bill Clinton's attitude towards welfare and the welfare state. Simply put, I attempt to explore implications of racism, classism, or sexism, if any, in Bill Clinton's arguments and motivations for substituting AFDC by TANF. I will examine Bill Clinton's remarks and statements concerning the issue of welfare and his arguments—as a New Democrat candidate—to support welfare reform. Furthermore, I will attempt to explain the intersectional implications of race, gender, and class in his arguments against welfare by dealing with a defined set of documents and archives.

I will analyse different bodies of texts from his speeches, public remarks, and press releases using archives from the Clinton Presidential Library. I draw upon texts from his memoir *My Life*. I endeavour to interpret the messages he conveyed concerning welfare and welfare recipients, and seek arguments that carried biased statements or opinions. I try to see if he was influenced by the ideas of other people in the political or private environment: by other candidates from the Republican Party such as Al Gore (his co-author of *Putting People First*) and the previous U.S. Presidents such as Ronald Reagan, and his wife Hillary Diane Clinton—a potential Democratic candidate for the presidency—or conservative commentators, if any.

Document analysis is a social research method, an important tool *per se*, and a very useful part of all schemes of triangulation, the combination of different methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon.⁸⁷ Documents are invaluable⁸⁸ because they can provide supplementary data and background information; contain data that cannot be observed, provide details that informants have forgotten; provide a means of tracking change and development; can be analysed as a way to verify findings from other data sources.⁸⁹ This study helps us understand Bill Clinton's rationale for welfare reform and the extent to

⁸⁶ Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, 239.

⁸⁷ Glenn A. Bowen, "Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method," *Qualitative Research Journal* 9, no.2 (2009): 31.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

which his arguments were impacted by race, gender, or class issues through analysing primary sources.

It should be noted, however, that this work is not concerned with the architecture of the American welfare state and its function, as well as its historical development. By and large, this study is focused on the main arguments advanced by the New Democratic President Bill Clinton for welfare reform and implications of race, gender and class issues in his decision to sign PRWORA. Moreover, this paper does not provide a complete analysis of Bill Clinton's speeches and books. It does not include an exhaustive list of his speeches, books, and radio talks. My choice of the written material is based on the relevance of the latter to the subject matter of my research paper. Each research paper has limitations and my limitations are as follows: by trying to provide an analysis of Bill Clinton's approach to welfare, I might conflate sociological explanations with an explanation of individuals' intentions. This is why I have based my analysis upon written and oral records.

My present dissertation is divided into two main parts entitled, respectively: "The Historical Development of Welfare and the Welfare State in the U.S. before the 1990s" and "The End of Welfare in 1996: Implications of Race, Gender, and Class Issues in Welfare Reform Legislation during the Bill Clinton Administration".

Part one consists of three chapters. It opens with an exploration of the historical origins of welfare and the welfare state by going back to the Colonial Period and then to the Progressive Era. Chapter one focuses attention on the historical development of a programme that would become known later on in the U.S. as "welfare": Outdoor Relief during the Colonial Period, Mothers' Pensions in the Progressive Era, ADC (Aid to Dependent Children) in the 1930s, AFDC in the 1960s, and TANF in 1996. Since colonial times, work and family ethics had played a central role in determining poor women's eligibility for Outdoor Relief. In the Progressive Era, mothers' pensions were created and they were exclusively designed for white widows and their children. During the Progressive Era, issues related to gender, class, and race had shaped the formal structure as well as the evolution of the American welfare state.

Chapter two throws light on how the Social Security Act of 1935 paved the way to the creation of a “stratified” American welfare system during the New Deal era. I try to investigate the evolution of Aid to Dependent Children (ADC)—formerly known as “mothers’ aid” or “mothers’ pensions” in the Progressive Era—so that to understand how its clients had become more and more stigmatised.

In chapter three, I will shed light on the evolution of the attack against welfare—previously known as “Outdoor Relief”—from the 1820s up to the late 1980s. This chapter highlights the main factors which contributed to the assault against welfare and which made it a hot-bottom issue in U.S. politics.

Part two includes three chapters. Chapter four deals with the perception of the Democratic Party of welfare and the welfare state, and the way and the manner this perception evolved and shifted through time, from the 1930s to the late 1990s.

Chapter five tackles Bill Clinton’s rationale for welfare and implications of race, gender, as well as class issues in his attack against welfare. It demonstrates whether racism, classism, and sexism influenced Bill Clinton’s ideas about welfare. The first section of this chapter is an attempt to explain how the issue of welfare reform developed within the Democratic Party in the U.S. before the signing of the welfare reform bill in 1996. I will try to explore the way and the manner political parties viewed the welfare state, “welfare”, and the poor in the United States of America. Moreover, I will attempt to explain how that vision shifted through time and the main factors which contributed to changes in their perception of the welfare state and poverty. Section two focuses attention on the main reasons behind President Bill Clinton’s decision to terminate “welfare” in 1996. My main objective is to demonstrate to what extent racism, sexism, and classism have influenced his attack against welfare and the welfare state. Meanwhile, I try to examine how far his decision influenced the political development of the Democratic Party in the U.S. as well as its vision vis-à-vis welfare.

In the last chapter of this thesis, I endeavour to see if Bill Clinton succeeded to accomplish his promise to “honor and reward people who work hard and play by the

rules.” I will deal with the evaluation of welfare reform by shedding light on scholarly literature during the pre-PRWORA (i.e., after 1996). I will study the impact of welfare reform on the structure, the composition of the Democratic Party, on its adherents. Besides, I will be focusing on the shift in its political ideologies and mainly its ambitions in relation to the welfare state and to policies which target the poor. Finally, I will investigate the development of the American welfare state during the administrations which followed Bill Clinton’s—namely, the Bush Administration, the Obama Administration, as well as the Trump Administration.

Part One

The Historical Development of “Welfare” and the Welfare State before the 1990s: from the Colonial Times to the late 1980s

The Congress shall have Power to lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States.

— *U.S. Constitution.*

A decent provision for the poor is the true test of civilization.

— Samuel Johnson

I am for doing good to the poor, but...I think the best way of doing good to the poor, is not making them easy in poverty, but leading or driving them out of it. I observed...that the more public provisions were made for the poor, the less they provided for themselves, and of course became poorer. And, on the contrary, the less was done for them, the more they did for themselves, and became richer.

— Benjamin Franklin

Chapter One

The Historical Development of Welfare in the U.S.: from the Colonial Period to the Progressive Era

The origins of the American welfare state can be traced back to the English poor laws of 1601 brought by colonists to the New World during the early seventeenth century. “Outdoor relief” is one of the oldest traditions in the U.S. During the early 1900s, the Mothers’ pension law (or Mothers’ aid) was passed and it aimed at assisting “husbandless”⁹⁰ mothers and their young children, widows, and orphans in particular.⁹¹

Mothers’ pensions formed the basic elements of what would be known later on as Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) in 1935 and what would become later on known as “welfare”. Issues related to race, gender, and class had mattered on the way and the manner through which the welfare state and “welfare” had developed in the United States since the colonial period. In this chapter, we will go back in history to see how the American welfare state and “welfare” had evolved before the 1930s—from the colonial times up to the Progressive Era by shedding light on implications of race, gender as well as class issues.

⁹⁰ This term refers to women who have no husband. It is employed by such scholars as Mimi Abramovitz, Louis Kriesberg, Herbert L. Wasserman. See, for instance, Louis Kriesberg, *Mothers in Poverty: A Study of Fatherless Families* (London: Routledge, Taylors & Francis Group, 2017). See also, Herbert L. Wasserman, “A Comparative Study of School Performance among Boys from Broken and Intact Black Families,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 41, no.2 (1972): 137–41.

⁹¹ See Amy Gutmann, ed., Introduction to *Democracy and the Welfare State* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1988), 3. See also Nadasen, Mittelstadt, and Chappell, *Welfare in the United States*, 1. Ward, *The White Welfare State*, 1. See also Gwendolyn Mink, “Welfare Reform in Historical Perspective,” *Social Justice* 21, no.1 (1994):114.

1) The Colonial Poor Laws, Women, Work and Family Ethics

1.1) Relief Policies during Colonial Times

The historical origins of the American welfare state can be traced back to the colonial period. When the pioneer colonists arrived in the New World during the early seventeenth century, they brought with them their culture, their language as well as their traditions among which the English poor laws.⁹² That is, “Early Americans did not invent poor relief; they borrowed it from England.”⁹³

It should be noted that, the Statute of Laborers enacted in 1349 in England during the reign of Edward III is recognised as the first legislation on welfare by historians.⁹⁴ That legislation sought to banish begging and compel tramps to work. The main section of the statute reads: “Because that many valiant beggars, as long as they may live of begging, do refuse to labour, giving themselves to idleness and vice, and sometimes to theft and other abominations; none upon said pain of imprisonment, shall under the color of pity or alms, give anything to such, which may labor, or presume to favor them towards their desires, so that thereby they may be compelled to labor for their necessary living.”⁹⁵ Since the early sixteenth century, many Western governments succeeded to provide provisions for the destitute.⁹⁶ Western relief systems were the result of the transformation at the heart of the Western societies: from feudalism to capitalism.⁹⁷

Many colonists were destitute because of the harsh conditions they had faced during and after their voyage from the Old World. Such conditions in the New World made them

⁹² Jill Quadagno, *The Transformation of Old Age Security: Class and Politics in the American Welfare State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 24. See also Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse*, Abramovitz, *Regulating the Lives of Women*; Waltrer Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State: A History of Social Welfare in America*, 6th ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1999).

⁹³ Greg M, Shaw, *Historical Guides to Controversial Issues in America: The Welfare Debate* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2007), 1.

⁹⁴ Karl de Schweinitz, *England's Road to Social Security, 1349–1947* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1947).

⁹⁵ Quoted in Joel F. Handler, *The Poverty of Welfare Reform* (Yale University: Yale University Press, 1995), 10.

⁹⁶ Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, introduction to *Regulating the Poor: The Functions of Public Welfare*, 2nd ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 3.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

poorer and poorer as natural catastrophes, warfare, epidemics, and others related to daily life, like illness and old age.⁹⁸ Poverty became a widespread phenomenon in the colonial communities; hence, each colony had to deal with the problem of caring for the destitute of all kinds: widows with young children, orphans, the sick, the lazy, the aged, the lame, the mentally ill and so forth.⁹⁹ Mutual aid and neighborly kindness had become insufficient to regulate the growing number of the poor.¹⁰⁰ Therefore, colonial authorities were obliged to use English traditions of relief to assist the poor through raising taxes: “[B]y taxation of every inhabitant, parson, vicar, and other, and of every occupier of lands, houses, tithes impropriate, proportions of tithes, coal-mines, or saleable underwoods in the said parish, in such component sum and sums of money as they shall think fit.”¹⁰¹

The main relief policies that existed in the colonies were the Elizabethan Statute of Artificers (1562), and the Elizabethan Poor Law of 1601 (also known as the Act for the Relief of the Poor). These policies operated initially in Plymouth Colony in 1642, in Virginia in 1646, in Connecticut in 1673, and Massachusetts in 1692.¹⁰² The English Poor laws maintained the work ethic and encouraged people to work rather than to live on relief: “If any would not work, neither should he eat.”¹⁰³ Captain John Smith, the Governor of Virginia Colony based at Jamestown, made it clear that the one who would not work must not eat.

The Elizabethan Poor Law of 1601 distinguished between two types of the poor: the unworthy or undeserving poor (the able-bodied poor, the lazy, the drunk); and the worthy or deserving poor (the disabled, the aged, widows, and their children).

⁹⁸ Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State*, 15–16 ; Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse*, 219.

⁹⁹ Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State*, 16.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ “An Act of the Relief of the Poor 43 Elisabeth, 1601,” in *Social Welfare: A History of the American Response to Need*, June Axinn and Mark J. Stern , 7th ed. (Boston: Pearson Education Inc., 2008), 9–13; see the complete version of the document in Appendix I.

¹⁰² Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State*, 18.

¹⁰³ James T. Patterson, *America’s Struggle against Poverty in the Twentieth Century*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2003), 339.

The poor laws made the community responsible for helping those who were poor through no fault of their own and punished those who were not.¹⁰⁴

The number of impoverished women in urban areas was significant. For instance, in Boston in 1751, from 1000 to 1200 widows were poor and needed relief.¹⁰⁵ Relief policies sought to regulate poor women (who were almost of the time widows) and their young children, the public relief's principal clientele.¹⁰⁶ Therefore, the "feminization of poverty"¹⁰⁷, "povertization of women", or more accurately the "impoverishment of women" dates back to the colonial period. It should be noted that one-third to one-half of a town's paupers were females and most of them were husbandless women and their dependent children.¹⁰⁸ Settlement laws denied irregular residents in a town the right to receive relief to restrict the number of paupers and to oblige residents ("white" or "black") to stay in their original areas of residency.¹⁰⁹ Disqualified and undesirable relief applicants were forced to leave the town and return to their original parishes, towns, or counties.¹¹⁰ Settlement laws denied also non-resident poor women the right of residency and the reception of relief as well. But unlike stranger poor men, stranger poor women faced serious problems to prove their self-sufficiency, as well as moral character to local

¹⁰⁴ Jill S. Quadagno, "From Poor Laws to Pensions: The Evolution of Economic Support for the Aged in England and America," *The Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly. Health and Society* 62, no. 3 (1984): 418.

¹⁰⁵ Gary B. Nash, *The Urban Crucible: Social Change, Political Consciousness, and the Emergence of the American Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 172.

¹⁰⁶ Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse*; Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State*; Abramovitz, *Regulating the Lives of Women*. See also Axinn and Stern, *Social Welfare*, 16. See also William Quigley, "Work or Starve: Regulation of the Poor in Colonial America," *University of San Francisco Law Review* 31, no.1 (1996).

¹⁰⁷ The term "feminization of poverty" was first coined by Diana Pearce in 1978, in an article in which she revealed that the number of female-headed families living in poverty was significant. This term was criticised by scholars like Linda Burnham, because it does not give a clear idea about the poor people, and about who is likely to become and remain poor. See Nightingale, "Gender Discrimination in the Labor Market," 333.

¹⁰⁸ See Alice Kessler-Harris, *Out to Work: A History of Wage Earning Women in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 16–19. See also Mimi Abramovitz, "The Family Ethic: The Female Pauper and Public Aid, Pre-1900," *Social Service Review* 59, no. 1 (1985):124–25. See also Abramovitz, *Regulating the Lives of Women*, 2277.

¹⁰⁹ Quadagno, *The Transformation of Old Age Security*, 25. The Act of Settlement of 1662 added settlement requirements and local responsibilities to regulate the poor see for instance Jill S. Quadagno "From Poor Laws to Pensions: The Evolution of Economic Support for the Aged in England and America," *The Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly. Health and Society* 62, no. 3 (1984): 419–20.

¹¹⁰ Michael Katz, *Improving Poor People: The Welfare State, the "Underclass", and Urban Schools as History* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995), 32.

authorities.¹¹¹ Put it in the simplest of words, the local authorities used gendered attitudes against the poor during colonial times, especially against single mothers.

1.2) The Colonial Poor Laws and the “Family Ethic”

Before dealing with the poor laws during the colonial period, we need first to define the term “family ethic”. This term was first coined by Mimi Abramovitz in her article “The Family Ethic,” and it refers to social norms that maintain the belief that the home is the women’s best place, where women stay and should care of their family members.¹¹²

It is generally assumed that the main defining feature of the “welfare state” is the correlation between social provision and the family.¹¹³ Since colonial times, the woman’s ideal place was seen in the home. Settlers brought with them conceptions about masculinity and femininity from Europe and based on these conceptions, they founded their families.¹¹⁴

The main objective of young women was marriage, it was their “raison d’être”.¹¹⁵ Thus, colonial authorities honoured a woman who maintained her traditional work and family roles and dishonored the one who chose singleness and idleness. America’s society was agricultural at the time, and since the labour force was limited, women were expected

¹¹¹ Abramovitz, “The Family Ethic,” 126–27. Some colonies like Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island allowed stranger poor single women to settle down, but they warned up that they would not receive aid ; see Alice Kessler-Harris, *Out to Work*, 17.

¹¹² I will be using this term in my work to mean that women who chose to marry realise domestic work, raise, and bear children were seen as correct women. Abramovitz, “The Family Ethic,” 122.

¹¹³ Alice Kessler-Harris and Maurizio Vaudagna, *Democracy and the Welfare State: The Two Wests in the Age of Austerity*, eds. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 227.

¹¹⁴ Barbara Easton, “Industrialization and Femininity: A Case Study of Nineteenth Century New England,” *Social Problems* 23, no.4 (1976): 389.

¹¹⁵ Richard Middleton, *Colonial America: A History, 1585-1776*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1996), 266.

to work inside and outside the home. Simply put, they were supposed to be “productive” and “reproductive” at the same time, during this period.¹¹⁶

In their work entitled *Women, Work, and Family*, the social historians Louise A. Tilly and Joan W. Scott place the family at the heart of their attempt to understand women’s work merely because the family is “the unit of decision making for the activities of its members,” and its decisions “implicitly assign economic value to all household tasks.”¹¹⁷ According to them, the concept of “labour” is divided into three main categories: “productive labour” which occurs inside or outside the home where individuals deliver services to earn money; “domestic labor”, which maintains household; and finally “reproductive labor”, which maintains the bearing and the rearing of children.¹¹⁸

Hence, during the colonial period, women were obliged to work for wages when they needed financial support and to take care of their family members: husband, children, and so forth. Meanwhile, because relief for needy people was given either in their own home or in the neighbour’s, women were expected to promote assistance outside the home (helping poor people, the aged, the sick, the injured, etc.) In other words, a “true woman” was expected to work and acquire a family as well.

Husbandless women who did not comply with family norms were conceived as a threat to the social and economic stability of the colonial community.¹¹⁹ Therefore, relief policies existed to reward women who maintained their marital status (or labour) and punish those who did not. The following statement clarifies the point:

(T)he family ethic stresses marriage, motherhood, and nonpaid work in the home as the centerpiece of a woman’s role. Because unattached women (were) seen as too sexually active and therefore improper guardians of family and community morality, relief clients face(d) government regulation of their sexual and social lives—a role traditionally assigned to a woman’s husband or father.¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ Abramovitz, “The Family Ethic,” 124.

¹¹⁷ Louise A. Tilly and Joan W. Scott, *Women, Work, and Family* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 6.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 172–75.

¹¹⁹ Abramovitz, “The Family Ethic,” 125.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 123. See also Joe F. Handler, *Reforming the Poor: Welfare Policy, Federalism and Morality* (New York: Basic Books, 1972), 11, 26–27.

The colonial officials made distinctions between two types of impoverished women: deserving and undeserving poor women. Deserving women were those who deserved assistance, who were involuntarily jobless, and who conformed to family norms (widows; the wives of the sick, the disabled, and the temporarily jobless men; or women who are conceived as involuntarily husbandless). Undeserving poor women were those who preferred idleness and non-compliance with work and family ethics (divorced, deserted, never-married women, young, and single mothers).¹²¹

Combined with Puritan beliefs, the colonial poor laws fought idleness, shiftlessness, as well as singleness and encouraged hard work.¹²² They also sought to regulate the poor to maintain social and economic stability by assisting “the deserving poor”; that is, people who are poor with no fault of their own (such as the sick, the aged, the disabled, widows, and young children). Moreover, they aimed at punishing the “undeserving poor”, i.e., able-bodied poor who favoured idleness (such as the lazy and the shiftless, etc.) by putting them in jail or institutions (almshouses or the house of correction) so that to help them improve their behaviour.¹²³ Therefore, the colonial poor laws supported the formation of white, stable, productive, and male-headed families. The patriarchal type of family was believed to be important for the economic and social survival of the colonial communities.¹²⁴ Besides, they encouraged women to be economically productive and to take care of their family members.

Women’s degradation in the United States and their marginalisation as compared to men over centuries can be explained by the emphasis of the Christian faith on the idea of “sexual virtue”.¹²⁵ Bertrand Russell, a philosopher, explains the point and he states that:

The Christian ethics inevitably, through the emphasis laid upon sexual virtue, did a great to degrade the position of a woman. Since the moralists were men, the woman appeared as the temptress; if they had been women, men would have had this role. Since the woman was the temptress, it was desirable to curtail her opportunities for leading men into temptation; consequently, respectable women were more and more hedged about with restrictions,

¹²¹ Abramovitz, *Regulating the Lives of Women*, 2816.

¹²² Abramovitz, “The Family Ethic: The Female Pauper and Public Aid, Pre-1900,” 126–24.

¹²³ Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare*, 57; see also, Piven and Cloward, *Regulating the Poor*, 3.

¹²⁴ Abramovitz, *Regulating the Lives of Women*, 2832.

¹²⁵ Angela Barron McBride, *A Married Feminist* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1976), 147.

while the women who were not respectable, being regarded as sinful, were treated with the utmost contumely.¹²⁶

To conclude, the colonial poor laws made a distinction between male and female paupers. They forced able-bodied men to work and encouraged women to stay in the home or to work when they needed financial help, instead of begging or asking for support from their local towns. Moreover, colonial poor laws also made a distinction between deserving and undeserving female paupers. Women, who were poor for no fault of their own, were not as badly treated as those who favoured idleness over working or staying at home to manage their homes and take care of their children.

2) Class Issues during the Colonial Period: The “*White Trash*”

The main purpose of the pioneer European migrants, who fled the Old World to settle down in the New World, was to create a classless (class-free) nation and to banish all sorts of aristocracy and monarchy. The question that arises is, did their dream come true? Class divisions mattered in America since the colonial period. When colonists arrived in the New World, they brought the ideas that existed in England. Authorities believed that less fortunate people are responsible for their poverty because they are lazy and dependent. Thus, poor people, whose complexion was “white”, were marginalised and treated with cruelty.

Nancy Isenberg supports that hypothesis and she unveils the bitter reality that the “white” poor had been stigmatised as well because of their lower social status in the New World since the early settlement period. In her book *White Trash*, she reveals that the British colonists promoted a “dual agenda” in the New World: they reduced poverty in England; besides, they called for transporting the idle and unproductive to the New World.¹²⁷ That stigmatisation of “white” people with lower social status (indentured servants, slaves, and children) in the newly created society led to the emergence of a “taxonomy of waste people”: “trash”, “unwanted”, “unsalvageable”, “human waste”,

¹²⁶ Bertrand Russell, *Marriage and Morals* (New York: Bantam Books, 1929), 97.

¹²⁷ Nancy Isenberg, *The White Trash: The 400-Year Untold History of Class in America* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2016), 231–34.

incurable, irreparable “breeds”, “lubbers”, “rubbish”, “clay-eaters”, and “crackers”.¹²⁸ It follows that class had its “singular and powerful dynamic apart from its intersection with race” in America during the colonial period.¹²⁹

3) America’s Founding Fathers’ Approach to Welfare and Poverty

In the previous sections, I tackled how Americans addressed poverty in early America. In this section, I try to shed light on the Founding Fathers’ perception of welfare and how they addressed poverty. Were there any writing records in which they mentioned how they dealt with the poor? In order to provide answers to this question, I will gather some of the Founding Fathers’ written records related to this subject. I will be focusing in this section on Jefferson’s and Franklin’s perspectives.

By digging deeply into this topic, I have discovered that historians do not agree about the fact that social welfare programmes existed or not before the emergence of the modern welfare state in America, during the twentieth century. One of the academics who provided answers to the question that I have raised above is Thomas G. West, a professor of politics and an author, in his book *Vindicating the Founders*. He drives our attention to the fact that most high school and college textbooks in the U.S.—such as James McGregor Burn’s *Government by the People* and Larry Berman and Bruce Murphy’s *Approaching Democracy*, which are both college textbooks—give the impression that Americans treated the poor with indifference and cruelty before the twentieth century, and that charities were the only financial source that was used to support them.¹³⁰ In other words, those writers state that no government assistance to the disadvantaged and impoverished populations existed before the New Deal; and Thomas West argues that their statements are both untrue and misleading.¹³¹ Other scholars had reinforced that hypothesis by saying that the

¹²⁸ Ibid, 237.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Thomas G. West, *Vindicating the Founders: Race, Sex, Class, and Justice in the Origins of America* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1997), 131–32; see also, Thomas G. West, “Poverty and Welfare in the American Founding,” *First Principles*, no.53 (May, 2015): 1.

¹³¹ Ibid., 2.

Founding Fathers did little to address poverty and treated badly the poor in the early created society in the New World. For instance, the pioneer historians in the field of social welfare Edith Abbott (an American economist, educator, and author) and Sophonisba Breckinridge (a social activist, feminist, Progressive Era social reformer, and social scientist) traced the history of poor laws in different states in the 1920s and the 1930s; and they revealed that the disadvantaged were treated by meanness and cruelty in the poorhouses.¹³² The historian Michael Katz describes the poorhouses in his book, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse* as follows: “Miserable, poorly managed, underfunded institutions, trapped by their own contradictions, poorhouses failed to meet any of the goals so confidently predicted sponsors.”¹³³ Walter Trattner, a historian describes how the poor were perceived by early American observers, he says:

[Early American observers] concluded that no one ought to be poor, and there was little tolerance for the able-bodied pauper. The only cause of such poverty, it was assumed, was individual weakness. . . . [B]y the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, Americans began to believe that poverty could, and should, be obliterated—in part, by allowing the poor to perish. . . . Stereotypes rather than individuals in need dominated the public mind.¹³⁴

Thomas West firmly believes that assistance to the poor; i.e., “welfare”, dates back to the early years of the colonial period, and not to the modern era. He states that the Founding Fathers, such as Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin, cared about the poor, and their intention and goodwill appeared in some of their rare statements in which they provided responses to foreigners concerning welfare. For instance, Thomas Jefferson tackled the topic of “poor relief” in his *Notes on the State of Virginia*—written as an answer to a Frenchman question—in which he explained the Virginia poor laws during the Revolution:

¹³² See, for instance, Grace Abbott, *Public Assistance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1940); Sophonisba Breckinridge, *Public Welfare Administration* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927; rev. ed., 1938).

¹³³ Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse*, 3.

¹³⁴ Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State*, 55–56.

The poor, unable to support themselves, are maintained by an assessment on the tithable persons in their parish. This assessment is levied and administered by twelve persons in each parish, called vestrymen, originally chosen by the housekeepers of the parish. . . . These are usually the most discreet farmers, so distributed through their parish, that every part of it may be under the immediate eye of some one of them. They are well acquainted with the details and economy of private life, and they find sufficient inducements to execute their charge well, in their philanthropy, in the approbation of their neighbors, and the distinction which that gives them. The poor who have neither property, friends, nor strength to labor, are boarded in the houses of good farmers, to whom a stipulated sum is annually paid. To those who are able to help themselves a little, or have friends from whom they derive some succors, inadequate however to their full maintenance, supplementary aids are given, which enable them to live comfortably in their own houses, or in the houses of their friends. Vagabonds, without visible property or vocation, are placed in workhouses, where they are well clothed, fed, lodged, and made to labor. Nearly the same method of providing for the poor prevails through all our states; and from Savannah to Portsmouth you will seldom meet a beggar.¹³⁵

Jefferson provided details about how poor people had been treated in early America and the various solutions that were used to address poverty. He also confirmed that the number of “beggar” persons was very limited. Thus, according to his statement, one can understand that the Founders did not neglect the disadvantaged people.

Such terms as “tithable”, “vestrymen”, and “parish”, which appear in the passage above, are related to the pre-Revolutionary Southern assistance provided for the poor—which were collected by the local Anglican Church.¹³⁶ In order to maintain the separation of the state and church, one of the main principles of the Revolution, Virginia answered to Jefferson’s proposal by transferring the responsibility to assist the poor from the church to the county government, in 1785.¹³⁷

Hence, from Jefferson’s perspective we can easily understand how welfare policies functioned in Early America:

- The government of the community assumed responsibility for its poor;
- Welfare was kept local in order to enable the administrators of the programme to know the real situation of need people so as to provide better assistance and to avoid fraud issues;

¹³⁵ Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1787), Query 14, in *Writings*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson (New York: Library of America, 1984), 259.

¹³⁶ Thomas West “Poverty and Welfare in the American Founding” 4.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

- Providing a clear distinction between “deserving” and “undeserving poor”: Able-bodied vagabonds were assisted, in return they had to work in institutions which obliged them to be disciplined. However, vulnerable people, such as the disabled, children, the sick, and the elderly, received assistance without stigma. The beggars and the homeless were assisted only if they showed their will to improve themselves by working.
- Self-reliance is “family reliance”: husbands and wives share income. Besides, husbands are supposed to be the principal breadwinners and the wives were not obliged to work. Husbands, who refused to support their families, were punished severely and they were sent to the poorhouses.
- Poor laws benefits were limited and insufficient. Therefore, marriage and labour (work) were viewed as the best remedies to poverty.

Jefferson was against the idea to take money from the taxpayers and give it to the idle. He states:

To take from one, because it is thought his own industry and that of his fathers has acquired too much, in order to spare to others, who, or whose fathers, have not exercised equal industry and skill, is to violate arbitrarily the first principle of association, the guarantee to everyone the free exercise of his industry and the fruits acquired by it.¹³⁸

When Benjamin Franklin lived in England during the 1760s, he observed that the problem of poverty was more complicated in England than in America. In an article, he criticised the British welfare system for the British press. He wrote:

I am for doing good to the poor, but I differ in opinion of the means. I think the best way of doing good to the poor, is not making them easy in poverty, but leading or driving them out of it. In my youth I travelled much, and I observed in different countries, that the more public provisions were made for the poor, the less they provided for themselves, and of course became poorer. And, on the contrary, the less was done for them, the more they did for themselves, and became richer. There is no country in the world where so many provisions are established for them [as in England] . . . with a solemn general law made by the rich to subject their estates to a heavy tax for the support of the poor. . . . [Yet] there is no country in the world in which the poor are more idle, dissolute, drunken, and insolent. The day you [Englishmen] passed that act, you took away from before their eyes the greatest of all inducements to industry, frugality, and sobriety, by giving them a dependence on somewhat else than a careful accumulation during youth and health, for

¹³⁸ Thomas Jefferson, letter to Milligan, 6 April 1816, in *Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Albert E. Bergh (Washington: Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1904), 14:466

support in age and sickness. In short, you offered a premium for the encouragement of idleness, and you should not now wonder that it has had its effect in the increase of poverty.¹³⁹

From Franklin's perspective, providing money for the poor with no follow-up supervision to improve their actual situation contributed to poverty—which is considered as the mother of all social woes. His aim was to avoid unefficient relief practices that were brought from the Old World on the American soil. As an American politician, he aimed to ban the archaic policies, especially those that were conceived for the poor. Everything that seemed British is “un-American”.

For him, Britain did not manage the problem of poverty correctly and carefully. Instead of helping the poor to become economically independent, authorities pushed them to idleness. That is to say, the way and the manner English authorities managed to address the issue of poverty encouraged the poor to become poorer and poorer. Thus, this blind strategy led to the increase in the number of paupers in England, at the time. In other words, Franklin is against promoting public provision by cutting taxes from the rich to support the poor people without controlling the behaviour of the latter. In early America, however, the Founders thought about the best way to tackle the issue of poverty and they firmly believed that poor relief policies exist to assist the poor with no encouragement of bad behaviour or violation of the rights of taxpayers.¹⁴⁰

In sum, historians disagree about the way and manner through which the Founders addressed the issue of poverty, and whether assistance to the poor existed before the New Deal era. Some assume that no government assistance existed before the New Deal and that Americans in general neglected the less fortunate categories in the American society. This view is negative and misleading. Others, on the other hand, believe that local governments helped the poor and that the Founding Fathers encouraged the type of aid that would have a positive long-term impact on the poor, as well as their behaviour. That is, the

¹³⁹ Benjamin Franklin, “On the Price of Corn, and Management of the Poor,” *London Chronicle*, November 1766, in *Writings*, ed. J. A. Leo Lemay (New York: Library of America, 1987), 587–88.

¹⁴⁰ Thomas West, “Poverty and Welfare in the American Founding,” 4.

Founders were not against assisting the poor and their approach to providing help was pragmatic and realistic (during the Age of Realism): avoiding providing public provision with generosity, and at the same time, caring about those who had fallen on hard times through any no fault of their own. Simply put, they both emphasised the importance of the correctness of the poor's behaviour. This view has been hitherto maintained by almost American governors after the Founding Fathers' era.

4) The Industrial Family Ethic

The industrial family ethic emerged by the 1790s, institutionalised in the 1830s, and reformed after 1865 (after the Civil War).¹⁴¹ By the early 1800s, industrialisation led to the transformation of work as well as family patterns within the American society. The growth of the market economy shifted the role of women in the emerging industrial capitalist American society.¹⁴²

Since the nineteenth century, women were expected to stay at home, raise their children and submit themselves to their husbands' authority.¹⁴³ That belief had been considered as a social norm, known also as "the feminine mystique," or the "cult of domesticity" or the "family ethic".¹⁴⁴ Simply put, the relationship between the welfare state and women was shaped by the "family ethic"; however, the relationship between males and the welfare state had been shaped by "work ethic".¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹ Abramovitz, *Regulating the Lives of Women*, 3576.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 3574.

¹⁴³ Barbara Easton, "Industrialization and Femininity: A Case Study of Nineteenth Century New England," *Social Problems* 23, no. 4 (1976): 389.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 389. Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood," in *The American Family in Social Historical Perspective*, ed. Michael Gordon (New York: ST. Martin's Press, 1983), 372–392. Betty Freidan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997). Mimi Abramovitz, "The Family Ethic," 122.

¹⁴⁵ See Abramovitz, "The Family Ethic," 123–24.

A new conception about gender roles had developed throughout this period as well. The emerging economic system led to “gender division” within the labour market: the market became the men’s principal place; however, the home became women’s ideal place.¹⁴⁶ The belief that “A woman’s place is in the home,” was maintained; therefore, the home became the “women’s sphere”.¹⁴⁷ Mimi Abramovitz clarifies the point:

The modern gender division of labor appeared in the early 1800s, as the Industrial Revolution gradually separated production for the household from production of the market. The developing factory system drew men out of the home. At the same time, family life, once intimately linked to economic activity, became a distinct and specific arena, with women in charge of parenting, homemaking, and caretaking. The shift to a market economy, and the allocation of waged work to men and domestic work to women, eventually devaluated women’s work in the home (as it was unwaged), and left women economically dependent on men.¹⁴⁸

The family ethic or norm in the Industrial Revolution era resembled that of Colonial America; however, the only difference is that women were denied their productive economic role and it was replaced by the “lady of leisure model”.¹⁴⁹ The belief behind keeping women in the home was seen as the best solution to preserve family ties which maintain social stability and order. In other words, the home became “the one institution that prevented society from flying apart.”¹⁵⁰ The industrial family ethic sought to protect women from the evils of the outside world.¹⁵¹ It should be borne in mind that the industrial family ethic reflected the white, native-born, middle-class women and neglected completely other women from other classes or races such as immigrants.¹⁵² Women of colour could not comply easily with the prescribed family and mother roles.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁶ Abramovitz, *Regulating the Lives of Women*, 3574.

¹⁴⁷ See Julie Matthaie, *An Economic History of Women in America: Women’s Work, The Sexual Division of Labor, and the development of Capitalism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1982) , 1–3.

¹⁴⁸ Abramovitz, *Under Attack*, 89.

¹⁴⁹ Gerda Lerner, “The Lady and the Mill Girl: Changes in the Status of Women in the Age of Jackson,” in *A Heritage of Her Own: Toward a New Social History of American Women*, eds. Nancy F. Cott and Elizabeth H. Peck (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), 182.

¹⁵⁰ Alice Kessler-Harris, *Out to Work*, 50.

¹⁵¹ Abramovitz, *Regulating the Lives of Women*, 3589.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 3597.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

The rate of poverty was high among husbandless women who lost their breadwinners in wars, industrial accidents, or because of desertion and so forth.¹⁵⁴ Such factors as immigration and industrialisation by 1800 made many women jobless and potential paupers. Thus, some husbandless women became prostitutes and others depended on public relief, their neighbours, or their families for financial help.¹⁵⁵

During the post–Civil War era, a new class of women emerged and it was composed of vagrants, prostitutes, minor thieves because they lost their breadwinners.¹⁵⁶ Women who were expected to live on relief were exposed to severe inspection and supervision by authorities. Their eligibility to relief was measured by their compliance with family and work disciplines or norms.

5) The Historical Origins of Welfare (ADC) during Progressive Era: The 1900s

5.1) The Problem of “Single Motherhood”

The Progressive Era is considered a key historical period during which the American welfare state developed significantly. Deborah Ward points out:

The Progressive Era retains a distinctive place in the state-building story of the United States. This era ushered in a new relationship between the U.S. state and its citizens. National and state governments instituted an unparalleled number of legislative and administrative actions aimed at protecting the social and economic rights of women, children, and workers.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴ Abramovitz, “The Family Ethic,” 128.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ See, for example, Estelle B. Freedman, “Their Sisters’ Keepers: An Historical Perspective on Female Correctional Institutions in the U.S., 1870–1900,” *Feminist Studies* 12, no.1 (1974): 77–96.

¹⁵⁷ Ward, *The White Welfare State*, 14.

Single motherhood¹⁵⁸ had become a major social problem facing the U.S. during the late and early twentieth centuries, and deserted wives represented the majority of single mothers and they symbolised widespread poverty in the country.¹⁵⁹ Many people, particularly women, from different backgrounds tend to view single motherhood as a dangerous social phenomenon: immigrants, African Americans, working-class, middle-class as well white people.¹⁶⁰ “Dependent motherhood” or women’s poverty during the early twentieth century drew the attention of charity institutions, women’s organisations, and child welfare advocates.¹⁶¹

Middle-class reformers’ ideas and perception of single motherhood, particularly those of Jane Addams, Sophonisba Breckinridge, Julia Lathrop, and the sisters Edith and Grace Abbott who were residents of social settlements at Hull House in the immigrant slums of Chicago in the 1890s;¹⁶² formed what historians call the “maternalist movement”.¹⁶³ They also played a central role in shaping mothers’ aid laws and their development from this period to the New Deal. Premilla Nadasen and her co-authors state that:

Women took the greatest interest: working-class women in labor unions affirmed solidarity with single mothers; middle-class African American women claimed responsibility for uplifting them as well as “the race” as a whole; and middle-class white reformers claimed a special “maternalist” responsibility” for single mothers, who they felt needed the guidance of their “betters.” These differently situated women sought to ease the burdens of

¹⁵⁸ “Single”, “solo”, “lone” mothers raising children on their own: never married, deserted, widowed, or divorced women. The term was coined by Emma Lundberg in 1933, and it referred to unmarried mothers. Emma O. Lundberg, *Unmarried Mothers in the Municipal Court of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Thomas Skelton Harrison Foundation, 1933).

¹⁵⁹ Gordon, *Pitied but not Entitled*, 24–25. Nadasen, Mittelstadt, and Chappell, *Welfare in the United States*, 21.

¹⁶⁰ Gordon, *Pitied but not Entitled*, 11.

¹⁶¹ See for instance, Joanne L. Goodwin, *Gender and the Politics of Welfare Reform: Mothers’ Pensions in Chicago, 1911–1929* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 21.

¹⁶² Patrick Wilkinson, “The Selfless and the Helpless” *Feminist Studies* 25, no. 3 (Autumn, 1999): 573; see also Jessica Toft and Laura S. Abrams, “Progressive Maternalists and the Citizenship Status of Low Income Single Mothers,” *Social Service Review* 78, no. 3 (2004): 347. See also Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State*, 129; Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse*, 174–75. On the history of social reform movements in the U.S. see for example Eugene E. Leach, “Social Reform Movements,” in *Encyclopedia of American Social History*, eds. Mary Kupiec Cayton et al., (New York: MacMillan Library Reference, 1993), 3: 2201–30. See also Goodwin, *Gender and the Politics of Welfare Reform*.

¹⁶³ Patrick Wilkinson, “The Selfless and the Helpless,” 573.

single mothers with a variety of proposals . . . (which) shaped the laws that would eventually evolve into the Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) program.¹⁶⁴

5.2) Mothers' Pensions (Mothers' Aid): The Role of Women in Developing the U.S. Welfare System

In this section, we attempt to explain the prominent role played by women, known as “maternalists”¹⁶⁵ in the development of the welfare state during the Progressive Era. Those women’s efforts led to creating mothers’ pension programme laid the groundwork for the creation of the American welfare state.¹⁶⁶ To do this, we need first to have a look at the conditions in the U.S. society during that era that facilitated for women the task to change their situation and later the path of a whole welfare system. According to scholars, gender bias is the main factor that pushed women activists to ask reform welfare policy during the Progressive Era, she writes “The roots of women’s inequality the welfare state can be found in maternalist social policy”.¹⁶⁷

By the early nineteenth century, and as industrial capitalism transformed the American society, the gap between the rich and the poor had become more and more widened: the power and wealth became in the hands of the few; however, the many suffered from poverty.¹⁶⁸ Thus, progressivism, a social reform movement emerged to deal with issues caused by capitalism.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁴ Nadasen, Mittelstadt, and Chappell, *Welfare in the United States*, 11.

¹⁶⁵ The term "maternalist" has won wide usage only in recent years, although it describes a movement that has long drawn the attention of women's historians. Not all the authors discussed in this review employ the term; indeed, some authors have explicitly rejected it, and those who do use it do not always agree on its definition. For explicit rejection of the term, see Eileen Boris, *Home to Work: Motherhood and the Politics of Industrial Homework in the United States* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 8; Kathryn Kish Sklar, “The Historical Foundations of Women's Power in the Creation of the American Welfare State, 1880–1930,” in *Mothers of a New World: Maternalist Politics and the origins of Welfare States*, eds. Seth Koven and Sonya Michel (New York; Routledge, 1993), 45. For efforts to define the term ;Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers*, 34; Linda Gordon, *Pitied But Not Entitled*, 5.

¹⁶⁶ Wilkinson, “The Selfless and the Helpless,” 571.

¹⁶⁷ Gwendolyn Mink, *The Wages of Motherhood: Inequality in the Welfare State, 1917–1942* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1995), 73.

¹⁶⁸ Abramovitz, *Regulating the Lives of Women*, 5274.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

Another issue that characterised the Progressive Era was “male desertion”.¹⁷⁰ In the early 1890s, activists in charities and social settlements made efforts to deal effectively with the problem of desertion by using existing methods, but their efforts and thoughts had evolved through time.¹⁷¹ Throughout that era, progressive social reformers considered desertion as a threat as well as a “critical problem” to family and society as well.¹⁷²

During this period, poverty was no longer conceived as a personal failure. Many factors contributed to the shift in the definition of poverty among which are the following: irregular unemployment during the recession of 1893, poor housing and low wages, the information provided by scientific charity workers, the negative ideas about the rich, and the advance in medicine.¹⁷³

By the 1900s, 20 per cent of all women in the United States were working for wages outside the home.¹⁷⁴ The idea of mother’s aid appeared during the Progressive Era (1896-1914), a time when middle-class reformers asked the government to promote well-being for needy husbandless women and their children, and particularly widows whose proportion was 77 per cent of all mother-headed families.¹⁷⁵ A contemporary social worker described the hard life of a single-mother family from New York City’s Lower East Side in 1909:

You live in three rooms in Essex Street . . . There is a boarder who helps out with the rent. . . You only have one bed. The boarder must have it. The three older children slept on a mattress on the floor after she brought them in from the street at eleven o’clock. The baby who is only eight months old, slept with you on the fire escape, and you stayed awake half the night for fear you might lose your hold on him and he might fall. While has a running nose and they tell you at the day nursery that if it is not better to-day- you will have to keep him home. . . . That means that Nellie will have to stay away from school and take care of him. You are only thirty-six years old, but you look forty-nine.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁰ Martha May, “The “Problem of Duty”: Family Desertion in the Progressive Era,” *Social Service Review* 62, no. 1 (1988): 40.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 41.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

¹⁷³ Robert H. Bremner, *From the Depths: The Discovery of Poverty in the United States* (New York: New York University Press, 1964), 131. See also Ward, *The White Welfare State*, 31.

¹⁷⁴ Blanche Coll, *Perspectives in Public Welfare: A History* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Office of Research, Demonstration and Training, 1969), 68. See also Ward, *The White Welfare State*, 29.

¹⁷⁵ Abramovitz, *Under Attack*, 62.

¹⁷⁶ Quoted in Gordon, *Pitied but not Entitled*, 15.

The best role of women, for reformers, was staying at home, and not in the workplace to take care of their children.¹⁷⁷ This is what historians called the “maternalist” vision and which stressed the importance of “mothering”.¹⁷⁸ In other words, maternalists stressed the importance of the maternal role to sustain the continuity and the stability of the whole society.¹⁷⁹

From a maternalist perspective, caring for the welfare of mothers and children is important for the construction of a successful state, as Theodore Roosevelt declared in 1909:

Each of these (dependent) children represents either a potential addition to the productive capacity and the enlightened citizenship of the nation, or, if allowed to suffer from neglect, a potential addition to the destructive forces of the community. The ranks of criminals and other enemies of society are recruited in an altogether undue proportion from children bereft of their natural homes and left without sufficient care. The interests of the nation are involved in the welfare of this army of children no less than in our great material affairs . . . *Home life is the highest and finest product of civilization. Children should not be deprived of it except of urgent and compelling reasons.* Surely poverty alone should not disrupt the home. Parents of good character suffering from temporary misfortune, and above all, deserving mothers fairly well able to work but deprived of support of the normal breadwinner, should be given such aid as may be necessary to enable them to maintain suitable homes for the rearing of their children. The widowed or deserted mother, if a good woman, willing to work and do her best, should ordinarily be helped in such fashion as will enable her to bring up her children herself in their natural home. Children from unfit homes, and children who have no homes, who much be cared for charitable agencies, should, so far as practicable, be cared for in families.¹⁸⁰ (Italics in the original text.)

Mothers’ aid was conceived by reformers as “a recognition of mothers’ service to the state.”¹⁸¹ The designers of the mothers’ aid programme were women and namely feminist activists. Their main principle was to establish a programme which would enable mothers to stay at home and take care of their young children because for them mothering is an occupation as such rather than simply a role at home.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, 11.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.,13.

¹⁷⁹ J. L. Goodwin, *Gender and the Politics of Welfare Reform*, 22.

¹⁸⁰ Theodore Roosevelt, “Conference on the Care of Dependent Children, Special Message to the Senate and House of Representatives, 1909,” in *Welfare: A Documentary History of U.S. Policy and Politics*, eds. Gwendolyn Mink and Rickie Solinger (New York: New York University Press, 2003), 23–25.

¹⁸¹ Quoted in Gordon, *Pitied but not Entitled*, 14.

¹⁸² Ibid., 37–38.

The first state mothers' pension law was enacted in 1911.¹⁸³ "White" and middle-class women, mostly from the General Federation of Women's Clubs, the National Congress of Mothers, and the Parent-Teacher Association¹⁸⁴ and whose number was about one million women, played a key role in the legislation of these laws.¹⁸⁵ Those women, who were single mothers themselves, were aware of the dilemmas that working women were facing, especially single mothers, and they tried to come up with solutions.¹⁸⁶ Hence, they asked the government to provide poor women with pensions to take care of their children in their homes, namely widows.¹⁸⁷

During the Progressive Era, reformers believed that the causes of poverty are related to industrialisation and not to personal failure and they firmly believed in the importance of "family preservation" to maintain a healthy society.¹⁸⁸ Mothers' pension programme made clear that the government (whether local, state, or federal) should assume responsibility to assist the most vulnerable category of people in the American society: poor mothers and their young children.¹⁸⁹ Progressive reformers demonstrated a contemporary view of womanhood, mothering, and childhood and stressed the importance of these key elements in the future and the development of social welfare policy in the United States.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸³ Illinois was the first state to legislate it, and six years later, thirty-five states had passed such law. By 1935, all states passed Mothers' Pension law except Georgia and South Carolina; see Mink and Solinger, *Welfare*, 25; see also Mark H. Leff, "Consensus for Reform: The Mothers'-Pension Movement in the Progressive Era," *Social Service Review* 47, no. 3 (1973): 397.

¹⁸⁴ Nadasen, Mittelstadt, and Chappell, *Welfare in the United States*, 14. See also Ward, *The White Welfare State*, 39.

¹⁸⁵ Nadasen, Mittelstadt and M. Chappell, *Welfare in the United States*, 14.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁸⁷ Ward, *The White Welfare State*, 1.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁹⁰ Ann Vandepol, "Dependent Children, Child Custody, and the Mothers' Pensions: The Transformation of State-Family Relations in the Early Twentieth Century," *Social Problems* 29, no.3 (February 1982): 223.

The main objective of mothers' pensions was to enable single women to raise their children inside their homes. Premilla Nadasen and her co-authors explain the role of mothers' pensions in U.S. society, they state that:

. . . (M)others' pensions sought to pull mothers out of the labor market and reinstall them in what was viewed as their proper place—the home. By providing mothers a pension—essentially small cash payments from the government—the program would enable single mothers to forgo paid work and attend to children in their own home . . . mothers would no longer suffer the fear of leaving children with strangers, the strain of working all day in a factory, or the pain of having their families separated. A mothers' pension would restore the proper—even sacred—domestic role to those women who struggled alone without a male breadwinner to make ends meet.¹⁹¹

Mothers' pensions were very limited and restrictive as they targeted widows and neglected other women such as divorced women who were ineligible.¹⁹² The colonial poor laws and mothers' pensions shared in common some criteria in that they both took into account the behaviour of women and aimed at preserving the family as well as the work ethic. Women who did not comply with the family and the work standards were exposed to supervision and harsh punishment. Simply put, the mothers' pensions reinforced the family ties, encouraged the formation of the patriarchal type of American families, and rewarded women whose behaviour was compatible with the prescribed mother and work norms. Michael Katz states that:

. . . (M)others' pensions helped families stay together, and they offered many women modest independence they otherwise would have lacked. For once certified as eligible, women received a regular income without repeated investigations. They remained at liberty to supplement their pensions with work and to conduct their lives without the regular intrusion of friendly visitors. Even more, mothers' pensions were a small, halting, but a consequential step away from charity and toward entitlement.¹⁹³

The following table shows the year in which the first mothers' law was passed in different states in the United States, the number of families which benefited from mother's aid. The data illustrated in this table are provided by the Children's Bureau. The "Department of Labor's Children's Bureau" was established in 1912 and it marked the

¹⁹¹ Nadasen, Mittelstadt, and Chappell, *Welfare in the United States*, 14. See also Abramovitz, *Regulating the Lives of Women*, 5337.

¹⁹² In Massachusetts 82 per cent of the Mothers' Pensions clients were widows. The amendment of 1913 to the Illinois legislation considered divorced women as unacceptable to receive pensions; see Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse*, 133.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

beginning of the institutional development of mothers' pensions.¹⁹⁴ The main mission of the Children's Bureau was to gather data on child health, welfare and to conduct surveys on child labour, child health, nutrition, education, and juvenile delinquency.¹⁹⁵

TABLE 1. Mothers' Aid 1931

Division and State	Date of passage of the first mothers' aid law	Number of administrative units in states having county jurisdiction		Number of families receiving aid -		Number of children receiving aid on a specified date	
		1921	June 30, 1933	During 1921 or 1922	On a specified date in 1931		
Total		2,723	1,049	1,490	45,825	93,620	253,298
New England							
Maine	1917				638	608	1,763
New Hampshire	1913				144	175	516
Vermont	1917				43	90	239
Massachusetts	1913				3,391	2,817	7,235
Rhode Island	1923					388	1,253
Connecticut	1919				603	959	2,679
Middle Atlantic							
New York	1915	58	48	49	12,542	18,423	48,686
New Jersey	1913	21	21	21	2,472	7,000	19,361
Pennsylvania	1913	67	50	57	*2,494	6,066	18,674
East North Central:							
Ohio	1913	88	86	88	5763	7708	21262
Indiana	1919	92	21	70	114	1083	3387
Illinois	1911	102	54	91	2500	6087	17004
Michigan	1913	83	70	75	2072	6555	18030
Wisconsin	1913	71	70	71	3284	7052	18188

¹⁹⁴ Ward, *The White Welfare State*, 43.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

West North Central:								
Minnesota	1913	87	78	85	2265	3455	9990	
Iowa	1913	99	64	98	1299	3242	7829	
Missouri	1913	115	32	11	277	307	1134	
North Dakota	1915	53	43	44	608	978	2644	
South Dakota	1913	69	44	963	423	1290	3324	
Nebraska	1913	93	56	82	349	1453	4141	
Kansas	1915	105	41	32	430	342	954	
South Atlantic:								
Delaware	1917	3	3	3	167	314	818	
Maryland	1916	24		7		121	450	
District of Columbia	1926	1		1		161	595	
Virginia	1918	124		3		110	309	
West Virginia	1915	55	19	17	162	334	876	
South Carolina			No mothers' aid law on June 30, 1931					
			No mothers' aid law on June 30, 1931					
Georgia								
Florida	1919	67	5	41	168	2298	5241	

Source: U.S. Children's Bureau Studies (1931–1933)

6) Implications of Race, Class, and Gender in the U.S. Welfare System during the Progressive Era

6.1) The Creation of the “Two-Channel Welfare State”: Gender Inequality

Welfare policies that preceded the New Deal era played an important role in shaping the formal structure as well as the development of the U.S. welfare state, and they were influenced by issues related to race, class, and gender.¹⁹⁶ Before the emergence of the American welfare state during the 1930s, public policies existed in the U.S. and they contributed to assist the most vulnerable persons in society, who had been considered as deserving poor.

There were two main successful benefits programmes in the U.S. during the Progressive Era: Mothers’ Pensions and Workmen’s Compensation. These two programmes were different in terms of their ideologies, principles of entitlements as well as administrative approaches, and they prepared the groundwork for the Social Security Act of 1935 which strengthened race, class, and gender divisions within the welfare system.¹⁹⁷ The differences between these two programmes led to the establishment of “the two-channel welfare state”: a channel which provided generous entitlements for “white” industrial males and another for poor, “white”, working-class widows, and their dependent children.¹⁹⁸

In other words, Workmen’s Compensation created the first channel of the welfare state which was male, judicial, public and “routinized” in origin.¹⁹⁹ Nevertheless, mothers’ pensions made the basis for a second channel of the welfare state which was female, administrative, private, and “nonroutinized” in origin, and which targeted widows of white

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 133.

¹⁹⁷ See Barbara J. Nelson, “The Origins of the Two-Channel Welfare State,” 3116–19.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 3110–3113.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 3327.

workers.²⁰⁰ The benefits that were devoted to “white” male workers were linked to welfare capitalism, whereas those delivered to poor women (“white” widows and their young children) were connected to the poor laws and the administrative practices of the Charity Organisation Society movement.²⁰¹

The early welfare programmes in the United States were designed to assist the most integrated groups which represented the industrial working class category; i.e., Northern “white” males working in the domains of mining, transportation as well as heavy manufacturing (and their widows if any).²⁰² Male workers’ behaviour was not submitted to regular control whereas the mothers’ pensions clients’ was highly supervised by the local authorities.²⁰³

In addition to workingmen’s benefits, another programme was constructed around males’ roles and it was called the Civil War pensions programme. Theda Skocpol states that:

. . . (C)ertain major phases and sectors of U.S. social provision, such as Civil War pensions and Workingmen’s benefits, have been constructed around male roles—including the noneconomic role of wage-earning family breadwinner—while others have been focused on the female roles of mother and working woman understood as a potential mother.²⁰⁴

Civil War pensions programme was one of the largest social welfare programmes that the United States of America had been developing during the early twentieth century.²⁰⁵ Civil War pensions provided generous old-age benefits to many “native-born white men outside the Confederate South” and their widows.²⁰⁶ In 1912, it had 860,000 beneficiaries and cost \$153.²⁰⁷ This programme did not succeed to launch a welfare state during the nineteenth century, because of corruption and the underdevelopment of the

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 3113.

²⁰² Ibid., 3517.

²⁰³ Ibid., 3517–20

²⁰⁴ Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and their Mothers*, 475.

²⁰⁵ To have more details about the development of Civil War pensions see “The Civil War and After – Scientific Charity”, chapter 5, in *From Poor Law to Welfare State*, Trattner, 77–108.

²⁰⁶ Quadagno, *The Transformation of Old Age Security*, 1.

²⁰⁷ I. M. Rubinow, *Social Insurance: With Special Reference to American Conditions* (New York, Henry Hold and Company, 1913), 4054.

American administration during the period. Indeed, the Civil War Pension system was a product of patronage-based parties.²⁰⁸

Congress could not convert Civil War pensions into a universal old-age pension system.²⁰⁹ Simply put, although the United States had a military pension system, it failed to establish a universal welfare state during the early twentieth century for all working and elderly Americans. It was not until the 1930s, during the Roosevelt Administration that the United States could establish a welfare state through the legislation of the Social Security Act of 1935.²¹⁰

6.2) Race and Class Implications during the Progressive Era: A Brief Overview

Before the Civil War, enslaved African American women performed harsh work in the fields and the houses of slaveholders. After slavery, racial discrimination and economic exploitation limited African American men's work opportunities. Hence, their wives and partners- who were already excluded from the industrial domain- worked as agricultural labourers or as domestic workers in white homes.

Throughout the Progressive Era, the United States witnessed a considerable number of legislative and administrative measures which sought to protect the social and economic rights of women, children as well as workers. But African Americans (and non-northern immigrants) were excluded from the era's political, economic, and social development.²¹¹ It should be noted that "Black" workers, men and women, were excluded from industrial

²⁰⁸ Barbara Nelson, "The Origins of the Two-Channel Welfare State," 3198. Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and their Mothers*, 169.

²⁰⁹ Unlike the U.S., other Western nations created their systems of old age insurance since the early twentieth century: Germany legislated a comprehensive Old Age Pensions Act in 1908, Sweden its *folkpension* in 1913, see Jill Quadagno, *The Transformation of Old Age Security*, 1–2. Between the 1880s and WWI, many European countries— together with Australia, New Zealand and Brazil— launched their social welfare programs which have become the core of their modern welfare states. Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and their Mothers*, 194.

²¹⁰ Social Security had become Old Age Insurance during the New Deal.

²¹¹ Ward, *The White Welfare State*, 14–15.

work and state social welfare assistance, in the North and South until World War I.²¹² During the Progressive Era, most African Americans lived in the South and they were denied political and social rights under the repressive Jim Crow laws. Therefore, they were excluded from state-level Progressive social policies (including mothers' pensions).²¹³ In other words, racism was "institutionalized" within the American welfare system during the Progressive Era.²¹⁴

The proportion of African American women (both middle-class and poor) who worked outside the home was higher than that of white women.²¹⁵ The mothers' aid fostered discrimination against working African American mothers, who had been seen as "unfit mothers".²¹⁶ The U.S. Children's Bureau undertook national research on state-level mothers' pensions programme in 1931 and published its results in 1933 for Frances Perkins, the Secretary of Labor.²¹⁷ According to data provided U.S. Children's Bureau, African American women received 3 per cent of mothers' aid only, and 80 per cent the recipients of mothers' pensions were white widows (see table 1). The welfare programmes which targeted husbandless women were dependent on "race-specific conceptualisation of gender roles."²¹⁸

Another dilemma that challenged the management of the mothers' pension programme and its early development was the arrival of a new wave of immigrants who came from different countries, who did not share the same cultural background and religion. These new immigrants arrived in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century and they came essentially from southern and eastern Europe and they were

²¹² Slar, "The Historical Foundations of Women's Power," 43.

²¹³ Robert C. Lieberman, "Race and the Limits of Solidarity: American Welfare State in Comparative Perspective," in *Race and the Politics of Welfare Reform*, eds. F. Schram, Joe Soss, and Richard C. Fording (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 450.

²¹⁴ Ward, *The White Welfare State*, 134–135.

²¹⁵ Nadasen, Mittelstadt, and Chappell, *Welfare in the United States*, 12. See also Barbara J. Nelson, "The Two-Channel Welfare State: Workmen's Compensation and Mothers' Aid," in *Women, the State, and Welfare*, ed. Linda Gordon, 3309.

²¹⁶ Gwendolyn Mink and Alice O'Connor, eds., *Poverty in the United States: An Encyclopedia of History, Politics, and Policy*, vol.1 A–K (California: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2004), 456.

²¹⁷ Nadasen, Mittelstadt, and Chappell, *Welfare in the United States*, 91.

²¹⁸ Stephanie Moller, "Supporting Poor Single Mothers: Gender and Race in the U.S. Welfare State," *Gender and Society* 16, no. 4 (2002): 478.

Catholics, Jews, and Eastern Orthodox Christians. They were considered racially distinct and inferior by native white American citizens during this period.²¹⁹

Mothers' aid agents feared that birth rates for poor immigrant mothers were higher than of native mothers.²²⁰ According to a report realised at the beginning of the twentieth century in Massachusetts, immigrant women's birth rates (who were almost deserted or single mothers) were 50 per cent higher than native ones'.²²¹

During the Progressive Era, several reports signaled this problem. For instance, a report realised in 1904 on desertion concluded that "with all our . . . Catholics, the wide-open door of our immense institutional system makes it easy for a man to lay down his obligations . . . Despite the dogged perseverance of the Hebrew race [there is] no more flagrant offender than the Jew. If the rent is over-due he disappears."²²²

Theodore Roosevelt tackled the subject of white women's infertility and blamed working "white" women for the low birthrates of native whites, which she called "race suicide".²²³ Thus, the mothers' pensions programme targeted essentially working "white" women ("white" widows more specifically) to help them stay at home and take care of their children. Besides, Roosevelt affirmed her support of scientific theories which asserted the inherent inferiority of non-native immigrants and especially African Americans.²²⁴

In 1913, eligibility requirements to mother's pensions changed among which requirements related to citizenship; hence, many immigrants lost their benefits.²²⁵ These changes at the level of the administration of mothers' pensions took place because of the impact of County Agent Meyer's anti-immigration sentiments.²²⁶

²¹⁹ Cybelle Fox, *Three Worlds of Relief: Race, Immigration and the American Welfare State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 168.

²²⁰ Ward, *The White Welfare State*, 48.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 48.

²²² Quoted in *Ibid.*

²²³ *Ibid.*, 49.

²²⁴ Deborah Stone, "Conference Panel on Theda Skocpol's *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers*," *Studies in American Political Development* 8 (Spring 1944): 111–18.

²²⁵ J. Goodwin, *Gender and the Politics of Welfare Reform*, 128.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*

However, Jewish, Italian, German, Polish, Irish, and other minorities, who were disproportionately single mothers or deserted wives, worked their way up progressively and succeeded to overcome prejudice and stigma and they proved that they can change their miserable situation without depending heavily on welfare.²²⁷ In other words, unlike “mothers of colour” (who were mainly African Americans), those minorities were less dependent on the government for survival.

Between 1904 and 1920, the poor relief office recorded twenty-seven national and racial groups that received assistance. The following table (3) shows the percentage of families who received relief among the general population by taking into account their race and their origins (natives or non-native born). This table demonstrates that native-born whites formed the largest group of poor relief programme’s recipients before World War II. That is to say, according to data illustrated in the table, African American poor families were also beneficiaries of relief programmes in the United States during the early twentieth century and other immigrants.

²²⁷ Fox, *Three Worlds of Relief*, 220.

TABLE 2. Percentage of Families in the General Population and among Poor Relief Families by Race and Nativity, 1910-1930

	Pop. Relief		Pop. Relief		Pop. Relief	
European American	62	20	66	24	67	30
African American	2	6	4	8	7	31
Total native-born	64	26	70	32	74	61
Germans	7	11	4	8	3	4
Irish	3	10	2	5	2	2
Italian	2	8	2	11	2	8
Polish	6	19	5	19	4	11
Other	18	26	17	25	15	14
Total foreign- born	36	74	30	68	26	39
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Chicago Population figures from Thirteenth Census, 1910: Population; Fourteenth Census, 1920 : Population ; Fifteenth Census, 1930: Population.

The working class in the United States played a very passive role in the development of social welfare provision in the United States. Jill Quadagno states that: “. . . a weak working class, or, more specifically, the absence of a labour-based political party, has impeded the formation of a more generous welfare state.”²²⁸ Indeed, the American “labor movement” did not succeed to launch a welfare state in the United States of America and its role had been weakened by racial divisions in the workplace and the community.²²⁹ The American welfare state, unlike the other states in the Western World, lacked a successful labour movement and this point may explain American exceptionalism.²³⁰ The social scientist Gosta Esping-Anderson’s comparative work of political development in Norway, Denmark, and Sweden demonstrates that “labour” was politically fundamental in the three latter countries.²³¹ Esping-Anderson explains that the political efforts of the working class, especially skilled craft workers (including unskilled industrial workers), played a central role in setting up the basis of the welfare state in those nations.²³²

All in all, throughout this chapter we were made to know that since the colonial period relief practices to aid the poor existed to maintain social order and stability. Husbandless women had become the public relief’s main recipients. Colonial authorities had not treated poor people in the same way and manner. They provided aid to the poor in general, and impoverished women more particularly, by paying attention to two main criteria: family and work ethics.

During the Progressive Era, in 1911 mothers’ pension law was passed. The main intention behind its legislation was to enable single mothers, widowed ones, in particular, to take care of their children inside the home. But social welfare programmes were influenced by racist and gendered attitudes during the Progressive Era. Unlike programmes that targeted women, males’ programmes were superior, and this led to the creation of the two-channel welfare state. Moreover, “women of colour” and their children were marginalised

²²⁸ Quadagno, *The Color of Welfare*, 6.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, 7.

²³⁰ Quadagno, *The Transformation of Old Age Security*, 10.

²³¹ Gøsta Esping-Anderson, *Politics against Markets: The Social Democratic Road to Power* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 245.

²³² *Ibid.*

by the Mothers' Aid programme. Even though the United States had a military pension system, it failed to establish a welfare state during this period. It was not until the 1930s, during the Roosevelt Administration that the U.S. could establish a modern version of the welfare state through the legislation of the Social Security Act of 1935.

In the following chapter, I will try to demonstrate how the Social Security Act of 1935 of the New Deal paved the way to the creation of a stratified and non-comprehensive welfare state in the United States of America, which reinforced race, gender, and class inequities within the American society. I will deal with ADC (Aid to Dependent Children), a federal assistance programme—a substitution of mothers' pensions—which had become very stigmatised because its main clientele had become “exclusively” single mothers of “colour” and their out-of-wedlock, dependent children.

Chapter Two

The New Deal, the Social Security Act of 1935, and the Rise of the Stratified Welfare State in the United States

The United States of America forged its welfare state²³³ during the New Deal era. Its cornerstone was the Social Security Act of 1935. It is generally assumed that this landmark legislation created the “modern welfare state” in the United States. However, the Social Security Act set the bedrock of a “stratified” welfare system because of implications of class, gender, and race.

Hence, this chapter demonstrates to what extent issues related to gender, class, and race have shaped the formal structure as well as the historical development of the U.S. welfare state during the New Deal. Light will be shed on Title IV of the Social Security Act, the programme which targeted impoverished women, and which was an extension of mothers’ pensions created during the Progressive Era. We will see that ADC’s clients had been marginalised due to race as well as gender-based issues.

²³³ On the formation of the welfare state in the U.S., see, for instance, Theda Skocpol, “Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research,” in *Bringing the State Back*, eds. Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschmeyer, and Theda Skocpol (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Ann Shola Orloff and Theda Skocpol, “Why Not Equal Protection? Explaining the Politics of Public Social Spending in Britain 1900–1911, and in the United States, 1880s–1920s,” *American Sociological Review* 49, no.6 (Dec.1984): 726–50; see also, Theda Skocpol and John Ikenberry, “The Political Formation of the American Welfare State in Historical and Comparative Perspective,” in *Comparative Social Research: The Welfare State, 1883–1983*, ed. Richard F. Tomasson (Greenwich, Conn.: JAI Press, 1983): 6; Theda Skocpol and Kenneth Finegold, “State Capacity and Economic Intervention in the Early New Deal,” *Political Science Quarterly* 97, no.3 (1982): 255–78; Theda Skocpol, “Political Response to Capitalist Areas: Neo-Marxist Theories of the State and the Case of the New Deal,” *Politics and Society* 10, no.2 (1980): 155–201.

1) The Great Depression of 1929, the New Deal, and the Rise of the U.S. Modern Welfare State

1.1) The Great Depression of 1929: A Brief Overview

The United States of America witnessed the worst and unprecedented economic crisis when the Wall Street Market crashed in October 1929, and that crisis marked the abrupt end of the Roaring Twenties. The 1929 economic recession was the deepest and longest economic collapse in American history; it lasted for eleven years. It caused mass unemployment and widespread destitution in the American society. It contributed to massive unemployment, business failures, and social disturbances. Peter Temin states that:

. . . Industrial production declined by 37 percent, prices by 33 percent, and real GNP by 30 percent. Nominal GNP, therefore fell by over half. Unemployment rose to a peak of 25 percent and stayed above 15 percent for the rest of the 1930s. There were many idle economic resources in America for a full decade. Only with the advent of the Second World War did unemployment rise to absorb the full labor force.²³⁴

Murray Rothbard also states that:

In addition to its great duration, the 1929 depression stamped itself on the American mind by its heavy and continuing unemployment. While the intensity of falling prices and monetary contraction was not at all unprecedented, the intensity and duration of unemployment was new and shocking. The proportion of the American labor force that was unemployed had rarely reached 10 percent at the deepest trough of previous depressions; yet it surpassed 20 percent in 1931, and remained above 15 percent until the advent of World War II.²³⁵

The most prominent cause was, as Grace Abbott puts it, “The uncontrolled and undirected free enterprise on which our economic system is based.”²³⁶ The depression had deeply-rooted causes and scholars are divided into two groups when dealing with the main factors which contributed to the economic recession of 1929. The traditional scholarship studied the events in the United States in isolation. This type of scholarship focused on the structural weaknesses of the American economy in the 1920s. Badger states that:

²³⁴ Peter Temin , “ The Great Depression,” in *The Cambridge Economic History of the United States, The Twentieth Century*, Stanley L. Engerman and Robert E. Gallman, eds., vol.3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) , 301.

²³⁵ Murray N. Rothbard, *America's Great Depression* , 5th ed.(Albama: The Ludwig von MisesInstitute, 2000) , xxxvi

²³⁶ Grace Abbott, *From Relief to Social Security* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941), 3–4.

Because of the misdistribution of income and the flaws of the banking system and the operation of the stock market, there was insufficient demand in the American economy to sustain the great gains made in productivity by American industry and agriculture. This lack of demand was not offset in the early years of the Depression by any compensatory government spending . . . analysis of this of demand was refined to focus first on the downturn in construction and automobiles, then on the decline in agricultural income and the loss of wealth caused by the stock market crash.²³⁷

Likewise, Robert McElvaine states, “From the late 19th century onward, the ways in which people live have been fundamentally transformed by the development of mass production industries. Mass production requires mass consumption, if demand is to match supply and the economy kept on an even keel.”²³⁸ The 1920s was an era of change marked by materialism and a “consumption ethic” which replaced “thrift and community” values.²³⁹ New devices were introduced to the market such as radios, automobiles, washing machines and they were rolling off the assembly lines in huge quantities and Americans became obsessed with purchasing the newest items.²⁴⁰ Thus, they focused on consumption and their day-to-day enjoyment instead of saving for the future.²⁴¹

On the other hand, recent scholarship studies tackled the depression from an international perspective by focusing on the impact of the First World War.²⁴² The Great War had a strong impact on policy decisions inside the nation and also on the world economy.²⁴³ The main effects of the Great War on the American economy were: “the changed pattern of international debts and lending, the expansion and collapse of agriculture, and the end of mass immigration.”²⁴⁴

²³⁷ Anthony J. Badger, *The New Deal: The Depression Years, 1933-40* (Houndmills: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1989), 29.

²³⁸ Robert S. McElvaine, *The Depression and the New Deal: A History in Documents* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 13.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Temin ,“The Great Depression,” 301.

²⁴³ Ibid.,

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 302.

Private charity could not address the needs of the growing number of poor people.²⁴⁵ The Republican President Herbert Hoover could not find effective and quick solutions to stop the economic recession, and he believed that the depression was a temporary economic phenomenon that would disappear without government intervention.²⁴⁶ David Cronon states that:

The Story of the Hoover Administration is almost entirely a tale of frustration and unrelieved woe, of groping uncertainty for a solution to the ever-deepening world-wide depression within the limits of a philosophy of individualism that considered centralized authority as more dangerous even than economic collapse. Hoover's unquestioning commitment to what he called rugged individualism led him to assume until too late that the country could weather this depression, like others in the past, without any comprehensive planning or intervention by the federal government.²⁴⁷

President Herbert Hoover maintained the conservative approach by letting the markets right themselves.²⁴⁸ The prices continued rising and the Federal Reserve could not control the situation.²⁴⁹ Hence, the economic crisis of 1929 produced marches of the unemployed and movement protests in each corner of the United States and which blamed "unbridled" capitalism for causing poverty and misery.

Before being elected president of the United States in 1933, Franklin Delano Roosevelt was the Governor of New York. He changed his opinion about relief. In fact, formerly he was an advocate of local responsibility for relief. In 1931, he argued:

Our Government is not the master but the creature of the people. The duty of the State toward the citizens is the duty of the servant to its master . . . One of these duties of the State is that of caring for those of its citizens who find themselves the victims of such adverse circumstance as makes the aid of others . . . To these unfortunate citizens aid must be extended by Government, not as a matter of charity, but as a matter of social duty.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁵ Dona Cooper Hamilton and Charles V. Hamilton, *The Dual Agenda: The African-American Struggle for Civil and Economic Equality* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 8.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 8. See also Robert V. Remini, *A Short History of the United States* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2008), 216. See also Anthony J. Badger, "Depression America," in *The New Deal: The Depression Years, 1933–1940* (Houndmills: Macmillan Press LTD, 1989).

²⁴⁷ E. David Cronon, *Twentieth Century America: Selected Readings, 1929 to the Present* (Homewood, Illinois: The Dorsey Press, 1966), 2:1.

²⁴⁸ Alix Meyer, "The Roosevelt Years and the Rise of the American Welfare State," *Cercles* 32, no.1 (2014):

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²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁰ Quoted in Irving Bernstein, *A Caring Society: The New Deal, the Worker, and the Great Depression* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1985), 19.

1.2) Women during the Great Depression

Long before the depression of the 1930s, married women worked outside of the home in factories, fields, the homes of other women, in clerical and services occupation.²⁵¹ Between the 1930s and the 1940s, the number of married women in the working force increased by nearly 50 per cent, yet their number in the population increased by 15 per cent.²⁵² By the 1940s, married women formed 35 per cent of the labour force.²⁵³

The depression resulted in increasing unemployment and low wages. Besides, the responsibilities of women towards their families increased remarkably during that period.²⁵⁴ Working-class women had developed “ingenious” strategies to cope with the emerging harsh circumstances and their actions had been characterised by flexibility as well as creativity.²⁵⁵ In other words, women had become more cooperative, accepted more responsibilities, and provided more self-sacrifice to meet the needs of their family members.²⁵⁶ Nevertheless, that complicated situation resulted in conflicts between parents and daughters, wives and husbands.²⁵⁷

Women of all races found themselves struggling to cope with joblessness, poverty, and uncertainty during those hard times. However, “women of colour” were particularly more desperate to cope with the economic recession issues.²⁵⁸ Furthermore, the economic depression led to an increased in desertion or namely poor men’s divorce. Evidence on the rates of desertion during the economic downturn is not clear-cut. However, during the late

²⁵¹ Winifred D. Wandersee Bolin, “The Economics of Middle-Income Family Life: Working Women During the Great Depression,” *The Journal of American History* 65, no.1 (1978): 60.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Nancy E. Rose, *Workfare or Fair Work: Women, Welfare, and Government Work Programs* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1995), 32.

²⁵⁵ Lois Rita Helmbold, “Beyond the Family Economy: Black and White Working-Class Women during the Great Depression,” *Feminist Studies* 13, no. 3 (1987): 629.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Rose, *Workfare and Fair Work*, 32.

1930s, the nationwide census demonstrated that one-tenth of all families were headed by women.²⁵⁹

Poverty is “gendered” and although the consequences of unemployment touched everyone, women had not the same experiences as men.²⁶⁰ Women who worked received lower wages. A woman, Blanche Crumbly, wrote a letter to FDR on October 26, 1933, in which she protested against the low wage she received from her employers despite her engagement and hard work in a textile firm, she revealed the following:

I want to let you see that they didn't pay me enough. I worked eight hours a day and you will see they have me marked up forty hours a week and didn't pay twelve dollars and by law they were supposed to pay twelve dollars whether you operated one machine or not but I worked in the weave shop and run five looms so I want you to see that I get my money that is due me for I am just a poor woman and was working trying to make some money but they didn't pay enough to keep me working so I want you to write right back to me and let me know what you can do.²⁶¹

In addition to this, unlike men, women were supposed to stay at home instead of joining the labour force. On May 10, 1933, Earl Leiby of Akron, Ohio, wrote to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt,

You are probably aware of the fact that homes are being wrecked daily due to the fact that married women are permitted to work in factories and offices in this land of ours. You and we all know that the place for a wife and mother is at home, her palace. The excuse is often brought up that the husband cannot find employment. It is the writers' belief that if the women were expelled from places of business, . . . these very men would find employment. These same women's husbands would naturally be paid a higher salary, inasmuch as male employees demand a higher salary than females.²⁶²

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Elaine S. Abelson, ““Women Who Have No Men to Work for Them’: Gender and Homelessness in the Great Depression, 1930–1934,” *Feminist Studies* 29, no. 1 (2003): 106.

²⁶¹ Blanche Crumbly to FDR, October 26, 1933, NA RG 9, Entry 398: Records relating to employee complaints in the textile industry, Box 5.

File: Bibb Manufacturing Co., Macon, Ga. (Hereinafter referred to as NA RG 9, Entry 398.)

²⁶² Earl A. Leiby to FDR, May 10, 1933, National Archives, Record Group 174: General Records of the Department of Labor, Chief Clerk's Files, Entry 167/838, Box 183.

For Leiby, the best way to answer effectively to the economic issues caused by the Great Depression, women must stay at home; whereas men must go to work. In other words, to restore economic prosperity during that period, he urged the government to restore the traditional role of women in society.

Maternalists continued their work during the New Deal and played a prominent role throughout the years of the economic recession. Their strategies and their ideologies had been gendered but without excluding men's rights: in their effort for welfare policy reform they focused on the importance of protecting mothers and their children and also ensuring "a living wage for the father."²⁶³ Maternalists' purpose during the depression era was to enable women to stay at home but with one condition: receiving direct financial assistance from the federal government.²⁶⁴ They encouraged "full-time domesticity" through rewarding "domestic women" by "nationalizing and expanding" old policies.²⁶⁵ All in all, maternalists impacted the development of policies for dependent families.²⁶⁶ In addition to this, they fought for gender equality in both relief and social insurance.²⁶⁷

²⁶³ Katherine F. Lenoot, "Child Welfare 1930–1940," *American Academy of Political and Social Science Annals* 212 (November, 1940): 1–11

²⁶⁴ Mink, *The Wages of Motherhood*, 125.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 126–127.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 127.

1.3) The New Deal and the Emergence of the Welfare State

In this section, we will attempt to explain how the American welfare state emerged during the New Deal era.²⁶⁸ It is generally assumed that FDR is considered the founder of the national American welfare state.²⁶⁹ Before taking a closer look at how the welfare state was created, let us briefly recall the historical background during which it developed.

During the 1932 presidential campaign, candidate Franklin Delano Roosevelt pledged a New Deal for the American people.²⁷⁰ Throughout that period, the American economy was still collapsing: banks closed, industries failed and farms became bankrupt.²⁷¹ By 1933, when FDR became president, the idea of governmental intervention in the social and economic affairs of people was accepted and supported.²⁷² President Roosevelt was influenced by Keynes' economic theory. Keynesian economics permitted a more active and interventionist state. It encouraged government spending and regulations to stimulate production and control unemployment. Following the steps of the Keynesian economy, FDR proposed a myriad of programmes to involve more the government. In other words, the state became an active coordinator. The New Deal consisted of three main initiatives: reforming the banking system, giving the government more power to control production, and the introduction of a "social safety net."²⁷³

²⁶⁸ The historian Basil Rauch introduced in 1944 his formula to order the New Deal by advancing a concept of "shift" during 1934 and 1935 Basil Rauch, *The History of the New Deal 1933–1938* (New York: Creative Age Press, 1944), 111–39. The First New Deal was launched when President Roosevelt introduced a myriad of programmes to Congress: during the "First Hundred Days" in 1933. The Second New Deal began in 1935 and lasted until 1936–37.

²⁶⁹ Quadagno, "Welfare Capitalism and the Social Security Act of 1935," 634. Patrick Wilkinson, "The Selfless and the Helpless" 571.

²⁷⁰ For further reading, see, for instance, Donald A. Ritchie, *Electing FDR: The New Deal Campaign of 1932* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2007).

²⁷¹ For further reading, see, for instance, Eric Rauchway, *The Great Depression and the New Deal: A very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

²⁷² June Axinn and Mark J. Stern, *Social Welfare: A History of the American Response to Need*, 177.

²⁷³ See Stanely L. Engerman and Robert E. Gallman, *The Cambridge Economic History of the United States, Twentieth century*, vol.3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 317–18. The first two initiatives of the New Deal were introduced during the "First Hundred Days" of 1933. The third one was introduced later to extend recovery to the whole population. *Ibid.*, 318.

In 1934, President Franklin D. Roosevelt created a Committee on Economic Security (CES) to study the problem of economic insecurity. This committee presented a set of legislative recommendations in a report to the president.²⁷⁴ Based on this report, FDR introduced a programme of social reform in his annual address to Congress, delivered on January 4, 1935, called “Social Security”.²⁷⁵

The Social Security Act was signed into law on August 14, 1935, and was the most prominent component of his New Deal agenda and which scholars consider as the cornerstone of the American welfare state.²⁷⁶ This landmark legislation marked the “beginning of a national welfare state in the United States.”²⁷⁷ Deborah Ward states that:

On August 14, 1935, Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Social Security Act into law. Within a relatively short period, the United States had progressed from having a nonexistent national welfare state to boasting relatively expansive welfare programs. . . . There is no doubt that the New Deal and its signature legislation, the Social Security Act ushered in revolutionary changes in the relationship between the state and society.²⁷⁸

The Social Security Act of 1935 placed the responsibility for social welfare in the hands of the federal government. It marked the birth of the “modern welfare state” in the United States of America.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁴ Gwendolyn Mink and Rickie Solinger, eds., *Welfare: A Documentary History of U.S. Policy and Politics*, (New York: New York University Press, 2003), 55–64.

²⁷⁵ Historians call it the Second New Deal. Robert V. Remini, *A Short History of the United States*, 224.

²⁷⁶ Wallace C. Peterson, *Transfer Spending, Taxes and the American Welfare State* (New York: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1991), 5. See also Abramovitz, “Welfare Reform in the United States,” 338; see also David M. Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929–1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 270–73.

²⁷⁷ Jill S. Quadagno, “Welfare Capitalism and the Social Security Act of 1935,” *American Sociological Review* 49, no.5 (1984): 634.

²⁷⁸ Ward, *The White Welfare State*, 98.

²⁷⁹ Mimi Abramovitz, “The Reagan Legacy: Undoing the Class, Race and Gender Accords,” *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare* 19, no.1 (March 1992): 91. For further information, see, for instance, Samuel Bowles, “The post Keynesian Capital-Labor Stalemate,” *Socialist Review* 12, no.2 (1982): 45–72. See also, Mimi Abramovitz, *Under Attack*, 15; Ward, *The White Welfare State*, 98. See also Ira Katznelson, *Fear itself: The New Deal and the Origins of our Time* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2013), 162.

Mimi Abramovitz states that “. . . the landmark Social Security Act modernised the social welfare system by, among other things, transferring responsibility for social welfare from the states to the federal government for promoting social welfare for Americans.”²⁸⁰ She also points out that :

. . . (T)he Social Security Act institutionalized the role of the state in maintaining families, the labor force, and the general welfare of society. By assuming responsibility for providing a minimum level of income below which no one was expected to live, the state began to address problems in the political economy that had been simmering since the end of World War I . . . The Social Security Act expanded and made permanent the state’s role in mediating conflicts between production and reproduction and sustaining patriarchal norms.²⁸¹

The Social Security Act of 1935 gave the green light to the federal government to run social welfare and to provide minimum assistance to people whose income was insufficient. In this respect, Jill Quadagno states that:

The Social Security Act laid the groundwork for a national welfare state and established some benefits as an earned right. Through such measures, the New Deal liberalism of the Democratic party came to mean active, positive intervention for the public good. Public support was high for programs that protected the many against the abuses of the few and taxed the few for the benefit of the many.²⁸²

Mimi Abramovitz also states that:

The enactment of the Social Security Act effectively legalized federal responsibility for social welfare. In the short run, this major restructuring of the system of social welfare provision cushioned the immediate blows of the Depression. Cash into empty hands and increased purchasing power, which assisted people in need while stimulating the depressed economy. In the long run, bringing the federal government into social welfare acknowledged that the state had to socialize the costs of family life on a permanent basis.²⁸³

²⁸⁰ Abramovitz, *Under Attack*, 15.

²⁸¹ Abramovitz, *Regulating the Lives of Women*, 6063–65.

²⁸² Quadagno, *The Color of Welfare*, 20.

²⁸³ Abramovitz, “The Reagan Legacy,” 92.

1.4) The Modern Welfare State

It is generally assumed that the welfare state emerged during the New Deal era and that FDR is the founder of the U.S. welfare system. Can we describe the model of welfare state created during the 1930s, that is, during his administration, as a modern one?

According to sociologist T.H. Marshall, the modern welfare state is a distinctive combination of democracy, welfare, and capitalism.²⁸⁴ The modern welfare state was established during the New Deal era, after the Great Depression, as a response to the demands of American citizens who asked the national government to intervene to promote fundamental economic protection for them. Fred Block and his co-authors clarify the point by stating that:

[. . .] (T)he modern welfare state is the product of decades of political effort by ordinary Americans to gain some control over their lives in the face of massive economic disruptions. The foundations of the welfare state were laid in the Great Depression of the 1930s, when millions of Americans struggled to win the most basic forms of economic protection: the right to unionize, minimum-wage laws, business regulation, and income support programs such as unemployment insurance.²⁸⁵

By answering the demands of the American people during the depression, the U.S. national government introduced a contemporary version of the welfare state and its goal, at that time, was assistance or relief.²⁸⁶ The federal government gave cash relief or assistance to the aged poor, old-age pensions, and unemployment insurance for many industrial workers as well as poor single mothers and their young children.²⁸⁷ In addition, the United States of America assumed for the “first time” the crucial role of labour unions in communicating the demands of the working class.²⁸⁸ There are three reasons which may

²⁸⁴ Thomas H. Marshall, *Citizenship and Social Class: And other Essays* (New York: The Syndics of the Cambridge University Press, 1950); see also, Ian Gough “Theories of the Welfare State: A Critique.” *International Journal of Health Services* 8, no. 1 (1978): 28.; see also, Asa Briggs, *The Welfare State in Historical Perspective*, reprinted in *The Welfare State*, ed. C. Schottland (New York: Harper and Row 1977), 29.

²⁸⁵ Fred Block, Richard Cloward, and Barbara Ehrenreich, introduction to *The Mean Season: The Attack on the Welfare State* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1987), x.

²⁸⁶ Anne Marie Cammisa, *From Rhetoric to Welfare Reform?: Welfare Policy in American Politics* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), 101.

²⁸⁷ See, for example, Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse*; Abramowitz, *Under Attack* ; Trattter, *From Poor Law to Welfare State*.

²⁸⁸ Alice Kessler-Harris and Maurizio Vaudagna, eds., *Democracy and the Welfare State: The Two Wests in the Age of Austerity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 5.

explain the importance of assistance in 1935: first, the poor were believed to be deserving because their poverty was a consequence of the failure of the economic system and not a personal failure; second, the programmes designed by the New Deal policy-makers (and even by FDR himself) were temporary; third, ADC was believed to be a permanent assistance programme for widows and their dependent children, and they were viewed as deserving husbandless women because women at the time depended on their husbands for income.²⁸⁹

Thus, by creating ADC, the national government had become responsible for regulating the problems of poor women and their dependent children. Gwendolyn Mink also states that: “The New Deal nationalized the others’ pension concept in the Aid to Dependent Children program, carrying into the *modern welfare state* its premises and prescriptions.”²⁹⁰ These “premises” include the following:

- The health of the policy depended on the quality of its children;
- The preparation of the child for citizenship depended on the quality of home life;
- Mothers played a central role in the family;
- The cultural and individual differences among mothers amounted to differences of quality and not of kind;
- Finally, the needs of poor mothers were not strictly economic but were behavioural, moral, and cultural as well.²⁹¹

But the U.S. welfare state cannot be viewed as a “real” modern welfare state compared to other democracies in the Western world. It is backward as it lacks a universal system of health insurance and family allowances. The only difference that we can draw between the traditional version of the welfare state and its contemporary one is the fact of the intervention of the national government in people’s affairs. In other words, the modern welfare state in America is the intervention of the federal government in the 1930s to

²⁸⁹ Cammisa, *From Rhetoric to Welfare Reform?*, 101.

²⁹⁰ Gwendolyn Mink, “Welfare Reform in Historical Perspective,” *Social Justice* 21, no. 1 (1994):114.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*

provide provision to several people in need, including mothers and their dependent children. However, were all mothers and their dependent children helped equally by the U.S. government? We will see this in the following sections or chapters.

2) The Social Security Act of 1935 and the Creation of the Stratified Social Welfare System

2.1) The Social Security Act of 1935

The Social Security act of 1935 was an “omnibus” act, consisting of eleven titles, which created nine different programmes. Each U.S. welfare programme has a different history and provides benefits to different groups.²⁹² It established two types of cash benefits: social insurance and public assistance. The social insurance programmes included pensions for retired workers (initially called Old Age Insurance (OAI) programme, formally known as Social Security) and Unemployment Insurance which guaranteed wages for the temporarily unemployed.²⁹³ Public assistance programmes targeted the poor and they were: Aid to Dependent Children (ADC), Old Age Assistance (OAA), and Aid to the Blind (AB).²⁹⁴ OAA, AB, and ADC were means-tested programmes and eligibility depended entirely on the client’s current income.²⁹⁵

²⁹² The Social Security Act of 1935 was amended several times from 1939 to 1996.

²⁹³ Abramovitz, *Under Attack*, 16.

²⁹⁴ Aid to the Permanently and Totally Disabled (APTD) was added in 1956, *Ibid.*, 16.

²⁹⁵ Janice L. Peterson and Carol Dawn Petersen, “Single Mother Families and the Dual Welfare State,” *Review of Social Economy* 52, no. 3 (1994): 316.

2.2) The Creation of the “Stratified Welfare State” in the United States of America

The Social Security Act of 1935²⁹⁶, the most important legislative piece during the New Deal era has created a stratified welfare system along with class, gender, and class lines. Social insurance, the most generous New Deal programme was designed to serve the middle-class elderly and marginalised other categories.²⁹⁷

Indeed, the Social Security Act of 1935 created a bifurcated welfare state: a national social insurance programme for retired workers and their families (whose eligibility for that programme was taken for granted); and public assistance programmes for others and their dependent children (who were exceedingly supervised and whose eligibility for assistance was not taken for granted).²⁹⁸

New Deal policy designers excluded agricultural labourers and domestic servants — who were almost African Americans—from Social Insurance. There is a split among scholars concerning the following point: whether the racial exclusions of agricultural and domestic workers from the Social Security Act of 1935 programmes were deliberate or unintentional.²⁹⁹ These exclusions laid the groundwork for a “bifurcated” and “stratified” welfare system in the U.S.³⁰⁰ Hence, social insurance programmes had become more superior to public assistance programmes. Linda Gordon points out that:

The Social Security Act of 1935 created... a stratified system of provision in which the social insurance programs were superior both in payments and in reputation, while public assistance was inferior—not just comparatively second-rate but deeply stigmatized. Public assistance is what Americans today call “welfare”; recipients of the good programs are

²⁹⁶ Gordon, *Pitied but not Entitled*, 4.

²⁹⁷ Katz, *Improving the Poor*, 25.

²⁹⁸ Ward, *The White Welfare State*, 99.

²⁹⁹ On scholars who consider those exclusions as “unintentional” see for example Gareth Davies and Martha Derthick. “Race and Social Welfare Policy: The Social Security Act of 1935,” ; Mary Poole, *The Segregated Origins of Social Security*. For those who consider those exclusions as deliberate, see Jill Quadagno, *The Color of Welfare*; Gordon, *Pitied but not Entitled*; Robert Lieberman, *Shifting the Color line*; Michael Brown et al., *Whitewashing Race*; Neubeck and Cazenave, *Welfare Racism*.

³⁰⁰ Gordon, *Pitied but not Entitled*, 4–5, see also Michael B. Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse*, x.; see also Julilly Kohler-Hausmann, “Guns and Butter: The Welfare State, the Carceral State, and the Politics of Exclusion in the Postwar United States,” *The Journal of American History* 102, no. 1 (2015): 92.

never said to be “on welfare.” And while most people hate “welfare,” they pay the utmost respect to Old-Age Insurance.³⁰¹

Robert Lieberman states that:

The New Deal represented a major breakthrough both for national social policy and for the political status of African Americans. The Social Security Act of 1935 created the first permanent national welfare policies, and northern African Americans began to switch their political allegiance to the newly dominant Democratic Party. But the major partner in the New Deal coalition was the White South, whose disproportionate power limited the New Deal’s capacity to include African Americans in social provision on equal terms.³⁰²

Similarly, Michael Katz states that:

The division between social insurance and public assistance has bifurcated social welfare along class lines. With a strong, articulate middle-class constituency, social insurance especially social security, carries no stigma, and its expanded benefits have reduced drastically the amount of poverty among the elderly. Public assistance, which has become synonymous with welfare, is, of course, restricted to the very poor, and, as consequence, they are treated meanly. Their benefits, which do not lift them out of poverty, remain far below those paid by social security.³⁰³

Jill Kohler-Hausmann also reveals that:

Some programs, such as Social Security, were designed for “deserving” citizens and tend to enhance the rights, resources, and standing of beneficiaries. Such programs are rarely means-tested, entail minimal surveillance, and in some cases obscure – often to the point of invisibility- any notion of dependence on the state. Despite the ostensibly universal character of many such programs, access has been highly racialized and gendered.³⁰⁴

The architects of the Social Security Act, who were “white” males, had sexist and racist attitudes as well as intentions. They marginalised both women and non-white men.

Jill Quadagno argues:

Because of southern opposition, agricultural workers and domestic servants—most black men and women—were left out of the core programs of the Social Security Act. Instead, they were relegated to the social-assistance programs, where local welfare authorities could determine benefit levels and set eligibility rules... Southerners simply would not allow the federal government to dictate standards or set benefit levels.³⁰⁵

³⁰¹ Gordon, *Pitied but not Entitled*, 3.

³⁰² Robert C. Lieberman, “Race and the Limits of Solidarity: American Welfare State in Comparative Perspective,” 462–65.

³⁰³ Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse*, x.

³⁰⁴ Kohler- Hausmann, “Guns and Butter,” 92.

³⁰⁵ Quadagno, *The Color of Welfare*, 21.

The designers of the Social Security Act sought to protect “white, male, industrial workers” against hazards of life by providing them with some measures such as unemployment compensation and social security; however, they did not take into consideration the needs of women (except for the wives of workers) and “males of colour”.³⁰⁶ They have conceived white male workers (and not women) as the bedrock of a capitalist, democratic system as well as a successful society because they preserve the patriarchal side of the family and they provide financial support for their wives and their children.³⁰⁷

Thus, programmes that targeted women (except widows) and non-white males were considered as inferior as compared to programmes which targeted white men: Unemployment Insurance and Old Age Insurance. Premilla Nadasen and her co-authors state that:

The vast majority of women and non-white men found themselves shut out of the more generous social insurance programs. Unemployment Insurance and Old Age Insurance excluded agricultural and domestic workers as well as occupations held predominantly by women, including employees in government, nonprofits, and hospitals. Temporary, part-time, and seasonal workers also found themselves without adequate social insurance coverage. As a result, Unemployment Insurance excluded 55 percent of African American workers (87 percent of black women workers) and 80 percent of all woman workers. Excluded workers as well as single mothers, blind or disabled people, and elderly people too old to pay into Social Security, were forced to rely, instead, on “mop up” public assistance programs—Old Age Assistance and Aid to Dependent Children—which provided sparse, means-tested, discretionary financial assistance for those not covered by insurance.³⁰⁸

The American welfare system has been stratified through different stages. According to Linda Gordon, there are three main stages of the stratification of the U.S. welfare system. In 1935, the Social Security Act of 1935 excluded “deliberately” the neediest groups from different programmes and that exclusion was “racially motivated” because Congress was controlled by southern Democrats. Those groups were included later in public assistance programmes, which were more and more stigmatised after a series of amendments, from 1939 to the 1970s. Finally, in 1974, AFDC was left as the exclusively

³⁰⁶ Abramovitz, *Under Attack*, 64.

³⁰⁷ Nadasen, Mittelstadt, and Chappell, *Welfare in the United States*, 17–18.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 18.

notorious and “maligned” public assistance programme, when other programmes were removed from public assistance and placed under the social security category.³⁰⁹

Hence, Roosevelt’s New Deal achieved two main goals: first, it set the groundwork for the protection of the industrial working class; second, it reinforced racial inequality in social welfare programmes, labour, and housing policies.³¹⁰ It reproduced and deepened already existing social inequalities and created a new hierarchy of social citizenship in the American society.³¹¹ The United States of America failed to create a “universal” welfare state that could treat all categories in its society alike (“blacks” and “whites”, women and men, industrial and agricultural workers).³¹²

To conclude, the Social Security Act of 1935 paved the way to the establishment of two types of programmes that formed the basic structure and the architecture of the American welfare state: inferior and superior programmes. The superior programmes were social insurance programmes and inferior ones were public assistance programmes.³¹³ This split between social insurance and public assistance programmes did not occur by chance, i.e., it was intentional, and it led to long-term consequences. When African-Americans were excluded from Social Security, they were oriented towards other programmes (to public assistance ones) which had stigmatised them more and which worsened their living conditions. “Black” women and their children had formed what is called the “urban underclass” (I will deal with this point in *Chapter Three*).

³⁰⁹ Gordon, *Pitied but not Entitled*, 5.

³¹⁰ Quadagno, *The Color of Welfare*, v.

³¹¹ Ward, *The White Welfare State*, 101.

³¹² Michael Brown, *Race, Money and the American Welfare State* (Ithaca; London, Cornell University: Cornell University Press, 1999), 3.

³¹³ Gordon, *Pitied but not Entitled*, 5. See also Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse*, ix.

3) The Development of ADC during the New Deal Era

3.1) From Mothers' Pensions to ADC

Aid to Dependent Children (ADC), officially known as Title IV of the 1935 Social Security Act, was an extension of mothers' pension programme that was introduced during the 1900s. Hence, ADC was not a creation of Roosevelt's Administration but a continuation of an existing system.

There are institutional and administrative linkages between the two programmes and they both favored white clients over non-white clients.³¹⁴ The two programmes targeted the behaviour of recipients and punished husbandless women other than widows.³¹⁵ They both categorised women as "deserving" or "undeserving". ADC inherited the negative attitudes against women, in general, and against "women of colour" in particular (who were mainly "black" single mothers) during the Progressive era. ADC was:

(D)esigned to release from the wage-earning role the person whose natural function is to give her children the physical and affectionate guardianship necessary not alone to keep them from falling into social misfortune but more affirmatively to make them citizens.³¹⁶

ADC did not consider all poor families with dependents as eligible for assistance.³¹⁷ Besides, it established harsh methods to control its recipients' behaviour. Thus, the Social Security Board called for home visits as well as episodic eligibility checks.³¹⁸ It gave the states the power to check whether recipients' homes were suitable or not.³¹⁹ These new policies that are maintained by the modern version of the American welfare state created during the New Deal stressed "gender conformity and... the norms of the dominant Anglo-American, middle-class culture."³²⁰

³¹⁴ Ward, *The White Welfare State*, 5–6.

³¹⁵ Abramovitz, *Under Attack*, 65.

³¹⁶ The Report of the Committee on Economic Security," Reprinted in Wilbur J. Cohen and Robert M. Ball, *50th Anniversary Issue, The Report of the Committee on Economic Security of 1935 and other Basic Documents Relating to the Social Security Act* (Washington , DC: National Conference on Social Welfare, 1985) , 5–6, 35–36.

³¹⁷ Abramovitz, *Under Attack*, 64.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 65.

³¹⁹ Gwendolyn Mink and Rickie Solinger, eds., *Welfare: A Documentary History of U.S. Policy and Politics*, 535–36. See also Gordon, *Pitied but not Entitled*, 296.

³²⁰ Mink, "Welfare Reform in Historical Perspective," 114.

In sum, “The Social Security Act, pillar of the New Deal welfare state, federalized mothers’ pensions and revived the Sheppard-Towner maternity policy.”³²¹ In other words, the Social Security Act of 1935 marked the beginning of the federal government’s intervention to assist mothers and their children. But we should bear in mind that not all mothers and children were included in this legislation. We will be studying this point in the following section.

3.2) The Process of Stigmatising ADC Clients

In 1939 Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) was amended, and it became known as the Old Age and Insurance programme (OASI). This programme made benefits of passed away male workers’ benefits available to their widows. OASI allowed women to benefit from social insurance; however, it reinforced the two-channel welfare state. It did not entitle excluded workers in 1935, agricultural and domestic labourers and their families but it gave more assistance for already included male workers and their family members. Premilla Nadasen and her co-authors reveal that:

The Old Age Insurance and Survivors Insurance (OASI) program enabled more women to benefit from social insurance. But it reified the two-track welfare state that the original Social Security Act institutionalized. Rather than expanding social insurance to cover excluded occupations like domestic and agricultural labor – a proposal that policymakers considered but rejected - it sought to further protect and entitle already covered males’ families by providing security to their surviving members.³²²

By the late 1930s, the clientele of ADC shifted dramatically.³²³ In 1939, the majority of ADC’s clients were widows. By 1941, only 20 per cent of widows’ dependent children were assisted by ADC.³²⁴ By 1941, 39 per cent of children who received assistance from ADC programme belonged to families whose principal breadwinner was a non-white single mother: never-married, divorced, or a deserted mother. By 1948, 30 per cent of ADC’s clients were women of colour.³²⁵ Therefore, ADC had become a

³²¹ Gwendolyn Mink, *The Wages of Motherhood*, 124.

³²² Nadasen, Mittelstadt, and Chappell, *Welfare in the United States*, 19.

³²³ *Ibid.*, 590–99.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, 590–99.

programme that targeted “undeserving” mothers and reinforced racial segregation. Mimi Abramovitz points out that:

... (The 1939 amendments) further (ed) institutionalized ADC as a program just for “undeserving” poor women. For one, the shift further hardened distinctions among women based on marital status. And second, left to serve only the socially unacceptable divorced, separated, and never married single mothers; ADC grew increasingly stigmatized. The amendments also deepened the act’s racial divide: since many black men did not qualify for social security benefits at all, their widows and children could not receive OAI (which was twice what children received on ADC); needy women of color thus had no choice but to apply for assistance. ³²⁶

By the 1940s, and thanks to the success of the New Deal and the economic recovery of the war, liberal reformers tried to expand the welfare state by introducing new programmes.³²⁷ For instance, the National Resources Planning Board proposed such programmes as national health insurance, full employment, and “comprehensive social welfare.”³²⁸ 1943 and 1945 legislative proposals intended to broaden the scope of the welfare state by entitling more American citizens to unemployment and old-age insurance, including ADC clients.

Nevertheless, the political malaise and economic growth shifted in the U.S.; as a result, the Republican Congress rejected these proposals.³²⁹ In an era during which the US entered in a Cold War against the Soviet Union, conservatives in Congress rejected all social welfare proposals, which they conceived as “anti-capitalist and undemocratic.”, and that the growing liberal welfare state represented for them “creeping socialism” and “big government”.³³⁰

A new group of poor Americans emerged during the postwar era: sailors, soldiers, and aircrew who returned from the war. Hence, the GI Bill of 1944 was passed and it reinforced the unfair two-channel welfare state that stressed race, class, and gender

³²⁶ Abramovitz, *Under Attack*, 66. See also Gwendolyn Mink, “Why Should Poor Single Mothers Have to Work Outside the Home?” (unpub.ms., 1995), 10.

³²⁷ Abramovitz, *Under Attack*, 67.

³²⁸ Nadasen, Mittelstadt, and Chappell, *Welfare in the United States*, 20.

³²⁹ Abramovitz, *Under Attack*, 67.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*, 67. See also Nadasen, Mittelstadt, and Chappell, *Welfare in the United States*, 20–21.

inequities.³³¹ The federal government promoted more economic and social support for war veterans: white working-class men; however, African American veterans were assisted yet unequally.³³² Unlike married women who depended on their men, single mothers were excluded from generous federal social welfare programmes during this period.³³³

To sum up, in this chapter we have examined how the U.S. welfare state emerged during the New Deal and how it was stratified along class, gender and race lines. We have seen as well that the centerpiece legislation of the New Deal, the Social Security Act of 1935, is the cornerstone of the U.S. welfare system. ADC, which was mothers' pensions during the Progressive Era, had become a programme that targeted poor single women, and it became no longer concerned exclusively with widows (believed to be deserving poor). In the following chapter, we will see how the attack against welfare developed through time: from the early nineteenth century to the late 1980s.

It should be borne in mind, however, even if Roosevelt Delano Roosevelt is considered as the founder of the U.S. welfare state, we cannot neglect the role played by "maternalists" (as we have seen in the previous chapter), in preparing the groundwork for the New Deal welfare state. That is, the basis of the U.S. welfare state created during the New Deal is the result of the hard work that was carried out by women during the Progressive Era.

³³¹ Ibid., 21.

³³² Ibid.

³³³ Ibid.

Chapter Three

The Historical Evolution of the Assault against Welfare, 1800s–late 1980s

The initial attack against “public aid” (“outdoor relief” or “dole”) and particularly programmes that targeted needy women and their children can be traced back to the early 1800s, and the aim of that attack was to punish the “undeserving poor”. During the post–World War I (the 1940s and the 1950s), the attack against social welfare programmes that assisted needy women and their children, (mainly ADC formerly called mothers’ pensions) continued, mainly because their main clients had become “black” immoral unmarried women and their illegitimate children. Hence, more restricting eligibility criteria were passed by the states to punish people who lived on welfare. In the 1960s, AFDC had become a programme for assisting lazy, shiftless, unmarried “black” women and their children who formed the core of the “urban underclass”.

Thus, welfare had become the most disliked and stigmatised public assistance programme attacked by politicians, the public, and academics. By the 1970s, the rise of neo-liberalism contributed more and more to the assault against welfare which paved the way to signing welfare reform in 1996. This chapter deals with the development of the issue of welfare, and it highlights the main factors which contributed to the assault against welfare and which made it a hot-bottom issue in U.S. politics.

1) The Attack on “Public Aid” during the early 1800s

Hostility against “outdoor relief” activities helping the poor, especially those which targeted poor women and their children, began in the 1820s, before the Civil War.³³⁴ That attack against “outdoor relief” was justified as follows: “most of those on relief do not need help”³³⁵. In other words, they were believed to be “undeserving” poor.

During the nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries, America shifted from an agrarian and mercantile nation to an industrial one. The Industrial Revolution played an important role in shifting radically family and work habits in the U.S. during this period.³³⁶ The 1824 poor law reforms prohibited “outdoor relief”³³⁷ and replaced it with “indoor relief”. These laws were aimed at encouraging work and banning begging in the streets. Hence, the undeserving poor were placed in institutions, called “almshouses” which taught them proper values and helped them get rid of gambling, alcohol, and idleness.³³⁸

The Secretary of Massachusetts Poor Law Commission Josiah Quincy declared in 1821 that “ that all of the modes of providing for the poor, the most wasteful, the most expensive, and the most injurious to their morals and destructive to their industrious habits is that of supply in their own families.”³³⁹

This swing from outdoor to indoor relief is justified by new explanations of poverty. Traditional conceptions about poverty changed. The early American society believed that poverty was “God’s will” and that poor people are poor because of no fault of their own, and thus they deserved the community’s help.³⁴⁰ However, due to industrialisation, the

³³⁴ Quadagno, *The Transformation of Old Age Security*, 26–27, see also Abramovitz, *Under Attack*, 51.

³³⁵ Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse*, 37.

³³⁶ Abramovitz, *Under Attack*, 51.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, 51.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, 54–55. See also Katz, *Improving Poor People*, 32–33.

³³⁹ Massachusetts General Court, Committee on Pauper Laws, *Report of Committee to whom was Referred to the Consideration of the Pauper Laws of the Commonwealth, 1821*, excerpted in Sophonisba P. Breckinridge, *Public Welfare Administration in the United States, Selected Documents* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927), 37.

³⁴⁰ Abramovitz, *Under Attack*, 55.

notion of poverty changed radically. Owing to the unlimited nation's resources, individuals were blamed for their own impoverishment and economic failure.³⁴¹

Another attack against public aid took place during the 1870s.³⁴² During the post-Civil War, America witnessed a period of prosperity.³⁴³ This stimulated immigration, hence, the number of immigrants who arrived to the U.S. (after the 1860s) increased rapidly.³⁴⁴

2) The Attack against ADC during the Post-World War II Era, 1940s–1960s

The welfare state expanded rapidly during the post-World War II period in the United States of America.³⁴⁵ This expansion of the welfare system took place as a result of the following factors: the growth of population, postwar economic prosperity, the liberalisation of the Social Security Act, a greater sense of public responsibility for social problems, and demands for greater economic security from both the trade unions and civil rights movements.³⁴⁶ Nevertheless, the attack against social welfare programmes (mainly ADC) intensified during the post-World War II era.

After World War II, “women of colour” and their young children became the principal recipients of ADC.³⁴⁷ The perception of welfare had been influenced by

³⁴¹ Ibid., 55–56.

³⁴² Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse*, 39.

³⁴³ By the 1890's, the U.S. produced more manufactures than any other country in the world (more than Germany, Britain and France, her main competitors); for more details see Jeremy Atack and Peter Passell, *A New Economic View of American History: From Colonial Times to 1940*, 2nd ed. (New York: Jeremy Atack and Peter Passell, 1994), 457–74.

³⁴⁴ Abramovitz, *Under Attack*, 67.

³⁴⁵ Ibid., 67; see also Abramovitz, “The Reagan Legacy,” 93. For more details about the growth of government activity in the Western World see for instance Eugene C. Steurle, and Masahiro Kawai, eds., *The New Deal Fiscal Order* (Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute Press, 1996).

³⁴⁶ Abramovitz, *Under Attack*, 67. See also Abramovitz, “The Reagan Legacy,” 93.

³⁴⁷ Before the war, the rate of women of colour on welfare was between 14 and 16 per cent. After the war their rate jumped to 21 per cent in 1942 to 30 per cent in 1948 to 48 per cent in 1961; see Irene Skricki, *Unheard Voices: Participants Evaluate the JOBS Program* (Washington, D.C.: Coalition on Human Needs, January 1993), 13.

conservative ideas during the 1950s. Therefore, the poor were viewed as lazy people who favoured welfare over work to avoid their social responsibilities or obligations.

Taking the case of New York City, for instance, the Republicans who controlled the New York government state hotly criticised and rejected the excess of public spending in 1947, of the state government that was previously under the leadership of the Democratic Party.³⁴⁸ The media covered the events in the city by calling attention to a “Woman in Mink” who lived on the dole, a gendered expression used by the *New York Times*.³⁴⁹ This paved the way to the incarnation of the early version of the “welfare queen” and the stimulation of the idea of reforming the whole welfare system in order to cut public budgets. This happened because of the gendered and racist ideas about welfare recipients during this period.³⁵⁰

In addition to this, structuralist ideas on poverty reigned over the “Cold War liberal” ideology; hence, the free enterprise system and economic growth had been recognised as the key solution for establishing economic prosperity, democracy, and equality.³⁵¹ Those conservative beliefs emerged amid the affluence which characterised that period and it reduced the sense of urgency for social reforms. Cold War “anti-communist” hysteria encouraged the beliefs which attacked liberal New Deal programmes and thus many conservative politicians considered them as “communist”, “un-American” and contrary to the free enterprise system.³⁵² However, most Republicans; namely, the broad-based “eastern establishment” and conservative Democrats advocated the New Deal policies.³⁵³ For instance, President Eisenhower was a moderate Republican and his administration

³⁴⁸ Felicia Kornbluh and Gwendolyn Mink, *Ensuring Poverty*, 25–26.

³⁴⁹ Headnote, in *Welfare: A Documentary History of U.S. Policy and Politics*, ed. Gwendolyn Mink and Rickie Solinger (New York: New York University Press, 2003), 89–93. For further reading concerning the history of the organising that did in fact occur within the New York City Welfare Department, see Daniel Walkowitz, *Working with Class* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 221–30.

³⁵⁰ Kornbluh and Mink, *Ensuring Poverty*, 26.

³⁵¹ Ellen Reese, *Backlash against Welfare Mothers: Past and Present* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 644–47.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, 647–49.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, 651.

brought “some retrenchment and much consolidation” to New Deal programmes.³⁵⁴ He revealed to his brother in 1954 the following: “Should any political party attempt to abolish Social Security, unemployment insurance, and eliminate labor laws and farm programs, you would not hear again of that party in our political history.”³⁵⁵

Scholars disagree about the factors which contributed to the attack against welfare during the 1950s. Such scholars as Bell and Solinger argue that the main reason behind that welfare backlash during that period was: the urge to ban “black” families from welfare benefits.³⁵⁶ Other scholars such as Soule and Zylan revealed that the attack against welfare was fueled by the states’ managers “racial, fiscal, and ... patriarchal motivations,” whose aim was to reduce “representation of black, unmarried, divorced, and deserted women among the receipt population.”³⁵⁷ Other scholars referred to “employable mother” rules which were used during the harvest season in rural areas to force poor mothers and children to work in farms.³⁵⁸ Some scholars explained the assault against welfare during that period by focusing exclusively on the South and highlighted the role played by racism against Mexicans, Puerto Ricans in anti-welfare campaigns in the North and West.³⁵⁹ Reese, however, claimed that the main social groups that supported the welfare backlash during the 1950s were: large farmers and conservative “whites”.³⁶⁰ Large farmers also included business leaders, and they asked the state to shrink poor mothers’ welfare benefits to reduce

³⁵⁴ Jerome Himmelstein, *To the Right: The Transformation of American Conservatism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 22–23.

³⁵⁵ Quoted in Robert Bresler, “The End of New Deal Liberalism and the Rise of Populism,” *Telos* 104 (Summer 1995): 14.

³⁵⁶ See Winifred Bell, *Aid to Dependent Children* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965); see also Richie Solinger, *Wake up Little Susie: Single Pregnancy and Race before Roe v. Wade* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

³⁵⁷ Sarah Soule and Yvonne Zylan, “Runaway Train? The Diffusion of State-Level Reform in ADC/AFDC Eligibility Requirements, 1950-1967,” *American Journal of Sociology* 103, no.3 (1997): 737.

³⁵⁸ Abramovitz, *Regulating the Lives of Women*; Grace Chang, “Undocumented Latinas: The New ‘employable Mothers,’” in *Mothering, Ideology, Experience, Agency*, eds. Evelyn Nakano Glenn, Grace Chan, and Linda Rennie Forcey (New York: Routledge, 1994); Joanne Goodwin, “Employable Mothers and ‘Suitable Work’: A Reevaluation of Welfare and Wage-Earning for Women in Twentieth Century United States,” *Journal of Social History* 29, no.2 (1995): 253. See also Piven and Cloward, *Regulating the Poor*; Rose, *Workfare or Fair Work*.

³⁵⁹ See the work of Lisa Levenstein, “From Innocent Children to Unwanted Migrants and Unwed Moms: The Public Discourse on Welfare 1960–1961,” *Journal of Women’s History* 11, no.4 (2000): 10–33 See also Fox, *Three Worlds of Relief*.

³⁶⁰ Reese, *Backlash against Welfare Mothers*, 661.

their own taxes and guarantee a source of cheap labour. Conservative “whites,” asked the government to maintain the “racial status quo” to limit welfare rights.³⁶¹

Even though theories that emerged to explain welfare backlash during the 1950s varied obviously, the result was the same: the states began legislating punitive measures during 1950s to reduce the number of welfare recipients and discourage others from applying. For instance, state residency requirements were reinforced to ban migrants (especially African Americans who moved from the South to the North) from receiving assistance. Besides, other restrictive administrative policies were introduced such as “suitable home” and “man-in-the-house” policies.³⁶²

2.1) The Great Society and the “War on Poverty” during the 1960s

In 1962, Michael Harrington published *The Other America*, in which he revealed that 40 to 50 million Americans were poor. John F. Kennedy was influenced by this article and it helped him design his New Frontier agenda. Hence, Harrington’s work reinforced liberal ideas within the American society which stressed the role of government in fighting invisible poverty.³⁶³

President John F. Kennedy was the first president to deliver a speech to Congress devoted to the subject of welfare as well as welfare policy on February 1, 1962. He focused on the “rehabilitative road” and on working mothers, and he recommended for States which had received Federal assistance to remove residence requirements for eligible persons. He stated in his Special Message to Congress on Public Welfare Programmes that:

[. . .] Our basic public welfare programs were enacted more than a quarter century ago. Their contribution to our national strength and well-being in the intervening years has been remarkable. But the times, the conditions, the problems have changed — and the nature and objectives of our public assistance and child welfare programs must be changed also, if they are to meet our current needs Public welfare, in short, must be more than a salvage

³⁶¹ Ibid., 661.

³⁶² Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State*, 309.

³⁶³ Michael Harrington, *The Other America: Poverty in the United States* (New York: Macmillan Publishers, 1962), 171–86.

operation, picking up the debris from the wreckage of human lives. Its emphasis must be directed increasingly toward *prevention and rehabilitation* I recommend that the Social Security Act be amended so as to provide that States receiving Federal funds not exclude any otherwise eligible persons who have been residents of the State for one year immediately preceding their application for assistance. ³⁶⁴ (Italics added.)

Title IV of the Social Security Act of 1935 was amended in 1962 and Aid to Dependent Children programme (ADC) became Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). AFDC allowed husbandless women on welfare to work and receive benefits and it became a programme that exclusively targeted single mothers and their dependent children.

John Kennedy was assassinated. The new President Lyndon B. Johnson addressed Congress in Capitol Hill after five days and promised Americans to continue FDR's New Deal and JFK's New Frontier, by focusing on domestic problems. He promised education for all children, jobs for all, care for the elderly, and equal rights for all Americans without taking into account their race or colour.³⁶⁵ At the same time, LBJ and his liberal proponents were conscious also of the dangers of the war in Vietnam.

In May 1964, Lyndon Johnson introduced the phrase "Great Society" when he addressed the graduating class of the University of Michigan: "We have the opportunity ... to move not only toward the rich society and the powerful society but upward to the Great Society."³⁶⁶ His Great Society agenda sought to promote social and political equality for all. Congress accepted most of LBJ's Great Society package which included a set of social welfare programmes and legal reforms: The Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965; the Fair Housing Act of 1968 which ensured social and political equality for African Americans; federal aid to education; the National Endowment to ensure education for poor as well as middle-class children; the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. The Great Society also promoted Medicare for

³⁶⁴ *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy: 1961–63*, vol.3 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1964); 98–103.

³⁶⁵ James T. Patterson, *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945–1974* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 524.

³⁶⁶ Quoted in *Ibid*, 562.

the elderly, Medicaid for the very poor, and increased funding for Food Stamps.³⁶⁷ Besides, AFDC was extended to millions of poor people who were previously ineligible.³⁶⁸

LBJ launched his War on Poverty in order to assist the poor in the midst of an affluent society. Its centerpiece was the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 which set up the office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), whose slogan was “a hand up, not a hand out.”, which in its turn brought about a significant array of antipoverty programme: Job Corps, a residential work experience programme underprivileged youth, Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), a domestic peace corps, Head Start, Legal Services, and Community Action Agencies.

Lyndon Johnson recognised the alarming issue of poverty as he considered it as a purely economic failure due to the culture of the poor and the administration’s like-minded policy-makers who designed his anti-poverty programmes shared that belief with him.³⁶⁹ Thus, he proposed job training and education as alternatives to help them get rid of it and improve their living conditions rather than to provide them with cash assistance.

The culture of poverty coincided with racial politics in 1965 and especially with the “confidential” report completed by a young assistant secretary of labour Daniel Patrick Moynihan (who would later serve as a domestic policy advisor in the Nixon Administration and as a Democratic senator from New York, 1977–2000), *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*.³⁷⁰ Even though Moynihan did not literally mention the phrase “culture of poverty”, his use of the metaphor “tangle of pathology” seemed to reflect the same ideas.³⁷¹ His analysis focused on the development of single-parent “Negro” families in the unemployment of “black” men. He revealed the main problem

³⁶⁷ For further readings concerning the Lyndon Johnson Administration see for instance the following “Lyndon Johnson and American Liberalism,” in *Grand Expectations*, James T. Patterson; see also “A Great Society and the Rise of Rights-Consciousness,” in *Grand Expectations*, James T. Patterson.

³⁶⁸ James T. Patterson, *America’s Struggle against Poverty in the Twentieth Century*, 3150.

³⁶⁹ Nadasen, Mittelstadt, and Chappell, *Welfare in the United States*, 40.

³⁷⁰ Mink and Solinger, *Welfare*, 226. To have a look at the complete version of Moynihan’s “confidential” report, see Mink and Solinger, *Welfare*, 226–38.

³⁷¹ Katz, introduction to *The “Underclass Debate*, 13.

within “black” communities, that is “family structure” and considered “*matriarchy*” (“black”) as a “fundamental” problem and a threat to the U.S. society.³⁷²

In 1967, President Lyndon Johnson established a commission to investigate the roots of the urban, race riots that took place in different spots in the South, and especially that of Detroit which was very violent, in the summer of 1967.³⁷³ The Kerner Report concluded in 1968 that: “What white Americans have never fully understood – but what the Negro can never forget – is that white society is deeply implicated in the ghetto. White institutions created it, white institutions maintain it, and white society condones it.”³⁷⁴ This report conducted by the government provided a deep understanding of race issues and their implications in American society (especially in the ghettos) during the twentieth century.³⁷⁵

To conclude, the Great Society of the 1960s aimed at assisting the poor by providing them with the necessary tools such as jobs, education, and training to improve their living conditions and get rid of poverty. Nevertheless, conservative politicians consider the Great Society as a failure because its policies led to the emergence of the “inner-city” which contributed to the “breakdown of the family structure.”³⁷⁶ The Great Society policies failed to mitigate the consequences caused by poverty amid “black” communities as it encouraged dependence on welfare, school dropout, and shiftlessness.³⁷⁷

³⁷² Ibid.

³⁷³ See, for instance, Sean Wilentz, ed., *The Kerner Report: The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders*, with an introduction by Julian E. Zelizer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 179.

³⁷⁴ *Kerner Report*, 2.

³⁷⁵ Wilentz, *The Kerner Report*, 184.

³⁷⁶ William P. Barr, speaking on *This Week* with David Brinkley, April 26, 1992, quoted in Daniel Patrick Moynihan, “How the Great Society ‘Destroyed the American Family’,” *The Public Interest* (Summer 1992).

³⁷⁷ Michael Brown, “Race in the American Welfare State: The Ambiguities of the “Universalistic” Social Policy since the New Deal,” in *Without Justice for All: The New Liberalism and Our Retreat from Racial Equality*, ed. Adolph Reed (New York: Routledge, 1999), 2001.

2.2) Welfare, the Urban “Underclass”, and the “Culture of Poverty”

In 1977, *Time* magazine signaled the rise of a threatening “underclass” in America’s inner cities whose members were familiar with drug use, crime, violence, teenage pregnancy and higher rates of unemployment and hence poverty.³⁷⁸ This is called “contemporary poverty”, which is characterised by the feeling of “hopelessness”. William Julius Wilson, an American sociologist, tackles in his book *The Truly Disadvantaged* the social transformation of “inner-city ghettos” and provides a clear examination of the convergence of race and poverty.³⁷⁹ Wilson considers the deep changes in the economy as the main reason behind joblessness in some segments of the “black” community. In his books, he distinguishes between the “inner city” and the “culture of poverty” and between “past racism” and “current racism”. In his examination of the “underclass”, Wilson omits the role of “current” racial discrimination. This does not mean at all that he rejects or neglects the role of “racism”; he just believes that the “black” underclass would have developed with or without the existence of racism. Wilson views the underclass as a “class” issue rather than a “race” one.

In the 1940s, 1950s, and the early 1960s, the “black” communities were categorised into different groups: Lower class, working-class, and middle-class “black” families lived in the same communities, but in different neighbourhoods; they sent their children to the same schools and shopped from the same stores.³⁸⁰ Black professionals; however, (such as doctors, teachers, lawyers etc.) lived in higher-income neighbourhoods in the black community and their presence reinforced the mainstream patterns of norms as well as behaviour.³⁸¹

The world’s most leading political thinker, linguist, and critic and the author of the best-selling *Who Rules the World?* Noam Chomsky provides a description of modern

³⁷⁸ “The American Underclass,” *Time*, August 29, 1977, 14–17. On the Underclass see Ken Auletta, *The Underclass* (New York: Random House, 1982). See also James Q. Wilson, “Redefining Equality: The Liberalism of Mickey Kaus,” *Public Interest*, no. 109 (Fall 1992): 101–8.

³⁷⁹ William Julius Wilson, *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

³⁸⁰ Archie Morris, “Race, Class, and the Culture of Poverty,” *Journal of the Center for Research on African American Women* 2, no. 1 (2007): 60.

³⁸¹ Wilson, *The Truly Disadvantaged*, 7.

poverty in the American slums as compared to the poverty he witnessed during his childhood during the 1930s economic recession and he states the following in one of his outstanding lectures:

Well, the Thirties were an exciting time—it was deep economic depression, everybody was out of a job, but the funny thing about it was, it was hopeful. It's very different today. When you go into the slums today, it's nothing like what it was: it's desolate, there is no hope. Anybody who's my age or more will remember, there was a sense of hopefulness back then: maybe there was no food, but there were possibilities, there were things that could be done. You take a walk through East Harlem today, there was nothing like that at the depths of the Depression—this sense that there's nothing you can do, it's hopeless, your grandmother has to stay up at night to keep you from being eaten by a rat. That kind of thing didn't exist at the depths of the Depression; I don't even think it existed out in rural areas. Kids didn't come into school without food; teachers didn't have to worry that when they walked out into the hall, they might get killed by some guy high on drugs—it wasn't that bad. There's really something qualitatively different about contemporary poverty, I think. Some of you must share these experiences. I mean, I was a kid back then, so maybe my perspective was different. But I remember when I would go into the apartment of my cousins—you know, broken family, no job, twenty people living in a tiny apartment—somehow it was hopeful. It was intellectually alive, it was exciting, it was just very different from today somehow.³⁸²

There is a split among sociologists about whether the widespread poverty among people who formed the underclass originated from a culture of poverty or an economic failure. Structuralists, like Gunnar Myrdal, believe that poverty was the consequence of economic obstacles stemming from economic and social “exclusion”. He stated in 1964 that:

Something like a caste line, is drawn between the people in the urban and rural slums, and the majority of Americans who live in a virtual full-employment economy... There is an under-class of people in the poverty pockets who live an ever more precarious life and are increasingly excluded from any jobs worth having, or who do not find any jobs at all.³⁸³

Scholars and historians believe that there is a relationship between welfare, poverty, as well as the rise of the urban underclass in the U.S. They emphasise the important role of race, gender, and culture in reinforcing this connection between them.³⁸⁴ The politics of race and gender played a central role in contouring both the origins of welfare as well as its evolution. Premilla Nadasen and her co-authors state that:

³⁸² Noam Chomsky, Peter R. Mitchell, and John Schoeffel, eds., *Understanding Power: The Indispensable Chomsky* (London: Random House, 2003), 1396–79.

³⁸³ Gunnar Myrdal, “The War on Poverty,” *New Republic* 150 (1964):14.

³⁸⁴ Katz, *The “Underclass” Debate*, 10; Gordon, *Pitied but not Entitled*, 6.

The politics of race and gender not only shaped the development of AFDC, but also produced a cultural logic that kept it stigmatized and miserly, almost from its origins. In its early history, Aid to Dependent Children, as it was known before 1962, was a relatively minor program serving primarily white widows. Racially discriminatory practices denied assistance to most needy African American mothers. When African American women began to claim assistance in the 1950s and 1960s, the goals of the program shifted from supporting women in their work as mothers to requiring them to take paid employment outside the home.³⁸⁵

The attack on welfare started when its recipients became single “mothers of colour” and their children, Michael Katz reveals that:

In the 1950s, as the recipients of ADC... increasingly became unmarried and black, public attitudes shifted. Race and sexuality fused with the usual stigma attached to welfare, and African –American women raising children by themselves became the new undeserving poor.³⁸⁶

Therefore, AFDC had been attacked because it was believed to benefit single “mothers of colour” and their children whose behaviour was conceived as deviated and unconventional. This category became the “new undeserving poor”.³⁸⁷ It should be noted, however, that this new category of the undeserving poor formed what historians and social scientists call the “urban underclass”.³⁸⁸

By the early 1960s, eligibility criteria to access public assistance programmes were “liberalized” and this made African American women (who were not previously included in the programme) eligible.³⁸⁹ Therefore, the typical clients of AFDC were unmarried mothers with little education or ability to secure employment.³⁹⁰ The main purpose behind creating ADC (previously known as mothers’ pensions) was to encourage Anglo-Saxon widows to stay at home and care for their children. When the welfare population included

³⁸⁵ Nadasen, Mittelstadt, and Chappell, *Welfare in the United States*, 9.

³⁸⁶ Katz, *The “Underclass,” Debate*, 11.

³⁸⁷ Ibid. See also Susan Tiffin, *In Whose Best Interest? Child Welfare Reform in the Progressive Era*, (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1982), 130–34.; Roy Lubove, *The Struggle for Social Security, 1900–1935* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), 91–112. On the dichotomy of worthy/unworthy poor and how it shifted through time, see for instance, Lisa Levenstein, “Deserving/Undeserving Poor,” in *Poverty in the United States: An Encyclopedia of History, Politics, and Policy*, eds. Gwendolyn Mink and Alice O’Connor, vol. 1. (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2004), 226–30 ; Michael B. Katz, *The Undeserving Poor: From the War on Poverty to the War on Welfare* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1989).

³⁸⁸ Katz, *The “Underclass” Debate*, 12.

³⁸⁹ Quadagno, *The Color of Welfare*, 120.

³⁹⁰ See David T. Ellwood, *Poor Support: Poverty in the American Family* (New York: Basic Books, 1988), 3–4.

other categories (“black” women and immigrants) tough rules and regulations had been applied to exclude them.³⁹¹ Some social science theories consider poverty as an individualistic problem caused by the values and behaviour of the poor. Hence, it had become clear for reformers that social problems originated from a “culture of poverty.”³⁹² The culture of poverty (initially called “subculture of poverty”) is, “a social phenomenon in economics and sociology under which poverty-stricken individuals tend to remain poor throughout their lifespan, and in many cases, across generations.”³⁹³ This term was first used by the American anthropologist Oscar Lewis in 1966, whose work revealed that poverty transformed the lives of the poor.

Initially, welfare was a public programme that benefited a small group of widows and their children and it carried no stigma.³⁹⁴ Unlike the other public assistance programmes, welfare has been stigmatised since its creation.³⁹⁵ All Americans, with different political ideologies, and from different social and cultural backgrounds have attacked welfare as Michael Katz puts it:

Nobody likes welfare. Conservatives worry that it erodes the work ethic, retards productivity, and rewards the lazy. Liberals view the American welfare system as incomplete, inadequate, and punitive. Poor people, who rely on it, find it degrading, demoralizing and mean.³⁹⁶

David Ellwood also states that:

Everyone hates welfare. Conservatives hate it because they see welfare as narcotic that destroys the energy and determination of people who already are suffering from a shortage of such qualities. They hate it because they think it makes a mockery of the efforts of working people... Liberals hate it because of the way it treats people. The current system offers modest benefits while imposing a ridiculous array of rules that rob recipients from security and self-esteem. Recipients are offered no real help and have no real dignity. The American public hates welfare too...³⁹⁷

³⁹¹ Gwendolyn Mink, “The Lady and the Tramp: Gender, Race, and the Origins of the American Welfare State,” in *Women, the State and Welfare*, ed. Linda Gordon (Madison : University of Wisconsin Press, 1990).

³⁹² Abramovitz, *Under Attack*, 19.

³⁹³ Morris, “Race, Class, and the Culture of Poverty,” 60.

³⁹⁴ Katz, *The “Underclass,”*, 11.

³⁹⁵ See Gordon, *Pitied but not Entitled*; Abramovitz, *Under Attack*; see also Reese, *Backlash against Welfare*; Marisa Chappell, *The War on Welfare: Family, Poverty, and Politics in Modern America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum, 2010) ; see also Nadasen, Mittelstadt, and Chappell, *Welfare in the United States*.

³⁹⁶ Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse*, ix.

³⁹⁷ Ellwood, *Poor Support*, 4.

Many scholars have tried to explain the attack against welfare and welfare clients in the United States. The noted scholar of welfare policy David Ellwood reveals that the American public disliked welfare by referring to data provided by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) in 1984. According to the NORC 1984 survey, 41 per cent of Americans thought that the government was spending too much on welfare, and 25 per cent thought that is spent too little.³⁹⁸

The distinguished historian Martin Gilens, in his book titled *Why Americans Hate Welfare* tries to figure out the nature and the reasons of public opposition against welfare.³⁹⁹ Gilens believes that “racial stereotypes” have played a crucial role in generating opposition to welfare. “White” Americans viewed welfare as a programme that rewards “black” able-bodied who were “undeserving poor”.⁴⁰⁰ Simply put, they attacked welfare because its recipients were lazy and shiftless. In this respect, he states that:

For most white Americans, race-based opposition to welfare is not fed by ill will toward blacks, nor is it based on whites’ desire to maintain their economic advantages over African Americans. Instead, race-based opposition to welfare stems from the specific perception that, as a group, African Americans are not committed to the work ethic.⁴⁰¹

Gilens reveals that the racist and negative images about poverty and welfare provided by the mass media in the U.S. played a central role in fueling the public’s opposition against welfare.⁴⁰² Although both “white” and “black” people were on welfare, the public has perceived welfare as a programme that had benefited “people of colour”. Put it in the simplest of words, welfare had become a “code word” for race.⁴⁰³ Welfare had been stigmatised because it is directly associated with “black” people, as Mary Poole puts it:

From the beginning, welfare has carried a stigma: those who receive it have failed as individuals and are a burden on society. And that stigma has a color. The welfare state is

³⁹⁸ Ibid.,4.

³⁹⁹ Martin Gilens, *Why Americans Hate Welfare: Race, Media and the Politics of Antipoverty Policy* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1999), loc. 3097.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid.,178.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid.,191.

⁴⁰² Ibid., 194–43.

⁴⁰³ Jon Hurwitz and Mark Peffley, eds., *Perception and Prejudice: Race and Politics in the United States* (New Haven , CT : Yale University Press, 1998), 195.

literally colored by the “black, welfare-dependent underclass,” which serves as a pillar of the American cultural imagination.⁴⁰⁴

3) The Attack against Welfare (late 1960s)

Another major attack on welfare during the twentieth century took place by the late 1960s.⁴⁰⁵ AFDC faced what was called a “welfare crisis” when the number of its clients increased and became exclusively single or never-married “mothers of colour”: divorced, never-married, and “black”. Welfare has become a very negative word as Katz puts it: “... as unmarried women of color with children began to dominate public assistance roles, “welfare” acquired the combined stigmas of race, gender, and illicit sex.”⁴⁰⁶ In 1960, 8.1 per cent of white households and 20.9 of “black” households were headed by a woman.⁴⁰⁷ Hence, poverty had been again “feminized” during this period.⁴⁰⁸ The number of welfare recipients rose significantly throughout this decade in urban areas in the North as well as the West.⁴⁰⁹ The number of AFDC clients raised from 7.1 million in 1960 to 7.8 million in 1965, then jumped from 11.1 million in 1969 to 14.4 million in 1974.⁴¹⁰

There were many factors that contributed to this dramatic growth in welfare spending: social, economic, and political. First of all, the growth of the population in general and the number of female-headed families, which represented the highest rate of

⁴⁰⁴ Mary Poole, *The Segregated Origins of Social Security: African Americans and the Welfare State* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 2. On the impact of the feelings of stigma on welfare recipients’ attitudes see Joel F. Handler and Ellen J. Hollingsworth, “Stigma, Privacy, and Other Attitudes of Welfare Recipients,” *Stanford Law Review* 22, no. 1 (November 1969): 1–19.

⁴⁰⁵ Abramovitz, *Under Attack*, 75.

⁴⁰⁶ Michael Katz, “The American Welfare State and Social Contract in Hard Times,” *The Journal of Policy History* 22, no. 4 (2010): 509.

⁴⁰⁷ Michael Harrington, *The New American Poverty* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1984), 193.

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁹ Abramovitz, *Under Attack*, 75. See also U.S. Congress, House Committee on Ways and Means, *Overview of Entitlement Programs*, 1994 *Green Book*, 89–395.

⁴¹⁰ James T. Patterson, *America’s Struggle against Poverty in the Twentieth Century*, 2387. For more details see for instance Eva Bertram, “Democratic Divisions in the 1960s and the Road to Welfare Reform,” *Political Science Quarterly* 126, no. 4 (2011): 580.

poverty, contributed to the welfare “explosion”.⁴¹¹ The liberalisation of welfare also contributed to the welfare explosion. In 1961, Congress raised welfare benefits.

After the 1962 Social Security Act amendments, ADC became AFDC, and it allowed husbandless women on welfare to work and receive benefits. Not all two-parent families were eligible to receive welfare.⁴¹² Hence, AFDC became a programme that targeted single mothers and their dependent children.⁴¹³ This act also included married men and this had generated more negative reactions against welfare recipients (since it included able-bodied men).⁴¹⁴

Besides, politics played an important role in welfare expansion by the late 1960s. The Democratic Party found itself obliged to support civil rights and social welfare policies due to the pressure made by the civil rights movement (which was powerful in the North), the March on Washington in 1963, the riots of 1964 and 1968 by a huge number of marginalised African Americans as well as the rise of the “black” power movement.⁴¹⁵

“Bread, Justice, dignity, and Adequate Income” was the motto of welfare rights advocates.⁴¹⁶ The National Welfare Rights Organisation (NWRO), an organisation of thousands of welfare mothers, which played a crucial role in the expansion of AFDC rolls.⁴¹⁷ Their activities targeted class and gender issues: they asked for increased benefits,

⁴¹¹ In 1969, 24 million people lived in poverty because their wages were not sufficient to maintain a decent life, Abramovitz, *Under Attack*, 75–76.

⁴¹² *Ibid.*, 76.

⁴¹³ The Public Welfare Amendments Act of 1962, Public Law 87–543.

⁴¹⁴ Daryl A. Carter, *Brother Bill: President Clinton and the Politics of Race and Class* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2016), 169.

⁴¹⁵ Piven and Cloward, *Regulating the Poor*. For another analysis see James T. Paterson, *America’s Struggle against Poverty in the Twentieth Century*, 2389–91. So welfare expansion was not due family break-up yet a result of social and political activity by middle-class women and women of colour, see Nadasen, Mittelstadt, and Chappell, *Welfare in the United States*, 43.

⁴¹⁶ Nadasen, Mittelstadt, and Chappell, *Welfare in the United States*, 39.

⁴¹⁷ Guida West and Rhoda Lois Blumberg, *Women, and Social Protest* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 7. NWRO was formed from white women, immigrants such as Porto Ricans, Americans and also urban African Americans. There were other organised groups from welfare recipients who joined NWRO such as the low income blind recipients from the categorical welfare programme Aid to the Blind and their allies in the National Federation of the Blind, African Americans from rural areas, attorneys in Civil Rights movements; Felicia Kornbluh and Gwendolyn Mink: *Ensuring Poverty: Welfare Reform in Feminist Perspective* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019), 24. For more details on these welfare

sexual freedom, more jobs, and the banning of “man in the house” rules.⁴¹⁸ These women of all races, almost “black”, defined welfare as an absolute right and not a privilege, and they fought to obtain it.⁴¹⁹ The economic, social, and political conditions during the mid-1960s helped women on welfare organise themselves: the economic prosperity, the liberal political climate, social movements, political conflicts, and the Great Society’s War on Poverty.⁴²⁰ ADFC clients gained attention as the rolls increased significantly. In addition to this, a union of liberals, radicals, welfare rights activists, and some moderate conservatives asked Congress to substitute AFDC with a fixed income for all American families.⁴²¹

The explosion of welfare led to hostility among all Americans (ordinary people, politicians, and academics) against welfare clients. Consequently, Congress passed a series of amendments in 1967 to Title IV of the Social Security Act of 1935. These amendments encouraged women on welfare to work through the Work Incentive Programme (WIN) which required labour for impoverished husbandless women to receive AFDC.⁴²² In order to limit the growing number of out-of-wedlock births, Congress passed a “freeze” on the funds provided by the federal government to states which contained a significant rate of poor dependent children whose mothers were single and whose fathers were absent.

In 1967, Governor of California Ronald Reagan announced in his first inaugural address that “We are not going to perpetuate poverty by substituting a permanent dole for a paycheck. There is no humanity or charity in destroying self-reliance, dignity, and self-respect ... the very substance of moral fiber.” After being elected, Reagan emphasised the importance of controlling the welfare budget because, according to him, welfare

organised groups see for instance Felicia Kornbluh, “Disability, Anti-Professionalism, and Civil Rights: The National Federation of the Blind and the ‘Right to Organize’ in the 1950s,” *Journal of American History* 97, no.4 (March, 2011):1023–47; Felicia Kornbluh, *Battle for Welfare Rights* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007); Abramovitz, *Under Attack*.

⁴¹⁸ See Quadagno, “Race, Class, and Gender in the U.S. Welfare State,” 16.

⁴¹⁹ Abramovitz, *Under Attack*, 131.

⁴²⁰ See Martha Davies, “Welfare Rights and Women’s Rights in the 1960s,” (Paper presented at the Integrating the Sixties Conference, D.C., 30 May 1995.

⁴²¹ Ibid.

⁴²² Stephen F. Gold, “Comment: The Failure of the Work Incentive (WIN) Program,” *University of Pennsylvania Law* 119, no.2 (1971):485–501,

https://scholarship.law.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=5817&context=penn_1aw_review . See also Nadasen, Mittelstadt, and Chappell, *Welfare in the United States*, 43.

contributes more and more to poverty. In 1987, the Reagan Administration had claimed that “the easy availability of welfare in all of its forms has become a powerful force for the destruction of family life through the perpetuation of a welfare culture” that discourages work and marriage, creates an unhealthy sense of entitlement, promotes dependence, and encourages people to challenge authority.”

Nine months after his election as president of the United States, Richard M. Nixon, delivered a speech on welfare and poverty policy in which he criticised FDR’s New Deal and “big government” policies.⁴²³ President Nixon pointed out: “My purpose tonight ... is ... to present a new set of reforms ... a new and drastically different approach to the way in which Government cares for those in need, and to the way the responsibilities are shared between the state and Federal governments.”⁴²⁴ He proposed substituting AFDC programme with Family Assistance Plan (FAP), a guaranteed annual income for poor working families with children under eighteen.⁴²⁵ Nixon’s plan sought to stimulate work through market incentives rather than through enforced working requirements.⁴²⁶ That plan was crafted by Daniel Patrick Moynihan who was the Chief Urban Affairs Council during his administration and who urged its speedy enactment because he believed that it would be significant as the Social Security Act of 1935.⁴²⁷ However, this plan failed because it supported big business as well as endorsed the labour movement, and also proved that class struggle between labour and capital shaped social policy in the United States.⁴²⁸

During the presidential elections of 1968, the issue of welfare reform was at the heart of both parties’ campaigns.⁴²⁹ In addition to this, congressional complaints against the rising cost of AFDC rolls made the attack against welfare more and more violent.

⁴²³ See Mink and Solinger, *Welfare*, 313.

⁴²⁴ *Ibid.*, 313–19.

⁴²⁵ Jill S. Quadagno, “Race, Class, and Gender in the U.S. Welfare State: Nixon’s Failed Family Assistance Plan,” *American Sociological Association Review* 55, no.1 (Feb., 1990): 11.

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁷ Handler, *Reforming the Poor*, 72.

⁴²⁸ Quadagno, “Race, Class, and Gender,” 12.

⁴²⁹ Eva Bertram. *The Workfare State: Public Assistance Politics from the New Deal to the New Democrats* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 43.

4) Neo-liberalism and the last Attack against the Welfare State (mid–1970s - late–1980s)

During his 1976 presidential campaign, the Republican President Ronald Reagan introduced the term “welfare queen” to the public lexicon to refer to fraud in welfare so as to gain more public support and show his political will to shrink the role of government in promoting social welfare.⁴³⁰ By “welfare queen”, Ronald Reagan meant Lynda Taylor, a resident from Chicago whose alleged misdeeds were reported by the *Chicago Tribune*. Taylor was accused of welfare fraud in 1974. According to the *Tribune* reports, that woman owned three cars—a Chevrolet, a Lincoln, and a Cadillac limousine, the car that Ronald Reagan used in his speeches several times—had twenty-seven names, thirty-one different addresses, twenty-five telephone numbers, three Social Security cards, stocks and bonds, and many dead husbands. His claims were however recognised by historians as exaggerating because this story was a myth.⁴³¹

The story of the “welfare queen” was invented to fuel the attack against welfare. Politicians sought to convince the American public that it is the right time to cut welfare spending and end welfare programmes that supported undeserving poor families. It should be noted, however, that the costs of welfare that were claimed in that period were too exaggerated as well. In other words, the size of welfare was a myth.⁴³² Mimi Abramovitz states that:

The Administration’s (The Reagan Administration) budget cutters argued that AFDC wasted funds on undeserving women and bloated bureaucracies; that it drained the treasury and fueled the deficit. They also insisted that women on welfare live “big on the hog.” Yet the facts suggest otherwise. The average benefit rose from \$178 a month in 1970, to \$275 in 1980. During the same time, however, due to inflation, its real purchasing power fell more than 40 percent.⁴³³

⁴³⁰ See, for instance, Ange-Marie Hancock, “Contemporary Welfare Reform and the Public Identity of the ‘Welfare Queen,’” *Race, Gender & Class* 10, no. 1 (2003): 31–59. See also, Shatema A. Threadcraft, “The Emergence of the ‘Welfare Queen,’” in *Encyclopedia of Race, Ethnicity, and Society*, ed. Richard T. Schaefer (California: Sage Publications Inc., 2008), 1: 1385.

⁴³¹ Ibid.

⁴³² Abramovitz, *Under Attack*, 24.

⁴³³ Ibid.

This means that negative stereotypes about welfare and welfare clients led to illusion and generated misconceptions about the real size of welfare in the U.S. as Mimi Abramovitz puts it:

The myths surrounding welfare's size matched the misperceptions of its cost. By the late 1970s, welfare's critics told us that the rolls had exploded and created an uncomfortable mess. But AFDC's expansion mirrored social forces over which individuals typically have little or no more control. The welfare rolls grew steadily during the late 1940s and 1950s, serving from 1 to 2 million individuals a year. The numbers doubled from about 3.0 million in 1960 to 10.2 million in 1971 reflecting high poverty rates but also the demands of the civil rights and welfare rights movements. Even so, AFDC's expansion kept pace with natural population increases serving a steady 2 to 3 percent of All Americans until 1969, when it jumped to more than 4 percent. From 1971 to 1990, the caseload one again stabilized at 10 to 11 million people per year, or 4 to 5 percent of the U.S. population—except during recessions, when the numbers rose.⁴³⁴

Women on welfare, especially “women of colour” had been described as animals. For instance, Senator Russell Long used the term “broodmares” to refer to the “black” and Porto Rican welfare beneficiaries, during a meeting of the Senate Finance Committee he chaired.⁴³⁵ Similar descriptions were used by some politicians in 1996 (We will tackle this point in *Chapter Five*).

By the 1980s, it was clear that the evolution of the American welfare state stagnated: 35.1 million Americans had no health insurance and 40 per cent of the poor had received no cash assistance.⁴³⁶ The public's perception of welfare and welfare recipients was unjustified.⁴³⁷ The public's perception of welfare was controlled by the media as Kent Weaver explained:

Most Americans do not know any welfare recipients personally or have any direct contact with the welfare system. Their views of welfare, and of welfare recipients, are likely to be shaped by what they see on television and what they read in newspapers and magazines. If they put an individual face on welfare at all as the United States debated and then carried out welfare reform...⁴³⁸

⁴³⁴ Ibid., 24–25.

⁴³⁵ Ange-Marie Hancock, *The Politics of Disgust* (New York: New York University Press, 2004), loc. 2184 of 4486.

⁴³⁶ Brown, *Race, Money and the American Welfare State*, 2.

⁴³⁷ Gilens, *Why Americans Hate Welfare*, loc. 1117.

⁴³⁸ R. Kent Weaver, *Ending Welfare as we Know it* (Washington D.C., : Brookings Institution Press, 2000),9.

African Americans have been recognised as lazy people because of the images left by slavery which generated stereotypes against “blacks”, and those prejudiced ideas against them persisted after the abolition of slavery.⁴³⁹ Ronald Reagan succeeded to attract public attention on the welfare issue. He won the presidency with an overwhelming victory. Reagan promised the American people, an “era of national renewal” and his party controlled the Senate for more than a quarter of a century.⁴⁴⁰ The 1980s were marked by the emergence of neo-conservatives and their main concerns were privatisation, small government, and deregulation.⁴⁴¹ That period was characterised by capitalist expansion: free market, investment, and entrepreneurialism were maintained.⁴⁴² But this economic policy resulted in inequalities of wealth and income distribution.⁴⁴³

Ronald Reagan’s economic recovery plan in the 1980s, known as “Reaganomics”, “trickle-down economics”, “supply-side economics”, or namely “neo-liberalism”. Neo-liberalism is an updated version of the “classical liberal” economic theory developed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by Adam Smith and David Ricardo who advocated the idea that the government should not intervene in citizens’ economic affairs.⁴⁴⁴ Reaganomics sought to terminate the New Deal legacy through downsizing the welfare state, limiting the domestic role of government, lowering labour costs, weakening the political power of social movements which defended the welfare state, preserving patriarchal “family values”, as well as promoting race-neutral social policies.⁴⁴⁵

The main objective of the neo-liberal policy was to downsize and shrink the welfare state. The welfare state expanded dramatically in the United States of America from the New Deal to the Great Society and especially during the post–World War II era. This expansion took place as a result of prosperity, population growth, and the emergence

⁴³⁹ Gilens, *Why Americans Hate Welfare*, loc. 2760.

⁴⁴⁰ Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State*, 362–63.

⁴⁴¹ Kevin Phillips, *The Politics of Rich and Poor: Wealth and the American Electorate in the Reagan Aftermath* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1990), 153. For more details about neo-conservatism see Peter Steinfels, *The Neoconservatives: The Men who are Changing America’s Politics* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979).

⁴⁴² *Ibid.*, 55.

⁴⁴³ *Ibid.*, 58.

⁴⁴⁴ See Johanna Bockman, “Neoliberalism,” *Contexts* 12, no. 3 (2013): 14.

⁴⁴⁵ Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State*, 348.

of new needs, the demands of the labour unions, civil rights, and women's liberation, and other social movements.⁴⁴⁶ Nevertheless, by the mid-1970s, capital formation and economic growth declined due to de-industrialization, globalisation, as well as other changes in the home and global economy.⁴⁴⁷ This caused another twentieth-century economic crisis. But this time politicians and academics and even the American public who supported conservatism considered "Big Government" as the major factor behind that crisis.

Among the aims of neo-liberal politics was to limit the domestic role of the federal government. The recession of the 1970s which caused higher inflation and higher unemployment rates made conservative ideas were welcomed among Americans by the early 1980s and this reaction might explain Ronald Reagan's overwhelming triumph in 1980.⁴⁴⁸ Ronald Reagan pledged to restore the U.S. economic system. He attacked "big government". According to the claims of the Reagan Administration, cutting government spending would help private investment prosper.⁴⁴⁹ This attack against "big government" is an assault against "Keynesian economics" policy which had been advocated by the previous New-Deal friendly administrations. Hence Keynesian economics was replaced by "supply-side economics" which called for less government involvement, fewer taxes, less government spending, decreasing regulations, and more support of the business.⁴⁵⁰

Supply-side economics was introduced on July 31, 1981, when Congress sent Ronald Reagan the five-year \$789 billion tax cut.⁴⁵¹ According to the Reagan Administration economists, the federal government must end its twenty-year deficit spending and had to move to a more balanced budget in the face of massive increases in tax cuts and defense spending.⁴⁵²

⁴⁴⁶ Abramovitz, "The Reagan Legacy," 100–02.

⁴⁴⁷ Abramovitz, "Welfare Reform in the United States,".

⁴⁴⁸ Frank Ackerman, *Reaganomics: Rhetoric vs. Reality* (Boston: South End Press, 1982), xi.

⁴⁴⁹ Abramovitz, "The Reagan Legacy," 101.

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 101.

⁴⁵¹ Michael K. Evans, *The Truth about Supply-Side Economics* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 3.

⁴⁵² *Ibid.*, 3.

In the fall of 1988, the Family Support Act (FSA) was passed, and its purpose was “to replace the existing AFDC programme with a Family Support Programme which emphasizes work, child support, and need-based family support supplements, ... [and] to encourage and assist needy children and parents under the new programme to obtain the education, training, and employment needed to avoid long-term welfare dependency.”⁴⁵³ Hence, the Family Support Act shifted the focus of the welfare system from checking the eligibility criteria of the welfare clients to access AFDC benefits, to enabling those clients as well as their families to be economically independent.⁴⁵⁴ This act had become effective in 1990 and it was different from its initial version introduced in 1935: The Social Security Act of 1935 which created the first federal-state programmes to assist husbandless mothers with dependent children provided that these mothers should stay at home and care for their young children.⁴⁵⁵

To sum up, the attack against public aid began in the 1820s. Welfare reform was not accidental but it was part of Ronald Reagan’s recovery strategy.⁴⁵⁶ During the period that preceded passage of PRWORA, the American public and politicians discussed the limitations of welfare. Congress and the media focused more attention on the comments of welfare administrators, politicians, business lobbyists, academics, and pundits; however, they neglected completely the arguments of welfare activists and welfare recipients.⁴⁵⁷

In part two of this thesis, we will endeavour to figure out the way and the manner through which issues related to race, class, and gender influenced Bill Clinton’s decision to sign PRWORA in 1996 in order to replace AFDC with TANF. We will try to explain if his attack against welfare was driven by racist, classist, or sexist prejudices by drawing upon existing documents related to this subject.

⁴⁵³ U.S Congress, 1988.

⁴⁵⁴ Mary Jo Bane and David T. Ellwood, *Welfare Realities: From Rhetoric to Reform* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1994), 1–2.

⁴⁵⁵ Catherine S. Chilman, “Welfare Reform or Revision? The Family Support Act of 1988,” *Social Service Review* 66, no. 3 (1992):349–50.

⁴⁵⁶ Abramovitz, “Welfare Reform in the United States,” 348.

⁴⁵⁷ Sanford F. Schram et al., eds., *Race and the Politics of Welfare Reform* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 3060.

Part Two

The End of Welfare in 1996: Implications of Race, Gender, and Class Issues in Welfare Reform Legislation during the Bill Clinton Administration

Well, today, 10 years later, that lady has a job. And she's raised three children. One has a job, and two are in school. By her undying effort and her unbreakable spirit, she shows us that we can make a difference, that this cycle of welfare can be broken; that welfare can be a second chance, not a way of life.

— Bill Clinton, *Remarks to the National Governor's Association Conference July 16, 1996.*

Our policies are neither liberal nor conservative, neither Democratic nor Republican. They are new. They are different.

— Gov. Bill Clinton and Sen. Al Gore, *Putting People First: How we can all Change America*, 1992.

I wrote this book to tell my story, and to tell the story of America in the last half of the twentieth century; to describe as fairly as I could the forces competing for the country's heart and mind; to explain the challenges of the new world in which we live and how I believe our government and our citizens should respond to them; and to give people who have never been involved in public life a sense of what it is like to hold office, and especially what it is like to be President.

— Bill Clinton, *My Life*, 1994.

I could see that *black* people looked different, but because he (papaw) treated them like he did everybody else, asking after their children and about their work, I thought they were *just like me*.

— Bill Clinton, *My Life*, 1994. (Italics added.)

She (his mother) recalled that he had told her that good people who were doing the best they could deserved to be able to feed their families ... Maybe that's why I've always believed in *Food Stamps*.

— Bill Clinton, *My Life*, 1994. (Italics added.)

I had spent enough time talking to welfare recipients and caseworkers... to know that the majority of them wanted to work and support their families. They faced formidable barriers, beyond the obvious ones of low skills, lack of work experience and inability to pay for childcare. Many of the people met had no cars or access to public transportation. If they took a low-wage job, they would lose food stamps and medical coverage under Medicaid. Finally, many of them just didn't believe they could make it in the world of work and had no idea where to begin.

— Bill Clinton, *My Life*, 1994.

Today, we are ending welfare as we know it. But I hope this day will be remembered not for what it ended, but for what it began -- a new day that

offers hope, honors responsibility, rewards work, and changes the terms of the debate so that no one in America ever feels again the need to criticize people who are poor on welfare, but instead feels the responsibility to reach out to men and women and children who are isolated, who need opportunity, and who are willing to assume responsibility, and give them to opportunity and the terms of responsibility.

— Bill Clinton, August 22, 1996.

Chapter Four

The Democratic Party, Conservatism Vs. Liberalism: How the Perception on Welfare and the Welfare State in the U.S. Evolved through Time until the 1990s

Bill Clinton promised to end welfare, strengthen the military system, and end crime, social injustice, and segregation in the United States of America. According to historians, he aimed to gain bipartisan support.⁴⁵⁸ He declared that “The era of big government is over.” By saying so, he meant that it was time to reduce the size of government by cutting federal spending on the poor.

This chapter explores the issue of welfare reform and how it developed within the Democratic Party in the United States before passage of PRWORA in 1996. I will be attempting to identify the main reasons behind the radical shift within the Democratic Party: from a party that advocated the poor and intervention of government in citizens’ affairs to a party that supported right-wing initiatives against the poor. I will also try to examine and investigate the main ideological principles of the New Democrats, their perception of the welfare state and poverty in the U.S. Besides, I will explore the main factors, which led to the emergence of the New Democratic Party and its political standpoint concerning welfare reform.

⁴⁵⁸ Howard Zinn, *People’s History of the United States 1492–Present* (New York: HarperCollins, 1999), 643–44.

1) The Democratic Party Vs. The Republican Party in Contemporary America, and the Welfare State: A Brief Overview

1.1) A Brief Definition of the Term “Political Party”

Before dealing with political parties and their view of the welfare state in the United States, we will initially provide a short definition of the term “political party”. The United States of America is a “two-party” system.⁴⁵⁹ In fact, “modern political parties” are an American invention.⁴⁶⁰ Before dealing with the role of political parties in the U.S. and their role in shaping social welfare policy and the way and the manner their vision of the welfare system shifted through time, we will, first of all, define the term “political party”.

It is not easy to give a very precise definition of this term. We will try in this section to provide some definitions based on the works of different scholars. A political party, in general, is “an association of like-minded individuals that seeks to gain power in a community (usually a state) to promote its chosen social order.”⁴⁶¹ There are other definitions of the term “political party”. According to Gilbert Abcarian and George S. Masannat:

The distinctive feature of the political party is to be found in its goal of electing candidates to public office in order to control or influence government policies. A political party serves as a vehicle through which like-minded persons associate in the expectation that their views will achieve the stamp of legitimacy through elections and lead to authoritative determination of government processes. Generally speaking, the three major tasks of political parties particularly in democratic systems, are those of nominating candidates, defining issues, and running or opposing the government.⁴⁶²

⁴⁵⁹ There are three types of party politics: uniparty, biparty, and multiparty political systems. Throughout its history, the U.S. had known different parties: Fascist, Communist, and vegetarian parties, as well as monarchist, socialist, and anarcho-syndicalist parties; see, for instance, Emmette S. Redford et al., *Politics and Government in the United States: National, State, and Local Edition* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1965), 133.

⁴⁶⁰ L. Sandy Maisel and Mark D. Brewer, *Parties and Elections in America: The Electoral Process*, 6th ed. (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2012), 22.

⁴⁶¹ Frederic Volpi, “Political Parties,” in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Sociology*, ed. Bryan S. Turner, 444.

⁴⁶² Gilbert Abcarian and George S. Masannat, *Contemporary Politics Systems: An Introduction to Government* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1970), 10.

According to Anthony Downs, “A political party is a team of men seeking to control the governing apparatus by gaining office in a duly constituted election.”⁴⁶³ For Giovanni Sartori, “A party is any political group that presents at elections, and is capable of placing through elections, candidates for public office.”⁴⁶⁴ In sum, a political party is a political organisation whose main objective is to put its personnel in power through elections to establish its programme: economic, political, or social. Each political party chooses its exclusive slogan or a motto.

Historians disagree about the exact period in which political parties first emerged in the U.S. John Hoadley states the following:

Scholars have differed considerably in assessing the development of American political parties during the period immediately following the ratification of the Constitution. The date marking the emergence of parties has been placed anywhere between the beginning of the new government and the time 50 years later when Whigs and Jacksonian Democrats were competing for power. Despite disagreements over the precise date when parties first appeared, most observers have agreed that important divisions did materialize in the first decade of the new nation.⁴⁶⁵

In the American tradition, Martin Van Buren’s main purpose behind legitimising political competition in the United States during the 1830s was: control presidential ambition.⁴⁶⁶ The Framers of the Constitution established a nonpartisan presidency and they were against the idea of political parties.⁴⁶⁷ For instance, Thomas Jefferson wrote in 1789: “If I could not go to heaven but with a party, I would not go there at all.”⁴⁶⁸

Political parties do not share the same ideologies or political opinions concerning how to run the country, its domestic and foreign policies. One of the issues that mattered most in the U.S. is how to control the national budget and how to find the best solutions to

⁴⁶³ Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1957), 25.

⁴⁶⁴ Giovanni Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis* (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 64.

⁴⁶⁵ John F. Hoadley, “The Emergence of Political Parties in Congress, 1789–1803,” *The American Political Science Review* 74, no.3 (1980): 757, doi:10.2307/1958156.

⁴⁶⁶ See, for instance, James Cesar, *Presidential Selection: Theory and Development* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1979).

⁴⁶⁷ Sydney M. Milkis, *Political Parties and Constitutional Government: Remaking American Democracy* (Baltimore, Maryland: The John Hopkins University Press, 1999), 2.

⁴⁶⁸ Julian P. Boyd, ed., *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 14, 8 October 1788–26 March 1789 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958), 649–51.

regulate poverty and poor people. Political parties in the U.S. have not shared the same vision towards how to promote welfare in the United States.⁴⁶⁹

The Democratic Party has always been considered as an advocate of the big government through increasing social spending to assist the deserving poor and guarantees an equal distribution of income. On the other hand, the Republican Party sought to minimise the role of the federal government through cutting social spending in order to give the opportunity for businesses to prosper more and more.

Recent scholarships demonstrate that both Democrats and Republicans played substantial roles to expand the role of the national government and increasing social spending and that the main partisan conflict in the United States has been over the role of the federal government in promoting social welfare for the American citizens. A new theory of the relationship between social policy and political parties in the U.S. has been introduced and developed by Christopher Faricy, by taking into account the following: first, the public and private sectors of the welfare system (the nature of the welfare state in the U.S., called the “divided welfare state”, and we will tackle this point in the last section of this chapter); second, the choice of providing social spending using public or private subsidies (that is social spending as a choice).⁴⁷⁰ From his perspective, there are two welfare states in the U.S.: a public welfare state created and supported by the Democrats, and a “burgeoning” private welfare state built and advocated by Republicans.⁴⁷¹

⁴⁶⁹ My aim here is to discuss briefly the notion of “political parties” and not to provide a deep understanding or explanation of how the government and politics function in the U.S., or about the historical development of political parties in the U.S. For more details about the functioning of the American government and politics, see for instance, the work of Stephen L. Wasby, *American Government and Politics: The Process of Policy-making in American Government* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1973), 1.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁷¹ Ibid., 2.

1.2) The Democratic Party and the Development of the Welfare State in the U.S. during the 1990s: A Brief Overview

We have already discussed the contribution of the Democratic Party in the emergence of the “modern welfare state” in the United States during the New Deal (*Part One, Chapter One*). However, in this section, we will briefly deal with the Democratic Party’s conception of the welfare state in the United States of America, and how it developed through time from the New Deal to the late 1990s. Then we will try to explain the way and the manner through which this shift in the Democratic Party’s perception of welfare and the welfare state contributed to the replacement of AFDC by the TANF block grant programme in 1996.

The Great Depression and the election of Franklin Delano Roosevelt to the presidency marked the beginning of a profound shift in American politics. In 1932, President Roosevelt succeeded to form a “new coalition” of labour, the working class, intellectuals as well as minorities for the first time in U.S. history.⁴⁷² Therefore, FDR is recognised as the founder of the “modern Democratic Party coalition” by historians.⁴⁷³

Indeed, the Democratic party became “the party to end all parties”⁴⁷⁴ by the late 1930s. The policies he generated were a real success as Kenneth Baer puts it: “FDR undertook a series of political and policy changes that resulted in the creation of a truly unique New Deal or “liberal” public policy . . . that would deliver success to the Democratic Party for years to come.”⁴⁷⁵ He also made it clear that the Democratic Party is a big supporter and defender of African Americans’ rights: “New Deal extended economic relief to the one-third of the nation that was ill-housed, ill clothed, and ill fed, which

⁴⁷² Carter, *Brother Bill*, 22.

⁴⁷³ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁴ Sidney M. Milkis, *The Transformation of the American Party System since the New Deal* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 5.

⁴⁷⁵ Kenneth S. Baer, *Reinventing Democrats: The Politics of Liberalism from Reagan to Clinton* (Kansas: The University Press of Kansas, 2000), 12.

included blacks, as well as poor whites.”⁴⁷⁶ However, the New Deal was not too fair with African Americans (see *Chapter Two, Part Tw*, to see how the New Deal marginalised African Americans).

The 1960s presidential elections brought office a “liberal Democratic administration.”⁴⁷⁷ That administration focused attention on anti-poverty initiatives launched by John F. Kennedy. That Great Society agenda marked a turning point in the history of the Democratic Party because of issues related to the Vietnam War, civil rights, gay rights, and women's rights.⁴⁷⁸ Indeed, it led to significant disagreements within the Democratic Party itself, and deep divisions in the midst of the nation.⁴⁷⁹

The Democratic Party at the time included Lyndon B. Johnson and also such representatives as Wilbur Mills, Senators Harry Byrd, and Russell Long, as well as other like-minded conservative representatives in the South.⁴⁸⁰ Southern conservatives held 40 per cent of the Party's seats in Congress in 1932: 38 per cent in the House and 44 per cent in the Senate; and about 35 per cent of them in 1968: 36 per cent in the House and 33 per cent in the Senate.⁴⁸¹

It should be noted that Democrats and liberals controlled the political sphere in the U.S. between the 1960s and the early 1970s, and they favoured “federal activism” over peoples' rights and economic regulation.⁴⁸² But this control of liberals was brought to an end when Republican conservatives succeeded to convince Americans that the time of liberal government is over. Democrats themselves rejected the slackness of liberalism towards economic and social issues, especially during the 1960s. And finally, the

⁴⁷⁶ Quoted in *Ibid.* 22; see the work cited for more details: Steven F. Lawson, *Running for Freedom : Civil Rights and Black Politics in America since 1941*, 3rd ed. (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 3.

⁴⁷⁷ Bertram, “Democratic Divisions in the 1960s,” 579.

⁴⁷⁸ Carter, *Brother Bill*, 22.

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸⁰ Bertram, “Democratic Divisions in the 1960s,” 579.

⁴⁸¹ See Bertram, *The Workfare State*, 15.

⁴⁸² Pierson and Skocpol, *The Transformation of American Politics*, 193.

Democratic Party had decided to abandon completely the basic principles of the New Deal liberalism in the mid-1990s.⁴⁸³

According to the historian Sean Wilentz, Ronald Reagan's government and the conservative movement had played a crucial role in shaping Bill Clinton's Administration.⁴⁸⁴ Bill Clinton, a "moderate Democrat", rewrote the social contract of poor families. He, therefore, succeeded to do what Ronald Reagan himself failed to accomplish for the issue of welfare reform.⁴⁸⁵

The split within the Democratic Party initially occurred during the 1960s over anti-poverty initiatives during the liberal-Democratic administrations of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson, and it paved the way to long-term divisions.⁴⁸⁶ The conservative transformations during the 1960s deeply affected the development of welfare policy in the 1960s. These transformations had become visible when AFDC recipients had become overwhelmingly "women of colour" and their young children. Their number increased substantially during that period (see *Part One, Chapter Three*). Therefore, Kennedy and Johnson who were liberal Democrats focused on the idea of "work" in their fight against poverty. By doing so they had created opportunities for conservatives within their own party to deal with welfare issues.⁴⁸⁷

1.3) The "New Democratic Party" in the U.S., the Welfare State, and African Americans

In this section, we will try first of all to distinguish between "Democrats" and "New Democrats" in terms of their ideologies and also strategies in tackling the issue of welfare reform. What is the main difference between the Democratic Party and the New Democratic Party? Can we draw a clear-cut distinction between the Democratic and the

⁴⁸³ Eric Foner and Lisa McGirr, *American History Now* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011), 3045.

⁴⁸⁴ Sean Wilentz, *The Age of Reagan: A History, 1974–2008* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2008).

⁴⁸⁵ See for instance, R. Kent Weaver, *Ending Welfare as We Know It*; Ann Marie Cammisa, *From Rhetoric to Welfare Reform?*

⁴⁸⁶ Bertram, "Democratic Divisions in the 1960s," 579.

⁴⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 581.

New Democratic parties' views and perceptions of welfare? What about African Americans, had they supported New Democratic Party's initiatives? These are the main questions that we will attempt to answer at the heart of this section.

There were various elements and also deep-rooted factors which led to long-term divisions within the Democratic Party over the issue of social welfare and which paved the way to welfare reform. Southern conservatives played a crucial role in the "concrete" crack within that party over anti-poverty programmes during the 1960s and they also played an important role in defining the national welfare policy during the 1990s.⁴⁸⁸ Consequently, a new Democratic Party emerged and it rejected the liberal beliefs that were maintained by the leaders of that party for decades.

The traditional "Democratic Party" (as opposed to the new version of the Democratic Party) was a firm advocate of liberal ideas since its inception. There were two main agendas related to the development of the American welfare state and the Democratic Party: the New Deal (during 1930s) and the Great Society (during the 1960s) and they were both introduced by liberal Democratic presidents who were backed by considerable congressional majorities and whose administrations were characterised by ambitious social policy initiatives.⁴⁸⁹ The "New Democratic Party" emerged when its adherents decided to divorce from the liberal tradition that had been the main defining feature of the original Democratic Party established by Democrats. The Democratic Party lost its majority in Congress in 1994, and thus Clinton decided to make large cuts in public spending and by doing so he did a U-turn in the history of the Democratic Party and the U.S. welfare state.⁴⁹⁰

Hence, we can draw a border line between the New and the Old Democratic Party by focusing on the idea of "workfare". The New Democratic Party stressed the importance of work in guaranteeing a minimum wage for poor families and hence fighting poverty. In addition, the New Democratic Party's members were against liberalism.

⁴⁸⁸ Bertram, *The Workfare State*, 161.

⁴⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁴⁹⁰ Karagiannis, Madjid-Sadjadi and Sen, *The U.S Economy and Neoliberalism*, 58.

Bill Clinton won the elections and he promised to restore the stability of the economic system by creating good jobs.⁴⁹¹ His presidency had been faced by both globalisation and the end of the Cold War.⁴⁹² Thus, Bill Clinton found himself compelled to solve domestic and foreign problems to sustain the nation's stability at home and abroad during those challenging times. Globalisation offered opportunities and difficulties for the United States after the Cold War. The U.S. could find markets abroad for its goods and services. Furthermore, businesses and firms had a great opportunity to enter the competition within the international marketplace so as to enhance their innovation, production as well as economic efficiency.⁴⁹³ On the other hand, globalisation could lead to job losses as some American firms or corporations which failed to compete with their foreign counterparts either closed or moved their operations to countries where labour costs were cheap—where health, safety, and environmental regulations were absent.⁴⁹⁴

The New Democratic Party emerged in the 1980s in order to change radically the political attitudes of the Democratic Party and restore its credibility after several defeats since the 1970s.⁴⁹⁵ The transformation within the Democratic Party and its political philosophy occurred thanks to the efforts of a group called “New Democrats” and their most organisational form called the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC) established in 1985, after the Democrats’ crushing defeat in 1984 to search for solutions, Kenneth Baer explains the crucial role of DLC and New Democrats, and he points out:

... the DLC and New Democrats in and around the organization have become the principal rival to the national party's dominant liberal faction. The appeal of New Democratic policymaking and politics to key parts of the electorate has strengthened the Democratic Party nationally at the expense of the Republicans... the DLC and the New Democrats have become one of the most influential forces in the Democratic Party and in American politics.⁴⁹⁶

He also states:

⁴⁹¹ Maney, *Bill Clinton*, 45.

⁴⁹² Ibid.

⁴⁹³ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁵ Duncan Watts, *The Dictionary of American Government and Politics* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 204–05.

⁴⁹⁶ Baer, *Reinventing Democrats*, 2.

By establishing this extraparty organization, these “New Democrats” hoped to remake the public philosophy of the Democratic Party by pressuring the national party from outside its official apparatus. In their view, they were loyal Democrats who wanted to convince wavering Democrats to “change the party rather than changing parties.”

The New Democrats advocated neo-liberal fiscal policies and moderate social positions.⁴⁹⁷ Unlike his party predecessors, Bill Clinton described himself as a “New Democrat” and he focused on the question of welfare to restore his party’s political position in the United States.

Bill Clinton was aware that he should expand his political influence and restore accordingly the power of the Democratic Party by focusing on communication. Indeed communication is an important means for politicians to achieve their goals as John Harris puts it: “Governing in the modern era is above all a task of communication.”⁴⁹⁸ The task of communicating with the public was another challenge for Bill Clinton because the way and the manner through which the media covered politics in the U.S. during that period changed dramatically.⁴⁹⁹ Nevertheless, national party leaders and activists opposed the political strategies of the New Democrats and considered the DLC’s initiatives and proposals as a break with Democratic Party’s values.⁵⁰⁰

Many civil rights measures had been passed during the Great Society such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 which ended the Jim Crow unfair laws in the South.⁵⁰¹ Affirmative action policies enabled some African Americans to enjoy their middle-class status in the American society: have access to prep schools, universities and to higher position jobs in firms, companies, and corporations.⁵⁰² Nevertheless, not all African Americans enjoyed this new social status in the U.S., and not all of them could join the working class: the majority suffered from extreme poverty

⁴⁹⁷ Duncan Watts, *The Dictionary of American Government and Politics*, 204.

⁴⁹⁸ Quoted in Steven E Schier, *The Postmodern Presidency: Bill Clinton’s Legacy in U.S. Politics* (Pittsburgh : University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000), 99.

⁴⁹⁹ Maney, *Bill Clinton*, 46.

⁵⁰⁰ Baer, *Reinventing Democrats*, 64.

⁵⁰¹ Daryl A. Carter, “Race and Class in the 1990s,” in *Brother Bill: President Clinton and the Politics of Race and Class* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2016), 53.

⁵⁰² *Ibid.*, 53.

especially those living in urban areas that had no regular financial assistance from the government.⁵⁰³ The Republican President, who was supportive for conservative ideas, had hotly criticized pro-African American Great Society measures.

During the 1992 Presidential elections, African Americans backed overwhelmingly the Democratic candidate Bill Clinton, and they hoped that by doing so they will maintain the civil rights they have established during the 1960s.⁵⁰⁴ The African American community was disappointed because the Bill Clinton Administration's policies did not support African Americans and the poor.⁵⁰⁵

It should be borne in mind that there was a misunderstanding about welfare reform within the Democratic Party itself and there were serious divisions over race, gender as well as economics.⁵⁰⁶ Gender, with its intersectional dimensions, played a central role in shaping debates over reform during that period in politics and social policy.⁵⁰⁷

2) Liberalism Vs. Conservatism in Contemporary America, and the Burning Question of Welfare Reform

Before tackling the way and the manner through which conservatives and liberals perceived welfare reform during the period which preceded passage of welfare reform legislation in 1996, we need to give definitions of the terms "liberalism" and "conservatism". It is not an easy task to provide *exact* definitions of these terms. In this section, we will try to explain them by taking into account outstanding historians' and scholars' definitions.

According to Kenneth Thompson, "The political and philosophical molds in which popular approaches to domestic and international politics are cast in most Western

⁵⁰³ Ibid., 53.

⁵⁰⁴ Monte Piliawsky, "Racism or Realpolitik? The Clinton Administration and African-Americans," *The Black Scholar* 24, no. 2 (1994): 2.

⁵⁰⁵ Piliawsky, "Racism or Realpolitik?" 2.

⁵⁰⁶ Kornbluh and Mink, *Ensuring Poverty*, 57.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid.

countries are neither reform nor realism but liberalism and conservatism.”⁵⁰⁸ That is, in order to understand politics in general and U.S. politics in particular, we need to understand conservatism and liberalism.

2.1) What is Ideology?

Ideas play a crucial role in politics, and this is called “ideology”. But what does ideology refer to? It should be noted that there is no agreed definition of the term ideology and that it is an ambiguous term as David McLellan puts it, “Ideology is the most elusive concept in the whole of social sciences.”⁵⁰⁹

The term ideology first appeared during the French Revolution and it was coined by Antoine Distrutt de Tracy (1745–1836), and it was widely used in public in 1796 during a period of Enlightenment. According to de Tracy the term *idéologie* referred to “a new science of ideas (*idea-ology*, same form of biology and zoology).⁵¹⁰ According to Jeffrey Haynes, ideology is the set of “ethical ideals, principles, doctrines, myths, and/or symbols. They are used both to explain how society should work and to offer a political and cultural plan for a desirable social order.”⁵¹¹ Among the meanings that have been attached to “ideology” are as follows:

- A political belief system;
- An action-oriented set of political ideas;
- The ideas of the ruling class;
- The world view of a particular social class or social group;
- Political ideas that embody or articulate class or social interests;
- An abstract and highly systematic set of political ideas.⁵¹²

⁵⁰⁸ Kenneth W. Thompson, *Political Realism and the Crisis of the World Politics: An American Approach to Foreign Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), 70 available at <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39076005459602?urlappend=%3Bseq=86>

⁵⁰⁹ David McLellan, *Ideology* (Milton Keynes: Open University, 1986), 1.

⁵¹⁰ Andrew Heywood, *Political Ideologies: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. (New York: Worth Publishers, 1998), 5.

⁵¹¹ Jeffrey Haynes, *Trump and the Politics of Neo-Nationalism: The Christian Right and Secular Nationalism in America* (New York: Routledge Focus, 2021), 32.

⁵¹² *Ibid.*, 6.

2.2) A Brief Definition of “liberalism” and Understanding Liberals’ Perception of Welfare

The term “liberalism” is vague and it is difficult to define. Liberalism can refer to political, economic, or religious ideas.⁵¹³ *Liber* in Latin means “a class of free men”, that is, men who were “neither serfs nor slaves.”⁵¹⁴

According to Tom Wicker, an American journalist, political reporter and columnist for the New York Times, the meaning of the term “liberal” is confused and abused in contemporary America.⁵¹⁵ For him, liberalism refers to the person who favors high taxes, a limited defense system, the intervention of government to regulate business and businessmen.⁵¹⁶ According to Louis Hartz, a liberal or an “American Democrat” is a person who believes in individual liberty, equality, as well as capitalism.⁵¹⁷ Hartz believes that the “liberal tradition” in America is the “natural” consequence of what Alexis De Tocqueville advanced “The great advantage of Americans is, that they have arrived at a state of democracy without having to endure a democratic revolution; and that they are born equal, instead of becoming so.”⁵¹⁸ In other words, for him, America was founded by people who escaped from different oppressions and the “*anciens régimes*,”⁵¹⁹ in Europe.⁵²⁰ As Peter Steinfels puts it, “America is the liberal society *par excellence*.”⁵²¹

⁵¹³ Nikolaos Karagiannis, Zagros Madjid-Sadjadi and Swapan Sen, *The U.S Economy and Neoliberalism: Alternative Policies and Strategies* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 57.

⁵¹⁴ Heywood, *Political Ideologies*, 24.

⁵¹⁵ Tom Wicker, “Introduction to the 1991 Edition,” in *The Liberal Tradition in America: An Interpretation of American Political Thought since the Revolution*, ed. Louis Hartz (New York, Harcourt, Inc., A Harvest Book, 1991), 25.

⁵¹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵¹⁷ Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America: An Interpretation of American Political Thought since the Revolution* (New York, Harcourt, Inc., A Harvest Book, 1991), 3.

⁵¹⁸ Alexis De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, ed. Francis Bowen, trans. Henry Reeve, vol.2, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Sever and Francis, 1863), 123.

⁵¹⁹ The expression “*ancien régime*” was first coined by Alexis De Tocqueville in his book *L’Ancien Régime et la Révolution* in 1856.

⁵²⁰ Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America*, 3.

⁵²¹ Peter Steinfels, *The Neoconservatives*, 2.

Liberalism reached the U.S. between the 1800s and 1900s⁵²². The main elements associated with “liberalism” in the U.S. are the following: no barriers to commerce, no intervention of the government in economic matters, the removal of any restrictions on manufacturing, as well as the abolition of tariffs in global trade deals. During the New Deal, President Franklin D. Roosevelt had been influenced by Keynes’ economic ideas (we have dealt with this point earlier in *Part One, Chapter Two*).

Geoffrey Thomas identifies four senses of liberalism: historically specific, polemical, economic, as well as general.⁵²³ The “historically specific” sense of the term liberalism is related to the *liberales*’ arguments, a group of Spanish politicians, who in the *Cortes* or parliament of March 1810 asked for a British-style constitutional monarchy and parliamentary government. In other words, they sought “a representative body that should combine the virtues of the French revolutionary assembly, the British House of Commons, and the sixteenth-century Cortes of Aragon or Castile.”⁵²⁴

The second sense of liberalism is related to British tabloid journalism. It is the permissive and relativistic attitudes to life and society which were developed at the time: “don’t blame the individual,” and “let’s be supportive to everyone.”⁵²⁵

Economic liberalism is “laissez-faire” and it refers to the non-intervention of government in the economic affairs of the country. The term laissez-faire was initially used by Gournay, an eighteenth-century French merchant, economist, and government official, denouncing the heavy economic regulation “laissez-faire, laissez-passer,” (leave things alone, let them through).⁵²⁶

Gradually, the idea of laissez-faire included the non-intervention of the government in welfare politics. That is to say, such welfare services as unemployment insurance, health care, pensions, and so forth, should be administered by citizens themselves or by voluntary

⁵²² For further reading about the liberalism in the U.S. during the New Deal, see John Jeffries, “The ‘New’ New Deal: FDR and American Liberalism, 1937-1945,” *Political Science Quarterly* 105, no. 3 (1990): 397–418.

⁵²³ Geoffrey Thomas, *Introduction to Political Philosophy* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co.Ltd., 2000), 212.

⁵²⁴ Quoted in *Ibid.*

⁵²⁵ *Ibid.*, 213.

⁵²⁶ *Ibid.*

agencies.⁵²⁷ This embedded version of “laissez-faire” goes well with John Stuart Mill’s words when he said, “the business of society can be performed by private and voluntary agency.”⁵²⁸ And it also reflects Adam Smith’s “system of natural liberty.”⁵²⁹ Hence, the traditional kind of liberalism appeared in 1776, with the publication of Adam Smith’s book *The Wealth of the Nations* which challenged economic perceptions of the time.⁵³⁰

And finally, from Geoffrey Thomas’s perspective, the general sense of liberalism is drawn upon a general body of ideas related to Hayek’s *defence* of the rule of law, Mill’s liberty principle, Rawl’s theory of justice; Locke’s account of individual property rights, and also Dworkin’s view of rights. He agrees with John Gray’s idea of establishing four main features of liberalism in political theory (he adds a fifth one), and they are as follows: individualism, universalism, egalitarianism, meliorism, as well as rationalism.⁵³¹

Liberalism reached its peak in America in the 1960s and early 1970s and it was during this period that it began to collapse.⁵³² That period in mid-twentieth-century America was characterised by prosperity, several achievements by women and minorities, and the decline of economic equality.⁵³³

To conclude, liberals are against the intervention of the government in citizens’ affairs. For them, the government should remain a passive coordinator. Liberals tend to believe that welfare leads to poverty and encourage dependency. They emphasise the importance of free enterprise and individual liberty to sustain economic independence. They also believe that people must work to promote real welfare and well-being for themselves without waiting for public provision from their government.

⁵²⁷ Ibid.

⁵²⁸ Quoted in Ibid., 213.

⁵²⁹ Ibid., 213.

⁵³⁰ Nikolaos Karagiannis, Zagros Madjid-Sadjadi and Swapan Sen, *The U.S Economy and Neoliberalism*, 57.

⁵³¹ For more details and definitions of related terms see Geoffrey Thomas, *Introduction to Political Philosophy*, 215–24.

⁵³² Peter Kolozsi, *Conservatives against Capitalism: From the Industrial Revolution to Globalization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 140.

⁵³³ Ibid., 140.

2.3) Neo-liberalism and Welfare

We have already mentioned (in *Chapter Three, Part One*) neo-liberalism to explain the evolution of the attack against “welfare” from the colonial period to the late 1980s. However, we did not explain the perception of welfare by neo-liberals *per se* and in detail. In this section, we will try to explain the term neo-liberalism and neo-liberals approach to welfare policies.

“New liberalism” or “neo-liberalism” is a conservative or right-wing political-economic philosophy that had influenced the economic policy and public thinking in the U.S. during the mid–1970s and had become more popular during the 1980s.⁵³⁴ “Neo” refers to a new type of “liberalism. Neo-liberalism had been a “conscious political choice” in the U.S. (as in the U.K.) and not “a fait accompli dictated by the ineluctable constraints of globalization.”⁵³⁵ Simply put, neo-liberalism is liberalism with a conservative nuance. That is, neo-liberals sought to cut government spending on social programmes and encourage free enterprise.

In the U.S. neo-liberalism sought to terminate the New Deal legacy through shrinking the welfare state, limiting the domestic role of government, lowering labour costs, weakening the political power of social movements which defended the welfare state, preserving patriarchal family values, as well as promoting race-neutral social policies. Neo-liberal policy main objective was to downsize the welfare state.

The main aim of the neo-liberal politics was to limit the domestic role of the federal government. The economic depression of the 1970s caused higher inflation and higher

⁵³⁴ For further reading about the origins of neo-liberalism, see, for instance, Ben Jackson, “At the Origins of Neo-Liberalism: The Free Economy and the Strong State, 1930–1947.” *The Historical Journal* 53, no. 1 (2010): 129–51.

⁵³⁵ Simon Lee and Stephen McBride, eds., *Neo-liberalism, State Power and Global Governance* (Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer, 2007), 90.

unemployment rates; therefore, conservative ideas were largely welcomed by Americans in the early 1980s.

Neo-liberalism emerged in the U.S. during the Reagan Administration, and its core purpose was to cut government spending and encourage private investment. Neo-liberalism attacked “big government” and reversed Keynesian economic policy which had been advocated by the previous administrations which advocated New Deal policies. Keynesian economics was substituted by supply-side economics which called for less government involvement, fewer taxes, less government spending, decreasing regulations, and more support of the business. Contemporary neo-liberalism is to some extent the echo of classical liberal political economy by highlighting Adam Smith’s “laissez-faire” approach and urging minimum state intervention in the social, economic affairs of citizens.⁵³⁶

In sum, the perception of neo-liberals of welfare policies is obvious. Since they aimed to cut social spending, and encouraged business, the focus is on work and not welfare. Hence, poor American citizens should not wait for the government to spend on them, instead, they must work. Workers and business holders who are tax payers are not responsible for feeding people who have no will to improve themselves through work and education. Welfare recipients were targeted by the neo-liberal government during the Reagan Administration and they were supervised by authorities. The ultimate goal of the neo-liberal government was to shrink the scope of the welfare state.

⁵³⁶ Gøsta Esping-Andersen, *Why we Need a New Welfare State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 10.

2.4) A Brief Definition of “Conservatism” and Conservatives’ Perception of Welfare

Conservatism is another hard term to define. In general terms, conservatism can refer to “moderate or cautious behaviour, a life-style that is conventional, even conformist or a fear of or refusal to change.”⁵³⁷ The term conservatism was first used to describe a distinctive political movement or an ideology that appeared that during the nineteenth century.⁵³⁸

It is generally assumed that the “conservative” experiences in the United States and Europe are different.⁵³⁹ Conservatives in the U.S. were originally the defenders of the constitution, its maintenance as well as preservation.⁵⁴⁰ It was until the post–World War II that anti-New Deal politicians called themselves conservatives.⁵⁴¹

In 1994, the Columbia historian Alan Brinkley wrote an article about the origins of American conservatism and his work stimulated hot debates among historians.⁵⁴² For Brinkley, historians have not focused in their works on the evolution of conservatism in contemporary politics because they considered it as “irrational” and “irrelevant”, and they focused instead on the history of liberalism.⁵⁴³

By the 1970s, conservative political parties and some political representatives of business interests had highly criticized the welfare state in the U.S. and (other OECD countries).⁵⁴⁴ The conservative movement which emerged during the 1970s was a reaction

⁵³⁷ Heywood, *Political Ideologies*, 66.

⁵³⁸ Ibid.

⁵³⁹ Paul Edward Gottfried, *Conservatism in America: Making Sense of the American Right* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 1.

⁵⁴⁰ For a more detailed discussion see the work of Jonathan O’Neil, “Constitutional Conservatism and American Conservatism,” *Nomos* 56 (2016): 304. “Constitutional conservatism” and “political conservatism” in the U.S. do not mean the same thing, Ibid., 292.

⁵⁴¹ Ibid., 9.

⁵⁴² Brinkley, Alan. “The Problem of American Conservatism,” *The American Historical Review* 99, no. 2 (1994): 409.

⁵⁴³ Ibid., 409.

⁵⁴⁴ Jonas Pontusson, *Inequality and Prosperity: Social Europe Vs. Liberal America* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2005), 3147. For more information see the table provided by Jonas Pontusson, based on data available on <http://www.oecd.org/social/expenditure.htm>, Ibid., 2542.

to the failure of the New Deal liberalism and it included different networks, individual leaders, and organizations.⁵⁴⁵

Even though there were many disagreements within the conservative movement, its members agreed on certain points: that the U.S. should establish a strong military shield against communism, the belief that the advance of the U.S. economy required the centrality of tax reductions, and finally, the era of 1960s was a marked by a total failure in the U.S. in various fields and areas.⁵⁴⁶

Conservatives tend to believe that poor relief or simply “welfare” in early America was entirely private and, therefore, it should remain eternally private. Their ideas about welfare are connected to Goldwater’s view of welfare. In the *Conscience of a Conservative*, Senator Barry Goldwater explains that welfare should remain a private affair, he writes:

Let welfare be a private concern. Let it be promoted by individuals and families, by churches, private hospitals, religious service organizations, community charities and other institutions that have been established for this purpose. If the objection is raised that private institutions lack sufficient funds, let us remember that every penny the federal government does *not* appropriate for welfare is potentially available for private use.⁵⁴⁷ (The italicised word appears in the original version of this excerpt.)

According to him, the government should not provide automatic assistance to poor people in the American society. He employs the term *welfarism* which “is the belief that the state or community has the responsibility to ensure the social well-being of its citizens, usually reflected in the emergence of the welfare state.”⁵⁴⁸ For the latter, welfare alters the client’s character; thus, he/she becomes a “dependent animal”. He points out, “. . . one of the great evils of welfarism . . . it transforms the individual from a dignified, industrious, self-reliant spiritual being into a dependent animal creature without his knowing it.”⁵⁴⁹ Goldwater believes that “welfarism” is a disguised “socialism” and its proponents seek to gain votes

⁵⁴⁵ Paul Pierson and Theda Skocpol, *The Transformation of American Politics: Activist Government and the Rise of Conservatism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 111.

⁵⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 112.

⁵⁴⁷ Barry Goldwater, *The Conscience of a Conservative*, with a new introduction by Patrick J. Buchanan (Washington: Begnery Gateway Inc., 1990), 68.

⁵⁴⁸ Heywood, *Political Ideologies*, 340.

⁵⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 66.

through promises of “free federal benefits “, “free housing”, “free school aid”, “free hospitalization” and so forth.⁵⁵⁰

2.5) Neo-conservatism and Welfare

By the beginning of 1976, the term “neo-conservative” or “new conservative” were used to refer to the academics and commentators who divorced themselves from “traditional liberalism”.⁵⁵¹ Neo-conservatives were first and foremost a group of “intellectuals” who organised themselves as a reaction to attack the liberal policies in the 1960s. The *Newsweek* magazine reported the following:

Intellectual circles, the social thinkers who were once the driving force of Democratic liberalism—men like Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. and John Kenneth Galbraith— have been upstaged by a group of “neoconservative” academics, many of them refugees from the liberal left, including Daniel Bell, Nathan Glazer, Irving Kristol, James Q. Wilson, Edward Banfield, Seymour Martin Lipset and Sen. Daniel P. Moynihan of New York.⁵⁵²

Neo-conservatives in the U.S. were influenced by the ideas of Leo Strauss, a German-Jewish scholar of the history of political thought whose scholarly contributions were fundamental to the study of conservative intellectual history during the post–World War II.⁵⁵³ Strauss emphasised the importance of revising the “Great Books” of Western civilization and especially matters related to nature, God, reason, and morality.⁵⁵⁴ Although neoconservatives in the U.S. were inspired by Strauss’ ideas, we cannot use neoconservatism and Straussians interchangeably, merely because neoconservatism as a recent study concluded: “is such a diverse thing that the term has always been close to meaningless.”⁵⁵⁵ Simply put, it is hard to say that the neoconservative thought and its evolution in the U.S. went hand in hand with Strauss’s thoughts merely because neo-conservatism has developed with a particular way and manner in the U.S. However, there were some close connections between Straussians and neo-conservatives: conservatives

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid., 64.

⁵⁵¹ Steinfels, *The Neoconservatives*, 2.

⁵⁵² Quoted in Ibid., 4.

⁵⁵³ Jonathan O’Neil, “Constitutional Conservatism and American Conservatism,” 314.

⁵⁵⁴ Ibid., 314.

⁵⁵⁵ Quoted in Ibid., 320.

who were in touch with Strauss or his students were part of the George W. Bush Administration, and Irving Kristol, the founder of neo-conservatism in the U.S. confirmed the impact of Strauss's ideas and also his students such as Martin Diamond.⁵⁵⁶

In his January 1992 State of the Union Address, President George H.W. Bush declared his will to support the states to continue a movement “to replace the assumptions of the welfare state and help reform the welfare system,” and he promised to “help this movement”.⁵⁵⁷ He believed that the states could play a very important role in radically reforming welfare by focusing on the role of “waivers”; he said: “Often, state reform requires waiving certain federal regulations. I will act to make that process easier and quicker for every state that asks for our help.”⁵⁵⁸ Hence, the question arises, had Bush's tactic to deal with welfare influenced Clinton's plans to tackle that issue? If yes, how?

To conclude, neo-conservatives were “former New Deal Democrats” who decided to abandon completely the New Deal political tradition in the 1960s.⁵⁵⁹ Neo-conservatives, mainly business and financial leaders were concerned with deregulation. That is to say, the reduction or elimination of government power in a particular industry and the lowering federal taxes.⁵⁶⁰

3) Is the American Welfare State Private or Public?

When we refer to the American welfare state and welfare provision, the first question that we might ask is the following: Is the American welfare state a private or public one? Providing a clear answer to this question is not at all an easy task.

The political scientist Jacob Hacker shows in his book *The Divided Welfare State* that the subject concerning whether welfare provisions should be provided by the private or the public sector is as old as the American social welfare system *per se*. For him, the

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid., 320.

⁵⁵⁷ Quoted in Michael Wiseman, “Welfare Reform in the States: The Bush Legacy,” *Focus* 15, no. 1 (1993):18.

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁹ Pierson and Skocpol, *The Transformation of American Politics*, 111.

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid., 112.

American welfare state is distinctive and exceptional not because of the “level” of spending but because of the “source” of spending.⁵⁶¹ He also reveals that the American welfare “regime” is a mixture of public and private provision.⁵⁶² He writes:

In the United States, a large share of the duties that are carried out by government elsewhere are instead left in the hand of private actors, particularly employers... and these actors account for more than a third of U.S. social welfare expenditures [...] private social benefits come to appear as an integral part of America’s unique “welfare regime”— a complex public-private framework.⁵⁶³

For him, the U.S. private-public model of welfare state consists of three linked elements:

- A network of direct-spending social programmes: Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security which are the core of the U.S. social policy,
- More indirect or hidden government intervention: Tax breaks, regulations, credit subsidies,
- These private protections are the product both of government policy and of the distinctive organisational and economic imperatives of the institutions which provide them.⁵⁶⁴

According to Hacker, the U.S. social policy approaches “stretch along a continuum ranging from purely public to purely private action.”⁵⁶⁵ Hence, the direct government provision is on one end of the spectrum; the private provision is on the other, and in between, we may find the hybrid approaches in which the government cooperates with private actors to provide social welfare benefits or to shape their private provision.⁵⁶⁶ The following table clarifies the point:

⁵⁶¹ Jacob S. Hacker, *The Divided Welfare State: The Battle over Public and Private Social Benefits in the United States* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 7. (loc.290 of 10887).

⁵⁶² The notion of “welfare-state regime” was initiated by Esping-Andersen in his book *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, see Gøsta Esping-Andersen, *The three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (Cambridge: Polity Press,1990).


⁵⁶³ Hacker, *The Divided Welfare State*, 7. (loc.290 of 10887).

⁵⁶⁴ *Ibid.*,13. (loc. 383 of 10887).

⁵⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, loc. 677 of 10887.

⁵⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, loc. 677–680 of 10887.

TABLE 3. The Continuum of Social Policy Approaches

<i>Public</i> <i>Private</i>					
					
Approach	Direct provision	Indirect or in-kind provision	Regulations	Subsidies and inducements	Purely private provision
Explanation	Provide good directly through either transfer or production	Purchase good from intermediaries or provide vouchers	Regulate the terms of private provision of good	Encourage the private provision or purchase of good	Leave provision of good to market forces or voluntary organizations
Common instruments of governance	Cash payment; government production	Payments to third parties; vouchers	Standards and targets, backed up by sanctions	Tax breaks; subsidized credit; public insurance	In pure form, occurs without intervention
Illustrative social policy example(s)	Social Security, Veterans Health System	Medicare, Food Stamps, housing vouchers	Private pension regulations	Tax exclusion of fringe benefits	Paid sick leave, unsubsidized

Source: Jacob S. Hacker, *The Divided Welfare State*, loc.686 of 10887.

In order to explain the difference between public and private social benefits, and estimates of spending, Hacker offers an interesting diagram, which helps us figure out the function of the U.S. welfare system and how private and public approaches are combined to provide well-being to the American citizens. The following figure provides clear information about this point:

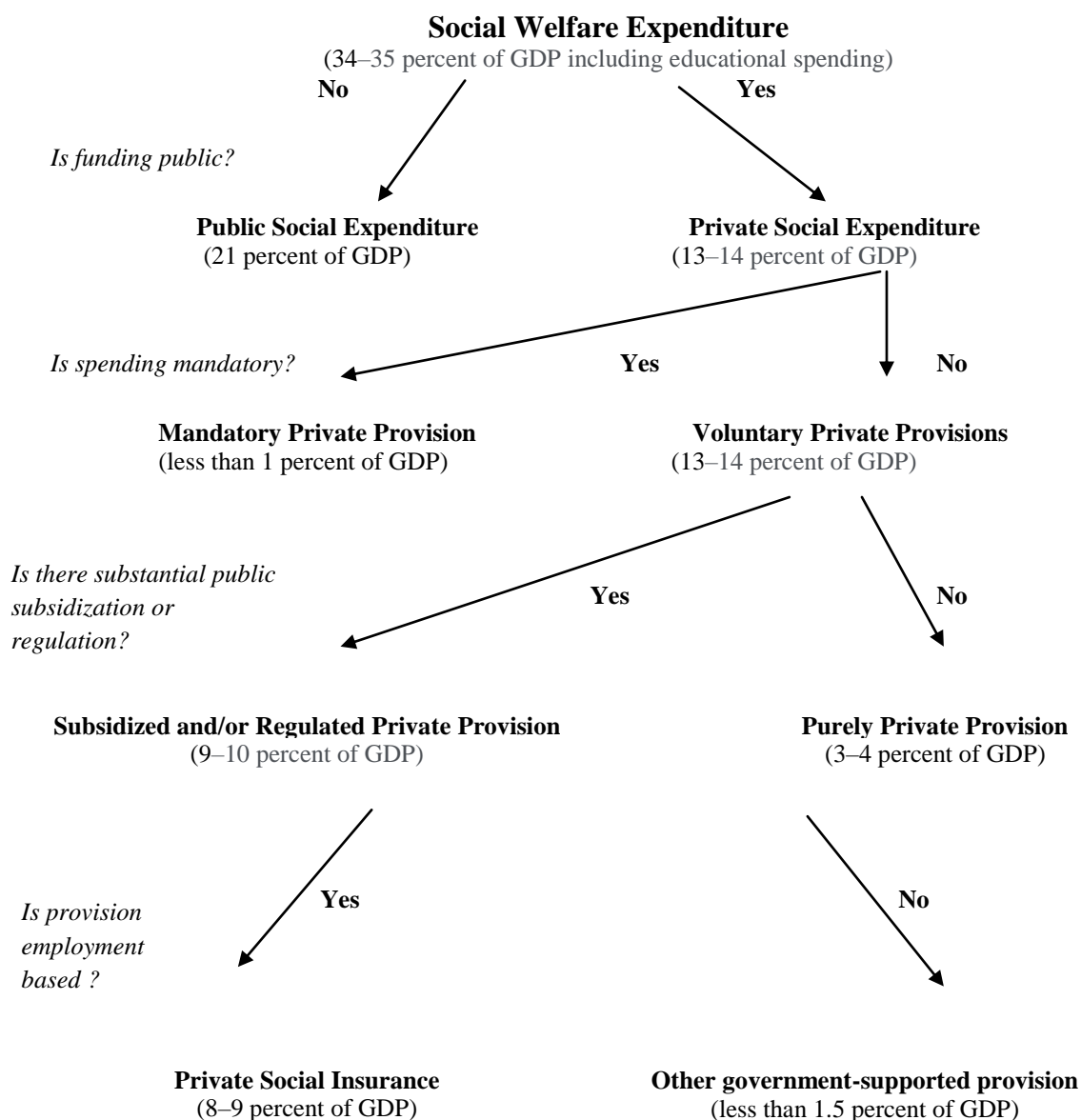


FIGURE 1. Distinguishing Private and Public Social Benefits

Source: Jacob S. Hacker, *The Divided Welfare State*, loc.700 of 10887.

The historian Michael Katz shares the same idea. He states that the American welfare state is neither public nor private but a combination of the two, and its composition reflects American federalism.⁵⁶⁷ He writes:

By focusing attention on public assistance, the language of welfare has obscured the true size and scope of America's welfare state. In reality, it is neither public nor private, but an enormous structure that combines the two. A public branch with three dimensions—public assistance, social insurance, and taxation—intersects in a myriad of ways with a huge private divided between the independent sector—charities and social services—and employee benefits.⁵⁶⁸

For Katz, the public welfare state subdivisions are public assistance, social insurance, and taxation. The private welfare state has one subdivision and it includes employee benefits: six out of ten Americans receive health insurance through their employers.⁵⁶⁹ According to the Danish sociologist Gøsta Esping-Andersen, the American welfare state is based on a private and mixed-economy model of social provision.⁵⁷⁰ Federal officials focus on private contractors in order to accomplish such government functions as employment, health care, as well as training.⁵⁷¹

To conclude, the American welfare state is neither private nor public but a hybrid system or “regime” that combines the two. This combination of public and private welfare systems are the result of the uniqueness of the American history, culture, and the traditions inherited from England during the Colonial Period.

⁵⁶⁷ Michael Katz, “The American Welfare State,” *History in Focus* 1, no.14 (October, 2008), <https://archives.history.ac.uk/history-in-focus/welfare/articles/katzm.html>

⁵⁶⁸ Katz, *The Price of Citizenship*, 9.

⁵⁶⁹ Katz, “The American Welfare State,” <https://archives.history.ac.uk/history-in-focus/welfare/articles/katzm.html>

⁵⁷⁰ Esping-Andersen, *The three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, 215.

⁵⁷¹ Daguerre, *Obama's Legacy*, loc.465.

Chapter Five

Race, Class, Gender, Welfare Reform and Bill Clinton's Rationale: Were there any Racist, Classist, or Sexist Implications?

This chapter is an attempt to explain to what extent issues related to gender, class, and race have influenced Bill Clinton's rationale for welfare reform. In other words, I will explore implications of racist, classist, or sexist prejudices, if any, in his decision to sign PRWORA in 1996. I will do this by analysing different bodies of texts (written records) from his speeches, public remarks, and press releases using archives from the Clinton Presidential Library.

I will also draw upon texts from his memoir *My Life* and *Putting People First* (with his co-author Al Gore). By large, I attempt to seek Clinton's arguments as a "New Democrat" for signing welfare reform, and pay particular attention to biased remarks or statements, if any.

His decision to end welfare might be seen as a serious break with the traditional Democratic principles, which were inherited from other Democratic U.S. presidents. It made, indeed, a turning point in the U.S. politics and public policy. Bill Clinton's aim was to be president of the U.S., without taking into consideration the consequences of his decision on the living conditions of the most vulnerable as well impoverished people in society.

1) Social Policy, Public Policy and Implications of Race, Gender, and Class in the United States: A Brief Overview

In this section, I will examine the implications of race, class, and gender on public policy in the United States of America, during the late 1990s. I attempt, first of all, to provide clear-cut definitions of the terms “social policy” and “public policy.” I have already provided definitions of race, class, and gender in this dissertation.

Social policy is “any government effort to deliver economic security to citizens through the protection against income loss and the guarantee of a minimum standard of living.”⁵⁷² In political science, we find three sub-disciplines: polity, politics, and policy.⁵⁷³ *Polity* refers to the set of institutional structures that characterize a political system.⁵⁷⁴ The study of *politics* focuses attention on political processes such as the structure of political parties and their cleavages.⁵⁷⁵ The study of *public policy* does not focus on political institutions and political processes; however, it focuses attention on the outcomes of a given political system: decisions, measures, programmes, or strategies introduced by the government or the legislature.⁵⁷⁶ It should be borne in mind that the study of social policy also takes into account policy and politics. I try here to provide some definitions of the term public policy. Public policy “seeks to explain the operation of the political system as a whole” in a given country.⁵⁷⁷ It can be defined “as a course of action (or non-action) taken by a government or legislature concerning a particular issue.”⁵⁷⁸ It is “. . . (the) activities intended to support actors in their policy *development* efforts. This is also referred to as ‘ex-ante’ policy analysis, which emphasizes the explicit orientation toward action and intervention, intended to achieve some future objectives.”⁵⁷⁹

⁵⁷² Faricy, *Welfare for the Wealthy*, 3.

⁵⁷³ See for instance Christoph Knill and Jale Tosun, *Public Policy: A New Introduction* (Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), 314–415.

⁵⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 415.

⁵⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷⁷ Peter John, *Analyzing Public Policy* (London: Continuum, 1998), 2.

⁵⁷⁸ C. Knill and J. Tosun, *Public Policy*, 415

⁵⁷⁹ Will A.H. Thissen and Warren E. Walker, eds., *Public Policy Analysis: New Developments* (New York: Springer, 2013), 239.

As I have mentioned previously (in *Part One* of this thesis), relief policies existed since colonial times. Two important elements were emphasised by authorities to assist the poor: work and family ethic. Relief was provided for the poor by taking into consideration their behaviour and their good will to improve their living conditions through work. Hence, the deserving poor were distinguished from the undeserving poor, and the way and the manner through which they were treated by the local authorities differed. Poor people, who did not make concrete efforts to escape poverty and who favoured “moral laxity”⁵⁸⁰, were exposed to severe supervision and punishment.

Relief practices were exposed to alterations through time, but conceptions about poverty and the role played by the poor themselves to fight poverty did not change radically. Family and work ethics were maintained from the colonial period to the twentieth century, in the combat against relief, or what has become known as “welfare reform”.

The United States of America has a divided social system (private and public. I already have discussed this point in *Chapter Four*). Public policy and social policy in the United States of America have been shaped by issues related to race, gender, and class.⁵⁸¹ Attitudes towards government social welfare spending have been associated with race and class matters.⁵⁸² In addition to this, gender—“robust, complex, and intersectional gender”—played a central in the development of politics and public policy in the U.S.⁵⁸³

Welfare had been attacked by Americans because its main clientele was believed to be a group of irresponsible unmarried “mothers of colour” and their illegitimate children who lived “high on the hog.”⁵⁸⁴ These assumptions about AFDC recipients have shaped the policies related to welfare. However, welfare did not include AFDC only, yet when people in the United States talk about welfare they refer to AFDC. Even though AFDC accounted

⁵⁸⁰ Shiftlessness, idleness, and “moral laxity” are the consequence of poverty; and hence, various social and economic woes, see May, “The Problem of Duty,” 42.

⁵⁸¹ See, for instance, Linda Burnham, “Racism in United States Welfare Policy,” *Race, Poverty & the Environment* 14, no. 1 (2007): 47.

⁵⁸² Leslie B. Inniss and Jeralynn Sittig, “Race, Class, and Support for the Welfare State,” *Sociological Inquiry* 66, no.2 (1996): 175–96.

⁵⁸³ Kornbluh and Mink, *Ensuring Poverty*, 110.

⁵⁸⁴ Abramovitz, *Under Attack*, 24.

for only one per cent of total federal spending in 1992, it was highly attacked by the public and this assault against it stemmed from stereotyped opinions about its clients.⁵⁸⁵

During the Regan-Bush era, political commentators, politicians as well as ministers employed such terms as “self-help”, “self-reliance” or “individual responsibility” in their discourse to indicate that “black” people’s problems originated from their community.⁵⁸⁶ Thus, “black” people were considered responsible for the woes in the midst of their community and were asked to search for remedies by themselves without depending on the state’s aid.⁵⁸⁷

Before passage of PRWORA, public discussions on the failure of the welfare system, its drawbacks, and the inability of policy-makers to come up with constructive solutions filled airwaves and multiple public communication stations in the United States.⁵⁸⁸ The voices that were almost heard were those of administrators, politicians, business lobbyists, academics, and pundits but welfare recipients themselves and welfare activists were absent from that debate.⁵⁸⁹

In the absence of welfare recipients, whose opinions were completely rejected, commentators used racist and gendered stereotypes: the “welfare queens” practicing fraud and bearing out-of-wedlock children.⁵⁹⁰ That is to say, those commentators tried to “put a black face on welfare.”⁵⁹¹ The only public successful intervention of welfare recipients in this welfare debate was: their stories of “welfare to work success”.⁵⁹²

⁵⁸⁵ Mary Jo Bane and David T. Ellwood, preface to *Welfare Realities*, x.

⁵⁸⁶ Preston H. Smith, ““ Self-help,” Black Conservatives, and the reemergence of Black Privatism,” in *Without Justice for All: The New Liberalism and Our Retreat from Racial Equality* , ed. Adolph Reed (New York: Routledge, 1999), 4844.

⁵⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 4847.

⁵⁸⁸ Holloway Sparks, “Queens, Teens, and Model Mothers: Race, Gender and the Discourse of Welfare Reform,” in *Race and the Politics of Welfare Reform*, eds. F. Schram , Joe Soss, and Richard C. Fording, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 171.

⁵⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹¹ Sanford F. Schram, “Putting a Black Face on Welfare: The Good and the Bad,” in *Race and the Politics of Welfare Reform*, eds., F. Schram , Joe Soss, and Richard C. Fording (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 196.

⁵⁹² Sparks, “Queens, Teens, and Model Mothers,” 171.

2) The Notion of “Intersectionality”

In order to analyse in depth Bill Clinton’s political rhetoric, his speeches, and also his books in which he referred to welfare—his memoir *My Life* and also *Putting People First*—we need to tackle the concept of “Intersectionality”. Intersectionality offers a lens through which we can better understand how various forms of inequality—such as race, gender, class, status, religion, and cultural background—may function and operate together.⁵⁹³

This term was initially coined by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw—an American law professor and legal scholar—in her work entitled “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex,” published in 1989.⁵⁹⁴ It was introduced in the late 1980s and the early 1990s, from critical race studies. It has become the primary analytic “tool” used by feminist and anti-racist scholars.⁵⁹⁵ Intersectionality is an “analytic tool”, a “problem-solving”, or more precisely a “heuristic”.⁵⁹⁶

The concept of intersectionality has become widely used in the twenty-first century by scholars, academics, historians, students in interdisciplinary studies, as well as researchers in the fields of women’s studies, ethnic studies, American studies, media studies, sociology, political science, and history.⁵⁹⁷ Intersectionality has not an exact definition but in this section, we attempt to provide some definitions given by scholars. Kimberlé Crenshaw gives a classical definition of this concept:

. . . (Intersectionality) denote(s) the various ways in which race and gender interact to shape the multiple dimensions of Black women’s employment experiences. . . . that many of the experiences Black women face are not subsumed within the traditional boundaries of race or gender discrimination as these boundaries are currently understood, and that the intersection of racism and sexism factors into Black women’s lives in ways that cannot be

⁵⁹³ See Figure 1.

⁵⁹⁴ See Kimberlé W. Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics,” *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989, 139.

⁵⁹⁵ Jennifer C. Nash, “Re-thinking Intersectionality,” *Feminist Review* 89, no. 1 (2008):1–2.

⁵⁹⁶ Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge, *Intersectionality* (Malden: Polity Press, 2016), 3.

⁵⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, x.

captured wholly by looking at the race and or gender dimensions of those experiences separately.⁵⁹⁸

According to her, “We tend to talk about as separate from inequality based on gender, class, sexuality or immigrant status. What is often missing is how some people are subject to all of these, and the experience is not just the sum of its parts.”⁵⁹⁹ An intersectional approach shows that people’s social identities can overlap, creating compounding experiences of discrimination.”⁶⁰⁰ Patricia Collins and Sirma Bilge define the concept of intersectionality as follows:

Intersectionality is a way of understanding and analyzing the complexity in the world, in people, and inhuman experiences. The events and conditions of social and political life and the self can seldom be understood as shaped by one factor. They are generally shaped by many factors in diverse and mutually influencing ways. When it comes to social inequality, people’s lives and the organization of power in a given society are better understood as being shaped not by a single axis of social division, be it race or gender or class, but by many axes that work together and influence each other. Intersectionality as an analytic tool gives people better access to the complexity of the world and of themselves.⁶⁰¹

Intersectionality is “an analytic tool [. . .] (which) seeks to demonstrate the racial variation(s) within gender and the gendered variation(s) within race through its attention to subjects whose identities contest race-or-gender categorizations.”⁶⁰²

During the 1960s and 1970s, African-American women activists faced a “complex” of social challenges, several axes of social divisions (race, gender, and class) in their activism within the civil rights movement, feminism, as well as within workers’ unions.⁶⁰³ African-American women were “*Black*”, *female* and *workers*.⁶⁰⁴ However, none of those social movements (mentioned above) could tackle issues faced by these women, and thus African-American women were obliged to use intersectionality to solve their problems.⁶⁰⁵

⁵⁹⁸ See Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color,” *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (Jul., 1991): 1244.

⁵⁹⁹ Katy Steinmetz, “She Coined the Term ‘Intersectionality’ Over 30 Years Ago. Here’s What It Means to Her Today,” *Times*, February 20, 2020, <https://time.com/5786710/kimberle-crenshaw-intersectionality/>

⁶⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰¹ Patricia Collins and Sirma Bilge, *Intersectionality*, x.

⁶⁰² Jennifer Nash, “Re-thinking Intersectionality,” 2–3. See also P. Collins and S. Bilge, *Intersectionality*, ii.

⁶⁰³ P. Collins and S. Bilge, *Intersectionality*, 2.

⁶⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁶⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

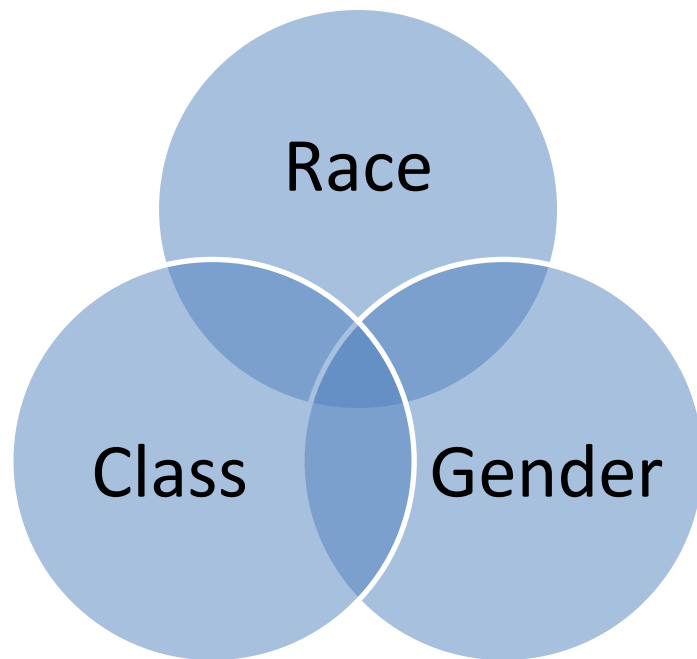


FIGURE 2. Intersectionality of race, gender and class

3) Discrimination and Prejudice

Another concept which appears at the heart of social science research and which I need to tackle in this paper is “discrimination”. This concept can be defined as follows: “actions or practices carried out by members of dominant racial or ethnic groups that have a differential and negative impact on members of subordinate racial and ethnic groups.”⁶⁰⁶ The dimensions of discrimination include: (a) motivation, (b) discriminatory action, (c) effects, (d) the relation between motivation and action, (e) the relation between action and effects, (f) the immediate organisational (institutional) context, and (g) the larger societal context.⁶⁰⁷ The following diagram is of “heuristic” value and it is provided by Feagin and Eckberg:

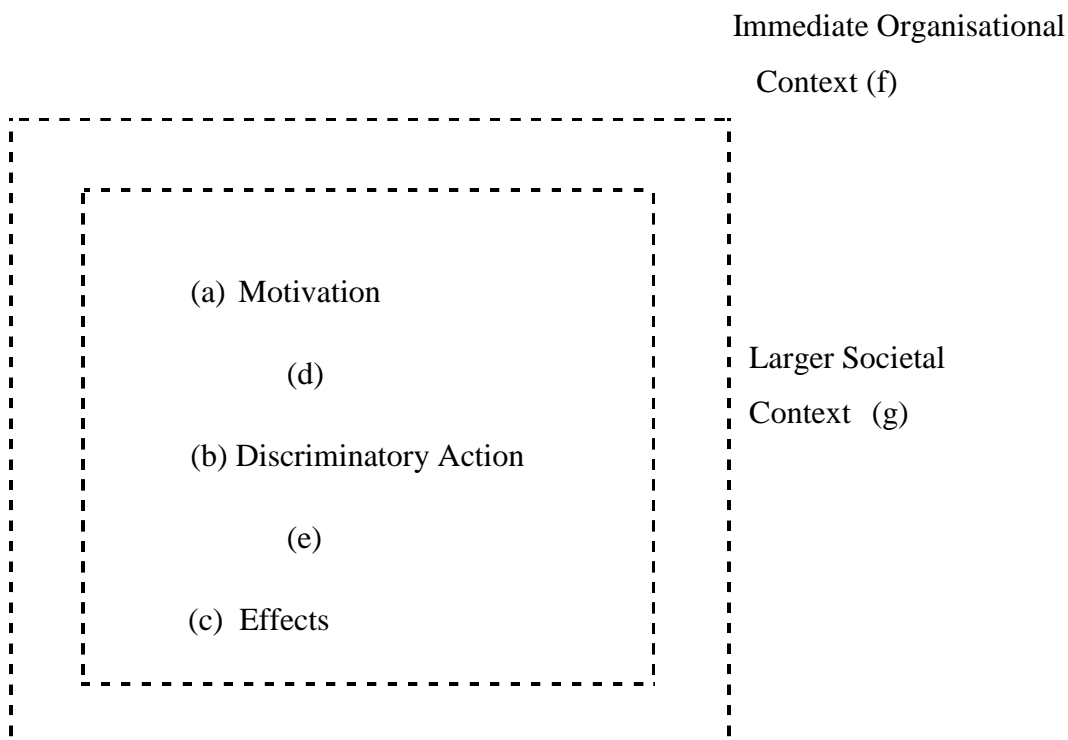


FIGURE 3. The dimensions of discrimination

Source: Feagin and Eckberg, “Discrimination,” 2.

⁶⁰⁶ Joe R. Feagin and Douglas Lee Eckberg, “Discrimination: Motivation, Action, Effects, and Context,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 6 (1980): 9.

⁶⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

4) The Correlation between Language and Politics

In this section, I endeavour to explain the link between politics and language. Both “language” and “politics” are hard to define. Providing definitions of these two concepts is not at all the aim of this work. Hence, I shed light on the connection between the two words and then depend on already available studies or findings in this area of research. Understanding the relationship between language and politics would be crucial in our study of Bill Clinton’s political rhetoric.

As I have mentioned earlier in this paper, according to Aristotle, humans are distinguished from other creatures because by nature they live in a *polis*. In addition to this, humans are characterised by their unique capacity for *speech*, he says: “But obviously man is a political animal [politikon zoon], in a sense in which a bee is not, or any other gregarious animal. Nature, as we say, does nothing without some purpose; and she has endowed man alone among the animals with the power of speech.”⁶⁰⁸ Aristotle shows the distinction between “speech” and “voice”. For him animals possess “voice” to communicate pleasure and pain; however, humans are able to produce “speech”.⁶⁰⁹ Aristotle defines speech in “functional terms”. He points out that “Speech . . . serves to indicate what is useful and what is harmful, and so also what is just and what is unjust. For the real difference between man and other animals is that humans alone have perception of good and evil, just and unjust, etc.”⁶¹⁰

⁶⁰⁸ Quoted in Paul Chilton, *Analysing Political Discourse: Theory and Practice* (Routledge: Taylor & Francis Group, 2004), 5.

⁶⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁶¹⁰ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 5; to have an embedded version of Aristotle’s work on “politics” see for instance Aristotle, *The Politics*, trans. T. A. Sinclair and ed. Trevor J. Saunders (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1992); see also Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. H. Rackham (London: Heinemann, 1932).

5) Explaining Bill Clinton’s Rationale for Welfare Legislation by Analysing Documents: Were there any Sexist, Racist, or Gendered Biases?

The notion of “welfare reform” in the United States has become associated with “cutting benefits to poor people”.⁶¹¹ Simply put, it has become a tool to improve the lives of the poor by changing their behaviour in the early 1990s.⁶¹² The question arises, which group of poor people had been targeted by those government’s restrictive measures during the Clinton Administration?

Welfare reform was at the heart of the list of policy priorities of the Clinton Administration.⁶¹³ Bill Clinton played the role of the “tough-minded New Democrat” during his 1992 campaign during which he promised to “end welfare as we know it” by stopping payments “after two years on the rolls”.⁶¹⁴ He signed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) to substitute AFDC with TANF.⁶¹⁵

He promised both conservatives and Democrats to end welfare, strengthen the military system, end crime, ban social injustice and segregation in the United States of America.⁶¹⁶ According to historians, his ultimate aim was to gain bipartisan support.⁶¹⁷ President Bill Clinton declared that “the era of big government is over,” that is to say, to reduce the size of government by cutting federal spending on the poor.

Before signing PRWORA, the attack against welfare recipients had become more and more violent. They were again described as animals (I dealt with this point in *Chapter Three*—The attack against welfare during the 1970s). In the welfare reform debate in 1996, the Republican representative of Florida, John Mica, used the term “alligators” to

⁶¹¹ Katz, *Improving Poor People*, 19.

⁶¹² *Ibid.*, 21.

⁶¹³ Rose, *Workfare or Fair Work*, 172.

⁶¹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶¹⁵ Abramovitz, “Welfare Reform in the United States,” 649.

⁶¹⁶ Howard Zinn, *People’s History of the United States 1942–Present* (New York, HarperCollins, 1999), 643–44.

⁶¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 643.

refer to women living on welfare.⁶¹⁸ His words appeared in an article in the *New York Times*:

Don't Feed the Alligators" and he explained: "We post these warnings because unnatural feeding and artificial care create dependency. When dependency sets in, these otherwise able alligators can no longer survive on their own. Now I know that people are not alligators, but I submit to you that with our current handout, non-work welfare system, we've upset the natural order. We've created a system of dependency. The author of our Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson, said it best in three words: 'Dependence begets servitude.'⁶¹⁹

Some scholars agree that Bill Clinton played a central role in the design of the welfare reform legislation. Indeed, he was the principal architect of welfare reform.⁶²⁰ Yet it should be noted that Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, a welfare expert, also played an important role in writing and passing the final version of welfare reform.⁶²¹ Moynihan was initially a New Deal Democrat, then a neo-conservative, who advocated Nixon's welfare reform bill, and then he worked on the liberal welfare reform bill.⁶²²

The Bill Clinton Administration released its welfare reform programme, the Work and Responsibility Act (WRA) in June 1994; however, the proposal had been substantially challenged by other existing reform bills in the House of Representatives or the Senate.⁶²³ WRA had no longer been at the heart of the political debate in the U.S. as the country prepared for midterm congressional elections.⁶²⁴ Nevertheless, Republicans focused on the welfare reform issue to fuel their congressional campaign, with their legislative agenda the "Contract with America" that called for reductions in welfare benefits, time limit for welfare assistance, as well as work requirements.⁶²⁵

⁶¹⁸ Hancock, *The Politics of Disgust*, loc. 2190 of 4486.

⁶¹⁹ *New York Times*, August 2, 1996, A10. See also, Deborah R. Connolly, *Homeless Mothers Face to Face with Women and Poverty* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000). See also, Hancock, *The Politics of Disgust*, loc. 2193 of 4486.

⁶²⁰ Philip A. Klinkner, "Bill Clinton and the Politics of the New Liberalism," in *Without Justice for All: The New Liberalism and our Retreat from Racial Equality*, ed. Adolph Reed (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999), 19.

⁶²¹ Anne Marie Cammisa, *From Rhetoric to Welfare Reform?: Welfare Policy in American Politics* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), xv.

⁶²² *Ibid.*, xv.

⁶²³ Wiseman, "Welfare Reform in the United States," 596.

⁶²⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶²⁵ *Ibid.*

The core components of welfare reform are the following: work enforcement, marriage promotion, as well as a limited intervention of the federal government for the promotion of social welfare, and they aimed at changing women's negative behaviour.⁶²⁶ The first major objective of welfare reform was to push more women on welfare to work. Its main provision was "work first". Welfare reform targeted women's behaviour and intensified the programme's already existing strict work requirements. It added other stiffer work rules on women whose main income was based on welfare rolls.⁶²⁷ In other words, the aim of welfare reform was replacing "welfare" with "workfare". That is to say, welfare reform encouraged work and aimed at excluding individuals from welfare rolls, except those who had a will to find a job or job training.⁶²⁸ The second goal of welfare reform was to promote marriage which formed the basis of society and eradicate the single motherhood phenomenon which had been recognised, for centuries, the main cause of social woes in the United States.⁶²⁹

The third goal of welfare reform was to reduce federal responsibility for social welfare.⁶³⁰ PRWORA sought to limit the role of the national government in social service programmes and give more power to the states (which is a purely conservative view) to design as well as manage their own assistance programmes.⁶³¹

Scholars have tried to explain Bill Clinton's objectives behind the legislation of welfare reform. For instance, Michael Nelson explains Bill Clinton's objectives by drawing on data from the Miller Center oral history. According to him, President Bill Clinton did not sign welfare reform legislation in 1996 for "immediate political considerations" but for long-term ones.⁶³²

⁶²⁶ U.S. Congress, 1996; Abramovitz, "Welfare Reform in the United States," 339. See also Taryn Lidhorst and Ron Mancoske, "Race, Gender and Class Inequities in Welfare Reform," 28–30.

⁶²⁷ Abramovitz, "Welfare Reform in the United States," 339.

⁶²⁸ Fred Block et al, *The Mean Season*, xiii.

⁶²⁹ U.S. Congress, 1996.; Abramovitz, *Under Attack*; Gordon, *Pitied but not Entitled*.

⁶³⁰ Abramovitz, "Welfare Reform in the United States," 446.

⁶³¹ Taryn Lindhorst and Ron Mancoske, "Race, Gender and Class Inequities in Welfare Reform," 28–31.

⁶³² Nelson, "Bill Clinton and Welfare Reform," 243.

There are three main interpretations concerning Bill Clinton's welfare rhetoric against welfare: the institutional weakness of his presidency because of congressional opposition; his opportunist strategy to win the elections in 1992 and 1996; and finally his law which transformed the "anti-welfare culture" by pushing people on welfare to work.⁶³³ Lindhorst and Mancoske state that "Assumptions about women's characters based on racial, gender and class-based stereotypes have permeated decisions related to public welfare for decades. Sometimes these presumptions have been stated overtly."⁶³⁴

Welfare reform law was based on prejudiced ideas because welfare recipients were disproportionately African Americans.⁶³⁵ But race did not matter alone, there were other issues related to gender and class.⁶³⁶ Indeed, gender issues, class, and race-based stereotypes were explicitly significant in legislating the 1996 welfare reform law. President Bill Clinton and Republican representatives in Congress, who formed the majority in it, have reformed welfare along racialised and gendered lines.⁶³⁷

The questions arise, therefore, did Bill Clinton's administration encourage all the poor to work? Were poor people punished? Were Clinton's promises accomplished? Was there any type of stigmatisation against any minority groups or categories in the U.S. society, during his administration?

Our study of Bill Clinton's approach to the issue of welfare is based upon an analysis and interpretation of some written records. First of all, I will study the following work: *Putting People First: How we can all Change America*. Second, I will deal with President Bill Clinton's memoir *My Life*. Then, I will analyse different speeches in which he addressed the American citizens concerning the welfare reform issue.

⁶³³ Martín Carcasson, "Ending Welfare as We Know It," 657.

⁶³⁴ Taryn Lindhorst and Ron Mancoske, "Race, Gender and Class Inequities in Welfare Reform," 28.

⁶³⁵ Philip A. Klinkner and Rogers M. Smith, *The Unsteady March: The Rise and Decline of Racial Inequality in America* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 312–334.

⁶³⁶ Abramovitz, "Welfare Reform in the United States," 338–339.

⁶³⁷ Felicia Kornbluh and Gwendolyn Mink, *Ensuring Poverty*, 23.

5.1) *Putting People First: Welfare and Work (1992)*

One of the written records that help us have a look at the way and the manner through which Bill Clinton conceived welfare and the poor is *Putting People First*. He wrote this book in collaboration with Senator Al Gore from Tennessee, and it was published in 1992. In the part in their book titled “Welfare and Work,” they hotly criticise Republican presidents, who presided over the U.S. during the preceding twelve years, and failed to honour successfully and concretely hard-working American citizens and to restore family values.

According to Clinton and Al Gore, previous initiatives to reform welfare were a total failure. Bill Clinton and Al Gore point out:

For twelve years the Republicans in Washington have praised the virtue of hard work, but they have hurt hard-working Americans. They have talked about “family values,” but their policies show they don’t really value families. They have pledged to reform welfare, but they have no plan to put people back to work. They have put their elections first – and people last. Millions of Americans have paid the price. Wages are flat, good jobs are scarce, and poverty has exploded. Today almost one of every five people who work full-time doesn’t earn enough to keep his or her family above the poverty level. Almost one of every five children lives in poverty- a million more than ten years ago. And because of deadbeat spouses, more than one of every five single parents doesn’t get adequate child support.⁶³⁸

Bill Clinton and his co-author believe that the previous Republican attempts to improve the American economy and find solutions for the social instability were in vain. Their policies were inadequate and they failed to honour and reward hard-working citizens who play by the rules by encouraging work, not by punishing or preaching to the poor.⁶³⁹ For them, the Republican president’s endeavours to restore family values and to help people on welfare find real jobs failed.

The “welfare and work” measures that Bill Clinton proposed in *Putting People First* are as follows: ending Welfare as we know it; guaranteeing a working wage; helping low-income Americans build savings; stimulating investment in the inner city and rural

⁶³⁸ Bill Clinton and Al Gore, *Putting People First: How we can all Change America* (New York: Times Book, 1992), 164.

⁶³⁹ Ibid.

areas; educating children; and cracking down on deadbeat parents.⁶⁴⁰ The first measure which tackles welfare titled “End Welfare as We Know it”, Bill Clinton and his co-author promised to:

- Empower people* with the education, training and child care they need for up to two years, so they can break the cycle of dependency; expand programs to help people to read; get their high school diplomas or equivalency degrees, and acquire specific job skills; and ensure that their children are cared for while they learn.
- After two years, *require those who can work to go to work*, either in the private sector or in community service ; provide placement assistance to help everyone find a job, and give the people who can't find one a dignified and meaningful community service job.
- Actively promote state models that work*, like Arkansas's Project Success.
- Guarantee affordable, quality health care to every American*—so nobody is forced to stay on welfare because going back to work would mean losing medical insurance.
- Sign into law the Family and Medical Leave Act*, which President Bush has vetoed, to give workers the right to take twelve weeks of unpaid leave per year to care for a newborn or a sick family member—a right enjoyed by workers in every other advanced industrial nation.⁶⁴¹ (Italics exist in original text)

Hence, his initiative for welfare reform encompassed different measures which targeted not only the behaviour of welfare clients. He aimed at making long-term changes in American society by providing work opportunities for the poor through education and job training and child care; promoting health care for all Americans; as well as signing into law the Family and Medical Leave Act.

Finally, it is worth saying that, in their *Putting People First*, Bill Clinton and his co-author did not show any “racist”, “gendered”, or “classist” biases. They devoted a part of their work to women's issues, in which they encourage women to work and propose solutions for working women such as providing assistance to care for their children during their absence. Thus, this book serves us to reveal that Bill Clinton had not shown any ideas based on race, gender, or class divisions. The most important point that we can grasp from his book with the Republican Senator Al Gore is that his plans for the presidency were neither Democratic nor Republican but a mixture of the two as they mention it at the beginning of their books. Besides, Bill Clinton and his co-author devote a section to deal with women's issues and abortion. To conclude, I do not detect any explicit exclusions of any group with regard to its ethnicity, sex, or class.

⁶⁴⁰ Clinton and Al Gore, *Putting People First*, 164–68.

⁶⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 165.

5.2) Bill Clinton's Memoir *My Life* (1994)

From ancient times to modern times, political leaders have managed to leave some record of their deeds that would enable future generations to remember their names and accomplishments.⁶⁴² Written records are important in interpreting events and important matters which took place in the past. Political memoirs, in which history and politics are narrated in personalised versions, have attracted across many centuries.⁶⁴³

An autobiography is defined as follows by Philippe Lejeune: « Nous appelons autobiographie le récit rétrospectif en prose que quelqu'un fait de sa propre existence, quand il met l'accent principal sur sa vie individuelle, en particulier sur la vie de sa personnalité ». ⁶⁴⁴ According to Lejeune, the autobiography consists of certain elements, unlike the other literary genres which are similar to it such as memoirs, novels, autobiographical poems, and diaries. These elements are the following: (1) The form of the language: (a) story, (b) in prose; (2) The subject: (a) individual life, (b) history of a personality; (3) The situation of the writer (the author): (a) identity of the author, (b) the narrator, (c) and characters.⁶⁴⁵

In 1994, President Bill Clinton published his autobiography *My Life* in which he tells the story of his life from childhood to his presidential days. His memoir is useful because it provides us with interesting details and pieces of information that we cannot find in other written or oral records.⁶⁴⁶ It may serve us in our inquiry, seeking answers to questions related to the issue of welfare reform. This book provides details about his political life and the story of America in the last half of the twentieth century. Hence, I use it as a source in my analysis of his political philosophy for welfare reform. In the epilogue, he stated the following about the purpose of his book:

I wrote this book to tell my story, and to tell the story of America in the last half of the twentieth century; to describe as fairly as I could the forces competing for the country's heart

⁶⁴² George Egerton, "Politics and Autobiography: Political Memoir as Polygenre," *Biography* 15, no. 3 (1992): 221.

⁶⁴³ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁴ Philippe Lejeune, *L'Autobiographie en France*, 3rd ed. (Paris : Armand Colin, 2010), 146.

⁶⁴⁵ Ibid., 146.

⁶⁴⁶ C. Berman, "Reading Bill Clinton's "My Life"," *Reviews in American History* 33, no. 1 (2005):126.

and mind; to explain the challenges of the new world in which we live and how I believe our government and our citizens should respond to them; and to give people who have never been involved in public life a sense of what it is like to hold office, and especially what it is like to be President.⁶⁴⁷

The author of *My life* is a politician from the South, a president, and more importantly a Democratic candidate. President Bill Clinton, as an autobiographer, shows through his memoir his status as a “poster child” of the 1960s in the 1990s.⁶⁴⁸ Hence, his presidential rhetoric was driven by the controversies of past decades: the Sixties.⁶⁴⁹ In his memoir, the latter reveals his observations of his state’s politicians in Arkansas, and how the political climate in his home state made him an ambitious political governor, and later a candidate for the presidency.⁶⁵⁰

After his birth, Bill Clinton and his mother went to his grandparents’ house in metropolis Hope and he stayed there until the age of four.⁶⁵¹ He was very influenced by his grandparents, particularly by his grandfather. His grandfather’s attitude towards “black” people and the poor marked his childhood as well as his entire life: “I adored my grandfather, the first male influence in my life, and felt pride that I was born in his birthday.”⁶⁵² Bill Clinton’s grandfather played a crucial role in shaping his view on race as well as poverty. This passage clarifies the point:

[. . .] a lot of my grandfather’s (grocery store) customers were *black*. Though the South was completely segregated back then, some level of racial interaction was inevitable in small towns, just as it had always been in the rural South. However, it was rare to find an uneducated rural southerner without a racist in his body. That’s exactly what my grandfather was. I could see that black people looked different, but because he treated them like he did with everybody else, asking after their children and about their work, I thought they were *just like me*. Occasionally, black kids would come into the store and we would play. It took me years to learn about segregation and prejudice and the meaning of poverty, years to learn that most white people weren’t like my grandfather and my grandmother, whose views on race were among the few things she had in common with her husband.⁶⁵³ (Italics added.)

⁶⁴⁷ Clinton, *My life*, 620.

⁶⁴⁸ Philip Abbott, “A “Long and Winding Road”: Bill Clinton and the 1960s,” *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 9, no. 1 (2006): 1–2.

⁶⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁶⁵⁰ C. Berman, “Reading Bill Clinton’s “*My Life*” ,” 127.

⁶⁵¹ Clinton, *My Life*, 9.

⁶⁵² *Ibid.*, 12

⁶⁵³ *Ibid.*, 13–14.

In the passage above, Bill Clinton has demonstrated his conception of “blacks” in the segregated South. When he was a child, he thought that they were just like him, merely because he is “white”. However, the expression “just like me,” may have different interpretations. I can provide two interpretations of this statement. The first one is clearly and explicitly stated. The second one remains implicit, and it engages Bill Clinton’s presence as a conscious character as well as a veteran politician.

According to the first interpretation, Bill Clinton was not aware of racial segregation in the South when he was a child. He played with “black” kids of his age and his grandfather served “black” and “white” customers alike. This was not a common practice during the late 1940s and the late 1950s, due to segregation.⁶⁵⁴ The second one demonstrates, however, that he has become more conscious about the differences between “white” and “black” people. When he was writing this passage, he has realised the differences that exist between “blacks” and “whites”. These differences are not biological but social. He says that, “I could see that “black” people looked different, but because he treated them like he did with everybody else,” then “I thought they were just like me.”⁶⁵⁵

Bill Clinton did not discover the concept of racial segregation at an early age, because his grandparents were not so racist that he could understand them. He states: “It took me years to learn about segregation and prejudice and the meaning of poverty, years to learn that most white people weren’t like my grandfather and my grandmother . . . ”⁶⁵⁶

He provided in his memoir a firsthand account of his conception of “Food Stamps” since his childhood; hence, he shows his support of Food Stamps and not AFDC. During the period in which he was writing his memoir *My Life* (he spent two years writing it and published it in 1994), the notion of “welfare” in the United States had become synonymous with such public assistance programmes as AFDC (cash assistance to poor families with dependent children), and Food Stamps (special “coupons” that indigent individuals can use

⁶⁵⁴ Maney, *Bill Clinton*, 10.

⁶⁵⁵ Clinton, *My Life*, 14.

⁶⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 16.

to purchase food)⁶⁵⁷. Nevertheless, Bill Clinton did not demonstrate any disagreement with Food Stamps provisions. The following passage clarifies the point:

My mother told me that after papaw died, she found some of his old account books from the grocery store with lots of unpaid bills from his customers, most of them black. She recalled that he had told her that good people who were doing the best they could deserve to be able to feed their families . . . Maybe that's why I've always believed in *Food Stamps*.⁶⁵⁸
(Italics added)

Clinton demonstrates in his memoir that he sought to modernise the Democratic Party by making of welfare reform and crime legislation the core of his future political ambitions.⁶⁵⁹

Berman clarifies the point and he states that:

Although foreign policy issues mattered greatly in his (Bill Clinton) White House, domestic political and economic matters mostly absorbed Clinton himself. He sought to create a “dynamic center” in American politics which required that the Democratic party endorse tough crime legislation and welfare reform if it were to complete successfully with the Republicans.⁶⁶⁰

Clinton unveiled some details about his first experience in welfare reform in 1979, by referring first of all to Hillary's activity as a chair of the Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families. He stated that Arkansas was among the states that were chosen during the Carter Administration to provide a concrete example of “workfare” practice in which able-bodied food-stamp recipients were asked to register for work to stop demanding stamps. Besides, he shows the importance of this event in his future decisions concerning welfare reform issues. Bill Clinton focused on “work-oriented approaches” as solution to help poor people improve their living conditions. He points out the following:

Nineteen seventy-nine was the International Year of the Child. Hillary, who was serving as chair of the Arkansas Advocates of Children and Families, an organization she had helped to found, took the lead in pushing some meaningful changes, including passing a uniform Child Custody Act to eliminate custody problems for families moving in and out of our state; reducing the average daily population of our youth-service detention centers by 25 percent; developing better inpatient and community-based treatment for severely disturbed children; and placing 35 percent more children with special needs in adoptive homes.

⁶⁵⁷ Wiseman , “Welfare Reform in the United States,” 597.

⁶⁵⁸ Clinton, *My Life* ,14

⁶⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 620.

⁶⁶⁰ Berman, “Reading Bill Clinton’s “My Life”,” 129.

Finally, I got involved in *welfare reform* for the first time. The Carter administration named Arkansas one of a handful of states to participate in “workfare” experiment, in which able-bodied food-stamp recipients were required to register for work in order to keep getting the stamps. The experience sparked my abiding interest in moving toward a more empowering, work-oriented approach to helping poor people, one that carried with me all the way to the White House and the signing of the welfare reform bill of 1996.⁶⁶¹ (Italics added)

Moreover, he declared the following concerning welfare reform legislation in his autobiographical memoir:

My ... major interest was welfare reform. I asked the legislature to require recipients with children three years old or over to sign a contract committing themselves to a course of independence, through literacy, job training, and work. In February, I went to Washington with several other governors to testify before the House Ways and Means Committee on welfare prevention and reforms. We asked Congress to give us the tools to “promote work, not welfare; independence not dependence.” We argued that more should be done to keep people off welfare in the first place, by reducing adult illiteracy, teen pregnancy, the school dropout rate, and alcohol and drug abuse. On welfare reform, we advocated a binding contract between the recipient and the government; setting out the rights and responsibilities of both parties. Recipients would commit to strive for independence in return for the benefits, and the government would commit to help them, with education and training, medical care, and job placement. We also asked that welfare recipients with children age three or older be required to participate in a work program designed by the states, that each welfare recipient have a caseworker committed to a successful transition to self-sufficiency, that efforts to collect child-support payments be intensified, and that a new formula for cash assistance be established consistent with each state’s cost of living. Federal law allowed states to set monthly benefits wherever they chose as long as they weren’t lower than they had been in the early seventies, and they were all over the place.⁶⁶²

A glance at his statement helps us figure out many facts with interesting details. My interpretation is as follows:

- *Bill Clinton was not alone in deciding about welfare reform:* He was accompanied by “several other governors” (but he does not reveal their names) to ask Congress to equip them with the necessary tools to promote work and financial independence for welfare recipients. In other words, to pass welfare reform;
- *Providing more independence for poor families through work and education:* The focus was primarily on the welfare recipients to help them become “independent” by fighting illiteracy and delinquency. That is to say, by eliminating adult illiteracy, drugs, school dropout, alcohol abuse, and teen pregnancy.

⁶⁶¹ Clinton, *My Life*, 356.

⁶⁶² *Ibid.*, 433–34.

- *Strengthening the bond between welfare recipients and the government:* Welfare reform aims to set up a “binding contract” between welfare recipients and the government—welfare recipients would commit to strive for independence from welfare in return for benefits; whereas, the government would commit to help them with medical care, education, , and job placement.

- *Helping families with young dependent children through modeling states’ assistance according to their needs:* Families on welfare with children (aged three or older) were required to participate in work programmes organised by the states. Each welfare recipient was supposed to have a caseworker who would assist them in a smooth transition from dependence to self-sufficiency. Few child-support payments would be suggested, temporary cash assistance to support those families, and the payments were relative, depending on the state’s cost of living

Bill Clinton explained his motivation for entering the race for the presidency during the late 1980s by stating three main reasons: First, he firmly believed that the Democratic Party had an excellent chance to recapture the White House since the opposition was weak and Vice President Bush would be the potential nominee of the Republican Party. Second, he felt strongly that it was the right time to change the country’s policies: the U.S. economic growth had been fueled exclusively by big increases in defense spending and large tax cuts that benefited the wealthiest and drove up the deficit. The huge deficits led to high-interest rates. Third, the government should invest in the American people through education, training, and research in order to maintain high wages and low unemployment.⁶⁶³

The latter also referred to his motivations for becoming president of the United States. To run for the presidency, he equipped himself with some strategies to win the presidency. He focused, for instance, on the hot issues related to welfare reform, budget deficit, crime, and the collapse of the economic system. The failure of previous Republican

⁶⁶³ Ibid., 436.

presidents to address those problems encouraged him to prepare the ground for his presidency.

Bill Clinton had tried to come up with real and tangible solutions to the burning issue of welfare. As a Governor of Arkansas, he invested much of his time and energy dealing directly with welfare clients and caseworkers to bring about tangible solutions to help poor families on welfare. By doing so, he recognised that “work” had been at the bottom of welfare recipients’ demands who sought eagerly to improve their living conditions. He involved himself in welfare recipients’ everyday lives to understand them more and help them express themselves about their efforts to get rid of dependence on welfare. He states:

I had spent enough time talking to welfare recipients and caseworkers in Arkansas to know that the vast majority of them wanted to work and support their families. But they faced formidable barriers, beyond the obvious ones of low skills, lack of work experience, and inability to pay for child care. Many of the people I met had no cars or access to public transportation. If they took a low-wage job, they would lose food stamps and medical coverage under Medicaid. Finally, many of them just didn’t believe they could make it in the world of work and had no idea where to begin.⁶⁶⁴

Bill Clinton demonstrated that people on welfare wanted to work. He provides details of a meeting he organised to discuss the issue of welfare reform with other governors. He refers to two women he brought with him to that meeting from Arkansas. These women preferred finding a job than depending on welfare. These two witnesses were convinced that the able-bodied poor on welfare should work to support themselves as well as their children. Bill Clinton’s initiative to enable poor people on welfare to express themselves about their disagreement about welfare was a smart one. Their arguments were taken for granted and supported his efforts to substitute welfare with work. He states the following:

At one of our governors’ meetings in Washington, along with my welfare reform co-chair, Governor Mike Castle of Delaware, I organized a meeting for other governors on welfare reform. I brought two women from Arkansas who had left welfare for work to testify. One

⁶⁶⁴ Ibid., 434.

young woman from Pine Bluff had never been on an airplane or an escalator before the trip. She was restrained but convincing about the potential of poor people to support themselves and their children. The other witness was in her mid to late thirties. Her name was Lillie Hardin, and she had recently found work as a cook. I asked her if she thought able-bodied people on welfare should be forced to take jobs if they were available. "I sure do," she answered. "Otherwise we'll just lay around watching the soaps all day." Then I asked Lillie what was the best thing being out of welfare. Without hesitation, she replied, "When my boy goes to school and they ask him, 'what does your mama do for a living?' he can give an answer." It was the best argument I've ever heard for welfare reform. After the hearing, the governors treated her like a rock star.⁶⁶⁵

By analysing Bill Clinton's words, I can identify the real motivations behind his support for the idea of work instead of welfare. Bill Clinton used the word "able-bodied poor". This concept has been widely used since the colonial period to refer to people who were poor because they made no efforts to support themselves as well as their families. This category of the poor is called also "undeserving poor" and they were seen as lazy and unproductive; hence, they were highly controlled and supervised by local authorities.⁶⁶⁶ Bill Clinton focused on the importance of encouraging people on welfare to work by giving them a chance through providing real job opportunities, training when necessary to enhance their skills, or equipping them with fundamental tools to guarantee a minimum wage. In other words, he aimed to enable them to live with dignity, without depending permanently on welfare.

A deeper analysis of Bill Clinton's words helps us see the reality of welfare clients: single women and children. This supports to some extent conservatives' stereotyped arguments against welfare recipients who were considered as "single mothers of colour and their young children". The two women were single mothers and "black", and referring to them crystallises the idea of the "welfare queen," which formed the core of the urban underclass. Even though Bill Clinton was neither a conservative nor a Republican, his initiatives concerning welfare reform reflected some extent the impact of racist and sexist biases on politics and social policy in the United States. Nevertheless, Bill Clinton focuses on the idea of "honoring work", first and foremost.

⁶⁶⁵ Ibid., 435.

⁶⁶⁶ For more details see for instance Michael Katz, *The Undeserving Poor: From the War on Poverty to the War on Welfare* (New York: Pantheon Works, 1989), 9. See also Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State*, 329.

Bill Clinton revealed in his memoir that he worked on welfare reform for about fifty years and valuing work was at the heart of his endeavour for reform. For him, welfare reform had not been a Republican issue (or conservative) nor a Democratic but it was concerned about poor mothers and their children. Hence, he provided the example of Lillie and her child. The following excerpt clarifies the point:

When I tackled welfare reform as a President, I was always somewhat amused to hear some members of the press characterize it as a Republican issue, as if valuing work was something only conservatives did. By 1996, when Congress passed a bill I could sign, I had been working on welfare reform for more than fifteen years. But I didn't consider it a Democratic issue. Or even a governors' issue. Welfare reform was about Lillie Hardin and her boy.⁶⁶⁷

Bill Clinton explained that liberals were against his plans for welfare reform. But he distinguishes his plans from those of the Republicans. He initiated new ideas for his party to give it a chance to survive in political life. Those ideas stemmed from the plans that Republicans failed to deal with: their exaggerated tax cuts and big deficits, their rejection of the Family and Medical Leave bills as well as the Bradley bill. In addition to this, they failed to fund education and honour work. He points out:

[. . .] Some liberals honestly disagreed with us on welfare reform, trade, fiscal responsibility, and national defense. But our differences with the Republicans were clear. We were against their unfair tax cuts and big deficits; their opposition to the Family and Medical Leave bill and the Bradley bill; their failure to adequately fund education or push proven reforms, instead of vouchers; their divisive tactics on racial and gays issues; their unwillingness to protect the environment; their anti-choice stance; and much more.⁶⁶⁸

According to Bill Clinton, Senator Pat Moynihan of New York, the chairman of the Senate Finance Committee during his administration, had the knowledge of welfare. He states: “[. . .] Pat Moynihan who knew more about the history of welfare than anyone else.”⁶⁶⁹ Pat Moynihan recommended to deal initially with welfare reform and then with health care reform. Hence, he urged to give more importance to the legislation of welfare reform before health care reform. Clinton states in this respect the following: “Moynihan recommended that we first do welfare reform, and spend the next two years developing a

⁶⁶⁷ Clinton, *My Life*, 435.

⁶⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 502.

⁶⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 455 .

health-care proposal.”⁶⁷⁰ He vetoed the Republican welfare reform bill because it lacked interesting criteria to be a successful one. He argues:

. . . I vetoed the Republican welfare reform bill, because it did too little to move people from welfare to work and too much to hurt poor people and their children. The first time I vetoed the Republican welfare reform proposal, it had been a part of their budget. Now a number of their budget cuts were simply put in a bill with the label “welfare reform” in it.⁶⁷¹

Bill Clinton concluded his memoir by stating the main achievements of his first term as president of the U.S: First, restoring economic growth by replacing supply-side economics with a more disciplined “invest and grow” economy; second, changing the perception of the role of the federal government in the U.S.: the national government provides the necessary tools to citizens to help them improve their living conditions; third, the homogeneity of the American community and rejecting all kinds of social divisions such as race, class, gender, religion, sexual orientation, and political philosophy; replacing rhetoric with reality through government actions in such areas as crime and welfare; using government action to reestablish family values in the American society. Such measures had been introduced as: family leaves law, the Earned Income Tax Credit, the minimum wage increase, the V-chip, the anti-teen smoking initiative, measures to increase adoption, and new reforms in health and education systems; and finally making of America the leading international power during the post–Cold War to preserve peace, democracy in the whole world and deal with the contemporary issues related to the threats of terror, weapons of mass destruction, organised crime, narco-trafficking, racial as well as religious conflicts.⁶⁷²

In short, President Bill Clinton was not the sole architect of welfare reform as Pat Moynihan also played a crucial role in the design of the final version of welfare reform legislation. Clinton stressed the importance of the states in assisting concretely people on welfare to be financially independent by providing them with the necessary tools such as

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid., 620.

⁶⁷¹ Ibid.

⁶⁷² Ibid., 620.

training, ensuring education, and paying for healthcare by forcing them to find real job opportunities, and therefore limiting their reliance on welfare.

5.3) Speeches , Radio Addresses and Press Releases

In this section, I will attempt to analyse Bill Clinton’s speeches, radio addresses, and press releases related to welfare reform issues. I aim to demonstrate to what extent his arguments were influenced by racist, classist, or sexist stereotypes. In short, I will analyse Bill Clinton’s political rhetoric.

Before I deal with “rhetorical analysis”, I need initially to have a brief look at the definitions of such terms as “speech”, “press release”, as well as “radio address”. A *speech* is a formal address delivered to an audience. Speeches are written to inform, persuade, or entertain. The power of persuading others through speech has become very important since ancient times, especially after the fall of the Roman Republic.⁶⁷³ A *press release* is “an official statement made to journalists by a large organization, a political party or a government department.”⁶⁷⁴ A *radio address* is a weekly speech delivered by the Presidents of the United States to the nation.

Before tackling “rhetorical analysis”, I need to define the term “rhetoric”. The word “rhetor” derives from ancient Greek and it originally meant “orator” or “speaker”; however, its meaning has changed over time.⁶⁷⁵ According to Kenneth Burke, we can place rhetoric under “[. . .] (A)ll those statements . . . that bear upon the *persuasive* aspects of language, the functions of language as *addressed*, as direct or roundabout appeal to real or ideal audiences, without or within.”⁶⁷⁶ For him rhetoric is “the use of language as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols.”⁶⁷⁷

⁶⁷³ M. Cicero, *Political Speeches*, a new translation by D.H. Berry (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), xi.

⁶⁷⁴ A S Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learners’ Dictionary*, 8th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 1482.

⁶⁷⁵ Mark G. Longaker and Jeffrey Walker, *Rhetorical Analysis: A brief Guide to Writers* (Boston: Pearson Education, Inc., 2011), 8.

⁶⁷⁶ Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 43–44.

⁶⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 45.

According to Mark Longaker and Jeffrey Walker, rhetoric “is the study and the practice of persuasion.”⁶⁷⁸ Rhetorical analysis is “the study of persuasion in order to understand how people have been and can be persuasive.”⁶⁷⁹

In this section, I aim to demonstrate to what extent race, class, and gender have influenced Bill Clinton’s arguments on welfare reform. I will do this by dealing with different official documents available online or through consulting the archives available in the Clinton Library. In a Radio Address of the President to the Nation delivered on August 17, 1996, Bill Clinton declared the following:

This week I will sign into law an increase in the minimum wage. For those who work hard to stay off welfare, but can't live on \$4.25 an hour, this is a very important act. It will truly honor work and family. The same bill also provides help to small businesses to help them increase investment in job creation, and to increase their ability to save for retirement.⁶⁸⁰

President Bill Clinton signed PRWORA to increase the minimum wage and enable people living on welfare to improve their living conditions. According to him, the main purpose of welfare reform was to honor work and family. He also proposed to provide “tax cuts” to working families who focused on the education of their children. He firmly believed that tax cuts would promote economic stability for working families, in particular, and balance the national economic budget, in general. He stated the following:

[. . .] Next we should give Americans a tax cut. We've already cut taxes for 15 million American working families through our dramatic expansion of the earned income tax credit. This year that tax reduction will be worth about \$1,000 to a family of four with an income of \$28,000 a year or less . . . I have proposed a program of tax cuts for working families that focus on education and child rearing . . . to balance the budget so we can continue to keep those interest rates down and the economy growing. That's very important if we want our families to be strong and successful.⁶⁸¹

Honouring work and preserving family values have been the centerpiece of all social welfare legislation since the Colonial Period. Families that did not comply with the

⁶⁷⁸ Longaker and Walker, *Rhetorical Analysis*, 2.

⁶⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁶⁸⁰ Bill Clinton, “Radio Address of the President to the Nation,” (August 17th, 1996), <https://clintonwhitehouse6.archives.gov/1996/08/1996-08-17-president-weekly-radio-address-to-the-nation.html>

⁶⁸¹ *Ibid.*

requirements established by authorities regarding family and work ethics, had been denied their rights to benefit from relief benefits (I dealt with this point in *Chapter One*). Other American presidents such as John F. Kennedy (who had so much influence on Bill Clinton's ideas since his childhood, as it is clearly stated in his autobiographical memory *My Life*. I referred to this point in another section in this chapter) also stressed the importance of work and the morality of poor people (who were almost welfare beneficiaries). According to the extracts above taken from his Radio Address, Clinton did not show any class, race, or gender biases. His discourse was empty of stereotyped opinions and statements. Clinton showed clearly that welfare reform aimed to honour work and restore family values.

What he reached in 1996, was the result of what other politicians had started working on years ago. His decision to reform welfare was the result of a culmination of a series of previous political declarations and events. On August 22, 1996, he claimed the following:

We all know that the typical family on welfare today is very different from the one that welfare was designed to deal with 60 years ago. We all know that there are a lot of good people on welfare who just get off of it in the ordinary course of business, but that a significant number of people are trapped on welfare for a very long time, exiling them from the entire community of work that gives structure to our lives.⁶⁸²

In this passage, President Bill Clinton refers to families living on welfare. For him, the composition of welfare clients had changed because people on welfare during the 1990s were no longer the same as during the 1930s. As I have mentioned in chapter three, clients of AFDC had become "single mothers of colour and their children".

Even though Bill Clinton does not state clearly that he is referring to "husbandless women of colour and their children", the racial stereotype used at the time to talk about welfare clients, one can deduce that President Bill Clinton wants that Americans comprehend that it is time to react concretely to make real changes because reality was there: the typical family on welfare has completely changed. Bill Clinton also refers to

⁶⁸² Bill Clinton, "Remarks by the President at the Signing of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act," (August 22nd, 1996)
<https://clintonwhitehouse6.archives.gov/1996/08/1996-08-22-president-remarks-at-welfare-bill-signing.html>

“good people” on welfare. Despite the fact that he does not give details about who were the “bad people” on welfare. We can read between the lines and recognise that President Bill Clinton refers to people who had been melted in the seamy side of the urban American society: the ghetto life or the inner-city life. Simply put, he refers to African Americans who had been always blamed for the failure of the American welfare system because of their negative behaviour by conservatives. Hence, from our point of view, implicitly saying, Bill Clinton is using racial stereotypes to justify the legislation of PRWORA. Those racial biases were not justified, and they were based on the myth of the welfare queen initiated by conservative policy-makers and commentators.

Bill Clinton confirms in a statement in September 1996, that the main purpose of implementing welfare reform legislation was first and foremost about “work”. He states that:

I am especially pleased by this action, because as I have said before, Wisconsin's plan to replace the broken AFDC system with a system based on work is one of the boldest, most revolutionary welfare reform plans in the country. I am delighted to see it move forward. Michigan is also embarking on an innovative plan to reward and require work and demand responsibility. I congratulate both states for recognizing what all Americans agree on: welfare reform is first and foremost about *work*. (Italics added.)⁶⁸³

In sum, Bill Clinton’s decision to sign PRWORA had been shaped by racial biases. “Racial animosities” have always shaped politics and social policy in the United States, and the substitution of AFDC by TANF is an attempt to “racialise” entitlement.⁶⁸⁴ The new law has widened the gap between citizens and immigrants because it prevented people with less than five years of residency to benefit from such “low-come” programmes as TANF, food stamps as well as Medicaid.⁶⁸⁵ Middle-class families’ income has been negatively influenced by the new governmental measures. Women with children, who belonged to “black” communities (who were poor), and who were perceived as “undeserving poor”, have been the target of that law. The signing of PRWORA gave the green light to each

⁶⁸³ Bill Clinton, “The Statement by the President,” <https://clintonwhitehouse6.archives.gov/1996/09/1996-09-30-president-statement-on-welfare-reform-implementation.html>

⁶⁸⁴ Anne Daguerre, “How Obama’s Welfare Legacy Helps Explain the Roots of Trump Supporters’ Rage,” *LSE US Center* (blog), October 31, 2017 <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/usappblog/2017/10/31/how-obamas-welfare-legacy-helps-explain-the-roots-of-trump-supporters-rage/> .

⁶⁸⁵ Ibid.

state to design its own welfare eligibility standards which were limited and harsh. Their “work-first” approach obliged many recipients, who were almost single mothers of colour with dependent children, to accept any job regardless of pay, work conditions, and childcare considerations.⁶⁸⁶

Bill Clinton was a Democratic centrist who succeeded to compromise with Republicans by using a strategy of “triangulation”: Stealing ideas from conservatives and presenting them as his own.⁶⁸⁷ In his vision of reforming welfare, Bill Clinton focused on patriarchy and work ethic. Besides, as Felicia Kornbluh and Gwendolyn Mink put it: “It was the political victory of the administration’s racialized and gendered assumptions about why low-income families might need welfare that fed bipartisan efforts to condition public assistance on obedience to public discipline.”⁶⁸⁸

In the following chapter, I will try to tackle the evolution of welfare reform after Bill Clinton’s presidency. I will focus on how the perception of welfare evolved after the signing of PRWORA (during the post-welfare reform era) from the lens of scholars, the public, and politicians. I will deal with the policies related to welfare that have been introduced during the administrations that followed Bill Clinton’s.

⁶⁸⁶ Alejandra Marchevsky, and Jeanne Theoharis, “Welfare Reform, Globalization, and the Racialization of Entitlement,” *American Studies* 41, no. 2/3 (2000): 236.

Julian E. Zelizer, “Rethinking the History of American Conservatism,” *Reviews in American History* 38, no. 2 (2010): 382.

⁶⁸⁸ Felicia Kornbluh and Gwendolyn Mink, *Ensuring Poverty*, 58.

Chapter Six

Post–Welfare Reform Era, Social Divisions, and the Evolution of the American Welfare State (After the 1990s): During Bush’s, Obama’s, and Trump’s Administrations

The passage of PRWORA changed radically the path of social welfare policy in the United States. It marked the end of the New Deal welfare state that was launched during the Roosevelt Administration and the beginning of a new era of welfare reform policy. In this chapter, I will attempt to understand to what extent Bill Clinton succeeded to accomplish his promise to “honor and reward people who work hard and play by the rules.” I will deal with the evaluation of welfare reform by shedding light on scholarship after passage of PRWORA (that is, after 1996). I will examine the impact of welfare reform on the structure, the composition of the Democratic Party and its adherents, the shift in its political ideologies, and mainly its ambitions about the welfare state and policies which target the poor.

Further, I will try to investigate the evolution of the American welfare state during the administrations, which followed Clinton’s: Bush’s Administration, Obama’s, and Trump’s. I will try to highlight the main achievements related to reforming the welfare system by those presidents. I will do this by taking into account implications of social divisions, in particular, the global and domestic economic, social, political as well as environmental challenges.

1) Post–Welfare Reform Era: Evaluating TANF

In 1996, the United States witnessed a radical change and a revolution in its social welfare policy. Congress passed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) that cut a wide range of safety-net programmes for the poor. PRWORA ended, therefore, forty years of direct government intervention in providing financial support to poor families. Welfare benefits became very limited in time and amount and states were responsible for funding welfare without any guarantee from the federal government.⁶⁸⁹ This shift in the American welfare tradition generated a significant body of research to evaluate the 1996 welfare reform. Americans, in general, believed that the passage of PRWORA would lead to more poverty especially among women with dependent children whose income is insufficient.⁶⁹⁰

The post–1996 research on welfare recipients varied in terms of the data which were used and the methods that were applied to explain the impact of welfare reform on the lives of single mothers and their dependent children: administrative records, survey data, focus groups, and ethnographic data.⁶⁹¹ American politicians and the public were divided into two groups concerning the passage of Bill Clinton’s welfare reform bill.⁶⁹² Reports on the discussions inside the White House revealed that most of Bill Clinton’s policy advisers, such as Donna Shalala, Secretary of Health and Human Services, and Robert Reich, Secretary of Labor were against the legislation of welfare reform.⁶⁹³

⁶⁸⁹ Abramovitz, *Under Attack*, 14. To get an exhaustive list of the different provisions of TANF and a complete comparison between AFDC and TANF, see Mink and Solinger, *Welfare*, 663–79.

⁶⁹⁰ Daniel T. Lichter, and Rukamalie Jayakody. “Welfare Reform: How Do We Measure Success?” *Annual Review of Sociology* 28 (2002): 117.

⁶⁹¹ See Sandra K. Danziger, “The Decline of Cash Welfare and Implications for Social Policy and Poverty,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 36, no.1 (2010): 532–33.

⁶⁹² *Ibid.*, 532.

⁶⁹³ Carcasson, “Ending Welfare,” 656.

The PRWORA included the following provisions: Devolution of greater programme authority to states, changes in financing, ongoing work requirements, incentives to reduce non-marital births as well as five-year maximum time limit.⁶⁹⁴ It limited access to such public assistance programmes as food stamps and Supplemental Security Income to some American citizens, mainly “people of colour”⁶⁹⁵ and more precisely, single “women of colour” and their dependent children. Besides, immigrants who arrived during the legislation of PRWORA were completely denied the right to access TANF benefits and other public assistance programmes mentioned above. The 1996 act included the stringy work and responsibility requirements; however, it lacked many spending proposals that Bill Clinton promised at the beginning of his administration for public jobs, childcare, and healthcare.⁶⁹⁶

TANF aimed at strengthening family ties and emphasised the importance of marriage: “(1) Marriage is the foundation of a successful society. (2) Marriage is an essential institution of a successful society that promotes the interests of children. (3) Promotion of responsible fatherhood and motherhood is integral to successful child rearing and the well-being of children.”⁶⁹⁷

On September 30, 1996, President Bill Clinton declared that welfare reform was a real success because it led to the decline of poverty in the United States and led to the increase of child support collections:

These steps build on the progress we have already made over the last four years to reform welfare and crackdown on child support enforcement. Since I took office, the welfare rolls have dropped by 1.9 million; child support collections have increased by nearly 50% to a record \$11.8 billion; and last year's decline in the number of Americans in poverty was the

⁶⁹⁴ For more details see for instance: Rebecca M. Blank, “Evaluating Welfare Reform in the United States” *Journal of Economic Literature* 40, no. 4 (2002):1106.

⁶⁹⁵ In this dissertation, the term “people of colour” is used when referring to people of racial-ethnic groups that were colonised and oppressed by “white” Europeans: African-Americans, people of Latin American or of Mexican heritage. Since the available data is insufficient, scholars tend to generalise when they refer to “people of colour”. People of European descent are considered as “white”; whereas, “blacks” and Native American Indians are categorised as “nonwhite”. People of Mexican or Spanish descent had been sometimes categorised as “white” people. The term “white” *per se* is not clearly defined.

⁶⁹⁶ Carcasson, “Ending Welfare,” 656.

⁶⁹⁷ P.L. 104–193, Title I, Sec.101.

largest one-year drop in 27 years. I am determined to keep working to make sure these trends continue moving in the right direction.⁶⁹⁸

In August 1999, President Bill Clinton attended a forum in Chicago to hear former welfare recipients talk about their experiences in the workforce and to ensure that PRWORA had been a real success.⁶⁹⁹ He listened enthusiastically to their success stories. One woman told Clinton that she was very proud of herself as she could use different public transports to join her teamwork at United Parcel Service (UPS), a package handling center in Philadelphia; another said she had been hired as a cashier and then earned several promotions at a retail clothing store in Boston; and a third woman told him that she was hired in a bank in Texas and that her employers helped her with the costs of her child care.⁷⁰⁰

Such corporate executives as T.J. Maxx and Marshalls, who were present at the forum, revealed that 90 per cent of the former welfare recipients that the company had employed had been retained and 20 per cent had been promoted.⁷⁰¹ Another data was provided by a top official of Consumer Value Stores (CVS) to the audience: four thousand welfare recipients in the previous three years had been hired by the drug store chain, and the retention rate was important (70 per cent).⁷⁰²

In January 2000, a *USA Today-Gallup* revealed interesting information concerning the evolution of economic conditions in 2000: 71 per cent of Americans rated economic conditions as “excellent to good”, and those who previously rated economic conditions in 1992 as “fair to poor” had declined from 87 per cent to 28 per cent in 2000.⁷⁰³ The rate of poverty dropped 11.3 per cent in 2000 (Census Bureau, 2000). Besides poverty rates fell from 23.6 per cent to 22.1 per cent for “Black” and 22.8 per cent to 21.2 per cent for

⁶⁹⁸ Bill Clinton, “Statement by the President,” released September 30, 1996, at <https://clintonwhitehouse6.archives.gov/1996/09/1996-09-30-president-statement-on-welfare-reform-implementation.html>

⁶⁹⁹ Patterson, *America’s Struggle against Poverty in the Twentieth Century*, 3400.

⁷⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 3400–04.

⁷⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 3404.

⁷⁰² *Ibid.*

⁷⁰³ *Ibid.*, 3411.

“Hispanics” between 1999 and 2000 (Census Bureau). By large, poor Americans’ lives, especially those who were former welfare recipients had been improved in 2000 thanks to passage of PRWORA.⁷⁰⁴

One of the important domestic achievements of Clinton’s Administration, to sustain welfare reform policy, was his plan to fund “abstinence-until-marriage” education.⁷⁰⁵ This strategy aimed to support local-level programmes to effectively prevent pregnancy among adolescents.⁷⁰⁶ Girls were compelled to finish their study programmes before marrying or bearing a child.⁷⁰⁷ In January 1997, he declared that the birth rates had declined for four years, consecutively.⁷⁰⁸

According to data provided by the Administration for Children and Families, the aim of architects of TANF to drop welfare rolls was achieved: from 12, 24 million recipients in August 1996 to 6.28 million recipients in June 2000. That is, there was a decline of 53 per cent.⁷⁰⁹ The media played a central role in magnifying the picture of this success. In their research paper, Schram and Soss explain this success from a realistic point of view. According to Sanford them the popular belief that welfare reform is a success is based on positive interpretations of two public facts: declining caseloads and outcomes for welfare “leavers”.⁷¹⁰ For them, media stories were exaggerating and that they were not based on real facts, and that media coverage was shaped by policy makers’ views.⁷¹¹

⁷⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁵ SK Flinn, “The Clinton Administration’s Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program: Ignorance does not Equal Abstinence,” *SIECUS Rep.* 25, no.4 (April-May, 1997): 18.

⁷⁰⁶ Arline T. Geronimus “Teenage Childbearing and Personal Responsibility: An Alternative View,” *Political Science Quarterly* 112, no. 3 (1997): 405.

⁷⁰⁷ See, for instance, a real story published by Time Magazine, Richard Lacayo, “Want a Baby? First Get a Life,” *Time*, June 20, 1994, <http://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,980948,00.html>

⁷⁰⁸ Flinn, “The Clinton Administration’s Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program,” 18.

⁷⁰⁹ Administration for Children and Families, *Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), 1936-2000*, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001.

<http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/news/stats/3679.htm>.

⁷¹⁰ Sanford Schram and Joe Soss. “Success Stories: Welfare Reform, Policy Discourse, and the Politics of Research,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 577 (2001): 50.

⁷¹¹ Ibid.

But by tackling the issue of welfare reform from another angle, researchers have discovered that TANF was a failure as it worsened the lives of poor women and their dependent families. In a research paper published in 2015, a group of researchers concluded that TANF led to the increase of the rate of deaths among women by studying two states: Florida and Connecticut; and they compared the results they obtained with those related to AFDC. These researchers revealed in their study that after passage of PRWORA, the lives of women were shortened by 0.44 years, that is to say, 6 months.⁷¹² And unlike AFDC, TANF saved the U.S. government about \$28,000 per life-year saved (per recipient).⁷¹³ Besides, TANF harmed a subgroup of recipients that included women who could neither work nor benefit from welfare benefits: because of their young children at home, large family size, mental or physical illnesses.⁷¹⁴ They were most of the time obliged to rely on financial assistance from relatives, neighbours, or friends, which was insufficient, and therefore their situation became worse and worse.⁷¹⁵

To sum up, welfare reform was not a real success because it led to worsening the lives of worthy poor women in American society. Besides the data that showed that welfare reform was successful was based on a category of women who had no disabilities, and who could find a job without any obstacles. Women with social difficulties were completely neglected. The media played a central role in publicising a positive image about the consequences of PRWORA on the U.S. society and economy without paying attention to its negative impact on some categories of poor women, especially those with physical or mental disabilities.

⁷¹² Peter Mueunnig, Rishi Caleyachetty, Zohn Rosen, and Andrew Korotzer, "More Money, Fewer Lives: The Cost Effectiveness of Welfare Reform in the United States," *American Journal of Public Health* 105, no.2 (February 2015): 324–28. Also see Elizabeth T. Wilde, Zohn Rosen, Kenneth Couch, and Peter Mueunnig, "Impact of Welfare Reform on Mortality: An Evaluation of the Connecticut Jobs First Program; A Randomized Controlled Trial," *American Journal of Public Health* 104, no.3 (March 2014): 534–38; and Peter Mueunnig, Zohn Rosen, and Elizabeth T. Wilde, "Welfare Programs That Target Workforce Participation May Negatively Impact Mortality," *Health Affairs* 32, no.6 (2013) 1072–77.

⁷¹³ Peter Mueunnig et al., "More Money, Fewer Lives," 326.

⁷¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 327.

⁷¹⁵ *Ibid.*

2) The George Bush W. Administration and the Welfare State

2.1) Is there any relationship between Warfare and Welfare?

In this section, I will try to understand the relationship, if any, between raging a war abroad and the growth of the welfare state by studying the case of the Bush Administration. In other words, I will try to examine the link between “Guns and butter”. But, what does this expression stand for? Although it is used by many scholars in their works, they do not provide exact information about who coined it first. However, they share the same definition of the following terms, as it has been defined by the professor of economics Paul Samuelson in his outstanding book first published in 1948 *Economics: An Introductory Analysis*. He writes:

Let us consider the famous pair, butter and guns, two commodities popularly used to illustrate the wartime problem of choosing between civilian and military production. Those who are war-weary may substitute any other two commodities such as bread and wine, or if they are teetotalers, bread and hyacinths, or for prosaic souls, food and clothing.⁷¹⁶

Simply put, the term “Guns” refers to defense or military goods; whereas, “butter” refers to civilian goods.⁷¹⁷ This dichotomy has been initially introduced in political discussions before World War I when governments rushed to build up their national defense systems at the expense of other services which were directed to citizens.⁷¹⁸ In this chapter, I will try to explain the relation between “guns” and “butter” during the Bush Administration.

On September 11, 2001, four American airplanes were hijacked by Islamist terrorists. Two of those planes crashed into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City; the third to destroy a part of the Pentagon, and the fourth crashed into

⁷¹⁶ Paul E. Samuelson, *Economics: An Introductory Analysis* (New York: McGraw-Hill Company, 1948), 18.

⁷¹⁷ Ibid.

⁷¹⁸ Alfred J. Broaddus, “Guns and Butter,” *Region Focus*, (Summer 2003), 1, accessed December 12, 2021, https://www.richmondfed.org/publications/research/econ_focus/2003/summer/~media/D9A67A72BB58486EB26609B0D1CD7BD9.ashx

https://www.richmondfed.org/publications/research/econ_focus/2003/summer/~media/D9A67A72BB58486EB26609B0D1CD7BD9.ashx

Pittsburg, in Pennsylvania.⁷¹⁹ That attack was the worst terrorist attack that the U.S. has ever witnessed. Therefore, Bush urgently declared “War on Terror”.⁷²⁰ Is there any direct proportionality relationship between warfare and welfare?⁷²¹ Did the war in Iraq affect welfare policy during his administration? What was the impact of the “War on Iraq” on the U.S. welfare state?

It is generally assumed that there is a strong historical relationship between warfare and welfare.⁷²² As Heraclitus states, “War is the father of all things,” including welfare.⁷²³ There is always a correlation between America’s engagement in war home or abroad and the growth of state capacities and social reforms.⁷²⁴

Let us first refer briefly to the previous wars and their contribution to social provision. For instance, Theda Skocpol linked the Civil War and the growth of generous military pensions provided for veterans who participated during the war.⁷²⁵ The Civil War contributed also to the introduction of tax income.⁷²⁶ During World War I, called also the “Great War”, after the intervention of the U.S. in 1917—As a consequence of the sinking of the *Lusitania* and the issuing of the Zimmerman telegram—the American social provisions system had evolved by the introduction of a “permanent income tax”.⁷²⁷ After World War II, a mass-based tax system was forged during the New Deal era to support financially new state programmes and most importantly the G.I. Bill—which is a set of

⁷¹⁹ See for instance, Debra A. Miller, *The War against Iraq* (New York: Lucent, 2004).

⁷²⁰ Social scientists have speculated on the correlation between social welfare policy and terrorism. See, for instance, Daniel L. Chen, “Economic Distress and Religious Intensity: Evidence from Islamic Resurgence during the Indonesian Financial Crisis,” *PRPES Working Paper*, Harvard University, 2003); see also Brian Burgoon, “On Welfare and Terror: Social Welfare Policies and Political-Economic Roots of Terrorism,” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 50, no. 2 (2006): 176–78.

⁷²¹ Direct proportionality in mathematics is explained as follows: given two variables x and y, y is directly proportional to x. But here, we are using this notion to explain the relationship between warfare and welfare.

⁷²² Herbert Obinger and Carina Schmitt. “Guns and Butter? Regime Competition and the Welfare State during the Cold War,” *World Politics* 63, no. 2 (2011): 246.

⁷²³ *Ibid.*, 247.

⁷²⁴ Robert P. Saldin, “Foreign Policy on the Home Front: War and the Development of the American Welfare State,” in *Warfare and Welfare: Military Conflict and Welfare State Development*, eds. Herbet Obinger, Klaus Peterson, and Peter Strake (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 176

⁷²⁵ Theda Skocpol, *The Transformation of Old Security*, 32.

⁷²⁶ See Sidney Ratner, *Taxation and Democracy in America* (New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, 1967); Witte, John F. Witte, *The Politics and Development of the Federal Income Tax* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985).

⁷²⁷ Saldin, “Foreign Policy on the Home Front,” 178–179.

programmes established for returning veterans of World War II and later extended to those who participated during the undeclared wars in Korea and Vietnam).⁷²⁸ After the Korean War—called the “forgotten war” because it has not given too much importance by historians because it was sandwiched between World War II and the War on Vietnam—more democratic rights were given to marginalised groups that contributed to the war effort.⁷²⁹

The 2003 invasion of Iraq is the largest, longest, and most costly war after the Cold War. It is generally assumed that the U.S. tended to witness a postwar economic expansion after its abroad interventions in wars and this “macroeconomic” performance is explained by the impact of “America’s deficit-financed military buildups”.⁷³⁰ America’s deficit-financed military buildups led to economic booms because of America’s international financial power that is derived from the dollar’s position at the centre of the global monetary system as a “reserve” as well as “vehicle” currency.⁷³¹

However, after the War on Terror, many American banks collapsed because of the nation’s financial instability, and some banks survived thanks to the federal government’s emergency \$750 billion Toxic Asset Relief Programme (TARP) that enabled them to recapitalise.⁷³² This economic crisis expanded to European countries twenty-eight countries experienced a systemic banking crisis in 2008 and 2009⁷³³; hence it brought the “credit boom” to an end and this had badly affected the status of the “housing bubble” that most developed countries witnessed during the past five years.⁷³⁴

⁷²⁸ Ibid., 193.

⁷²⁹ Ibid.

⁷³⁰ Thomas Oatley, *A Political Economy of American Hegemony: Buildups, Booms, and Busts* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 85.

⁷³¹ Ibid., 85.

⁷³² Ibid., 1.

⁷³³ For more details about the causes and consequences of the global credit crisis in 2008, see, for instance Douglas W. Arner “The Global Credit Crisis of 2008: Causes and Consequences,” *The International Lawyer* 43, no. 1 (2009): 91–136.

⁷³⁴ Thomas Oatley, *A Political Economy of American Hegemony*, 1.

2.2) Bush and Welfare Reform Policy

George W. Bush was elected president of the United States in November 2000. In this section of our thesis, I attempt to investigate the post-welfare reform era in general and surveys Bush's Administration through a social welfare policy lens. I will be trying to explain Bush's approach to welfare reform. In other words, I will focus on the main measures that had been introduced during his administration to tackle the issue of welfare reform. The main questions that I try to answer are the following: what had the George W. Bush Administration promoted for poor Americans?

Many scholars in the field of American social policy assume that no significant measures related to welfare policy had been introduced during the Bush Administration; the focus in their research has been always on welfare reform legislation during the Bill Clinton presidency.⁷³⁵ Nevertheless, important changes in welfare policy occurred during the Bush Administration and they made a turning point in the history of the American social policy: the shift from a welfare system that promoted welfare assistance through "checks" to a system that assisted "social service programmes supporting work activity".⁷³⁶

2.3) The "War on Terror", Capitalism, and its Impact on the Global and U.S. Economy

The U.S. government justified raging a war against Radical Islam by accusing Iraq—that was under the regime of Saddam Hussein—of possessing weapons of mass destruction.⁷³⁷ The U.S. considered the strong correlation between Iraq and Al-Qaeda as justification to invade Iraq.⁷³⁸ The 2003 invasion had been handled by the Multi-National Force–Iraq (MNF–I), known also as the "coalition forces"—It was led by the United

⁷³⁵ Scott W. Allard, "The Changing Face of Welfare during the Bush Administration," *Publius* 37, no. 3 (2007): 304.

⁷³⁶ *Ibid.*, 305.

⁷³⁷ On the theories that explain the declaration of the war against Iraq; see, for instance, Daniel Lieberfeld "Theories of Conflict and the Iraq War," *International Journal of Peace Studies* 10, no. 2 (2005): 1–21.

⁷³⁸ Noam Chomsky, *Who Rules the World?* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2016), 562.

States of America and included the United Kingdom, Australia, Spain, and Poland. Not all Americans had applauded Bush's initiative to wage a war against Iraq. Besides, a remarkable worldwide opposition took place before and during the war.⁷³⁹ Such countries have opposed the U.S. military intervention in Iraq, such as France and Germany.⁷⁴⁰

President Bush thought that the war he started against Iraq would bring peace to Iraq, to the Middle-East region, and the whole world. He firmly also that the U.S. intervention would stimulate the nation's economy. However, the war has had terrible results on Iraq and the whole world: it led to insecurity inside the Arab World and to global economic instability, including the U.S. itself.⁷⁴¹ Saddam Hussein did not possess weapons of mass destruction. His assassination marked the beginning of a huge disorder in the world and a series of terrible events in many Arab countries and the emergence of a new and more complicated terrorist threat led by "Daesh".

Bush's decision to attack Iraq had badly affected the U.S. economy and also the well-being of American citizens.⁷⁴² Furthermore, the U.S.—in addition to other countries aboard—witnessed a global economic crisis in 2008 caused by the U.S. military intervention in the Middle East.⁷⁴³ Other uprisings called the "Arab Spring" emerged in the Arab World (Egypt, Syria, Libya and Yemen) in the years that followed the depression, to denounce their tyrannical governments. That is, new challenges have emerged after the War in Iraq in addition to other challenges such as Climate Change; massive migration to economically stable and socially secure countries; and the series of terrorist attacks in the whole world including European countries.

⁷³⁹ See, for instance, David Cortright, "The Movement against War in Iraq," *Nonviolent Social Change: The Bulletin of the Manchester College Peace Studies Institute* (January 2007): 1–8.

⁷⁴⁰ Lorda, Clara Ubaldina, and Elisabeth Miche, "Two Institutional Interviews: José María Aznar and Jacques Chirac on the Iraq Conflict," *Discourse & Society* 17, no. 4 (2006): 447–72.

⁷⁴¹ See, for instance, Muralidharan, Sukumar. "Iraq and the Crisis of the U.S. Imperium: Of Dollar Hegemony, Debt and the English Language." *Social Scientist* 31, no. 3/4 (2003): 74–89.

⁷⁴² See, for instance, Louise Fawcett, "The Iraq War Ten Years On: Assessing the Fallout," *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 89, no. 2 (2013): 325–43.

⁷⁴³ Thomas Oatley, *A Political Economy of American Hegemony*, 1.

In sum, the state's coercive power and militarism played a key role in the development of capitalism in America, and this is true also for the invasion of Iraq.⁷⁴⁴ After the end of the Cold War and with the collapse of the Soviet Union, America had become the sole military superpower with no potential competitors on the geopolitical and ideological scenes.⁷⁴⁵ Besides, neo-liberal ideas in the U.S. during this period played a crucial role in the military intervention of the U.S. abroad, and it aimed to protect capitalism and to ensure that no other nation would rival its global supremacy.⁷⁴⁶

2.4) Was Bush's Administration a Failure?

There was a split among scholars about the role of the Bush Administration and its contribution to the historical development of the United States. Some presidential scholars and historians have not studied the Bush Administration "objectively" because they consider it as a failure and they ignored his actions and his contribution to history.⁷⁴⁷

For them, Bush abused his power and presided over a "lawless" administration.⁷⁴⁸ Others interpreted his reaction in dealing with the "terrorist" crisis as weird or "out of the norm".⁷⁴⁹ On the other hand, such scholars as Stephen Knott believe that those critics were unjustified and he considered political scientists and historians who treated Bush as a "demagogue" as politically "hypocrites".⁷⁵⁰ That was scholars' account, briefly explained, on Bush's presidency.

However, in their analysis, some scholars such as Sidney M. Milkis focus attention on the positive side of Bush's presidency by studying the relationship between the political

⁷⁴⁴ Daniel Egan, "Globalization and the Invasion of Iraq: State Power and the Enforcement of Neoliberalism," *Sociological Focus* 40, no. 1 (2007): 98–111. For further reading on the role of military intervention in the development of capitalism see, for example, Rosa Luxembour, *The Accumulation of Capital* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1968).

⁷⁴⁵ Daniel Egan, "Globalization and the Invasion of Iraq," 102. See also, Robert G. Patman, "Globalisation, the New US Exceptionalism and the War on Terror," *Third World Quarterly* 27, no.6 (January 2006): 963–86.

⁷⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 101. See also, David Armstrong, "Dick Cheney's Song of America," *Harper's Magazine* October: 76–83.

⁷⁴⁷ Stephen F. Knott, *Rush to Judgment: George W. Bush, the War on Terror, and his Critics* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2012), 99–108.

⁷⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 109.

⁷⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 120.

⁷⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 99.

party and the executive branch. It should be noted that explaining the relationship between the executive branch and the political party in the United States is not an easy task at all. The main periods in U.S. history during which executive power had been strengthened were the 1930s and the 1940s; hence, the president “became the leading instrument of popular rule”.⁷⁵¹ This process of fostering the role of the president in the U.S. political life, during the Great Depression and the Second World War, is called by scholars: “modern presidency”.⁷⁵² During the George W. Bush Administration, the relationship between the modern presidency and the American party system had been successful; therefore, many electoral victories (until the 2006 elections) for the Republican Party had taken place at all government levels.⁷⁵³

One of the most terrible moments for U.S. President George W. Bush was when a furious Iraqi journalist, Muntadhar Al-Zaidi, threw his shoes at him during a news conference Sunday evening in Baghdad, in 2008 (during his last visit to Iraq).⁷⁵⁴ Bush's decision to conquer Iraq was illegitimate and he was not welcome by the Iraqi people because the war devastated their country and they are still suffering until now from the consequences of the forced democracy established by the U.S. army. This proves that George Bush is very incompetent if we compare him to the Founding Fathers who built the most powerful nation in the world. Simply put, Bush’s presidency was a total failure.

⁷⁵¹ Sidney M. Milkis, and Jesse H. Rhodes, “George W. Bush, the Republican Party, and the “New” American Party System,” *Perspectives on Politics* 5, no. 3 (2007): 461.

⁷⁵² *Ibid.*

⁷⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵⁴ Ed Pilkington, “Shoes Thrown at Bush during Iraq Visit,” *The Guardian*, December 14, 2008, accessed January 3, 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/dec/14/iraq-georgebush>

2.5) Analysing Bush's Memoir *Decision Points*

I have previously mentioned the importance of drawing upon presidents' memoirs to study a particular era in history (See *Chapter Five*). Thus, I will refer to Bush's memoir to try to provide answers to the questions we have raised above, in this section: the impact of the War on Iraq on the U.S. welfare state.

In the final year of his presidency, George W. Bush wrote a memoir in which he decided to record his own perspective on his presidency and he hoped that it could be used as a resource for persons who would study that period of history (during his presidency).⁷⁵⁵ He revealed that he had been inspired by the *Memoirs* of President Ulysses S. Grant; hence, he decided not to write an exhaustive account of his life, and he focused on the key moments or periods inside the White House, that is, on making decisions.⁷⁵⁶ He says, "Like Grant, I decided not to write an exhaustive account of my life or presidency. Instead, I have told the story of my time in the White House by focusing on the most important part of the job: making decisions."⁷⁵⁷ He unveiled also that he confirmed his "account with government documents, contemporaneous notes, personal interviews, news reports, and other sources some of which remain classified."⁷⁵⁸

Bush opens his memoir with a chapter entitled "Quitting" in which he mentions details about the experiences he shared with his wife Laura during the process of "quitting drinking" and the significance of those experiences (during 40 years) in shaping his character and the future of his political career.⁷⁵⁹ Even though he demonstrated his intention (in the introduction) that he will focus solely on key moments related to "making decisions" in the White House; he begins his memoir by referring to irrelevant details such as "drinks (alcohol)", "temptations", "chocolate", and his aim to "discipline" himself.⁷⁶⁰ He then referred to his father George H.W. Bush and details about his childhood and the

⁷⁵⁵ George W. Bush, *Decision Points* (London: Virgin Books, 2010), 41–44.

⁷⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁷ Ibid., 44.

⁷⁵⁸ Ibid., 56.

⁷⁵⁹ Ibid., 96.

⁷⁶⁰ Ibid.

moments (good and bad) he shared with his parents and the death of his sister. His parents had never wished to see their son a president, he says, “My parents never projected their dreams onto me... Their view of parenting was to offer love and encourage me to chart my own path.”⁷⁶¹

The first chapter of his book reflects, to some extent, contradictions between what he says (words) and what he writes or mentions (actions) in his memoir: the intentions he initially claimed in the introduction about the purpose of writing his account on the presidency (focusing entirely on key decisions).

In addition to this, President Bush uses religious expressions in his memoir; hence, he employs such expressions in his book as: “For months, I had been praying that God would show me how better reflect his will.”; “My scripture readings had clarified the nature of temptation and the reality that the love of earthly pleasures could replace the love of God.”⁷⁶² Those religious reflections appeared in his political discourse as well. Does this reflect Bush’s fanatic intentions when he declared the War on Iraq, the most powerful and economically stable Arab and Islamic country in the Middle-East region? I can sum up my answer in one line: Iraq under the government of Saddam Hussein (who is viewed as a dangerous dictator) had been always considered by the U.S. government as a threat to the Israeli colonial occupation in Palestine as it possessed weapons of mass destruction. In his 2002 State of the Union Address, President George W. Bush shifted the focus of the terrorist attack (after the events of 9/11) from Al-Qaeda to Iraq.⁷⁶³

In his book, Bush refers to his decision to wage the war on Iraq. For instance, he reveals that he gave Saddam Hussein and his sons “a final forty-eight hours to avoid war” but they “rejected every opportunity”.⁷⁶⁴ He reveals also the following: “I did not want to send Americans into combat again. But after the nightmare of 9/11, I had vowed to do

⁷⁶¹ Ibid., 180.

⁷⁶² Ibid., 90.

⁷⁶³ Tim Dunne and Klejda Mulaj, “America after Iraq,” *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 86, no. 6 (2010): 1287.

⁷⁶⁴ Bush, *Decision Points*, 224.

what was necessary to protect the country. Letting a sworn enemy of America refuse to account for his weapons of mass destruction was a risk I could not afford to take.”⁷⁶⁵

Bush continued the plan, his father George H.W. Bush had already started in 1991 (the “Gulf War”) as a response to Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. He sent a letter to his father to inform him about his decision to send U.S. troops to conquer Iraq:

Dear Dad, . . .

*At around 9:30 a.m., I gave the order to SecDef to execute the war plan for Operation Iraqi Freedom. In spite of the fact that I had decided a few months ago to use force, if need be, to liberate Iraq and rid the country of WMD, the decision was an emotional one. . . . I know I have taken the right action and do pray few will lose life. Iraq will be free, the world will be safer. The emotion of the moment has passed and now I wait word on the covert action that is taking place. I know what you went through.*⁷⁶⁶

Love,

George

His father replied:

Dear George,

Your handwritten note, just received, touched my heart. You are doing the right thing. Your decision, just made, is the toughest decision you’ve had to make up until now. But you made it with strength and with compassion. It is right to worry about the loss of innocent life be it Iraqi or American. But you have done that which you had to do. Maybe it helps a tiny bit as you face the toughest bunch of problems any President since Lincoln has faced: You carry the burden with strength and grace. . . . Remember Robin’s words ‘I love you more than tongue can tell.’ Well, I do⁷⁶⁷.

Devotedly,

Dad

⁷⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶⁶ Ibid., 224–25.

⁷⁶⁷ Ibid., 225.

To conclude, in his memoir, Bush revealed that his intention to wage a war against Iraq was two-fold: he has fanatic ideas (religious intentions); besides, he accomplished his father's plan against Iraq. Throughout his memoir, he did not refer to social welfare policy or strategies to tackle issues related to poverty. I can, however, explain his motivations to conquer Iraq. Unlike Bill Clinton, George Bush focused on warfare instead of welfare.

3) The U.S. Welfare State during the Barack Obama Administration

3.1) Obama's Welfare Legacy: Obama's Efforts Related to Social Welfare Policy

When he was a Senator, Barack H. Obama—an African American with ambitious and progressive political visions—gave a memorable speech at a Baptist Church on the South Side of Chicago on Father's day in 2008 in which he criticised severely irresponsible fathers, particularly African American ones, and focused on the importance of maintaining “procreative, two-parent, heterosexual families” to care for biological progeny.⁷⁶⁸ In other words, in his speech, he urged men to take greater responsibility for their families and put stress on the importance of raising correctly their children. Besides, Obama focused on the role of men in preserving the “family ethic” in his speech, more than on women's. He blamed single motherhood and absent fatherhood for increasing poverty, child misbehaviour, crimes, addiction, and incarceration.⁷⁶⁹ For him, single motherhood He described those irresponsible fathers as: “(fathers) acting like boys instead of men.” And wanted fathers to recognize that what makes a father a man “is not the ability to have a child—it's the courage to raise one.”⁷⁷⁰

⁷⁶⁸ Barack Obama (D-Illinois), “Father's Day speech,” June 15, 2008, to Apostolic Church of God, Chicago, Illinois, as released by his campaign, politico .com, accessed December 12, 2021, <https://www.politico.com/story/2008/06/text-of-obamas-fatherhood-speech-011094> , see also Barack Obama, “Obama Father's Day Speech,” June 15, 2008, 12:33 to 13:32, C-Span, <https://www.c-span.org/video/?205980-1/obama-fathers-day-speech>

⁷⁶⁹ Kornbluh and Mink, *Ensuring Poverty*, 109.

⁷⁷⁰ Barack Obama, “Father's Day speech,” <https://www.politico.com/story/2008/06/text-of-obamas-fatherhood-speech-011094>

On Tuesday, November 4, 2008, Barack Obama was elected president of the United States, and he was the first African American to be elected president in the history of the United States of America. The ideology that dominated the nation at the time was not conservatism; besides, voters sent Democratic majorities to the House and Senate. Obama's rhetorical strategy, and especially his "A More Perfect Union" speech, had characterised the 2008 presidential campaign.⁷⁷¹ The actions of his first term made clear that President Barack Obama had been committed to a distinctive vision of American government: by emphasising the importance of free enterprise, rejecting the "equality of result", and guaranteeing fair opportunity and decent security for all the American citizens.⁷⁷² By doing so, Barack Obama is updating Franklin D. Roosevelt's Second Bill of Rights.⁷⁷³

Barack Obama faced the inherited dilemma from the previous administration: In January 2009, more than 160,000 troops were in Iraq and 38,000 more were in Afghanistan.⁷⁷⁴ Besides, the financial system was weak because of the 2008 economic recession.⁷⁷⁵ In the last quarter of 2008, the rate of the national economy was about 8.3 per cent and 5.4 per cent in the first quarter of 2009 and this caused a budget deficit of about 10 per cent; therefore, the Barack Obama Administration focused on reducing the nation's intervention overseas by withdrawing Military troops as a result of the economic collapse.⁷⁷⁶

One decade after passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act in 1996—which was supposed to end the racialised debates around welfare, public assistance for low-income families remains a hot political issue in the U.S.⁷⁷⁷ With the election of Obama as president of the U.S., many Americans (academics, politicians,

⁷⁷¹ Susanna Dilliplane, "Race, Rhetoric, and Running for President: Unpacking the Significance of Barack Obama's "A More Perfect Union" Speech," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 15, no. 1 (2012): 127.

⁷⁷² Cass R. Sunstein, "Obama, FDR, and the Second Bill of Rights," *Bloomberg*, 2013, available at <https://www.bloomberg.com/view/articles/2013-01-28/obama-fdr-and-the-second-bill-of-rights>

⁷⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷⁴ Thomas Oatley, *A Political Economy of American Hegemony*, 150.

⁷⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 2. *Ibid.*, 150.

⁷⁷⁷ Daguerre, foreword to *Obama's Welfare Legacy*, loc. 140–41.

public) assumed that Obama's Administration would focus on low-income families, who were disproportionately African Americans.⁷⁷⁸

America failed to provide government-guaranteed health care or family allowances. Unlike other industrialised nations in the world, the United States of America does not guarantee medical services and health insurance as a right of citizenship.⁷⁷⁹ In his project related to social policy, Barack Obama sought to tackle primarily the issue of healthcare.

The Barack Obama approach to address poverty had been hotly criticised because welfare spending increased from \$563 billion in 2008 to \$745 billion in 2012.⁷⁸⁰ Even though the percentage of unemployment decreased from 9.6 per cent in 2009 to 7.8 per cent in 2013, the rate of American families who benefited from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programme (SNAP), known previously as "food stamps", rose from 10.9 per cent to 15 per cent during the Obama Administration.⁷⁸¹ Thus, Newt Gringrich, a former speaker of the House and 2008 presidential candidate, said that Obama would be remembered as the "food-stamp president".⁷⁸²

President Barack Obama and the Democratic Party followed a "patriarchalist" path and had an "intersectional sexism" perspective to tackle the issues of poverty in the United States during the early twenty-first century.⁷⁸³ That is to say, they focused on the important role that "private patriarchal families" could play to cure the social woes amid the American society.⁷⁸⁴ For them, managing single mothers' lives is the key solution to combat poverty.⁷⁸⁵ His administration's antipoverty policies had been highly rejected by Republicans as they targeted the "undeserving" groups. Hence, his ambitions to change the U.S. welfare system were thwarted. In 2010, the Republican Party (or Grand Old Party)

⁷⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁹ Noble, *Welfare as we Knew it*, 7; Quadagno, *The Color of Welfare*, 4.

⁷⁸⁰ Richard S. Conley, "Barack Obama and the American Welfare State: Transformation or Punctuation?" *PS: Political Science & Politics* 50, no.1 (2017): 35.

⁷⁸¹ Ibid.

⁷⁸² Ibid.

⁷⁸³ Kornbluh and Mink, *Ensuring Poverty*, 110.

⁷⁸⁴ Ibid., 111.

⁷⁸⁵ Ibid.

had become more powerful as it controlled the House.⁷⁸⁶ In 2014, the Republican Party increased its House majority, controlled the Senate and also two-thirds of state legislatures.⁷⁸⁷ Those Republican coalitions prepared the groundwork for the election of a Republican president in 2017. Even though, different movements emerge to fight racial inequality such as “#blacklivesmatter”, they failed to tackle “interesting mobilizations of misogyny, discrimination, and patriarchalism that were omnipresent in bipartisan social policy” during Bill Clinton’s and Barack Obama’s administrations.⁷⁸⁸

3.2) The “Obamacare” and the Re-emergence of the Tea Party

The roots of the “Tea Party”—that had been active during the Obama Administration to oppose Obama’s initiatives related to social welfare policy—can be traced back to the 1970s.⁷⁸⁹ Some members of the Tea Party and who played a key role in its establishment were: former Republican elites who were for promoting low-tax and also anti-regulation measures.⁷⁹⁰ The Tea Party ideology includes hatred of Barack Obama; a “visceral” opposition of redistributive and pro-poor social policies; and a focus on limiting federal government intervention.⁷⁹¹

On the evening of March 23, 2010—a few hours after President Barack Obama had signed into law the Affordable Care and Patient Protection Act also called “Obamacare”, a proposal that targeted the reform of the healthcare system—at least forty Tea Parties gathered in a small café on Main Street in Brockton, Massachusetts.⁷⁹² Tea parties sought to stimulate Republicans’ political awareness in the whole nation, and hence contributed to the return of the Republican Party to the political scene with much enthusiasm and confidence.

⁷⁸⁶ Daguerre, *Obama’s Welfare Legacy*, loc. 158.

⁷⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸⁸ Kornbluh and Mink, *Ensuring Poverty*, 111–12.

⁷⁸⁹ Vanessa Williamson, Theda Skocpol, and John Coggin, “The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism,” *Perspectives on Politics* 9, no. 1 (March 2011): 25.

⁷⁹⁰ Ibid., 26.

⁷⁹¹ Daguerre, *Obama’s Welfare Legacy*, loc. 396.

⁷⁹² Williamson, Skocpol, and Coggin, “The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism,” 25.

A series of events preceded the Tea Party reappearance: On January 28, 2009, Rush Limbaugh coined the Term “Porkulus” to describe the upcoming “stimulus” package”. By February 8, the word appeared on the *New York Times* “Idea of the Day” blog. On February 16, 2009, an anti-stimulus protest supported by commentator Michelle Malkin and Americans for Prosperity took place in Seattle. Follow-up protests were held in Denver, CO where Obama signed the stimulus bill, and in Mesa AZ, where Obama referred to his mortgage plan.⁷⁹³ On February 19, 2009, CNBC commentator Rick Santelli, also a Chicago Mercantile Exchange Trader, demonstrated his strong opposition to Obama’s mortgage modification plan, he argued:

The government is promoting bad behavior . . . This is America. How many of you people want to pay for your neighbor’s mortgage, that has an extra bathroom, and can’t pay their bills? Raise their hand! President Obama, are you listening? . . . (W)e’re thinking of having a Chicago Tea Party in July. All you capitalists that want to show up to Lake Michigan, I’m going to start organizing.⁷⁹⁴

That verbal explosion spread quickly across the nation, and it generated a sentiment of disgust amid groups who tend to oppose all liberal policies and initiatives. The Tea Party led to the emergence of right-wing activism in the United States and shaped the political arena during the 2010 midterm elections.⁷⁹⁵ The Tea Party is “a new incarnation of longstanding strands in US conservatism . . . (with) some innovative organizational features.”⁷⁹⁶

⁷⁹³ Ibid., 38.

⁷⁹⁴ Michael Zucker, “Santelli, why don’t you Listen?” *Chicago Tribune*, March 1, 2009, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-2009-03-01-0902280392-story.html>

⁷⁹⁵ Williamson, Skocpol, and Coggin, “The Tea Party,” 26.

⁷⁹⁶ Ibid.

4) The Welfare State during Donald Trump's Administration

4.1) Republicans' Victory

Hillary D. Clinton and Donald J. Trump were the main and final candidates at the end of the 2016 presidential campaign. The Democratic candidate Hilary Rodham Clinton had a long experience as a politician: as a first lady, a U.S. senator for New York, and also as a secretary of state. However, the Republican Donald Trump has been a well-known American businessman and his party's slogan was "America First". Trump's candidacy has been considered as the least conventional in modern political history.⁷⁹⁷

In his rhetoric during the 2016 presidential primary campaign, Trump aimed at gaining public support by defining himself as an "anti-politician" or "anti-establishment" candidate.⁷⁹⁸ His rhetorical policy and strategy—which were characterised by a tone of sexism, racism, and xenophobia—reflected his intention to depict his character as a successful businessman who came from "outside the political realm" to make America great, again.⁷⁹⁹ It should be emphasised that the period that followed the 2016 presidential elections was marked by a phenomenon of "Fake News" (false stories).⁸⁰⁰

The "email scandal" affected badly Hilary Clinton's race for the presidency. Hilary Clinton blamed Trump's campaign because it violated every rule of the presidential campaign; and some commentators, political pundits, and media personalities assumed that his chance to win the elections was very little.⁸⁰¹ In her memoir entitled *What Happened*, Hilary Clinton reveals that former FBI chief James Comey and his reopening of the Federal Bureau Intelligence (FBI) investigation into her private email server ten days before the vote was the main cause of her defeat.⁸⁰² His success was related to a strong

⁷⁹⁷ Bert A Rockman, "The Trump Presidency – What Does It Mean?" *Zeitschrift Für Staats- Und Europawissenschaften (ZSE) / Journal for Comparative Government and European Policy* 14, no. 4 (2016): 437.

⁷⁹⁸ Orly Keyam, "Donald Trump's Rhetoric: How an anti-political strategy Helped him Win the Presidency," *Language and Dialogue* 8, no.2 (2018):183.

⁷⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁰ Hunt Allcott, and Matthew Gentzkow, "Social Media and Fake News in the 2016 Election," *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 31, no. 2 (2017): 212.

⁸⁰¹ Jeremy Kowalski, introduction to *Reading Trump and Trumpism: A Parallax of the Campaign and Early Presidency* (Switzerland: Springer, 2018), 1.

⁸⁰² Hilary Rodham Clinton, *What Happened* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2017).

affection with his supporters and also his rhetoric of “national populism”.⁸⁰³ Typical voters for Donald Trump were older white men who live in rural areas, self-employed or blue-collar workers, with a low level of education who share anti-immigration and anti-government sentiments.⁸⁰⁴

The Trump presidency was considered as a threat to the U.S. nation because Donald Trump, the rich businessman, “took office as if orchestrating a hostile corporate takeover.”⁸⁰⁵ He had a so-called bread-new vision of America—he considered global warming as a “hoax”, he pledged to build a wall along the Mexican border that Mexico would pay for it; deport 11 million illegal or undocumented immigrants, and he also promised immigration bans on certain countries especially on migrants with an Islamic background. Besides, he pledged to withdraw American troops from Afghanistan, Iraq as well as Syria. Hence, the Republican Party victory has been declared again with Trump’s election as president of the United States.

4.2) Trump, Capitalism, and the Welfare State

During his presidential campaign, Donald Trump pledged to cut public assistance programmes. In April 2018, Trump signed privately an executive order to give the green light to federal agencies to strengthen the work requirements for multiple welfare programmes.⁸⁰⁶ Even though Barack Obama succeeded to some extent to refresh the United States’ economy during his presidency, Donald Trump had convinced his target audience (who were almost older “white” voters) to blame Obama for wasting public money on illegal immigrants, undeserving minorities, and the young.⁸⁰⁷ In this section, we

⁸⁰³ Robert C. Rowland, “The Populist and Nationalist Roots of Trump's Rhetoric,” *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 22, no. 3 (2019): 343.

⁸⁰⁴ Christian Fuchs. *Digital Demagogue: Authoritarian Capitalism in the Age of Trump and Twitter* (London: Pluto Press, 2018), 85.

⁸⁰⁵ Jon D. Michaels, “Trump and the ‘Deep State’ The Government Strikes Back,” *Foreign Affairs* 96, no. 5 (2017): 52.

⁸⁰⁶ “Trump Signs Executive Order Pushing Work Requirements for Welfare Recipients,” *CBS News*, April 11, 2018, accessed September 28, 2020 at <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/trump-signs-executive-order-pushing-work-requirements-to-receive-welfare-benefits/>

⁸⁰⁷ Anne Daguerra, *Obama’s Welfare Legacy*, loc.1938.

attempt to understand the impact of capitalism on the development and the structure of the welfare state during the Trump Administration as well as Trump's approach to welfare.

Conservatives policy-makers have always aimed at reforming welfare in the U.S. For them, welfare should be a temporary safety net and not a way of life.⁸⁰⁸ Put it in the simplest of words, welfare should be an opportunity for vulnerable, able-bodied poor and not an obstacle. In his 2018, executive order, "Reducing Poverty in America by Promoting Opportunity and Economic Mobility," President Donald Trump focused on the importance of marriage in fighting poverty in the U.S., and he said that further welfare reform is required, he declared the following: "The welfare system still traps many recipients, especially children, in poverty and needs further reform and modernization to increase self-sufficiency, well-being, and economic mobility."⁸⁰⁹

The Trump Administration made more work restrictions on some food stamps beneficiaries, and it aimed at reducing their number: 688, 000 recipients were supposed to be eliminated from receiving SNAP benefits.⁸¹⁰ This new reform enabled the states, under the supervision of the U.S Department of Agriculture, to force able-bodied individuals who received SNAP benefits, and who had no children or other dependents at home (elderly or disabled), to work at least twenty hours per week.⁸¹¹ This welfare reform was planned to go into effect in April 2020 but the Covid-19 pandemic changed the path of the Trump Administration's strategies to tackle poverty issues and welfare reform matters.⁸¹²

⁸⁰⁸ Leslie Ford, "How Trump Restored the Principles of Welfare Reform and Lifted Americans out of Poverty," *The Heritage Foundation*, October 9, 2020, accessed June 14, 2021, <https://www.heritage.org/welfare/commentary/how-trump-restored-the-principles-welfare-reform-and-lifted-americans-out>

⁸⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁸¹⁰ Pam Fessler and Rachel Treisman, "Nearly 700, 000 SNAP Recipients could Lose Benefits under New Trump Rule," *NPR*, December 4, 2019, accessed May 12, 2021, <https://www.npr.org/2019/12/04/784732180/nearly-700-000-snap-recipients-could-lose-benefits-under-new-trump-rule?t=1641208448729>

⁸¹¹ Leslie Ford, "How Trump Restored the Principles of Welfare Reform and Lifted Americans out of Poverty," <https://www.heritage.org/welfare/commentary/how-trump-restored-the-principles-welfare-reform-and-lifted-americans-out>

⁸¹² Ibid.

Capitalism has witnessed a crisis in 2008 because of the global depression, and that crisis had been followed by political instability in the United States and Europe.⁸¹³ The reactions of governments in Europe and North America towards the global economic recession of 2008 were “neoliberal” that focused on cutting expenditures for the welfare state.⁸¹⁴ During Trump's presidency, state power and capitalism had changed completely: “authoritarian capitalism based on the direct rule of the billionaire class, nationalism, scapegoating, the friend/enemy scheme law-and-order politics and meditated spectacles.”⁸¹⁵

It is important to note that the United States' economy has flourished during the Trump Administration.⁸¹⁶ The U.S. economy has witnessed stability during the Trump presidency because he focused primarily on domestic affairs. For instance, Trump focused on the well-being of American citizens first and neglected foreigners on American soil. He also ordered the military to stop its operations in Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan.

There is a correlation between the real Gross Domestic Product (GDP)— previously referred to as Gross National Product (GNP), which stands for the standard measure of the value-added created through the production of goods and services in a country during a given time—in a given country and human well-being: wealth and high-living standards.⁸¹⁷ The economic stability that the United States has witnessed during the early years of Trump's presidency is the fruit of Obama's efforts. President Donald Trump neglected minorities' rights for welfare and privileged like-minded white businessmen. In his strategy of “America First”, Trump implemented trade protectionism through tariffs

⁸¹³ Fuchs, *Digital Demagogue*, 197

⁸¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 91

⁸¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 197.

⁸¹⁶ See, for instance, Arne Heise and Ayesha Serfraz Khan, “The Welfare State and Liberal Democracy: A Political Economy Approach,” *World Review of Political Economy* 10, no. 2 (2019): 220–45.

⁸¹⁷ Recent research reveals that another parameter has been taken into consideration in order to assess a country's status (in addition to GDP or GNP): happiness, see Justin Fox, “The Economic of Well-being,” *Harvard Business Review*, January–February 2012. <https://hbr.org/2012/01/the-economics-of-well-being> For further information about the link between welfare and ecosystem services see, Matthew Agarwala, Giles Atkinson, Benjamin Palmer Fry, Katherine Homewood, Susana Mourato, J. Marcus Rowcliffe, Graham Wallace, and E.J. Milner-Gulland, “Assessing the Relationship Between Human Well-being and Ecosystem Services: A Review of Frameworks,” *Conservation and Society* 12, no. 4 (2014): 437–49.

especially on imports from China, and established anti-immigration measures. This led to a balance in the U.S. economy to some extent before the Covid-19 crisis.

Despite his racist, sexist, and classist attitudes, as well as his unconventional comments and communicative manners with other governors abroad, he succeeded to some extent to reach his aim: “Make America Great Again”.⁸¹⁸ According to data available at OECD database the United States’ quarterly gross domestic product in 2020, during the Trump presidency and the pandemic, hard times is about 7.4 where OECD total is -10.5. Hence, according to available data at OECD, the United States’ economy is doing well even during the Covid-19 crisis.⁸¹⁹

In other words, even though President Trump’s rhetoric and attitude were unconventional, the status of the U.S. economy has improved during the Trump Era, unlike Obama’s. It should be noted, however, that *not all Americans* benefited from the abundance that the U.S. had witnessed during the Trump presidency. According to information provided by OECD, unlike other democracies in the world (such as Finland, Switzerland, France, Denmark, etc.) income inequality—which refers to the unequal or uneven distribution of wealth—remains higher in the U.S.⁸²⁰ New challenges have emerged during the last year of Trump presidency especially with the uncertain times caused by the pandemic: higher rates of unemployment, social and economic instability home and abroad.

In 2020 President Trump aimed at reinforcing the military spending and reducing spending on such public services like Medicare, Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programme (SNAP) that was called food stamps previously, housing assistance, in his 2020 budget.⁸²¹ That White House budget plan for the fiscal year 2020 aimed to:

⁸¹⁸ According to data available at <https://www.bea.gov/news/2020/gross-domestic-product-fourth-quarter-and-year-2019-advance-estimate>

⁸¹⁹ OECD (2020), Quarterly GDP (indicator), accessed November, 17, 2020, doi: 10.1787/b86d1fc8-en

⁸²⁰ <https://data.oecd.org/inequality/income-inequality.htm>

⁸²¹ Kriston Capps, “The Brutal Austerity of Trump’s Huge 2020 Budget : The President’s Wish List for 2020 Mixes Massive Military Spending Boosts with Slashes to Medicare, Medicaid, Food Stamps, Housing Assistance, and Other Domestic Needs,” *Bloomberg CityLab*, March 11, 2019, accessed December 3, 2021, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-03-11/trump-s-2020-budget-cuts-would-hit-states-and-cities>

- Re-impose restrictive measures on government (domestic) spending by cutting about \$55 billion in 2020. Aid for housing, food, medicine, research, and other programmes would be reduced as well.⁸²²
- Eliminate the Community Development Block Grant and HOME Investment Partnerships programmes. Besides, it aimed to cut spending on the National Housing Trust Fund, impose stringent work requirements and “triple” rents for housing aid recipients, as well as reduce funds by 16.4 per cent.⁸²³
- Cut \$219 billion from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programme (SNAP). Hence, the budget would reduce SNAP funds (30 per cent at least).⁸²⁴
- Cut \$10 billion in funds from the Social Security Disability programme.
- Cut \$845 billion from Medicare funds.
- Reduce financial support for transportation infrastructure.
- Reduce the budget for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency by 31 per cent (because climate change is not considered as a real threat by the Trump Administration).⁸²⁵
- Increase the budget for military spending through Overseas Contingency Operations by hundreds of billions of dollars.
- Ask for supplementary financial support from Congress to build a border wall with Mexico. More than \$9 billion targeted the construction of the wall,⁸²⁶
- Impose more restrictive measures on immigrants (request further administrative documents) to access Medicaid: Undocumented and illegal immigrants cannot benefit from Medicaid.⁸²⁷

⁸²² Ibid.

⁸²³ Ibid.

⁸²⁴ Ibid.

⁸²⁵ Richard Kogan et al., “Cuts to Low-Income Assistance Programs in President Trump’s 2020 Budget Are Wide-Ranging,” *Center on Budget and Policy Priorities*, May 15, 2019, accessed December 3, 2021, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/federal-budget/cuts-to-low-income-assistance-programs-in-president-trumps-2020-budget-are>

⁸²⁶ Ibid.

⁸²⁷ Ibid.

Thus, Trump’s administration was not interested in tackling welfare issues and its main intention was to shrink more and more the scope and the size of the welfare state. Felicia Kornbluh and Gwendolyn Mink clarify the point, they state that:

Trump’s infant presidency and the Republican congressional majority deployed the framework of welfare reform to assail all forms of social provision by the federal government. Eager to choke off access to the safety net, the ruling party variously proposed capped funding, block grants, and work requirements to shrink government programs such as Medicaid, food stamps, housing, and Supplemental Security Insurance (SSI).³ As for welfare—TANF—itsself: Republicans aimed to intensify its disciplinary mechanisms, especially work requirements, in ways that would make poverty assistance virtually unattainable or its terms wholly untenable for poor families.⁸²⁸

It was clear that President Trump aimed at cutting domestic spending and increasing spending on the military in his 2020 budget wish list. Nevertheless, his proposed 2020 budget was a real disaster. Fortunately, the White House 2020 proposed fiscal year budget was not welcomed by both Republicans and Democrats and thus not confirmed by Congress.⁸²⁹

4.3) “Fascism” and “Neo-nationalism” during the Trump Administration

In this section, I will try to explain how and why “fascism” and “neo-nationalism” appeared in American political life during the Trump Era and shed some light on their impact on welfare policies and the welfare state. I need first to define “fascism” and “neo-nationalism”. The term fascism stems from the Italian word *fasces* (a bundle of rods carried before consuls in Ancient Rome to signify their authority); later, by the 1890s the word *fascia* was used in Italy to refer to a political “group or band, usually of revolutionary socialists.”⁸³⁰

Fascism is a “generic term of political abuse ... and is associated most closely with Europe between the world wars, when movements bearing this name took power in

⁸²⁸ Felicia Kornbluh and Gwendolyn Mink, *Ensuring Poverty*, 131.

⁸²⁹ Richard Kogan et al., “Cuts to Low-Income Assistance Programs in President Trump’s 2020 Budget Are Wide-Ranging,” <https://www.cbpp.org/research/federal-budget/cuts-to-low-income-assistance-programs-in-president-trumps-2020-budget-are>

⁸³⁰ Heywood, *Political Ideologies*, 212.

Italy and Germany and wreaked havoc in many other European countries.”⁸³¹ Fascism “is essentially the attempt to ensure the rule of monopoly capitalism in its purest, most untrammelled, most vulnerable form.”⁸³² Fascism emerged during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in an age of globalisation, during which capitalism changed radically societies, destroyed traditional communities, professions, and cultural norms in the Western World.⁸³³ That was a period of immense immigration as well: peasants moved to industrialized cities, and people from poor countries fled to richer ones.⁸³⁴ With the arrival of the Republican candidate Donald Trump to the political scene, the conservative columnist Robert Kagan and distinguished foreign policy scholar warned, in an article:

This is how fascism comes to America, not with jackboots and salutes (although there have been salutes, and a whiff of violence) but with a television huckster, a phony billionaire, a textbook egomaniac “tapping into” popular resentments and insecurities, and with an entire national political party— out of ambition or blind party loyalty, or simply out of fear— falling into line behind him.⁸³⁵

David Brooks, a conservative political and cultural commentator, shares the same point of view with Robert Kagan, he also warns:

People will be judged by where they stood this time. Those who walked with Trump will be tainted forever after for the degradation of standards and the general election slaughter. The better course for all of us—Republican, Democrat, and independent—is to step back and take the long view, and to begin building for that.⁸³⁶

Other terms that I need to examine are “nationalism” and “neo-nationalism”. Broadly speaking, nationalism can be defined as “the belief that the nation is the central principle of political organization.”⁸³⁷ The idea of nationalism appeared during the French Revolution when the revolutionaries protested against Louis XVI in 1789 in the name of the people to

⁸³¹ Sheri Berman, “Populism Is Not Fascism: But It Could Be a Harbinger,” *Foreign Affairs* 95, no. 6 (2016): 39.

⁸³² Terry Eagleton, “What Is Fascism?” *New Blackfriars* 57, no. 670 (1976): 100.

⁸³³ Berman, “Populism is not Fascism,” 39–40.

⁸³⁴ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁸³⁵ Robert Kagan, “This is how Fascism Comes to America,” *Washington Post*, May 18, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/this-is-how-fascism-comes-to-america/2016/05/17/c4e32c58-1c47-11e6-8c7b-6931e66333e7_story.html

⁸³⁶ David Brooks, “If not Trump, what?,” *New York Times*, April 29, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/29/opinion/if-not-trump-what.html>

⁸³⁷ Heywood, *Political Ideologies: An Introduction*, 168–69.

form a “French nation”.⁸³⁸ Hence, the notion of nationalism was associated with revolution and democracy.⁸³⁹ Nationalism, as a political ideology “asserts that a nation has the political right to constitute itself as an independent, sovereign, political community, because of both a perceived shared history and common destiny.”⁸⁴⁰ As a political movement, nationalism is conceived when “a group of people of indeterminate but normally considerable size often but not always living in the same country. [...] believe themselves distinctive and unique, [and manifest] by community ties that are both significant and persistent.”⁸⁴¹ Nationalism is highly criticised and rejected by internationalists who see it as “insular, backward looking, and unsuited for the challenges of the post–Cold War world.”⁸⁴²

Neo-nationalism is “an ideology articulated by political parties often described as radical, populist, or nativist.”⁸⁴³ In other words, neo-nationalists seek to change politics radically, protect the people’s interests from the elites, and preserve the rights and dignities of the natives and exclude immigrants.⁸⁴⁴ Trump considers himself as a radical as he sought to change American politics radically; a populist since he encouraged the majority of ordinary citizens to condemn the self-serving and corrupt elites; and a nativist because his main supporters were “white indigenous” Americans.⁸⁴⁵ In other words, the three attributes combined—nationalist, populist, and radicalist—form what we call “neo-nationalism. Simply put, Trump is a “neo-nationalist” American leader.

⁸³⁸ Ibid., 168–69.

⁸³⁹ Ibid., 169.

⁸⁴⁰ Haynes, *Trump and the Politics of Neo-Nationalism*, 32.

⁸⁴¹ Ibid. For further reading on nationalism, see for instance, Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994); see also Anthony D. Smith, *Theories of Nationalism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972).

⁸⁴² Haynes, *Trump and the Politics of Neo-nationalism*, 32.

⁸⁴³ Alexander Svitych “Populism or Neo-nationalism?” *Political Observer on Populism*, April 30, 2018, accessed December 6, 2021, <https://populismobserver.com/2018/04/30/populism-or-neo-nationalism/>. See also, Alexander Svitych, “The 1619 Project,” *New York Times*, August 14, 2019, accessed December 6, 2021, www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/1619-america-slavery.html

⁸⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁴⁵ Haynes, *Trump and the Politics of Neo-nationalism*, 40.

As a neo-nationalist, Trump is adherent both to market forces and nativism.⁸⁴⁶ He also targeted the cultural, societal, and political threats of “uncontrolled Muslim immigration”.⁸⁴⁷ Trump had been widely supported by Christian nationalists because they firmly believed that he will re-Christianise America and support persecuted Christians abroad.⁸⁴⁸

In sum, neo-nationalism in the U.S. combines both Religious nationalism—that is to say, Christian nationalism which is backed by the Christian Right— and the First American nationalism—which is secular, and that is backed by secular conservatives—and were both successfully tackled by President Donald Trump.⁸⁴⁹ Besides, Trump’s neo-nationalism in the U.S. is different from other countries’ nationalism in the Western World as it is shaped by the United States’ unique history, culture, society, and politics.⁸⁵⁰

4.4) Trump, the Rhetoric of “Disgust”: The Intersections of Race, Class, Gender, and Religion

Trump is one of the most controversial and unprecedented American leaders in American political history. During his administration, stigmatisation against different groups and communities became more and more violent. Not only African Americans (“people of colour”, but also Arabs (especially Muslims), Mexicans, and Asian Americans have been stigmatised, especially during the pandemic. Trump has benefited from the current events to employ expressions that incite hatred, disgust, and anti-immigration sentiments. A recent study has shown that there is a correlation between disgust sensitivity and anti-immigrant attitudes.⁸⁵¹

⁸⁴⁶ Ibid., 41.

⁸⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁴⁹ Ibid., 42.

⁸⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁸⁵¹ See for instance Annika K. Karinen, Catherine Molho, Tom R. Kupfer, and Joshua M. Tybur, “Disgust Sensitivity and Opposition to Immigration: Does Contact Avoidance or Resistance to Foreign Norms Explain the Relationship,” *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 84 , no.103817 (2019):1.

Trump's comments have been considered "racist" by some commentators. He used "Chinese virus" (or "Kung-flu")⁸⁵² to refer to a virus that originated from Wuhan, China. During a press interview, a confrontation took place between an Asian American *CBS News* reporter Weijia Jiang and Trump. President Donald Trump asked the reporter to find answers related to the pandemic to China herself. During another press interview, Trump opened his talk with the following expression: "I would like to begin by announcing some important developments in our war against the *Chinese* virus."⁸⁵³ A reporter asked Trump the following question: "why do you keep calling this "Chinese Virus"? There are reports of dozens of incidents of bias against Chinese Americans in this country?" Your own aid Secretary Azar says he does not use this term. He says ethnicity does not cause the virus. Why do you keep using this?" Trump answered: "Because it comes from China." The reporter added: "A lot of people say it is racist." Trump continued: "It is not racist at all, no. Not at all. It comes from China. That's why. It comes from China." In his answer to the reporter, Trump made stressed the word "CHINA", because, for him, the virus comes from China. The word "Chinese" is problematic as it associates a pandemic to an ethnicity.

Michael Richardson, a communication scholar who tackles in his works the intersection of power, affect, and violence in culture believes that "the affirmation, amplification, and circulation of disgust is one of the primary affective drivers of Trump's political success."⁸⁵⁴ Trump's rhetoric is characterised by the centrality and frequent evocation of "disgust".⁸⁵⁵ Indeed, there is a correlation between "disgust", conservatism and more extreme politics of ethno-nationalism.⁸⁵⁶ Donald Trump has become president of the U.S. despite his "chaotic" and "unconventional" campaign, and this success can be explained by "the appeal of ethno-nationalism, racism, voter suppression, economic anxiety, political alienation, media coverage, the errors of the Clinton campaign, (and) the

⁸⁵² "Wuhan virus" is another racist expression which appeared in the political discourse used by the Trump Administration.

⁸⁵³ "Trump Grilled on Use of Term "Chinese Virus";" *BBC News*, March 18, 2020; <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-us-canada-51953315> (Italics added)

⁸⁵⁴ Michael Richardson, "The Disgust of Donald Trump," *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies* 31, no.6 (2017): 1. See also Casey Ryan Kelly, "Donald J. Trump and the Rhetoric of White Ambivalence," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 23, no. 2 (2020): 195–223.

⁸⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁵⁶ Ibid.

interference of the Russian Intelligence agencies.”⁸⁵⁷ The triumph of Donald Trump has generated a “fever of Trumpian right-wing populism” which is still spreading in many democracies around the world.⁸⁵⁸ Indeed, the election of Trump in the U.S. (and Brexit in Europe), the “populist” phenomenon has been extended to other established democracies such as France, Sweden, Poland, Hungary, Greece, and Spain.⁸⁵⁹ It is difficult to define the term “populism” but it commonly refers to “... (the representation of) the will of the people versus some “other,” commonly represented as a corrupt and self-serving elite.”⁸⁶⁰

The Trump presidency has also been characterised by the return of brutal phenomena of anti-black racism, such as police violence against “black” people, in the American society (such incidents as the assassination of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor). That phenomenon led to the intervention of such movements like the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement—a social movement that advocates non-violent civil disobedience and “black” liberty— has reacted to the incidents of police brutality. Besides, worldwide peaceful reactions took place to morally support the “black” community in the U.S. and abroad.

Trump is known for his misogynist and racist attitudes.⁸⁶¹ For instance, he tweeted “Send her back!” to attack four Congresswomen: Representative Ilham Omar of Minnesota, Representative Rashida Tlaib of Michigan, Representative Ayanna Pressley of Massachusetts, and Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York.⁸⁶² In earlier tweets, he demonstrated his disgust from countries of origin of the four representatives “women of colour: “a complete and total catastrophe, the worst and the most corrupt” then asked those women to “go back and help fix the broken and crime-infested places from which they came.”⁸⁶³

⁸⁵⁷ Ibid., 4.

⁸⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁵⁹ Yotam Margalit, “Economic Insecurity and the Causes of Populism, Reconsidered,” *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 33, no. 4 (2019): 152.

⁸⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁸⁶¹ Felicia Kornbluh and Gwendolyn Mink, *Ensuring Poverty*, 130.

⁸⁶² Hatem Bazian, “Islamophobia, Trump's Racism and 2020 Elections!” *Islamophobia Studies Journal* 5, no. 1 (2019):8.

⁸⁶³ Ibid.

Stigmatisation against various minority groups (who were not seen as “White”) living in the U.S. society by the Trump government has been driven by race, gender, class, and religious biased ideas. Simply put, such social vision parameters as race, class, gender, and religion have been intersected during Trump’s Era and their intersection has become obvious in Americans’ political, social, as well as cultural lives. They have been overtly and intentionally used as legitimate criteria by the Trump Administration to justify harsh attitudes against certain target groups, and those groups included:

- Both sexes (females and males) with Asian, African, Arab or Latino backgrounds or origins;
- Both sexes (females and males) whose faith is Islam;
- And women (females), in general.

However, “white” Americans whose ancestors were “white” successful immigrants from Europe, in particular, were recognised as legitimate citizens in the U.S. Trump himself is a grandson of a German entrepreneur who immigrated to the U.S. in 1885. For Trump, “white” Europeans from countries like Germany, Britain, Norway, who migrated to the New World in the past, have contributed to the development of the United States, unlike new immigrants whose countries are, for instance, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq and Mexico.

Therefore, during the Trump Administration, racist, classist, gender-based, as well as religion-based or stereotyped attitudes were obviously and widely used in politics and public policy in the U.S. President Trump used a clear language of race, gender, religion, and class in his rhetoric. This typology of discourse was absent in Bill Clinton’s political speeches.⁸⁶⁴ Unlike other Republican presidents, (except from Ronald Reagan, who targeted “mothers of colour” during his administration), the intersection of those social divisions was to some extent absent in other U.S. presidents’ political rhetoric.

⁸⁶⁴ As we have seen in *Chapter Five*, even though Bill Clinton targeted welfare recipients, he did not use any obvious and direct biased language.

5) The 2020s Harsh Times, the Presidential Elections and the Future of the Welfare State in the U.S.

Unlike former presidents in the modern era, Donald Trump is a capitalist and a politician.⁸⁶⁵ Yet, at the same time, he plays the role of a celebrity and he sought to attract the audience's attention using different means such as social media (Twitter), reality TV etc., and his ideology is called "Trumpology".⁸⁶⁶

The world has witnessed a terrible transformation at all levels because of the Covid-19 pandemic that appeared initially in Wuhan, in China, then it has spread in all over the world: from Asia to Europe, then Africa to Canada, and to the Americas. Consequently, the Coronavirus pandemic resulted in a global hysteria and an abrupt change in people's routines. Many workers have been compelled to stay indoors to stay safe and to practice social distancing. Many firms stopped their activities to control the spread of the virus and recommended remote work.

Experts in economics are suspecting another economic recession even harsher than the Great Depression of 1929. Despite the fact many governors from different spots in the world made huge efforts to cope with the new situation that the Coronavirus pandemic has resulted in—by encouraging remote work and adopting social distancing—many individuals have unfortunately lost their jobs or their income has been reduced. Some firms, however, have not stopped working despite the pandemic and companies which benefited from this situation: IT companies that enhance networking and companies that produce masks and hydroalcoholic gels.

The U.S. government's reaction to the pandemic has been unique as Trump blamed China for the spread of the pandemic instead of looking for pragmatic solutions. He called the virus "Chinese Virus" simply because it originated from China.

⁸⁶⁵ Fuchs. *Digital Demagogue*, 165.

⁸⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

This period of the Covid-19 has been marked by the 2020 U.S. presidential elections and the victory of the Democratic Party under the leadership of Joe Biden (I will tackle the difference between Biden’s strategies and Trump’s in dealing with the pandemic and their reaction to the economic crisis in a separate paper).

In sum, welfare (which refers to public assistance programmes) has been shaped by stigma and stereotype. It is very important to bear in mind that not only the poor have been benefiting from welfare.⁸⁶⁷ The U.S. government also helps middle-class and upper-class families.⁸⁶⁸ In other words, “social welfare programs serving the middle class and upper classes receive more government funding, pay higher benefits, and face fewer budget cuts that programs serving poor people.”⁸⁶⁹ Thus, the perception of welfare in the United States (that welfare benefits only the “welfare queens”) is irrational and it has been, to some extent, manipulated by the media and by some politicians who tend to blame poor people for benefiting from welfare to become richer and richer.

⁸⁶⁷ Mimi Abramovitz, “Everyone is Still on Welfare: The Role of Redistribution in Social Policy,” *Social Work* 46, no.4 (November 2001): 297.

⁸⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 299.

⁸⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

General Conclusion

Unlike other Western nations, the U.S. welfare state is underdeveloped.⁸⁷⁰ It is taken for granted that the architecture of the U.S. welfare state is so unique.⁸⁷¹ The United States of America is exceptional because it lacks national health insurance and universal family allowances or paid parental leave.⁸⁷² Arguments about the U.S. unique welfare state were linked to the role of race, gender, and class in shaping social policy in the United States.

The American welfare state has been exposed to various alterations throughout its historical development. Many factors have influenced its formal structure from its inception. Scholars believe that such social divisions as gender, class, and race have shaped the formation and the development of the American social welfare system. It is irrelevant to deal with the past and the future of the American welfare system without dealing with race, class, and gender issues because they have played an important role in shaping the United States' politics and public policy. Paula S. Rothenberg states that "It is impossible to make sense out of either the past or the present (in the U.S.) without using race, class, [and] gender ... as central categories of description and analysis."⁸⁷³ The United States of

⁸⁷⁰ See for instance Jeff Manza, "Race and the Underdevelopment of the American Welfare State," *Theory and Society* 29 (2000): 819.

⁸⁷¹ Katz, *The Price of Citizenship*.

⁸⁷² Quadagno, *The Color of Welfare*, 4.

⁸⁷³ Paula S. Rothenberg, Introduction to *Race, Class, and Gender in the United States: An Integrated Study*, 6th ed. (William Paterson University of New Jersey: Worth Publishers, 2004), 1.

America has given so much importance to those divisions in its distribution of wealth, opportunity, resources and even power.⁸⁷⁴

The most important legislation of the New Deal, i.e., the Social Security Act of 1935, led to creation of a stratified system along with class, gender and race lines. Those social divisions influenced the structure as well as the evolution of the New Deal welfare state through time. Yet the Social Security Act of 1935 programmes have not been developed in a similar way and manner: some programmes were stigmatised and others were not.⁸⁷⁵ AFDC had been the most controversial and isolated programme throughout its history in the U.S.

Racial stereotypes have played a crucial role in generating opposition to welfare. “White” Americans viewed welfare as a programme that rewards “black” able-bodied who were “undeserving poor”. In other words, they attacked welfare, or simply AFDC, because its main recipients were lazy and shiftless. It should be noted that racist and negative images about poverty and welfare provided by the mass media in the U.S. played a central role in fueling the American public’s opposition against welfare.

Social divisions reinforced the idea that the welfare state is a failure and that the American welfare system should be privatised. They shifted the path of the American welfare state that was established during the New Deal era and proved that Americans prefer the private over the public system because it is corrupt and inefficient.

Throughout this project, I have tried to analyse Bill Clinton’s arguments for welfare reform and it appears in *Chapter Five*. I have attempted to demonstrate the implications of racism, classism and sexism in his decision to sign the welfare reform bill in 1996. My work provides an original analysis of arguments advanced by Bill Clinton concerning the welfare reform issue by using different written (and some oral) records.

⁸⁷⁴ Ibid., 5.

⁸⁷⁵ Katz, *The Price of Citizenship*; Gordon, *Pitied but not Entitled*; Abramovitz, *Regulating the Lives of Women*.

Welfare reform is about reestablishing the “work ethic” and the “family values” that had been stressed by authorities since the colonial period.⁸⁷⁶ Throughout this paper, one is made to know that President Bill Clinton was close to African Americans and a defender of civil rights. His childhood in the South and his grand grandfather’s tolerant attitude towards “blacks” influenced his opinions about African Americans. Indeed, the environment in which he had grown up shaped his future political views.

In this dissertation, I have demonstrated that President Bill Clinton, the New Democrat, strongly defended and supported welfare reform merely because he firmly believed that Republicans failed to deal with it. He focused on the idea of assisting families with modest income (namely welfare recipients) through tax cuts. Thus, he proposed to assist people on welfare to find real and tangible job opportunities by providing them with some key tools and solutions such as training, education, and through maintaining the vital role of the family ethic. He emphasised the important role of states in helping needy families to find jobs. The key solution for him was cutting taxes. He used authentic and positive strategies for welfare reform to restore the position of the Democratic Party in the U.S. political life by involving welfare reform recipients themselves in the attack against welfare.

He used in his political discourse some stereotyped labels such as “the undeserving poor”—who were mainly never-married “women of colour” and their young dependent children. His discourse reflects the reality about how politicians perceive welfare clients: single women and young children. This perception of welfare recipients is identical to conservatives’ stereotyped opinions. They believe that welfare clients are “single mothers of colour and their young children”. He referred to single mothers and used the adjective “black”. He crystallizes, therefore, the idea of the “welfare queen” which formed the core of the urban underclass.

Even though Bill Clinton was neither a conservative nor a Republican, his initiatives concerning welfare reform reflected some extent the impact of racist and sexist biases on

⁸⁷⁶Abramovitz, *Regulating the Lives of Women*, 165.

politics and social policy in the United States. Nevertheless, Bill Clinton focuses on the idea of “honoring work”, first and foremost.

His attitude was positive: he focused on the idea that states should be active to help poor families find jobs, supporting them through training, helping them educate their children, and ensuring their access to healthcare. Hence, according to the analysis and the interpretation of the written material that I have used in my research work, I conclude the following:

- *Rational Arguments for welfare reform*: He focused on the notion of work and preserving family values, which go hand in hand with conservatives’ arguments and which the Republican Party had been supporting during the previous decades.

- *Involving welfare clients in the attack against welfare to avoid bias*: His rhetorical strategy was unique to some extent. He involved welfare clients themselves—who were African American single mothers—in his effort for welfare reform. This may confirm, to some extent, the conservatives’ negative perception of welfare recipients who were viewed as mainly single “mothers of colour” and their children.

- *The federal government should be active to help people on welfare find solutions*: He aimed to change the perception of the role of the federal government in the U.S. That is to say, the national government should provide the necessary tools to citizens to help them improve their living conditions. He also sought to sustain the homogeneity of the American community and rejecting all kinds of social divisions such as race, class, gender, religion, sexual orientation, and political philosophy.

- *Refreshing the political position of the Democratic Party in the U.S.*: As a New Democrat, Bill Clinton worked for the welfare reform effort to reestablish the position of the Democratic Party within the American political scene, gain confidence from both parties, and empower his race for the presidency.

It should be noted that, Bill Clinton’s plan to reform the social welfare system was a failure, according to data provided by academics, as many poor families’ living

conditions had become worse and worse, and this deepened poverty in the U.S. society during the post-welfare reform era. Put it in the simplest of words, welfare reform did not improve the living conditions of poor people. The media played a central role in publicising the so-called “success stories” of some ex-welfare clients. Besides, it should be borne in mind that not all welfare recipients, who wanted to change their lives through work and education, received equal opportunities from the state governments. Intersectional race, class, and gender issues impacted social welfare policy and the distribution of wealth in the U.S before, during the welfare reform era and beyond.

During the years that followed the signing of PRWORA by Bill Clinton, the welfare state in the U.S. had been exposed to some changes during Obama’s Administration. President Barack Obama made tangible efforts to reform the U.S. welfare state by targeting key programmes such as healthcare and food stamps. His intention to innovate the U.S. welfare system had been thwarted because of conservatives’ opposition (Tea Parties). His will to reform the American welfare system was considered by conservatives as an attempt to exclusively help the “undeserving poor”.

During the Trump era, welfare targeted people who did not need any government assistance. During the Covid-19 pandemic, new challenges have emerged and the future of the welfare state is between the Democrats’ hands since, again, Democrats have returned to the political scene with the election of Joe Biden. I will tackle the evolution of welfare (public assistance programmes) and the U.S. welfare state during the present times in another project.

Appendices

Appendix I

The STATUTES AT LARGE

From

The Thirty-ninth Year of Q. Elisabeth,

TO THE

Twelfth Year of K. Charles II. inclusive,

To which is prefixed,

TABLE containing the TITLES of all the STATUTES during that Period,

VOL.VII.

BANBY PICKERING, of Gray's Inn, Esq;

Reader of the Law Lecture to that Honorable Society.

Edited by Joseph Bentham, CAMBRIDGE, Printer to the University, Charles
Bathurst at the,

Cross Keys, opposite St. Dunstan's Church in Fleet-Street , London 1763.

CUM PRIVILEGIO

An Act for the Relief of the Poor, 43 Elisabeth, 1601.

Be it enacted by the authority of this present parliament, That the church wardens of every parish, and four, three or two substantial householders there, as shall be thought meet, having respect to the proportion and greatness of the same parish and parishes, to be nominated yearly in *Easter Week*, or within one month after *Easter*, under the hand and seal of two or more justices of the peace in the same county, whereof one to be of the *quorum*, dwelling in or near the same parish or division where the same parish doth lie, shall be called overseers of the poor of the same parish: and they, or the greater part of them, shall take order from time to time, by and with the consent of two or more such justices of peace as is aforesaid, for setting to work the children of all such whose parents shall not by the said church-wardens and overseers, or the greater part of them, be thought able to keep and maintain their children; and also for setting to work all such persons, married or unmarried, having no means to maintain them, and use no ordinary and daily trade of life to get their living by: and also to raise weekly or otherwise (by taxation of every inhabitant, parson, vicar and other, and of every occupier of lands, houses, tithes impropriate, proportions of tithes, coal-mines, or saleable underwoods in the said parish, in such competent sum and sums of money as they shall think fit) a convenient stock of flax, hemp, wool, thread, iron and other necessary ware and stuff, to set the poor on work: and also competent sums of money for and towards the necessary relief of the lame, impotent, old, blind, and such other among them, being poor and not able to work, and also for putting out of such children to be apprentices....

III. And be it also enacted, That if the said justices of peace do perceive, that the inhabitants of any parish are not able to levy among themselves sufficient sums of money for the purposes aforesaid; That then the said two justices shall and may tax, rate and assess as aforesaid, any other of other parishes, or out of any parish, within the hundred where the said parish is, to pay such sum and sums of money to the church – wardens and overseers of the said poor parish for the said purposes, as the said justices shall think fit, according to the intent of this law: (2) and if the said hundred shall not be thought to the said justices able and fit to relieve the said several parishes not able to provide for themselves as aforesaid; Then the justices of peace at their general quarter sessions, or the greater number of them, shall rate and assess as aforesaid, any other of other parishes, or out of any parish, within the said county for the purposes aforesaid, as in their discretion.

IV. And that it should be lawful, as well for the present as subsequent church – wardens and overseers, or any of them by warrant from any two such justices of peace, as is aforesaid, to levy as well as the said sums of money, and all arrearages, of every one that shall refuse to contribute according as they shall be assessed, by distress and sale of the offender's goods, as the sums of money or stock shall be behind upon any account to be made as aforesaid, rendering to the parties the overplus; (2) and in defect of such distress, it shall be lawful for any such two justices of the peace to commit him or them to the common goal of the county, there to remain without bail or mainprize until payment of the said sum, arrearages and stock: (3) and the said justices of peace, or any one of them, to send

the house of correction or common goal, , such as shall not to employ themselves to work , being appointed thereunto , as aforesaid: (4) and also any such two justices of peace to commit to the said prison every one of the said church –wardens and overseers which shall refuse to account, there to remain without bail or mainprize until he have made a true account, and satisfied and paid so much as upon the said account shall be remaining in his hands.

V. And be it further enacted , That it should be lawful for the said church-wardens and overseers, or the greater part of them, by the assent of any two justices of the peace aforesaid, to bind any such children, as aforesaid, to be apprentices , where they shall see convenient , till such man-child shall come to the age of and twenty years , and such woman-child to the age of one and twenty years, or the time of her marriage; the same to be effectual to all purposes , as if such child were of full age, and by indenture of covenant bound him or her self, (2) And to the intent that necessary places of habitation may more conveniently be provided for such poor impotent people; (3) be it enacted by the authority aforesaid , That it shall and may be lawful for the said church-wardens and overseers , or the greater part of them by the leave of the lord or lords of the manor, whereof any waste or common within their parish is or shall be parcel, and upon agreement before with him or them made in writing, under the hands and seals of the said lord or lords, or otherwise, according, to any order to be set down by the justices of peace of the said county at their general quarter –sessions , or the greater part of them, by like leave and agreement of the said lord or lords in writing under his or their hands and seals , to erect , build, and set up in fit and convenient places of habitation in such waste and common , at the general charges of the parish , or otherwise, of the hundred or county, as aforesaid to be taxed , rated and gathered in manner before expressed , convenient houses of dwelling for the said potent poor ; (4) and also to place inmates, or more families than one in one cottage or house, one act made in the one and thirtieth year of her Majesty’s reign , intituled, *an act against the erecting and maintaining of cottages* , or anything therein contained to the contrary notwithstanding : (5) which cottages and places for inmates shall not at any time after be used or employed to or for any other habitation, but only for impotent and poor of the same parish, that shall be there placed from time to time by the church –wardens and overseers of the poor of the same parish , or the most part of them , upon the pains forfeitures contained in the said former act made in the said one and thirtieth year of her Majesty’s reign.

VII. And be it further enacted, That the father and grandfather , and the mother and grandmother , and the children of every poor, old , blind, lame and impotent person, or other poor person not able to work, being of a sufficient ability ,shall, at their own charges , relieve and maintain every such poor person in that manner , and according to that rate, as by the justices of peace of that county where such sufficient persons dwell, or the greater number of them , at their general quarter –sessions shall be assessed ; (2) upon pain that

every one of them shall forfeit twenty shillings for every month which they shall fail therein.

VIII. And be it further enacted, That the mayors , baliffs , or other head officers of every twon and place corporate and city within this realm, being justice or justices of peace, shall have the same authority by virtue of this act , within the limits and precincts of their jurisdictions , as well out of session, as at their sessions , if they hold any , as is herein limited, prescribed and appointed to justices to the peace of the county, or any two or more of them , or to the justices of peace in their quarter –sessions , to do and execute the uses and purposes in this act prescribed , and no other justices of peace to enter or meddle ther: (2)and that every alderman of the city of *London* within his ward , shall and may do and execute in every respect so much as is appointed and allowed by this act to be done and executed by one or two justices of any county within this realm.

X. And further be it enacted by the authority aforesaid, That if in any place within this realm there happen to be hereafter no such nomination of overseers yearly, as if before appointed, That then every justice of peace of the county , dwelling within the division where such default of nomination shall happen and every mayor , alderman and head office of city, town or place corporate where such default shall happen, shall lose and forfeit for every such default five pounds, to be employed towards the relief of the poor of the said parish or place corporate , and to be levied , as aforesaid, of the goods , by warrant from the general sessions of the peace of the said county, or of the same city, town or place corporate, if they keep sessions.

XI. And be it also enacted by the authority aforesaid, That all penalties and forfeitures beforementioned in this act to be forfeited by any person or persons, shall go and be employed to the use of the poor of the same parish , and towards a stock and habitation for them , and other necessary uses and relief , as before in this act are mentioned and expressed ; (2) and shall be levied by the said church –wardens and overseers , or one of them , by warrant from any two such justices of peace , or mayor , alderman, or head officer of city, town or place corporate respectively within their several limits , by distress and sale thereof, as aforesaid ; (3) or in defect thereof, it shall be lawful for any two such justices of peace , and the said alderman and head officers within their several limits, to commit the offender to the said prison, there to remain without bail or mainprize till the said forfeitures shall be satisfied and paid.

XII. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That the justices of peace of every county or place corporate , or the more part of them , in their general sessions to be holden next after the feast of *Eatser* next, and so yearly as often as they shall think meet , shall rate every parish to such a weekly sum of money as they shall think convenient ; (2) so as no parish be rated above the sum of xix-pence, nor under the sum of a halfpenny, weekly to be

paid , and so as the total sum of such taxation of the parishes in every county amount not above the rate of two- pence for every parish within the said county; (3) which sums sp taxed shall be yearly assessed by the agreement of the parishioners within themselves , or in default thereof, by the church –wardens and petty constables of the same parish , or the more part of them : or in the default of their agreement , by the order of such justice or justices of peace as shall dwell in the same parish or (if none be there dwelling) in the parts next adjoining.

XV. And be it further enacted , That all the surplus age of money which shall be remaining in the said stock of any county, shall by discretion of the more part of the justices of peace in their quarter –sessions, be ordered, distributed and bestowed for the relief of poor hospitals of that county, and of those that shall sustain losses by fire , water , the sea or other casualties , and to such other charitable purposes, for the relief of the poor , as to the more part of the said justices of peace shall seem convenient.

XVI. And be it further enacted, That if any treasurer elected shall willfully refuse to take upon him the said office of treasureship, or refuse to distribute and give relief , or to account , according to such form as shall be appointed by the more part of the said justices of peace; That then it shall be lawful for the justices of peace in their quarter-sessions, or in their default , for the justices of assize at their assizes to be holden in the same county, to fine the same treasurer by their discretion ; (2) the same fine not to be under three pounds , and to be levied or to be prosecuted by any two of the said justices of peace whom they shall authorize. (3) Provided always, That this act shall not take effect until the fest of *Easter* next.

XVII. And be it enacted, That the statute made in the nine and thirtieth year of her Majesty's reign, intituled, *An act for the relief of the poor*, shall continue and stand in force until the feast of *Easter* next; (2) and that all taxations heretofore imposed and not paid, nor that shall be paid before the said feast of *Easter* next, and that all taxes hereafter before the said feast to be taxed by virtue of the said former act, which shall not be paid before the said feast of *Easter*, shall and may after the said former act, which shall not be paid before the said feast of *Easter* be levied by the overseers and other persons in this act respectively appointed to levy taxations, by distress, and by such warrant in every respect , as if they had been taxed and imposed by virtue of this act , and ere not paid...

Source: Axinn and Stern, *Social Welfare*, 9–13.

Appendix II

Historical Overview of the U.S. Programme for Single Mothers

Name of Programme	Date	Programme
Widows' Pensions	1908-35	State Programmes, variously implemented
Aid to Dependent Children (ADC)	1935	Title IV of the 1935 Social Security Act; federal /state partnership
Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC)	1962	Liberalization of Title IV
Family Support Act	1988	Moves toward mandatory work with various supports for working mothers.
Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF)	1996	The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act

Source: Abramovitz, "Welfare Reform in the United States," 338.

Appendix III

Social Security Act of 1935

Title IV: Grants to States for Aid to Dependent Children 1935

Appropriation

Section 401. For the purpose of enabling each State to furnish financial assistance, as far as practicable under the conditions in such State, to needy dependent children, there is hereby authorized to be appropriated for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1936, the sum of \$ 24, 750, 000, and there is hereby authorized to be appropriated for each fiscal year thereafter a sum sufficient to carry out the purposes of this title. The sums made available under this section shall be used for making payments to States which have submitted , and had approved by the Board, State plans for aid to dependent children.

STATE PLANS FOR AID TO DEPENDENT CHILDREN

SEC. 402. (a) A State plan for aid to dependent children must

- (1) provide that it shall be in effect in all political subdivisions of the State, and, if administered by them, be mandatory upon them;
- (2) provide for financial participation by the State;
- (3) either provide for the establishment or designation of a single State agency to administer the plan, or provide for the establishment or designation of a single State agency to supervise the administration of the plan;
- (4) provide for granting to any individual, whose claim with respect to aid to a dependent child is denied, an opportunity for a fair hearing before such State agency;
- (5) provide such methods of administration (other than those relating to selection, tenure of office, and compensation of personnel) as are found by the Board to be necessary for the efficient operation of the plan; and

(6) provide that the State agency will make such reports, in such form and containing such information, as the Board may from time to time require, and comply with such provisions as the Board may from time to time find necessary to assure the correctness and verification of such reports.

(b) The Board shall approve any plan which fulfills the conditions specified in subsection (a) except that it shall not approve any plan which imposes as a condition of eligibility for aid to dependent children, a residence requirement which denies aid with respect to any child residing in the State

(1) who has resided in the State for one year immediately preceding the application for such aid or

(2) who was born within the State within one year immediately preceding the application, if its mother has resided in the State for one year immediately preceding the birth.

PAYMENT TO STATES

SEC. 403. (a) From the sums appropriated therefor, the Secretary of the Treasury shall pay to each State which has an approved plan for aid to dependent children, for each quarter, beginning with the quarter commencing July 1, 1935, an amount, which shall be used exclusively for carrying out the State plan, equal to one-third of the total of the sums expended during such quarter under such plan, not counting so much of such expenditure with respect to any dependent child for any month as exceeds \$18, or if there is more than one dependent child in the same home, as exceeds \$18 for any month with respect to one such dependent child and \$12 for such month with respect to each of the other dependent children.

(b) The method of computing and paying such amounts shall be as follows:

(1) The Board shall, prior to the beginning of each quarter, estimate the amount to be paid to the State for such quarter under the provisions of subsection

(a), such estimate to be based on

(A) a report filed by the State containing its estimate of the total sum to be expended in such quarter in accordance with the provisions of such subsection and stating the amount appropriated or made available by the State and its political subdivisions for such expenditures in such quarter, and if such amount is less than two-thirds of the total sum of such estimated expenditures, the source or sources from which the difference is expected to be derived,

(B) records showing the number of dependent children in the State, and

(C) such other investigation as the Board may find necessary.

(2) The Board shall then certify to the Secretary of the Treasury the amount so estimated by the Board, reduced or increased, as the case may be, by any sum by which it finds that its estimate for any prior quarter was greater or less than the amount which should have been paid to the State for such quarter, except to the extent that such sum has been applied to make the amount certified for any prior quarter greater or less than the amount estimated by the Board for such prior quarter.

(3) The Secretary of the Treasury shall thereupon, through the Division of Disbursement of the Treasury Department and prior to audit or settlement by the General Accounting Office, pay to the State, at the time or times fixed by the Board, the amount so certified.

OPERATION OF STATE PLANS

SEC. 404. In the case of any State plan for aid to dependent children which has been approved by the Board, if the Board, after reasonable notice and opportunity for hearing to the State agency administering or supervising the administration of such plan, finds-

(1) that the plan has been so changed as to impose any residence requirement prohibited by section 402 (b), or that in the administration of the plan any such prohibited requirement is imposed, with the knowledge of such State agency, in a substantial number of cases; or

(2) that in the administration of the plan there is a failure to comply substantially with any provision required by section 402 (a) to be included in the plan; the Board shall notify such State agency that further payments will not be made to the State until the Board is satisfied that such prohibited requirement is no longer so imposed, and that there is no longer any such failure to comply. Until it is so satisfied it shall make no further certification to the Secretary of the Treasury with respect to such State.

ADMINISTRATION

SEC. 405. There is hereby authorized to be appropriated for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1936, the sum of \$250,000 for all necessary expenses of the Board in administering the provisions of this title.

DEFINITIONS

SEC. 406. When used in this title-

(a) The term dependent child means a child under the age of sixteen who has been deprived of parental support or care by reason of the death, continued absence from the home, or physical or mental incapacity of a parent, and who is living with his father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, brother, sister, stepfather, stepmother, stepbrother, stepsister, uncle, or aunt, in a place of residence maintained by one or more of such relatives as his or their own home;

(b) The term aid to dependent children means money payments with respect to a dependent child or dependent children.

Source: Mink and Solinger, *Welfare*, 74-76.

Appendix IV

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Jackson Hole, Wyoming)

For Immediate Release August 17, 1996

RADIO ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT TO THE NATION

Jackson Hole, Wyoming

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning. This year the American people are being offered a clear choice of economic plans; two very different visions of how to help our economy grow. This morning I want to talk with you about my plan for our nation's economy, about the differences between my plan and the plan offered by our opponents, and how we can keep the American Dream alive as we move toward the 21st century.

This is a very hopeful time for our country. Our nation's enduring mission is to give every American opportunity, to demand responsibility from all of our citizens, and to come together as a community. We must go forward into this new century together.

One of the things that helps us is a growing economy. A growing economy helps makes all those values -- opportunity, responsibility and community -- real for our families, our children, for all Americans.

As America prepares itself for the possibilities of the new century they seem unlimited. But four years ago that wasn't so clear. Our economy was drifting then. New jobs were scarce, unemployment was 7.7 percent. Our budget deficit was at a record high and growing.

I took office determined to set our country on a new course, and that is what we did -- cutting the deficit by 60 percent, investing in our people, expanding exports to record levels. And today we see the results. America is making more cars than Japan for the first time in a decade. We have 900,000 new construction jobs. There are hundreds of thousands of businesses owned by women; in fact, now, one in three businesses are owned by a woman.

4.4 million Americans have become homeowners. Another 10 million have refinanced their mortgages at lower rates. The combined rates of inflation, unemployment and mortgages is at a 28-year low. The budget deficit is now the smallest it's been since 1981, and our economy has created over 10 million new jobs.

Finally, real hourly wages -- the paycheck of the American worker -- these wages are starting to rise again for the first time in a decade. As even our opponents have acknowledged, our economy is the soundest it's been in a generation.

This opportunity strategy is working. But now we have to build on it -- to produce faster growth, more high-paying jobs, more successful businesses; to bring the benefits of economic growth to those who have not yet experienced them. First we have to finish the job of balancing the budget so that we can keep interest rates down and remove the debt burden from future generations. Then we have to give our people education and training, access to health care, and retirement security, so all working people can reap the rewards of this new economy.

This week I will sign into law an increase in the minimum wage. For those who work hard to stay off welfare, but can't live on \$4.25 an hour, this is a very important act. It will truly honor work and family. The same bill also provides help to small businesses to help them increase investment in job creation, and to increase their ability to save for retirement.

Next we should give Americans a tax cut. We've already cut taxes for 15 million American working families through our dramatic expansion of the earned income tax credit. This year that tax reduction will be worth about \$1,000 to a family of four with an income of \$28,000 a year or less. Now we can, and we should, do more.

In going forward I have proposed a program of tax cuts for working families that focus on education and child rearing, and are clearly within our ability to balance the budget so we can continue to keep those interest rates down and the economy growing. That's very important if we want our families to be strong and successful.

On the tax cut front I think, first, we should give tax cuts to pay for a college education. I have proposed giving individuals a \$1,500 tax credit each year to pay for two years of college tuition; a Hope Scholarship that will entirely pay for tuition at a typical community college. We have to make two years of education after high school as universal as a high school education is now.

And, going beyond that, I proposed giving families a tax deduction for up to \$10,000 a year for the tuition of all college costs, going beyond just the first two years. Over and above that, I have proposed collapsing all the federal training programs into a G.I. Bill for America's workers, so that those who are unemployed or under-employed can get a skills grant worth up to \$2,600 a year to pursue their education.

This is a good, good foundation on building a network of lifetime learning that all American families will need to succeed in the global economy.

The second thing we need to do is to give parents of children under the age of 13 a \$500 per child tax credit to help them to pay for child care. This also is very important.

Thirdly, we ought to give people a tax cut through expanded IRAs that people can use to withdraw from without penalty in a way that helps them save not only for their retirement, but also for a first-time home, for medical care, or for a college education.

That's our program -- targeted tax cuts; continuing to invest in education and research and new technologies; continuing to cut the deficit and balance the budget; expanding exports to record levels. This is the plan that will work. We know this growth strategy works; it's already produced over 10 million new jobs -- a very different situation that existed under the previous policy.

Now, as you know, our opponents are offering a very different strategy, but it's the same one they've offered before. And our plans are very different. My tax cut is limited in size; it's worth \$110 billion. Theirs is five times as much -- \$550 billion. We can afford ours. We can't afford theirs.

My tax cut is targeted; theirs is indiscriminate. Mine will be there when the middle class families need it to help them give their children and education, buy a home, pay for child care. Our opponents' plan gives indiscriminate tax cuts, regardless of the cost. In fact, millions of middle class families with children in college, or with adults in educational programs, would actually get a bigger tax cut under my plan than under our opponents' plan.

And my tax cut is paid for with specific, tough budget cuts consistent with the balanced budget plan. Our opponents haven't said how they'll pay for their tax cut yet.

Now, if they don't pay for it, their plan would balloon the deficit. That would increase interest rates, and that would slow down the economy and cost us jobs. Our plan, by contrast, would clearly help the economy.

Higher interest rates under their plan would cancel out the tax benefits for most families. Under our plan, interest rates would come down because the budget will be balanced just as people are getting their tax cuts.

On the other hand, if our opponents do pay for these massive tax cuts, that would mean even bigger cuts in Medicare, Medicaid, education, and the environment than they have already proposed. My plan pays for tax cuts without undermining our values. Their plan would deeply cut Medicare. My plan would not require new out-of-pocket costs for beneficiaries to pay for tax cuts. Their plan would undermine Medicaid's guarantee of quality health care to pregnant women, poor children, to families with people with

disabilities, and to the elderly. My plan would preserve Medicaid's guarantee for these groups of Americans.

Their plan would cut education. My plan would cut taxes while increasing investments in education. Their plan would endanger the environment. My plan would cut taxes while continuing to clean up pollution and make our environment cleaner.

So the American people have a clear choice in this election. We agree on one thing: Americans do deserve a tax cut. But we must choose between a tax cut that responsibly balances the budget and one that puts our economy at risk; between one that is targeted to help working families pay for education, health care and other pressing needs, and one that is indiscriminate; between one that is paid for by prudently cutting government, and one that is paid for by undercutting Medicare, Medicaid, education and the environment, or not paid for at all, bringing back those bad, old days of out-of-control deficits, high interest rates, slow growth, or recession.

I look forward to discussing these plans before the American people in the coming months. This election will give our nation the chance to decide whether we want to continue forward on a path of opportunity, responsibility, work and growth. That kind of debate can only be good for our country.

Thanks for listening.

END

Source: The White House, *Bill Clinton Library*

<https://clintonwhitehouse6.archives.gov/1996/08/1996-08-17-president-weekly-radio-address-to-the-nation.html>

Appendix V

Remarks on Welfare Reform Bill Clinton

August 22nd , 1996

I'd like to say to Congressman Castle, I'm especially glad to see you here because 8 years ago about this time, when you were the Governor of Delaware and Governor Carper was the Congressman from Delaware, you and I were together at a signing like this.

Thank you, Senator Long, for coming here. Thank you, Governors Romer, Carper, Miller, and Caperton.

I'd also like to thank Penelope Howard and Janet Ferrel for coming here. They, too, have worked their way from welfare to independence, and we're honored to have them here.

I'd like to thank all of the people who worked on this bill who have been introduced from our staff and Cabinet, but I'd also like to especially thank Bruce Reed, who had a lot to do with working on the final compromises of this bill; I thank him.

Lillie Harden was up there talking, and I want to tell you how she happens to be here today. Ten years ago, Governor Castle and I were asked to cochair a Governors' task force on welfare reform, and we were asked to work together on it. And when we met at Hilton Head in South Carolina, we had a little panel, and 41 Governors showed up to listen to people who were on welfare from several States. So I asked Carol Rasco to find me somebody from our State who had been in one of our welfare reform programs and had gone to work. She found Lillie Harden, and Lillie showed up at the program.

And I was conducting this meeting, and I committed a mistake that they always tell lawyers never to do: Never ask a question you do not know the answer to. [*Laughter*] But she was doing so well talking about it, as you saw how well-spoken she was today, and I said, "Lillie, what's the best thing about being off welfare?" And she looked me straight in the eye and said, "When my boy goes to school, and they say what does your mama do for a living, he can give an answer." I have never forgotten that. And when I saw the success of all of her children and the success that she's had in the past 10 years—I can tell you, you've had a bigger impact on me than I've had on you.

And I thank you for the power of your example, for your family's. And for all of America, thank you very much.

What we are trying to do today is to overcome the flaws of the welfare system for the people who are trapped on it. We all know that the typical family on welfare today is very different from the one that welfare was designed to deal with 60 years ago. We all know that there are a lot of good people on welfare who just get off of it in the ordinary course of business but that a significant number of people are trapped on welfare for a very long time, exiling them from the entire community of work that gives structure to our lives.

Nearly 30 years ago, Robert Kennedy said, "Work is the meaning of what this country is all about. We need it as individuals, we need to sense it in our fellow citizens, and we need it as a society and as a people." He was right then, and it's right now. From now on, our Nation's answer to this great social challenge will no longer be a never-ending cycle of welfare, it will be the dignity, the power, and the ethic of work. Today we are taking an historic chance to make welfare what it was meant to be: a second chance, not a way of life.

The bill I'm about to sign, as I have said many times, is far from perfect, but it has come a very long way. Congress sent me two previous bills that I strongly believe failed to protect our children and did too little to move people from welfare to work. I vetoed both of them. This bill had broad bipartisan support and is much, much better on both counts.

The new bill restores America's basic bargain of providing opportunity and demanding, in return, responsibility. It provides \$14 billion for child care, \$4 billion more than the present law does. It is good because without the assurance of child care it's all but impossible for a mother with young children to go to work. It requires States to maintain their own spending on welfare reform and gives them powerful performance incentives to place more people on welfare in jobs. It gives States the capacity to create jobs by taking money now used for welfare checks and giving it to employers as subsidies as incentives to hire people. This bill will help people to go to work so they can stop drawing a welfare check and start drawing a paycheck.

It's also better for children. It preserves the national safety net of food stamps and school lunches. It drops the deep cuts and the devastating changes in child protection, adoption, and help for disabled children. It preserves the national guarantee of health care for poor children, the disabled, the elderly, and people on welfare—the most important preservation of all.

It includes the tough child support enforcement measures that, as far as I know, every Member of Congress and everybody in the administration and every thinking person in the country has supported for more than 2 years now. It's the most sweeping crackdown on deadbeat parents in history. We have succeeded in increasing child support collection 40 percent, but over a third of the cases where there's delinquencies involve people who cross State lines. For a lot of women and children, the only reason they're on welfare today—the only reason—is that the father up and walked away when he could have made a contribution to the welfare of the children. That is wrong. If every parent paid the child support that he or she owes legally today, we could move 800,000 women and children off welfare immediately.

With this bill we say, if you don't pay the child support you owe, we'll garnish your wages, take away your driver's license, track you across State lines, if necessary, make you work off what

you pay—what you owe. It is a good thing, and it will help dramatically to reduce welfare, increase independence, and reinforce parental responsibility.

As the Vice President said, we strongly disagree with a couple of provisions of this bill. We believe that the nutritional cuts are too deep, especially as they affect low-income working people and children. We should not be punishing people who are working for a living already; we should do everything we can to lift them up and keep them at work and help them to support their children. We also believe that the congressional leadership insisted on cuts in programs for legal immigrants that are far too deep.

These cuts, however, have nothing to do with the fundamental purpose of welfare reform. I signed this bill because this is an historic chance, where Republicans and Democrats got together and said, we're going to take this historic chance to try to re-create the Nation's social bargain with the poor. We're going to try to change the parameters of the debate. We're going to make it all new again and see if we can't create a system of incentives which reinforce work and family and independence. We can change what is wrong. We should not have passed this historic opportunity to do what is right.

And so I want to ask all of you, without regard to party, to think through the implications of these other nonwelfare issues on the American people, and let's work together in good spirits and good faith to remedy what is wrong. We can balance the budget without these cuts. But let's not obscure the fundamental purpose of the welfare provisions of this legislation, which are good and solid and which can give us at least the chance to end the terrible, almost physical isolation of huge numbers of poor people and their children from the rest of mainstream America. We have to do that.

Let me also say that there's something really good about this legislation. When I sign it, we all have to start again, and this becomes everybody's responsibility. After I sign my name to this bill, welfare will no longer be a political issue. The two parties cannot attack each other over it. Politicians cannot attack poor people over it. There are no encrusted habits, systems, and failures that can be laid at the foot of someone else. We have to begin again. This is not the end of welfare reform, this is the beginning. And we have to all assume responsibility. Now that we are saying with this bill we expect work, we have to make sure the people have a chance to go to work. If we really value work, everybody in this society—businesses, nonprofits, religious institutions, individuals, those in government— all have a responsibility to make sure the jobs are there.

These three women have great stories. Almost everybody on welfare would like to have a story like that. And the rest of us now have a responsibility to give them that story. We cannot blame the system for the jobs they don't have anymore. If it doesn't work now, it's everybody's fault: mine, yours, and everybody else. There is no longer a system in the way.

I've worked hard over the past 4 years to create jobs and to steer investment into places where there are large numbers of people on welfare because there's been no economic recovery. That's what the empowerment zone program was all about. That's what the community development bank initiative was all about. That's what our urban brownfield cleanup initiative was all about, trying to give people the means to make a living in areas that had been left behind.

I think we have to do more here in Washington to do that, and I'll have more to say about that later. But let me say again, we have to build a new work and family system. And this is everybody's responsibility now. The people on welfare are people just like these three people we honor here today and their families. They are human beings. And we owe it to all of them to give them a chance to come back.

I talked the other day when the Vice President and I went down to Tennessee, and we were working with Congressman Tanner's district; we were working on a church that had burned. And there was a pastor there from a church in North Carolina that brought a group of his people in to work. And he started asking me about welfare reform, and I started telling him about it. And I said, "You know what you ought to do? You ought to go tell Governor Hunt that you would hire somebody on welfare to work in your church if he would give you the welfare check as a wage supplement. You'd double their pay, and you'd keep them employed for a year or so and see if you couldn't train them and help their families and see if their kids were all right." I said, "Would you do that?" He said, "In a heartbeat."

I think there are people all over America like that. I think there are people all over America like that. That's what I want all of you to be thinking about today: What are we going to do now? This is not over, this is just beginning. The Congress deserves our thanks for creating a new reality, but we have to fill in the blanks. The Governors asked for this responsibility, now they've got to live up to it. There are mayors that have responsibilities, county officials that have responsibilities. Every employer in this country that ever made a disparaging remark about the welfare system needs to think about whether he or she should now hire somebody from welfare and go to work, go to the State and say, "Okay, you give me the check. I'll use it as an income supplement. I'll train these people. I'll help them to start their lives, and we'll go forward from here."

Every single person needs to be thinking— every person in America tonight who sees a report of this who has ever said a disparaging word about the welfare system should now say, "Okay, that's gone. What is my responsibility to make it better?"

Two days ago we signed a bill increasing the minimum wage here and making it easier for people in small businesses to get and keep pensions. Yesterday we signed the Kassebaum-Kennedy bill which makes health care available to up to 25 million Americans, many of them in lower income jobs where they're more vulnerable. The bill I'm signing today preserves the increases in the earned-income tax credit for working families. It is now clearly better to go to work than to stay on welfare—clearly better. Because of actions taken by the Congress in this session, it is clearly better. And what we have to do now is to make that work a reality.

I've said this many times, but, you know, most American families find that the greatest challenge of their lives is how to do a good job raising their kids and do a good job at work. Trying to balance work and family is the challenge that most Americans in the workplace face. Thankfully, that's the challenge Lillie Harden's had to face for the last 10 years. That's just what we want for everybody. We want at least the chance to strike the right balance for everybody.

Today we are ending welfare as we know it. But I hope this day will be remembered not for what it ended but for what it began: a new day that offers hope, honors responsibility, rewards work, and changes the terms of the debate so that no one in America ever feels again the need to criticize people who are poor on welfare but instead feels the responsibility to reach out to men and

women and children who are isolated, who need opportunity, and who are willing to assume responsibility, and give them the opportunity and the terms of responsibility. (Applause)

Source: From “Remarks by President Clinton and Vice President Al Gore at the Signing of the Welfare Reform Bill,” *Federal News Service*, August 22nd, 1996.

Appendix VI

Perceived Need of Welfare Recipients

	Percentage (Agree)
1) Most people on welfare who can work try to find jobs so they can support themselves	31
2) In your view, are most people who receive welfare payments genuinely in need of help or are they taking advantage of the system?	
Taking advantage of the system	66
Genuinely in need of help	34
3) Most able-bodied people on welfare prefer to sit home and collect benefits even if they can work?	59
4) Most able-bodied people on welfare really want to work but can't because of circumstances.	41
5) Do you think that most people who receive money from welfare could get along without if they tried, or do you think most of them really need help?	
Most could get along without it	61
Most really need help	39

Note: Results are based on national telephone surveys and exclude respondents saying “don't know” or providing no answer.

Source: Gilens, *Why Americans Hate Welfare*, 1140.

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