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GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE VERSUS FAMILY POLICY. By Alfred J. Kahn and Sheila B. Kamerman
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It has become fashionable in recent years to:

1. list the dozens, or hundreds, of separate federally-enacted programs addressed to a given age, problem or disability group;
2. locate these separate programs in separate federal departments or bureaus within departments;
3. employ the resulting picture as part of the argument for program coordination, service integration or creation of a central focus for planning or advocacy. It is our central theme that, while it is easy to evoke concern or even horror it is very difficult to generate solutions which can be advanced with confidence.

Indeed, current political trends make this a particularly difficult time to advance solutions to government structural deficits which are premised on integration, generalist (as opposed to categorical) strategies, and concepts of larger societal goals and values. Yet such solutions are in many ways attractive and may indeed be essential. "Family policy" is a solution of this order.

THE OBJECTIVE

In a variety of related publications we have argued that the United States has some explicit family policies (family law on the state level; Social Security law and policy about spouses, survivors, dependents; legislation about use of Medicaid funds for abortions, for example) and many implicit policies (armed services policies as to the residential arrangements for soldiers'

or sailors' dependents, the nature and form of tax deductions, the relation among taxation levels for family heads, head-of-household, the single person, for example). We also have noted some considerable lack of harmonization among these policies. We have concluded that historical, sociological and political forces have created in the United States a context in which pluralism, diversity, and a lack of comprehensiveness are almost inevitable in government responses to families and their needs.²

Thus, although we are convinced that government will inevitably have to do more, over time, in response to social change, problems, needs, inequities, goals - and there are tendencies to enact family policies more frequently - and to harmonize more within sectors, the idea of a comprehensive, uniform family policy, from which all else would be derived and against which all else would be measured, has continued to meet the strongest of resistance. In this sense we strongly concur: a monolithic, well-integrated, comprehensive family policy that defines specific family goals and standards and seeks to shape all peoples' motives and behaviors vis a vis family is unlikely to win strong support in this country and is highly undesirable. Indeed, a more accurate term for what we are discussing would be "families policies".

Despite the difficulties, the stake of individual adults in the private pleasures of child rearing and of assuring personal "immortality", and of societies in producing a competent sufficiently-large new generation to meet societal needs for a labor force and for continuity, means a convergence of concern about optimal conditions. Thus there is need for family policy if we mean by this the creation of conditions which permit and encourage continuity, contribute to sound childrearing, and (at various points in the life cycle) balance

1. The discussion paper on which this article is based is available from the authors at cost, \$5.00: 622 W. 113th Street, New York, New York 10025.

This is another of COFO's guest articles. The views expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the positions of any of the four COFO organizations.

2. Sheila B. Kamerman and Alfred J. Kahn, editors, Family Policy: Government and Families in Fourteen Countries (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), Chapter 14.

personal satisfaction with societal concerns and do so realistically in the light of possibilities and constraints.

Thus, the need for discussion of whether it is possible for American society to structure its governmental machinery so as to facilitate family policy development in this special sense - to protect the core functions of families yet to do so without imposing a pattern of conformity which would negate core values; as part of this, to monitor or oversee activities throughout government which might harm families.

FAMILY POLICY AS PERSPECTIVE

There is a viewpoint on family policy, largely European, which defines family policy as a specific field. Governments have assembled measures, most often measures for disadvantaged and dependent families, or for families with specific problems or needs, and have assigned them to one or two related agencies, bureaus or departments. Population policy measures have sometimes been included. Sometimes a universal children's allowance is part of the package. (For example: child welfare, services to unmarried mothers, pre- and post-natal health care, preschool education, maternity benefits, children's allowances.)

Our research has shown that in those countries which see family policy as field, it becomes a modest field. After all, core elements of implicit, if not explicit, family policy involve taxation, economic policy, health, social security more broadly defined, housing, education, and of course the labor market. This is too much for any government to organize as one field; much of it revolves around concerns other than family well-being.

The attractive and promising perspective is to see family policy as perspective. By this we mean the effort to develop a series of criteria which monitor our

institutions and actions from the point of view of family well-being or "potential family impact". It seeks to avoid acts of commission or omission which harm families or interfere with their capacities to rear and care for children, to nurture and sustain one another, to care for their dependent members. Where the knowledge base is strong enough, family policy as perspective seeks to promote actions or provisions to enhance the family's capacities. As indicated, we doubt that there are many clear agreements growing out of knowledge base-value convergence which justify monolithic actions, policies which offer only one option.

We are not suggesting that family policy in this sense is the only relevant policy perspective on the current political scene. Indeed we take for granted the existing social policy criteria which have been forged in the experience and policies of the last four decades: equality; racial justice; individual rights; an increasingly specified and guaranteed social minimum in the fields of employment, personal social services, income security, education, housing, health. To this we now would add: promoting the welfare - or at least avoiding the diswelfare of families. And while we mean by family what the census means (two or more individuals related by blood, marriage, or adoption), we also include the many other less-frequent family forms, the continuing relationships which are "paperless", most of them heterosexual, many involving children. Most important, of course, are families with young children, including female-headed families with young children - whether created by divorce, desertion, widowhood or out-of-wedlock birth. These inclusions, too, are part of the essential pluralism.

We have summed up elsewhere as follows: "The policy...should encourage diversity, or at least be neutral among a variety of acceptable alternatives in style, roles, directions."

But to face the scientific difficulty of adding such a criterion (knowledge of what enhances the family) and the value

tensions which are aroused (what type of family life is acceptable, justifies active public buttressing?) is to recognize the need to move cautiously and deliberately. Here we discuss one aspect of the question: where can (should) such concern be located in government? Is it in fact possible to invent necessary structural mechanisms, given the political constraints on family policy in the United States? And if such structures could be conceived and put into place, would they not, in their modes of operation, negate the commitment to pluralism?

GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE AND FAMILY POLICY

The International Working Party on Family Policy explored the experience in eleven European countries plus Israel, Canada and the United States. The conclusions were widely endorsed as unmistakable:

"...government currently fragments both policy and programmatic interests of the family in many units, bureaus, and departments...Only a few countries organize administratively specifically and comprehensively to deal with a wide range of family matters."

"...the European record shows no significant success with family ministries anywhere."³

Family ministries have been established as a device to consolidate family service efforts and to guide governmental action. The assigned programs which they actually administer inevitably are few (family policy as "field"), and the ministries are seldom politically powerful and able to have much impact on those other domains which are more critical in family well-being.

The Working Party identified the reasons for this experience as well. As put by Dr. Friedhelm Neidhardt, the family is the place where private consequences of all governmental and non-governmental actions are felt and must be integrated.

A family ministry, to be effective, would need to cover all of government. Government finds it more feasible and effective to organize functionally around coherent units of concern: defense, economic policy, agriculture, health, and so forth.

Another aspect of available experience also is relevant. Often, unable to make satisfactory impact on policies administered by other governmental units or ministries, the unit assigned to deal with family policies grasps the opportunity to operate specific new programs. Such program take-over justifies staff expansion and assures access to consumer constituencies. However, the price is high: a unit which operates "programs" sacrifices its credentials as an advocate of balanced, harmonized, coherent family (child) policy. It becomes another small bureau with its own interests, claiming a broader role, but unconvincingly.

3. Kamerman and Kahn, editors, *Family Policy*, p. 488.

If family policy is not to be field and is to strive to become perspective it requires both sanction and structural location that will allow it to achieve perspective on issues in various functionally-organized departments - and will permit it some mode of expression on such issues. Again, Neidhardt speaks for the consensus about such a governmental unit:

First, it must be located in a place where relevant decisions for all ministries regularly come to be co-ordinated.... Second, it must have power enough to press significant family interests against the particular interests of other areas and to balance them.⁴

To which we would add that the process must be assured of support from a significant constituency and, in the U.S. at least, probably also requires a voluntary sector counterpart to avoid the danger that governmental interests dominate in an arena in which there always has been concern that the family as an institution not become merely an instrument and reflection of public purpose.

It is now possible to enrich the discussion and to face the complexities further by drawing upon two "cases."⁴

In our search for a governmental locus for family policy we turned, first, to the Office of Human Development Services, OHDS, potentially the lead unit for a "public interest", "generalist", "integrated" perspective. It was expected that OHDS would shape diverse categorical programs into an integrated personal social services system operating on family principles (family policy as field?).

This is not the place for specifics. Elsewhere we have looked in detail at both history, structure, and Department of Health, Education and Welfare (DHEW)-Congress relations. OHDS, thus far, for all its potential, is a triumph of the categorical as opposed to the general; an illustration of difficulty in defining priorities or universal principles; a victim of determination in some quarters to continue to segregate the welfare poor.

The case can be made for accountability, case integration, coherence, universalism. But the case also is made for handicapped categories, protecting specialized groups, special needs. And such case is made by national interest groups, professional associations, federal bureaucracies in specialized programs, and Congressional committees which have taken on specialized causes. President Jimmy Carter has complained that he is often blocked by an iron triangle: the interest group, the bureaucracy and the Congressional committee in an alliance. The defeat of OHDS to date is a good - if discouraging - example.

Nor are the obstacles only political; the second case suggests that there are also major substantive dilemmas. In an effort to improve child health services, an analytic team in the Public Health Service identified four structural options, calling eventually for the establishment of a Deputy Assistant Secretary for Child Health Affairs within PHS of HEW. However, all that is known about child health requires a family focus and jurisdiction over personal social services, income and related

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 489-90.

*These cases are discussed in detail in the full paper, "Government Structure versus Family Policy". See footnote 1.

programs. One must then choose whether family or child is the organizing principle - and that there is need in fact for a large (and politically unacceptable) reorganization of many social programs under the family (or child) banner. Government turns from this, as has U. S. government, in favor of functional categories (health, income, education) and then faces major problems of coherence, coordination, policy thrust. We end where we began: government needs to see family policy as perspective, to concern itself with family impact, while most of its activities are structured along functional lines. Can this be done?

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

We would note, first, that we are not here dealing with the techniques and analytic tools of family policy analysis. Although there has been widespread interest in devising measures for assessing and reporting potential impact on families of proposed administrative rules and new laws, the exploratory experience of the past several years has not been reassuring as to the practicality of such an endeavor. In reviewing these efforts, our conclusion is as follows:

1. the knowledge-base in most fields of interest will not now sustain an effort at prediction of potential family impact of proposed measures - especially within a legislative or administrative agency time-frame. (But serious experimentation remains highly desirable.)

2. it will be difficult to draw upon existing knowledge and measurement capabilities in this field and to place such use into political process, when and as it becomes scientifically practicable, unless there is greater readiness to face and deal with the question of value perspectives from which the results are assessed and responded to.

3. it may be easier in the near future to identify "bads" (what harms families and their members) and to get (value) agreement that they are "bad" enough to cause concern, than it will be to define and achieve consensus around both criteria for and measures of enhanced family welfare. But even with regard to "bads" consensus will be possible in only a limited number of situations.

We turn now to an exploration of existing structures.

Is there any place within government where family interest and concerns could be highlighted and monitored? Are there any possibilities? If there are no solutions, are there useful partial efforts?

1. DHEW. Family policy does not belong solely to DHEW but much of DHEW does need to be monitored from a family perspective. ACYF in OHDS has been broadened to include a family concern. Thus far this appears to mean only that (just as there are categorical service programs for children, youth, the aged, various types of handicapped individuals) now there will be some categorical programs for families, probably families in specific problem groupings (domestic violence? teen-age pregnancy?). In this sense, family merely becomes another service category. ACYF becomes no different than all other special government units administering categorical programs.

There is a potential direction for OHDS which at the moment has little political support behind it. Congress votes categorical service programs. States and localities should have flexibility in devising locally suitable delivery systems. The specialized sub-administrations of OHDS could make their major contributions as centers concentrating on technical assistance, research and development, training innovation. The OHDS field arm, working through the regions to implement Title XX planning and to facilitate relevant funding for all OHDS programs could be the Administration for Public Services (APS). Such a conception of mission might give OHDS credibility in developing with ACYF a family policy research and monitoring operation and to attach to it a citizen advisory board as well. It would be expected to serve DHEW, much as the domestic policy staff should serve all the executive departments.

2. The White House. A watch-dog function at a level above the individual departments is essential if a family policy perspective is to be implemented within government. The fact that DHEW is the locus of income maintenance and service programs does not make it the proper location because far too much is not included. Government is organized departmentally at the federal level and must be. The cross-cutting concerns are best addressed at the White House level where someone above the individual departments could pull the pieces together and ask what family-welfare criteria might recommend.

There is an ongoing debate about the relationship between the Office of the President and the Executive Departments.⁵ Clearly the resolution in a given Administration must depend on the personality of the President, his management style, the issues of the day, and organizational wisdom. No program is solved by reorganization alone. Nonetheless there is no way to avoid some organizational provision for dealing with matters which cut across departments. This is why we have an Office of Manpower and Budget, a National Security Council, a Domestic Policy staff. Given the organizational pattern of the Carter White House, the subject under discussion requires specialized attention within the Domestic Policy staff. Given the organizational pattern of the Carter White House, the subject under discussion requires specialized attention within the Domestic Policy staff. The permanent commitment

⁵Administration for Children, Youth and Families in Office of Human Development Services.

5. Stephen Hess, Organizing the Presidency (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1976).

could be very modest, since data, analysis, task groups, even monitoring may be allocated among the relevant departments. Family policy needs its assigned champion within the White House when policy is made and coordinated, when programs are shaped, when alarms are sounded. Such staff members also could assure the needed periodic protection of policies and programs from an OMB which on occasion has used only budgetary criteria on its monitoring. Of course no Domestic Policy staff member could have any significance in this arena without a serious, articulated White House commitment.

3. The Congress. We noted earlier the tension and conflict between population or age group concerns and the functional approach to government organization, concluding that on balance the functional perspective was both more efficient and more effective.

Writing about the capacities of government to act decisively and effectively when it has to, James Sundquist stresses the need for a partnership between the President and Congress. As part of his argument he points to the absence in Congress of any regular institutional structure in either house (except in the field of fiscal policy), "to deal effectively with matters that cut across the jurisdictions of two or more committees."

With its power dispersed, Congress remains organized to deal with broad ones. Its structure still impels it to think parochially. It can skirmish for limited objectives but it cannot think strategically....The leadership in neither house has shown a disposition to improvise with temporary special committees for coordination purposes, and it is clear that a multiplicity of permanent committees dealing with broad, cross-cutting policy questions would create a jungle of conflicting jurisdictions that could only make the present situation worse.⁶

Sundquist continues by pointing out that in recent years in an effort at improving Congressional policy making capacities there has been a rapid growth in the number and size of the research and analysis

agencies serving Congress. Although we would concur with the Sundquist point that analysis is not decision, and that there are no institutions within Congress which could formulate cut-across policies, the existence of these research and analysis agencies does provide an expanded technical assistance arms to address broader questions and to highlight potentially significant consequences. In this field there would be progress if Congress were given the overall picture and knew of options and their potentials. The Library of Congress, the Congressional Research Service and the Congressional Budget Office all offer the capacity for doing some of the needed scientific work to address salient problems.

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO), in particular, could fulfill an essential research and analytic function in relations to potential family impact of major proposals. Over the past several years as the Congress has developed its independent budget process, it has been served admirably by this new service arm and its corps of over 200 professionals, many of them specializing in various forms and aspects of policy analysis and policy research. It would be natural for CBO to develop a small unit which would undertake family impact analyses, both post facto and predictive, in response to requests. The CBO thus could simultaneously advance the state of the art and contribute to a realistic pattern of analysis. It would not, it should not, make recommendations.

With all of this, however, the ultimate responsibility for decision-making affecting families would still remain in many places. In short, there is no easy way to institutionalize family policy concerns in any one place in government. Furthermore, the instruments which may seem promising in 1979 may need reconsideration in 1981. The Congress, White House and DHEW are constantly changing their ways of working - and the relationships among them shift with time and with changes in the policy. But it would be wise to do now what seems possible and useful now. The mission is an important one.

TO SUMMARIZE - AND TO CONCLUDE

As we have noted, family policy initiatives are confronted by:

1. scientific problems (measuring, predicting, and influencing family impact);
2. value issues (what family states will be regarded as desirable);
3. conceptual challenges (when is and when is not the family and its interest a strategic organizing principal for government);
4. political obstacles (in both the narrow and broad sense of the word); and
5. executive branch and Congressional committee structures which reinforce centrifugal forces militating against planning or coherence.

The present discussion assumes the need for ongoing scientific work and the unavoidability of a value debate

6. James Sundquist, "Congress and the President: Enemies or Partners?" in Henry Own and Charles L. Schultze, editors, Setting National Priorities: The Next 10 Years (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1976), pp. 613-14.

if family policy is to be seriously pursued.

Our conclusion is that at the present time there are only "suboptimal" possibilities in DHEW, the White House, the Congress. While there are no obvious ideal structures, there are places where responsibility could be located and useful work done to protect and perhaps even advance family interests.

But we also conclude that such new efforts within government are unlikely to yield much or even to be launched unless there is greater determination expressed outside of government that family well-being be guarded in the course of general policy-making.

Any governmental effort to consider the family and its well-being as a criterion of social policy will require a counterpart in the voluntary sector. What is needed is a family commission of relatively broad organizational representation, created and backed by citizen groups and professional organizations. Certainly no group or commission can speak for everyone. However, it should be possible to assemble a relatively broad group which commits itself to advancing family well-being by blocking "dis-welfare" and gradually uniting on modest targets for new action as a degree of value consensus emerges and the knowledge-base is built.

Such commission will need a research arm for trend monitoring and family impact analyses. It will need voluntary action support among its member organizations for service monitoring and mobilization.

A commission so constituted as to avoid narrow partisan identification, as appropriate, could become an important prod and ally of governmental units, an advocate, and a defender of the public interest against them, as necessary. The first goals might stress policy sensitivity to family needs. Later there might be agreement on broader targets.

But neither voluntary sector commission nor governmental units will mean much without a larger and more organized public constituency. Of the 57 million families in the U.S., a little more than half have children under the age of 18. Obtaining consensus around specific issues may be difficult for this group, yet surely without the support of a significant number of those most directly concerned with these issues it would be hard to argue the need for more attention and activity. Here, the work to be done is obvious. Whether or not it is possible to mobilize such a constituency remains to be seen - particularly at a time when the proportion of the eligibles who vote in local, state and federal elections is distressingly small - and the numbers who engage in or actively support citizen lobbying is even smaller.

Perhaps efforts to take a broad perspective, a long view, to incorporate family well-being as an important policy criterion, is more than current reality will sustain. It would be worth the test. It would be useful to know whether for the present we must rest largely on rhetorical affirmations as to the family's importance, but carefully avoid an explicit family policy efforts at all.

THE 1981 WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON FAMILIES

On April 12, 1979, President Carter announced that Secretary Joseph Califano had appointed a former Congressman, Jim Guy Tucker, to serve as Chairman for the White House Conference on Families. In late May, a second announcement was made about the appointment of John Carr as Executive Director for the Conference. Mr. Tucker will establish policy for the Conference, in addition to developing the Advisory Committee and its Task Forces. Mr. Carr will have the day-to-day responsibilities for running the Conference.

BACKGROUND OF APPOINTEES

Jim Guy Tucker was born on June 13, 1943, in Oklahoma. He earned a B.A. from Harvard in 1964 and his law degree in 1968. He served one term in the U.S. House of Representatives (1976-1978), until an unsuccessful race for the U.S. Senate in 1978. Mr. Tucker has written numerous articles on energy and consumer protection, and has been active with a variety of voluntary organizations in Arkansas. He is married and has three children.

John Carr served for several years as the Director of the Full Employment Coalition in Washington, D. C. More recently, he has been the Director of Education for the Human Development Project of the US Catholic Conference.

AD HOC COALITION ON THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON FAMILIES

On April 23, Mr. Tucker met with the Steering Committee of the Coalition and attended the Groves Conference later that week. He also contacted the local family service agency in his own community. Mr. Tucker also spoke on June 6 at a meeting of the full Coalition, which now consists of 46 national organizations.

COFO SUPPORTS EFFORTS TO EXPAND FEDERALLY FINANCED SERVICES TO FAMILIES

Title XX provides the major financial support for family services. Title IV-B is the Child Welfare Statute which, as proposed in HR 3434, would be amended to provide funds for delivery of preventive services to families.

In its testimony on March 27, before the House Ways and Means Committee, COFO endorsed the need for a new Title XX ceiling of \$3.1 billion for FY 80 and urged the House Committee to accept the Administration's recommendation to include emergency services for adult victims of spouse abuse. These suggestions were adopted in the Committee bill HR 3434 along with a two year extension of the \$200 million set aside for child day care and a compromise on Title XX training funds which would place a limit for state expenditures of 3% of state allotments.

Title IV-B provides for an entitlement of \$266 million that would be used to prevent unnecessary foster care placement and to provide services to strengthen families.

ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY PROGRAM

The House Labor-HEW Appropriations Subcommittee met in mid-May and voted against passage of an FY 79 supplemental appropriations for the adolescent pregnancy program; It also voted to limit FY 80 funding to \$15 million. If the Senate concurs, there will be no money to set up the HEW office and no funding for projects for FY 79.

However, proposed regulations for the Adolescent Pregnancy Program were issued by HEW on March 12, with comments due by May 12. Final regulations will be issued in late May.

FEDERALLY FUNDED CHILD CARE

Senator Alan Cranston (D-Calif), chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Child and Human Development, introduced S. 4, the Child Care Act of 1979, designed to increase and diversify child care services to low income working families. The Subcommittee held two days of hearings in February and received substantial support from organizations that have long advocated a greater federal role in providing quality day care to children. The Administration, however, opposed S.4 on the grounds that no new categorical program for child care was needed at this time.

In a surprise move on March 15, the Senator cancelled further hearings and work on the bill. The reasons he gave were: 1) no support from the Administration; 2) a volume of mail opposing any federal role in child care programs; 3) unresolved differences among child care organizations.

FEDERAL INTERAGENCY DAY CARE REGULATIONS (FIDCR)

HEW has issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) on FIDCR policy. There will be a 120 day comment period and a

schedule of meetings across the country, beginning 30 days after the issuance of the regulations. Crucial issues that will be addressed in the rulemaking include: 1) family day care standards; 2) child/staff ratios; 3) level of training for child care providers; 4) degree of parental involvement; 5) coordination of health and social services.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

House Action: Rep. George Miller (D-Calif) introduced HR 2977, the Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Act. The bill authorizes \$65 million for 3 years, with grant awards up to \$50,000 to private, non-profit agencies and shelter programs. The bill also provides for establishing a national information clearinghouse and a media campaign on the problem of violence in families. No hearings have been scheduled.

Senate Action: No comparable bill has been introduced, but on May 8, the Senate passed S.440, the Comprehensive Alcohol Abuse and Prevention Act. Section 13 of this Act includes a provision for emergency assistance to victims of alcohol-related domestic violence.

Administration Initiative: In April, President Carter appointed Secretary Califano to head a new Interdepartmental Committee on Domestic Violence, as a step in coordinating programs in federal agencies that fund services to victims of family violence. Califano has established an HEW Office for Domestic Violence, which will be the central coordination point for HEW research and social services in family violence. June Zeitlin is staff director of the Office.

**NATIONAL COUNCIL ON FAMILY RELATIONS**

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