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*Forming Nation: Framing Welfare.* Gail Lewis (Ed.).  
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## Book Reviews

Gail Lewis (Ed.) *Forming Nation: Framing Welfare*. New York: Routledge, 1998. \$75.00 hardcover, \$22.99 papercover.

This anthology is one of a series of five books written for a course on British social welfare offered by the Open University. This British-based “university without walls” uses coordinated texts written by teams of authors and consultants. The books are designed as interactive teaching tools, with exercises, questions, and frequent summaries of the authors’ presentations. The fact that *Forming Nation: Framing Welfare* is designed for a particular audience—students seeking an analysis of the historical development of British welfare policy—and formatted for a specific approach to teaching may limit its utility as a textbook for courses in the United States. Its classroom niche here would probably be courses in comparative social welfare, but it might also be of interest to the reader interested in British social history and the general development social welfare policy. This review looks at the book from the point of view of each potential set of readers.

The book intends to expose and analyze the complex goals and motives which lie beneath the creation of social welfare policy in Great Britain. It is organized around a number of major themes, including the “construction of particular groups of people and particular issues as social problems” that welfare programs are designed to deal with; the role of power in the formation of a welfare system; the place of women, minorities, and working class and poor people in that system; the formation of the British nation-state out of several different geographical entities; the importance of empire and colonialism in the British mind set, and “the struggle to shift the boundaries of the relationship between the state and the individual citizen.” (1–3) In addition, the book also aims to acquaint students with different discourses related to social welfare and to the various historical approaches to the topic. Covering all these themes and issues in a coherent way is a heavy challenge, and one that is met only intermittently in the chapters of this book. The introduction will confuse many students, and

perhaps more informed readers as well. Some chapters successfully focus on a limited number of issues, while others try to cover the waterfront. In addition, crucial terms, such as "hegemonic," are not always explained. Most notably, "discourse" is discussed throughout the book but only defined in the next to the last chapter. A good background in British history is assumed, which may make the text particularly difficult for students in the United States.

The text is organized in a roughly chronological way, with each chapter devoted to a particular aspect of the welfare system. The first two chapters cover the place of "family" in the development of social welfare from the early 1800s on, and the relationship between gender, class, and philanthropy in Victorian Britain. Both chapters rely heavily on social control interpretations of the development of social welfare policies and the "regulation" of British families, leaving little room for other factors in a complex social process. Descriptions of the role of women, both as laborers and as caregivers, are more comprehensive, giving various interpretations behind the control of women's labor and the growing emphasis on women's place in the center of the family. This discussion echoes the interpretations and debates seen in the work of American writers such as Linda Gordon, Gwendolyn Mink, and Theda Skocpol.

The last four chapters provide material that will be less familiar to many readers, and it is this fresh content that I found most interesting and useful. These chapters describe the surprisingly late development of compulsory education in Britain, the creation of the Irish in Britain as a social problem (similar to treatment of African Americans in the United States), the construction of unemployment and organized responses to it in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and contemporary family patterns in Great Britain. These chapters are by and large more substantive and straight forward; theoretical concepts are better integrated into the discussion. Readers in the United States might be particularly interested in comparing British responses to emerging family patterns and debates about the effectiveness of the "lone mother" (our single mother) family head to similar deliberations in the U.S.

*Forming Nation, Framing Welfare* has strengths and weaknesses. Its attempt to apply multiple analytic themes can be confusing; the social control interpretations in some sections of the book are heavy-handed and insufficiently supported. On the other hand, the "interactive text" features such as vignettes and accompanying questions and analyses should prove interesting and helpful to students. Finally, discussions of the race concept as applied to the Irish, the coverage of topics such as the history of public education and responses to emerging family forms, and references to social welfare developments in several of the British colonies are informative and useful for those with a general interest in the formation and role of social welfare in modern societies.

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Dana Vannoy and Paula J. Dubeck (Eds.), *Challenges for Work and Family in the Twenty-First Century*. Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Gruyter, 1998. \$43.95 hardcover, \$21.95 papercover.

Both work and family have changed dramatically during the last 50 years. Globalization of the economy and the elimination of many jobs through technology have increased competition for jobs, reduced job security, and decreased wages. The entrance of women into the workforce has had repercussions both for workplaces and for families. Today, 75% of mothers with children age 6–17 work, an increase from 39% in 1960. In addition, changing demographics have resulted in longer life expectancies and responsibilities of working adults for elderly, disabled relatives.

As a result, a literature known as "work-family." has developed during the last 20 to 25 years, centering on several themes. One is the need for policies and programs to facilitate the dual roles of worker and family member such as childcare, family and medical leaves, and flexible work arrangements. Another involves the impact work organization has on family health and the effects of family characteristics on work outcomes such as