

Sugar-Coated Poison: Insights and Reflections of Social Administrators on the Welfare Trap

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Abstract

Research on poverty in Taiwan has predominantly focused on individual-level factors, with limited exploration of the systemic impact of the social assistance system. To address this gap, this study interviewed eight social administrators to explore whether welfare traps exist in Taiwan's social assistance system. The findings confirm the existence of welfare traps, which can be attributed to four key factors: (1) the ineffectiveness of transitional welfare measures in fulfilling their intended objectives; (2) insufficient economic incentives to promote employment and facilitate exit from the social assistance system; (3) the disproportionate concentration of welfare resources on households qualifying as low-income; and (4) instances where subsidy

income surpasses earned income, reinforcing welfare dependency. Based on these findings, this study proposes policy recommendations for reforming Taiwan's social assistance system to address welfare traps and promote economic independence.

Keywords: Welfare Trap, Work Disincentives, Welfare Dependency, Social Assistance, Poverty