REVIEWS

Theda Skcopol, *This Missing Middle: working families and the future of American social policy,* Norton, New York, 2000, xii + 207 pp., £17.95.

This book is a powerful restatement of an important but often neglected strand of liberal thinking about social policies in the United States. For more than a decade Theda Skcopol has criticised the idea that cash benefits alone constitute the most effective response to the needs of the long-term poor. She has consistently distanced herself from the zeal with which many of her fellow liberals have sought to defend welfare from conservative attacks. Writing in *The American Prospect* in 1990, she argued that a more realistic strategy would be to accept the force of much of the conservative critique of cash based welfare and to try to develop new policies that would meet the 'needs of the less privileged in the context of programs that also serve middle class and stable working class citizens' (1990, p. 67). Such policies would include an expansion of contributory insurance, but would also involve a move away from the principle of a right to welfare and towards the imposition of work requirements and other benefit conditions. In consequence she refused to 'woman the barricades' against the welfare reform legislation of 1996, and claimed that it was time to 'bury the corpse' of welfare and 'move on' (1996, p. 21). This position has since been vindicated in so far as few now call for a return to welfare as it operated before 1996. Her latest book thus starts with the assumption that the 'major' policy wars of the last generation can be declared over' (p. 154).

The demise of welfare, however, has not ended the excessive polarisation of American social politics. Liberals remain pre-occupied with the 'seriously poor', conservatives still call for tax breaks for the highest earners. Both continue to hold entrenched positions regarding the relative importance of economic inequalities and cultural change in explanations of family breakdown and child deprivation. Both continue to neglect what Skcopol calls the 'missing middle' – working families on middle and low incomes.

It is these working parents who have to contend with the mounting pressures upon family life in contemporary America, and have to do so at a time when their incomes are stagnating in real terms, when their jobs are less secure, and when health insurance and child care is becoming less and less affordable. There is a further sense in which these families represent the middle ground. They often espouse commonsense values 'at odds with the polarised positions dramatised by advocates and politicians' (p. 9). They sense that the protracted debate over family values is artificial and misleading. 'Influences artificially polarised in ideological debates are thoroughly intertwined in daily life experience' (p. 121).

In order to meet the needs and concerns of such families, progressives must try to emulate the success of social conservatives in the 1970s and 1980s. They must attempt to shift the centre of national debate by a 'politics of mobilisation around clearly articulated values, not just narrow policy prescriptions' (p. 163). At the heart of this politics must be a reassertion of the importance of parenthood, and especially of the need to recognise the pressures upon the time and

resources of working parents. In policy terms it will mean campaigning for universal health coverage, and for universal access to parental leave and child care. Each of these initiatives would be as important for dual worker households as for working single parents.

What is most striking to a British reader is the eclecticism of the book. Skcopol repeatedly draws upon and articulates positions that in Britain would be seen as mutually antagonistic. Her arguments for universality, for example, could have been drafted by Titmuss. Successful social politics are those that cover 'broad swatches of the citizenry' and whose benefits are viewed 'as honourable for all citizens to receive' (p. 32). Titmuss would also applaud her call for higher taxation of those who have benefited most from America's booming economy in order to compensate those who have borne the social costs of that boom. He would have been less impressed, however, by her assertion that the second characteristic of effective social policies is that they provide benefits in return for service to the community, and that by the end of the twentieth century the only service that was acceptable was waged employment. Paid work, Skcopol argues, is now 'universally understood as desirable for all adults, men and women, mothers and fathers alike'. Parental duties are clearly important and of value to the wide community, but 'Americans cannot be convinced that parental work apart from at least part-time waged employment is socially honorable' (p. 161). It is this shift in attitudes that precludes any return to a system of cash-based social assistance. It also makes it all the more urgent to adapt not only welfare but also employment laws and practices to the new realities of family life.

Like many such books, *The Missing Middle* is stronger on diagnosis than on remedy, and Skcopol's uncompromising insistence upon the centrality of paid work will disturb many British readers. Nevertheless, this remains a compelling and ultimately optimistic vision of social policy in the new century.

Skcopol, T. (1990), 'Sustainable social policy', *The American Prospect*, I: 2.
Skcopol, T. (1996), 'Bury it', *The New Republic*, 12 August.

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ALAN DEACON
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Vic George and Paul Wilding, *British Society and Social Welfare: Towards a Sustainable Society*, Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1992, 242 pp., £45.00 £14.50 pbk.

In this book, George and Wilding have taken up the notion of sustainability, currently much in vogue with UK government departments, and use it to develop arguments for taking new directions in social policy. The Brundtland Commission (1987, p. 43) defined sustainable development as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. A growing body of literature on the subject has focused on economic sustainability, and economic models have tended to dominate work on environmental sustainability. It is refreshing to find a book paying much needed attention to the social aspects of sustainable development while recognising the importance of environmental protection for future social well-being.

Although the authors claim to take a broader view than the Brundtland Commission, their work actually fits the 1987 definition quite closely. They see the 'needs of the present' as including the availability of work for all to provide income, security, purpose and hope; families that can effectively socialise the next generation, care for dependent members, and provide for emotional needs; a safe and clean environment; the reduction of gross inequalities; and a lawful and ordered social structure. The book examines how these needs can be met at present in ways which can be sustained in future generations.

The selection of these needs is based on the first part of the book, which traces and analyses failures in both the Beveridge and Thatcher years in achieving sustainable social development. From 1945 to the late 1970s, stability in society was achieved at the price of social justice as it relied on the acceptance by many disadvantaged groups (women, ethnic minorities and disabled people) of their deprivations. The resulting inequities, it is argued, made for inherent unsustainability. In contrast, in the 1980s and 1990s it was social *in*stability which precluded sustainable development. Rapid changes in the economy, the rise of market driven individualism and concern for short-term profits and benefits led to a shortage of work, changing patterns of family formation, environmental deterioration, increasing social divisions and increasing levels of crime.

It is these five policy areas that form the subjects of the book's central chapters – work, the family, the environment, social divisions and law and order. Each chapter begins with a description of changes that have been occurring in the UK and it is here perhaps that the book is at its weakest. The first part of the chapter on the environment, for example, provides a condensed catalogue of environmental concerns. This is necessarily a rather simplified listing, given the need to cover a huge amount of information in a small part of a chapter. Nevertheless, it would have benefited from a clearer exposition of exactly how what has been happening poses a threat to social sustainability.

This omission is redeemed in the final chapter of the book which draws on the conventional and radical proposals for action outlined in each substantive chapter to propose the authors' own ideas for socially sustainable policy development. This chapter is a strong one. It emphasises the need for shifts in social values regarding rights and duties, public and private provision, public participation, acceptance of the importance of the collective good and egalitarian ethics. It foreshadows the recent publication of the UK government's indicators for sustainable development (Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions, 1999) in arguing for a range of measures of social welfare which include data on the environment, health and crime, as well as more conventional indicators.

Changes in values are used to inform the authors' policy proposals for modern full employment based on non-traditional definitions of work, including caring; a range of family types reflecting contemporary diversity in patterns of family formation; environmental protection relying on changing public attitudes and values to reduce consumption; the reduction of inequalities using integrated policies in education, employment, training and using social security as an important but secondary line of action; and for achieving sustainable law and order by focusing on promoting good order and prevention

strategies rather than on offenders and offending. Obstacles to sustainable policy development are not seen as necessarily insurmountable. The new social order that is proposed relies on both a strong state and a strong economy. The latter, in relation to the book's coverage of environmental protection policies, carries resonances of ecological modernisation, where economic growth and environmental concern go hand in hand. But George and Wilding make clear the need for a more radical break away from traditional forms of economic growth if social sustainability is to be realised.

Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions (1999), *Quality of Life Counts: indicators for a strategy of sustainable development for the UK*, The Stationery Office, London.

World Commission on Environment and Development (1987), *Our Common Future* (The Brundtland Report), Oxford University Press, Oxford.

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John Major, *The Autobiography*, HarperCollins, London, 1999, xxiii+774 pp., £25.00.

The publication of John Major's autobiography attracted enough curiosity to propel it into the best-seller lists. It is perhaps surprising that a politician, who only two years earlier had been unable to sell his party to the country, sold his story so well. Interest in Major appears greater now than when the tabloids salivated over the sleaze and incompetence with which they characterised the Conservative Party in government.

The interest generated in Major's autobiography is justified. Parts of it are, of course, predictable: Major puts his version of events over ERM entry and exit, skirmishes with 'the Bastards' over policy on Europe, and Back to Basics. Less predictable is the volume's readability and humour which makes it far more enjoyable than the autobiographies of his two predecessors (Edward Heath *The Course of My Life*, Margaret Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, *The Path to Power)*. While Edward Heath's and Margaret Thatcher's memoirs read as if a team of advisors wrote them, one can hear the man behind the words in Major's autobiography. We are still experiencing the fall-out from 1990s conservatism and Major is playing a far more positive role in politics than either of his predecessors managed after their fall; Major, for instance, periodically gives interviews to support the current government over the Northern Ireland peace process. By the time Heath's memoirs finally appeared Heath and events surrounding him were history. John Major, in contrast to Heath and Thatcher, offers support in his autobiography to his successor. Heath could not resist sniping at Thatcher; she added a gratuitous part to *The Path to Power*, which covers her life up to 1979, in which she attacked the Major governments. Indeed, Thatcher's negative influence is a key theme of Major. Major repeatedly draws attention to the damage he believes Mrs Thatcher inflicted on his governments by her criticisms of his policies on Europe.

While one is made aware of Mrs Thatcher's menacing presence in the background, the first Mrs Rochester of 1990s politics, few other women politicians make an appearance. Major's political world was inhabited almost entirely by

men. For nearly thirty years every Cabinet had contained a woman but in 1990 Major appointed an all-male Cabinet. The absence of a woman was the most commented-upon aspect of his cabinet making. In his autobiography Major justifies the exclusion of women in 1990 by claiming that there were no obvious women candidates. He explains that he appointed three women to posts just below Cabinet rank in order for their to be viable women candidates in a reshuffle. This explanation is an implied criticism of Thatcher, for she had obviously not brought on other women to a point where they could be appointed to Cabinet. After the 1992 General Election Major tried to make amends and appointed Gillian Shephard and Virginia Bottomley to the Cabinet. Both are praised by Major, but his comments on Shephard, that she has a sharp mind, businesslike political skill and scrapped without fear or favour, place his comments on Bottomley in the shade.

If ever a politician wanted you to believe that the personal is political it is John Major. Repeatedly he explains his policies with reference to his own underdog – earlier experiences. Major describes the insecurity of his youth and explains that the Conservative Party attracted him because it argued for opportunities to build security, ownership and wealth, and showed practical ways to achieve these goals. He linked his desire for a classless society to his background, which was so dependent on others that he wanted individuals, families and communities to be able to make decisions for themselves and for doors to be opened, a somewhat simplistic notion of 'classlessness' which social policy academics have dissected at some length. A constant and powerful theme of *the Autobiography* is the snobbery and scorn which Major and others like him had experienced: it is this aspect of a class society which Major is the most remorselessly critical; at one point he refers to the 'sneering classes' (p. 28).

Major relates the specific policies he pursued in government to personal experiences. As minister of state responsible for policies affecting disabled people he tells us that he relished the job because Norma had been involved with MENCAP for years, he remembered the difficulties his father faced when he lost his sight, and he took an especial interest in the McColl report on services provided by the artificial limb and appliances centres because he had nearly lost a leg himself in an accident in Nigeria and was therefore 'instinctively sympathetic to the disabled' (p. 93). He states that as chancellor of the Exchequer he wanted to attack inflation because he had seen its effects on neighbours and friends: those who lose out are those with least. As prime minister, he wanted to change the culture of public services because of the patronising and arrogant way he and those close to him had been treated, a memory which prompted him to pursue the Citizen's Charter. Even Back to Basics, he claims, was nothing to do with a moral crusade against single mothers, because he knew about the problems of single motherhood as his sister and Norma's mother had brought up children alone. He writes, too, of his commitment to health and education services and to law and order because on these the quality of life of people in Brixton – with whom he was brought up – was dependent.

It should be clear from the above that social policies play a key part in this autobiography. Major gives an interesting and coherent personal account of his policies, many of which he believes are continuing under the Blair regime.

Heath, Edward (1998), *The Course of my Life*: the autobiography *of Edward Heath*, Hodder and Stoughton, London.

Thatcher, Margaret (1993), *The Downing Street Years*, HarperCollins, London.

Thatcher, Margaret (1995), *The Path to Power*, HarperCollins, London.

HELEN JONES

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John Ditch (ed.), *Introduction to Social Security: policies, benefits and poverty*, Routledge, London, 1999, xvi+247 pp., £15.99 pbk.

There are relatively few introductory books on social security. Those published are rarely, if ever, revised. The challenges facing authors include the complexity of a very broad system, and the need to balance general principles and historical developments with being up to date with the latest changes in the direction of policy (I speak as the co-author of one of these books). Social security continues to be a rapidly moving target, now as much as ever.

The approach taken in this volume is that the editor has supplied a general introduction, setting out some general guidance to social security, and including discussion of recent reforms to the system such as the move to tax credits. There follows ten chapters on specific topics each written by leading authorities within social policy, who will be familiar to readers of this journal.

Jonathan Bradshaw writes on the nature of poverty, Roy Sainsbury on the aims of social security, Pete Alcock on the development of social security, and John Veit-Wilson on the adequacy of social security. Thereafter, Eileen Evason looks at British pensions, Anne Corden at take-up, and Helen Barnes and Sally Baldwin cover disability and social security. The last three chapters are by Eithne McLaughlin on poverty, women and social security, Gary Craig on 'race', social security and poverty, and John Ditch on poverty and social security in the EU.

The chapters are presented in a consistent style. The nature of such collections compared to a general textbook is, of course, that readers gain the individual expertise on each area, but lose a set of unifying themes that run the course of the book – though the notion of the system moving towards selectivity is a strong candidate.

Everyone involved in studying social security will welcome the publication of this book. The chapters cover a wide range of areas, and the authors have provided accessible coverage of their chosen topics. However, it is worth drawing out a number of features of the presentation. First, the breadth of coverage of each chapter varies considerably. For example, Bradshaw's concise chapter on poverty would doubtless fill much of an undergraduate course (or would be useful revision); Corden's chapter on take-up is most helpful for researchers and policy-makers in the area, but clearly of more specialised interest. Both are extremely clear and well written, though catering for different audiences. Indeed, each chapter will be potentially of great use to those coming new to the area. Much of the material will, however, be rather familiar to those who have been in the field for longer.

It is also worth noting that, like many books on social security, six of the ten chapters concern *poverty* and social security: the subtitle to the book is perhaps more informative than the main title as to the content.

There are a number of 'student-friendly' features, including a helpful list of abbreviations, an index and solid lists of references to each chapter. The exposition is also very clear, and rarely covering more technical material. Most authors also eschewed the use of footnotes (though one author needed 23). I would personally have liked to have seen more use of graphics, and possibly some more tables to display data. The preface suggests that the book was a long time in the making, and that other (un-named!) authors did not produce expected contributions. Inevitably some of the chapters are more up-to-date than others.

Perhaps the greatest omission from the book, certainly in relation to current priorities, is the lack of attention to the movement from benefits to tax credits (and the role of taxation, in general) and the increasing emphasis on 'active' policies. These twin threads of 'welfare to work' and 'making work pay' now appear at the forefront of the developing agenda. Whilst these elements are relatively new, there is a strong existing literature on the effects of social security on work incentives, which could have formed a key part of such a book (rather than a couple of pages in the 'aims' chapter).

These comments aside, this is a significant publication that will be much appreciated for providing an introduction to the study of social security policy, particularly as it relates to poverty.

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Christine Pantazis and David Gordon (eds.), *Tackling Inequalities: where are we now and what can be done?* Policy Press, Bristol, 2000, 239 pp., £15.99 pbk.

This book's mission is to explain, forcefully and transparently, inequalities in the UK, how they have grown in the last twenty years or so and how they leave Britain comparing shamefully with its neighbours. Alongside this is a critique of the weakness of New Labour government policy to tackle these inequalities; even, for some of the contributors, its alleged unwillingness, and disinterest in inequality itself.

The book tries to combine solid empirical evidence and academic analysis with accessibility to a wider political and policy audience. It achieves this difficult task, which so often fails, admirably. The chapters are short, easy to read and hard hitting, in most cases without the loss of good argument and evidence. It covers comparative and historical perspectives and specialised chapters on employment, spatial divides, education, housing, crime and health.

A key theme of the book, written by members of the 'Radical Statistics' group, is that research on inequality and poverty is too often ignored by politicians. For example, politicians persist in pursuing approaches like area-based policies which have been shown not to work and use statistics to suit their own political ends. Critics will inevitably ask, rightly or wrongly, whether this group of authors are guilty of the same misuses.

Area-based approaches, such as health and education action zones, are consistently criticised. Strategies aimed at the poorest areas, it is argued, often end up helping those in such areas who are not poor, while failing to help the poor outside them. These zones are established on the basis of competitive tendering rather than need. What are required, the authors propose, are *national*

strategies aimed at inequalities of income and wealth and at the poverty of individuals across the board.

Current government policy comes in for further stern criticism. New Labour are pursuing strategies which fail to make significant enough inroads into inequality. The government are stronger in demanding obligations of the poor than of the very rich, often celebrating the alleged economic benefits of inequality and more worried about meritocracy than more equal outcomes. That the government have turned out to be moderately redistributive is recognised, but it is rightly pointed out that people across the board have benefited from Gordon Brown's budgets and that the very poor, the non-working poor, have actually lost. However, the authors do not always contextualise this within the sticks-and-carrots strategy, whether justified or not, of eventually getting those non-working poor out of poverty and into the workforce. Some of the authors rightly point out that supply-side techniques may not always themselves produce demand for jobs, especially in less propitious economic times. Wider economic and not just local and social solutions to exclusion are called for.

Some of the criticisms are too strong. Occasionally the 'alternatives' advocated seem similar to some of those which the government are actually pursuing. Some contributors, but not all, are keen to criticise the government and less happy to give them credit for doing the right thing – forgetting that radical analysis is not just about critique and alternatives but also about recognising and promoting progressive change where it is happening. Occasionally the government's real concern with poverty and inequality and not just with electoral support from middle England seems to be glossed over.

Only Peter Townsend at the end really engages with the crucial issue of transnational co-operation between governments, required both because poverty exists between nations and not just within them, but also because global agreements are needed so that governments can regulate transnational capital and pursue agreed social protection and redistributive ends. These are undermined by nationally competitive strategies which just prioritise countries' own economic self-interests. New Labour are refreshingly more positive than their predecessors about the building blocks for such an approach available in European co-ordination. But, depressingly, they still obstruct possibilities for co-ordinated social protection, regulation and harmonisation needed in Europe to tackle poverty and inequality. This book is a hard-hitting, forceful warning to Britain's Labour government about the need to fight inequality and poverty with both national and transnational economic strategies. It also hammers home the acute and immoral gaps that have grown within UK society and between the rich North and the poor South of the world.

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Robert Whelan, *Involuntary Action: how voluntary is the 'voluntary sector'?*, IEA, London, 1999, ix+91 pp., £7.00 pbk.

The lead paper in this short book occupies roughly one-third of the total: the remainder consists of commentaries. Although Whelan's contribution clearly

bears the stamp of the IEA, the commentaries are mainly by authors known to be opposed to IEA views on state welfare.

Whelan argues that the distinguishing features of voluntary action are independence and autonomy, and that much of what is termed 'the voluntary sector' has strayed far from the principles of voluntarism. The loss of independence stems from increased reliance on government funding. Voluntary organisations are forced to accept the government's agenda, sacrificing their freedom of action in return for resources, and this problem has been intensified by the system of contracting. The decline of the voluntary sector's autonomy is regretted by Whelan because 'state welfare is widely seen as being morally corrosive' (p. 16). It debases recipients and leads to the creation of an underclass, pauperism and a culture of dependency. This is IEA doctrine in its purest form. The present position, with its lack of a moral dimension, is contrasted with a 'golden age of philanthropy when the state did very little and charity did a great deal' (p. 21). Whelan regrets that a return to the golden age is not feasible, but he nevertheless recommends that voluntary organisations should separate themselves from the state. He also recommends that responsibility for large areas of social provision should be transferred from the state to the voluntary sector. He does not specify which areas, claiming that this is not a matter for current concern. It is somewhat perverse to argue for transfer of responsibility as a solution to present ills, but to decline to specify which areas of provision he has in mind.

Deakin's critique is the most trenchant and far-reaching of those that follow. He states that 'Whelan's analysis is flawed and the prescription that he bases it on self-defeating' (p. 27). Deakin takes issue with Whelan on four fronts: (i) co-operation with the state arose from shortcomings in the level and range of provision and in the mode of its delivery; (ii) Beveridge was not, as Whelan suggests, opposed to active co-operation between the voluntary sector and the state; (iii) Whelan fails to take account of the changes in the voluntary and community sector and what is required is clarification of the terms of engagement; (iv) while there is a risk of inappropriate voluntary sector–state relationships, there are almost equal risks attached to the sector's relationship with the market.

Holman disagrees with Whelan on three counts. First, he rejects Whelan's assertion that the welfare state is morally corrosive and that it has lost public support. Second, Whelan's analysis is concerned almost entirely with national voluntary agencies. Holman is well known for his support for neighbourhood groups and he recommends a National Neighbourhood Fund. Third, using the example of national childcare associations, Holman questions Whelan's assumption that in the 'golden age' voluntary associations were completely independent from government.

May makes a similar point in relation to industrial and reformatory schools. On the other hand, an interesting chapter by Prochaska shows that the King's Fund managed to retain its independence through difficult times following the 1914–1918 war, but gradually became enmeshed in the NHS after 1948. The book demonstrates that there is no single pattern of state/voluntary sector relationships: the Zoological Society of London (Burge), the locally based groups recommended by Holman and Atkinson, the King's Fund and the medical research charities described by Graham and Mills are very different in character and have differing needs for financial and general support. Several writers argue that it is

not so much the existence of state funding that endangers the independence of voluntary organisations, but rather the form which it takes. Burge, Holman, May and Prochaska all identify contracting as the real threat. Whilst most contributors accept that there are dangers in too ready an acceptance of state funding, the main overall conclusion is that potential benefits outweigh any drawbacks. Furthermore, the existence of a developed system of state welfare does not preclude, and indeed may promote, a vibrant voluntary sector. Salamon (1987) has long argued that the public and the private voluntary sectors are complementary, each compensating for deficiencies in the other. The compact between the government and the voluntary and community sector (Home Office, 1998) may show the way forward. If this is given full effect, and followed by local compacts, then new levels of constructive collaboration (May's phrase) may be achieved without threatening the independence of the voluntary sector.

Home Office (1998), *Getting it Right Together: compact on relations between the government and the voluntary and community sector in England*, Cm 4100, HMSO, London.

Salamon L. M. (1987), 'Partners in public service: the scope and theory of government-non-profit relations, in Powell W. W. (ed.), *The Nonprofit Sector: A research handbook*, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT.

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Jon Glasby, *Poverty and Opportunity: 100 years of the Birmingham Settlement*, Brewin Books, Studley, Warwickshire, 1999, 214 pp., £17.95, £11.95 pbk.

Carl Milofsky's case that 'organisational practice is, in a sense, research on the viability of a vision' presents challenges for the social historian exploring achievements of long-lasting voluntary organisations (Milofsky, 1996, p. 11). Does longevity alone show organisation success? How should participants' enthusiasms be viewed over time? What counts as signs of organisation renewal? In '*Poverty and Opportunity: 100 years of the Birmingham Settlement*', John Glasby sets out to meet and go beyond Milofsky's challenge. His study is intentionally celebratory, illuminated by striking photographs and often reflective contemporary documents. It is an accomplished work, conveying strongly the twin senses of complexity and urgency which are at the heart of the multi-purpose community agencies known as 'settlements'. This is enabled largely by taking a thematic approach. Settlement effort is examined in relation to five policy areas, based on Beveridge's Five Giants (though it is arguable that Beveridge was quite such a friend to the settlement movement as is implied).

A thematic approach contrasts favourably with conventional chronological accounts of settlements' work (see, for example, Briggs and Macartney, 1984). It contextualises particular initiatives. It also presents consecutive initiatives as elements in the recurring dynamic between the organisation and other local and national organisations, activities and policy framework. Thus the temptation to portray the settlement as the centre of a particular social policy world is avoided. The cross-policy boundary nature of settlement work is also well demonstrated. This is so, whether that work is seen, variously, as responsive, pro-active, collaborative and experimental or as eccentric, tangental and obscure. Though Glasby's enthusiasm for 'third way partnerships', giving settlements 'unprece-

dented scope' (p. 198) remains untested, he provides strong evidence that Birmingham Settlement showed the value of 'joined up' projects in the 1890 as well as in the 1990s.

Glasby's debt to Rimmer's work is acknowledged fully, with parallel discussion, for example, on the Settlement's continuing ability to attract local philanthropists' support, when financially straitened (Rimmer, 1980). Regularly, settlement projects – for example, regular health checks for elderly people, infertility support – are presented as leading statutory policy-making. Some programmes were innovative internationally, notably the Money Advice Centre, and its complementary work. Project titles change over time. Thus, the 1920s' children's book-borrowing circle, 'The Clean Hands Club', for example, now sounds more like an ethical investment-watch group. Yet the commitment by settlement workers to local communities' needs seems retained and strengthened over time, despite contemporary and later commentators' recognition of the apparent intractability of those social needs. The giants may have changed appearance but they have not noticeably shrunk in size.

Overwhelmingly, this study represents 'history as energiser'. Its style encourages readers not simply to know what happened under Birmingham Settlement auspices, but to attest to its value; and by implication, ideally, to support its work. In so doing, some problems for settlements generally and questions concerning Birmingham Settlement's progress, are omitted or passed over with unfortunate speed. The very illustration of complexity in settlement work points also to chronic dilemmas facing settlements, when (and if) they prioritise work. Yet this aspect of organisational life in the Birmingham Settlement is examined only briefly; suggesting an external iron grip on the Settlement, giving it little or no choice but to 'focus its attention elsewhere' (p. 186). Settlements' move away from 'residency' has been critical in reappraising their organisational goals. Here, this is noted only as marking 'a radical break with the past' (p. 106), and thereafter lacks commentary. Possibly too many developments are designated as 'classic' forms of settlement activity. In the accounts of projects which closed or collapsed (the temperance pub in 1912, the settlement mortuary in 1931, the recording studio in 1985, the MidLife Centre in 1994) there is no reference to any resulting organisational learning. Is this also a 'classic' settlement tendency, to move on and not evaluate failure? By contrast, the Settlement managerial framework has undergone significant transition to reach its current position as a charitable company, but discussion is lacking on the processes by which this was reached. Disappointingly, there is minimal reference to gender issues. With the Settlement's foundation by women, as the Birmingham Women's Settlement' in 1899 (its name changing in 1919), Glasby sees its early history as 'very much gendered history' (p. 17). He neither examines what this means, nor pursues it through the study. Finally, the episodic and often important Settlement relations with the University of Birmingham are treated surprisingly blandly.

This study is a welcome addition to the literature showing settlements' durability, and viability. Its omissions and uncertainties show the extent to which settlement 'stories' are truly multilayered. In Milofsky's terms (*ibid.*), Glasby shows Birmingham Settlement passing far beyond 'the test of a voluntary organisation's survival'. this is 'whether second generation visionaries can find new formulations of idealism and organisations that capture the original essence'.

Briggs, A. and A. Macartney (1984), *Toynbee Hall: the first hundred years*, Routledge Kegan Paul, London.

Milofsky, C. (1996), 'Editorial', *Non Profit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 25: 1, 8–13.

Rimmer, J. (1980), *Troubles Shared: the story of a settlement 1899–1989*, Phlogiston Publishing, Birmingham.

JENNY HARROW
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John Vincent, *Politics, Power and Old Age*, Open University Press, Buckingham, 1999, 176 pp., £15.99 pbk.

This book is a new addition to the very successful 'Rethinking Ageing' series, which as the series editor Brian Gearing indicates in his Preface, seeks 'to fill a need for accessible, up-to-date studies of important issues in gerontology'. As Gearing also acknowledges, this text is an attempt to broaden the focus of the series and, as such, Vincent's text is a particularly welcome addition.

This excellent, if ambitious, text provides a discursive analysis of how older peoples' lives are shaped by power relations, by what Vincent refers to as 'political behaviour at its most general and ubiquitous', and how 'some people exercise power over others' (p. 1). Indeed, one of the 'big' questions it asks is 'what are the political consequences of an ageing population' not only *to* older people but also *for* older people as individual senior citizens. In this way, the book is not only about how older people can achieve full citizenship but also about the political forces that detract from the realisation of this aim. The book has ten chapters that successively follow his critical gerontological focused analysis from the 'micro-level' through to the 'macro-level'. It commences with a discussion of the politics of personal interaction, of the body and identity in old age, ending with a discussion about identity issues for those with dementias, including Alzheimer's disease. It then considers the politics of lifestyle and the preservation of self-identity, and employs the examples of social movements such as the women's movement and the 'right to die' movement, the latter he suggests, being the ultimate expression of personal politics.

In this next chapter, he widens this analysis to consider the medicalisation of old age and the use (and abuse) of professional knowledge within both medical and local government environments. Over the following two chapters, he discusses national politics considering the electoral process and party politics, as well as the important issues of participation, pressure groups and advocacy before considering generational politics and questions of intergenerational solidarity that have so dominated (party) political discussion in the USA and Europe over the past ten years and more. This then leads on to a discussion of cultural politics, post-modernity and ageing, before drawing this wide-ranging analysis together in a final chapter.

I have purposely attempted to indicate the subject matter covered in some detail in order to provide some indication of the ambitiousness of this book. If I were to offer a criticism it would be that the scope of his analysis is in several ways a weakness, since his attempt to provide a complete analysis of many of the salient and important issues has inadvertently led to a superficial consideration of them. Yet, such an oblique criticism may be over-harsh, for to provide a thor-

ough analysis of the nature and purpose of politics and power (as used by Vincent) at the interface of old age requires a wider perspective and a much longer book. The majority of the material presented in this book has been presented elsewhere, yet Vincent uses a wide range of British and American sources to produce a convincing argument that 'Personal and cultural politics are not separate from the more formal organizational politics of national elections and welfare pressure groups' (p. 140).

Much of the discussion is thought provoking and some would suggest contentious. I found his discussion and analysis of the debate between political economy and post-modern approaches to the study of older people and later life issues (within Chapter 9) particularly illuminating and useful. I also found it very constructive to have some very familiar material placed squarely within a focus on power and politics, which for Vincent simply is not just about party politics. Thus, this text will certainly encourage debate and scholarly research, but also inform and enliven it. This meets one of Vincent's objective when he suggests that the text should contribute to 'rethinking old age'. Like other texts in this series, it will be well received by the mainly academic market and is highly recommended to all readers of this journal.

TONY MALTBY
University of Birmingham

Nigel Malin (ed.), *Professionalism: boundaries and the workplace*, London, 2000, Routledge, 271 pp., £55.00, £16.99 pbk.

The concept of professionalism in health and social care is under siege. Challenges from user movements and the culture of consumerism have challenged professional power. Organisational changes – especially the impact of managerialism and its economic logics of decision-making – have eroded the autonomy of workers in state run services and subjected them to new forms of discipline. The deskilling and reskilling flowing from such changes has underpinned a move towards describing professional work in terms of task-based competencies rather than flowing from a coherent and bounded body of knowledge. The focus on collaboration has challenged the boundaries *between* professions, while moves to accredit 'unqualified' care workers has challenged the boundary of professionalism itself.

This book sets out to trace such shifts and to map the responses by care professionals as they attempt to redefine notions of professionalism and professional practice. It is organised around five themes. Part I deals with the problematic nature of professional boundaries in the field of social care. Parts II and III deal with the impact of changes around the themes of 'professionalism and enterprise culture', and 'professionalism and new managerialism'. Part IV addresses 'professionalism and credentialism', covering changes in professional knowledge and training. Part V focuses on the 'emotion management' at the centre of professional work in social care.

Much of the material on changes to the professions – on the downgrading of social work to care management, or the changing nature of probation work – is well trodden ground. While the impact of managerialism and the quasi-market cannot be underestimated, there are problems in presenting change as coherent

and unidimensional. Some chapters suggest an oversimplified picture of the reforms of the 1980s and 1990s, presenting descriptive and/or normative accounts of change which offer little by way of new insights or analysis. While several chapters attempt to explore the role of the professions in mediating new state forms and shaping emergent patterns in the relationship between welfare services and users, the claim that the book as a whole examines 'strategies of resistance' is only partly realised. The exception is the chapter by Fournier who suggests that change has shifted, rather than eroded, professional boundaries and may create new divisions upon which the professions can reconstruct themselves, and that the introduction of market principles can also serve to provide new strategies of legitimation to professional groups.

One of the most interesting features of the book is its broad definition of 'professional work'. As well as the usual studies of social work, community care, probation and health, it includes chapters on the clergy; on complementary medicine; on HIV prevention outreach work; on agencies offering advice to the small business sector; plus a comparison between care workers and the therapeutic role of homeopathic healers. These help illuminate the core themes of the book – for example, the shifting nature of the boundary between professional and voluntary work – as well as offering different perspectives on the nature of the boundary between professionalism and client. These chapters also help theorise the more elusive dimensions of practice in health and social care – the quasi-therapeutic role of some care professions, the centrality of emotional labour, and the relationship between user advocacy and the maintenance of the 'proper' boundary between professional and client. Discussions of emotional labour and of user–worker shared identifications suggest the importance of issues of gender, race and other dimensions of identity to the analysis. While this is by no means absent from the discussions (see, for example, Pinder's account of the implications of flexible working by women GPs and Deveral and Sharma's analysis of what happens when a worker's (black) identity is considered an integral part of the job), it is not as integrated across the book as a whole as might have been expected.

It is inevitable that the book looks backwards to the impact of the Thatcher and Major periods of change. But what might be the possible implications of New Labour for the professions and professional work? Some issues, hinted at but not developed by Malin in his introduction, suggest fruitful lines of future enquiry. First, what are the implications of the rise of 'evidence based practice' for the professions? Will this further undermine professional autonomy or revalorise professional expertise? Second, what will be the implications of New Labour's emphasis on partnership and 'joined-up government'? Malin suggests that collaboration can have a negative effect on professional boundaries. But does 'partnership' imply better cooperation and understanding across boundaries or the weakening of the boundaries? Other issues, not discussed here, may also be significant. What will be the fortunes of the quasi-professions emerging at the interstices of organisational boundaries – the Community Safety worker, the Youth Offending Team manager, the co-ordinator of the local Drug Action Team and so on? What will be the implications of the growth of the 'scrutocracy' of inspection and audit, and of the new national bodies overseeing professional training and practice in social services and health, and of the increased vulnerability of work-

ers and managers to charges of organisational or professional failure? It is too early to answer such questions. But the struggles around these agendas will not easily lend themselves to discussion or analysis within the old terrain of debate about the professions within which much of this book is cast.

JANET NEWMAN
University of Birmingham

Richard L. Zweigenhaft and William G. Domhoff, *Diversity in the Power Elite: have women and minorities reached the top?*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, vii+215 pp., £25.00, £8.95 pbk.

The USA was engaged in policies on equal opportunities in the areas of race and gender at least a decade before the UK, therefore it is very interesting to find out whether these have been influential in the most difficult areas to infiltrate, namely the elite positions in society. This book provides a fascinating and gripping study of seriously important issues for all societies, particularly the reasons for the finer gradations of racial prejudice in the USA.

This is the third in a trilogy of books that the authors have written together on the possibility of the establishment of diversity in the power elite (those who own and manage large banks and corporations, finance the political campaigns of conservative Democrats and virtually all Republicans at the state and national levels, and serve in government as appointed officials and military leaders), described by C. Wright Mills in 1956 as exclusively white, male and almost entirely Christian. In this book, they investigate the contribution of gender, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation and social class to an individual's acceptance into the power elite, and compare this to their effect on the possibility of entering the American Congress.

They conclude that the American power elite now shows considerable diversity compared to the 1950s, but its core group continues to be wealthy, white, Christian males. High social origins continue to be an advantage in entering the elite, and the new diversity in the elite is transcended by common values and a sense of hard-earned class privilege. However, although the elite has accepted diversity only in response to pressure from minority activists and feminists, they have benefited from these new members' role as a 'buffer' between them and consumers, angry neighbourhoods, government agencies, and wealthy foreign entrepreneurs. Finally, the assimilation of different groups has been uneven because the issues of gender, ethnicity, race and sexual orientation have different degrees of effect on an individual's success rate.

The authors argue that success or otherwise in entry to the elite is dependent on four factors; identity management, the importance of class, the importance of education, and intriguingly, the importance of light skin. In other words, to be successful women and minorities have to: find ways to demonstrate their shared values with those already in the elite (examples are given of women lighting up cigars in the boardroom, or learning to play golf, and gay executives acting in an overtly, traditionally masculine manner); originate from business and professional, upper and middle-class backgrounds; be better educated than those already in the elite, but from the same few schools; and finally, have lighter skin, because those with a darker-skin find it more difficult to use suitable educational qualifications as a passport to success. 'Put more strongly, class is going to be the

factor most affecting the likelihood of reaching the highest levels of the institutional structure for all Americans except blacks and darker-skinned Latinos' (p. 184).

Thus this study provides confirmation of the previously exposed, but often denied, sophisticated race prejudice scale prevalent in the USA, based on gradations in skin colour. Further evidence of this is darker-skinned blacks finding it harder to get employment, and, if convicted of crime, receiving harsher sentences. This is a fascinating and important issue, which needs to be understood and explained by social scientists. The authors of this book think the phenomenon hinges on distinctions being made on the basis of reasons for immigration. This is between voluntary immigrants and forced immigrant groups, subjugated through a victor's superior military technology or brought to a country as slaves.

The authors argue that blacks falling into this second category of immigration, being by far the largest minority for centuries in the USA and concentrated in the rural South and large cities, are 'still seen as a ... potential threat to the white system of power relations' (p. 185). This is reinforced by the development by blacks of a 'resistance culture' manifest since the Civil Rights Movement as opposition to white culture and values (for example, rap music, style of walking, use of language, and rejection of education). This 'opposition culture' feeds stereotyping and prejudice through the annoyance and fear of the white majority, which is often also shared by other voluntary immigrant groups. Also, interestingly this 'opposition culture' is gendered, predominantly male, potentially explaining the somewhat greater success of black women in America than black men. 'The legacies of the long historical power confrontation between white and black males are very great' (p. 189).

Zweigenhaft and Domhoff come to an important conclusion that, contrary to claims in the contemporary USA by those opposed to positive race action programmes, the gap between African Americans and all others remains the sharpest divide in US society, wider even than class. Therefore, the strong support of positive legislation and programmes at the federal level are critical for the integration of African Americans into all levels of society.

BARBARA BAGILHOLE
Loughborough University

James Midgeley, Martin B. Tracey and Michelle Livermore (eds.), *The Handbook of Social Policy*, Sage, London, xv+550 pp., £53.00.

The description of national services and policies is the staple element of most texts in social policy, and with the growth of large, modular courses there is an established market for books which are simply and directly informative. The *Handbook of Social Policy* is a large, heavy textbook (heavy in both senses of the word), intended for students in US universities. Much of the work done by Social Policy in the UK is centred in the US in other types of course, and the book is aimed at a relatively narrow range of students: while the editors' introduction is bullish about its prospects in a wide range of fields, the publisher suggests it will mainly be used on BSW and MSW programmes, and perhaps for some public courses.

There are thirty-three chapters. Part I is mainly concerned with method – eco-

nomics, policy analysis, practice and evaluation. This is a potentially interesting approach, but the content is disappointing: the material is not impossibly complex, but most of it is not really introductory either, and parts are fairly uncompromisingly presented. The second part is a history, five chapters and seventy pages. The focus falls clearly on governmental policy, described in a fairly direct chronology; there is no thematic ordering. Part III covers policy areas in twelve chapters. Here, again, the concern is to describe, sometimes in minute detail, federal legislation. The chapter on Social Security does not discuss general issues – apart from the claim that 'the idea of mandatory privitisation of Social Security is sweeping the world' – but it does explain how to calculate pension entitlement. 'Social Policy and Health Care', one of the more clearly written chapters, outlines developments in health care policy, but not the structure of health care, the role of the medical profession, health in equalities, or even the place of the independent sector. The chapter on 'The Elderly' will not tell you anything about older people, but it will tell you the rates of taxation attributable to Medicare.

The end sections of the book contain material which is more clearly recognisable as the stuff of a teaching textbook. Part IV includes some ideological material – 'institutional', conservative and critical perspectives; chapters on welfare pluralism (oddly mixed with localism), feminist approaches, race, development and the environment. The material in this part is more introductory than the discussion of services in Part III, but it falls short of providing an overview of any of the subjects: themes and issues are only briefly identified, a couple of chapters seem more concerned to provide reading lists than to explain the topics, and the material is still strongly focused on federal measures. Part V considers, rather too shortly, international influences and policy futures.

If the concern was to provide an introduction to social policy, far too much has been taken for granted. Contextual information is taken very briefly: there is not very much about the needs and problems which social policy is supposed to respond to. This undermines the usefulness of the textbook as a source of reference; you can find out what provisions have been made for children, homeless people or people with disabilities, but if you want to know what the policies are a response to, you will need to read something else. Further, some large assumptions have been made about what students will know and understand about social policy. The division of powers in the federal system is described rather than explained. If the students did not know before they started what 'liberals' think, what a Health Maintenance Organization is, what the Veterans Administration does or what a class action is, I am not sure they would know afterwards. Readers from abroad will need some background in US studies to make sense of it at all.

By the standards of textbooks elsewhere, the overall treatment seems very limited. There is little sense, after the introductory section, of social policy as an interdisciplinary subject, and theoretical considerations are mainly confined to political ideologies. This kind of material can be got from other textbooks, though; the test has to be how the book tackles the material that is specific to the US. In this respect, the *Handbook of Social Policy* still has important deficiencies. The lack of material on American society is remarkable.

Perhaps more unexpectedly, given the focus on state-based services and the

claim to be concerned with practice, there is not much on social administration: issues like management, planning, rationing, empowerment, or community involvement are hardly considered, and the main content has little or nothing on social policy at the sharp end. The book does not offer enough to work as a teaching text, and it does not give an adequate description of social welfare services in the US. It will probably sell well, but I think the students are being short-changed.

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PAUL SPICKER
University of Dundee

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John Baldock, Nick Manning, Stewart Miller and Sarah Vickerstaff (eds.), *Social Policy*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1999, xxx+594 pp, £17.99 pbk.
Cliff Alcock, Sarah Payne and Michael Sullivan (eds.), *Introducing Social Policy*, Prentice Hall, Harlow, 2000, viii+343 pp., £19.99 pbk.

In these RAE-dominated times it is refreshing to see published two books that are clearly designed to be textbooks, with thought having gone into how they are put together and how they will work for the student. These are similar books but with some important differences. Their, albeit limited, consideration of developments under New Labour gives them an advantage over their competitor texts, but they also have other strengths which make them worthy of serious consideration for reading lists.

Social Policy is a very comprehensive review of services, debates and issues, informed by the use of a wide range of sources, and with a clear aim of equipping students with material for presentations and essays on social policy topics. The editors emphasise that social policy is an evidence-based subject, but it is also demonstrated on many occasions in the book that political and ethical judgements are fundamental. Eighteen authors have contributed between them twenty-one chapters. Each chapter is an essay within its area, preceded by a contents list of subheadings and ending with a glossary and guide to further reading. A well planned index adds to the value of this generally excellent text.

The core of the book is Part IV, 'delivering welfare'. This reviews the main service areas, such as the benefit system and health policy, together with chapters on the environment and green social policy', and even arts and cultural policy. The focus is on state interventions and this leads to some (deliberate) neglect of the private and voluntary sectors as topics in themselves. As with the rest of the book, the material is about the UK with occasional cross-national comparisons. Key legislation is highlighted, good use is made of tables, diagrams and succinct quotes, and readers are taken through key debates.

The other parts of the book are essentially contextual. Part I discusses the history and politics of modern welfare systems, while Part II considers social and economic aspects, such as the roles of families and markets. Some useful technical material is included – for example, summaries of the UK's major social surveys and useful public spending data. There are also good discussions of topics ranging from citizenship to welfare regimes.

Part III explains how social policies are managed and paid for, concentrating on bureaucracy, professionalism, the new public managerialism and public expenditure. Part V discusses the consequences and outcomes of social policy,

with chapters by Pickvance on the impact of social policy and Taylor-Gooby on the future.

There is unfortunately a tendency, common in academic social policy, to neglect local structures and processes, especially local government. Partly linked to this, material on some of the basic tools of policy-making and service delivery is thin, such as business plans, project management and consultation methods. It is important that students of social policy acquire skills in these areas, not least because they are transferable, and whilst this is obviously not a management text, the linkages should be there.

Overall, this book deserves to be key reading on undergraduate social policy modules and will also be useful for postgraduate courses – and lecture preparation! It is sufficiently broad-based to have a reasonable shelf-life, although the extent to which authors include developments under New Labour varies quite a lot, and some chapters do not take their discussion beyond 1997. Indeed, there is no incisive analysis of the New Labour project. It is also a pity that students are not signposted to learning resources that will keep the material up-to-date, especially the internet and sources such as government web sites. Some guidance about these resources would have strengthened the book, as would more guidance and encouragement about using journals. There is clearly a danger that some students will not go beyond the covers of this comprehensive text.

Introducing Social Policy is a similar textbook, although less voluminous and pitched at a slightly less demanding level. It is very much aimed at students encountering social policy for the first time, including sub-degree study. Broadly similar in structure to *Social Policy*, the major policy areas form the last section of the book. As well as the main service areas, this section includes chapters on family policy, criminal justice and the European Union. While not as adventurous as including arts and cultures, these different spheres of social policy promise to introduce an interesting and perhaps controversial variability into future social policy textbooks; it is not clear, for example, why both books exclude town and country planning or even sport and exercise, in favour of, say, environmentalism or arts and cultural policies. The 'social policy imagination' is now encompassing much more than the conventional elements of welfare states in seeking to understand and improve welfare, making it especially important that social policy further develops and explains its own methods and concepts beyond those that are defined by its traditional subject matter.

The preceding sections of *Introducing Social Policy* encompass history, policy and politics, and theory and ideology. This is well-trodden ground but the main points and debates are tackled competently and clearly, with good use of diagrams and boxed key points. Each chapter starts with a few key objectives and ends with a conclusion, list of references and a guide to further reading. A glossary and good index are included at the end of the book. There are, though, no references to web resources.

Unfortunately this book has only patchy and brief coverage of changes under New Labour; the chapter on personal social services, for example, contains no reference to post-Conservative developments. Both books tend to be critical of the pragmatism that appears to be an inevitable feature of Labour governments in power, but the critiques could sometimes be more sophisticated.

For example, criticism of New Labour's adherence to previous Conservative public expenditure targets include no mention of Labour's memories of the calamitous events that followed the 1964 and 1974 general election victories.

While these books are likely to appeal to slightly different markets, there is considerable overlap. *Social Policy* has the edge: its length enables its authors to be more rigorous and there is a considerable amount of well-organised material. The writing is also, in general, more lively.

<div align="right">TIM BLACKMAN
Oxford Brookes University</div>

Richard Freeman, *The Politics of Health in Europe*, Manchester and New York, 2000, x+164 pp., £14.99 pbk.

Of all the spate of books which have recently appeared on comparative health policy, this is the most student- and reader friendly to date, which has the added merit of being at the same time theoretically sophisticated. This is due to its insistent emphasis on 'politics', which means that it does not, as with so many comparative health texts, race off from the starting blocks of a technocratic assumption that rationing is inevitable and the question is merely how to do it. This book, thankfully, starts from broad political questions about health care as distributive issues involving the modern state and its intersection with capitalist and medical power, from which it then seeks to explain patterns of similarity and difference.

It starts off promisingly by offering readers at the outset a concise and useful introduction to different theoretical perspectives. Unfortunately, however, I do not think that this is fully followed through, in the book's subsequent contents. Though it claims to espouse an 'eclectic' approach to its subject, the book exhibits strong tendencies towards an 'institutionalist' form of analysis. Sometimes this is also laced with an underlying functionalism, in that the contemporary restructuring of health care is largely seen in Kleinian terms (of the Rudolf rather than Melanie variety) as an adaptation to fiscal pressures and the failure of medicine to deliver on its promises. I would argue that this underplays the political role of the new right in pushing forward managerial and market solutions to the contemporary problems of health care at national and international levels. In this regard the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is appropriately brought on stage right in the discussion of restructuring, but nowhere is it really asked how this character got a role in the play, or what motivates it.

In a variety of ways this book shows the strengths of taking a regime-based approach to comparative health care. European types of regime are helpfully clustered into 'national health services' in which are included Italy, Sweden and the UK, while France and Germany stand as prime examples of 'social insurance systems'. They are then helpfully compared and contrasted with each on a number of relevant dimensions, in very informative ways. However the notion of politics adopted by the book is largely of an internalist kind. Whereas, for example, the discussion of Esping-Anderson (1990) seeks to relate wider 'power resources' to social security systems (albeit in ways that some like Baldwin (1990) have

criticised), this kind of analysis of possible linkages in relation to health at most only appears at the margins of the book. Rather than comprehensively analysing the social bases of state health services, universalism in health care is pictured primarily as resulting from a social consensus which then became too expensive to maintain. Another missing element is the lack of a sustained comparative discussion of the impact of health care on health, and the role of different regimes in this regard. There was no discussion of the effects of different regimes on social inequalities of health, even in the chapter on public health.

These problems apart, however, this is a lively and concise review of its broad subject. Richard Freeman's book offers an excellent review and commentary on the available literature of the politics of health care, and brings a wider focus to bear on it than many other comparative texts. This is therefore a book which will deservedly find its way on to many student reading lists, and it is undoubtedly a good place to start for anyone who wants a coherent and theoretically well-informed tour of the development and restructuring of Europe's health care systems.

Baldwin, P. (1990), *The Politics of Social Solidarity: class bases of the European welfare state 1875–1975*, Cambridge University Press.
Esping-Anderson, G. (1990), *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, Polity, Cambridge.

<div align="right">
MICK CARPENTER
University of Warwick
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Angela Coulter and Chris Ham (eds.), *The Global Challenge of Health Care Rationing*, Open University Press: Buckingham, 1999, xi+267 pp., £16.99 pbk.

This book contains a selection of the papers given at the 1998 London international conference on priorities in health care. It has no less than 21 chapters (including the editors' Introduction and Conclusion) crammed into 250 pages of text. Countries covered by the contributions include Canada, Denmark, Finland, Israel, Italy, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, the UK and the US. Many chapters are focused on descriptions of how rationing is achieved in specific cases, with the (implicit or explicit) assumption that these provide policy lessons. But the brevity of chapters means that there can be no real attempt to investigate, or even describe, what may be crucial contextual features of the relevant health or political systems. This lack of detail extends to other types of chapter; thus Martin and Singer's demolition of rather parodic versions of economic and other approaches to rationing is followed by the statement that the authors are developing an alternative approach of which few details are given. Perhaps most frustrating is the collection of chapters on public participation in rationing; Mullen provides a long list of techniques which are not explained, whilst Edgar gives an account of apparently successful public consultation in New Zealand, describing the methods only as 'town hall meetings and questionnaires' (p. 179). One detail which struck me from these accounts of rationing in different countries was the high level of access to treatments which seem to be considered usual; thus Israel set a limit of seven cycles of *in vitro* fertilisation for couples with two existing children (p. 50), and a US managed care organisation introduced charges for *minor* mental health problems after the eighth outpatient visit (p. 117).

The collection has some highlights. Unsurprisingly, one is the debate on the inadequacy of information for rationing (Williams) as against the inadequacy of institutions (Klein); in the latter argument Klein nicely turns the economic standpoint back on itself by observing that 'maximising the health of the population' may not contribute to maximising its welfare (p. 21). Other highlights are an excellent discussion of accountability by Daniels (a chapter which, significantly, is 30 per cent longer than most of the others), and Griffiths, Reynolds and Hope's detailed description of drug prioritisation in Oxford. Ham's account of the notorious 'Child B' case is a useful source, whilst Garattini and Bertele's account of various high-profile Italian cases, including the saga of Di Bella's cancer cocktail, is a fascinating read if rather naïve about the role of providers in informing the media.

The contributors to this volume seem on the whole to share two overriding points of consensus. First, that rationing is inevitable: the editors assert this in their Introduction (p. 1) and only Mullen, in a throw-away remark, suggests the contrary. Though I would not dissent from the inevitability view, it would have been useful to see the issue debated, or at least to have an explanation for the assumption. Second, that explicit rationing is preferable to implicit: in this case one contributor (Sabin) does refer to counter arguments, and Coast's empirical demonstration of the existence of certain disutilities of explicitness gives pause for thought. Though my own preference is again aligned with the majority, a real debate would have been a useful addition to this book. Those of us who have undertaken such tasks ourselves are well aware that edited volumes, especially of conference proceedings, are often of variable quality and this volume is no exception. The large number of short chapters makes for a degree of diversity, diffuseness of focus and lack of extended analysis that is sometimes quite frustrating. That said, these editors have done a wholly professional job of assembling their material into a coherent framework, in providing thorough and useful commentary in their opening and closing chapters, and in producing the volume relatively soon after the conference. One could only have asked them to be more selective about the papers included, perhaps leaving space for the best contributions to be expanded.

<div style="text-align:right">

STEPHEN HARRISON
University of Manchester

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Prue Chamberlayne, Andrew Cooper, Richard Freeman and Michael Rustin (eds.), *Welfare and Culture in Europe*, Jessica Kingsley, London, 296 pp., £18.95 pbk.

Culture in the title of this book refers to the lived experience – the way of life – of the population. If we separate social policy from culture then we have an incomplete view of social policy, argue the editors of this volume. Social policy needs to attend to the cultural context in which social policy is delivered, for it is only then that social policies can be delivered appropriately. The meanings and values of the population need to be studied if social policy is to provide a coherent account of reality.

They argue that the 'cultural turn' already encompassed by educational studies, literary studies and sociology needs to be taken seriously by social

policy. The depth of change in social policy has made more established conceptions of culture problematic. Comparative social policy is arraigned for being insufficiently attentive to the differences in cultural traditions between societies in Europe.

These themes are explored in a variety of essays which were presented as papers to an ESRC workshop series. Martin Peterson discusses the erosion of the welfare state in Sweden in the context of globalisation, Walter Lorenz explores the centrality of culture in the German 'social pedagogy' movement, contrasting it with the late nineteenth-century origins of social work. He quotes Octavia Hill as an exemplar of the essentially individualistic nature of social work in England. A curious choice this, for in addition to housing associations and the COS, she was – doubtless through the influence of Ruskin – heavily engaged in cultural projects such as the Kyrle Society designed to bring, among other things, classical music to the ears of slum dwellers, and was one of the founders of the National Trust formed to make beautiful countryside accessible to working people (see Darley, 1990). Steve Trevillion provides an account of subjectivity in social work drawing on work which contrasts the model of social work organisation in Sweden and the UK and the emergence in both countries of networking as a central feature of the social work task. John Baldock reports on research undertaken with elderly survivors of strokes and highlights the way in which the culture of social services managerialism is imperfectly understood by its recipients and, more importantly, is not responsive to their concerns.

Inevitably in a collection of this kind there is a straining after some common themes and despite the valiant efforts of the editors in their introduction to the parts of the book this shows in places. Much of the central work reported in this book uses qualitative, biographical methods in order to understand the culture within which individuals lead their lives. But for me the essay by Michael Hornsby Smith – 'The Catholic Church and Social Policy in Europe' – stood out as a contribution to the understanding of the differential development of European welfare states, although as the editors acknowledge, it is written from within the dominant tradition of analysis of the macro in comparative social policy. Whilst rejecting the view that the contrast between the Protestant and Catholic nations in Europe explains their welfare states – with Sweden being the most developed because it is furthest from Rome! – he concludes that 'Catholic' countries tend to a corporatist social policy and much of the social chapter in the Maastricht Treaty can be traced to the influence of Catholic social teaching.

But the core of the book is the work by Chamberlayne and others which utilises the biographical method. Chamberlayne presents some of her findings on the position of informal carers in the former German Democratic Republic while Tejero and Torrabadella report on changing family relationships in Spain, and Antonella Spano provides an analysis of poverty in Italy using these methods. The claim is that the experience of individual actors is foregrounded and the structures of care and bureaucracy are seen from this user perspective upwards. The final part of the book, 'Theorising Welfare as Culture', has essays by Ashenden on Habermas and the application of his ideas to welfare, by Knowles on the work of Foucault and Lefebvre in relation to welfare regimes, while Rustin outlines the contribution that psychoanalysis can make to the study of welfare.

Unfortunately there is some sloppiness in the editing. In the List of Contributors we are provided with biographical information on only nine of the fifteen authors. At two points Clare Ungerson is wrongly credited with co-authorship of the chapter by John Baldock. Finally, I was very surprised that Michael Rustin could write: 'Gay people demand the same rights as homosexuals, for example, regarding the age of consent, or to make gay marriages or as parents...' (p. 262).

This is an important contribution to the study of welfare in contemporary Europe. Nonetheless the editors' characterisation of academic social policy as largely concerned with the macro and administrative seems to be describing a social administration to be found in some universities more than thirty years ago.

The authors' insistence on the centrality of meaning – that social policy needs to be connected to the understandings of citizens – is one of the most valuable conclusions which comes from this work. Here the criticism offered in the last chapter of social policy seems to be of some value while earlier strictures on the neglect of the personal and informal in academic social policy seem misplaced.

Darley, G. (1990), *Octavia Hill*, Constable, London.

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Dilys M Hill, *Urban Policy and Politics in Britain*, Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2000, xii+254 pp., £42.50, £13.99 pbk.

Picking the moment to produce and launch a contemporary history of policy and politics is never easy. Even the best informed analyst is unlikely to be so 'on-message' as to be able to predict accurately the publication of the government's urban White Paper or to be able to adjust publication schedules to allow coverage of the Social Exclusion Unit's National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal. And appearing in print with such occasions imminent is unfortunate. Of course these problems are not new, but they raise in my mind serious questions about the future viability of books of this type. I do not think it is just the turbulent policy environment that exists in Britain at present that fuels these concerns. The instant availability on the web of important policy documents (as well as the increasing use of on-line consultation) also adds to the pace of change and, more crucially, to a growing feeling that it is both important and possible to keep up with contemporary policy developments. In this sense any conventional book which concerns itself with very recent policy developments is doomed to almost instant obsolescence.

But Hill's book is not just about these very recent developments. In an early chapter she traces the development of urban policy since 1945 and describes the reliance on the statutory town planning system and regional policy in trying to deal with uneven development. She goes on to consider the growing influence of market mechanisms and the use of competition to allocate urban policy funds and concludes with a critical review of the current consensus around the importance of local partnerships for area-based renewal.

The following chapters tend to focus much more on the last few years,

typically contrasting the situation reached in the last years of the Major administration with various aspects of the New Labour project of modernisation. Thus, Chapter 4 provides an analysis of the legal, institutional and political framework within which urban policy is developed. This helpfully includes both a regional and a European perspective, although the depth of coverage is rather shallow in parts and the pointers to sources of more detailed critical debate on these issues could be more extensive. The chapters on urban politics and local democracy (5) and on improving local services (6) also contain a mix of valuable and succinct descriptions of such issues as community identity and deliberative forms of democracy, but again I was not convinced by the particular combination of detail and suggestions for further reading. Chapter 7 revisits many of the same issues in its critical analysis of 'The Modernising Agenda'. Although doubtful of the scale of positive impacts achieved by urban policy interventions over the last twenty years, Hill supports the emphasis placed on 'working together for holistic solutions, creating and sustaining partnerships and pursuing consensus' (p. 170). While few would argue against these principles, we need to begin to accumulate and critically review any systematic evidence of the practical ways in which these can be taken forward, for they are not especially new. The report of Policy Action Team 17 (PAT 17, 2000) which has fed into the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal begins this task and also illustrates an important (and in my view welcome) aspect of modernisation – the publication of more of the background thinking to important policy developments.

The final chapter, subtitled 'Cities in Changing Times', returns to a theme developed at the outset of the book: that although economic decline and poverty can be found everywhere, cities are special places because of the concentration effects they both create and embody. While most would accept this proposition it tends to encourage us to disregard too easily the need for policy to consider the relationship between all places and not just those defined rather imprecisely as large towns and cities. In this it is worth noting that government is increasingly referring to regeneration policy rather than urban policy and, in so doing, avoiding the need to engage so extensively in this particular discourse of spatiality.

Overall then, Hill's book offers the student of urban policy and politics a good overview of contemporary history and some very worthwhile critical reflections on the New Labour project of modernisation. However, it may be that the growing importance of new forms and channels of communication will make the conventional textbook on such rapidly changing topics a thing of the past, along with urban policy.

Policy Action Team 17 (2000), *Joining it up Locally/The Evidence Base*, Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, London.

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Paul A. Sabatier (ed.), *Theories of the Policy Process*, Westview Press, Oxford, 1999, 289 pp., £53.95, £20.00 pbk.

This is one volume in a series on 'Theoretical Lenses on Public Policy' published by Westview Press. Others consider a diverse collection of perspectives ranging

from the broad (parties, policies and democracy) to the much more narrowly focused (institutional incentives and sustainable development).

The intention of this book is to allow a number of writers to propound and evaluate a range of theoretical perspectives to explain the policy process. Sabatier starts the volume with a chapter that discusses the need for the development of better theories in order to help us gain a greater understanding of the complexity of policy-making in contemporary societies. Given this complexity and the wide variety of actors, their different goals, objectives and policy preferences, he argues that it is necessary to find a way of simplifying the process in order to properly comprehend it. Since there are inevitably often several different ways of looking at the same situation, in this book he takes what he describes as 'a multiple lens strategy' (p. 6) and outlines seven conceptual frameworks. These are:

- heuristic – the division of the policy process into consecutive stages such as agenda setting, policy formulation and implementation;
- institutional rational choice – a group of frameworks that focus on how institutional rules alter the behaviour of intendedly rational individuals who are motivated by material self-interest;
- multiple streams – an approach which views the policy process as composed of three streams of actors and processes, namely, a problem stream, a policy stream and a politics stream;
- punctuated equilibrium – based upon a view that sees policy-making in the United States as characterised by long periods of incremental change interspersed with brief periods of major change;
- advocacy coalition – focusing on the existence of 'advocacy coalitions' (including actors from elected and unelected organisations) who share common belief systems and undertake some degree of co-ordinated activity over time;
- policy diffusion framework – explaining variations in the adoption of policies across political entities using both the characteristics of political systems and the variety of diffusion processes;
- the funnel of causality and other comparative frameworks – attempts to explain variance in policies across states using variables such as public opinion, socioeconomic characteristics and political institutions.

In the remainder of the book these seven frameworks are considered in four sections focusing on views of rationality in the policy process (rational choice and multiple streams models), policy change over fairly long periods (the punctuated equilibrium framework and the advocacy coalition framework) and comparative perspectives (innovation and diffusion and other (large-N) comparative approaches). Finally, the work is drawn together with a comparison of the various theoretical frameworks and several strategies for advancing the state of policy theory are discussed.

Unsurprisingly, perhaps, the book is heavily reliant upon the US literature, and whilst a number of significant British and European works are cited the examples are also largely drawn from north America.

As may be apparent from the discussion and terminology employed so far, despite the intention of 'simplifying' our analysis and understanding of the pol-

icy-making process this is not an easy read. However, each of the individual chapters has a relatively clear structure, setting out a brief history of the relevant models, discussing their underlying principles and propositions, and the difficulties and challenges posed by them. Usefully, they also analyse the frameworks, taking account of 'recent' empirical evidence and revisions, and undertake some evaluation of the strengths and limitations of the framework as well as suggesting directions for future development.

Despite the complexity of much of its discussion and the significant north American bias, the book does retain a number of strengths for those interested in the analysis of social policy-making. In particular, it considers a number of very different models that are likely to be applicable in other contexts, some of which may not be familiar to many potential readers. It also provides a broadly based picture of the policy process which encourages consideration of a wide variety of ideas and issues.

Overall, this book is a challenging read. Whilst it has a clear and generally coherent structure it does deal in considerable detail with some difficult approaches to the analysis of public policy-making. As such, it would not normally be appropriate for those without a reasonable level of knowledge of this field. However, those who do read it may find that they have achieved one of the end goals of the book in that they will have been introduced to what Sabatier (p. 13) describes as 'several of the more promising frameworks...to compare the strengths and limitations of each. [And] At the end of the day the reader will hopefully have a "repertoire" of two or three frameworks that he or she is familiar with and adept at employing.'

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Nicholas Deakin & Richard Parry, *The Treasury and Social Policy: the contest for control of welfare strategy*, Macmillan Press in association with the ESRC Whitehall Programme, London, 2000, 256 pp., £45.00.

The politics of the UK public expenditure is a widely discussed but under-researched topic. Dominated by the Treasury the annual public expenditure round has proceeded in an atmosphere often likened to a Turkish bazaar where spending departments and the Treasury haggle over allocations. Several landmark studies have shed light on this process, most notably that of Heclo and Wildavsky (1981) charting Whitehall village politics in the 1970s and 1980s and Thain and Wright's (1995) painstaking examination of the 1980s and early 1990s. To this small band can now be added the work of Deakin and Parry, who as part of the ESRC's Whitehall programme, have penetrated the inner sanctum of the Treasury and the major social spending departments.

The authors' main concern is the changing role and relationships of the Treasury with other government departments, especially those concerned with social policy. They wish to explore whether, in addition to a macro level concern with spending totals and aggregates, the Treasury has sought to influence the *content* of social policy. To this they link an ambition to examine how the role of the Treasury has changed in a fragmenting state where it may well have achieved 'more control over less'. In order to answer these questions the authors

conducted a wide-ranging series of interviews with officials from the Treasury and major social policy spending departments during the mid 1990s. The discussion is therefore supported throughout by quotations from serving officials aided by wide-ranging documentary research.

The book falls into three parts: the background to the Treasury's involvement and concern with social policy spending (chs. 1–3), recent changes in the Treasury and the effects of these on the dynamics of social policy expenditure (chs 4–8) and a final section codifying the research findings in the context of New Labour's expenditure policies and assessing the Treasury under Gordon Brown (chs 9–10). The initial chapters set out the context of public expenditure policy specifically as regards the Treasury's interest and intervention in social policy from the mid 1940s to the early 1990s. The interests of ministers and officials in the growth of social spending is charted, as is the rise and decline of the post-Plowden public expenditure process (PESC). Throughout this period a failure by both Treasury ministers and officials to understand the complexities of social policy implementation is noted, combined with the centre's determination to develop a more interventionist stance, an ambition facilitated by the development of various technical devices in the wake of PESC, in particular, more central control over the allocation processes.

The meat of the book, however, comes in the second section where the authors provide a first-hand account of Treasury reform in the wake of an internal management study, the Heywood Report (1994) (ch. 4); the effect of this on the internal operations of the Treasury and its relations with social policy spending departments (ch. 5); and a more detailed assessment of the implications of these changes for social security policy (ch. 6); health, education and housing (ch. 7); and wider issues of territorial government (ch. 8). These chapters, drawing heavily on the perceptions and experience of officials, offer both a case history of traumatic organisational change (not always well conceptualised or implemented) in the Treasury and the effects of this (as the Treasury aims to develop a more 'strategic' role) on the internal budgetary politics with the spending departments. The authors' thesis is that these changes have allowed the Treasury to further its long-term ambitions to control not only expenditure totals but the *substance* of policy in areas such as social security, education and health. True, the characteristics of policy areas differ but the authors contend that the Treasury's agenda is to move from first-order concerns of controlling economic aggregates to a wider range of objectives related to the promotion of efficient market mechanisms and actual policy outcomes and impacts. They add, however, that the Treasury's ambition may often outstrip its ability to operate in an informed and effective way in these areas (ch. 10).

Interestingly the authors' solution to these problems is to accept what they see as inevitable Treasury hegemony and to recommend a more organised strengthening of the Treasury rather than instigate changes at cabinet or departmental level. Yet, while they may be correct in their call for better strategic capacity and more integrated policy analysis it does not follow that the Treasury, as currently structured, is the best place for these to reside. Indeed the authors' analysis of the implications of their research, particularly when set against recent developments in public expenditure under New Labour (Comprehensive Spending Reviews, Public Service Agreement) would benefit from a more considered dis-

cussion than is currently provided. However, this is to nit-pick at a richly textured study that can inform those interested in British politics at a number of levels, including the implementation of change in Whitehall, the evolving politics of the UK budgetary process, and the continuing battle between controllers and spenders that effects not only monetary totals but the very thrust and content of social policy itself.

Heclo, H. and A. Wildavsky (1981), *The Private Government of Public Money*, 2nd edn, Macmillan, London.
Thain, C. and M. Wright (1995), *The Treasury and Whitehall: the planning and control of public expenditure 1976–83*, Clarendon Press, Oxford.

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Tony Fitzpatrick, *Freedom and Security: an introduction to the basic income debate*, foreword by Christopher Pierson, Macmillan, London, 1999, xiv+231 pp., £45.00.

Throughout the last half-century, as universal welfare was first implemented, then criticised as either unwarranted or failing to deliver, and finally rejected in favour of mass means-testing and conditional workfare, the idea of Basic Income (BI) – a truly unconditional, universal benefit paid to every man, women and child – has continued to attract support from academics and politicians around the world whilst remaining on the periphery of welfare reform debates. Is this interest nostalgia for welfare's 'golden age' or a rational commitment to radical reform? In one version or another, BI appeals to people from all shades of political opinion as well as to feminists and ecologists. In this sense, part of its appeal lies in its apparent ideologically neutrality. Yet, as it takes on the particular character that ideologically interests espouse – for example, negative income tax (NIT) for the pro-market right or Social Dividend for common-ownership socialists – it becomes increasingly mired in controversy. These are some of the paradoxes surrounding BI that Tony Fitzpatrick's engaging and illuminating study explores.

In these ways BI is more than just an economic device to meet basic needs, a tool to engineer social justice, or a political project to advance citizenship. It is above all a policy whose significance only makes sense in the context of the particular ideology of citizenship supporting it. It is this focus on ideology and citizenship that serves as Fitzpatrick's guiding thread throughout the book. Its aims are three-fold: to understand the 'minimum model' of BI whatever its different ideological contexts; to map the ideological contours of the BI terrain; to show how BI proposals interact with debates in politics and social policy concerning citizenship, social justice, redistribution, individual freedom and the future of welfare.

The book falls into two parts. The first covers the basics of BI and the development of the idea in different countries (ch. 1); the structure, function and social divisions of different benefit systems, their redistributive effects and European trends (ch. 2); a typology of different BI measures, their costs, and a thumbnail sketch of its history from the 1770s to the present (ch. 3); and an overview of the pros and cons of BI (ch. 4). The second part (chs 5 to 9) examines the welfare philosophies, critiques and BI measures associated with the key ideologies shap-

ing social policy. First, neo-liberalism is examined with its malign interpretation of state welfare and its proposal from some quarters for a NIT that minimises state interference in the market. Second, welfare collectivism is addressed with its benign view of the welfare state and its support for Participation Income encouraging a broad range of socially productive activities. Third, socialism and a Social Dividend that distributes the returns of collectively owned assets are discussed. Finally, feminism and ecologism are examined. Although both ideologies provide a range of arguments for and against, it is the ecologists who place the greatest store by BI. In particular, BI proposals play a central role in the ideas of leading thinkers such as Robertson, Gorz and Offe. In addition, the book gives fair measure to proponents from other persuasions such as Milton Friedman, Tony Atkinson, James Meade and John Roemer and the debates they have engendered.

Fitzpatrick introduces a new category for characterising welfare analysis, in addition to the right's *malign* critique and the *benign* endorsement of welfare collectivists, namely the *sublime* critiques of socialists, feminists and ecologists. By addressing the ambiguities of state welfare more rigorously than the right and welfare collectivists do, socialists, feminists and ecologists each advance distinctive analyses of the failings of welfare and prosecute projects based on BI for overcoming these failings. In this way Fitzpatrick advances mainstream welfare debates by tracing the ways in which different sets of political values concerning citizenship, human identity and justice interact with contemporary social and economic developments to pose new options for welfare's future.

That BI encourages, it is claimed, new and more just social arrangements raises important issues about the potential of social policy to create new welfare subjects who are less restricted by the demands of conditional welfare and free to pursue their own life choices about work, parenting, relationships and so forth. In this process, ideology can enhance the individual's sense of her or his own potential, power and subjecthood. Though occasionally touching on this central aspect of the theory of the ideological subject in his account of the three sublime interpretations of welfare, Fitzpatrick generally follows a more conventional line in confining the analysis to examining the role of ideological values and principles in defining the shape of BI.

Fitpatrick's book offers an imaginative approach to social policy which explores the thought experiments of the left, right and centre as a way of seeking to 'construct progressive proposals rather than ... imagine that BI's fate is sealed once and for all' (p. 150). In addition, it provides a useful teaching resource for studying different forms of more conditional social security, each appraised by comparison with the ideal standard of BI. As such, the book deserves a place on course reading lists alongside more standard social security texts – which hopefully a future paperback edition will secure.

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