

Book Reviews

Ian Gough and Geoff Woods (eds) (2004), *Insecurity and Welfare Regimes in Asia, Africa and Latin America*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 363 pp., £50 hbk, ISBN 0521834198.
doi: 10.1017/S0047279405218809

Although social policy scholarship in Britain, North America and other parts of the English-speaking world has conventionally focused on domestic provisions, the volume and scope of comparative inquiry has now increased exponentially. Formative comparative analyses of the social services in a handful of industrial countries have been augmented by more encompassing comparative accounts and by many more country case studies that provide useful insights into social welfare in different societies. The result is an impressive body of scholarship that transcends the domestic preoccupations of conventional social policy inquiry.

Ian Gough and Geoff Woods have contributed further to the growing corpus of comparative social policy scholarship by producing an edited collection of papers concerned with social policy in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The book is the product of a research project funded by the British government's Department of International Development. It builds on the editors' prior work at the Institute for International Policy Analysis at the University of Bath in England, where academic colleagues from the interdisciplinary fields of social policy and development studies met to discuss ways in which their respective insights could be merged to focus on key social policy concerns. The result is a substantive and impressive scholarly work that draws attention to the distinctive features of social need and social policy in the Global South.

The book begins with a useful introduction by Gough and Woods that briefly explains the conceptual approach the editors employ to frame the analysis. As they make clear, they are greatly indebted to Esping-Andersen's now ubiquitous 'three worlds' model. The book's own version of Esping-Andersen's approach is then loosely applied to examine welfare patterns in the Global South with particular reference to Latin America, East Asia and Africa. The final section serves as a repository for three rather disconnected chapters dealing respectively with the usefulness of using the welfare regime approach in Bangladesh, international welfare provision and a concluding chapter on rethinking social policy in development.

It is obvious that a great deal of work has gone into preparing this weighty publication, and the editors are to be commended for attempting to encompass a huge subject matter within a typological framework inspired by Esping-Andersen's work. However, it is not clear that this framework succeeds in capturing the diverse and complex cultural practices, governmental provisions, international conventions and treaties, and other institutions that combine in intricate ways to enhance and, in many cases, diminish the welfare of more than two thirds of the world's population. In fact, it is doubtful that any typological endeavour, no matter how sophisticated, can encapsulate these complexities.

It is perhaps unfortunate that the typological obsession, which has characterised much social policy inquiry since Harold Wilensky and Charles Lebeaux constructed the residual-institutional dichotomy in the 1950s, should have distracted this valiant effort to fuse the insights of development studies with those of social policy. Although both development studies

and social policy have long been dominated by a top-down, macro-perspective that relies implicitly on the nation state as a unit of analysis, development studies has been subjected to incisive criticism from anthropologists, feminists and postcolonialists, who have argued for an alternative view based on the perspectives of 'the other'. Woods is sensitive to this perspective in that his account focuses on familial, kin and community relationships. While he recognises the indispensable role of non-formal social provisions in meeting human needs and solving social problems, it is unfortunate that the analytical potential of his approach is overshadowed by the book's typological preoccupations.

It is also unfortunate that the book's dependence on the typological approach relegates the normative potential of its analysis. There seems little point in categorising welfare regimes when there is a far more urgent need to provide the intellectual ammunition to improve them. The persistence of violence and oppression, the insidious impact of the diffusion of neo-liberal ideology on international standards of living, the resurgence of Western imperialism and many other manifestations of global illfare cry out for new ideas that can inspire meliorative action.

A puzzling feature of the book is its ahistorical character. Although typologies are indeed intended to provide contemporaneous classifications rather than historical analyses, it is difficult to understand how interpretations of welfare systems can be meaningful in the absence of a perspective that incorporates political, cultural and economic histories, particularly since statutory provisions (as well as customary practices) in many parts of Asia, Africa and Latin America have been extensively influenced by Western imperialism and its legacy.

It was in the colonial context that the first major scholarly publications dealing with social welfare in the Global South were published, and it is another puzzling feature of the book that it fails to recognise the substantial legacy of scholarship that has previously been undertaken into social policy in the developing countries. Except for a brief reference to Lucy Mair's formative account of British colonial welfare policy in the 1940s, the pioneering work of scholars, such as Stewart MacPherson, Margaret Hardiman, Keebet and Franz von Benda Beckman, Howard Jones, Frank Hirtz and others who wrote extensively about social policy in the developing nations in the 1980s, is not even mentioned. The idea that knowledge builds incrementally and usefully on the work of others appears not to have influenced the editors and authors of this book.

Despite these drawbacks, *Insecurity and Welfare Regimes in Asia, Africa and Latin America* makes a valuable contribution to the literature on comparative social policy, and it should be consulted by anyone wishing to know more about welfare systems in those global regions that have long been neglected by mainstream social policy writers. Although the usefulness of employing Esping-Andersen's typological approach may be questioned, the book makes an interesting contribution to the academic literature; indeed, it may have analytical potential as future comparativists endeavour to provide new insights into the complex processes that affect social welfare around the world.

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Anthony Hall and James Midgley (2004), *Social Policy for Development*, London:
Sage, 288 pp., £22.99 pbk, ISBN 0-7619-6715-X.
DOI: 10.1017/S0047279405228805

No social policy textbook is complete without attention to the international context of health and social welfare institutions, policies and practices. Usually this proceeds with a chapter on supra-national social policies and the occasional reference to what these policies imply for non-OECD countries. Development studies, for its part, is more conversant with the international

context of national social development but DS textbooks pay frustratingly little attention to social policy issues. In this context, Hall and Midgley's *Social Policy for Development* makes a distinctive contribution to both of these fields of study. Written as an update to Margaret Hardiman and James Midgley's *The Social Dimensions of Development* published over two decades ago *Social Policy for Development* examines the contribution of social policy to social development processes in the Global South, attending to the social policies of international institutions therein.

The book has much to commend it. Written in an accessible and concise way, the book reviews a substantial amount of material in nine chapters. Chapter 1 introduces students to the relationship between social development and social policy and attends to the local, national and supra-national contexts shaping social development. Chapter 2 reviews various social policy responses to poverty and inequality and their relationship to social development. Chapter 3 focuses specifically on 'rural development', while chapter 4 (written by Jo Beall) focuses on urban development. The four following chapters examine the policy fields of education, health (written by Mrigesh Bhatia and Elias Mossialos), social services and social security as they relate to social development. The final chapter examines international development cooperation. Each chapter is prefaced by a half-page chapter summary and is followed up with a useful annotated guide to further reading.

My overall impression is positive but I have reservations. The absence of an integrated bibliography is a nuisance. Also, given that this is a textbook, I thought the chapters could have made use of case study material to better illustrate some of the points made in the text. More substantial criticisms pertain to the inadequate coverage of international trade issues, the use of private investment/financing and privatisation processes and what these imply for social policy and development. There is very little on transnational corporations in the development process, apart from a very brief mention of export-processing zones and employment conditions in them. There is nothing on environmental or population issues and policies. There is no discussion of gender issues in development processes; 'women' have just six entries in the index. Of course, one book cannot cover everything in equal detail and the authors do provide references for further reading, but the cumulative impact of these various omissions is, on balance, substantial, and especially so for a core teaching text.

Although this book will probably be used most widely in 'specialist' undergraduate and postgraduate courses examining social policy as it relates to countries outside the OECD, this book (despite the omissions) could/should be used in 'mainstream' social policy courses to elucidate the relationship between social policy and social development generally and stimulate discussion about social policy as a field of study and a political practice. It could, for example, be used to enhance students' appreciation of: foreign policy as social policy; the international political economy of social policy development; the relationship between the social policies of national and international governmental organisations; the relationship between social development processes in the Global North and those of the Global South; the marginalisation of welfare concerns of most of the world's population by governments of the Global North, and the variety of arrangements that exist worldwide to secure human health and welfare. These issues are integral, not incidental, to social policy. Despite my reservations, this book goes a substantial way to integrating international issues into social policy and development studies alike.

Reference

Hardiman, Margaret and James Midgley (1982), *The Social Dimensions of Development*, London: John Wiley.

Frances McGinnity (2004), *Welfare for the Unemployed in Britain and Germany*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 228 pp., £55.00 hbk, ISBN 184376220X.
DOI: 10.1017/S0047279405238801

It seems, to many observers, that a full-employment economy as the result of labour market policy reforms implemented since the late 1990s in the UK vs. high unemployment and fierce political struggles to implement 'necessary' labour market policy reforms in Germany are the core elements that characterise the differences between the two political economies at the beginning of the twenty-first century. This book does not directly address these differences that have dominated much of the current economic and political debates, it tackles the sociologically important question of how different designs of social policies affect unemployed workers. The study is largely focused on the 'effects' of cash transfers, i.e. passive labour market policies, in the early/mid 1990s.

The starting point of Frances McGinnity's insightful study is the observation that many social policy analysts make the claim whereby the specific design of welfare states stratifies outcomes, without providing the necessary empirical evidence in regards to individual outcomes. From an empirical perspective her work indeed breaks new ground. She primarily focuses on micro-level outcomes (mainly income poverty, duration of unemployment, and labour market participation among spouses of unemployed workers), i.e. the individual unemployed being the unit of analysis. Her empirical work is based on longitudinal data analysis, which prevents her from having to rely on a snapshot approach to make inferences.

After a brief introduction focusing on theoretical and methodological issues McGinnity compares labour market trends (i.e. the development and structure of unemployment as well as employment) from the mid-1980s to the late 1990s. This chapter is followed by an analysis of the various welfare policies for the unemployed in both countries. In accordance with welfare state regime theory, the benefits for the unemployed in Britain are primarily means-tested, whereas in Germany they are largely earnings-related insurance benefits. These two chapters set the stage for her original research focusing on individual outcomes.

First McGinnity addresses the issue of income poverty among the unemployed in the two countries. Based on regime theory one could expect that the different policy designs lead to distinct outcomes. And indeed, the incidence of poverty is much higher among the unemployed in Britain than in Germany. Whereas only 8.1 per cent of the unemployed have an income below 40 per cent of the median income in Germany, this is the case for 21.2 per cent in Britain. The cause of the relative low poverty rates among the unemployed in Germany is that the overwhelming majority of them are entitled to some form of earnings-related benefits. However, the likelihood of poverty (based on the 50 per cent threshold) among the relatively small group of unemployed workers in Germany, who have to rely on means-tested social assistance, is comparatively high. (The recently legislated reform of the unemployment compensation system, merging the previously separate unemployment assistance and social assistance into one assistance programme, will lead to a significant growth of this group of income poor unemployed workers.) Although McGinnity also analyses the poverty rates among various household types with unemployed workers, we should be very cautious interpreting and using these findings, due to the very small number of cases in some of these subgroups. In the case of single unemployed parents her 'tentative' findings are based on 19 cases for Britain and 15 for Germany. Independently of these critical remarks, her overall research findings in regards to poverty among the unemployed are very important. They empirically support the hypothesis that welfare states (in this case unemployment benefits) geared towards poverty reduction through means-tested programmes are not necessarily as effective as earnings-related unemployment insurance systems in achieving this goal.

In relating the unemployment compensation system, labour market regulation, the family, as well as the education and training systems McGinnity's research reveals very interesting results in regards to the duration of unemployment. Contrary to the insider/outsider argument, young Germans do not have particularly long spells of unemployment. This phenomenon can largely be explained by the success of the comprehensive vocational training system. Although overall the insider/outsider argument does not seem to apply, a small group of workers with no qualifications are severely disadvantaged. Being married and having children tends to increase the length of unemployment spells among women in Germany. However, long-term unemployment is especially prevalent among older workers in Germany. The reasons for this can be located in the design of the unemployment insurance benefit system, i.e. granting older workers longer benefit durations, and in the formalised vocational training system, which makes it more difficult for older workers to adjust in an everfaster changing economy. Finally, McGinnity speculates whether the longer spells of unemployment among older workers in Germany might simply be explained by the fact that older unemployed British workers are more likely to be 'transferred' to disability benefits, thus shortening their official unemployment spell. However, it has to be recognised that Germany in the mid-1990s operated very large early retirement schemes; without these programmes unemployment spells of older workers might have been even longer. Despite McGinnity's interesting findings, one has to stress that more empirical research has to be conducted to uncover the relevance of the various potential and multi-faceted causal variables for long-term unemployment.

Finally, does the design of the unemployment compensation system affect the decisions of wives of unemployed workers to become actively engaged in the labour market? According to McGinnity the answer is 'yes': German women tend to enter into paid employment when their husbands become unemployed, while such an effect cannot be found for wives of unemployed workers in Britain. The earnings-related unemployment *insurance* benefits in Germany are not means-tested and the earnings-related, but means-tested unemployment *assistance* has a much higher earnings disregard than the unemployment support in Britain. The flat-rate benefit, in combination with a dependant's allowance and very low earnings disregard in Britain may very likely have contributed to the rise in workless households in the 1990s.

What do we learn from McGinnity's findings? First, we should be very careful in transforming unemployment compensation systems based on earnings-related insurance benefits towards means-tested systems, if our aim is to avoid poverty among the unemployed. Second, the length of unemployment spells is not only determined by the specific designs of unemployment compensation programmes, but also by other institutions, such as the educational or vocational training systems. Third, low-income disregards for spouses of unemployed workers within means-tested assistance schemes might serve as an incentive for both partners to stay unemployed and thereby counteract efforts to 'activate' the unemployed.

To some extent it is a pity that McGinnity's insightful book was published in 2004 and not earlier; one would have wished it for many readers especially among the political actors, who have 'successfully' reformed the German unemployment compensation system in the years 2003/04. Since some major reforms of the welfare system for the unemployed have been enacted in Britain since the late 1990s, an important question arises in regards to whether McGinnity's findings still apply to the situation of unemployed households today. Furthermore, it has to be acknowledged that McGinnity does not address the core argument raised by liberal and conservative or even 'modern' social-democratic reformers, namely that a 'lean' unemployment compensation system may contribute to greater employment growth and thereby increase the welfare of many individuals who would otherwise have continued to be unemployed. Finally, the study would have benefited from also analysing the effects of active labour market programmes and the interaction of welfare transfer payments with tax benefits at the individual level. Despite

these criticisms McGinnity's work is an important contribution to our understanding of welfare for the unemployed.

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Tony Maltby, Bert de Vroom, Maria Luisa Mirabile and Einar Øverbye (eds) (2004),
Ageing and the Transition to Retirement: A Comparative Analysis of European Welfare States, Aldershot, UK, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 295 pp., £49.95 hbk,
ISBN 0754609227.
DOI: 10.1017/S0047279405248808

The book takes two common European trends as its starting point: first, the demographic shift towards population ageing and, second, the decrease in the employment rates of older workers, a tendency considerably reinforced by the promotion of early retirement schemes. These two trends pose significant problems for contemporary welfare states. The use of early retirement and disability pension schemes, once deliberately institutionalized as a means to withdraw older workers from the labour market and to counter soaring unemployment rates, increase the dependency ratio and thus impose a severe financial burden on the welfare state. Moreover, these two tendencies are, sooner or later, likely to result in labour shortages in European economies. Hence, this book certainly addresses a topic of immediate interest for welfare state researchers and policy makers alike.

The book investigates how different European states deal with the challenges posed by ageing societies, through what kind of programme and asks who the crucial actors in the policy-making process are. Four general 'age-arrangements', describing the transition to (and from) retirement, are delineated: 'early exit', 'late exit', 'retention' and 're-entering'. The two latter approaches are of particular importance for policy makers as they comprise programmes aimed at the reversal of widespread early exit pathways from the labour market and promoting the re-activation of older workers. Refreshingly, some of the authors do not only dwell on the problems that ageing populations create, but also highlight the opportunities presented by ageing workforces. Indeed, as some country reports do reveal, some firms try to turn the alleged vice into a virtue and activate their older workers as they are viewed: for example, as having a good working routine, are often highly motivated due their long affiliation to the firm, and possess certain skills which would be lost with their abrupt retirement (p. 110). Most authors, however, assess as limited so far, the impact of specific government policies aiming at the re-integration of older workers.

The book is an outcome of the working group on 'Ageing and Work', itself part of the COST A13 programme 'Changing Labour Markets, Welfare Policies and Citizenship' (see www.socsci.auc.dk/cost). The core of the book consists of case studies of 12 European countries. Notably, two new EU-members from Central-Eastern Europe, Hungary and Slovenia, are included. A minor blunder is that the presentation both on the back cover and within the text does not reflect the actual date of publication of the book and still treats them as non-EU states, presumably because the group meetings forming the basis of the publication took place between 1998 and 2003.

A brief introduction by the editors depicting the origin of the project, the main guiding questions and the outline of the book is followed by a chapter on the framework for analysis of policies towards older workers. Here, central concepts such as 'age-culture' or 'age-programmes' are explained and related to the key concept of social citizenship. As indicators for the social

citizenship, status of older workers, position in the labour market and in the welfare system, as well as quality of life are singled out. These items are also recognised as the relevant dimensions for the single-country analyses and cross-national comparisons.

This point leads me to my major criticism. The title claims to offer a *comparative* analysis of European welfare states. Notwithstanding the valuable contribution of detailed country information to our general knowledge and the enhancement of cross-cultural policy learning by such studies, a simple compilation of national profiles by itself is not comparative. In fact, the biggest part of the volume consists of country reports (Chapters 3–14). Although guiding questions and a common analytical framework provide structure to the case studies – that is, if the country experts actually stick to this analytical model; unfortunately this modest aim has not been realised by a few of the contributors – this does not make the study comparative. What accounts for the variation between ‘early exit’ countries and those with high labour market participation among older workers? Which types of countries choose which kind of ‘age-arrangement’? Is there a systematic relationship between labour market policies, welfare state design and specific patterns of transition to retirement? Unfortunately, by and large such important comparative questions remain unanswered by the book.

Although the editors sketch major differences between the countries according to prevailing labour market policies and retirement practices in their introduction (p. 2), such patterns are not reflected in the structure of the book. Instead, the subsequent country studies are apparently arranged according to geographical aspects. Starting with the Nordic countries – with no reason mentioned, a case study on Sweden, the prototype of the Scandinavian ‘welfare regime’, with high employment rates also among older workers, is missing, although some cross-references to Sweden are made in some chapters – the analyses move southwards to continental Western Europe, the UK, the two Central-Eastern European states, and, finally, Italy and Spain. The short concluding chapter, apart from summarising the general trends as well as the action at the EU level in the last decades, gives some comparative substance to the topic by systematising the findings according to groups of countries and at least implicit welfare models, but a thorough interpretation is missing.

A final remark is on the editing of the book. Inevitably, the numbers of contributors increases the variance of the stylistic quality of the chapters, including the presentation of factual data. Whereas some chapters are almost overloaded with figures and tables others do without any systematic overviews at all. As a consequence of the reliance on experts from the respective countries, most of the contributors are non-native English speakers. A more careful proof-reading would have been desirable to give more clarity to the arguments and to avoid unnecessary distractions to the reader through spelling mistakes.

To conclude, the book addresses an important topic and delivers valuable information on a range of countries; however, it still has a preliminary work-in-progress character and lacks a thorough comparative analysis.

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Kai Leichsenring and Andy M. Aleszewski (eds) (2004), *Providing Integrated Health and Social Care for Older Persons: A European Overview of Issues at Stake*, Vienna: European Centre and Aldershot: Ashgate, 499 pp., £27.50 pbk, ISBN 0-7546-4196-1.
DOI: 10.1017/S0047279405258804

This compendium is the interim report of the Procare project, funded under the EU’s 5th Framework Programme. The overall aim of Procare is to promote the development of

new models of integrated care, by comparing and evaluating models of health and social care service delivery across Europe, and identifying the factors that contribute to sustainable arrangements with beneficial outcomes for the stakeholders involved. The first phase of the Procure project, reported in this volume, consists of a literature review and reports compiled by researchers of the arrangements in their respective countries. This will be followed later by cross-cutting, thematic analyses of key aspects of integrated services. Implementation issues run throughout the project, as the study considers the divergence between policy rhetoric and reality and the challenges of rolling out innovative projects within welfare arrangements for older people that are typically characterised by high levels of local devolved responsibility.

The bulk of the book consists of reports from nine EU countries (including southern European countries, such as Italy and Greece) on their respective arrangements for funding health and social care services, on the pressures and constraints that shape the delivery of those services and on innovative schemes within each country that have demonstrably succeeded in overcoming those constraints to deliver integrated services. The country reports all follow a similar structure, covering the legal frameworks and funding arrangements for mainstream health and social care services, the coverage and range of mainstream services used by older people and the wider policy pressures that variously promote or inhibit integrated care. Two innovative projects in each country are described in detail and research evidence on their effectiveness presented. The diversity of funding and organisational arrangements for both mainstream and innovative services show little evidence so far of European convergence.

The national reports are the main strength of this publication; the two introductory chapters that aim respectively to provide a European overview and to pull together some of the theoretical and conceptual issues in integrated care are disappointing. This is mainly because the concept of 'integration' is treated both uncritically and without adequate definition. First, integration of health and social care is assumed to be a desirable policy goal. However, we still lack convincing evidence of the benefits of integration, from the perspectives of older service users, staff, managers and the funders of services. Moreover, the methodological challenges involved in generating such evidence are considerable. These challenges are enhanced in the context of cross-national research where it may be difficult to agree on a single set of outcome indicators, as desired outcomes are likely to reflect local, regional and national preferences, values and policy priorities. Moreover, there may be instances in which the integration of health and social care services carry major threats. For example, integrated budgets may be at greater risk of pressures from the acute healthcare sector, with resources being diverted away from low-level preventive and social support services. In contrast, separate funding streams can offer a degree of protection from such predations. There is also no consideration of the other services and support systems, such as housing, that can contribute to an integrated 'whole systems' approach and which in countries such as Denmark are major components of community care.

Finally, and most important, although integration is a complex concept, this is no reason to shy away from attempts at definition – indeed, the complexity of the topic demands a degree of conceptual clarity. Integration is a multi-faceted concept. Definitions can focus on the degree of integration, along a continuum ranging from isolation, through networking and collaboration, to fully integrated structures and functions. Integration can take place at different organisational levels, from the activities of front line professionals, through teams and units, to management, commissioning and funding arrangements. And even within health and social care services, integration can involve different clusters of services and sectors – acute and community-based health, statutory, voluntary and community provider organisations, formal

and informal family care. However, the definition that is offered (pp. 73/4), that integrated care should be experienced as seamless, flexible and responsive, does not address these different dimensions.

Moreover, because of the lack of definition and conceptual clarity, the introductory chapters contain some strange assertions. For example, it is not clear why 'consumer-directed care' is the antithesis of 'integrated care' (p. 26), given the evidence from schemes in the UK and the Netherlands (and the US, albeit outside the scope of this project) that consumer-directed arrangements can allow older people to construct their own integrated care arrangements. Nor is it clear why it should be difficult to access older people and carers so as to involve them in consultation (p. 39). Indeed the absence of older people's perspectives on the meaning of integrated care and their evaluations of local innovative schemes is one of the major weaknesses of this project.

These challenges are compounded by a methodology that is essentially inductive and that aims, in its second phase, to identify the common features, benefits, drivers and barriers to integration from a heterogeneous cluster of innovative arrangements. Yet without a more rigorous approach to the conceptualisation of integration, it may be difficult for the Procare project to avoid identifying policy and organisational lessons that are at such a high level of generality that their practical implications and applications are not clear.

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Martin McKee, Laura MacLehose and Ellen Nolte (eds) (2004), *Health Policy and European Enlargement*, European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies Series, Maidenhead: Open University Press, 294 pp., £24.99 pbk, ISBN 0335213537, £69.99 hbk, ISBN 0335213545. Also available online at <http://www.who.dk/document/E82999.pdf>
DOI: 10.1017/S0047279405268800

The enlargement of the EU brings what this collection describes as 'challenges' for health policy. The accession countries tend to have poorer health and spend less on health care than previous EU norms. The free movement of professionals and patients between them and older member countries asks new questions about qualifications and entitlements respectively. The trade which enlargement promotes may also promote health through increased wealth, but it also increases health risks if the trade concerned is in products such as alcohol and tobacco. Expanded trade in pharmaceuticals creates tensions between firms (and countries) whose competitive advantage lies in the development and distribution of new drugs and those whose core business is generics.

It is these problems that are somewhat unevenly treated here, in 300 pages and 18 chapters, some more than 20 pages long and some less than ten. Some of them serve well as standard introductions to their topics, authoritative if inevitably brief treatments of the complex problems with which they are concerned. There is a useful account of the development of EU health policy since the Treaty of Rome, for example, as well as surveys of the health of populations in candidate countries, and of health care financing, delivery and governance arrangements. A chapter on the free movement of health professionals describes the regulation of medical and paraprofessional training (in effect, the regulation of its acceptance by others) clearly and effectively. A complementary chapter on the movement of patients covers both entitlement and reimbursement arrangements, making a careful assessment of the status quo and its management by ECJ case law. Both chapters are cautious about the extent to which movement

of either patients or professionals takes place or is likely to increase, and in both cases, too, the principal effect of enlargement seems likely to be to raise questions about the robustness of prevailing EU regulation rather than to present it with problems that are genuinely new. A chapter on pharmaceutical policy is similarly neat, drawing like others on a questionnaire survey of key informants in the then candidate countries.

These pillars of the general discussion are interspersed with other chapters of different kinds. There are case studies of professional regulation in Poland, nurse recruitment in the UK and pharmaceutical patent protection in Spain. Because of the uniqueness of East German accession to the EU through reunification with West Germany, its relevance for others is questionable, as the author of a further case study admits. Another contribution rehearses arguments for investment in health – because ‘better population health can lead to important induced growth effects’ (p. 68) – but notes the reluctance of both accession countries and the EU to commit fully to it. A later commentary on free trade puts this in context, acknowledging simply that: ‘(T)he EU is above all an economic entity where trade appears to trump public health at all turns’ (p. 220). A chapter on health impact assessment pulls its punches, perhaps rightly. Given their proclaimed importance as well as their significance as original entry points for the EU in health, successive treatments of communicable disease control and health and safety at work are relatively scant. A final chapter looks beyond new borders to the Stability Pact countries of south-east Europe, offering much less conclusion than implicit warning: there, socio-economic conditions are worse, our understanding of population health less secure, and arrangements for health protection and health care more fragile.

In this way, the book itself is not unlike the problems and processes it describes: uneven, uncertain and difficult to judge. To the extent that it is intended ‘to serve as a bridge between pure academic research and the needs of policy makers’, as the series editors remark in their introduction, the informational and technocratic needs of the latter are indeed largely well served. But whether this collection can stimulate ‘the development of strategic responses suited to the real political world in which health sector reform must be implemented’ is more questionable.

For there is no politics here, and that matters, because public health is in the end undeniably public, a matter for government. Uncertainty about it only makes government more important, not less. Even if something like HIA were to be adopted by the EU, it is far from obvious whose responsibility it might be or, indeed, how that responsibility might be met. The underlying problem for public health policy makers in Europe remains that of finding purchase in a field where neither problems nor policy making competences are clearly defined.

It just may be that what European health policy makers want, both in Brussels and in national and provincial capitals, is ideas. Apart from a couple pages of largely descriptive theory of convergence and divergence, there is little reference to the logic or otherwise of integration (and its limits), or to patterns of policy making and ways of understanding them. There is much talk of ‘complexity’ and ‘systems’ but very little of the kind of thinking that taking complex systems seriously might generate, as it has done among those concerned with the origins of health and disease. There is no reference to the open method of coordination, or to its origins, applications and prospects, for which health policy makers might have to look to other fields. Like much public health writing, then, the strength of this collection lies in the substantial, articulate and effective statement it makes as to what is to be done. Its weakness is in being much less sure about how and why.

Alberto Alesina and Edward L. Glaeser (2004), *Fighting Poverty in the US and Europe: A World of Difference*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, xii and 250 pp., £25 hbk, ISBN: 019 9267669.
DOI: 10.1017/S0047279405278807

This is a book by two professors of economics at Harvard University in the USA, but it is likely to be of interest to a social policy audience in Britain and continental Europe as well as in the USA. This is because the book seeks to find the answer to a critical question in comparative social policy – why is it that welfare policy in Europe is so much more redistributive than in the US?

Actually the book does more than just address this question; it also sets the context for it. In Chapter 2 the empirical evidence on the outcomes of redistribution is examined in some detail in order to, ‘reassure the readers’ that there are ‘heavy redistributive flows from the rich to the poor’ and that ‘these flows are much larger in Western Europe’ (p. 16). The evidence, from sources such as the OECD and Luxembourg Income Study, does indeed confirm this. So, why is it?

It is not, these economists conclude, the product of differences in the economies or economic policies of the two regions. Economic explanations left the authors ‘almost completely empty handed’ (p. 75). The authors therefore go on to look at politics (in particular the different democratic systems and political institutions in the US and Europe) and sociology (in particular the differences in racial and ethnicity diversity and homogeneity across the continents). These factors they conclude can explain the differences in policy, roughly in equal measure. US politics has prevented more redistributive social democratic governments taking power or exercising it (in the case of Roosevelt’s New Deal); and ethnic diversity in the USA has mitigated against any progressive and solidaristic social movements amongst the poor.

In the final chapter the authors also look at ideological factors and in particular the influences of history and geography. Both they conclude have been influential contextual factors. The more stable political history of the USA over the last two centuries and its decentralised policy making have mitigated against the major shifts in policy found in Europe, especially in the last century. The larger geographical scale and more dispersed population of the US have also reduced the potential impact of the organised urban working class, the major motor of much of European social policy development.

That economists should conclude that the real explanations for social change lie in politics and sociology (and history and geography) is a refreshing, if surprising, message. It is also one which is reached through a wide-ranging and accessible review of the development of political and social change across Europe and the USA. This makes the book a fascinating and accessible read. Inevitably this breadth means that much of the coverage is fairly general; and details of policy developments are largely skated over. Also, given the relatively slow processing of comparative data sources, much of the data relied on in Chapter 2 to underpin the analysis is rather dated, by and large preceding, for instance, the current UK Labour administration. Readers in the UK may be interested to speculate whether Labour’s policy initiatives have moved the UK more towards the continental European model of higher redistribution than is apparent from the evidence quoted here – though some might doubt that.

This is a readable and a useful book, which should inspire those interested in comparative policy analysis and the broad trends which influence social policy development. It succeeds in doing just what it sets out to: explain the differences in policy outcomes across the two continents. What it does not do, of course, is address the next question: what we might do the alter this. But that is a question for social policy scholars, not economists.

PETE ALCOCK
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John Stewart (2004), *Taking Stock: Scottish Social Welfare After Devolution*, Bristol: The Policy Press, 171 pp., £19.99 pbk, ISBN 1-86134-523-2.
DOI: 10.1017/S0047279405288803

Prior to Devolution in 1999 and since then, issues of welfare and social policy have been pivotal concerns of the Scottish Office and now the Scottish Executive. While it is perhaps overstating the case, it can be argued that the success or failure of the entire Devolution project will centre on the extent to which public services, the NHS and other key 'heartland' areas of social policy show signs of significant improvement. While the existence of 'reserved powers' under the Devolution settlement means that key areas of social and welfare policy, notably in relation to employment and social security, remain in control of the Westminster Parliament, social welfare has been central to the Devolution process in Scotland. Reflecting his background as a social historian, Stewart highlights that between the Union of 1707 and Devolution, the Scottish Office enjoyed considerable autonomy in relation to important areas of social welfare, particularly local government, education, social work and criminal justice. During this time there were continual tensions between what Stewart sees as a centralising tendency in British social welfare and in the UK state more generally, and the existence of Scottish welfare autonomy.

These tensions provide the key thread running through this book. Since Devolution, there has been much discussion of the degree to which the Scottish Executive can be said to be treading a 'different path' in relation to social and welfare policy, a path which sees it increasingly at odds with the agenda being set by New Labour in London. Readers of this book will no doubt be well aware of the decision of the Scottish Executive to pursue policies for the financing of higher education, which have involved the abolition of up-front student fees, the provision of 'free' social care for the elderly and the 'McCrone' settlement for Scottish school teachers. These are often presented as representing the most significant areas of policy 'divergence' between the Holyrood and Westminster Parliaments.

The substantive chapters focus on the financial arrangements surrounding Scottish Devolution and the tax-raising powers of the Scottish Executive. The controversial 'Barnett formula' that governs the allocation of public expenditure to Scotland is fully discussed in a clear and illuminating way and, while Stewart fully explores the detail of this, he manages to do so in a way that avoids the mind-numbing experience that often accompanies the reading of public expenditure arrangements. Following this the focus of the book moves to a concern with some key areas of social and welfare policy as they affect 'Scotland': poverty and disadvantage, children, education and lifelong learning and health policy. In each of these Stewart explores the diverse and multiple ways in which the Scottish Executive has sought to develop 'Scottish solutions for Scottish problems'.

The most important discussion, however, is reserved for the concluding chapter where Stewart explores the question of autonomy or convergence in social policy since Devolution. In other words, is there a distinctive Scottish 'path' in this field. Stewart rightly notes that it is not simply a question of Scotland diverging from England or the UK, but that there are signs of a divergence also in England compared with other parts of the UK. However, while he argues that there are clear signs of Scottish distinctiveness, of Scottish 'solutions', the reader is left without a clearly worked answer I feel. Perhaps this is asking for the impossible, given the unevenness of convergence/divergence across different welfare sites and the ongoing process that is the Devolution project.

I think the ambiguity in his discussion also stems to a great extent from his often uncritical celebration of Scottish Devolution and of the Scottish Executive. For instance, he argues that the 'Executive has done reasonably well since 1999 and its strategy can be deemed a qualified success' (p. 139). But the argument for this is left underdeveloped and there is much evidence,

in attitude surveys as well as in the sharp decline in the numbers voting at different elections since 1999, that a sizeable proportion of the Scottish population would not agree with this conclusion. Nor, might I add, would the tens of thousands of public sector workers in Scotland who have taken some form of industrial action in recent years against Executive policies.

Stewart is guilty of a lack of critical appraisal in another important respect, this time in relation to the long rehearsed notion that 'the Scots' are in some way resilient to pro-market agenda's, initially in the guise of 'Thatcherism' and now Blairism/Third Wayism. Thus he argues 'we have a public-sector ethos, collectivist ethos and culture in Scotland that markedly distinguishes it from New Labour aspirations and policies and, perhaps, from the currently dominant value system in England' (p. 143). This is a highly contentious claim and one could be forgiven for being left with the impression that PPP/PFI, managerialism, workfarism and the more moralistic dimensions of the Blairite agenda are somehow marginal issues north of the Border. To support his claim he notes that Foundation Hospitals were rejected by the Scottish Executive and also that comprehensive schooling is much more secure in Scotland. However, since the book was published Scotland's First Minister has publicly declared in the summer of 2004 his commitment to reconsider the role of Foundation Hospitals as well as encouraging more consumer choice in education. Stewart not only repeats well-worn myths about Scottish civil society but it is disappointing that he did not adopt a more critical approach that focused more directly on the New Labour project as it influences welfare in Scotland as much as in the rest of the UK.

In sum, I would say that this is a well-written and highly accessible book. Not only is it well-researched, there are also some very useful references and guides to web-based resources that will be of interest to those who wish to understand important aspects of the entire devolutionary process. This is not just a book about social welfare in the context of devolutionary governance, but also an important discussion of a central policy area of New Labour, albeit one that could have been subjected to a more rigorous interrogation.

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Hilde Bojer (2004), *Distributional Justice: Theory and Measurement*, Basingstoke: Routledge, 151 pp., £55 hbk, ISBN 0 415 29824-5.
DOI: 10.1017/S004727940529880X

Starting from the observation of a remarkable gap between theories of distributional justice and the measurement of inequality, Hilde Bojer's book seeks to bridge the gap between theoretical reasoning on inequality and measurement issues. Her second concern is the role of women, men and children in theories of distribution and its measurement. While the book's emphasis is on the theoretical discussion of those issues, Bojer uses some empirical examples, mainly drawing on her own research on income distribution in Norway, to illustrate her points.

The first part of the book is devoted to theories of justice. After a brief introduction, Bojer reviews different streams of theoretical reasoning about distributional justice in six chapters. First, the role of deserts and the fruits of labour are summarised, reaching from Locke and Hume to Rawls and Dworkin. She then lays out welfarist approaches, such as utilitarianism and more recent approaches of welfare economics, and the main concepts used in such approaches and their ethical implications. Third, Bojer portrays Rawls' ideas on the social contract with particular emphasis on the difference principle, the theory of uncertainty and the role of primary goods for social justice. Responding to the latter issue, the approaches presented in the next chapter are concerned with the question of what should actually be considered when assessing distributions. While Dworkin is concerned with the equality of resources and uses the

concept of an envy-free distribution as a yardstick for social justice, the approaches by Sen and Nussbaum focus on capabilities that are necessary for a good functioning in society. In the last chapter of this section the concepts of Marxism and libertarianism as put forward by Nozick, Friedman and Hayek are summarized. In the last chapter of the first part of the book, Bojer revisits those theories of social justice with a view to the widely neglected role of children and their mothers.

In the second part of the book, Bojer turns to measurement issues. In Chapters 9 to 11, she examines the basic issues in each distribution analysis, how to define the resources in question – income or wealth – and which unit of observation to choose – individuals or households – and how to account for income sharing within households. Those chapters open the debate on issues that are all too often taken for granted in empirical research, such as the role of assets or wealth for economic well-being, the role of non-monetary incomes and the value of services, or the question of whether to measure annual or lifetime income. While some readers may conclude that the quasi-standard methods used in contemporary empirical distribution analyses, mainly based on current equivalent annual individual incomes, have earned some merit as practicable and reasonably robust methods, it is nevertheless important to raise those questions in order to further develop methods and data bases in the long run.

The last three chapters are devoted to measures of inequality and poverty. Bojer presents the theoretical foundations, formulas, interpretations and limitations of several measures, including Lorenz curves, the Gini index, entropy measures and Atkinson's measure. The chapter on poverty measures is very brief, but two important points are raised: First, Bojer rejects the widely spread misunderstanding that the concept of relative poverty is meaningless, as it is not inseparably linked to inequality and can theoretically be fully eliminated in modern societies. Second, she demonstrates how dependent measured poverty rates are on seemingly minor (and often undocumented) methodological choices, such as equivalence scales, which is often ignored in heated public discussions on poverty rates. The last chapter concludes the book, somewhat abruptly, with a detailed discussion of the decomposition of inequality measures.

In view of the renewed interest in inequality issues, as exemplified by the debate on the effect of globalisation processes on inequalities within and between countries on a global scale, the book is most timely. As Bojer has observed, there is a remarkable lack of communication between the theorists of social justice, who are rarely ever concerned about how their ideas can be operationalised, and empirically oriented researchers who often apply methods and models in an almost technocratic way without fully reflecting the theoretical foundations of their research. Bringing those streams together for the sake of further developing both theory and methods is a laudable and ambitious exercise. In view of the complexity of the theory and measurement of distribution, it would be unfair to criticise the fact that the book has not succeeded in building the bridge between moral philosophy and empirical methods, as the author concedes herself. But the book has started to erect the first piers of such a bridge by raising key questions such as the implications of measuring inequality on the basis of individuals or households, inequality between men and women, or the role of children in the theory of distribution.

Although Bojer has been concerned with rendering the book accessible to non-economists, students who are not used to reading symbols and formula will find some parts of the book rather cumbersome to read. However, readers should invest their time and effort in the interest of a constructive dialogue between economists and students of other disciplines concerned with inequality, such as sociologists, political scientists and philosophers. Only when such a dialogue is carried further, can the gap between the philosophical discussion on inequality and its measurement be effectively closed. Bojer's book is a timely first step in this direction.

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Saul Becker and Alan Bryman (eds) (2004), *Understanding Research for Social Policy and Practice: Themes, methods and approaches*, Bristol: Policy Press, 423 pp., £19.99 pbk, ISBN 1861344031.

DOI: 10.1017/S0047279405308804

This should have been an important book. It appears in a series of very good student texts sponsored by the Social Policy Association (SPA) and addresses a topic that underpins past and future claims for social policy to be a stand-alone university subject. It is co-edited by none less than the current chair of the SPA and boasts a galaxy of leading scholars among its contributors. As a reviewer, virtually everyone in the discipline would have to declare an interest – in this case membership of the publisher's academic board (though not at the time when the volume was commissioned).

Yet despite its pedigree, *Understanding Research* is deeply disappointing. What must have looked exciting in the proposal and still excites on the back cover – 'comprehensive in scope, and written by experts in a thoroughly accessible and engaging style, the book combines theoretical and applied discussions to provide *the* essential one-stop guide to research for social policy and practice' (original emphasis) – remains tantalizingly beyond reach. While much that is promised is delivered, the volume is simply too ambitious, attempting to cover too much ground in bite sized chunks. The result is to scholarship what 'headline news' is to journalism. Moreover, the editing appears to have been executed at newsroom pace: anyone who reads the introduction need not bother with the beginning of Chapter 1, since they will find a word-for-word repeat.

Four of the seven chapters address methodological 'how to' questions, with the traditional if increasingly dated distinction made between quantitative and qualitative research. A chapter that seeks to define social policy and social policy research precedes them and the book ends with chapters on the much-neglected topic of research management and on dissemination. Each chapter begins with a much needed contents map to guide the reader through the myriads of encyclopaedia-like entries '70 main sections and 47 illustrative boxes . . . not including the Introduction, Glossary and other additional material' according to the editors' note (p. ix). It should be added that most sections have a list of references and helpful additional reading and there is a reasonably good index.

With these investigative aids, the student can find something on almost everything with handfuls of really insightful advice and the some glimpses of very good research practice. Even hardened professionals will admit to learning new things and being caused to question their own practice. However, there is weak material and, typically cramped for space, the section on 'Evaluating sources for a literature' does not help the reader to be discriminating, merely ranking material in books below that in academic journals (because of double blind reviewing) and above professional ones.

The organisation of the volume leads to multiple entries. 'Evaluation research' and 'Evaluation' have a total of four entries in the index and eight or so pages devoted to them, although the key concept of a counterfactual (the situation that would have obtained in the absence of a policy) is not mentioned despite being of critical importance irrespective of the purpose of the evaluation (for example, to establish whether a policy works [impact evaluation] and, if so, how it works [formative evaluation]) or the method used. To find anything of relevance to this topic, the reader has to turn to the section on 'Experimental design' in the chapter on 'Quantitative research' and needs to be well enough informed to make the connections that remain unmade in the volume.

Such lack of clarity about the intended audience is apparent elsewhere, as in the chapter on 'Managing social policy research'. The basic advice, to be systematic, is wise but unlikely

to help anyone but the most extreme novice and yet sections in the chapter are devoted to such advanced and specialised topics as 'Managing policy researchers' and 'Managing funders' constraints'. The latter draws attention to the general failure to discuss the management of relationships with stakeholders that is often key to successful policy research. There is a quite detailed and welcome prescriptive section on 'Confidentiality' but that on ethics is restricted to a discussion of 'Codes of ethics'. (The section on 'Ethical considerations' elsewhere in the volume duplicates discussion of confidentiality, stresses informed consent but does little really to engage the reader, expert or novice, in viewing ethics as being more than a set of bureaucratic procedures that have to be followed. More is warranted, for example, on the actual harm that can be done to research subjects, especially in the context of policy evaluation.) Finally, there is nothing on formal methods of project management and quality appraisal, the ignorance of which among academics has caused universities to acquire a reputation for delivering too little, too late among at least some users of policy research.

The lack of space cramps almost everybody's style. Even where it does not – there is a masterly account of quantitative analysis condensed into seven pages – one is left wondering what is to be gained by such heroic efforts. Likewise, even the opening discussion on the meaning of social policy presents hostages to fortune; what, for example, differentiates social policy as a university subject from public policy?

In sum, the volume can be likened to a Dundee cake, rich in ingredients but basically nutty. Any students who take the cover blurb literally and make this a one-stop volume are destined for a 2.2-degree at best. Similarly, practitioners who believe that *Understanding Research* is a comprehensive handbook risk making the most basic of blunders when they come to undertake research for real.

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Ann Oakley and Jonathon Barker (eds) (2004), *Private Complaints and Public Health: Richard Titmuss and the National Health Service*, Bristol: The Policy Press, 242 pp., £19.99 pbk, ISBN 1 86134 560 7.
DOI: 10.1017/S0047279405318800

This book reproduces a selection from Titmuss's work on health, health policy and health systems. The title of the book is taken from an essay written in 1958 that uses the term complaint in a general sense. The creation of the NHS politicised the provision of health care and the individual concerns of both patients and staff surfaced as matters of public policy. As Bevan famously commented: 'when a bedpan is dropped on a hospital floor its noise shall resound in the palace of Westminster' (cited by Nairne, 1984). At the time, direct ministerial accountability was seen as a benefit. In contrast, recent health ministers have found it a burden and repeated attempts have been made to devolve responsibility to the periphery through quasi markets, foundation hospitals and policies for patient involvement. Indeed, one of the strengths of the book is that it provides a historical perspective. Titmuss writes as an analyst of contemporary policy from the interwar period to the 1970s. He demonstrates the persistence of the particular problems in health care delivery and the differences in the ways in which these are defined and the solutions put forward in a particular period.

In their introduction to the volume, the editors posit three aims: first, to put together Titmuss's writings on health; second, to use this to shed light on how a universal system of health care can be organised and funded; and, third, to review his overall contribution to

the development of theory and policy. Such a project was considered from time to time by Titmuss himself, but not pursued. In realising these aims, the book is a tribute and stands as a memorial to Titmuss. The essays are grouped under particular headings: Social medicine and inequality; The National Health Service; The sociology of health care and health, values and social policy. Each section is followed by a commentary from contemporary scholars, namely Michael Wadsworth, John Ashton, Jonathon Barker and Janet Askham and Julian Le Grand.

Raymond Illsley provides an eloquent epilogue, which draws out what he sees as the theories related to health and inequality in Titmuss's early work. He argues that: 'the analysis of pre-war and wartime books reveals the development of a remarkably comprehensive theory of the relationships between social and structure and social change, on the one hand, and the determinants of physical and intellectual health and development, on the other' (p. 202). In demonstrating a link between poverty and the environment in explaining how childhood social experience has repercussions on subsequent adult ill health, Illsley argues that Titmuss laid the foundation for material explanations for inequalities that have been confirmed by subsequent studies. As a consequence, social policy per se will have a limited effect in reducing health inequalities that are rooted in the political and economic system.

What are the benefits of reproducing the work in this way for students of social policy? For those of my generation, who were taught by Titmuss, the collection provides an opportunity to read the early works, then out of print, for the first time. It also allows for a reassessment, with a touch of nostalgia, of the later essays first read over 30 years ago. I was struck by the directness and the clarity of the prose; the sharp insights and fascinating historical detail. Many essays provide insights from the perspective of an insider engaged in, and reflecting upon, practical policy as well as research. For example, the essays on the development of health insurance prior to the second world war; the commentaries on planning for the emergency medical services and the analysis of the costs of the national health service in the early 1950s provide classic illustrations of the importance of informed social analysis. Titmuss had a passionate commitment to collectivist social values and the book includes an excerpt from perhaps his best-known work: *The Gift Relationship*. This illustrates well his ability to draw on personal experience, dip into anthropological and sociological literature and synthesise these sources with empirical data sets to develop a normative theory of how humanistic social policies can provide lessons on how we should live in society.

Of course, the very strengths of the book also indicate some of its weaknesses, especially as a text for those new to the subject. The essays reflect Titmuss's obsessions as well as his passions. He valued the generalist as against the specialist; the work of the GP against that of the hospital consultant and had a mistrust of the benefits of technology and science. He had a preference for drawing on a range of social sciences to develop the study of social administration rather than developing a discipline based on theory, conceptual analysis and a rigorous method. However, in both its strengths and weaknesses, the book contributes to the history of the discipline.

As a collection, it is extremely well put together. The contributor commentaries provide a contemporary perspective and the extensive cross-referencing helps the reader to locate specific information. In consequence, the book is both thoughtful and thoughtproving.

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JUDITH ALLSOPP
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Jill Manthorpe and Nicky Stanley (2004), *The Age of the Inquiry. Learning and Blaming in Health and Social Care*, Basingstoke: Routledge, 294 pp., £65 hbk, ISBN 0-415-28315-9, £17.99 pbk, ISBN 0-415-28316-7.
DOI: 10.1017/S0047279405328807

The Age of Inquiry is a comprehensive, thought-provoking and challenging examination of inquiries involving social and health organisations in England and Wales since the 1990s. It succeeds in exploring inquiries in a range of service settings and from a variety of perspectives.

The book is divided into five parts. Part I focuses on those participating in inquiries. Parts II to V of the book examine inquiries in the areas of child abuse and deaths, mental health homicides, the abuse of people with learning disabilities and the abuse and neglect of older people.

In their introductory chapter, the authors raise a number of issues, which the reader returns to from different angles in the 13 chapters which follow. The authors draw attention to the form as well as the content of the inquiry. Consideration is given as to why some inquiries reach 'iconic' status and the role of the media in this process is discussed. Finally, a review is given of the use of inquiries and their future role and shape.

In order to focus on the socially excluded and to balance "the omniscient" stance of the inquiry team and the reader of the inquiry report' (p. 3), the authors devote the three chapters in Part I of the book to contributions from participants in inquiries. The perspectives of an inquiry chairperson, family members and patients and staff are given. Chapter 1 examines mental health inquiries from the personal perspective of an inquiry chairperson and also draws together the views of nine chairs of inquiries. This chapter provides an informative discussion on the merits of public and private inquiries, panel composition, the scope of the inquiry and the publication of reports.

The strength of this book is exemplified by the change of narrative voice between the first two chapters. In the second chapter, the parents of a young man with mental health problems give a frank and powerful account of the death of their son in prison, their campaigning for an inquiry which did not meet their needs and their journey to the European Court of Human Rights. The third perspective in Part I of the book is provided by a manager and staff member in a Personality Disorder Unit. His account of events leading up to, and during an inquiry, brings home to the reader the culture of collusion and intimidation that existed between both patients and staff members in that institution. However, the challenges for staff who work with the 'enduringly complex problems' (p. 71) of the treatment of people with personality disorders are also vividly drawn.

The three chapters which examine child abuse and deaths provide a comprehensive summary of the issues in this field. Munro provides a succinct historical account of developments in inquiries from 1970 to 1990. She examines the role of inquiries in fostering a blame and defensive culture and considers the considerable challenges to be faced in fostering a quality child welfare as opposed to a child protection orientation in policy, procedure and practice. In their examination of inquiries into fatal child abuse, Reder and Duncan consider the relative merits of the inquiry or the review system. They provide a very useful summary of meta-analyses of inquiry and review reports. The authors suggest the two basic failings of inquiries and reviews are their focus on bureaucracy rather than human factors, and their inability to satisfy multiple agendas. In the final chapter of Part I, Corby discusses the impact of the North Wales Tribunal of Inquiry on the morale of residential workers and on the status of residential child care. He argues for the importance of finding 'a more systematic, independent and public way to review or inquire into all cases of abuse in residential care in a more routinised way' (p. 127).

Part II of the book is concerned with inquiries into mental health homicides and comprises of three very different chapters. In the first, McCulloch and Parker examine the background, remit and limitations of mental health inquiries. This is followed by summary of the key themes arising from homicide inquiries. A more in-depth discussion of non-compliance then takes place, after which key policy themes are presented. Stanley's chapter on women and mental health analyses the inquiry report as a social document through the dimension of gender. She argues that, while few reports explicitly mention gender, this analysis is useful in order to see stereotypical assumptions and gender invisibility, which inform both descriptions of practice and the judgments of the inquiry team. In the final chapter of this section Sheppard provides an annotated summary of mental health inquiries between 1985 and 2003.

As the authors of articles in Part III and IV of the book emphasise, there have been fewer inquiries in the field of learning disabilities and older people, and those which have taken place have attracted less media interest. In Chapter 10, Fison, Kitson and Corbett discuss the reasons for this lack of attention and provide an overview of learning disability inquiries and policy. Appropriately, the following chapter by Cambridge argues for the use of inquiries as learning tools for social care organisations. This is a thought-provoking chapter, which argues for a move from punitive to emancipatory responses. The author provides a seven-level framework for both analysis and response, in which the importance of interpreting and understanding the meaning of abuse for individuals and institutions is emphasised.

The themes discussed in relation to learning disability are returned to in Part IV in Penhale and Manthorpe's chapter on older people, institutional abuse and inquiries. They argue that, while older people's experience of abuse may range from abusive regimes to individual acts and may be perpetrated by a wide range of people, factors such as ageism and ambivalence towards residential care have contributed to the superficial and short-lived interest in the abuse of older people. Their chapter details the abuse of older people in three hospital settings, the lessons from which they suggest have relevance to wider range of 'home for life' settings (p. 260).

The book concludes with a general discussion of the differing roles of inquiries and inspections and advocates. This book is an interesting mixture of first-hand narratives and research analysis and will be useful for practitioners, policy makers and academics.

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Andrew Gray and Stephen Harrison (2004), *Governing Medicine: Theory and Practice*,
Maidenhead: Open University Press, 214 pp., £22.99 pbk, ISBN 0335214355.
DOI: 10.1017/S0047279405338803

The topic of this book is one of the key planks of the 'modernisation' of the UK National Health Service (NHS) – clinical governance. I enjoyed reading it, not least because of its careful and clear exposition of the wider context within which clinical governance is being defined and practised in the UK. A consequence of this focus is that (of necessity), the book focuses on British healthcare (and, more particularly, English and Welsh healthcare), which potentially makes it less relevant to international readers.

With the exception of Chapter 6, the first part moves the discussion of clinical governance from more general and theoretical contexts to the more specific history of recent relations between the profession of medicine and the UK state. Chapter 1 explores definitions of 'governance', and discusses 'clinical governance' in the UK policy context. Chapter 2 introduces the Foucauldian idea of governmentality, and discusses different forms of professional

knowledge, their relationships to different ways of organising professional work. From this perspective, current policy and practise is encouraging professional knowledge and work to become more encoded in organisations and procedures, and is driving NHS organisation to adopt a form closer to the ideal type machine bureaucracy.

Chapter 3 describes the wider UK context of the collapse of the nineteenth-century 'club' society, dominated by oligarchy, deference and social elitism, a collapse driven by its incompatibilities with democratic society were laid bare by the economic failures of the 1970s. Changes in the governance of medicine therefore parallel similar changes affecting other institutions such as education, accountancy and law. Chapters 4 and 5 are more focused on the narrower history of medicine and the UK state. Chapter 5 is a particularly engaging account of changes in professional autonomy, although some may, like me, find the conclusion of a rapid and continuing decline in medical autonomy too strong or potentially premature (which does not mean to say that it will not happen).

Chapter 6 is something of an orphan, in that unlike its peers in Part I, it reports an empirical study of Welsh practitioner perspectives on clinical governance using survey and focus group data. Although its conclusions about different clinicians and managers perceptions and experience of clinical governance seemed plausible, the lack of detail on method and analysis left me rather unconvinced.

The second part consists of four chapters that examine the scientific and bureaucratic rationality that underlie clinical governance, and every chapter is interesting and stimulating. However, a weakness of three of the chapters in this section is that the implications for clinical governance are not always explicit. Chapters 7, 9 and 10 deal with evidence based medicine's belief in the gold standard of randomised controlled trials, the creation and implementation of telemedicine and the place of users in defining what matters and how professionals and services should respond. All were excellent reads but it is not clear if the authors believe that problems with existing assumptions about evidence undermine the whole idea of clinical governance, or if they indicate that governance would be better or more 'effective' or more 'just' if other kinds of evidence were allowed. This issue is only explicit in Chapter 8. Here, the assumptions of clinical governance about the nature of medical knowledge and work are contrasted with empirical evidence of the existence of Schon's (1988) 'swampy lowlands' of tacit knowledge and everyday practices, and the authors propose new forms of reflective and reflexive practice to bring governance to these areas.

The third part contains three chapters about how clinical governance can be realised in the NHS, all of which take it for granted that it is a worthwhile endeavour. Chapter 11 is a comprehensive description of medical learning in the UK, which discusses strategies for ensuring that clinical governance translates from policy rhetoric to day-to-day practice. Chapter 12 reviews the literature on human resource management, and its role in facilitating the implementation of clinical governance, and Chapter 13 makes a convincing case for changing the way that clinical governance is organised in NHS organisations (although its conclusions are probably more applicable to secondary than primary care). Like Chapter 8, these all propose ways of ensuring that doctors and other professionals internalise new forms of governance, and assume that patient care will improve if they do (in Degeling's memorable phrase on p. 179, for care to improve professionals need to be helped to 'enfold the authority of a system of clinical *self*-governance "into the soul"').

A weakness of the book is that there is some discontinuity between the three parts of the book. Part I and the concluding chapter cast clinical governance primarily in terms of a reshaping of the relationship between the state and the medical profession. Part II is about the nature of evidence. Part III discusses implementation of clinical governance under the assumption that its main purpose is to improve patient care. Links between the chapters are

largely left to the reader to make, and nowhere is there much sustained discussion of whether clinical governance can or will deliver the claimed intended consequence of better care for patients (although some earlier chapters imply it will not), nor a full exploration of what some of the unintended consequences of its implementation might be (assuming that reducing the power of the medical profession is an intended consequence, even if not often explicitly stated).

Overall, I enjoyed this book and although there were points where I disagreed with the authors, almost all of it was informative and thought provoking. I would certainly recommend it to UK readers with an interest in clinical governance beyond the rhetoric of policy. It is perhaps of less direct relevance to international readers, although given the international trend to greater regulation and measurement of professional work, such a case study of the changing relationship between medicine and the state in one country should have generalisable lessons for other countries.

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Fiona Devine (2004), *Class Practices – How Parents Help Children Get Good Jobs*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 285 pp., £16.99, pbk, ISBN 0521006538.
DOI: 10.1017/S004727940534880X

Dalton Conley and Karen Albright (eds) (2004), *After the Bell – Family Background, Public Policy and Educational Success*, London and New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 337 pp., £70 hbk, ISBN 0415308968.

These two books are on the same broad field, namely the sociology of education, and rely on very similar contexts, materials and even countries, e.g. the USA, and yet they could not be more different theoretically and methodologically. Both are trying to argue about the importance of education to occupational and social mobility, drawing on some of the key ideas developed in sociology and public policy in the 1960s, especially from the now (in)famous Coleman report of 1966 for the US government. Yet their approaches provide contrasting methods around which some of the more stormy debates in the social sciences have revolved, in particular the uses of qualitative or quantitative research methods and the nature of the evidence base, to use a more familiar term.

Fiona Devine's book is a reflective narrative, based upon her interviews with 86 teachers/educators and doctors/physicians (half each from the USA and England) about their family backgrounds and their influences on their own family and occupational lives. It is an absolute pleasure to read and in my view is one of the most theoretically and methodologically sophisticated books within sociology and the sociology of education to have been published in the last decade or more. She seems to be able to play with very difficult theoretical concepts and express them with an easy facility, drawing on her own rich research materials from her in-depth interviews. The key theorists whose ideas she wants to work with are Bourdieu, Goldthorpe and Coleman (mark 2). In particular she struggles with notions of social and cultural capital and tells us quite often how hard and slippery some of these concepts are. Indeed, she ends

up admitting that Coleman's notion of social capital is far easier to work with than Bourdieu's and she deploys this throughout much of her study. However, she also wants to demonstrate the complex and contradictory persistence of social class in occupational opportunities and the ways in which middle-class families mobilise economic, cultural and social resources to maintain and enhance their positions. Here she relies on Goldthorpe's work to argue about social mobility. She also wants to show how much social change there has been, benefiting all, but especially those able to profit from it the most. Here she provides her argument through the use of Bourdieu and Coleman.

In an early part of the book Devine argues that she chose her two occupational groups for interview based on her assumption that she would have a large sample of women to study (as teachers and wives/partners of the doctors). So the one flaw is that Devine does not explore or even exploit her rich and exciting data around the concept of gender, despite the early argument to do so. She starts her argument about her own family life and the changes in her own and her sisters lives especially compared with their mother. So I rather assumed that this kind of approach would be, without question, the basis of her more general approach and that gender would be threaded through the book. Although hers is a narrative account, there have been some fundamental changes to women's lives, including her own, that are distinctive from men's lives. Indeed, a key question that is not addressed is why did the middle classes devote so much attention to the education of their daughters, and have the desire to see their daughters as occupationally successful, given that this had not been the case before the Second World War.

Conley and Albright's edited book draws on papers mainly by American (post)graduate students presented at a conference in June 2001 to consider the importance of family in relation to educational and employment opportunities. The papers are mainly highly quantitative studies, drawing on, and out, the arguments and implications of the Coleman report of 1966 to demonstrate that what happens after/outside school for children and young people is just as important as what happens within. The authors are trying to provide an antidote to what they regard as an over-emphasis on school-based studies or studies off/in schools. Thus the title of the book is meant to signal the importance of understanding out-of-school life. For me this seems ironic, since the book that, in Britain, launched the move away from an over-reliance on studies of social mobility and family background (back in the 1970s) to ones about schools and the so-called school effect was aptly named *Fifteen Thousand Hours* (Rutter *et al.*, 1979?). Although the editors of the book provide a rather well-written introduction about the post-war history of educational policy and research, and especially the so-called liberal era of the sixties when so much social policy in the USA developed, it is written very much from an outsider perspective, rather than as an insider, and is involved intensively with the debates. As I read this, I felt 'the gaze', to use a Foucauldian perspective, on me and people of my generation who felt involved and implicated in these events and policies – insiders rather than outsiders. The main body of the book consists of a series of statistical approaches to different facets of the family and educational debates.

Devine's book has the real feel of an insider, and someone deeply and passionately involved in current theoretical and methodological debates about how we understand our lives, educationally, occupationally, and perhaps most important of all, emotionally. I feel sure it should be on the reading lists of most sociology and social policy introductory courses in undergraduate and also postgraduate degrees. Conley and Albright's book has the feel of two rather dispassionate public policy advisors, or at least wannabe advisors, and is very much in the new evidence-based approach to both policy and practice. I suspect that this book will not be available readily on student or university library lists, because of its rarefied and now very old-fashioned approach to educational policy and research.

Reference

Rutter, M. *et al.* (1979), *Fifteen Thousand Hours: Secondary Schools and their Effects on Children*, London: Open Books.

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Bronwen Cohen, Peter Moss, Pat Petrie and Jennifer Wallace (2004), *A New Deal for Children? Re-forming Education and Care in England, Scotland and Sweden*, Bristol: The Policy Press, 241 pp., £19.99 pbk, ISBN 1 86134 528 3.
DOI: 10.1017/S0047279405358806

Some have commented that I have become quite ‘the dinner party bore’ when discussion moves to debates around children, childhood and child care and my almost constant reference to ‘it’s quite different in Scandinavia . . .’. For those who have been interested in the welfare of children, the situation in Scandinavia has long served as a point of comparison, an alternative model and at times an inspiration to our own British views on childhood and our ideas of the development of policies towards children. It is therefore of enormous importance that there should be plenty of comparative material to draw upon. There has, of course, been a tremendous amount of scholarly material available drawing comparisons between British and Scandinavian welfare provision. However, the Cohen, Moss, Petrie and Wallace monograph has been written in the light of interviewing a variety of informants (in public agencies, trade unions, voluntary organisations) and visits to nine local authorities, and raises searching questions on child care policy in Britain.

The core of the book is the three chapters outlining the case studies of England, Scotland and Sweden. The authors describe the contexts of child care and education up to recent points of reform: 1997 and the New Labour programme for England and Scotland (and 1999 Scottish devolution) and 1996 in Sweden with the return of a Social Democratic government. All the reforms shared a concern with restructuring institutions, integrating services and improving communication and relations between children’s services and policy makers. However, the real interest concerns the differences between the three countries. The heart of the difference between the British countries and Sweden lies in how childhood itself is conceived. From the Swedish interviews and analysis of Swedish documents an image of ‘a strong child, responsible and independent, a co-constructor of knowledge alongside adults’ (p. 176) is discerned in marked contrast to the British viewpoint. Listing all the differences explored is beyond the word limit of this review, however interesting examples include the tensions between ‘care’ and ‘education’ in children’s services, tensions between central and local government, fiscal controls and the preparation of children for participation in the ‘knowledge-based’ economy and society. Two small comparative examples that I found intriguing are the different conceptions and utilisation of the terms ‘pedagogy’ and ‘lifelong learning’. In Sweden, and indeed many other European countries, ‘pedagogy’ means the education of children ‘in the broadest sense of the word’ (p. 145), including aspects of care, whereas ‘pedagogy’ is usually narrowly translated into English as ‘education’. Also, ‘lifelong education’ in Sweden is used in a far more holistic way as it:

foregrounds an understanding of the child as an active learner from birth, which entails the child seeking to construct knowledge and make meaning of the world around it, and also because it opens up to the possibility of a new and equal relationship between early, childhood education and care, schools and school-age childcare based on new and shared

understandings rather than a takeover by schools and a narrowly didactic view of education. (p. 192)

The book is a thought provoking, informed and instructive account, and an important point of reference for those who wish an analytic grip of many of the new concepts of governance around child care, such as 'joined-up thinking', curriculum changes and funding to name a few.

This is not to say that the book has not got any gaps and weaknesses, as any book will have to draw up limits over what it can cover. Nevertheless, I was disappointed that there was no comparative material on the policies that surround support for children from ethnic minority communities (even though one of the three 'case studies' was a child from an Iranian asylum-seeking family in Sweden) or those who work with them. Similarly, those children who require 'special' education or care, such as those with disabilities, mental health or behavioural problems, barely get a mention in the book. I was also disappointed that the voluntary sector's contributions were rarely raised, or the ways in which the state sector interfaced with them. This is quite a gap, as in the UK much schooling is undertaken in independent or voluntary aided schools and much care, support and advocacy comes from the voluntary sector. The thrust of the book was very much from the perspective of practitioners and policy makers (who were interviewed) with no room for the voices from communities, parents or indeed children. The latter perspectives are recognised by the Westminster government through the Communities that Care initiative, although a Swedish comparison and the authors' analytic framework would be priceless in contextualising this initiative.

Nevertheless the book is well worth reading whether you are an academic, policy maker, practitioner, student or anyone else interested in child care policies. The book raises huge questions on the infrastructures of childhood in all the countries. However, it is perhaps the situation in Scotland that future directions are the most open and interesting, as Scotland after devolution can decide to follow England's individualistic liberal welfarism or move toward a more Swedish or Scandinavian system. I am sorry that people have found the topic 'boring' at my dinner parties but I would love to sit down and discuss this book with the authors over a meal and I suspect many others would find it stimulating too. So is anyone else for dinner?

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Christine Hallett and Alan Prout (eds) (2003), *Hearing the Voices of Children*,
Basingstoke: Taylor & Francis, 264 pp., £22.50 pbk, ISBN 041527642X.
DOI: 10.1017/S0047279405368802

Many of us in the field of social policy are grappling with the challenge of how to meaningfully engage children in our research, in our policy and decision making and in our practice. This is a relatively new concern, and moves us away from the traditional notions of children as 'objects of study' or 'objects of concern', towards a more active and dynamic concept of children as competent reflexive social agents. There is still a long way to go, but there is clearly a growing interest in social policy about increasing children's participation in the decision-making process at all levels. But how and why is this happening and what does this new interest in children as active participants in the policy process mean for policy and for children themselves?

This new book, edited by Christine Hallett and Alan Prout, *Hearing the Voices of Children* engages directly with this current direction in social policy. The book does not revisit

fundamental debates about the issues of children's rights and the tensions between children's rights and adult rights, but rather takes as its starting point the premise that children and young people are already involved in the policy-making process and that this is a positive social trend. By starting at this point the authors are free to critically explore the rationale for children's involvement in policy formation at all levels, and to evaluate how this process can be made meaningful for policy makers and, more importantly, for children themselves. However, there are inherent tensions and contradictions in developing participation and dialogue for children in what is essentially an adult-driven and adult-orientated framework of governance. These are significant issues, and one of the strengths of this book lies in the ways in which it critiques current policy and practice from the standpoint of children themselves.

The book draws on contributions from a range of experts in the fields of childhood and social policy, and is divided into four main themes: hearing children's voices, discourses of childhood, children and services and resources for children. Each of these parts provides useful insights into the challenges presented by engaging children in different policy arenas. The book begins with a valuable contribution by Alan Prout, which sets the scene by identifying some of the key social changes that took place in the last quarter of the twentieth century. These social transformations have had a profound impact on the condition of childhood in the UK, Europe and North America. Prout identifies five key general trends affecting childhood, and in doing so the implications for children and social policy are evident. First, the impact of declining fertility on children's claims to social resources as their share of the population declines. Second, increasing differentiation in children's life circumstances, including diversification in family types and growing disparities between affluent children and those living in poverty. Third, the emergence of 'transnational childhoods' as children move backwards and forwards across national boundaries, and, fourth, the increasing institutionalisation and regulation of childhood. The fifth and final trend, the idea that children should have a voice in decision making, springs in part from increasing institutional reflexivity, which has resulted in a new interest in children as policy participants. However, as Prout argues, involvement of children in the policy process will require a major change in discourse and representation. There is 'a crucial connection between the voice of children in public discourse and policy making (their political representation) and the socially and culturally constructed ways in which children are seen (their social and cultural representations)' (p. 22).

These tensions are developed throughout the book and are explored further in the second part, which focuses on the policy context in which children's participation can arise. This part provides us with a valuable European dimension and explores how different discourses and models of childhood over time have shaped the relationships between social policy and children in Finland, Germany and the UK. It reveals how 'in both historical and contemporary societies, social policy has tended to see children through notions of dependence, vulnerability, malleability and investment in the future' (p. 4). These discourses of childhood reveal some of the challenges facing social policy if children's participation is to have real and lasting value. The third part of the book focuses on children's experiences as service users and draws most heavily on data collected directly from children, giving us the opportunity to truly 'hear' what children have to say. It is here that we are able to listen to the direct experiences of children who have been involved in one way or another in the policy process, and these chapters provide some powerful examples of bad as well as good practice. A key theme emerging from the book is the lack of good-quality evaluative evidence, in both the short and the long term. At present, as these chapters illustrate, it is evident that we are struggling to make the process of consultation and participation meaningful. There is a danger that the participation of children in decision making becomes at best tokenistic and at worst meaningless. However, when the process works for children as well as for policy makers it is clearly a valuable and enriching experience – one

which has the potential to deliver real changes to the ways in which policies are made and services are delivered for children.

I have one quibble about the overall structure of the book. In particular, Part IV dealing with resources for children sits uneasily at the end of the book. The issue of adequate resources for children is a fundamental concern of policy and its inclusion as a small part at the back of the book reads almost like an afterthought. I would have liked to see it follow on from the first part. This would have meant that the book ended with the powerful third part dealing with children's experiences of services. However, overall this is an excellent book, which deals in a critical but constructive way with fundamental changes in the way in which children appear in the policy process.

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Shane Blackman (2004), *Chilling Out: The Cultural Politics Of Substance Consumption, Youth And Drug Policy*, Maidenhead: Open University Press, 227 pp., £17.99 pbk, ISBN 0-335-20072-9.
DOI: 10.1017/S0047279405378809

As I write, the Chelsea footballer Adrian Mutu has just admitted using cocaine as his first tentative step at defending and explaining a negative drug test: there can be few members of the population that are surprised or shocked to learn that yet another highly paid young celebrity has indulged in the recreational use of a banned substance. Equally, in my own academic discipline of criminal justice studies, the link between acquisitive crime and problematic drug use is being heralded as the holy grail of crime causation with the use of the criminal justice system to place offenders into treatment being seen as some form of ultimate weapon in the war on crime and the war on drugs. Yet focusing on the drug use of the famous or the actions of those whose drug use is out of control hides a complex and often contradictory situation that is bedevilled by half truths, politically motivated spin and conflicting approaches to 'solving the problem', one of which is prohibition. Shane Blackman recognises this and makes it his mission to educate prohibitionists into realising that drugs are a 'cultural and social fact of life' and that we need to 'regulate them inside society instead of seeking to unrealistically remove them from society'.

The anti-prohibitionist stance of the book is made abundantly clear in the opening paragraph of Chapter 1 and continues to be one of two organising themes in the work; the other being youth and youth culture. Employing anti-prohibition and youth culture to provide a degree of continuity across the chapters is, I believe, important, because my only major criticism of the work is that at its mid-point it moves close to being a series of discrete essays more akin to an edited volume than a coherent argument aimed at challenging one of a number of approaches to the drug problem.

Personally, and that is all a review can ever be, Chapter 3 looks particularly out of place in a work that has an otherwise strong policy focus. Whilst I recognise the fact that capitalism has made huge profits from drug culture, and it is almost impossible to separate cultural practices from drug taking, I have a problem with this chapter in the overall shape of the work. My main gripe is that Chapter 3 is well written and informative, and does not need to lapse into a Sunday supplement type of 'critics choice' list of films, bands, songs and dead performers, all of which are linked to drug consumption: the only rationale for the inclusion of such peripheral detail seems to be to demonstrate the author's esoteric taste and knowledge of drug chic.

That apart, there is more than enough in Shane Blackman's latest work to congratulate. He uses the first two chapters to examine the history of drug control in order to place all subsequent developments within a context. This is to be applauded, because even a casual glance at the history of drug control uncovers a mass of policy contradictions, sheds light on the organisational power struggles at both the macro and micro levels, exposes the skulduggery of nation states (for which read the USA in a large part) who employ the war on drugs as a vehicle to promote and ensure 'safe' regimes in their back yard, and brings to our attention the machinations of a seemingly endless stream of politicians and moral entrepreneurs who use the 'drug problem' to further their wider political and philosophical aims.

I found Chapters 4 and 5 to be the great strengths of the book, perhaps reflecting Blackman's earlier, youth-focused work. Chapter 4 offers the reader a journey through sub-cultural theories. The manner in which this is done allows the chapter to be of use to students encountering these theories for the first time, whilst encouraging old hands to refresh and re-ignite some of the questions surrounding the use and misuse of the concepts of youth and sub-culture as explanatory tools in the drug control debate. From there, in Chapter 5, Blackman moves on to examine yet another 'chameleon concept' – that of drug normalisation. I was particularly impressed with the manner in which the revisionist history surrounding drug use in society is challenged in the opening sections of this chapter and the way in which it exposes the historical and contemporary efforts of moral entrepreneurs to mould cultural practices to their own version of rationality. The chapter ends with a discussion of the arguments and counter arguments surrounding the normalisation thesis using the debate between Howard Parker on one side and Tim Newburn and Michael Shiner on the other as its basis, and it neatly highlights the latter's alleged misunderstanding of post-modern theory and youth culture, thus bridging Chapter 4 and 5. Chapters 6 and 7 examine drug education in schools and British drug reform respectively and provide an erudite and at times thought-provoking commentary on both issues.

I enjoyed this book and can see it being of use to students, policy makers and academics alike, although were I a died-in-the-wool prohibitionist I have my doubts that it would persuade me to change my views. Therein lies the problem with drug policy; a point neatly made in the conclusion by Shane Blackman when he states that 'there is no such thing as a neutral drug policy'. One's approaches and views surrounding illicit drug use are bound up with personal experience, age, perhaps gender and always political and philosophical perspectives, and one of the strengths of this work is that Blackman sets out his particular perspective from the outset and makes a strong case in its defence.

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Hera Cook (2004), *The Long Sexual Revolution: English Women, Sex, and Contraception 1800–1975*, Oxford; Oxford University Press, 412 pp., £35 hbk, ISBN 0-19-925239-4.
DOI: 10.1017/S0047279405388805

This book is a valuable addition to the historiography of fertility, birth control and sexuality in England. It is very detailed, containing a wealth of information from an impressive number of sources. These include sex manuals, Government publications, parliamentary papers, historical archives and local and national newspapers. The detailed history, is not, however, achieved at the expense of strong central themes. As the book's title suggests, Hera Cook concentrates on analysing changing sexual behaviour, especially that of women, over the last two centuries. In so

doing, she places women, rather than men, as the prime movers of the fertility decline. She also charts contraceptive developments and develops a strong argument connecting women's sexual activity to their ability to control their fertility. Thus, the twentieth-century transformation of attitudes towards sexual behaviour was based upon 'the transformation of conception and pregnancy from an uncontrollable risk to a freely chosen outcome of sexual intercourse' (p. 339).

One of the most interesting sections is that in which she challenges Foucault's influential account of changing sexuality in nineteenth-century England. Foucault rejected the 'repressive hypothesis' of Victorian sexuality, claiming that the multiplicity of sexual discourses actually served to privilege sexuality as the core of identity. Cook's focus on female discourse reveals a sexual repression internally (as well as externally) generated. She argues that the dominant sexual culture in the mid-Victorian period was characterised by the acceptance of purchased sexual relief for men (prostitution), by a view that 'respectable' women were forbidden to discuss sexual matters. This is seen as the foundation of Victorian sexual hypocrisy, a hypocrisy that the emerging feminist movement was to challenge in the first instance by proposing sexual abstinence. She also sees this as part of a more general shift towards female rejection of sexual pleasure and sexual activity as an obvious means of reproductive control in the absence of birth control.

The ability, or inability, of women to control their reproduction is undoubtedly one of the more important factors structuring their lives. 'Women can only take charge of their lives if they can control their own reproduction. This means either sexual abstinence or the separation of sexual activity from procreation' (Greenwood and King, 1981: 168). Hera Cook charts the movement from sexual abstinence to that of separation, a separation impossible without the historical development of contraceptives. The possibility of sexual intercourse without fear of pregnancy is still comparatively recent and we are reminded of generations of women for whom heterosexual activity involved the likelihood of pregnancy. She presents a strong case for explaining the fertility decline from the 1860s to the 1930s as largely a consequence of married women's resistance to their husband's sexual demands. This is characterised as a 'highly unstable low fertility regime maintained by sexual control' (p. 161). Bearing in mind that estimates of contraceptive failure ranged from 51 per cent to 18 per cent for condom use, and that abortion prior to the 1967 Abortion Act was generally an illegal and dangerous procedure, this seems a reasonable assessment.

In 1960, Searle put the first generally available oral contraceptive on the market. By 1964, around 460,000 British women were using some form of oral contraceptive. Intra-uterine devices (IUDs) were also introduced in the 1960s. The growing effectiveness and availability of contraception gradually broke down the link between sex and reproduction. This has had a massive impact on women's lives, and, according to Cook, on sexual relations and the institution of marriage. She also sees increases in women's contraceptive use as a major contributor to the emergence of second-wave feminism. This is a position shared by many second-wave feminists but challenged by others. Linda Gordon (1977: 79), for example, argued that 'changes in consciousness preceded the technology which made sex possible without the fear of pregnancy'. What came first, and also how women's increased labour participation fits into the equation, is an area of some dispute in feminist histories of second-wave feminism. What is in little doubt, however, is that the 1960s breakthrough had a significant impact on women's lives. It broke the link between sex and reproduction that had played such a strong role in channelling women into the private world of the family and limiting their opportunities outside of that.

In England today, sex without reproduction is still not a perfect process. Contraceptive failures occur. Abortion is still restricted. Many women accept uncertain, and possibly unsafe,

contraceptive methods with a weary fatalism. In many other countries the situation is considerably worse. The main argument of this book, that women gain sexual autonomy with contraceptive advances, is still relevant. There is much to be gained from any future improvements in contraceptive techniques and availability.

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