

Book Reviews

Julian Le Grand (2003), *Motivation, Agency, and Public Policy: Of Knights and Knaves, Pawns and Queens*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, xii + 191 pp., £25.00,
ISBN: 0-19-926699-9.
DOI: 10.1017/S0047279404217949

This important book develops a number of arguments that were first put forward in an article in this journal in 1997 (Le Grand, 1997). In the original essay Le Grand claimed that a fundamental change had taken place in policy-makers' beliefs about human motivation and behaviour. Specifically, he argued that the post-war welfare state had rested upon the twin assumptions that those who financed and delivered welfare were motivated primarily by altruism ('knights'), and that most of those who claimed welfare were content to remain the passive recipients of state largesse ('pawns'). By the late 1980s, however, there had begun a shift towards policies that were based upon the very different assumption that welfare providers were motivated by their own self interest ('knaves'). In a parallel shift, those who received welfare began to be seen as 'active' consumers, who were more able and more willing to exercise 'choice' than had been anticipated by the architects and early supporters of the 'classic welfare state'.

The most important manifestation of these changes, Le Grand argued, was the development of the quasi-market. No longer would the state be the monopoly provider of welfare. Instead it would provide 'informed agents' with funding to purchase services from independent producers. The hope and expectation was that the fund-holding GP, the care manager in community care, and the school head could all be led to allocate their budgets in ways which both served their own self interest and maximised the well being of their patients, clients and pupils. Le Grand's central argument was that this objective could not be achieved by policies that assumed welfare providers were either 'knights' or 'knaves'. What were required were 'robust' incentive structures that appealed to both the 'knight' and the 'knaves' in equal measure.

Le Grand has now extended this analysis in two ways. First, he provides a much fuller account of the theoretical underpinnings of his arguments. Over half of the book is devoted to a discussion of the literature on motivation and agency. Second he has shifted his focus from policy analysis to policy prescription. Alongside an assessment of the impact of quasi-markets in health and education, Le Grand proposes a series of measures that are designed to empower individuals and increase their capacity for agency.

The result is something of a paradox. The book is bold and ambitious in the way that it moves from concepts to policies. 'Academics', claims Le Grand, 'too often get away with the enunciation of broad principles, leaving the hard choices involved in policy formation and implementation to be made by someone else' (p. 18). The book is also powerful and compelling in its advocacy of quasi-markets. At the same time it is grounded upon a narrow conception of the self, and this limits and confines its understanding of human agency and of the ways in which it can be fostered and enhanced.

The centrepiece of Le Grand's conceptual framework is the typology set out below. The horizontal axis refers to the spectrum of assumptions about motivation, and the vertical axis

page as ready formed and self-contained individuals. There is none of the richness of James Q. Wilson's discussion of *The Moral Sense* (1993), nor of Askonas and Kwan's typologies of self-interest and altruism (1997). Similarly, Le Grand makes no reference to recent sociological analyses of the ways in which people engage in moral practices and reach moral decisions (Hogget, 2001; Williams, 2001), or to the work of Duncan and others on the multiple contexts in which lone mothers balance paid work and child care (2003). This may not matter when he is discussing the assumptions made by policy makers, but it matters a great deal when he is seeking to establish mechanisms through which people can acquire a greater capacity for agency.

To some extent Le Grand acknowledges the limitations of his conceptual framework in the nature of the policy initiatives he puts forward. It is striking, for example, that a book on agency and public policy by one of the most influential 'New Labour' theorists should make no mention of welfare to work, surely the flagship programme for turning pawns into queens. Instead the focus is upon asset-based welfare. Le Grand proposes that capital grants be paid to all, either at birth or at the age of eighteen, and that people be encouraged to save for retirement or to meet care costs through matching partnership payments. He also suggests that the costs of much of this could be funded through hypothecated taxes, the revenues from which are ear-marked for specific purposes and the rates of which are settled by periodic referenda.

The rationale of asset-based egalitarianism of this kind is that by redistributing wealth and opportunity it gives people the resources they need to act independently and to pursue their life projects. The obvious problem for Le Grand is that every pawn is either an embryonic knight or an embryonic knave, and so the strategies to empower them have to be 'robust'. This means, for example, that his scheme for capital grants has to strike a balance between the objective of giving people greater freedom of action and the danger that they will turn out to be myopic knaves who promptly blow the lot. There are, however, other difficulties that can not be resolved within his framework. One is the issue of capacity.

In his discussion of quasi-markets, Le Grand stresses that a critical factor in their success is the autonomy enjoyed by the key actors. Both GPs and state school heads are well-placed to identify and pursue their aims. He does not, however, ask this question of the pawns he wishes to empower and activate. As a consequence, he remains open to the criticism of Lawrence Mead that the long-term poor are 'dutiful but defeated', and will not respond to incentives in the way that Le Grand expects because they lack the personal qualities and capacities necessary to pursue their own self-interest (1992: 136). In effect, Mead would argue that the best that can be achieved in such cases is that pawns become pseudo-queens, capable of mimicking agency when subject to paternalistic agency and direction. Similarly, Le Grand's framework cannot accommodate those who claim that some pawns constitute an underclass, and do not share the values and aspirations of the wider society. It is at this point that the ambiguities of Le Grand's terminology become stretched to breaking point, since some may find the notion of an anti-social queen disconcerting to say the least.

This book, then, contains a series of arguments that are powerful but limited in their scope and applicability. It works best as an analysis of how the diverse motivations of welfare providers can be channelled to ensure that benefits and services are both delivered more efficiently and become more responsive to the needs and aspirations of those who receive them. Its understanding of agency, however, is at best incomplete. It gives us one piece of a complex jigsaw.

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Tony Fitzpatrick (2000), *After the New Social Democracy: Social Welfare for the 21st Century*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, viii + 232 pp., £45.00 hbk, £15.99 pbk, ISBN: 0-7190-6477-5.
DOI: 10.1017/S004729404227945

This book sets out to do two things. First, it critically analyses the nature of contemporary social democracy as this complex of policies and ideas have evolved both in the UK under New Labour and in other Western and Northern European states. Second, and more importantly, it argues the case for a new social politics organised around principles of 'ecowelfare'. Written in a stimulating and accessible style, this well-organised volume makes an excellent contribution to ongoing debates about the role and purposes of welfare, and the possible nature of future welfare politics in post-productivist regimes.

The critical analysis of the 'new social democracy' (NSD) in Part I argues that it has failed to provide an antidote to 'the conservatism of the political centre', representing instead, 'the hegemonisation of the Right rather than a counter-hegemonisation to the Right' (pp. 32–3). To this extent, the NSD is, at best, a version of socially democratised conservatism rather than anything more radical. Only one small cheer for the NSD, then. Fitzpatrick explores this basic position in a number of chapters that deal with citizenship, the security state and the development of the NSD in the European Union. In each case he is concerned to argue that 'old' social democratic ideas of equality and social justice continue to have a purchase but that, if they are to remain relevant for twenty-first century notions of welfare, they need to be reinforced and upgraded by ecowelfarist ideas and ideals. Where social justice is concerned, for instance, Fitzpatrick argues that New Labour's understanding is based on a combination of weak equality (i.e. 'fairness' and social inclusion) and strong 'reciprocity' (i.e. mutual obligations), as opposed to the stronger, more egalitarian conceptions of social and distributive justice which typified 'old' social democratic ideologies. The difficulty, as Fitzpatrick sees it, is that the enforcement of an equality of obligation in conditions of weak equality simply victimises those who are already casualties of an unequal socio-economic environment. An alternative view would favour a 'diverse reciprocity which takes its place beside a strong conception of equality' (p. 50) because the level of obligations should vary according to where individuals stand in the distributional hierarchy. Essentially, the more endowments one has the more duties one should possess. Pushing further, a strong theory of distributive justice will seek greater equality (particularly of power) while recognising that reciprocity should remain 'diverse' until such time as much greater levels of egalitarianism are achieved – and it is such a theory that Fitzpatrick favours.

Part II of the book is devoted to reinterpreting the core egalitarian principles of 'old' social democracy in terms of a model of ecowelfare and subsequently applying the model to three

contemporary social issues: intergenerational welfare, biotechnology/genetics and the need for new forms of democratic politics. Whether or not the full logic of Fitzpatrick's position is accepted, there is no doubting the force of the argument, which is elaborated in some detail. Put (very) simply, three key principles – 'moderate sustainability', 'attention' and distributive justice – are combined in ways that underpin an ecowelfarist approach characterised by 'egalitarianism, multicultural liberalism, feminism and environmentalism' (p. 125). The model is then used to promote a particular form of intergenerational justice that argues, *inter alia*, the case for Green environmental taxation and a changed property regime in the present that would 'assist in the transformation towards a post-productivist ethic of reproductive values [and help] to create higher levels of sustainability than at present and so to reduce ... the numbers of future poor' (p. 150). These ecowelfarist ideas are also used to inform a perspective on human genetics and biotechnology that calls for a cautious, 'regulated' approach to the hugely complex range of issues involved. In Fitzpatrick's view, an ongoing democratic and deliberative debate among experts and lay people alike better conforms to the spirit of the ecowelfarist model in this contested area than do countervailing *laissez faire* perspectives. Sensibly he does not claim to be able to resolve the fine-grained moral and ethical dilemmas with which this area is imbued, but relies on the potential that deliberative mechanisms hold for the discovery of future solutions. This preference for democratic deliberation is expanded in the final chapter, the argument being that 'association and deliberation are invaluable aspects of a new progressive [welfare] politics' (p. 177), which can empower citizens and potentially stimulate greater political engagement. In particular, Fitzpatrick argues that it is important for political actors to seek alliances between (formal) social democratic party politics (however flawed) and the emergent (informal) deliberative democratic forms which characterise the political behaviour of certain social movements. If social democracy is to mean anything in the future, it should mean a participative equality which 'subjects public issues, debates and decisions to the kind of democratic gaze that is presently threaded through a limited range of pressure groups, protest groups and lobbying organisations' (p. 206).

How realistic is the ecowelfarist vision developed in this volume? If the answer is 'not very', this in no way reduces the significance of the arguments elaborated here. Fitzpatrick is as aware as anyone of the difficulties involved in moving from the present state of NSD conservatism to even an approximation of ecowelfarism, and the purpose of his book is surely to *make a case* for a different welfare politics, however distant the vision may actually be. Nevertheless, his infectious over-optimism needs tempering on two counts – one is something of cheap shot, the other a more substantial issue. The cheap shot is that even in conditions of weak globalisation (or strong *internationalisation*?), the hold of the corporate financial system on national governments appears to be increasing. This is emphatically not a 'race to the bottom' argument but the suggestion, nonetheless, is that the emergence of the NSD was no accident of fate but a particular response to the changing nature of global capitalist hegemony. Of course the precise nature of this 'response' differs among different regimes, as Fitzpatrick rightly acknowledges – and nothing is forever – but it is hard to resist the conclusion that welfare regimes in the (post)industrial societies are presently moving towards market-friendly solutions rather than towards the kind of deliberative eco-egalitarianism that Fitzpatrick advocates. The more substantive point is simply this: any model that proposes a mixture of decentralised, local and deliberative forms of political practice as part of a wider socio-political framework that also recognises a need for more centralised, state-based and collectivist kinds of organisation should say something about the relationship between the two. The state remains a rather shadowy actor in the ecowelfare model – but apparently an important one if the model's core principles are to be properly embedded. Without a worked-through conception of the role of the state the model cannot entirely explain, for example, how the (inevitably) competing demands

of various interests are to be reconciled: to rely on 'attention' and reciprocity in conditions of strengthening equality is probably insufficient because some central mechanism, however democratically constituted, is likely to be needed to achieve reconciliation. Do these points of criticism undermine this book in any way? Certainly not – they just prove that Fitzpatrick's position is well worth engaging with. A small step towards deliberation perhaps . . .

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S. Dex (2003), *Families and Work in the Twentieth Century*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation/Policy Press, 108 pp., £16.95 pbk, ISBN: 1-85-35095-X.

G. Neagele *et al.* (2003), *A New Organisation of Time over Working Life*, Dublin: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, v + 160 pp., pbk, ISBN: 897-0222-2.
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Confronted with the challenge of sustaining welfare budgets in the face of demographic change and highly competitive global markets, the UK's Labour government is currently considering a range of measures to further its active labour market policies. Central to these are provisions for enhancing employment opportunities, especially for women, and extending people's working lives. Under the Employment Guidelines flowing from the 2000 Lisbon summit it is committed to reversing the growth in early retirement unleashed by its predecessors and raising the effective average age of labour market exit to 65 by 2010. Labour is also committed to increasing the proportion of women in the workforce to 60 per cent, and to securing child care for at least 90 per cent of under fives and 33 per cent of under threes by 2010. Less specifically it is expected to adhere to the EU's broader economic and social inclusion agendas and, within these, provisions for promoting equal opportunities, life-long learning and reconciling work and family life.

With record numbers in work, the UK has already exceeded EU employment targets. Yet the government is under pressure to enable more women, particularly single mothers, to enter the labour market, persuade early retirees to re-enter it and entice individuals generally to defer retirement. Developments in these arenas are widely seen as the most effective mechanisms not only for countering the costs of population ageing but for reducing child poverty and sustaining state welfare. Simultaneously though Labour is facing mounting concern over the 'time squeeze' faced by those in work and the effects of Britain's 'long hours culture' on family and community life. Along with implementing the Working Time, Parental Leave and other EU Directives, it has responded with a variety of measures to enable parents to combine work and caring, including the right for those with under-six or disabled youngsters to request flexible working. In a parallel move it is gearing up for the implementation of the Age Discrimination Directive in 2006 and with it legislation enabling flexible retirement.

Coming from two key policy-research stables, these studies cast different but complementary insight into the effectiveness of Labour's approach by drawing together the key findings of two extensive research projects. Dex provides a highly readable guide to the research generated by the 20 projects forming the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's programme on work and family life in the UK. Naegle and his co-authors cover a broader canvas, offering both a new conceptual framework and a review of working time arrangements and preferences

in 14 EU member states, the USA and Japan undertaken for the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.

Dex's synopsis is structured around the four main themes addressed by the project groups. She begins by considering the studies of families and labour markets, then those on flexibility and the changing organisation of work, the effects of paid work on family life and what she terms 'partnerships and support'. All make for riveting if dense reading and it seems invidious to single out any one element from the wealth of information gathered by the different projects. What emerges is a clear picture of labour market processes in rural as well as suburban and inner city areas and the extent of 'atypical' and 'long-hours' working among both mothers and fathers. Together they also point to the complexities of employee and employer decision-making and the varying, gendered, cultural, ethnic and occupationally based calculations affecting parents' working arrangements.

Potentially of most interest to policy analysts, especially given the strains these often entail, are the many insights into parents' child-care strategies and the effectiveness of employer-led and governmental policies. In reviewing these Dex treads cautiously, posing as many questions as answers. With certain exceptions she suggests there is no 'pressing' need for further legislation. The former includes the full implementation of the Working Time Directive and limitations on the extension of Sunday trading (both areas where Labour has resisted change). Beyond this she highlights the need for a more coherent child care strategy, arguing this should take account of parents' preferences for informal provision and concerns over whether they should be enabled to work evenings and weekends. Much, however, depends on employer action. Here Dex takes a pragmatic stance, calling for further guidelines to encourage the spread of family-friendly practices, including support not only for parents but for carers more generally.

Whether her relatively optimistic assessment of the salience of the business case and the government's light-touch approach is justified remains to be seen. But for this reader its minimalist strategy contrasts sharply with developments elsewhere in Europe. It is these that form the focus of Neagele *et al.*'s report. In many ways this confirms Dex's concerns, particularly in regard to gender divisions in employment and lifelong income. Their remit, though, leads them to consider people's needs across their working lives, particularly in the light of the drive to raise retirement ages and the spread of 'non-standard' forms of employment amongst both men and women. Looking at these trends and the decline of the traditional 'three box' pattern (education, work, retirement), they call for the restructuring of social policy to encompass what a sister report terms 'time welfare' as well as income (Boulin, 2003). More specifically, they propose that as retirement ages rise, individuals should be entitled to paid leave, not only to meet caring responsibilities but other 'stress' phases and to support both 'life-long learning' and community activities. These proposals in turn require a new, individualised but gender-neutral, time-based, approach to social security to support individuals through differing life-course combinations of work, training and other commitments. Not surprisingly in advancing these suggestions the authors see themselves as contributing to further debate rather than early legislation. They do, however, point to many similar initiatives and a possible base for further developments, based on the notion of 'life-course' policy-making. In keeping with the Foundation's role this also incorporates the enhancement of the quality of people's lives.

For policy analysts both reports make for a stimulating read, encompassing far more than can be summarised here and offering a rich seam for students to mine. Some of the issues raised may be familiar, especially to those who follow feminist discourses. But together they provide an illuminating starting point for entering the growing debate on the place of time and the primacy of work in policy formation and evaluation and one which deserves a wider audience than the European Foundation has often received.

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Isabela Mares (2003), *The Politics of Social Risk: Business and Welfare State Development*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 319 pp., £17.99 pbk, ISBN: 0-521-53477-1.

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This fine study traces the development of the welfare state in France and Germany, with particular emphasis on the role of business interests in the introduction of social insurance policies. The core of the work uses historical research into socio-political negotiations over industrial accident insurance, unemployment insurance, post-war social insurance reforms and early retirement policies to evaluate general propositions developed in a meticulous discussion of interest-based approaches to welfare state development.

The precise specification of hypotheses and the explicit confrontation with empirical material echoes the doctoral thesis out of which the book grew. It showcases a method for using historical research in social policy to test theories, and can be held up as a model for researchers – trainee especially – working in the field. At the same time, the self-conscious tidiness of the approach, allied to the deployment of a rational choice framework, may make the account of policy development a little reductive for some tastes.

The point of departure, inspired by the literature on ‘varieties of capitalism’, is that because social insurance helps to address market failures in skill formation, it should often find support amongst sections of the business community. This would challenge the existing ‘research perspective’ in comparative welfare state analysis, presented – somewhat hastily – as ‘premised on the assumption of business opposition to social insurance’ (p. 2). But rather than simply blowing down the straw man of a ‘monolithic business community uncompromisingly opposing social policies’ (p. 3), the study seeks to elucidate the actual conditions under which business interests will support social insurance: in other words, when do the benefits of social policies to business outweigh the costs?

Comparing across countries and policy sectors allows Mares to gain leverage over some key variables, and she finds systematic evidence that large firms, firms in high-skill sectors and firms that are relatively exposed to a particular risk will be more inclined to support the introduction of social insurance than small, low-skill and/or low-risk firms. Now, anyone who has seriously studied social policy in, say, France will already know that UIMM (*Union des Industries Métallurgiques et Minières*) – an association representing large industrial manufacturing firms – has been a less consistent opponent of socialised insurance policies than representatives of small and medium-sized enterprises. The value of this book, however, is to tease out the various ‘micro-foundations’ of divergent employer preferences, and to evaluate them more systematically than before.

Part of this exercise involves carefully re-specifying just *what* exactly is being struggled over in the development of social insurance. To this end, the theoretical section of the book isolates two institutional dimensions of social insurance design, which are labelled ‘control’ and ‘risk redistribution’. The latter refers to the issue usually privileged in welfare state analysis – the scope and coverage of benefit provision. The former, however, refers to an issue that has less often taken centre stage – who should govern and administer social policy provision? For Mares, these are issues of equal strategic significance to employers, though some kinds of firms

may well be more sensitive to the benefits of self-administration, and others to the benefits of widespread risk redistribution. As the book points out (pp. 42–50), both issues are also of considerable strategic importance to organised labour.

In addition to facilitating precise specification of the social policy preferences of employers, this conceptualisation of the ‘universe of social policies’ allows the study to investigate the dynamics of cross-class alliances that underpin social insurance. These, Mares argues, must be understood in terms of social interests trading-off their policy preferences with respect to one dimension of policy design in pursuit of their preferred outcome on the other. Given this element of trade-off, cross-class alliances are usually ‘strategic’ rather than ‘pre-strategic’, with their success also structured by the calculations of policy entrepreneurs or the impact of policy legacies on actors’ incentives.

Although Mares piles up an impressive array of evidence in support of this argument, one may be sceptical as to whether she always captures the full story. Two examples must suffice. Mares argues that early reformist politicians in France successfully promoted a national-level variant of the ‘Ghent model’ of unemployment insurance by extending state subsidies to mutual organisations, cleverly quelling small employers’ hostility to union control of unemployment funds and encouraging them to strategically support the policy for its relatively limited risk redistribution. But were not these ‘policy entrepreneurs’ also influenced by the general pull of *mutualisme* in French social reform debates at this time? Similarly, can the defeat of proposals for unified insurance (*Einheitsversicherung*) in post-war Germany really be reduced to a ‘strategic alliance’ between capital and labour, without reference to the more diffuse influence of the principle of subsidiarity?

Though largely introduced as a means to the end of understanding business influence and cross-class compromises, the explicit conceptualisation of the ‘control’ dimension of social politics may ultimately be this book’s most important contribution to our broader understanding of welfare state development. In essence, it underscores the fact that social and political actors have *procedural* as well as *substantive* policy aims, and that the latter may sometimes be subordinated to the former in welfare politics. If hardly new, recognition of the procedural dimension of welfare politics has tended to be seen as a ‘complication’ in the key struggle around substantive policy problems. From a reading of the individual case studies, however, this book’s title could as logically – if less neatly – have been ‘the politics of control’ as ‘the politics of social risk’. This work thus makes a strong case for admitting the multi-dimensional nature of what is too often called ‘the social question’, and investigating how different dimensions feature in conflicts over social policy. Even if one is sceptical about the pivotal role of employers in settling these conflicts, or has less faith in purely rational explanations of policy development than Mares, her book will still open up valuable new perspectives for understanding the politics of welfare state development, especially in those national contexts where public and private have long been interwoven in complex ways.

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Steffen Mau (2003), *The Moral Economy of Welfare States: Britain and Germany Compared*, London: Routledge, 238 pp., £60.00 hbk, ISBN: 0-415-31754-1.
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To what extent do people think about giving to others when they think about the welfare state? Do they think of contributions and taxes as collective provisions for others, or as payments which support themselves, either as a form of savings (pensions) or insurance against risk (unemployment, sickness)? Presumably a bit of both, one would assume, but what is the

balance between altruism and self-interest which sustains the public support without which redistributive welfare states would collapse? In this detailed and careful study, Mau argues that perceptions of reciprocal fairness are an important part of the answer. Reciprocity rests on some form of expectation of give and take, but it does not imply an equal exchange of burdens and obligations on the part of contributor and beneficiary. The concept is complex, clearly, but Mau argues convincingly that it is important to understand why people 'endorse some kind of transfers while disapproving of others' (p. 35). The author argues, however, that the prevailing notion of reciprocity within any given welfare state is influenced by different institutional structures and programme-specific design features. This point of departure allows Mau to advance on the large body of literature on welfare state attitudes by demonstrating that institutional settings and welfare legacies impact on the acceptability of different types and scopes of redistribution, i.e. the moral economy of welfare states.

The first section of the book engages skilfully with the conceptual and theoretical intricacies of Mau's argument, laying the ground for the empirical part which investigates attitudinal patterns regarding redistribution, poor relief, unemployment protection, retirement pensions and health care in Germany and Britain. The country choice is apt due to differences between the more paid-employment-focused social policy tradition in Germany and a more poverty relief orientation in Britain. For both countries Mau provides evidence for the first of his arguments, i.e. the relevance of reciprocal expectations. For example, within unemployment compensation contributors expect benefit recipients not to abuse the system and to engage in job seeking. Despite differences in popularity, public pension systems in Germany and Britain continue to be supported by a strong basis of generational reciprocity. His second proposition, too, is clearly supported. Institutional differences are reflected in accepted notions of social justice which differ between countries. Support for flat-rate provision, for example, is as much entrenched in Britain as is the notion of graduated benefits in Germany. Mau also takes careful account of the, at times, substantial differences of attitudes in East and West Germany.

On a more critical note, some of the data employed are rather dated (mid and even early 1990s) and some of the institutional parameters (e.g. Family Credit) have long been abolished and welfare state areas substantially reformed in the second half of the 1990s in the UK and, more recently, also in Germany. In addition, one wonders about the dynamic nature of 'moral economies' of welfare states given the potentially volatile nature of public attitudes, as shown by recent editions of *British Social Attitudes*, or the current hectic period of retrenchment and restructuring in Germany within an atmosphere of uncertainty about the sustainability of traditional welfare state structures.

Nevertheless, as a whole, the book is persuasive on both empirical and theoretical grounds and achieves its aims of adding substance to literature on attitude surveys which so often raise questions rather than provide explanations as to the causes for cross-national variation. This is no mean achievement and also makes the book an important read for those not specifically interested in either Britain or Germany but in questions of how to understand (and analyse) patterns of welfare state support generally. Finally, the study also has a political message: that replacing reciprocity-based social insurance arrangements with means-tested social programmes potentially endangers the loyalty basis which redistributive arrangements require. In sum, Mau's study provides an important contribution to current debates about both welfare state attitudes and the impact of institutional structures on perceptions of social justice and fairness. It deserves to be read widely. It is just a shame that Routledge has, once again, decided to publish an important piece of comparative welfare state literature in hard back only, rather than in a more affordable paperback.

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Lena Dominelli and Wanda Thomas Bernard (eds.) (2003), *Broadening Horizons: International Exchanges in Social Work*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 418 pp., £49.95 hbk, ISBN: 0-754-61945-1.
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Three features of the current UK context make publication of this book about international exchanges in social work timely. First, there is renewed interest in international social work as a result of globalisation. Second, the change in the qualifying social work award from the diploma to the new degree and the related increase in requirements of external reference groups (UK governments, Care Councils and Funding Councils) has implications for the feasibility of programmes finding sufficient space in the curriculum to offer an international dimension. Third, detailed and prescriptive practice requirements (National Occupational Standards, 2001), raise questions about the viability of meeting the latter in an international placement.

The book is divided into three parts to give voice to each of the main groups involved in the exchanges. It draws primarily on a major EU–Canada Exchange project that involved 45 students who had placements in child welfare agencies. In addition, there are chapters from South Africa, the USA, China and Australia. It is ambitious in its aims to: (i) consider the relationship between the local and the global; (ii) contribute to the debate about how to tackle social work problems on a global scale; (iii) discuss the experiences of academics, practitioners and students involved in international exchanges; (iv) give practical guidance on how to deal with living and working across borders. Does it achieve these? In my view, it implicitly raises questions about the first, minimally addresses the second and accomplishes the last two aims rather well.

In Part I, nine students interestingly describe their experiences with child welfare placements. They are very positive about the value of the experiences to them personally and professionally. However, Noble (Australian field co-ordinator) later in the book questions the ‘feel good’ factor and suggests students should be exposed to the critique that ‘seeing new practices through imperialist eyes actually impeded real cultural dialogue and impedes their professional growth’ (p. 267). My other concern was that the recorded experiences are positive yet we are warned in the introduction that there were some less positive. It would be illuminating to hear more of these.

In Part II, six very diverse chapters are written by ‘practitioners’ from universities and participating agencies. The chapter by Sammon, Whitaker and Barlow (Canadian placement co-ordinators) is particularly helpful about practicalities. They also pose five key questions that they continue to ask following the Project experience:

- What are the educational advantages for students?
- How can one practice without imposing one’s cultural values?
- How can a social worker practice in an anti-oppressive manner without being culturally judgmental?
- How does one guard against a neo-colonial stance?
- What is the role of field co-ordinators and how do their values and expectations affect the process?

We also hear about the innovative Stockholm ‘multiversity’ project where university and local agencies set out to develop practice with children and families to counteract ‘territorial thinking already evident among professional groups’ (p. 195). Waldman and Colombi write about the development of child welfare across borders, a ‘world wide web-based course’ (although it might be more accurately described as an England/Sweden/Canada course). They deconstruct ‘the process of building and shaping a curriculum as a shared international activity, using the

new technologies as the medium for both negotiations about and delivery of the curriculum' (p. 211). It is a pity that at the point of writing, the course had not been fully piloted or evaluated so some crucial information is missing.

Part III includes five substantive chapters by academics from Canada, South Africa, Hong Kong and Australia talking about their experience of international exchange programmes. I found Noble's chapter particularly valuable about international placements as she locates her discussion in a critical and theoretical context. She warns that 'caution and reflection are needed to avoid these international exchanges . . . becoming another form of colonising behaviour' (p. 259). Particularly useful is her 'lessons learnt' discussion.

I have three main criticisms of this book. First, although it is promoted as being about a range of countries, it is predominantly about the EU (Netherlands, Sweden, UK)—Canada project and the final chapter by the editors focuses solely on this. Secondly, the contributions need editing more tightly – for example the EU—Canada project is described several times by different writers. I acknowledge the editors' position that each chapter is not written to a standard proforma to ensure that the author's voice remains unique. However, for coherence and accessibility, editorialising is essential. Third, Noble suggests that academics must identify the 'philosophical, organisational, methodological and pedagogical challenges' (p. 259) of international placements. This book tends to dwell on the organisational and methodological challenge, while the philosophical and pedagogical challenges are given less priority.

Nevertheless, the book has value to all programmes considering international exchanges. As a Field Co-ordinator (in Canada) and a DipSW Programme Director (in England), I have managed international placement exchanges in response to pleas from students. These placements have sometimes taken place, not as part of a project or an institutional plan but because the individuals involved were invested in making them work. It was always an unresolved question about whether the return merited the resource required, and whether the student satisfactorily met the home competences. This book discusses the problem of locating adequate resources to support international placements, including secretarial and financial support. Dominelli (p. 242) also refers to the tension between making scarce placements available for international students at a time when they are increasingly not available for home students, but suggests this is a false dichotomy and placements should be conceptualised as being for all students. She asks whether the former perception might indicate 'an underlying mistrust around equivalences' (p. 242)? This important issue merits further exploration, which brings me to my final plea that the issue of international placements be properly researched.

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Kent W. Colton (2003), *Housing in the Twenty-First Century: Achieving Common Ground*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Wertheim Publications in Industrial Relations, 506 pp., £25.95 hbk, ISBN: 0-674-01093-0.
DOI: 10.1017/S0047279404277947

Notwithstanding its title, this is a book as much – if not more so – about the twentieth than the twenty-first century. In the first of its two parts, accounting for somewhat over half its

500 pages, a wealth of information is presented about the progress and achievements of the housing sector in the USA, building on the Housing Act of 1949, the principal aim of which was to ensure a 'decent home and suitable living environment' for all Americans. In the second part, the book turns to the present century with concerns how Americans are going to respond to the challenge of delivering satisfactory housing during the next 50 years.

Its author follows in the long tradition of people who, having spent their working lives in some capacity connected with public policy — such as in the voluntary sector or the civil service — have wanted to share their insights and experiences through the vehicle of academic-style publishing. Kent W. Colton has worked for over two decades in Washington as the CEO of the National Association of Home Builders; like many others in this tradition, he displays an approach to the subject matter which has a strong orientation toward description and the presentation of empirical information, and particularly toward polemic.

Chapter 1, starting from the milestone of the 1949 Act, sets out an overview of US housing, presenting information about the development of the housing stock, the affordability of housing and demographic changes. Chapter 2 deals with single-family, home ownership — the 'Great American Dream'. Presenting information about its historical growth, but focusing particularly on its advantages and benefits, this is the longest chapter in the book. Here, although other aspects are not ignored, the main emphasis is on the economic benefits to individuals and societies. Colton also considers variations in home ownership experiences by race — lower among minorities — and location — lower in inner cities than suburb areas. This leads on in Chapter 3 to a parallel discussion of multi-family, rental housing. Acknowledging the wide spectrum, from low-income welfare housing to luxury apartments, this chapter also emphasises economic perspectives and dimensions. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 each focus on a general aspect of the housing system: the first of these on the transformation of the US housing finance industry, particularly over the last two decades and particularly in increasing the flow of mortgage credit; the second on the role of government in the housing system; and the last on the importance of housing in the economy.

Running throughout these six chapters, which together constitute the first section of the book, is a conviction that what has been told is a 'story of success'. The ideological certainty is strong. 'Remarkable progress has been made in terms of increased levels of home ownership', the expectations and hopes embodied in the 1949 Act being 'met and, in some case, perhaps exceeded', and so on. Whereas this section closes with discussion of about how the progress is to be maintained in the light of, among other things, demographic and environmental developments, it is the overriding sense of past achievements that shines through.

To a non-American reader — perhaps I should say, *this* non-American reader — much of this seems very inward looking and self-satisfied. Economic growth in the advanced economies has resulted in a general tendency for housing standards to increase, so the US experience is neither unique nor particularly outstanding. And, if home ownership rates are a criterion of success, then it needs noting that these are not as high in the US as in a number of other countries, both east and west. In fact, Colton writes as if the only comparator for America *now* is America *then*; what has and is happening elsewhere in the developed world being either unknown or not deemed significant. Moreover, it is not only non-American housing developments that Colton ignores, but also non-American literature, of which there is of course an abundance addressing the issues and theoretical discussions underlying his writing. So, rather than a balanced assessment of developments and achievements in the US, this first section of the book reads more like an exercise in patriotic back-slapping.

It is in the second section of the book that Colton looks to the future. His concern is that notwithstanding past achievements, indeed perhaps because of them, housing has slipped down the political agenda so that existing and developing problems will need special efforts

if they are to be solved. Here, he sees the key as 'achieving common ground', that is reaching agreement in a political environment marked by increasing partisanship, to find ways in which the effort is sufficient to 'cut across traditional interests and differences'. In each of Chapters 8 to 11 he presents a twentieth-century case study of policy formulation that demonstrates successful or unsuccessful attempts to achieve common ground. In the final chapter he firstly draws upon the lessons from the case studies to identify nine general principles helpful for the task of finding common ground. They include having a good idea, spending time persuading and having an honest broker. Secondly, he presents ten building blocks that in his view would establish a strong framework for US housing in the future: more home ownership, affordable rental housing for others, tax incentives and so on. Having ploughed through all this, there is no doubting the intensity of the mission, but many readers may consider that the insights and the social science are limited.

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Miriam David (2003), *Personal and Political: Feminisms, Sociology and Family Lives*, Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books, 227 pp., £17.99 pbk, ISBN: 1-858-56305-4.
DOI: 10.1017/S0047279404287943

This complex book is Miriam David's 'intellectual biography' which charts the influences on her intellectual and professional development. She argues that what she and other feminists choose to study is profoundly shaped by developments in their personal and family lives as well as by the changing social and political circumstances in which they find themselves.

The book is divided into three historical phases: the first is social liberalism, the second economic liberalism and the third neo-liberalism. The rise of the women's liberation movement with its slogan 'the personal is political' is linked to the first phase and dates from 1963, when Kennedy was assassinated and David started university, to the late 1970s, when the first Thatcher administration was elected and David married and became a mother. The second phase lasts until the collapse of communism and the departure of Margaret Thatcher as leader of the Conservative party and is characterised as a time when David's work focussed on linking the personal and the political. The third phase ushers in the 'post-socialist condition' and the 'third way', post-structuralism and the personalising of the political. It also encompasses David's divorce and the death of her mother.

Roughly two chapters correspond to each of these phases. The book, however, is not structured only chronologically but also thematically. Thus Chapter 2 is about the emergence of the women's liberation movement and the growing importance of feminism for David's intellectual and political activities, but it also includes an assessment of the women's movement and its influence on the academy from the vantage point of the present. This way of organising the material was consciously chosen by the author in preference to a life-course approach so that she would be able to discuss 'theoretical and methodological developments' and reflect on her own 'subjective interests and developments' (p. 7). The third chapter explores the growing influence of feminism and feminists within universities and is a period when David was at Bristol University and involved with others in developing women's studies courses. Her focus in this chapter is on the early development of feminist sociology as represented in books such as Oakley's *Sex, Gender and Society* (Temple Smith, 1972) and *Sociology of Housework* (Martin Robertson, 1974) and Chodorow's *Reproduction of Mothering* (University of California Press, 1978). The next two chapters are marked by David's transition to motherhood and the death of her father. During this period feminist auto/biographies became more numerous

and, for David and other feminists, sociological studies of motherhood and caring became important. She explores what happens when feminists move up university hierarchies thereby becoming femocrats, lacing her discussion with descriptions of contemporary events and commenting on the development of feminist standpoint theory and critical analyses of social policy development.

One of the main threads running through the book is the increasing importance of auto/biography to academic feminism and sociology and how this is a direct result of feminist methodology. At the same time as interweaving her own personal and intellectual biography with the academic and political material she discusses, she also reflects on other feminist biographies that have been influential both within the women's movement and within academic feminism. One of those to whom she returns in various places in her account is Simone de Beauvoir who, along with Betty Friedan, she identifies as being one of the mothers of second-wave feminism.

The third pair of chapters brings us up to date. It includes a brief comment on the problems of choosing schools for her children and her intellectual focus on the links between families and education. Its main focus is on the development of research exploring motherhood, on the one hand, and children's and young women's lives, on the other. She argues that such studies demonstrate the huge changes in women's lives that there have been over the period covered by the book. In parallel she comments on the theoretical and methodological developments which characterise this phase and the differences between and diversity of women. The theme of significant social change is pursued in the second of this pair of chapters where she comments on the ways in which personal lives have become political, using as examples Clinton, Blair and Princess Diana. She also tells the reader about the death of her mother. There is slightly more detail here than when discussing the earlier death of her father but what is intriguing in the context of this intellectual biography, and the way David links her intellectual concerns with changes in her personal and family life, is that there is no exploration of why her mother's ageing did not influence her intellectual concerns in the way that the birth of her children and her own transition to motherhood did.

There is an enormous amount of material in this account which is a highly personalised interpretation of the development of feminism since the 1960s, its influence within the academy and on the development of David's own intellectual and professional career. At the same time it is a reflection on how developments in her family and personal life as well as socio-economic and political change fed into her intellectual concerns and shaped the direction of her research and her political engagement. As such it is an important contribution to feminist understandings of the interdependence of the personal and the political.

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Paul Michael Garrett (2003), *Remaking Social Work with Children and Families: A Critical Discussion on the 'Modernisation' of Social Care*, London: Routledge, 193 pp. (including index), £19.99 pbk, ISBN: 0-415-29839-3.
DOI: 10.1017/S004727940429794X

This book focuses on the political and ideological aspects of some recent policy and practice changes in the field of social work with children and families. It claims a particular focus on how reforms have been centred on producing fitness for participation in a market economy and on reducing the risks of criminality.

There are some problems with the book that are not of the author's making but of its timing. It precedes the September 2003 Green Paper, the shift of much of child welfare to the

Department for Education and Employment, the appointment of a Minister for Children and the new Adoption Act. This does not invalidate the author's analysis, but it does limit it.

However, other problems stem from book's origins in a series of journal articles. The main one of these is its choice of issues. Whilst the author does not claim to be writing a comprehensive review, it is puzzling to find Quality Protects mentioned only briefly. More crucially, for a book on this subject, Best Value is not mentioned at all and the Performance Assessment Framework – which should have been central to the author's arguments on the increase of surveillance in this field – is barely considered.

There are chapters on the following subjects: social work with children and families, 1990–97; the 'Looking After Children' materials; co-operation between police and social services; the Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families; the renewed focus on adoption; discrimination against Irish people in the UK; finally, new initiatives such as Connexions and mentoring schemes.

The pre-1997 discussion is thought provoking, but a tendency to over-reference means that many of the arguments are poorly developed. A more central weakness is that the book spends barely a page on the central features of the looked-after system in the mid 1990s which underpinned Labour's later agenda. The abuse inquiries of the 1990s (Staffordshire, Leicestershire and, above all, Waterhouse) are skipped over. More importantly, so are the outcomes for looked-after children in terms of later homelessness, joblessness and poor educational achievement. Figures on these were ubiquitous at the time and it is odd not to see them mentioned here.

The critique of the 'Looking After Children' and Action and Assessment Record conception of 'good parenting' as being ideological and partial is easy to make, but the chapter does not present an alternative approach which would address the chronic problems that beset the looked-after system at this time. The chapter which focuses on police/social services relations mainly reports the results of the author's own qualitative study. This contains interesting findings, but given how small scale it is there is not much that can be read into the conclusions with respect to national developments. It is therefore a pity that the author did not link it to the other studies in this field, which he cites earlier in the chapter but does not discuss.

The focus on New Labour's approach begins with the Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and Their Families (2000). There is a critique of its language and potential intrusiveness, but also an acknowledgement of more positive elements. The following chapter's discussion of developments in relation to adoption exhibits curious gaps. For example, it contains no data on the trends in numbers of adoptions from the care system, despite such data being publicly available and this issue being central to the chapter's analysis. The chapter on ethnicity is mainly a (well-informed) review of discrimination against Irish people in the UK generally, rather than a discussion of their treatment within a social work context. There is some plea for engagement with the issues by social workers, but that is about it. There is also some discussion of asylum seekers and a brief discussion of wider ethnicity issues. The final substantive chapter, on 'emergent' new professions, looks at the role of mentors and Connexions advisers.

In the concluding chapter, the author engages with the introduction of 'star ratings' for local councils and the development of the new social work degree. The overall thesis, repeated from earlier chapters, is that there has been a strong increase in surveillance and control. It is therefore regrettable that there is no discussion of the inspection regime introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 nor, as already mentioned, of the Performance Assessment Framework.

Alongside the difficulties already indicated, there are also problems of style. There are quite a few typos, which suggests a somewhat rushed completion. More problematic is a tendency

to over-reference. On occasion, references come so thick and fast that it is hard to discern the author's argument beneath them; the substantive discussion in the book is 148 pages, yet there are 24 pages of bibliography. The choice of sources is also perplexing. Articles in the *Guardian* newspaper are frequently referenced, whilst substantive documentation on what has been happening in social care in the past decade (SSI reports, Parliamentary Select Committee inquiries, Social Exclusion Unit Reports and official statistics) are conspicuous by their lack of use, even where they appear in the bibliography.

The book does contain some good points and arguments. For example, on the lack of involvement by young people in the development of the 'Looking After Children' materials and the capacity of Action and Assessment Records to reinforce perceptions of widespread problematic behaviour by looked-after children. However, the wider criticisms that it makes are generally too easy to offer much insight. It is, after all, a relatively simple process for an academic to pick holes in the language, tone and logic of official publications and the pronouncements of politicians.

It is perhaps the penultimate sentence of the book that best sums it up. This states that the author has 'attempted to provide a series of critical snapshots of the changes taking place in this area of social care'. Given the major gaps in the analysis, this is perhaps the best way of approaching it.

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Suniya S. Luther (ed.) (2003), *Resilience and Vulnerability*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 574 pp., £23.95 pbk, ISBN: 0-521-00161-7.
DOI: 10.1017/S0047279404307944

This edited collection brings together an extensive range of research material on the highly topical theme of resilience and vulnerability. The book aims to address four themes:

1. providing operational definitions of the chosen risk condition and of the methods utilized in its investigation;
2. elucidating salient vulnerability and protective mechanisms;
3. articulating limits to resilient adaptation; and
4. addressing the implications of findings on resilience for intervention and policy formulation (p xxi).

All of these themes are indeed picked up, to a greater or lesser extent, by the authors.

The concept of resilience has been dogged by definitional problems such that there is somewhat of a split between practitioners and researchers. On the one hand, the very simplicity of the term, along with a 'common sense' understanding of what it means, makes it appealing to practitioners looking for more optimistic frameworks to balance the current preoccupation with risk. On the other hand, the slipperiness of the concept has lead researchers to become preoccupied with attempts to capture it and perhaps to neglect the development of some of the more promising strands for practice. In this book Suniya Luthar has attempted to redress this by explicitly aiming to 'distil salient take-home messages'. She acknowledges that resilience is not a 'flawless scientific construct' (p. xxix) and the chapters do cover a significant amount of definitional ground.

In a very helpful introductory chapter, Masten and Powell start from a fairly straightforward definition of resilience as 'patterns of positive adaptation in the context of significant risk or adversity'. They emphasise the two necessary components: that the person is emotionally healthy and that risk or adversity has been present. They also help to demystify the concept by emphasising that 'resilience usually arises from the operation of ordinary adaptive processes, rather than rare or extraordinary one' (p. 16). They refer to the adaptive qualities that are associated with resilience as being 'ordinary magic'.

However, as the book progresses several contributors do unpick the concept in more detail. The book's significant contribution is to tackle, head on, the complex issue of distinguishing between those factors that specifically interact with and modify risk and those that offer more general protection regardless of the level of risk. The authors of different chapters do not reach uniform conclusions on this issue, but they do explore the matter in considerable depth. The reader will not find a definitive research-based conclusion as to whether there are some factors that are uniquely protective only in the presence of risk, but they will find a comprehensive coverage of the strands of the discussion. The difficulty is that the strands are spread across chapters and the reader would face a challenge in pulling out the strands from each chapter and finding the main thread.

The chapters are clustered into three sections. The first set of chapters consider family-based adversity and cover such risk factors as mental illness, substance misuse and parental divorce. Taken together these chapters provide very detailed information about the impact of individual factors and clusters of factors upon developmental outcomes. The recurring theme in these chapters is of the importance of parent-child interactions and attachment relationships. These are probably the most optimistic chapters for individual practitioners as they do give a range of pointers for practice with children who are experiencing familial adversity.

The second section looks at broader contextual and socio-emotional factors, and highlights the corrosive impact of poverty upon healthy development. The tone of these chapters is less optimistic, although they do provide material that could be very useful for policy makers. As Sameroff *et al.* conclude, the key message for intervention is that strategies must address a constellation of risk factors: 'The proverbial magic bullet may turn out to be as multidimensional as the modern army' (p. 388).

The final section includes chapters on the underlying neurological and genetic patterns associated with vulnerability and resilience. This is unusual for texts on resilience and is therefore welcome, although, because it is a short and complex section, the messages for intervention are few. The chapters rely heavily on animal studies in a way that other chapters do not and have a different 'feel' from the rest of the book. They are probably rather too technical for novices in the field and too superficial for experts. Nevertheless, they give tantalising glimpses of the potential applications of these lines of research.

It would have been useful if there had been a short discussion at the end of each section to draw together the extensive, and sometimes somewhat contradictory, findings from the individual chapters.

The book is built heavily around traditional empirical studies that employ batteries of psychological and other standardised measures. There is, therefore, less emphasis upon the use of self-report and subjective accounts of adversity. One of the dilemmas in research on resilience and vulnerability is ensuring that the 'adversity' that 'resilient' individuals have transcended really was potentially adverse for that individual. There is scope for far more research on subjective accounts of stress, risk, challenge and coping.

The concept of resilience has been in danger of becoming somewhat over-used. It is even in danger of deflecting attention away from the need to tackle the ravages of poverty and

deprivation in favour of equipping individuals to cope with such risky environments. This is picked up on in the chapter by Cauce *et al.* who state:

Thus, whether it is politically correct or not, when we focus on inner-city neighbourhoods with a high poverty concentration, the limits of resilience are all too obvious. Although it may not be impossible, it is certainly hard for the researcher with open eyes, just as it is hard for an adolescent living in these neighbourhoods, not to be overwhelmed by risk. (p. 359)

But this book is not a pessimistic one. It provides a realistic account of just how complex individual children's reactions are to adversity and offers a number of promising research findings.

The book certainly makes inroads into meeting the stated aims. However, the latter theme of addressing the implications of the findings is less well-addressed in some chapters. Practitioners who work directly with vulnerable, abused and neglected children may find it difficult to extract specific messages for practice. However, it would act as an extremely rich and valuable resource for those who aim to produce more focused practice guidance.

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Karen Duke (2003), *Drugs, Prisons and Policy-Making*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 206 pp., £50.00 pbk, ISBN: 0-333-98203-7.
DOI: 10.1017/S0047279404317940

The extent and nature of the 'drug problem' in prisons is one that has vexed the authorities for some time. Phil Wheatley, the Director General of the Prison Service acknowledged recently that the number of prisoners received into custody has increased substantially in recent years (*Independent*, 1 December 2003). Indeed he claimed that in some prisons, up to 80% of new arrivals were found to have taken Class A drugs in the 48 hours prior to their incarceration. His claims prompted a vocal response from voluntary agencies working in this area, who claimed that the prison service was barely coping with the problem of drug misuse, while prison-based detoxification was limited in effect due to insufficient treatment available to help prisoners address the basis of their drug problem. Similarly, it was claimed that support for drug-using prisoners on release was significantly under-resourced. Despite policy initiatives and practical interventions, such as the Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice and Throughcare Service (CARATS), which was introduced to prisons in England and Wales in 1999, there have been ongoing concerns regarding the ability of the prison service to effectively respond to drug use.

Nevertheless this is an issue that the prison service is unable to ignore. While considering the way in which this problem has been defined and responded to historically provides a useful lens through which current policy and practices can be examined, it also makes for very interesting reading. *Drugs, Prisons and Policy-Making* by Karen Duke provides a detailed and informative examination of the history of drugs policy in the English prison system. Through the use of four case studies which correspond to key phases in prison drug policy development since 1980 (1980–86, 1986–93, 1993–97, 1997 to date) she examines policy decisions and policy making in depth. A detailed documentary analysis is interwoven with interviews with key actors in the policy process, which provide a rare insight into the underpinning rationale and

expectations of individuals involved with the creation and enactment of policy. While the interviews capture the views of those in 'powerful' positions of making and influencing policy, it is evident that penal policy making is influenced by broader social, political and economic factors. Nevertheless individual decision makers are given the unenviable task of appeasing politicians, the public and the criminal justice system.

In each of the four phases of policy making which Karen Duke examines, she usefully outlines how the drug problem is framed and defined, the role of research and development of knowledge bases, and the impact of wider social, political, policy and institutional contexts. Throughout the book, she acknowledges the tensions between 'treatment' and 'punishment', which are ever present in a context underpinned by concerns relating to security and control. She explores the emerging definition of drug use as a 'problem' within prisons in the early 1980s, an issue which she suggests had previously been ignored, as long as it helped maintain the compliance of prisoners. She documents the way that the focus on throughcare and service provision on release, evident during the early 1980s, was soon superseded by the impact of HIV/AIDS on responses to drug users within the community in general and prisons in particular. The tensions between harm-reduction and abstinence-based models of intervention within prisons are explored, while the implementation of Mandatory Drug Testing (MDT) and the current focus on drug-related crime and coerced treatment are examined and critiqued. The continuous tug-of-war between medical and penal forms of control is set out and the changing contexts illustrate the precedence given to emerging policy and practice.

Each phase of policy making is contextualised by community-based responses to drug use, and the impact of political anxieties and priorities is clearly evident in the analysis provided. Indeed, as Karen Duke illustrates, while prisoners were unable to access many of the resources available to drug users in the community (needle exchanges, maintenance prescribing) due to their status of 'less-eligibility', many of the mechanisms which were introduced to prisons are now moving outward to the community. This shift is very much in line with developments in penal and drug policy in the United States. Mandatory and voluntary testing for drugs are evident in areas of criminal justice (and increasingly employment) while mandated treatment is increasingly becoming the fast-track mechanism for accessing services (Drug Treatment and Testing Orders, the Glasgow and Fife Drug Courts). Within this climate, the inherent tension for voluntary and/or non-statutory drug agencies involved in policy making has clearly created ethical dilemmas. While drug agencies have, at times, attempted to capitalise on punitive policies which may contravene their own ethos (arguing for increased 'treatment' resources to coincide with the introduction of MDT) they have been unable to alter the fundamental ethos of the prison system.

While *Drugs, Prisons and Policy-Making* provides a focus on how policy changes over time and on the policy-making process, it also provides a wealth of information on broader issues. It examines the key operational contexts of prisons at different points in time, the political and social agenda around 'law and order' and the 'war on drugs'. While the agendas of decision makers were built to some extent on shifting sands, the effects of policies (or their absence) impact to the greatest degree on those 'inside': prison staff and most significantly prisoners. The depiction of prisoners and definition of the 'drug problem' is noticeable in the formulation of policies. The tensions that are inherent in providing 'treatment' within an institution, which has the task of incarceration, are not easily resolved. Karen Duke highlights these tensions while providing an insightful and thorough examination of the attempts made over time to manage them.

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George Davey Smith (ed.) (2003), *Health Inequalities: Lifecourse Approaches*, Bristol: The Policy Press, 548 pp., £25.00 pbk, ISBN: 1-86134-322-1.

DOI: 10.1017/S0047279404327947

This important book is the result 14 years of George Davey Smith's collaborative research into health inequalities. Presenting a considerable volume of empirical research, it examines the findings through the innovative perspective of *life course approaches*, as a way of going beyond simplistic links between poor health status and poverty, and brings together the work of some of the most distinguished academics in the field.

The application of the lifecourse perspective to the analysis of health inequalities is a significant development, linking many of the strands of disadvantage and social exclusion throughout life and drawing on the life courses of others who impact on our lives; for example, noting that the impact of health inequalities can be important even before conception.

The book covers immense ground and is divided into ten sections: Patterns of health inequality, Voting and mortality, The Whitehall Study, Health and lifetime social circumstances, Further lifecourse influences on health, Ethnicity and health inequalities, Diversions, Health inequalities – past and present, Social inequality and population health and Reducing health inequalities, now and in the future. One might criticise the order in which the different sections are presented, but this would, essentially, be merely a matter of opinion and does not detract from the clarity and accessibility of the work.

The detailed content of the book is, of course, an enormous resource for anyone with an interest in health inequalities and determinants, offering additional data to further evidence and enhance the Black Report (Townsend *et al.*, 1992), The Health Divide and the Report of the Acheson Inquiry (1998). This collection goes much further, however. By applying a lifecourse perspective to the analysis of the data, Davey succeeds in both enhancing our understanding of the importance of structural factors to health status, but also to social exclusion in a more general sense.

Nor is this volume without an element of comedy or at least irony – though this is used to good effect and is, upon proper examination, far from light-hearted. The 'Diversions' (Section VII) provide us with a seemingly humorous quartet of papers: 'Socioeconomic differences in the mortality of pets'; 'Death in Hollywood: life-style excess, social comparisons or publication bias?'; 'Sex and death: are they related?', and 'Health, health services and health politics in Britain'. Needless to say, the humour is superficial; that pets share their owners socio-economic status, and therefore their health status be it 'good' or 'bad' is, upon reflection, entirely reasonable, and it should not, therefore, surprise us when Davey says that Socioeconomic differentials in the mortality of pets probably reflect the same differences in material circumstances as in their owners. The utility is in articulating the relationships – and their complexity – to increase our understanding of health and society.

However, the greatest strength of this volume is not in the breadth and depth of the data, nor in the humour; rather it is in Sections IX and X that we discover its true forte. In Section IX, answering the question 'Income, inequality and mortality: why are they related?' (p. 437) and providing some theories through which we may develop a better understanding, 'Understanding it all: meta-theories, and mortality trends' (p. 445) are crucial analyses that lead to the inestimable Section X, 'Reducing health inequalities, now and in the future', where Davey Smith emphasises the necessity for policy change if health inequalities are to be reduced and begins to indicate some pathways, such as the Universal declaration of Human Rights where Article 25[1] states:

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

Other policy pathways are recommendations, perhaps most notably that not only do health services have a significant effect on population health but that 'we do not consider that the evidence that it is impossible to meet the population demands for health services is reliable; ... such claims are based almost entirely on supposition and are supported by professional self-interest' (pp. 517–718). Academics, politicians, activists take note (and make this valuable work a part of your library as soon as you can).

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BOB MATTHEWS

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Jane Millar (ed.) (2003), *Understanding Social Security: Issues for Policy and Practice*, Bristol: The Policy Press, 335 pp., £17.99 pbk, ISBN: 1-86134-419-8.
DOI: 10.1017/S0047279404337943

This text in the *Understanding Welfare* series, edited by Saul Becker is published by Policy Press and the Social Policy Association. This is the first book series the SPA has initiated and the texts in it are commissioned to be 'benchmark compliant'. 'An emphasis' on all of policy content, policy-making and policy delivery will be a key feature of all the books in this series.

The Millar text covers two parts of the Social Policy benchmark 'the provision, finance and regulation of social security' and 'knowledge of human and social needs in the UK and other countries and of social policies and welfare institutions which exist to meet them'.

The book has a detailed contents listings, clear layout, summaries at the start of each chapter, questions for discussion, web resources and further readings at the end of each chapter. These all make it ideal as a teaching text, and the format of the series *Understanding Welfare* will I think be warmly welcomed by social policy teaching staff.

The contributors to this particular text all worked as tutors on The Department of Social Security [now Department of Work and Pensions] Annual residential Summer Schools. Their active engagement with policy makers and practitioners through these schools and in other capacities is demonstrated throughout the book.

In line with the objectives of the series as a whole, 'This is a book about the "how" of administration as much as it is about the "why" of policy' (Millar: p. 5). The book has three parts.

Part I explores the changing context for current policy issues and debates, for example changing life course and employment patterns (Rowlingson) and changing governance (Carmel, Papadopoulos and Yeates).

Part II focuses on the key groups and issues targeted for reform in recent years taking policy objectives and implementation together. For example, Bryson on 'work for those who can', Becker on 'security for those who cannot [work]', Millar on wage supplementation, Burchardt on disabled people, Ridge on children and McKay on pensions.

Part III turns in more detail to issues of delivery and implementation, for example Wright on 'street level' implementation', Stafford on changing modes of delivery, Platt on equity and ethnicity, Sainsbury on fraud and Kellard on IT and E-government. Wright's chapter is a case study of street-level bureaucracy and its place in the policy process. Such case studies remain only relatively rare and as such Wright's chapter could be used on modules in other areas of the social policy curriculum.

Similarly Millar's own chapter on wage supplementation should be read by all social policy scholars and students on many social policy modules, so as to bring knowledge of New Labour's welfare reforms up to date and internationally contextualised. If there is an omission in the book, it is that a chapter on changing perceptions and measures and levels of poverty under New Labour would have helped to further contextualise the social security territory field so ably covered in this book.

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Julian Hine and Fiona Mitchell (2003), *Transport Disadvantage and Social Exclusion: Exclusionary Mechanisms in Transport in Urban Scotland*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 162 pp., £42.50 hbk, ISBN: 0-7546-1847-1.
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There is a great deal of policy interest at present in the relationship between transport and social exclusion. At the UK level for example there was a study undertaken in 2000 by the Dept of Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR, 2000) and another in 2003 by the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU, 2003) focusing directly on this relationship. In Scotland, Hine and Mitchell have also made previous contributions on this subject (see Gaffron *et al.*, 2001, Hine and Mitchell, 2000), and as such are the natural choice for the publication of this book.

The book is presented as offering a fuller understanding of the relationship between transport and social exclusion using primary data collected from households in three case study areas of Scotland alongside interviews with policymakers and public transport providers on the problems of providing public transport to meet social inclusion objectives. The format is a familiar one, with Chapter 1 providing a discussion of the phenomenon of social exclusion in relation to transport, Chapter 2 outlining patterns of transport exclusion and the policy responses to these and Chapter 3 introducing the three case study areas (Castlemilk in Glasgow, Leith in Edinburgh and Coatbridge in North Lanarkshire) by presenting descriptive data on the general circumstances of respondents in the study areas. Chapter 4 continues from here by exploring the transport choices and disadvantages facing people in these three areas using the household survey data collected as part of the study, while in Chapter 5 this same data source is used to look at access to services and journey time facing different people in the case

study locations. Chapter 6 is the final data chapter which here uses interview data collected from transport operators and local authorities in the three case study areas to investigate their responses to transport provision and priorities. Finally, Chapter 7 sets out to reflect on the main themes emerging from this study and to outline potential policy mechanisms and practices considered appropriate to respond to transport disadvantage.

Given that much of the work published on this subject has come from government departments and been published in the format of a policy report, the publication of this book is in itself a valuable contribution. In particular, the presentation of data on the relatively disadvantaged position of women, disabled people, older people and children in terms of choice of means of transport supports what we know from other studies of social exclusion (see for example O'Connor and Lewis, 1999) and as a result fits within this wider dialogue. For this reason, undergraduates and postgraduates on urban regeneration courses in particular are likely to find this book interesting in drawing together the links between different aspects of social exclusion.

I do, however, have some (relatively minor) concerns about the presentation of the evidence. My main concern is that the issue of the generalisability of the data is not addressed, which implies (or perhaps more fairly does not contest) a wider applicability of these findings while not acknowledging the particularities of the areas chosen to take part in the study. For example, Leith is an area of Edinburgh that has historically had relatively (by Edinburgh standards) low-cost, single-person, private sector accommodation to rent and buy, and for that reason has recently been popular with young professionals as they are priced out of buying property in other areas of the city. Added to this, the relative size of the city means that walking is an option for most day-to-day activities, while relatively good bus links in Leith make public transport a serious alternative to owning a car if you live in that particular area. Comparing Leith with Castlemilk and Coatbridge without reflecting on the differences in local housing stock, local infrastructure and household composition therefore does not directly account for the range of factors that interact to create transport choice at the local level.

That said, the book does make a useful contribution to discussions on the relationship between transport and social exclusion at the Scottish level and shows the differences in circumstances of particular groups as well as the local policy responses that have been developed to meet transport need. That the book ends by suggesting where transport policy needs to focus its attention in future reminds me (as elsewhere in its style and layout) of reading a government report. This is perhaps unsurprising given that this book is the result of a commissioned piece of research undertaken for the Scottish Executive and that it follows the pattern of data presentation familiar in government publications. Saying that does not mean to undermine the contribution of Hine and Mitchell in producing this book. Indeed, when I am next teaching introductory urban regeneration courses I will be recommending this book both as a result of its likely ease of access for undergraduate students and the contribution to the debate that it offers.

References

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