
This is an important book. It takes one issue, pensions policy, and focuses sharply on the political manoeuvring around pension policy over a period of seventy years from canon Blackley’s pension proposal published in November 1878 through to the implementation of the 1946 National Insurance Act. A student of social policy may at first be forgiven for thinking that this is an interesting but perhaps rather a modest issue for a book of this length and detailed scholarship. But they cannot be forgiven for long. It quickly becomes clear that the pensions debate embraces many of the most contentious and intractable arguments and dilemmas of social policy. Is there a need for a public policy at all? If so, is it a proper matter for the state or should it be left to commercial or mutual-aid organisations? If a case can be made for a public pensions policy, then on what principles should such a policy be based? Fundamentally, who pays and how? Are pensions concerned with the relief of poverty among older people, or are they a right of citizenship? Are they triggered by achieving a certain age, or are they to be paid on retirement? These are all issues which are continuing to exercise Gordon Brown’s mind today, as they have every chancellor of the twentieth century. So there are fundamental issues and concepts of social policy to be considered. Now add the historical dimensions, and observe the unfolding of the debates over time. This means more than the truism that few of these key questions are finally resolved, or that there is a cyclical pattern with each generation revisiting and reworking the old arguments. The added complication is that each generation is caught up, sometimes trapped, in the consequences of choices exercised by their parents and grandparents. Many of the fundamental choices of principle remain the same, but the context in which the choice must be exercised is never the same.

All of these themes are painstakingly unpicked in McNicol’s study. Layer upon complex layer of ideological preferences, refracted through immediate circumstance; the jockeying for position and influence of individuals, tensions between major interest groups, the mood-swings of public sentiment, the impact of increased knowledge of social conditions and circumstances, whether drawing for example on ‘scientific’ social research, or the persuasive polemics of writers such as George Orwell.

The book is like a drama (at times melodrama) in three acts. Act 1 focuses on the ‘will we–won’t we, can we–can’t we?’ debates round the turn of the century. It seems that there is to be no way out of the impasse. The issues are too difficult and too divisive, no consensus can be reached. But then, almost Abruptly, there is a nail-bitng curtain-call with the passing of the 1908 Act, and the introduction of the non-contributory old-age pension paid for out of general taxation. Just why Asquith decided to move when he did, and as he did, still remains something of a mystery upon which McNicol can shed little light. But the scene has been set for Act 2. The 1908 Act is anathema to a chancellor of the exchequer; to a chancellor it is as unwise as issuing a blank cheque.
Act 2 takes us to the 1925 Act, which, somewhat messily but emphatically, brings the contributory principle back to the heart of the policy. Depending on one’s point of view the heroes/villains of the piece are Neville Chamberlain and the mandarins of the Treasury who seem to have played a fairly consistent game throughout. If resistance is no longer possible, then containment must be tried. When containment becomes difficult, then damage-limitation is necessary. But from start to stop the Treasury seems to have been determined first, to reduce the direct cost to itself, and second, to minimise the redistributive consequences of pensions policy.

Act 3 appears to star Beveridge, but before the end Ernest Bevin has been given more good lines than most of us might have expected. Once again we see how tangled are the influences. At one level, Beveridge’s principles of Universality and Uniformity appear to be radical and democratic, with a visionary appeal. But once the Treasury have been at them, the principle of uniformity ensures that the flat-contribution is levied at a rate that even the poorest wage-earner can afford, to earn an entitlement that may be described as subsistence but which from the outset required major means-tested top-up from National Assistance. As far as relieving poverty in old age is concerned, the 1948 settlement was doomed from the outset. The levels of benefit were too low to meet the needs of those entitled to claim, and large numbers of people, especially the disabled and the many women who were not in wage-earning employment, were excluded altogether.

Between Acts 2 and 3, in the spirit of the picnic at Glyndeboune, is an elegant entr’acte. It takes the form of three tableaux, each illustrative of the 1930s. Tableau 1 is a brief one, which focuses on the Labour movement at the end of the 1920s, and the struggle to reconcile radical aspirations on the one hand, with being seen to be ‘responsible’, that is to say, fiscally conservative, on the other. Tableau 3 is another brief one, looking at the poverty surveys of the 1930s. These research projects have a certain gravitas. They claim to scientific authority and to yield reliable and detailed knowledge. Policy-making can now draw on a secure empirical foundation. But McNicol is unconvinced of these credentials, and finds their investigations into old-age poverty to be ‘tantalisingly inadequate’. This can be attributed in part to their deeply held and often unstated assumption that pensions had already gone a long way to eradicating poverty in old age so that policy should be directed more at developing ‘social capital’, education and training for younger people.

Tableau Two was the most interesting of the three, looking as it does at the role played by Political and Economical Planning (PEP). PEP was a research organisation founded in the aftermath of the Wall Street Crash, and convinced of the need for coherent social planning, not to replace capitalism, but as a preferred alternative to Socialism. Grappling with unemployment was a major preoccupation, and underlay part of PEP’s interest in pensions, that is to say the part that pensions could play in easing older workers out of the labour market, thus creating opportunities for younger, otherwise unemployed workers. But PEP is also seen as a prime illustration of the belief in the power and capacity of social planning which was to become so much an article of faith during the Second World War, and for many years afterwards.

I learned a lot from this book, which is constantly provocative and stimulating.
It reconfirmed my conviction that good social policy needs a good grasp of its own history, and an awareness of the ways in which the past fashions and constrains the choices to be made in the present. It is an antidote to policy-hubris. If there is one small improvement to be made, it would be the inclusion of a proper bibliography. McNicol’s reading is very wide, and his sources are very powerful, but all too often they are lost in the obscurity of the ibids and op cit of the footnote.

RICHARD SILBURN
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The title of the book covers its content well. Based on a large number of secondary data from west Europe, in particular from Britain, France, Germany and Sweden, covering most of the second part of the twentieth century, John Callaghan demonstrates that since the end of the golden age (1950s and 1960s) European social democracies have experienced a retreat in several, but far from all, of its most fundamental organisational pillars and policy dimensions.

It is a very informative and cogently analytical book; it is also well written and, finally, it rightly challenges the pervasive ‘metaphysical pathos’ of pessimism which informs so much discussion of the left’s prospects of the period under review.

The book’s prelude, ‘the golden age of social democracy’, leads into a more prolonged examination of the period since 1970. Callaghan’s intention here is to show that social democracy’s achievements were real but limited and the social democratic vision rarely extended beyond parliamentary democracy, rising living standards and state provided welfare.

Today, it seems clear (Chapter 2) that the golden age rested on a particular combination of historical factors that cannot be easily reproduced. The period began with wages depressed by the world crisis of 1930s and the austerity of the war. The years of reconstruction that followed the war kept the bargaining power of labour weak in large parts of Western Europe. In Germany and Italy dictatorial regimes had destroyed organised labour. Accumulation of capital proceeded on the basis of very low labour costs well into the 1950s. In the 1960s and 1970s then followed a neo-liberal ideological offensive. Mancur Olsen pointed to the problem of the ‘free riders’ – a rational individual member of an organisation tempted to freeloard, since they benefit from any improvement won by others whether their own efforts have any noticeable affect on outcomes. Hayek argued that stable democracies were particularly prone to ‘institutional sclerosis’ – an inability to modernise. Later, in the 1990s, versions of this argument developed into the notion of ‘Eurosclerosis’ – that highly regulated economies suffer from numerous rigidities as compared with market driven economics. This ideological offensive against the social democracies continued and in the 1980s the IMF, World Bank, OECD and WTO promoted the ‘Washington Consensus’ – financial and labour-market deregulation, reducing government spending, privatisation and deflation. In the 1980s it became evident that the neo-liberal economic orthodoxy had become the hegemonic project. Even before the post-war boom came to an end the prevailing doctrines of social democracy
were, however, subject to a radical left critique by feminism, environmentalism and the new Marxism. This went together with shop-floor militants who were critical of the existing representation which their unions and parties afforded (Chapter 4).

Throughout the book, the economy and the politics are closely interwoven in analyses which demonstrate that the social democrats, whether in opposition or in government, had some room for political manoeuvre and that this room in the 1980s was used for an ideological and political retreat where the role of the state now became to facilitate the workings of the market (UK) or to combat inflation and reduce marginal taxation (Sweden).

Already some four to five years ago my Danish students asked me, when talking about activation policies, what made a well-consolidated Scandinavian type welfare state like Denmark, with social democratic dominated governments which were almost free from problems as far as inflation, balance of payments, growth rates, state debts and budget deficits were concerned, follow an ideology which has so clear a liberal origin and so many of its connotations? Why did these governments end up supporting the ‘workfare road’ and launching a series of compulsory education, training and activation schemes of the ‘food for work’ type for all categories of unemployed people, including drug-addicts and psychiatric patients?

The more recent development of activation policies (and hereby parts of ‘The Third Way’) into a hegemonic project of European labour market policy has made it easier to answer these questions, but Callaghan’s book certainly is a help. He knows the academic debate about the globalisation thesis but acknowledges that it has had very little influence on the social democratic responses to the internationalisation of capital (there is a vast literature on globalisation, see Hirst and Thompson, 1996). New Labour accepted early on that governments had to respond to globalisation by attracting multinational capital by means of tax incentives, subsidies, skilled labour and flexible labour markets. The Amsterdam and Luxembourg summits in 1997 showed that the French policy of reduced working hours as a radical challenge to New Labour has lost ground. Then followed more top meetings, some inside, some outside the frameworks of the EU, and step-by-step national policies were adapted, sometimes ‘only’ by inspiration and borrowing from each other.

In the Preface Callaghan quotes Tony Blair for informing the French National Assembly that ‘there is no right and left in economic management today. There is good and bad’ (p. xi), and the book concludes that today ‘social democratic leadership have reached the conclusion that practical politics excludes attempts to transcend, control and regulate markets’ (p. 224). This leads to a modest optimism about the social democracies’ adoption of ‘heterogeneous values’ which ‘may lead in time to the recruitment of significant cohorts who subscribe to the new values, while those disillusioned with the abandonment of traditional policies eventually exit’ (p. 223).

It is a highly faceted book which can be read from several perspectives: a historical perspective, where Callaghan draws, among others, on Hobsbawm’s work. In contrast to Hobsbawm’s latest book (Hobsbawm, 1994), Callaghan, however, explicitly deals with the changing and increasingly fragmented class structure in the second half of the twentieth century (and its subsequent effects on collectivist attitudes and solidarity). Callaghan seems inclined to suggest that
politics, rather than labour-market segmentation, is the most powerful factor in producing such attitudes. The foremost perspective in the book is the political science perspective (voting patterns, memberships, unionisation, party organisation, etc.) and the least developed is the social policy perspective on which I now shall make a few comments.

Callaghan rightly points out that since the 1970s welfare states have been identified – particularly by the neo-liberals – as a source of governmental ‘overload’ and ungovernability; fiscal crisis; inflation; sclerotic overregulation; cultures of dependency; and so on. Callaghan, however, is also aware that the relation between welfare states and social democracies is not 1:1, i.e., evidence does not support the proposition that retrenchment is greatest where the left is weakest (Pierson, 1996), that there is overall European support for the welfare state (Svallfors and Taylor-Gooby, 1999) and that European countries, in general, have not experienced a decline in social expenditures (as a percentage of GNP) – only a tendency for the slow starting countries to catch up.

But when Callaghan claims that the internationalisation of capital has not led to the convergence of the welfare state he steps on contested ground. At the recent Lisbon meeting, the EU Commission for the first time suggested concrete benchmarks regarding employment rates, levels of unemployment, numbers living below poverty rates and child poverty. In this scenario the future social Europe is one spending a lot of resources on active welfare policies through education, training and job subsidies, etc. Besides the tendency for slow starting countries to catch up on social expenditures, predictions of a converging trend guided by a welfare mix approach takes play in all of Europe which leads to another scenario of a dual welfare society with four specific regime features (Abrahamson, 2000).


IVER HORNEMANN MÖLLER
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This is a valuable book in two ways. It is the first comprehensive study of unemployment in the EU12 and thus of considerable worth to academics and policymakers involved in debates about what generates unemployment and what to do about it. Second, it is a model of how to make progress in dealing with a complex issue using an array of data-sets (many of which are only semi-compatible) by formulating clear hypotheses which the data is capable of testing. The title inaccurately equates Europe with the EU12.

The book consists of three sections dealing with the relationships between unemployment and poverty, labour market marginalisation and social integration, topped and tailed by summary chapters. The first chapter emphasises the
point (often lost sight of in debates which contrast US and European experience) that the experience of unemployment is not homogenous across EU member countries. It briefly analyses the role of welfare state institutions, patterns of family life and the labour market in relation to employment patterns, preparing the ground for the book’s central point, that the experience of joblessness must be understood in terms of the interaction of these factors. The four unemployment regimes identified here (sub-protective, liberal, employment-centred and universal, corresponding roughly to a post-Esping-Andersen framework of Mediterranean, Anglo-Saxon, corporatist and universalist welfare regimes) form the basis for the analysis of particular issues in the rest of the book.

The four chapters on poverty and unemployment emphasise the differences between European countries in the extent to which joblessness is associated with low income. They also show that ‘neither the extent of poverty nor changes in poverty rates can be explained purely in terms of social policies, although these play a major role’ (p. 45). Universalistic regimes are generally most successful (although Sweden surprisingly does nowhere near as well as Denmark and the Netherlands – Table 2.4). For other regime types ‘the most consistent finding ... [is the] importance of the nature of the household for the extent to which a person is exposed to income poverty and hardship’ (p. 68). To oversimplify, sub-protective Mediterranean regimes to some extent mitigate the problem of a lack of state provision through informal redistribution. The UK with its liberal welfare policies, not necessarily tempered by recent enthusiasm to ‘make work pay’ by holding down benefits, and its fragmented family structure, gets the worst of both worlds.

Chapters 6 to 11 (the longest section of the book) deal with unemployment and marginality. They show how social policies in interaction with labour market structures make a difference to the experience and trajectories of unemployment in a number of ways. In general, past unemployment and frequent job changes increase the probability of experiencing unemployment in the future, but factors such as the size of firm in which people work and policies regulating labour market access and job security are also important. Social capital influences chances of finding work, but what matters is not so much the size of networks and frequency of contacts, but the quality of those contacts and the way policy regulating the labour market affects how easy it is to turn those contacts into jobs.

One of the clearest indications of the relevance of policy is in relation to lone mothers. Both Denmark and the UK have a high incidence of one parent families, but the former has the lowest lone mother poverty rate and highest participation rate of lone mothers in employment in the EU12, while the latter has the highest poverty rate and very nearly the lowest participation rate (pp. 178, 180). Childcare and welfare support systems account for a good deal of the difference. One social policy intervention that does not affect the unemployment levels although it does affect the experience of unemployment is the level of benefits. Chapter 6 demonstrates at some length that there is no evidence of any effect of benefit levels on work incentives in any of the regime types, a point with Anglo-Saxon policy-makers might note (p. 133).

The third section deals with social integration. Unemployment has a powerful impact on satisfaction with life quite independent from its impact on living standards in all the countries (p. 305). Attitude surveys show that it is seen as a key problem everywhere without much differentiation between regimes. Networks
of immediate contacts and higher general levels of sociability, however, tend to mitigate isolation more in the South of Europe. Again, institutions matter, but social structures and particularly family patterns are also important. Policy has a mediating effect on the tendency for unemployment to come in couples – when one spouse is unemployed, the other is also in general likely to be without a job (p. 181). Policies also influence differences between the experience of unemployment by women and men.

The concluding chapter sums up the evidence: policy regimes have more effect on living standards than they do on social integration, since household and family patterns are more important here; the cumulative disadvantage of unemployment is greatest where neither social policies nor family systems take responsibility for those without work. The book is located firmly in the tradition which sees the welfare state, in its various forms, as a response to the social changes of urbanisation and modernisation, and the Anglo-Saxon model in an advanced industrial society as, by implication, a mistake.

PETER TAYLOR-GOODY
University of Kent


This book is a commendable attempt to interrogate the implications of one aspect of globalisation – migration – for citizenship theory and practice. It makes a valuable contribution both to the field of international/global social policy and to the field of citizenship studies. The book starts from the premise that current levels and patterns of international migration have exacerbated existing problems with citizenship, difference and democracy, as well as creating new challenges. The authors demonstrate how international migration has resulted in ‘porous boundaries’ and ‘multiple memberships’, challenging traditional nation-state-tied concepts of citizenship, resulting in more multicultural understandings of the state and ‘post-national’ forms of citizenship, including regional and global citizenship.

Although this book is not primarily written for students of social policy, it contains enough in it to recommend it as a social policy text in courses examining citizenship theory and practice, either at undergraduate or postgraduate level. It deals with a remarkably wide range of issues: theories of citizenship; the development of citizenship from ancient Rome and Greece to nation-state formation – including (albeit briefly) the emergence of the welfare state – to emergent forms of supranational and global citizenship. While it does not include a detailed comparison of national variations in the rights of citizenship to be central to comparative social policy modules, it usefully and innovatively compares the EU and Asia-Pacific regions. Particularly useful is that individual chapters can be read in their own right or as part of the broader argument. Some of the chapters rehearse key issues in citizenship – for example, chapter 2, ‘Theories of Citizenship’, chapter 4, ‘Becoming a Citizen’, or chapter 5, ‘Being a Citizen’, which examines the interdependency of civil, political and social rights, as well as gender and cultural rights. Although the authors do not include detailed analysis of migration patterns or trends (this is confined to a brief overview of
main trends in international migration since 1945), they do provide plenty of examples to illustrate their arguments from a relatively broad range of countries.

As a point of criticism, I would have been interested in reading more on the human rights paradigm and its intersection with citizenship paradigm. The issue of human rights appears briefly in the context of the emergence of supranational institutions and how minorities are using international human rights instruments to defend their difference against majorities. Also, the authors address emerging forms and politics of citizenship at national, supranational and international levels, in what is, by their own admission at the end of the book, a highly restricted part of the world. As they note, ‘at best, 40% of the world’s population lives in places where the rule of law is more or less established’ (p. 230). This point is fundamental to any discussion of global citizenship or an assessment of the prospects for it, but was regrettably tucked away in the postscript almost as an afterthought. Thus, although the authors’ analysis claims to be international, their discussion is actually largely confined to the countries of the Asia-Pacific region and the EU and the USA. Furthermore, the authors understandably focus on ethnicity, but this was, I felt, rather at the expense of gender. The specific experience of female migration and its relationship to citizenship were discussed rather too briefly for my liking, while its relationship to globalisation, notably in the form of the international sex trade, was regrettably given even less space. However, this book essentially focuses on the intersection between migration, ethnicity, citizenship and democracy in a globalised world and, in this, the authors have on balance done admirably well to review such a broad area in such a concise and readable form.

Nicolà Yeates
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Jochen Clasen’s book aims to address concepts, theories and methods in comparative research of social policy rather than primarily presenting empirical reportage. In the main, the contributors are well-established comparativists, but there are also valuable papers by some relative newcomers. There are three sections: an examination of welfare states as aggregate institutions, followed by sectoral analyses and a final part which, according to the editor, is concerned with cross-cutting ‘themes and topics’. However, I found no clear distinction between the latter two parts.

Given its objectives, as Clasen concedes, the collection is necessarily selective: there is nothing on education and no broad treatment of pensions research, for example. Each chapter follows a broadly similar sequence examining conceptual problems, definitional issues and the vagaries of data availability. Each contains a good literature review and suggestions for future reading. In these regards – and without prejudice to the others – I was particularly impressed by John Doling’s critique of comparative housing research. In the first part, Catherine Jones Finer, in an informal style, continues her quest for more meaningful comparative typologies by casting the net wider than the usual sample of advanced countries towards a speculative worldwide encapsulation. This section also has a strong contribution on comparative methodologies by Deborah Mabbett and Helen Bolderson, especially the first half of their critique. There is ample evidence
of a strong editorial hand, particularly in the first half of the book, although, thereafter, there is some drift from the remit towards presentations of 'findings'. Nonetheless, throughout there is an emphasis on the need for an approach to social policy which is sensitive to the peculiarities of the environmental context in which it operates: most contributors are at pains to stress the interactive effects of individual welfare sectors, as well as the impact of economic and fiscal policies. Appropriately, Katherine Rake reminds us of the chronic frustration suffered by comparativists stemming from these covariant complexities, namely, the too frequent inability to disentangle dependent and independent variables. These issues of contextualization and the specificities of welfare institutions are taken up at several points, not least by Jane Lewis in urging a wider understanding of the interplay of family policies, Richard Freeman on health policy, and the contribution of Simon Roberts and Helen Bolderson on the access (or the lack of it) of international migrants to social security benefits.

In all, the book avoids narrow episodic treatment. This, together with its varying strengths in conceptual and methodological grounding should ensure it a long shelf life. There is much to commend it as a vademecum for comparative researchers and as a source-book for teaching. A minor quibble: although Clasen provides a context-setting introduction, I think some reflective conclusions would have rounded off what is without doubt a welcome collection.

The themes of contextualisation and intersectoral social policy effects are also investigated by Norman Johnson in this incisive comparative exposé of developments in the political economy of social policy since the 1970s towards expanding the welfare mix. His principal focus is the ever-closer interaction of the state, commercial, voluntary and informal care sectors, largely in advanced capitalist countries, although he muses on the implications of the growing current of marketisation for Central and Eastern Europe. Surprisingly, given the comprehensive sweep adopted, the extensive literature incorporated is almost exclusively English-language, although not necessarily written by those working in the Anglo-Saxon world.

Johnson’s approach to sampling is pragmatic, citing countries which highlight each element of his argument. I found his chapter on the voluntary sector the most wide cast in comparative terms. He starts by rehearsing the main elements of debates about the failures of the social democratic enterprise with regard to state welfare: the criticisms by feminists, for example, and complaints about top-down, often centralized and unresponsive solutions. The now conventional rhetoric about bottom-up or consumerist/user sensitive remedies to counter the legitimation and fiscal crises of Fordist welfare states has been accompanied by devices originally espoused by the New Right, in various forms of ‘new public management’ and, par excellence, in the embrace of quasi-markets which represent a ‘new orthodoxy’ that has attracted even hitherto social democratic stalwarts like New Zealand. This has created fresh opportunities for non-state actors and, moreover, the state itself has mutated with much functional devolution promoting the salience of lower-tier authorities. All of which amounts to a profound change in the policy scenario in the last thirty years, evidence of a ‘de-politicised’ globalisation of policy strategies. Yet, Johnson reviews evidence strongly suggestive that, overall, the post-war welfare state remains popular: depending on the country and the particular policy sector, the elec-
torate still looks towards state-centred or, at least, state-regulated solutions to collective social provisions. It follows that what has emerged is a renewed role for the state rather than the withering away of its responsibilities. With it has come revised relations with those who demand and supply welfare. A new citizenship is developing, demanding that individuals be more entrepreneurial in their pursuit of access to welfare. Changed funding cultures have led to a strengthened contractualism, which, as regards inter-sectoral relations, is increasingly competitive and, at times, adversarial. The state may be shedding its role as direct provider (although the subsidiary principle means that in conservative corporatist countries this was never prominent) but it is engaged in widened forms of formal incorporation of the voluntary and commercial sectors, not to mention assumptions about the availability of informal care. Their indispensable functions – ‘faisant fonction’ as the French term it – demand a more refined role for the state as regulator, as witnessed by the scandal of British personal private pensions. As well as being indicative of dynamism in the mixed economy, these developments amount to a redistribution of social and economic costs. They open up new avenues of ‘welfare dependency’ on the part of voluntary and commercial agencies involved and raise important questions about the state’s ability to plan and fund over time, space and specialism.

Johnson rounds off this impressive analysis with a strong concluding chapter. My feeling is that, overall, this is a book for the specialist, but advanced students will also find it an important resource.

STEE MANGEN
London School of Economics


The traditional nations of Eastern and Central Europe, and the former Soviet Bloc, have undergone profound changes since the seismic events of 1989 – ‘the change’ – which transformed these nations into variants of the Western market economy societies. At the time, hopes were high that the transition would bring about significant benefits for these societies. These hoped-for benefits included the creation of a ‘civil society’ – though it was by no means clear what form such a society might take (Osborne and Kaposvari, 1997) – together with greater political and social freedoms and significant economic benefits (Atkinson and Micklewright, 1992).

Not surprisingly, these significant aspirations have not been fulfilled. This book focuses upon evaluating the progress towards one of the aspirations – the reduction of poverty and a narrowing of the gap between the standards of Western Europe and the transitional nations.

The authors set out their perspective from the outset: ‘[since 1992] most transition countries have endured ten years of economic contradiction and stagnation and real incomes have declined ... for [some nations] the consequences of economic transition have been disastrous’ (p. 1). This important book charts the dimensions of this stagnation and decline. They focus on four broad themes in their examination of poverty across the transitional nations: full employment and low wage inequality, the changing welfare state, housing and official views on poverty.
Following on from an holistic overview of the macro-economic factors which have shaped and/or neglected poverty to the transitional nations, the main body of the book includes fifteen chapters. These cover eight nations in transition from the former Soviet Bloc, with three general chapters (on central Asia, child poverty and household coping strategies) and, bizarrely, a chapter on Spain. These fifteen chapters address four themes: the measurement of poverty (in central Asia, Romania, Macedonia and Slovenia), the nature of social assistance systems (in Uzbekistan and Russia), housing and social exclusion (in Russia, Central and Eastern Europe and Ukraine) and comparative analyses (between Albania and Macedonia and between Hungary and the UK). And there is the chapter on Spain.

Within the space of a short review like this it is impossible to do justice to the arguments and quality of each chapter. Rather the review will focus on the structure and model put forward by the volume. To start with the strengths of this volume, three are most apparent. First, the book draws together useful empirical data about the nature of poverty in the transitional nations of the world. This is significant both for students of these nations and for policy-making. Falkingham’s chapter is especially important here, bringing together both measures of poverty and of coping strategies in central Asia. Second, the book develops well its macro-theme of the link between the macro-economic changes in these societies and their impact upon families and households. The chapter by Stanovnik and Stropnik is a good example of its approach, where they link the analysis of economic change in Slovenia with its impact upon families and households. Third, the comparative element and approach of the book is strong. This is apparent both in the way such an issue as the measurement of poverty is addressed across a range of transitional nations (see above) and in individual chapters which take a comparative analysis (the chapter by Hutton and her colleagues on a comparative analysis of poverty in Albania and Macedonia is especially strong here).

So, a book with definite strengths and which has much to offer both to researchers wanting background data for their own work and for students studying transitional nations.

However, there are also some problems with the volume. I would highlight four here. First, it is inevitable that such a volume as this will date very quickly. Conditions within the transitional nations are changing rapidly. Whilst some of the methodological approaches here will have import for the future as a description of poverty in these nations, the shelf life of the book has to be limited (though again it could form an important benchmark against which to judge future studies, in terms of the changing nature of poverty in these nations). Second, the analysis is heavily quantitative. This approach is important, of course, but it would have been good to see at least some acknowledgement of the importance of qualitative research findings, especially in relation to the experience of poverty.

Third, and more substantively, the structure of the book is arbitrary, like many edited books. It is the result of a conference, so that its content is determined by the conference participants rather than by any apparent over-arching framework. This means that there are some gaps (nothing on Poland or Slovakia, or about the health dimensions of poverty, for example) and some strange inclusions – that of Spain being the most tenuous one.

Finally, and following on from above, the volume suffers from the lack of an over-arching framework of analysis. Redmond and Hutton’s opening chapter is
a good one, but no clear and consistent theme is then followed through the rest of the book. One can imagine readers dipping in for the odd chapter but there is not a strong enough theme running through overall. Moreover there is a significant lack of a concluding chapter to draw out the key empirical, conceptual or methodological issues. It is hard to tell whether this was simply as a result of too short a time frame for the production of the volume, but it is a fatal flaw, undermining the otherwise fascinating individual analyses in the volume.

In sum this is a useful, but flawed, and certainly not definitive, addition to the literature.


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Over nearly three decades the core nations of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) – Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand – have experienced sustained economic growth. Between 1971 and 1995 average annual GNP growth ranged from 3.72 per cent in the Philippines to 8.13 per cent in Singapore (World Bank, 1998) and the region’s economic policies have generated considerably more discussion and research than its social policies. Indeed the latter are sometimes assumed to be practically non-existent. This book presents the results of research that attempts to redress this neglect by providing both a general and a country-specific perspective on social welfare in this part of Asia.

An introductory review of the region’s rapid economic development highlights a decrease in poverty, the far greater use of public resources to support education rather than social security and, in a number of countries, the persistence of high levels of income inequality. A country-by-country analysis on social security, health and education follows. Each policy is discussed in a separate chapter that ends with a cross-national comparison. In the penultimate chapter policy similarities and differences are explained by reference to an historical examination of the social, economic and political factors most likely to have affected their development. The book concludes with a summary chapter containing the study’s key conclusions and forecasts about future social policy development in the light of the still uncertain implications of the Asian financial crisis, which began with the devaluation of the Thai baht in July 1997.

When social security is considered, there is throughout Southeast Asia a heavy reliance on compulsory savings mechanisms for maintaining income during retirement. Social security schemes tend to provide relatively generous benefits to civil servants and military personnel, though there are large gaps in coverage for those most in need of income protection. For example, informal sector workers such as domestic servants, casual workers, seasonal workers and those
working in agriculture are excluded. Southeast Asian governments are generally heavily involved in providing health care, though financing comes largely from out-of-pocket payments with government financed schemes once again favouring those employed in the civil service or the military. Education policy has received a large share of public expenditure and it is the policy area where the greatest cross-national similarity exists. Primary education has been emphasised over secondary and tertiary education with public institutions dominating at all levels except for Indonesia and the Philippines, which also have a large private sector.

Social policy developments are explained in terms of four factors, the key one being the role of domestic politics. Most statutory social welfare programmes began in the 1960s when governments were threatened by considerable political instability, and they have been continued because of a need to cultivate domestic support from the electorate or national elites. The region’s relatively young population has generated greater pressure to expand education than either health or social security, whose consumption levels tend to be much higher amongst the elderly. This does not necessarily reflect a cultural bias towards education but is rather in line with government strategies to ensure an adequate supply of skilled labour to support their policies of industrialisation and economic growth. The impact of foreign investment, foreign trade or external borrowing in defining the nature of social policies is supported only to the extent that international conditions are used by domestic policy-makers to justify their own particular policy strategies.

Across all three social policy areas there is a trend to expand private sector provision and/or financing. The arguments, about increasing efficiency and guarding against the rise of ‘welfare dependency’, used to promote an expanded role for non-state actors are consistent with international developments. However, the difference is that, at least until the advent of the recent Asian economic crisis, the countries of Southeast Asia have not been faced with pressure to reduce public spending because of fiscal difficulties.

The book takes a strong ideological stance in favour of the state’s primary role in social services provision. Only the state is seen to have the capacity to ensure adequate social protection in the modern world. The argument counters a widely held belief, both inside and outside of Asia, about the unique efficacy of culture-derived coping mechanisms based on family, community and market. Viewed with particular alarm are the movements towards privatisation of health care in Malaysia and Singapore whose public health care systems have proven well able to provide quality health care services at relatively low cost. Similarly, an expanded rather than a reduced state sector is seen to be preferable for countries like Indonesia and Thailand, which are currently engaged in studies with the World Bank on how to privatise education.

There is no doubt that this book fills a gap in the comparative social policy literature. It will prove useful to anyone who wants to gain an introductory overview of policies in Southeast Asia. In addition, the country-specific data and analysis will be helpful to researchers whose work has a more specific focus.


BRIAN BREWER

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Gail Wilson, *Understanding Old Age: critical and global perspectives*, 2000

At the outset of this book, Gail Wilson poses two very interesting and pertinent questions: first, in writing about old age is she subscribing to what Carroll Estes termed the ‘aging enterprise’ whereby capital (in this case, proceeds from a publication) is gained from providing services for older people including researching and writing about them? Her second question is, by writing about this discrete group in society, is she guilty of perpetrating the notion of older people as ‘other’, the image that social gerontologists have been trying to dispel for the last five decades or so? Wilson ably addressed both these questions by admitting to the first and challenging the second.

Population ageing is a world-wide phenomenon and the theme which runs through the book is the fact that the meaning and definition of ageing differ substantially not only between cultures, but within cultures and over time. In the first of twelve chapters, Wilson sets the world scene and discusses some of the language, overt and covert, used to identify and define old age. This language, she argues, not only perpetrates the myths of old age as doom and gloom laden, but more importantly, drives world social policy and underpins the social construction of old age as problematic. The aim she sets herself in the introduction is to contest the prevailing biases by critically examining the dominant policy themes in order to offer a more balanced account of the experience of ageing from a cross-cultural perspective.

Chapter 2, then, examines attitudes to ageing across cultures and contrasts the experiences of ageing in the more developed and less developed world. She points out that although there are certain inescapable biological aspects of ageing which are universal, there are different social belief frameworks guided by diverse cultural values. The more knowledge we have of these differences, the better are we able to understand ageing in context. Chapter 3 provides an overview of worldwide demographic data, with which most of us are familiar. However, Wilson reminds us that the increasing proportion of older people in the population of the less developed world is mainly as a result of falling birth rates. Since children in these parts of the world are more expensive in social policy terms than older people (who generally do not have pensions), the notion of ‘burden’ is largely fallacious.

The possibility of increased power and raised political consciousness as a result of modern global communications is the focus of Chapter 4. Fears about older people voting for ‘short term gain’ (health and pension provision), particularly as expressed in the United States of America, have not been substantiated. Nevertheless, little is known as yet of the potential of older people and their voting powers and this is one of the uncertainties to which Wilson refers in her introduction. Globalisation is the main issue in Chapters 5 and 6 where structural adjustment within free market economies and migration of elders are examined in a shrinking world and challenges some of the stereotypes of older people as passive and conservative. Chapter 7 examines the issue of material resources and inequality in later life. In the more developed world we tend to take pension provision for granted. Pension provision is rare in the less developed world, and here, older people are economically active, health permitting, much longer. Health, of course, is a major issue with older
people, and many of them define ‘old age’ by their health status, as discussed in Chapter 8. Wilson argues for health provision as a right, as a positive investment in the lives of older people, rather than the perceived burden on fiscal policy.

Chapter 9 to some extent revisits cultural values and attitudes as described in Chapter 2 and structural changes in Chapter 5 when it examines family and community and later life. Indeed, the final chapters which assess global differences in services for elders (Chapter 10) and institutional living (Chapter 11) refer to the impact of the market economy on the future of provision for elders around the world and Wilson cautions against the imposition of inappropriate homogenous policy on diverse cultures. The concluding chapter brings together the main argument of the book: that a world ageing population should not be viewed as threat or a burden, but as a normal progression in world growth. As such it should be celebrated.

The book is well structured and written in accessible language and should appeal equally to people with or without a social policy background. More importantly, it should appeal to newcomers to the study of ageing. Although admitting that we face an uncertain future as an ageing population, she successfully tackles some of the fears expressed by world policy makers. In doing so, she has produced a book which not only presents an excellent critique of current discourses on ageing but offers a conscious correction of some of the biases which inform this knowledge.

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This edited collection is the latest in the Research Highlights in Social Work series produced under the general direction of Joyce Lishman at Robert Gordon University. Along with other books in the series, this collection provides a useful overview of contemporary issues across the field of social care. The book is divided into three parts. Part I contains a number of chapters which aim to address the changing role of social care over the past thirty years, focusing particularly on developments from the mid 1980s to mid 1990s. Part II contains three chapters which examine some aspects of interagency relationships, and Part III reviews social care across the UK and in a broader comparative context. Bob Hudson provides a useful summary of the main features of the chapters in a short introduction, and concludes the collection by reviewing the 1997 social services white paper and pondering its implications for future developments in the field.

One of the challenges with a volume of this kind is to pull together a coherent set of chapters that deal with an overall theme in a fairly comprehensive manner. This collection is not particularly successful in achieving this. For example, Part I claims to take a historical perspective, examining changes over a generation. To some extent this is achieved, particularly in Chapter 4 (an excellent summary by Brian Hardy and Gerard Wistow of their work in relation to private
sector care homes) and in Chapter 5 (a well-written review of developments relating to the voluntary sector and social care for older people, by Jeremy Kendall). However, the other chapters in this section focus almost exclusively on the post-1991 period. Part II aims to address issues of interagency or ‘cross-boundary’ issues in social care but again this theme is not particularly comprehensively addressed in the three chapters presented. Whilst Chapters 8 and 9 provide thoughtful reviews of the relationship between social care and housing (Murray Hartwin) and social care and security (Geoff Fimister), Chapter 10, by Melanie Henwood, aims to address the issue of the relationship between central government and local authority Social Service Departments but in reality deals much more with the health and social care interface. In many ways this chapter overlaps with Nirmala Rao’s chapter in Part I, which looks at changes in the statutory sector but again reviews issues relating to the relationship between health and social care in the post-1991 period. While this overlap does not detract from some useful material in both these chapters, it highlights the fact that, because there is no specified section on health and social care in the book, it is dealt with in a cursory way by a number of the authors.

Part III contains three very different but equally valuable chapters. Arguably it is in this final section that this edited collection makes its strongest contribution to the new literature on social care. In Chapter 11, Alison Petch explains variations in social care (up to 1998) between Scotland, England and Wales. Although this chapter is essentially descriptive, it provides a clear and concise summary of the main differences in service structure and delivery between the different parts of Britain, with particular reference to services for people with learning disabilities and mental health problems, care management arrangements and the ‘mixed economy’. This chapter will prove particularly valuable for students of social policy and/or social work in the context of devolution. Chapter 12, by Michael Hill, is an original and thoughtful introduction to the comparative study of social care. He argues that the relative lack of sophisticated comparative work on social care calls for a reworking of regime analysis approach developed in comparative social policy, most notably by Esping-Anderson. Hill’s chapter acknowledges existing critiques of this approach but lays the foundations for a similar typology of social care systems across countries. Finally, Chapter 13 concludes the collection with Bob Hudson’s review of the 1997 social services white paper. Hudson compares the key principles underlying the 1997 white paper with those set out in Caring for People in 1989. As a number of other authors have argued, these principles do not differ significantly. However, Hudson argues that the difference is not so much in what is done as the way in which it is done – with a greater degree of centralisation and reduction in local discretion. In many ways his brief critique echoes some of the main points made by Mark Baker in reference to the NHS white papers (Baker, 2000), suggesting that changes in social care reflect shifts across a number of areas of social policy.


LINDA Bauld
University of Glasgow


The two books reviewed here relate to a central issue in social policy, the role of the state in relation to the creation and regulation of employment. The work by Aldrich *et al.* (henceforth EE) seeks to locate the creation of the Department of Education and Employment (DfEE) historically by examining the relationship between the two departments responsible for education and employment policy prior to the creation of the merged DfEE in 1995. The second chapter analyses the creation of the DfEE and four subsequent historical chapters trace the relationship between the departments responsible for education and employment policy (initially the Board of Education and the Ministry of Labour) from the turn of the century to 1995. The historical perspective enables both important continuities and breaks to be analysed. Thus a consistent theme is the clash between political advocates of the autonomy of academic education embodied in a curriculum of traditional 'subject' divisions and of a vocationally orientated educational system. In this respect the National Curriculum (*EE*, pp. 166, 204) and Labour’s emphasis on attainment levels in English and Mathematics (*EE*, p. 204) are indicative of the tenacity of academic educational objectives even in a climate strongly oriented towards vocationalism. Equally, the text acutely identifies the political basis for shifts thus the formation of the DfEE is seen as rooted in conditions in which the political strength of organised labour is attenuated and the status of the department charged with employment policy is downgraded (*EE*, p. 205).

Price’s book (henceforth *OH*) provides a history of the public employment service in Britain from the Edwardian reforms which led to the creation of labour exchanges to the present day. Conceptually the service is seen as a mix of three ‘models’ of provision whose relative importance fluctuates in different periods. The three models are the ‘labour transparency model’ in which the public employment service acts as the means of providing information which links the demand and supply of labour. Price (*OH*, pp. 3–4) quotes Beveridge, arguing that ideally performed a public employment service should be a universal service which would be the focal point for all job applicants. The second model is ‘benefit control’ in which the role of the service is to provide a test of unemployed status as a means of limiting benefit expenditure (*OH*, p. 4). The third is the ‘social welfare’ model in which the service acts as a source of help and advice to the public on employment issues.

The public employment service is seen as combining all three ‘models’ but the emphasis on each varies over time. Thus attempts to ‘modernise’ the service in the 1960s and 1970s, which included the introduction of Jobcentres, involved a reassertion of the ‘labour transparency’ model with, *inter alia*, an increasing emphasis on increasing the overall level of placements (*OH*, p. 168). In contrast, from the mid 1980s ‘benefit control’ objectives have taken precedence (*OH*, pp. 310–11). Amongst the many interesting aspects of Price’s book are the links demonstrated between the ‘market share’ of the service and these policy shifts. As he points out (*OH*, p. 311), precision on market share is difficult to achieve.
because of uncertainty over the total level of engagements. Nevertheless, it is clear that Beveridge’s aspiration to a universal service has never been approached. Price’s estimates suggest that the overall market share of the service has never exceeded 29 per cent of engagements at the end of the inter-war period (and he suggests this is probably an over-estimate, OH, p. 81). Equally, while the shift to a ‘labour transparency’ approach from the 1970s to the early 1980s was associated with an increased market share this appears to have fallen back with the dominance of ‘benefit control’ (OH, p. 311).

A backdrop to the concerns of both books is the move to an explicit supply side orientation in employment policy over the last three decades. Thus, for example, Price sees the Blair government as adopting a benefit control approach ‘broadly consistent’ with that of its predecessor (OH, p. 311). This raises the question of how the authors of the two works relate to this current orthodoxy. Price is inclined to a ‘true believer’ stance. He points out that, while one of Beveridge’s principle objectives as an Edwardian reformer, was decasualisation, today ‘educated opinion regards “flexibility” – which is not so very different to casualisation – as the key to economic success’ (OH, p. 315). Yet this ignores the critical literature on the impact of ‘flexible’ labour markets on the quality and level of employment in the United States (Freeman, 1995) and the European Union (Morgan, 1996). Equally this tendency to uncritical acceptance of supply side accounts leads to questionable aspects in his historical analysis. He appears to endorse Mrs Thatcher’s view that ‘benefit control’ measures such as Restart were crucial to defusing public concerns on unemployment in the lead-up to the 1987 election (OH, p. 257). Yet, as Godley (1996) has pointed out, the overall fall in unemployment beginning in 1986 was driven by an ‘old fashioned consumer boom’ itself the result of tax cuts and ‘an explosion of credit’ resulting from financial deregulation.

Aldrich et al. are somewhat more ambivalent on the efficacy of supply side approaches. They point to the justification of ‘lifelong learning’ by David Blunkett as part of an essential investment in ‘human capital’ (EE, p. 209). However, they also show that there are considerable grounds for scepticism as to whether the expansion of education and training will deliver the benefits expected by the secretary of state. These include arguments that there is at best a weak connection between educational standards (measured by test results or vocational qualifications) and measures of economic performance; and that it is not clear whether increased participation in education is a cause or consequence of economic growth (EE, pp. 209–10) and appear to echo the doubts of critics of Labour policy such as Robinson (1997). However, they characterise the DfEE target to develop ‘lifelong learning’ as a means to improving ‘employability’ as a ‘worthy’ objective. This seems to sit uneasily with the scepticism referred to above. If there are doubts over the efficacy of investment in ‘human capital’ is it clear that ‘lifelong learning’ (itself an instrumental objective) is so ‘worthy’?

The historical perspective given by both works enables shifts in policy to be situated in their political context but, perhaps ironically, this broader perspective is used to a very limited extent in critically scrutinising contemporary conventional wisdom.


This edited volume is undoubtedly an excellent resource for those interested in the comparative development of policy and practice relating to parental leave within Europe. It comprises fourteen articles on parental leave policies within the EU and Norway, based on contributions to a European seminar which included participants from twelve states. Its publication was well timed to coincide with the achievement of implementation of parental leave legislation in every EU member state as required by the adoption of the 1996 Directive on Parental Leave (96/34/EC) and notes that (perhaps unsurprisingly) the UK was the last state to comply some twenty-five years after Sweden introduced the first statutory entitlement to parental leave. In the Appendices a concise summary of parental employment and leave entitlements in the EU and Norway adds to its usefulness, for those seeking to compare the variations in the legal frameworks and respective rights of EU citizens in this regard.

The collection is divided into two parts. The first consists of seven national reviews of research and information on parental leave in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Finland, France and Sweden. This part of the book is notable for exposing the different stages of advancement of parental leave amongst the states of the EU, yet the issue of how to better encourage men to take leave is universal. For example, research focusing on Denmark, Sweden and Finland is concerned with reasons why fathers do not take up the additional parental leave on offer to them; the very structure and low benefit rate prescribed by the French system has the side effect of reinforcing rather than reducing gender discrimination in the labour market and gender divisions of labour within the family; and the flexible career break system introduced in Belgium in 1998 is already showing a strong gender bias, in terms of uptake.

The second group of articles is mainly concerned with cross-national studies and includes chapters which compare leave policies in Denmark, Finland and Spain, examine the impact of parental leave in women’s employment and fertility using data from Finland, Norway and Sweden; consider parental leave from the perspective of fathers and employers and analyse the shifting and conflicting attitudes and values concerning the roles of mothers and fathers that have shaped policies in Norway and Sweden.

As is often the case with edited collections which originate from conference proceedings, the book suffers from an ex post facto drawing together of issues, rather than the coherent treatment of a logically developed theme. Whilst the editorial first chapter succeeds in contextualising the articles which follow and identifies common policy issues which arise, it falls short of compiling a cohesive study
of parental leave across the whole of the European Union. Furthermore, as the editors themselves acknowledge, there are other states whose policies and initiatives in this field are worthy of consideration, notably those of Eastern Europe.

Nonetheless, the book undoubtedly gathers together interesting research data and analysis and in doing so is able to suggest an agenda for further research in this field (pp. 19–19). It sets out six areas where better information and more research are called for, including improved statistical information about the use of parental leave; research on how and why a range of decisions are made by both fathers and mothers and the impact of leave-taking in both the short and long term for parents, children, families, child care services and work places and the effect of family diversity on leave. This agenda in itself is a valuable contribution to the ongoing development of parental leave policies and related research.

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These two collections show that social policy, as a ‘laggard’ discipline, having belatedly ‘done’ postmodernism and postfordism, is now finally foregrounding the analysis of ‘risk’ as an integrative concept across a range of macro and micro issues, long after its initial appearance as a significant new direction in social science discourse. No doubt the issue will now find its way on to social policy courses, as it should. ‘Risk’ is of course not a new concern, but in headier days social policies aspired to provide ‘security’ against it. In these less utopian days, it is increasingly seen as something which individuals themselves must primarily manage, in an unpredictable world where state provision is being downsized, and where there is declining faith in the ability of experts to remedy it.

Risk is therefore not just a social problem, but a broader metaphor of ‘new times’. To be fair, these are issues addressed by Taylor-Gooby’s introduction to the set of chapters associated with the ESRC’s Economic Beliefs and Behaviour Programme. Subsequent chapters explore significant social policy issues which are to a greater or lesser degree centred on issues of risk. However, the more general chapters in Part I address the central themes of the book less well than the substantive chapters in Part II on ‘responses to risk’. Le Grand’s chapter on ‘knights and knaves’, and Frey’s follow-up, interestingly challenge both Fabian optimism and neo-liberal pessimism about human motivation, showing how behaviours are responsible to institutional pressures. So perhaps it does not matter that ‘risk’ hardly appears in the discussion, especially since Hartly Dean’s essay on the erosion of citizenship and social security gives the concept a decent airing. Nevertheless, what I felt was missing from this text was a thorough engagement with the social theory of Beck (1992) and others, based on the empirical evidence that the ESRC programme produced, in the substantive chapters in the book (with the exception of the one on pharmaceuticals). This is a pity, because much social
theorising about risk is rather abstract and lacks empirical grounding (e.g. see Fitzpatrick’s review in *Journal of Social Policy*, 2000, 29:3 of Culpitt (1999)).

Also missing, despite good chapters on family policy, flexible work, pharmaceutical risk, financial risk, housing and long-term care, is any sustained focus on social policy as controlling ‘the other’ as criminal, mentally ill person, welfare scrounger, ‘paedophile’ and so on. The book tends to assume that risk is something primarily experienced, whereas social policy discourse also identifies and seeks to govern categories of people defined as ‘risks’. A good book, therefore, but one which does not fully bridge the yawning gap between social theorising and investigative research on ‘risk society’.

The collection edited by Manning and Shaw is a rather different fish. The title is merely a convenient launching pad for a loosely connected set of millennium ‘reflections’ on macro social policy issues, which first appeared as a special issue of *Social Policy and Administration*. The essays are definitely year 2000 compliant in that they address the big questions of both where the welfare state has come from and where it is going. Some chapters are more convincing than others. I found this latest version of Bob Jessop’s schematic attempt to construct ideal-type fordist and postfordist capitalist welfare states, against which real ones are then measured up, as still flawed but more clearly stated and empirically grounded in divergent national developments. Nicola Yeates’s chapter on globalisation contrasts Jessop’s tendency to determinism by critiquing top-down ‘strong’ theories in favour of multilevel analysis according a central influence to politics and ideology. It is an excellent introduction to a complex subject. Peter Abrahamson offers a spirited defence of welfare regime theory against both particularistic detractors and the new convergence theory of globalisation. In an era when work-welfare issues are coming to the fore (whether as part of a universal Schumpeterian shift or not), Crouch offers a welcome industrial relations perspective on social policy.

Finally, the concluding chapter by Robert Dingwall provides an insightful, highly critical commentary on Beck’s ‘risk society’ theory. It mercilessly deconstructs him as a continental ‘armchair’ theorist who generalises about late modern society as a whole from German contexts with at best flimsy empirical foundation. He convincingly shows that Beck draws too great a contrast between the past and present-day ‘risk society’ in a whole range of ways. Arguably, however, the dismissal of holistic meta-theories of society is taken too far. What is needed is both theorising and empirical research on risk which connects at a variety of levels, linking discrete policy issues about ‘personal troubles’ to broader ‘public issues of social structure’. Otherwise we will continue to reproduce the classic divisions that C. Wright Mills (1959) delineated between ‘grand theorising’ and ‘abstracted empiricism’. Judging from the two books reviewed here, despite their many strengths we are still some way off from synthesising theoretical and policy issues around questions of risk.


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While policy attempts at the dispersal of minority ethnic groups in relation to housing and education have had a short-lived and shadowy history in 1960s Britain (although recently revisited in the 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act) they have been pursued more extensively in the context of the United States where ethnic segregation, once part of the legal framework, remains entrenched in residential patterns. The attempts to challenge this spatial segregation in Chicago, Illinois are the subject of Rubinowitz and Rosenbaum’s study. They focus on the Gautreaux programme, a large-scale twenty-two year desegregation initiative named after the civil rights Chicagoan activist Dorothy Gautreaux. Between 1976, when the programme began, and 1998, when it ended, thousands of African/American families, the majority comprising of female headed families with school age children, moved from public sector housing in inner city Chicago to the middle-class white dominated suburban areas on the edge of the city. Divided into two parts the first half of *Crossing the Class and Color Lines* provides a detailed account of the historical context within which the programme was established, alongside other smaller schemes, which similarly aimed to blur the lines of racial and class residential segregation by relocating poor African/American families into overwhelmingly white affluent neighbourhoods. While the Gautreaux programme was the most successful of these desegregation initiatives, there was political opposition to such initiatives which the authors note ‘for some staying in the Black community represented an ideological, political, or social commitment to rebuilding their neighborhood and its institution. Some criticised the Gautreaux programme for draining resources, attention, commitment and people that might otherwise meet the Black community’s pressing needs’ (p. 57). However, the authors tend not to engage in any substantive way with this critique or with a theoretical assessment of policy initiatives which centre on the concept of racial integration and move (inevitably) small numbers of socially excluded sectors of the population into those spaces where richer socially included sectors of the population are established. In the absence of these more critical considerations, Rubinowitz and Rosenbaum opt to focus on the argument that the Gautreaux initiative provided a unique chance for poor African/American families to escape their blighted, dangerous neighbourhoods and thereby encounter (and benefit from) social and economic opportunities that would otherwise be denied them. It is in this vein that the authors, on more than one occasion, refer to those families that did relocate as ‘pioneers’. Whilst clearly attempting to illuminate the individual courage displayed by those who did leave family, friends and familiarity behind to try and improve their lives in uncertain and unfamiliar territories, this term also evokes associations with European settlers and the capitalist goal of individuals seizing opportunities to better their lot against the odds. This, in many ways, is the theme explored in the second part of the book. Predominantly relying on data gained from two sets of interviews conducted with 114 Gautreaux families, once in 1982 and again in 1989, Rubinowitz and Rosenbaum examine three key areas of the lives of relocated families — safety, social interaction and schooling. The interview data reveals the success stories that followed the move to white suburbia. Mothers
interviewed by the researchers overwhelmingly felt that they and their children were less likely to be victims of crime and less likely to become involved in criminal activity, that they had developed friendships and a sense of community support and that the children had tended to achieve educationally with a high percentage going on to degree-level study. However, these narratives also contained ambiguities. Some interviewees spoke of their social isolation and their sense of loss of community in the 90 per cent white suburbs. At times, the narratives also provided a glimpse into the underbelly of integration as the interviewees spoke of terrifying incidents of systematic racial violence, of their children not being allowed to play with their white school friends, of the humiliation of being the only one in the suburban supermarket queue using welfare vouchers, of their concerns as to the over-representation of Gautreaux children being placed in special education streams in suburban schools. Although *Crossing the Class and Color Lines* does not shy away from these experiences the authors argue that the positive (more permanent) aspects of integration for these families are bigger than the negative (more temporary) aspects. Rubinowitz and Rosenbaum highlight how the successes of African/American Gautreaux families directly challenge the underclass and ‘culture of poverty’ theories promoted by new right-influenced policy-makers and politicians. This is a laudable conclusion and Gautreaux-style voucher schemes are increasingly replacing public sector housing provision as the key tenet of US housing policy. However, the perennial questions about urban poverty, racialised social exclusion, limitations of integration initiatives and the costs demanded of those doing the integrating tend to be skated around rather than tackled head-on in what is an important piece of research and one which will be of interest to students and practitioners working in the area of housing policy and racial equality strategies.

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This is an unusual edited volume, with seven of the eleven chapters being written by Michael Hill. This is not so much a problem as an asset, since these are the best in the book, although the other chapters are all worthwhile additions to the volume. The book makes a justified claim to fill a gap in the range of social policy textbooks in its treatment of local authority social services as a whole, even though the service delivery areas covered are dealt with in a less comprehensive manner than in many social policy textbooks. More problematic is the timing, since it was written in the midst of a major and still ongoing period of reform in this area. However the difficulties this presents are handled well.

The book is divided into three sections. The first defines social services and also reviews the general history and the demographic and social context. The second section considers social services delivery tasks in the fields of childcare, adult care and mental health services and the relationship between social services and the social security system. The final section considers both central and local organisational contexts and the contemporary policy agenda. The middle section is the weakest, since it does not give enough space to the relevant service
areas. Hudson, for example (Chapter 5: adult care) has the overly large task of outlining and reviewing services for older people and those with physical or learning disabilities.

Although this proves to be a well-informed and clear review, there really ought to have been more on all three of these areas in a book of this nature. Section 1 is all written by Hill. Chapter 1, on the nature of social services, is well sign-posted and explained. It is particularly good on the resource constraints, rationing and gate-keeping of personal social services. Chapter 2 is a well-written, knowledgeable history from the late nineteenth century onwards. Chapter 3 strikes a good balance between the presentation of empirical and demographic data and some thoughtful analysis of trends and developments. There is also a wealth of tabular data (throughout the book as a whole, tables are reasonably up-to-date). Chapter 4 begins with a discussion of childcare policy by Jane Tunstill. This is a wide-ranging and useful survey of recent policies and practice, but is too focused on outlining official developments. It needed more discussion of some of the big background issues; the major state child abuse scandals (pin-down, Staffordshire, Clywd) of the past decade, the problems with education and with leaving care support and how these link to the Labour government’s social exclusion agenda. This sort of context is essential for making sense of ‘Quality Protects’. Following Bob Hudson’s chapter on adult care (see above), Ian Shaw’s chapter on mental health services offers well-informed discussion of recent and contemporary policy developments with respect to community care and mental health services, though it could have benefited from more social context on the demographics of mental illness. Hill follows this with an assured review of the relationship between social services and the social security system. The final section begins with a chapter by Hill on the central and local government framework that concentrates primarily on the former. The complicated political relationships are not easy to convey and although it is well written, this chapter would have benefited from one or two explanatory diagrams. Chapter 9, again by Hill, looks in more detail at local policy delivery structures and internal organisation. Although necessarily a little dense in places, this is a particularly valuable part of the book since it covers territory rarely covered elsewhere.

In Chapter 10, Stephen Mitchell uses his detailed knowledge of the current reform agenda from his position within the Department of Health to good effect. Given that this is essentially a review of reform ‘in progress’, the agenda following on from the ‘Modernising Social Services’ White Paper is explained with admirable clarity and with the right sense of priorities, as is the relevance of ‘Best Value’ to social services. Finally, Hill concludes with a fresh and thoughtful set of comments on social services provision past and future.

This book is valuable even at this point in time, since it provides a detailed overview of many aspects of social services provision that one would not find in one place elsewhere. Certainly, social work students, and social policy students more generally, can benefit significantly from the wealth and range of its coverage. There is an even stronger case for a second edition, when the dust has settled a little on the current reform process. The central section, though, should be expanded at that point. That could be the key to turning it from a useful and worthwhile volume into a standard text.

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This book provides a thorough and accessible survey of developments in the UK labour market since the 1970s. Most of the contributors belong to the Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion or the Centre for Economic Performance at the London School of Economics, and all fifteen chapters exploit the wealth of data now available on employment, non-employment, earnings and incomes, variously distributed by sex, age, race or ethnicity, region, educational qualification and household or family type. In addition, several chapters draw on longitudinal or panel databases which track the same individuals over longish periods of time and offer new insights into labour market and lifecycle dynamics.

The book is divided into three sections: the first deals with the market for jobs, the second with the characteristics of jobs and the third with patterns of pay. A number of trends stand out. First, the boundary between unemployment and economic inactivity is fuzzy and despite the fall into both overall and long-term unemployment since the early 1990s, the activity rates of men and women have see-sawed, with the proportion of older men in the workforce falling sharply, while the proportion of economically active women aged 25–49 has continued to rise. Second, jobholding has become polarised between work-rich and work-poor households – thanks, not least, to the interaction of low paid and insecure entry jobs with the tax and benefit system. Third, over the past decade, the average weekly hours worked by full-time employees, inclusive of paid and unpaid overtime, have risen, while the average duration of job tenure has fallen, except – interestingly – for women with dependent children, who have benefited from the extension of maternity leave rights established in 1978. Fourth, since the GCSE was introduced in the late 1980s, the level of educational attainment at age 16 has improved substantially, and with increased enrolment in higher education during the 1990s the proportion of young people staying on in full-time education after the age of 16 has risen dramatically. At the same time, most of the relatively limited volume of vocational training currently provided in Britain – roughly estimated at 1 billion hours per annum compared with 12 billion hours spent in compulsory schooling – goes to those with the highest qualifications, status and rewards. Fifth, and more generally, the degree of overall wage inequality, which had been falling until 1977, rose at an unprecedented rate in the 1980s and continued to rise albeit more slowly, in the 1990s. Over the same period, the incidence of low pay grew, as did the extent of the overlap between low pay and poverty.

As a *description* of the social legacy left to the New Labour government by its Conservative predecessors, the book is excellent. It also highlights challenges that the government has yet to confront: notably, the role of employers in removing older men from the workforce by encouraging premature retirement; and the ‘low pay, no pay’ cycle which militates against efforts to reduce enhanced employability and self-reliance at the lower end of the labour market. At a *conceptual* level, however the book is less satisfactory. None of the contributors discusses what is meant by work or questions the received view that paid employment in the mainstream economy, preferably in the business sector, but otherwise in the public sector, represents the royal road out of poverty and social
exclusion. This blinkered conception ignores the role of households in producing people, both from day-to-day and across the generations; ignores the contribution of voluntary associations to the formation and maintenance of ‘social capital’; and precludes any examination of the impact of waged work and commodity production on the vitality of families and civil society.

Conversely, the editors go too far in claiming that the book explains why the UK labour market has developed in the way it has. For example, to account for trends in unemployment since the age of ‘full employment’ came to an end, Stephen Nickell invokes the concept of ‘equilibrium unemployment’, yet cheerfully admits that economists do not really understand what governs the movement of this unhappily named and epistemologically suspect variable. Similarly, while the primary cause of growing wage inequality may, as Stephen Machin argues, be skill-biased technological change, it cannot be the only factor at work given that wage inequality has not grown to anything like the same extent in all countries. There will, however, be a chance to rectify these omissions and shortcomings if, as the editors suggest, The State of Working Britain becomes a regular publication.

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Recent years have seen the development of a belated but emergent field in social policy characterised by a commitment to engage with some of the debates and issues raised by post-structuralist perspectives. Applying these perspectives to analyse shifts and realignments in the social relations of welfare has meant that many of the assumptions and categories of analysis in the discipline of social policy have become destabilised and/or reconfigured. In line with this concern to develop and deploy newer analytic and conceptual frameworks the authors of this volume explore shifting alignments and priorities in the areas of health, welfare (i.e., income support), higher education and science and technology through the lens of post-structuralism.

The context of their argument is ‘the emergence of economic liberalism, increasing globalisation, the reconstruction of the welfare state and the move towards a more market-driven approach to social provision’ (p. 2). The theme connecting all the chapters is how these developments impact upon citizenship, especially re-definitions of the meaning of citizenship and the relation between state and citizen. The authors take care not to claim a complete rupture with more established analytic traditions in social policy. They do, however, point to three areas where the intervention of post-structuralist perspectives has had a significant impact upon Fabian, social democratic, feminist or Marxist schools. For them these points of rupture settle most clearly around the conceptualisation of the state; the general categories and methods of analysis deployed in the social policy orthodoxy; and the status of social policy’s truth claims. Rather than see the state as unitary and monolithic and the main seat of power, the authors of this collection suggest a post-structuralist social policy seeks out and analyses the multiple and contradictory relations and practices of state agencies.
Rather than see the general categories of class, gender, ‘race’ etc. as referencing clearly bounded, ontologically given and homogenous categories, a post-structuralist social policy destabilises these categories. It focuses attention on the processes of production of these categories and the subjects, subjectivities and identities they produce as part of the field of operation of social policy practices. They recognise that the emergence of radical Marxist and feminist approaches to social policy had already destabilised the truth claims embedded in social policy orthodoxy. However, they point out that post-structuralist approaches reinflect these critiques by pointing to the indivisibility of power/knowledge. There is one key implication of this. This is the need to rethink policy itself as a constitutive force. As Petersen puts it in his chapter on public health and the new genetics, social policy analysts need to move beyond ‘reactive conceptions of policy, [and] policy makers [need] to develop more sophisticated approaches based upon recognition of the generative power of policy’ (p. 140).

The authors recognise that at this juncture the limits of post-structuralism for social policy may be reached if it leads – as some argue – to a reinstatement of liberal individualism which privileges rational ‘economic man’ and a conception of ‘a public’ formed through the correspondence of individual and collective interests. The way out they suggest, is either through the forms of associative democracy expressed by calls for some kind of citizen’s income, or the development of a consciousness and system of networks capable of fostering mutualism. Such developments necessarily begin from a notion of multiple and unstable differences which are constitutive of a shifting series of identities and collectivities. In this context, the agendas of social welfare agencies, professionals and their respective practices would be to promote citizenship ‘as an expression of openness, tolerance, difference and mutuality rather than sameness’ (p. 12).

These themes are then explored in a more focused way in the individual chapters on public welfare (Harris), higher education (Dudley), public health and the new genetics (Petersen) and technology and citizenship (Barns). One of the strengths of the collection is the clarity of the expositions of Foucauldian governmentality approaches to the reconfiguration of welfare and the demonstration of how this frame of analysis can be applied to the systems of social welfare and citizenship of some Western states. For example, the Harris chapter on public welfare offers a concise and clear exposition of governmentality as developed by Nikolas Rose. She shows how this framework of analysis can direct historical periodisation and characterisation of contemporary trends. Dudley’s chapter on higher education displays a similar strength especially on the double inscription of the subject in the ‘life-long learning regime’. We see how the formation of a life-long learning culture and infrastructure offers the ‘citizen-learner’ the opportunities for personal development and fulfilment, but also – as a responsible member of society – imposes the duty to avail her or his self of these opportunities through the life-course. In this way these chapters point to a second strength of this collection. This is a demonstration of the reworking of the welfare–citizen–state relation around the rationalities of neo-liberal governance across a range of welfare agencies and policy areas. They analyse some of the processes involved in a reworking of the concept of citizenship around a notion of duty not rights; or, more correctly, how the exercise of rights is mediated and dependent upon the performance of duty in all areas of life. This includes the
management of ‘risk’ in privatised ways. Students, and others new to the post-structuralist social policy literature will find this a valuable source in this respect. Students are also likely to find the debates among the authors at the end of each chapter a useful resource both because they express the challenge to the authority of the author that marks post-structuralist approaches and because it is here that points are elaborated and further contextualised.

Overall, I found this collection to be an important contribution to the emerging post-structuralist social policy. However, there are some problems. For example, the collection tends towards that sin commonly linked to post-structuralist and neo-Marxist analyses alike, of exhibiting a top-down approach to the subject area. The result is that one is often left with a sense that regimes of neoliberal governance are in fact monolithic, singular and totalising. This is so despite attempts towards the end of the chapters to point to the limits of neo-liberal regimes of governance, and thus to at least indicate the possibility of uncertainty, instability, contradiction and contestation. One is left wondering where challenge might come from and how it might be expressed. Or how, as Yasmin Soysal suggests (1996), discourses of human rights might be deployed against the limitations of the redefined citizenship they describe. Or how it might be possible to infiltrate into the discursive spaces of nation-construction in ways which do not subsume difference ‘within the subjectivity of the economic actor and (construct it) as a secondary characteristic ultimately reducible to an economic subjectivity’ (Dudley, p. 91). For, as the authors of the recently published Commission on the Future of Multi Ethnic Britain (2000) have recently shown, there is far more invested in ‘difference’ than the economic, as Nike and Addidas surely know.

In advancing these criticisms I am wary of simply repeating the usual mantras against post-structuralist influenced work. But it is rather frustrating that the authors have not given much space to an exploration of the uneven patterns and effects of realignments in social welfare and citizenship. Nor to the points of administrative, professional, social and political vulnerability in the different policy areas they explore.


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This book is part of the useful The State of Welfare series published by Routledge and edited by Mary Langan. The series aims ‘to provide a forum for the debate about the new shape of welfare into the millennium’. According to the editors the contribution made by this volume is to ‘focus on class movements and struggles around issues of social policy and social welfare and, in so doing, to argue that social policy analyses need to acknowledge “class struggle” as a potential factor shaping and constraining policy outcomes and collective responses to wel-
fare and social policy’ (p. 9). The editors’ introductory chapter celebrates a ‘return to Marx’ and sets its face against the ‘rampant relativism of postmodern theorizing’ (p. 1). It reasserts ‘class struggle’ against ‘new social welfare movements’, ‘interests’ against ‘identity’ and ‘universalism’ against ‘particularism’ in the analysis of welfare.

Confidently maintaining a fundamentalism which cedes nothing to the last twenty-five years of social theory they assert that, ‘the non-labouring working class (the sick, the unemployed, the elderly, those with “caring” responsibilities, and so on) … [do] not have discrete interests from those members of the working class in employment. For both sections their interests are best served by the destruction of the dominant system and organisation of production which breeds oppression and exploitation’ (p. 6). There is, they argue, a unity of interests of ‘men and women, gay and straight, black and white, young and old, able-bodied and disabled’ which is best served by the ‘embryonic’ universalist politics of working-class struggle, contrasting ‘sharply with the concerns of particularism, difference and disunity which the dominant postmodern politics treats as a virtue’ (p. 9).

There is an undoubted truth in the editors’ view that class has been neglected in recent policy analysis. Treating class solely as a *variable* in understanding policy outcomes rather than as a tool of analysis impoverishes our understanding of welfare struggles. It is a long way, though, from recognising the continuing importance of class to the assertion of an unashamed reductionism which treats the relationship between socio-economic location (understood solely in productivist terms), interests (abstractly defined as the destruction of the system) and collective action (interpreted as class struggle) as unproblematic. It would have been valuable if the class basis of a contemporary welfare politics could have been examined in more depth. Generally, this collection neglects attempts to address ‘recognition’ as well as ‘redistribution’, the ‘social relations of welfare’ or ‘new welfare subjects’ in any depth caricaturing them as some postmodern conspiracy to disunite the working class. However, the purpose of the book is not to engage with recent theoretical developments but to reassert the ubiquity of class struggle through an historical approach.

Following the Introduction, three chapters remind us of the struggles which accompanied the formation of early welfare forms under English capitalism. Mark O’Brien takes us through the anti-poor law movements, Tony Jones and Chris Novak look at nineteenth-century ‘self-help’ movements and John Charlton examines how the ruling class ‘lumbered into a rolling state intervention policy’ (p. 69) at the turn of the twentieth century.

The remaining eight chapters take us chronologically through key, though sometimes forgotten, struggles and movements in the twentieth century which impact on social policy. Alan Johnson’s chapter on ‘Poplarism’ is notable not only for the attention it gives to an important historical landmark in popular movements but for the interesting discussion of Poplar’s implications for a ‘politics of commonality’. Other chapters provide useful historical sketches of the Clydebank rent strike of the 1920s (Sean Damer); unemployment during the 1920s and 1930s (Laura Penketh and Alan Pratt) and housing in post-war Glasgow (Charlie Johnstone).

Of the four remaining chapters, three provide class struggle readings of ‘The
struggle for abortion rights’ (Sue Clegg and Rita Gough), ‘Riots and urban unrest in Britain in the 1980s and 1990s’ (Rumy Hasan) and the ‘Great poll tax rebellion’ (Michael Lavalette and Gerry Mooney). The final chapter, by Ian Ferguson, examines the mental health users’ movement as a case study in the refutation of ‘identity politics’ and the contemporary relevance of class.

This volume could be a useful resource for students of social policy who need reminding of the importance of class struggle in the history of the welfare state. However, as a contribution to a series aimed at critically assessing social policy in the new millennium it is all too ready to employ stereotypical binary oppositions and substitute assertion for analysis to offer much in terms of a twenty-first century radical politics of welfare.

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Rethinking Social Policy is the course reader for the Open University course D860, which is a Masters level programme. The book consists of an introduction and twenty-two chapters. Whilst many of the chapters are well focused and review conceptual issues germane to the task of broadening our understanding of social policy, there is no structure imposed on the material beyond the introductory chapter. As a consequence, the range of issues covered by rather a lot of short chapters may appear to be a little too fragmentary for a student trying to grasp what is required to rethink social policy. For those who are not OU students, the text can be used selectively and I think it will be valuable for final year undergraduates grappling with the application of Foucauldian discourse theory to the analysis of social policy in particular.

It is obviously not possible to describe each chapter in detail but I can, at least, provide a flavour of the book. Gail Lewis’ introduction is unnecessarily turgid in places but eventually lightens when she attempts to identify common themes in the text. The key question she poses is, what do we mean by ‘social’ in social policy? The thrust of her introduction is to establish an approach to social welfare analysis which emphasises the contested nature of social policy and the struggle over meanings. She sensitises the reader to the expanding boundaries of social policy and so aids the reader’s receptivity to the varieties of analyses offered in the book.

The chapter by Ruth Lister reviews the achievement of feminism in shaping perspectives on family life, the public/private spheres and our conceptions of work and caring. Jane Lewis reprises her well-known observations on gender and welfare regimes. And Shakespeare analyses the ‘discourse of burden’ which, he claims, shapes policy for the elderly, children and the disabled. It is the silencing of the receivers of care which, he maintains, requires to be rethought: being able to make independent choices is the goal for the disabled.

Six chapters explore the relevance of Foucauldian post-structuralism and discourse analysis in a fairly explicit way. Watson establishes the perspective by setting out the key notions in Foucault’s work. Carabine illustrates the ways in which welfare discourse interacts with other social and political discourses through an historical analysis of nineteenth-century women, specifically the
representation of poor women as manipulative and wholly responsible for basting through the dominant discourse of the Commissioners of the New Poor Law of 1834. Phoenix explores the construction of gendered and racialised identities of young boys through education. Pinkey offers observations on the construction of children’s identities. Her conclusion is that the absence of children’s ‘voices’ in the construction of policy has succeeded in creating essentialist, homogenous and imaginary welfare subjects. And Twigg returns us to a key theme in Foucault’s work in her chapter on social policy and the body, illustrating its relevance for the understanding of social gerontology and policy for the disabled.

Two chapters stand out as being interesting but tending to deviate from the book’s main theoretical approach. Hoggett writes about social policy and emotions, a subject which is neglected but very relevant for social policy, but its location in this collection leaves it rather isolated because it is clearly against the over-socialised conceptions of the welfare subject evident in many of the other contributions. Meanwhile, Mooney wishes to place the Marxist theory of class at the centre of social policy analysis, and it too appears rather out of place by advocating a return to an ‘old’ agenda in a book about rethinking social policy.

The chapters by Jessop on the Schumpetarian workfare state and by Clarke on globalisation are pivotal for understanding the changing context of contemporary social policy. However, the absence of a more explicit organisational structure on the chapters means that their significance may be overlooked by students grappling with the text’s breadth and lack of signposts. Poole’s contribution reminds us of both the neglect of and coming significance of Central and Eastern Europe for our thinking about welfare in post-communist times.

The three chapters by Muncie, by Stenson and by Stanko illustrate the necessity to rethink the relationship between the criminal justice system and the welfare state. Gail Lewis examines multiculturalism through an analysis of New Labour educational policy. Davies reflects on the crisis of professional self-regulation. MacIntosh provides insights into the institutionalisation of economic cultures in social care. Gewirtz suggests that New Labour’s school reforms will exacerbate injustice. Pillinger writes about a changing work–welfare discourse. And, finally, Williams rounds off the collection by reflecting on ‘good enough principles of welfare’. An interesting collection of essays but perhaps too many for a coherent student reader.

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