
This was one of the first books in print to deal with the New Labour government. It relies heavily on media reportage, with its style being a social policy version of a mix of the British General Election Studies and Theodore White’s ‘The Making of the President’ series. It is a readable, illuminating and vibrant account; a walk through the welfare woods without Bill Bryson’s jokes. Some introductory chapters on ‘The road to 1997’ and Conservative welfare policies set the scene. The main sectors of social policy of employment, education, health, social services, housing, social security and pensions are covered. In addition, there are chapters on taxing and spending, criminal justice, green issues; and views from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, while a concluding chapter focuses on ‘a new deal for Britain?’ Most of the chapters follow a similar formula which reviews Conservative welfare policies, the manifesto, the issues of the election campaign and ‘early days’ – generally the first 100 days – of the New Labour government.

The book lacks an introductory chapter, setting out the rationale for the book’s coverage and a template for analysis. It covers some neglected areas such as an explicit focus on Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, and ‘the new social policy’ such as green issues. However, similarly eligible issues such as transport are not covered. More seriously, the text would have benefited from greater coverage of issues such as accountability and citizenship, which are central to New Labour rhetoric. There are mentions of the Commission on Social Justice, but nothing on the ‘third way’. Despite the Manifesto reference to a ‘new and distinctive approach’ which differs from both the solutions of the old Left and the Conservative right (p. 152) these claims are not subjected to much analysis. Helen Jones (p. 94) argues that ‘In health policy, as in so many other areas of policy, Blair is often perceived by commentators to be the true heir of Thatcher.’ She claims that this contains an element of truth, but that the reality is far more complex. However, this important point is not sufficiently examined and many contributors tend to emphasise continuity from the Conservatives, with some contributors appearing to subscribe to a fairly simplistic ‘Blairjorism/Hagairism/Blatcherism’ thesis. There is little discussion of whether the ‘principles of 1997’ differ from the ‘principles of 1945’ and of New Labour’s claims that new times require new policies and new politics. Nevertheless, the book remains a useful record of the welfare issues of the 1997 election. It contains a wealth of contemporary material from parliamentary Hansard and newspapers, although at times it tends to relate the gospel according to the Guardian. (In the index, the Guardian has twenty-four page references, with the next highest being the Financial Times with nine, and New Labour’s vital tabloids hardly feature.) Given the data sources, the book could have been strengthened by the use of discourse or content analysis, and references to the ‘politics of manifestos’ and symbolic politics literature.
All this said, the book is a valuable contribution to the New Labour literature, and deserves to be examined in the context of Labour’s evolving policies. In particular, some chapters may have lasting value. For me, three chapters stand out. First, Carey Oppenheim places New Labour’s policy development of social security in its wider context. Second, Susanne Macgregor’s perceptive concluding chapter contains some important points about the disappearance of the language of the old welfare state in the 1997 election campaign (p. 249); the ‘American-inspired social policies which appear to influence some New Labour thinking’ (p. 250) and the idea (subsequently developed in an essay in *Capital and Class*) that welfare to work is ‘a new paternalism in social policy’ (p. 265). Finally, Michael Sullivan questions what is specifically Welsh about the Welsh Manifestos: ‘Like the Labour Party’s, the Liberal Democrats’ Welsh Manifesto is apparently a cut-and-paste job of the UK Manifesto with some Welsh or Wales-related issues inserted’ (p. 237). Conversely, the social policy of Plaid Cymru is seen as ‘quintessentially ‘old Labour’ – a sort of Welsh Bennery’ (p. 237).

In conclusion, with some exceptions, the book consists primarily of policy description. One suspects that a rapid production process and the desire to ‘be first’ made a more analytical approach less feasible. The book may have a short ‘half life’. At worst it could end up, like its prime source of newspapers, as the book equivalent of tomorrow’s chip wrappers. However, it deserves better than this. There are many perceptive ‘throw away’ lines that are not fully explored, but will repay revisiting. It provides a sound foundation to the social policies of New Labour which others may build on.

MARTIN POWELL
University of Bath


In this book the author goes against much contemporary thinking in social policy by arguing that there is a real consensus between the Centre-Left and the New Right over the major issues which have apparently divided both party activists and social theorists. Indeed, the question mark that appears after the title is redundant, since Steven Smith is confident that at the foundation level there is no real divide at all. Furthermore, he argues that the fact that New Labour has adopted much of the previous Conservative government’s policy and that spending on social welfare has actually increased in real terms over the last thirty years, whatever the government, are not merely responses to political exigencies, or the acceptance of historical legacies that cannot feasibly be removed, but that they reflect a fundamental agreement about the aims of social policy. It is true that there are significant differences over some aspects of policy designed to implement the goals but they should not, the author claims, be understood as symptomatic of a genuine difference over values.

This is a controversial thesis which Smith pursues doggedly through a whole range of policy areas covering education and training, social security, equal opportunity, income and wealth, policy towards the disabled and community care. In analysing these issues Smith tries to build a bridge between
social philosophy and social policy; particular policies adopted do not reflect vote-maximising strategies but reveal ultimate value commitments of both New Right conservatives and orthodox post-Beveridge moderate socialists. The values that apparently unite superficially rival social theories are the belief in autonomy, liberty, the difficulties that both sides display over the desirability or otherwise of a ‘neutral’ state (i.e., one that desists from generating any paternalistic moral values) and equality. With regard to the last, conservatives will be surprised to learn that they have believed all along in state promotion of at least some notion of equality.

All of these policy areas are analysed in some considerable detail to reveal the underlying similarity of approach. Perhaps the most interesting and instructive is education. Here the ‘didactic’ or rigid learning style favoured by the New Right seems to stand in stark contrast to the permissive, pupil-centred approach of the Centre-Left. Did not the New Right provide horror stories from the early 1970s about the inexorable decline of literacy and numeracy caused by progressive education? But Smith argues quite cleverly that the debate is really about autonomy: the New Right favouring policies that promote this valuable personal goal in the very long run, while the Centre-Left seem anxious to make children masters of their own fate from a very young age. Furthermore, he claims, the progressives did not completely abandon traditional standards. And, ironically perhaps, the New Right favours didactic education because its spokesmen feel that it promotes a Centre-Left policy — equality; or at least strong equality of opportunity.

In social security the New Right have never been in favour of abandoning the poor and unemployed to their own fate but have actively promoted labour market policies that maximised individual well-being. But they have also favoured the concept of desert; all social policies in this area should be structures around a moral notion of worthiness that links conduct with reward; just as the Centre-Left has always done. There is a reluctance on both sides to embrace those radical policies of the negative income tax or guaranteed minimum wage that require no social contribution from the recipient.

What Smith doesn’t notice here is a serious fissure in the Right itself. The more libertarian writers, e.g., Milton Friedman, would simply throw money at the poor (although not very much); to demand anything of them in terms of appropriate social behaviour would compromise their individualistic principles. But the neo-conservatives, e.g., Lawrence Mead, strongly favour workfare and are distressed by the anti-social behaviour which they see caused by indiscriminate cash welfare payments. In fact, this example is illustrative of a general problem with the book’s philosophical basis; the lumping together of quite disparate policy agendas under the label ‘the New Right’.

But there are many policy areas which to some extent justify Smith’s case. The New Right and the Centre-Left find themselves in some agreement over the disabled. Both sides would reject a notion of ‘equality of welfare’ in which it is assumed that a certain level of well-being should be guaranteed through the provision of common services. This could lead to a great deal of paternalism and reduction in autonomy. The New Right and Centre-Left share the opinion that the disabled lack resources, not the capacity to determine for themselves their own futures.
Despite the persuasiveness and sophistication of the argument, this reader felt that Smith had carefully chosen the policies and the respective thinkers to strengthen his own case for a consensus. Perhaps if he had chosen healthcare he might have found real clashes between those New Right authors who favour real freedom of choice and theorists from the Centre-Left who advocate common consumption of medical treatment, either on alleged efficiency grounds or on communitarian principles. The same is true of pensions policy.

Furthermore, real differences between the two schools can be seen in their understanding of human behaviour with regard to general welfare policy. New Right thinkers, influenced by certain developments in welfare economics, are convinced that too much welfare, of almost any kind, generates (especially in social security) certain behaviour problems, e.g., if you pay young women to have babies you will get more unmarried mothers and feckless fathers. The concept of ‘moral hazard’, not mentioned by the author, dominates New Right thinking about welfare and could be said to be behind the drastic welfare reforms introduced in the United States in 1996. It is a pity that Smith deliberately eschews economics in his analysis.

Still, this is an interesting book. Although it is somewhat repetitive, with points seemingly endlessly summarised, and bears all the marks of a successful thesis, the argument is conducted at a fairly high level. It shows philosophical sophistication and is informed by a thorough knowledge of the social services. The latter may have been carefully selected but they provide adequate materials for the author to make some apposite connections between social theory and policy. The bridge that is thought to exist here is a little more rickety than Smith supposes, but the attempt to construct one was worth the architectural effort.

NORMAN BARRY

University of Buckingham


It is difficult to do justice to a work of scholarship that is written in the form of an extended metaphor. The authors of The World of the Gift start with the claim that ‘the gift is all-pervasive in our society’ and that it continues to be ‘the foundation of our social fabric’. Their philosophical approach is essentially pluralist, based as it is on the premise that the structure of social solidarity are grounded in three main forms of institutional bonding – the market, the state and the domestic, a private sphere of personal relationships. They also suggest that there is a fourth sphere which is ‘specific to modern society, the gift to strangers’ that interpenetrates those of the state and the domestic world.

As far as Godbout and Caille are concerned, indebtedness in the context of personal relationships is the defining characteristic of the true gift relationship. Intended or unintended, outcomes of reciprocity create quite different kinds of social bonding. From this starting point they set out to examine three interconnected issues. They explore the extent to which interpersonal gift-relationships shape and inform the structures of social solidarity. They examine the ways in
which this form of giving differs from the specifically modern mode of giving to strangers through the agencies of the statutory social services. They evaluate the ways in which these two forms of interpersonal and impersonal relationships complement or conflict with each other. As Godbout and Caille summarise their task – ‘The modern individual believes that behind the gift we find exchange. We wanted to try the opposite idea: behind exchanges, we sought the gift.’

These authors do not deny the importance and pervasiveness of self-interest in social life. Gift relationships, they concede, must coexist with competitive markets since, in default of wealth creation, there would be much less to give. Their concern, however, is to challenge the political and economic trends in contemporary life which, in their view, are transforming ‘every social bond into a relationship between strangers governed by the market or the state’. In pursuit of more possessions, they argue, people increasingly fail to nurture or extend their personal relationships. As their wealth accumulates so does their dependence on material things. The rich may give to the poor in the spirit of noblesse oblige yet the poor go on giving what they can to each other, simply because they feel a moral obligation to do so.

In the context of formal social policy, the notion of the gift relationship is almost synonymous with the name of Richard Titmuss. Godbout and Caille, however, consider that his model of voluntary blood donorship falls short of their definition of an authentic gift relationship. In their view, the state as the prime agency of service provision inevitably transforms the gift relationship into ‘an anonymous circulation network between strangers’. Similarly, when the state becomes directly involved in the informal sector of social care and sets out to create partnerships with family members and other volunteers, it tends to reduce disinterested acts of altruism to the status of ‘unpaid work’, regulated by bureaucrats and professionals.

Under the auspices of the state, the informal world of gift relationships swiftly becomes a network of formal rights and obligations. The two systems, they argue, ‘do not function according to the same principles’ and, over time, the state inexorably imposes its own values and logic on donors and recipients alike. ‘Titmuss’, they assert, ‘confused the system of the gift with that of the state’ because he did not understand that ‘in the transition from the gift to taxes or social insurance we have lost an important element of the gift in which a donor risks an act whose reciprocation is never guaranteed’.

Godbout and Caille therefore conclude that ‘the state does not obey the logic of either the market-place or the gift and truly constitutes a third system’. The logic of their analysis, however, points towards a pluralist mode of welfare in which each of its three component parts are normatively quite different from each other. In any kind of partnership between these sectors, either the state or the market will eventually reshape the values and meanings which sustain the dynamics of voluntary altruism and the gift.

In the case of markets it is arguable that their most enthusiastic advocates are unitarists at heart. By 1994, most of the major services of the British welfare state were in the process of becoming dominated by a unitary and uniform market ideology. At the same time, this intriguing study of The World of the Gift has caused me to think again about the unitarist implications of Titmuss’s approach to social policy.
Titmuss often wrote as if the British welfare state had reinvented altruism and the gift relationship. In his ideal society, benevolent agencies of the state were destined to become the moral exemplars to which all our other social institutions ought to aspire. Titmuss was, above all else, a statutory unitarist. He was hostile to pluralism because he neither understood nor trusted competitive markets. In this respect it is worth noting that in his seminal essay on ‘The Social Division of Welfare’ he scarcely mentions the voluntary or informal sectors.

Godbout and Caille challenge our conventional assumptions about the character of both unitary and pluralist models of welfare. They explore the scope and limits of rationality and reciprocity in the formal and statutory and non-statutory sectors of social service. They reassert the enduring significance of sentiment and dependency in the informal sectors of social care. In my view, however, they underestimate the importance of rights and the potentially negative implications of the psychological links between dependency, unrequited obligation and stigma. They also replicate Titmuss’s error in drawing such a sharp distinction between egoistic and altruistic values.

Nevertheless, The World of the Gift is an intellectually challenging and enjoyable book to read. Its subject is of central importance in the study of social policy because the gift relationship is still ‘all pervasive in our society’. If this were not the case, the formal structures of the modern welfare state would have collapsed into bankruptcy and chaos long ago. Feminists may lament the implications of this claim. Their masculine counterparts may fret about the new responsibilities they will have to assume if the structures of informal altruism are to become more truly egalitarian in character.

Nevertheless, Godbout and Caille’s message is unequivocal – when governmental and market agencies become involved in the informal social care sector there is always a danger that they will change it for the worse. Governments fail their citizens in three ways. They renege on their formal obligations to them. They undervalue the responsibilities they discharge towards each other. And they overlook the fact that when the private domain of welfare is invaded and colonised by statutory social services – or markets – it loses its distinctiveness and much of its effectiveness.

ROBERT PINKER
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This book examines social exclusion in the context of housing provision and homelessness, with a particular focus upon the issue of community care. Although the quality of chapters is variable, as is often the case with such edited volumes, parts of this book make incisive comments on both homelessness and community care. The diversity of authors, ranging from academics to housing professionals and even a commercial lender, all add to the richness of the volume. Parts of this book will certainly appeal to a range of students, academics and professionals working in the fields of housing, homelessness and community care, as well as those with just a passing interest in these issues and ‘social exclusion’.

The term ‘social exclusion’ has become highly fashionable in recent years,
pervading political, mass media and academic accounts of many social prob-
lems. All too often, however, the use of this term has clouded the stark reality
of what social exclusion actually means for both clients and service providers.
As the authors rightly say, ‘there is a considerable literature on community
care and housing issues which too easily sanitises the passion, belief and com-
mitment’ (p. 14) of those working with the homeless, and this book con-
sciously attempts to avoid such sanitised perspectives. The fact that this book
revolves around the varied work of a specific organisation – St Anne’s Shelter
and Housing Action in Yorkshire – helps to locate the wider debates on hous-
ing and community care policy in the everyday reality that is the problem of
homelessness and social exclusion. It is certainly a strength of this work that
is absent from some comparable texts. None the less, the strong focus on the
work of just one organisation was – initially at least – rather disconcerting.
Yet a concern with drawing out the wider implications of the experiences of St
Anne’s pervades the volume, and considerable effort is made to continually
locate the specifics of this organisation in the wider policy arena. Generally,
the contributions all rise to this challenge and the volume is stronger for it.
Some chapters stand out as being particularly rich.

After the introductory chapter by Fiona Spiers, which succinctly orientates
the reader to the approach and concerns of this book, there are two interest-
ing chapters on both the development of community care and changing atti-
dudes towards mental health issues. Both contributions, by Gerald Wistow and
Alan Butler respectively, offer succinct and accessible overviews of important
changes and would be a good place to start for anyone developing their inter-
est in these areas. The next chapter, by Nigel Malin, makes some pertinent
points while examining the vexed debates surrounding ‘quality of life’. The
importance that he attaches to the distinction between user and staff percep-
tions in considering improved quality of life was particularly encouraging.
This is a fundamental point which is none the less often ignored.

Alan Deacon’s chapter, on the resettlement of the single homeless, similarly
makes for good reading. In particular, he highlights the very real importance of a
range of provision – to match the range of problems presented by the single
homeless. A similar point is made by Ian Law and his colleagues who provide a
very welcome examination of racism and ethnicity in the context of youth home-
lessness. For a variety of reasons, the issue of ethnicity has long been something
of a conundrum in the context of youth homelessness and this chapter is particu-
larly refreshing. The same can be said for the two concluding chapters, which
consider both the role of owner occupation and other housing sectors, and the
role of the commercial lender in addressing homelessness and social exclusion.
These chapters, by Janet Ford and Mike Blackburn respectively, both make for
thought-provoking reading and it is encouraging to see such an engagement with
contemporary changes to housing tenure and provision in this volume.

In short, despite the disconcerting focus on the work of just one organisa-
tion, this book, none the less, offers a rich variety of accessible chapters, which
could offer much to anyone with even a cursory interest in social exclusion,
housing and community care.

MARK LIDDIARD
University of Kent

Acknowledging and tackling ‘social exclusion’ is one of the major ways in which New Labour claims to set itself apart from its predecessors in government. The phrase may be newly fashionable, but the concept is not. There is a long history in social policy analysis of describing the ways in which not only markets, but also state welfare provisions, generate and sustain the inequalities and discrimination which foster exclusion. Purdy and Banks acknowledge this history. However, in editing this collection, they argue that health and health care have been relatively neglected in recent debates over the dimensions of social exclusion. They aim to fill this gap, through their contributors, by presenting ‘a sample of the policies and practices of exclusion currently experienced by patients and users of the health services in the UK, and by nurses and other health professionals providing these services’ (p. ix). The emphasis is thus intended to be mainly on the NHS rather than on the broader social and economic factors which influence health.

The chapters are a mixed bag. All are interesting and worth reading in their own right. Most acknowledge the tensions and contradictions within an NHS which, even now, is viewed widely as one of the most inclusive of welfare state services, yet at the same time not only reflects exclusionary practices within the wider society, but additionally has created some of its own. Some (particularly the editors themselves) are also very pessimistic about the prospects of New Labour’s rhetoric about tackling social exclusion translating into effective policies and positive outcomes, emphasising the continuities rather than the discontinuities with previous Conservative policies.

However, the variety of the chapters, in terms of content and approach, at times challenges the attempts of the editors to mould them into a coherent collection. Some consider particular aspects of health care: maternity services, surgery, psychiatry and public health, for example. Others discuss specific groups, such as older people and low income families. Broad trends in health care constitute the focus for others: the rise of managerialism and the implications of the ‘information age’. The theme of exclusion is more explicit in some chapters than others. It is easy to see, for example, how the ‘managerialisation of state welfare’ reviewed by Clarke, or the negotiated process of post-operative discharge described by Fox, could have unequally distributed exclusionary tendencies, but neither author explicitly discusses these.

Different chapters also seem to be addressing rather different audiences. A number of authors contribute summaries and discussions of issues which would be useful to recommend to undergraduate students of health and health policy. Alan Walker’s review of the issues around the empowerment of older people in health services is a good example, as is Clare Blackburn’s well-expressed and succinct discussion of the health and health care experiences of low income families with children. On the other hand, Nick Fox’s chapter contains a more specialist discussion of research approaches and research findings, while Sue Davies produces a detailed account of an innovative community health development project, which would be of particular interest to practitioners. This range fits with the ‘wide readership’ to which the editors
aim to appeal, but makes it difficult for the book to claim clear territory either as a textbook or as an original contribution to the contemporary policy debate.

JANE KEITHLEY
University of Durham


Ian Hacking (1988) has called for greater rigour in the deployment of that tired metaphor ‘social construction’, a criticism relevant to this volume. The title seems tautologous, after all, what would it mean to say that community care was not socially constructed? Moreover, to talk of construction suggests a sense of building, or assembling from parts. It also suggests that something taken for granted is going to be unmasked or refuted. Although the first part of this collection does offer an overview of the historical development of health and welfare, the analysis does not substantiate the claim implied in the title. Here and elsewhere, the phrase ‘social construction’ is used so frequently as to become rather meaningless.

In fact, this type of conceptual confusion is a general characteristic of the first part of the book. Admittedly, to survey the field from the Poor Law Amendment Act to the present day in seventy-two pages is a tall order. However, Symonds’ attempt feels crudely inadequate. The historical narrative is uninspired, and the use of sociological theory is superficial and simplistic. Moreover, the discussion is full of untidiness and inaccuracy where clarity and precision are needed. For example, historians will search in vain for the National Health Insurance Act of 1911 and the Disability Discrimination Bill Act of 1995. These errors occur in two of the many lists and tables which are scattered throughout the book, but which rarely illuminate effectively the complexities and contradictions of community care developments. In general, the book could have benefited from the attention of a good copy-editor.

The second part of the book focuses on the changing role of the professions. But there is no immediate improvement in style. For example, it is difficult to deconstruct statements like the following: ‘Professional concerns are seen to be focused on the outcomes of service restraints for service users. As a result of this concern, it will be seen that professionals are involved in determining means to redress the current exigencies of policy for people to whom they have a duty to provide care.’ Moreover, Anne Kelly’s implication, here and elsewhere, that professionals are motivated mainly by altruistic commitment to patients and service users, would surely be contested by those more sceptical about professional motivations, and more aware of the oppressive nature of many modern welfare services. Kelly argues against the control of professionals through new managerialism, but fails to discuss the need for quality assurance and accountability to service users. In the wake of the Bristol case, and with the advent of clinical governance, this seems to be an omission. There is a rather dated feel to several sections of the book, both in terms of references and discussion. Time-lags are inevitable in studies of this kind, but in this book feel particularly unfortunate.

From a disability perspective, there is little to commend this book, with the
exceptions of the contributions of Robert Drake. User perspectives do not feature prominently in most of the chapters, many of which champion noble professionals in their resistance to management and government, rather than the people on the receiving end of services. The development of the disability movement is largely ignored, and terms such as ‘mental and physical handicap’ are used, despite having been generally discredited. There is the briefest discussion of independent living, and no reference to the recent work of Jenny Morris, or the impact of direct payments. This is ironic, given that authors here argue that district nurses should provide more direct care, including ‘soft inputs’ such as counselling and support. Yet many disabled people are now ‘voting with their feet’, and choosing non-professional personal assistants in preference to domiciliary care and nursing services which they have experienced negatively.

Despite the faults outlined, there is also much of interest and value in this collection. I found some of the more focused discussion of the role of particular nursing professionals very useful, particularly Pat Davies’ report of research with psychiatric nurses. There is a good, clear analysis of management by Nancy Harding, together with chapters on community development and the gap between rhetoric and reality which should be helpful for practitioners and students. The final part of the book, entitled ‘care for communities’, contains a disparate selection of papers, of which Drakeford’s discussion of the importance of poverty, and Bytheway and Johnson’s unmasking of the ‘carer’ concept are especially good: the latter is one of the few chapters which uses the term ‘social construction’ appropriately.

In conclusion, this collection is uneven and disappointing. While cultural analysis makes an important contribution to social policy, the concept of social constructionism is too often used without intellectual rigour. Reviewing the entire field of community care may be a task beyond the capacity of a single volume. In particular, general accounts which cover both health and social services in the statutory, voluntary and commercial sectors within one discussion run the risk of generalisation and confusion. Readers will find material of value in this publication, but only by overlooking significant portions of the text.


TOM SHAKESPEAR
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This book presents an account of the workforce of social services departments which draws on material gathered in a comprehensive longitudinal survey of the estimated third of a million social services staff in the UK. It summarises and extends previous reports of work undertaken with Department of Health funding by a research team from the National Institute of Social work from 1992 to 1996. The research had three broad aims: to develop an understanding
of the structure and dynamics of the statutory social services workforce, to investigate the experience of working in social services in terms of job satisfaction and stress, and to assess developments in, and access to, training for different groups of staff.

Over 2,000 staff in the statutory social services in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland were involved in the survey, most of them were surveyed on two occasions. The study covers the situation of staff in four job categories – managers, field social work staff, home care workers and residential workers. The timing of the survey meant that it reflected a period of substantial reorganisations in local government as well as restructuring in the social services departments of all three of the countries researched.

The book examines the routes into social services work, the current work responsibilities of staff and the levels of job satisfaction and stress experienced by staff. It identifies and examines three key themes which emerged from the staff interviews – violence, ethnicity and gender. It also analyses issues of training and job change. In its concluding chapter it highlights the main themes emerging from the research, relating them to the differing perspectives of service users, employers and staff.

Given the neglect of research into social services departments in the 1980s and 1990s, this book provides an invaluable and long overdue account of how staff have fared in the complex, changing environments of local authority social welfare. The insights provided into the employment histories of staff and the reasons why they remain in, or leave, social services, provide an important contribution to what has been to date a fragmented literature on these topics. The book describes a pattern of staff turnover (9 per cent in England) comparable with other professions. However, it is a workforce which does not fit neatly into conventional approaches to career progression and professional training. Staff enter this area of welfare relatively late in their lives. This is associated with a pattern of leaving and re-entering employment. It is a workforce characterised by flexibility, commitment and substantial family responsibilities.

A theme emerging in relation to staff satisfaction with work across all four job areas was frustration at the perceived increase in bureaucracy and paperwork, which had resulted from recent legislative and organisational changes. This frustration with greater organisational demands in this area went side by side with generally high levels of satisfaction with work. Staff reported most satisfaction from work over which they had most control and activities that were perceived as producing rewards because of the direct results of staff's own efforts. Stress was associated with those aspects of work over which staff had least control, particularly a lack of resources and an inability to provide a good enough standard of service.

The survey confirmed findings elsewhere about the relatively high levels of violence experienced by social services workers compared with other health and welfare workers. It highlighted the racism experienced by black staff and their feelings that equal opportunities policies were not being adequately implemented in their departments. The continuing disadvantage experienced by women in relation to maximising their potential in social services departments emerges strongly.
In summarising their findings and their implications for the next millennium the authors conclude that ‘the social services workforce is stable, committed and resilient but it is not indestructible and cannot necessarily withstand constant change’ (p. 60). They suggest that it is a workforce with a ‘deteriorating capacity either to absorb the existing demands of working in welfare, or to respond positively to further change’ (p. 184).

In these circumstances, the authors point to the need to promote more mobility between job types, equal career opportunities for all staff and the establishment of an integrated continuum of training that will offer access to the majority of staff who are currently part time, weekly paid, unqualified and in the main, women. As they point out, such responses will also need to take into account the likelihood that an increasing number of staff will find themselves working outside of social services not only in the non-statutory sector, but in health, education and housing settings.

Faced with proposed and ongoing changes in service delivery and training in the personal social services, this landmark study provides an important orientation point for those currently developing welfare policy and practice, as well as those with a brief to commission research for the twenty-first century.

J. Ginn et al., (1997), Work Histories of Social Service Staff, London: NISW

ANN DAVIS
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The past year has seen a proliferation of texts on various aspects of disability. Barnes and Oliver (1998) and Drake (1999) both concentrate on social policy. Matters of image, language and communication have been expertly dealt with by Corker (1998) whilst Priestley (1999) has analysed professional practice and the development of new service objectives. This new volume by Barnes, Mercer and Shakespeare strikes out in a new direction. The book is aimed primarily at theoreticians and especially at sociologists. The framework is straightforward. The authors begin in what is, at least for those conversant with disability studies, familiar territory. They contrast the medical and social models of disability and show how a medical perspective continues to pervade the key institutions of Western society: the family, education, work, housing and the built environment.

From this initial sociological overview the authors move to a political and cultural analysis of the relationships between disabled people and the state. These middle chapters are concerned with the struggle of disabled people for those rights which constitute the hallmark of citizenship. The book’s essential message is that conventional politics has failed disabled people. Sadly, the authors appear to have a point. As I write this review a dozen voluntary
organisations have resigned from the Disability Forum to protest against proposed cuts of £750 million in disability benefits. At the same time, Lord Ashley and the All Party Disablement Group are lobbying desperately to strengthen the powers of the forthcoming Disability Rights Commission and the Disability Movement is fighting tooth and nail to prevent the government from embarking on yet another of its patronising and misguided ‘hearts and minds’ campaigns intended to persuade the public that ‘disabled people are just like the rest of us really’ (British Council of Disabled People, 1999). The continual re-emergence of such campaigns reinforces the authors’ point that disabled people face particular problems when they seek to assert that to have an impairment is not to be in an aberrant or deviant condition, indeed, that disabled people’s culture is as valid, vibrant and fruitful as that of any other social group.

It is fair to say, then, that the part of the book that guides us from theory via policy to outcomes takes a path that has become rather well-trodden in recent years, but the exploration of the relationship between theory, popular culture and communication (whilst not wholly virgin territory) is perhaps the most important contribution in terms of what is new. An incisive and thoughtful chapter on culture, leisure and the media explores the oppressive and exclusory qualities of a society contoured by the values of a non-disabled majority population. The key question here is whether disabled people would prefer to combat the negative images of ‘mainstream’ culture by securing and expressing their own cultural values and identity, or instead use their growing influence to infiltrate – and bring about some mutation in – the prevailing culture (whatever that might be). In their judgement, Barnes, Mercer and Shakespeare agree with Sutherland’s (1993) view that what disabled people can produce can ‘blow the past away’.

The book ends with a critical evaluation of the sociology of disability. The chief criticism of contemporary sociology is its sheer lack of reflexive thought in this area. Notwithstanding Oliver’s (1990, 1996) formidable challenge to social scientists developed in his seminal texts on the social model of disability, the medical or personal tragedy model still dominates much of sociology, including the sociology of social work. Barnes, Mercer and Shakespeare thus see contemporary sociology as disabling. Worse than this, the social relations of research production remain, for disabled people, ultimately exploitative. They therefore call for a fresh start, a new relationship between disabled people and medical sociology, one in which disabled people are no longer objects of study, one which embodies both a rights-based approach and an anti-oppressive pedagogy.

Exploring Disability is in some senses a ‘position statement’. By the end of the book the reader will be aware of the considerable shifts in thinking that have been wrought over the past twenty years or so. Disabled academics and disability activists have much to be proud of in effecting this sea-change. However, academic sociology has remained somewhat becalmed, one might almost say oblivious to these new currents. This well-written and wide-ranging conspectus provides the charts that sociology will need if it is to reset its course.

C. Barnes and M. Oliver (1998), Disabled People and Social Policy, Harlow, Longman.

This book is a carefully argued and research-based consideration of three linked developments in the national employment relations systems of European countries. The first and fundamental development for Teague is the increasing lack of fit between the post-war model of economic citizenship and the changes in production systems and social structures across Europe. In short, the so-called European model of economic citizenship, a complex of economic and social relations embedded in a whole array of public and collective institutions not found elsewhere in the world, is now coming under intense pressure. The reason for this, according to Teague, is that the very economic functionality of these institutions is becoming increasingly weakened by regional and global economic trends. The classic problem of matching equity with efficiency thus again confronts European governments and business enterprises. The second development is that European national governments are attempting to reform their labour market institutions in response to such pressures but without a clear vision of what a new Social Europe should look like. The third development is that while such national institutional change is confused, the role and significance of ‘Europe’, especially the European Union (EU) cannot be underestimated.

The book is organised into three parts. Part I deals with the details of the pressures upon European employment relations institutions coming from labour market performance and new forms of production. Part II deals with two different approaches to the reconstitution of economic citizenship in Europe. One is the ‘Europe of the Regions’ programme as a scheme for co-ordinated change of employment relations systems. The other is the varying ways in which selected European countries have sought to introduce active labour market measures and what Teague considers to be their New Keynesian similarities. The final part of the book concerns the development of the EU’s social policy: the impact of Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) upon Social Europe; and, finally, the possible ways forward for the remaking of European economic citizenship in the light of the social and economic changes already discussed. In the last chapter, Teague discusses both the policy alternatives and the problems for democratic governance in seeking to achieve a new structure of social and economic relations – a new structure of European ‘economic citizenship’.

So what can the European social policy analyst gain from reading this book? In the first place, s/he will gain a much better understanding of the
economic context for social policy both in terms of economic policy and in terms of the broader role of key economic factors at work in Europe. Teague shows why it is so important to understand the linkage between national government economic policy, especially labour market and employment relations policies, and social policies. In so doing he rebuts the simplistic conclusion of some that Europe must face an ‘Americanisation’ of its labour market and social policies along neo-liberal lines. His research indicates that different European governments and firms are, in fact, adopting different approaches alongside EU-sponsored economic strategies. Second, Teague shows that Europe is developing economically as a region in a way which seems likely to engender trans-national labour markets in Europe and with it need for European-wide employment relations systems. Such changes would have significant implications for national social policies, of course. Third, Teague provides a (very) brief review of the nature of the EU’s own social and economic policies and an account of the impact of EMU upon European social policy, which is much more subtle than most others currently on offer. He argues that rather than leading inevitably to the collapse of the European social model, a ‘soft’ form of EMU could provide a warmer economic climate for future social policy development than would otherwise be the case.

That said, it must be admitted that this is a book more likely to satisfy social economists than social policy specialists: its approach, whilst instructive, is rather lacking in discussion of European social policy other than that linked with employment relations. Teague, indeed, argues that it would be foolhardy to attempt to chart both the difficulties of welfare state and employment relations systems in one book. The problem with this view is that it seems to rest on the premise that social policy and welfare provision are essentially responses to economic changes and policy. However, Europe is surely a leading example of the way in which existing social policies and the whole ideological and institutional construction of ‘welfare’ systems have had, and will continue to have, an independent influence upon the politics of economic policy and economic change. Interestingly, if a little confusingly in comparison with the rest of the book, the questions discussed in Teague’s last chapter illustrate precisely these points.

ROB SYKES
Sheffield Hallam University


This edited book by Walker and Naegle is part of the Open University press ‘rethinking ageing’ series. Indeed, the book is a welcome attempt to rethink what we understand and how we explain the processes of ageing in contemporary societies. The book’s specific focus is a delineation of the political representation of older people across Europe. The contextual backdrop that lies behind the publication of such a book is that there is little in the social policy literature of specific case studies of political processes and subsequent policies and provision of services that affect older people in different European coun-
tries. This book is to be commended for its bold attempt and superb coverage that synthesises such political issues.

The organisation and structure of the book is very impressive. It has two parts: the first part, with Chapters 1–4, is concerned with a general overview of political issues of concern for older people in Europe. The second part of the book, Chapters 5–11, provides different case studies in illuminating recent developments by regional and national governments to increase the political participation of older people.

Generally, the first part is an examination of the different structures of representation for older people. What was found is that there are huge differences of what national and regional structures exist to engender a political arena in which em-power-ment is to be realistically mobilised and achieved. For example, in Austria it is documented that at regional level, there exists a senior citizen advisory board which has played a pivotal role in mobilising concern over issues such as social security and health care for older people (p. 32). However, in the UK, there is no regional body that has been set up to deal with social issues for older people (p. 34). This raises serious questions of democratisation and decision making in an advanced capitalist society. Indeed, Walker, in the introduction, has serious reservations about the political attempts of national government in the UK to ‘listen’ to pension campaigns when there are consequent cuts in public pensions (p. 11). In Italy, there is an Italian Pensioner Party with representation in government – which provides a focus for debate in the UK.

The second part of the book, Chapters 5–11 provides an empirical analysis of the national case studies that concerns the politics of old age. This edited collection has amalgamated the diverse case studies. Incidentally, the case studies centre around Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Sweden, UK and Hungary. There is one case study on the USA which does not quite fit the title of the collection – perhaps the chapter could have been written with a comparison with Europe. Each chapter gives a slight historical overview of the main policy initiatives for older people and up-dates the reader with contemporary illustrations and future directions. For example, in Chapter 10, Ahn and Olsson Hort give an excellent insight into the interplay between current privatisation and cutbacks in resources which have a detrimental impact on the lives and experiences of older people. However, Swedish older people can provide an oppositional counterforce in the context of support and membership of pensioner organisations. In Chapter 8, Mirabile asserts that the participation of older people in Italian society was fought for by the trade union movement, which has a large membership consisting of older people. However, Naegele confirms in Chapter 7, that in Germany there is a low level of political activity from older people. What seems to be highlighted from the different case studies is that political representation for older people is relative to time and spatial environment in Europe.

This is one of the best books I have read in a long time. Walker and Naegele have edited a magnificent piece of work which analyses the temporal gaps and fillings of the sociopolitical landscape of old age in Europe.

JASON L. POWELL
Liverpool John Moores University

After years of observing US food policy, I continue to marvel at certain key features of its extraordinary complexity. The US food system delivers some of the best and the worst food in the world. It is unsurpassed in its productive might, its trade power and the grip corporations have over public policy. Yet alongside this food ‘fire power’, it manages to shock by the brilliance with which it recrates hunger.

This fine book by Peter Eisinger addresses the seeming permanence of hunger within that rich country. The scale of the problem defies the imagination but not the dissection of Eisinger. His book is crammed with evidence and arguments that, even as prosperity has grown, so the army of the hungry has remained. In the mid-1960s, one study showed that 9 million Americans had diets which were deficient. By the mid-1990s, after decades of argument about how to measure hunger, the Census Bureau calculated that 11 million Americans lived in households which were ‘food insecure’, with a further 23 million living in households which were ‘food insecure without hunger’, in other words hovering on the edge of hunger. What was that about human rights?

Even for people not interested in the juncture of food and social policy, this book would make valuable reading. It provides a case study of how public policy can recognise, often reluctantly, yet fail to resolve a problem. Sceptics might conclude that in a culture where welfare is rooted in the English Poor Law, no resolution is likely, but Eisinger tells a modern tale, infused with ideologies of family life, responsibilities and hard cash. This is the reality behind the propaganda the US now triumphantly offers the world since the demise of the Soviet Union: the world of flexible labour forces, low minimum wage rates, punitive ethics and a belief in self-amelioration, while living standards quietly drop. But before we Europeans relax into smug anti-Americanism, beware. What we see so clearly in the US exists in most rich societies in a different form; less starkly, perhaps, but there none the less; see Graham Riches’ superb comparative collection *First World Hunger* (1997). Even though hunger amidst plenty is an old, old theme in both social policy and food policy (think Ireland, not just the UK of the nineteenth century), we need to look at contemporary US hunger with some humility. Quietly, inexorably, many rich societies are falling into line with the US model. The entire European Union, for instance, overproduces food yet hunger stalks this continent too.

Eisinger’s book should be required reading on courses covering US social policy. What makes it special is not that it tells of the horror of food poverty, though it does that well enough, but that it charts the battles within US public policy over hunger. It documents the patient efforts of good people to get the US to recognise this shameful streak in its much-vaunted economic success story. The ‘can do’ culture cannot lecture other forms of society about inefficiencies whilst it has such indignity at home.

One among many myths that the book nails is that hunger in the US is a forgotten issue. Polls show that most US citizens are aware of, are offended by and feel they do something to alleviate hunger in America. No, the problem is not that people do not know but that the policies have not succeeded. Eisinger
argues that the myriad interventions have collectively targeted aid on pockets of need. As a result, US food/social policy is characterised by special programmes: food stamps, the special supplemental food programme for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), the school lunches and breakfasts, the special milk, the summer food service, the emergency food assistance programme (TEFAP), the soup kitchens and food banks, the food distribution on Indian reservations, the nutrition programme for the elderly, and so on. Of these, the food stamps programme is worth by far the most – $22.8 billion in 1996. The next most costly is school lunches, which cost the state a mere $6.1bn. Yet both these programmes touch 25 million US citizens. The others have emotional but less financial clout.

What I most enjoyed about this book was the meticulous and dispassionate manner in which Eisinger tells his tale. I learned much about the efforts to define and measure the scale of hunger in the US. Involved as I am in the UK movement to confront our food poverty, I have always tried to learn from the US by keeping track of various Congressional hearings and of the growth of Food banks and Second Harvest (redistribution of reject but safe food). There still has been no UK Parliament Select Committee Inquiry but we have had our Black and Acheson reports which gave the cost of diet-related ill-health. Even the Conservative government recognised this cost, which is why it set up the Nutrition Task Force Low Income Project Team and now the Blair government has set up the Social Exclusion Unit’s Access to Shops Policy Action team (on both of which I sat). We await the outcome of this formal recognition here, but US experience suggests that perhaps we should not hold our breath; it is the process which matters, not a state begging bowl.

Although there is much we can learn from observing the US scene, I have certain major reservations, notably its acceptance of the voluntary schemes of Food Banks. These are now big business and are being exported throughout the First World. This system distributing unused food, in my view, institutionalises short-term crisis management; it is no more than Victorian philanthropy dressed up. It is our political duty to resist it, because once in, the state uses it to shed responsibilities. What I admire most about the US scene, on the other hand, is its army of activists, people who have said: ‘no, we are not prepared to accept this situation as civilised’. I thrill at this brave band, some of whom are academics, others politicians and others from churches and citizens organisations. Key people bond them together. Eisinger shows how in the US, as in the UK, these strands of work have been most effective when co-ordinated. The danger is that people get tired or old or bought off.

Through him, we can salute people like the Food Research and Action Centre or the academics at Tufts University but we must also accept Eisinger’s conclusions. They are sobering and echo my own. No private philanthropy can banish hunger. Voluntary action is limited but can be flexible and quick to respond. Good work is often diminished by being infused with religious ethics. Targeted programmes ameliorate immediate hunger but do not prevent the arrival of new armies of the poor. A society which celebrates individual success and rewards wealth will inevitably create hunger.

The sheer enormity of US hunger has made tackling the issue itself complex and I freely admit a partial knowledge. What is so marvellous is that, now, we
Europeans can turn to one volume which indicates it all. Eisinger roams widely over all the main players in the modern US hunger story. He charts bills presented to Congress, the role of pressure groups in forging alliances, attempts to change public perception, and the involvement of scientists in helping both confront and ‘gate-keep’ distribution. It is a tale of modern social policy everywhere; if you have not already read it, visit Phil Raikes’ marvellous Modernising Hunger (1988) to see the developing word side of this coin.

Eisinger tells the story of various attempts to define hunger and concludes that there is a continuum rather than an absolute threshold of hunger. This may be simple but it is true and it helps explain why so many efforts to use public policy to prevent hunger are side-lined by opposing vested interests. They can draw on a deep well of victim-blaming in popular culture to resist attempts to make the state redistribute wealth and build a consensual food culture. These are lessons we would do well to ponder this side of the social policy pond, too. Hunger is politics at its most raw and urgent. Charity is not enough.

TIM LANG
Centre for Food Policy, Thames Valley University


For a long time the Nordic welfare model has epitomised a possible ‘middle way’ between predominantly state and market ideologies, a balance between economic growth and social justice. However, the economic crises, in Denmark in the 1980s and more recently in Sweden and Finland, have raised questions about the sustainability of this type of welfare state. The desirability of a generous welfare system has even been debated within the Nordic countries themselves. Elsewhere the recent economic crises in Sweden and Finland have been interpreted as signs of the imminent collapse of the Nordic model; and market based solutions and policies have become increasingly prominent. The fate of Nordic social policy is therefore of importance not only to Nordic countries, but also to social policy more widely. This book, filled with rich empirical analysis, is a timely contribution to the debate. Nordic Social Policy looks in depth at the changing preconditions for social policy, the changes in social policies and the development in the welfare of the people. In other words, the focus is on what has actually happened in social policies and the impact on the welfare of individuals and families. Taken as a whole, the various analyses in the book provide a good basis for deciding whether the Nordic welfare states have given up their ‘middle way’.

The book is a result of the collective and co-ordinated work of more than twenty Nordic social researchers over many years. It is organised into three parts. The first reviews the changing preconditions for the welfare state, the second consists of the analyses of the social policies themselves, and the third examines welfare outcomes. The changing preconditions include citizens’ support for the welfare state, changing demographic and family structures and the political and economic development. The empirical analysis studies policies
such as labour market activation and social security in cash and kind, as well as welfare outcomes such as income inequality, poverty, marginalisation and social exclusion.

The results of the analyses are striking, although at times underplayed by the authors. Broadly speaking, the insights can be summarised in three points. First, main conclusion: ‘yes, preconditions and political rhetoric have indeed changed’. Second: ‘but no social policies have changed fundamentally, although some have been trimmed and others expanded’. Third, and most importantly: ‘there are no signs that economic downturns have gone hand in hand with increasing inequalities’. Relatively stable and successful welfare policies are thus the hallmark of Nordic social policy in the 1990s. Business as Usual in an Unusual World would, therefore, be a more appropriate subtitle for Nordic Social Policy than the somewhat misleading Changing Welfare States.

This is not to say that important changes have not occurred. Indeed, the authors note that the policies have changed towards a greater emphasis on activation in social security, and some benefits in both cash and kind have been cut and others improved. This, however, may be seen as trimming and adapting, rather than a wholesale departure from the principles of universal, generous benefits, and a large role remains for the state vis-à-vis other actors. Another change is that young people in Finland, Sweden and Norway are encountering increasing financial difficulties relative to other age groups – particularly older people, who can no longer be regarded as among the most economically viable groups in the Nordic countries.

The book is a rare contribution to comparative social policy in bringing together researchers from different countries and asking them to collaborate under a common research framework and with original data. The authors effectively destroy myths from both the left and right about the crisis of the welfare state and the worsening social problems. However, it would have been instructive to explore how social policies work to prevent social problems from occurring in adverse economic circumstances. Indeed, the book as a whole shows that the Nordic welfare state prevented widespread poverty resulting from the sudden and very deep recessions in Sweden and Finland, and also suggests that their comparative welfare systems have contributed to their fast recovery. Although the study points to the inadequacy of statements on the fate of the welfare state and welfare outcomes based on aggregate measures, it fails to identify the mechanisms at play. For example, relatively unchanged income distributions do not mean that nothing of importance has changed. As an illustration, imagine that the whole population or major segments of it become worse off, as was more or less the case in Finland in the early 1990s. Such a situation does not show up dramatically in statistics on income inequality. However, the economic position of benefit recipients has generally deteriorated relative to people with earned income in the 1990s, not only in Finland, but also in Sweden and Denmark. Hence, detailed studies of tax/benefits systems may help to reveal the impact on the well-being of people and – from a more economic perspective – on questions of work incentives. Another way forward might be to contrast the Finnish and Swedish experience with that of other countries with economic difficulties, but with different types of welfare state, if any. In general, it would be interesting
to put the whole study into perspective and compare the developments of non-Nordic countries, and so identify alternative routes to, and outcomes of, welfare. However, the editors note that it is an on-going research project which plans to include more countries in its next phase. With at least Britain and Germany among them, this would facilitate comparisons with two other archetypal welfare states in similar settings.

Overall, this book is an excellent collection of analyses, which bring much new material, and together provide a unique foundation for assessing the state of social policy and welfare in the Nordic countries. The book deserves to be read by everyone interested in social policy in a comparative perspective.

JOHN KVIST
The Danish National Institute of Social Research


This book is one of the most substantial and authoritative poverty studies to appear in Europe in recent years. Its strengths are methodological, theoretical and political. It analyses data from the Bremen life-course poverty study and relates it to data from other longitudinal poverty studies in East Germany and elsewhere and more generally to panel studies in Germany and the US. This analysis also links quantitative and qualitative data, so that the work is able to integrate discussion of time as lived experience with time as the sequence of objective events. The advantages and difficulties of longitudinal panel studies for the examination of social processes are well known and will not be discussed further here (see, e.g., Leisering and Walker 1998, Ch. 1). This book takes the exploitation of such data one step further by relating its account to theoretical discussion of welfare state modernisation and (post-)modernisation.

The material is situated within an understanding of social change that draws heavily on the ‘risk society’ theories of Beck (1992). Thus poverty in relation to need for social assistance is seen as a risk associated with the vulnerabilities of a particular stage in the life-course (in this study, working age) and poverty policy is designed to mitigate this risk, just as pensions tackle vulnerability to poverty when employment income ceases in old age, and education the risk of being unable to attain career options in youth (Chapter 2).

The empirical data analysis shows that ‘poverty has many faces’. Different groups are vulnerable to poverty for different reasons, are likely to endure poverty for different periods and respond to the experience of poverty and of receiving social assistance in different ways, ranging from the role of passive victim to the active exploitation of the opportunities that the social welfare system makes available. This conceptualisation of last resort benefit claimants as pro-active, as shaping their own futures in the context of the poverty relief system, is grounded in the linking of qualitative data on the experience of coping with poverty to quantitative material on the trajectories that individuals pursue through poverty. A relatively optimistic perspective emerges: most people who experience poverty succeed in coping with it and in escaping from it.

This approach has a clear policy relevance in two ways. First, it refutes the
'dependency culture' analysis of those who see poverty careers as the passive constructions of welfare policy, by showing that people respond in very different ways to welfare opportunities as well as to the dependency traps of the benefit system. Second, it forms the foundation for policy recommendations which are set out in the closing chapters of the book. These reflect currents in poverty policy elsewhere, but do not share the punitive aspects of, for example, recent US policy. The arguments centre on ways to strengthen the promotion of pro-activity in welfare design in moving towards a system which 'offers the poor better benefits but expects more from them'. Thus welfare will be linked to training and to policies designed to enhance work opportunities and employability through, for example, better access to childcare, as in Labour's New Deal. However, it is stated bluntly that it is necessary to ensure that the gender gap in pay must be reduced if policies that rely on a shift into employment are to effect a real reduction in poverty. The recommendations are particularly radical in the German context where social insurance links work benefits to work record and social assistance is typically thought of simply as poor relief.

The policy relevance of the work is strengthened by a review of the development of German poverty discourse in the post-war period (Chapter 7). The policy recommendations, the account of social change and the analysis of discourse link together in an attempt to shift modern European welfare discourse towards support for the policies outlined above. The empirical evidence argues that the experience and incidence of poverty have changed in ways conditioned by the transition from modern industrial to post-modern risk society and the book taken as a whole claims that a new understanding of poverty and new policies are therefore needed.

A book that operates on this scale is bound to provoke controversy. Here two issues may be mentioned. First, is the question of definition. Since the Bremen studies are primarily of social assistance claimants, poverty is implicitly defined in terms of entitlement to this last-resort benefit in the context of the German system for much of the book, although elsewhere broader definitions relating to inequality are also pursued. This leads to the problem that exit from social assistance tends to be seen as evidence of both policy success and of success in promoting the life plan of the pro-active claimant. However the findings on whether 'exit from social assistance marked the end of a period of poverty' are not entirely clear. On page 86 it is reported that this 'seems to have been common (it is, for instance, likely when paid employment starts'). The quantitative data show the extent of return to social assistance within five years and the German Panel Study (GSOEP) 'confirms that this is not a matter of income fluctuations barely above the poverty line'. On page 282 it is stated that most moves out of poverty fail to get above 70 per cent of mean equivalent income. Thus evidence that poverty is not always chronic is not evidence of progress towards equal social mobility. Success is real, but limited.

This relates to the second issue. The study is generally upbeat in showing that most people escape from spells of poverty. This fits the 'risk society' analysis with its 'democratising' claim that in the modern world contingencies tend to apply evenly across society rather than to particular groups, which may be defined, for example, on the basis of social class. When no one can rely on a
‘job for life’, middle-class groups may experience a transitory poverty, as the results of student unemployment or in career transitions. Equally, some needs (for health care, for example) may apply to anyone, although they, in fact, strike a minority of particular unfortunate individuals at any one time. Those with particular characteristics (age, class and area of residence) are more vulnerable than others.

*Mutatis mutandis*, the same logic may apply to poverty. The problem for policy-makers who wish to promote more universal provision and a more preventative approach lies in convincing the electorate that the relative risks in both cases are similar – that most people (or their families) are vulnerable to poverty in the same way as they are vulnerable to illness. Part of the project of this book is to contribute to shifting the dominant paradigm of poverty discourse in this direction, in addition to providing a new and empirically grounded analysis of the life courses of those who are temporally, chronically or episodically poor. Both book and project are a substantial undertakings.


**PETER TAYLOR-GOODY**
University of Kent


Wiseman’s ambivalence about globalisation is clear from the start. On the first page he notes that it ‘is the most slippery, dangerous and important buzzword of the late twentieth century’. As well as providing a clear warning about the way in which the word has been used, he also confirms its contemporary significance. Globalisation has become the watchword of governments and policy-makers, across the world, being alternately blamed and celebrated, depending on what particular action (or outcome) is being justified.

Wiseman starts by reviewing the main broad theoretical approaches to globalisation. He acknowledges that something really big is going on to the extent that, ‘space and time have been compressed by technology, information flows, trade and power so that distant actions have local effects’ (p. 14). Social relations stretch across space, across national boundaries, creating new sets of connections between people as well as between computer terminals and financial hubs. The global context has changed so that we find ourselves part of wider social and economic networks whose operation directly and immediately affects our daily lives. Nike sportswear is just one example of this – designed in the US, with prototypes developed in Taiwan, manufactured in many countries across Asia, sold in markets across the globe and helping to define the street style of young people in the main metropolitan areas of the world.

The challenges faced by nation–states in an era of globalisation have been felt particularly strongly in Australia, which has been dramatically affected by the speed-up and increased intensity of communication. Instead of being the victim of distance, isolated on the edge and caricatured by its characterisation
as ‘farm and quarry’, it has been drawn into an increasingly connected world.

For a British reader, the wonderful – slightly disorienting – shock of this book (which in a sense makes it genuinely ‘global’ rather than comparative) is the way in which the Australian experience resonates with familiar, yet slightly off-key, policy echoes. In some respects it is the similarity of the national political debate on different sides of the globe that is scary, but the differences are also important. They undermine any simple expectation of homogenisation or inexorability. Indeed it is clear that the active process of policy transfer (the borrowing of political tactics even if not always the transfer of ‘best practice’) is an equally important aspect of globalisation. So, for example, Keating in Australia – with his policy of ‘progressive competitiveness’ or ‘globalisation with a human face’ – can be seen as one of the begetters of Blair in the UK, just as Blair has sought to spread his own particular model more widely.

At the heart of this book is an attempt to capture the relationship between national – or local – scope for initiative and the global context which, rhetorically at least, appears to set ever tighter limits on what policy-makers, businesses, organisations and individuals may do. Wiseman sets out to challenge the notion that globalisation is ‘an all-powerful Godzilla’ (p. 2). The process of globalisation certainly shapes the context within which national politics plays itself out. But Wiseman questions those who claim that this leaves nation-states virtually powerless by highlighting the active role played by national politicians in translating globalisation into local political practice. As a final act of heresy – in the context of arguing for the development of a more extensive policy agenda, linking global, national and local initiatives – he suggests, not only that national governments have the scope to, but also that they ought to pursue a strategy of progressive taxation. Quite refreshing, really.

Allan Cochrane
The Open University


Can social enterprises serve as a way to rejuvenate the welfare state? The answer to this question is ‘yes’ according to Victor A. Pestoff. Beyond the Market and the State is a work that in a fruitful and exciting way combines theory, empirical research and political visions. Social enterprises are in Pestoff’s terminology either worker co-operatives, consumer’s co-operatives or voluntary organisations. The approach of the book is to show through theoretical arguments and empirical evidence a way of rejuvenating an increasingly petrified welfare state into a welfare society with good work conditions and empowered citizens.

The case study that Pestoff examines, and at times contrasts with Canada, Italy and Spain, is that of Sweden, well known as a former prototype of the welfare state, however, reconsidered in most of its foundations in the last decade. As the title of the book indicates, Pestoff wants to show that the alternative to the state is not the market, but rather complementary third-sector solutions.
The theoretical perspectives provided in the book cover general concepts such as civil society, third sector, welfare mix and civil democracy. More specific theoretical concepts are also introduced, since Pestoff wants to make a case for social enterprises. He develops arguments for multi-stakeholder organisations, social accounting (instead of traditional accounting), and finally the idea that social enterprises should create ‘good jobs’.

The theoretical section of the book is interesting, especially the parts where the author develops his thinking about multi-stakeholder control over social enterprises and where he argues for social accounting as the most relevant method to evaluate performance. Since these enterprises are based on other values (fraternity, self-help and benevolence) than state and market alternatives, they demand this specific form of accounting. Even if the arguments Pestoff provides for his case are well developed, he is here and there tempted to make far-reaching conclusions. There are examples where the visionary ideas colour the analysis such as ‘civil democracy provides a policy objective both for increasing public sector efficiency and strengthening citizenship’ (p. 81) or ‘multi-stakeholder organisations can help to transform the welfare state into a welfare society in Sweden and elsewhere in Europe’ (p. 127).

This strong emphasis on the positive properties of social enterprise is also reflected in the empirical part of the book. Pestoff demonstrates this through a unique empirical study of child care services in Sweden. Twenty-four parent co-operatives, sixteen voluntary organisations and seventeen worker co-operatives in different parts of the country were studied. The study focused on issues related to organisational differences (57 day care centres), staff (n = 244), their work conditions and participation and a parent study (n = 580) focusing on the interaction between clients and staff. The results were striking in how they showed advantages for these alternative day care providers:

Social enterprises appear to turn high-stress jobs into active jobs by promoting structures and processes for providing more decision authority and control, more social support, and often more client involvement. Thus, social enterprises taken together, and each of these three types in particular, should be given much closer and more serious consideration as a way of improving the psychosocial work environment, renewing and enriching working life, providing good jobs and reforming the public sector in advanced welfare states.’ (p. 191)

In the following chapters Pestoff shows that social enterprises are expected to enrich Swedish women’s work environment and to empower citizens as co-producers. The latter is interesting to confront with the expected risks with, especially, consumer co-operatives. In the debate, one opinion was that they could become reservations for resourceful middle-class families and that families in weaker positions (like single-parent families) would face a risk of being excluded. Pestoff’s data indicates that this may be the case, even if Sweden lacks comparable statistics on family resources for municipal day care. In all, the parents are very positive towards co-operative day care services. Unfortunately, the comparison with municipal day care services is only done through retrospective questions to parents who are using co-operatives, and only to approximately half of them with earlier experience of municipal care. Since it is often a deliberate choice for most of the parents in this group, it is
not surprising that they declare that co-operatives are ‘better’ than municipal services (between 77.4 and 86.5 per cent confirmed that opinion).

The last part of the book is more explicit in its visionary role: ‘Without a vision for developing and rejuvenating the welfare state into a welfare society and without the development of civil democracy, the welfare state of today will most likely collapse under its own weight and become a relic of the past’ (p. 253).

The book can be recommended to anyone who is interested in contemporary changes of the European welfare state. Even if the case is Sweden, both the theoretical, empirical and visionary contents of the book all go beyond the case. The, at least for a Swede, atypical unabashed use of data only from the ‘good’ social enterprises to make statements like the ones shown above is actually rather entertaining – there is no doubt that the visionary character of the book will be obvious to any reader. The vision Pestoff provides is well grounded in both theory and empirical research and it is certainly well worth further discussion.

LENNART NYGREN
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The most prominent divide in Northern Ireland appears to affect every area of social life to such an extent that various ethnic minorities can find themselves being asked ‘are you a Catholic or a Protestant, Muslim/Chinese/Jew?’. The ‘troubles’ and the sectarianism associated with them has led to a relative neglect of issues of racism in Northern Ireland, something that this collection seeks to redress. The failure to examine racism and discrimination has been aided by a lack of substantial evidence (there was no ‘ethnic question’ in the census in Northern Ireland) and by the view that there is no real ‘colour problem’, in part because the numbers of visible ethnic minorities appear to be so small. These are matters that the contributors to this book question and challenge.

Robbie McVeigh attempts to theorise the relationship between racism and sectarianism. In seeking to account for the specificity of Irish racism McVeigh sees the historical/colonial dimension in which Irishness has itself been racialised as a basis from which to understand the many ways in which race intersects with other social processes. He goes on to chart the emergence of a politics of difference and an anti-racist movement pressing for legislation and enforcement body akin to the CRE. This has resulted in the passing of the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997, which is basically similar to the 1976 Race Relations Act. Drawing on case law, as to what is regarded as an ‘ethnic group’, the order specifically includes Travellers as a protected group, though protection is withheld from groups defined by religious belief or political opinion, thereby excluding Catholics and Protestants from using it to claim discrimination. The law is not the only means to tackle discrimination and elsewhere attention is paid to the role of grants to voluntary groups as well as fair treatment and social need guidelines in raising awareness and advancing minority claims.

The emphasis from some contributors on community campaigns for legislation
and policy development differs from explanations of the emergence of the 1965 and 1968 Race Relations Acts as products of the ‘liberal hour’ when political elites stood in the face of popular sentiment. Here there is more of a sense of ‘bottom up’ political and social movements. Some of these themes are explored in other parts of this book, which look at the neglect of ethnic minority concerns by the main political parties, the broader international context for anti-discrimination legislation, and the role of the media in addressing and perpetuating divisions around race.

The second section provides a number of case studies of the main minorities in Northern Ireland and in most cases issues of health, housing and education are examined. The largest minority seems to be the Chinese community, followed by the Travellers, a group against whom there is an extensive history of discrimination, whether in the guise of social pathology or liberal humanism. The antipathy to them has been called sedentarism, which is defined as a specific form of racism against nomadic modes of existence. Although Travellers have been recognised in the Race Relations Order, Paul Noonan argues that the law will be unable to address their group rights and disadvantages in the form of low educational attainment or poor health status, for example. Reserved sites for Travellers are seen as akin to reservations or internal colonies and Noonan contends that the removal and suppression of them as a group can be called ethnic cleansing. The following chapters examine the Indian and Pakistani communities. As is Britain, the former are seen as becoming differentiated from other ethnic minority communities in terms of increasing spatial diffusion, decreasing family size and high levels of educational attainment. For some (though not the contributors to this book) this so-called ‘Jewish future’ for Indians is contrasted with the different fortunes of Pakistanis (and Bangladeshis on the mainland), who are sometimes counted as part of the ‘underclass’. Some American writers have used this to deny that racism is a factor in the production of social disadvantage. Because of this, it is noteworthy that Donnan and O’Brien stress the diversity and heterogeneity of even the very small number of Pakistanis in Northern Ireland. As they point out, to call them a ‘community’ is a form of sociological reductionism which ignores regional and cultural differences, as well as migratory experiences. Thus this also stands as an important corrective to those approaches which call for health and education services to become more culturally sensitive to the needs of, for example, ‘south Asians’. Interestingly, there is some evidence that sections of both the Indian and Pakistani communities feel concern that the effect of the Race Relations legislation may increase their visibility and vulnerability in a divided society.

There is undoubtedly scope for further investigation of racism in a society dominated by sectarianism, and the ways in which dynamics of ethnicity intersect with gender and class divisions. Some opportunities for comparisons with the mainland are under-developed, though it could legitimately be argued that some works on race in the UK have rarely felt the need to examine the situation in different parts of the country. This book should help to ensure that is less likely to be the case in the future.

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This is a short textbook, designed for students approaching the topic for the first time. It sets out with clarity the nub of major debates since the 1940s over health care. It covers all the areas one would expect to find. Berridge begins with an overview of demographic changes over the period. She outlines the debate over the relationship between war and social change and the extent to which the NHS emerged from a consensus. She charts the wartime and immediate post-war Labour governments’ influence on the creation of the NHS. This leads inevitably into a brief discussion of the continuities of the NHS with the previous health care systems, and the inherent weaknesses of the NHS. Berridge outlines changing health care provision, both formal and informal, over the last fifty years. She goes on to discuss health workers, such as doctors and nurses, and their relationship with the state; professional and lay attitudes towards health and illness; the mixed economy of health care, and health care provided by lay people, especially women, at which point she outlines feminist critiques of the sexual division of labour. Other issues covered include the changing nature of public health; inequalities in health; the changing organisation of health care, and rationing. Differences between popular perceptions and the reality of funding and rationing are mentioned, along with the pharmaceutical industry, medical technology, science and drugs. Berridge mentions the shifting interest among historians from state provision to the relationship between the state and the voluntary sector, a change in interest which reflected a growing awareness of the need for policies to co-ordinate health services. Thus, a huge number of issues are raised in a short space. The annotated bibliography will facilitate students’ pursuit of these subjects.

The book’s strength lies in the excellent guide to the shifting debates over health care policy rather than in a wider study of health and society indicated by the title. Having guided the reader through so many issues and introduced her/him to so many debates this reviewer is left somewhat puzzled by an artificial dichotomy which Berridge draws of academic health policy analysis having fallen between social policy and high politics; surely these are not mutually exclusive.

HELEN JONES

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This book is a pioneering attempt to make links between social policy as an academic discipline and environmental concerns. Ever since the publication of the Bruntland Report in 1987 (‘Our Common Future’, World Commission on Environment & Development, Oxford University Press, 1987) and the subsequent world conference in Rio De Janeiro in 1992 there has been a clear framework for such an integrative approach. Bruntland and Rio notwithstanding, there has been considerable resistance to making such links; both in theory and in practice. For example, many local authorities in the UK have now developed Local Agenda policies that purport to be holistic but nevertheless fail to include
practical measures to address issues of poverty and social exclusion. Departments of Social Services and Departments of Economic Development more often than not fail to refer to or substantially address LA21 issues. It would appear that many local authorities really cannot see beyond superficial ‘clean means green’ measures. In any event, attracting inward investment will always seem more important than addressing environmental issues. In universities, despite lip-service to interdisciplinarity, the ‘environment’ is seen as a sub-discipline of the academic subject of geography. Social services, poverty, social welfare likewise are the concern of Departments of Sociology and Social Policy. Meg Huby’s book is a brave attempt to cross these intellectual boundaries and integrate subject matter that is usually fragmented by disciplinary boundaries. In the current climate in UK universities of extreme competitiveness for RAE results there are few rewards for such effort despite tokenistic lip service The ‘real world’ cries out for research and publications that attempt to integrate disparate fields of knowledge. The RAE process has the effect of maintaining established academic empires and knowledge domains with all their irrelevance to the lives of ordinary people and a suffering world. Meg Huby is to be commended for seeking to unify across disciplines.

The book is laid out textbook fashion and has eight chapters. The introductory chapter tries to provide some integrative theory by introducing concepts of needs and inequality in the access to and distribution of resources. These are linked to environmentalist ideas and concepts of sustainability as elaborated in the Bruntland Report, the economic growth debates that are intrinsic to ‘green thought’, as well as the influential risk sociology elaborated by Ulrich Beck. Overall this is really an attempt at introducing some key themes linking social policy and environment. Meg Huby wants the concepts of inequality, sustainability and responsibility to provide a framework that can transcend the boundaries of social and environmental studies and facilitate holistic thought and action. The core of the book has separate chapters on ‘Water’, ‘Food’, ‘Housing’, ‘Warmth and Domestic Energy’, ‘Mobility and Travel’, ‘Recreation and Leisure’. Each chapter has a brief summary of the main points. The final chapter brings the issues together and discusses them in terms of concepts like risks, social responsibility, loss of amenity, political conflict, well-being and quality of life.

The key question that should be addressed to this book is, is it likely to succeed in its integrative intent by persuading the sceptical reader that there is merit in linking social and environmental policy? This reader felt that it does not quite succeed because the political and economic issues around distribution and redistribution are not addressed forcefully enough to satisfy either social or environmental radicals. Although there are many references to inequalities in access to and distribution of resources these are not highlighted strongly enough in the discussion. In the United States the environmental justice movement has played a leading role in theoretically and practically linking social and environmental justice. For example, the influential Sierra Club, one of the foremost players in the environmental lobby, has been obliged to change its polices on population control and immigration policy, which were implicitly neo-Malthusian, to policies that acknowledge the human rights of Native Americans and migrant workers. In the past, the Sierra Club has been
primarily concerned with wilderness protection; it now has to embrace the rights of minorities to land, water and resources. In other words it has a human agenda as well as a biocentric agenda.

Environmentalists who adopt ecocentric positions will not be happy with the human welfare perspective adopted by Huby. Her position throughout the book is pretty much what Robyn Eckersley called ‘human welfare ecology’. That is to say, the case for addressing environmental problems is grounded in anthropocentric human utility arguments. This might be expedient in the short term but is not likely to contribute to the wholesale revolution in values and behaviour that will be needed to seriously address ecological problems and instil respect for nature as well as secure a place for the non-human in this world. Some of the more thoughtful environmental philosophers like Tim Hayward have been seeking to reconcile the humanistic and biocentric positions. Huby comes down very clearly on the humanistic of the fence. Within the compass of an introductory book seeking to transcend social and environmental concerns these are complex and difficult issues to address and, understandably perhaps, they are not really taken up. There is, however, a cost attached to this. The anthropocentric values that have contributed to the environmental problems we now face are not really confronted as seriously as they might have been, nor is a reformulated social policy agenda considered as it might have been from an ecocentric perspective.

Another criticism that might be raised about this book is that it is not really clear who the readers might be. Is it a text for undergraduate students or postgraduates? This reader felt that it was too densely argued for undergraduates, apart from elective students in their third year maybe. Certainly it would be a welcome addition to the literature for post-graduate students in environmental management programmes and social policy students at post-graduate level. For practitioners there would need to be more case studies of local communities engaged in the LA21 process, both nationally and internationally. There is now a wealth of material post-Rio on which to draw.

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Early intervention in children’s lives plays a pivotal role in the Blair government’s ‘proactive’ welfare strategy. The New Labour project to ensure that we all develop into responsible parents and flexible, well-trained workers depends upon catching us young. The result has been an avalanche of policy initiatives including the National Childcare Strategy, Sure Start, the Social Exclusion Unit, the National Family and Parenting Institute, to name just a few.

This volume is an edited collection of papers given to a conference, jointly sponsored by the Family Policy Studies Centre and the Department of Health, as a contribution to the debate on this issue. It is aimed primarily at practitioners and policy makers across the broad range of agencies working with young children. The main themes are the need for ‘joined up thinking for joined up problems’ and the importance of developing more robust evidence-based evaluation of early intervention projects.
The book consists mainly of brief accounts of model projects in the UK and USA. Some of these, such as the Dorothy Gardner centre which has been operating in Westminster for over twenty years, are likely to be familiar to those working in the field. Less well known will be the ‘Big Brothers/Big Sisters Project’, which has only recently been imported from the US to the UK. Overall, the book does provide an indication of the vitality and diversity of the work which is going on at local level.

What is disappointing about this volume, particularly for an academic readership, is the lack of any critical debate about the rationale underpinning early intervention on both sides of the Atlantic. There is no sense here of the unease which many early years teachers feel about basing policy for young children on outcome measures which relate to adult life such as employability, delinquency and even the ability to secure a mortgage. Although the opening speech of the Conference which forms the first chapter of the book contains a ritual remark by Paul Boateng about the need to ‘listen to children’, the whole thrust of this policy initiative is far from child-centred and children’s voices are not represented here.

Equally disappointing is the exclusive focus on the US for models of excellence in early intervention. Justifying this, Michael Little, of the Dartington Social Research Unit, argues that the evidence from Europe ‘is not as robust as that from the USA’. Whether or not this claim can be justified, it remains the case that a European perspective might shift the whole focus of the debate. More attention might then be given to issues such as the level of child poverty, the case for parental leave and the age at which children should begin formal education.

Such is the enthusiasm of the government for a strategy of targeted early intervention and the obvious goodwill and general excellence of the initiatives described in this book, it might seem almost heretical to question whether current policy is really in the interests of young children. Nevertheless, it is a debate which the Family Policy Studies Centre could consider for a future volume.

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Hartley Dean and Margaret Melrose, Poverty, Riches and Social Citizenship, Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1999, xiv + 211 pp., £45.00, £15.99 pbk.

R. H. Tawney once observed obliquely about the question of redistribution that for the thoughtful poor, poverty is a problem of riches – the riches, that is, that others have. At a time when the issue of poverty and how to combat it effectively seems to be back on the agenda of government; when debates about citizenship for the poor are increasingly defined by government as conditional (‘work for those who can...’) and, as Ruth Lister’s foreword observes, often set within rigid and excluding either-or frameworks; and when the Chancellor of the Exchequer appears to be engaging in some forms of redistribution by stealth, this is indeed a timely book.

Dean needs no introduction to readers; collaborating in this and many other instances with Margaret Melrose, one of the growing band of researchers obliged to flit from contract to contract whilst producing research reports and
writing of a consistently high quality, he has (they have) produced a series of incisive and at times elegant expositions of the conditions of the poorest in society – beggars, benefit claimants (including those working ‘on the side’), and members of minority ethnic groups – each of them grounded in careful and, at times, challenging fieldwork-based studies.

The book starts from an eclectic body of past research, including Runciman’s exposition of Relative Deprivation and Social Justice, the British Social Attitudes surveys and more recent popularised commentaries on social and economic division, such as those of Will Hutton and J. K. Galbraith. Dean and Melrose build on this with findings from a detailed qualitative study aiming to locate differing theoretical perceptions about citizenship in the context of huge socio-economic disparities between rich and poor. The unique contribution of the book, they argue, is that by looking both at the ‘structural or class determinants of poverty and riches, and the manner in which they are constituted at the level of social and cultural experience and individual identity’, they are able to identify ‘a strategy which combines concerns with equality with concerns about difference’.

The obligatory review of evidence about the growing gap between rich and poor ends with a commentary on taxonomies of inequality. This is followed by reflections on discourses and meanings, drawn from theory, from the media and from respondents to the authors’ own study. Few respondents acknowledged their own poverty, a familiar enough finding. But more than half attributed the poverty of ‘others’ to structural reasons, including government policy. This finding may emphasise an important shift in British attitudes; past work by Eurostat revealed the British as a nation to be extraordinarily punitive and individualistic in explanations of poverty. This may be an unexpected, if rather dismal, bonus deriving from the horrendous growth of poverty over the past twenty years.

The third chapter is one of the most interesting since it explores perceptions of riches and wealth, an area of research which is remarkably unexplored despite the plea many years ago by radical American sociologists that the task of the social researcher should not be to look down at the poor but up at the rich. Dean and Melrose examine the perceptions ‘poor’ (and some who described themselves as rich) people have of the rich and what richness means. This opens up a fascinating vein of discussion: Is being rich to be free? Is it fun to be rich? Does richness equate with waste? and what are the responsibilities of the rich? Interestingly, the findings suggest that for the poorer respondents, richness is seen as largely to do with security (i.e., a mirror reflection of their lives in poverty) and that for most, both poverty and richness are distant phenomena – things that happen to other people (even in the era of the Lottery). They conclude that the prospect of poverty may be unsettling but so may be the ‘capriciousness of riches’ and that capitalism guarantees neither security nor success.

Limits on this review mean that it is not possible to do justice to the detailed and challenging discussions which follow around themes and tensions such as welfare and citizenship (in Alfred Marshall’s terms, ‘can everyone be a gentleman?’), security and freedom (‘social security isn’t a right, it’s a privilege’), and citizenship and social difference. The latter reminds us that the notion of
citizenship has historically been a flawed one for those ‘citizens’ who were female and/or black. The authors’ final synthesising task is to assert that the ‘basis still exists for a social citizenship project that is both redistributive and inclusive’. This is a challenging statement and a challenging task and depends, as the opening quotation from E. P. Thompson also reminds us, as much on political consciousness as on political and economic change.

Dean and Melrose argue that it is possible to reaffirm the value of class as an organising concept alongside that of identity (rather than in competition with it) and that the current sociological obsessions with globalisation and individualism should not cloud us to the fact that power at local, national and international levels remains largely shaped by class interests. The urgent political task is thus to rediscover and assert the importance of a solidarity which respects difference and diversity and to accord social policy the task, not of retreating to the definition of threadbare safety nets or to the management of risk, but of ‘imparting greater certainty to the meaning of citizenship’, even if this requires – from governments – a bit of redistribution along the way.

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