What’s new about New Labour? Just as the shape of Thatcherism only really emerged with a second Conservative term after 1983, so the question of the novelty of New Labour continues to excite interest and spark debate. The government may be in its third year of office – and Tony Blair in his fifth year as party leader – but the exact identity of New Labour remains uncertain. Is it a radical reforming government or one that is merely consolidating previous Tory reforms? How far does New Labour remain within the social democratic fold? And does the notion of a ‘third way’ provide a useful explanatory guide to Blairism?

The latest Social Policy Review offers a stimulating contribution to the ‘what’s new?’ debate, covering both the ‘big ideas’ of the Labour government (social exclusion and the third way) and the detail of current welfare reforms. In their introduction, Hartley Dean and Roberta Woods argue that social policy ‘currently finds itself at the eye of a storm of reform and intellectual controversy’ – a storm, as the contributions from the United States, New Zealand and Germany show, is hardly a local affair. In Britain, the main cause of this controversy, the editors suggest, is the welfare reforms of the Labour government: ‘the scale of change has been at least as dramatic as that which followed the election of the first Thatcher government in 1979, and the pace, if anything, has been more rapid’ (p. 7). But what’s new about it all?

Howard Glennerster offers a cautious yet sympathetic reading of New Labour’s third way: ‘This government is about a changed set of priorities and values compared with both old Labour and the Conservatives ... But there is also a lot of pure pragmatism and continuity with the past’ (p. 42). John Benington and David Donnison’s essay on social exclusion supports this view: ‘New Labour’s policies towards the poor have a number of similarities with, but also crucial differences from, both old Labour and New Right policies’ (p. 68). One important difference for Benington and Donnison (as it is for Glennerster) is New Labour’s challenge to both the universal welfare state and the free market as the means of tackling poverty; and that forms of governance which bridge the public, private and voluntary sectors are being advanced. This approach, they suggest, reflects the political necessity to capture the support of Middle England – who may be included but who are insecure. But the danger of all this, Benington and Donnison argue, is that the poorest and most seriously excluded may remain so, especially if the support mechanisms of the old (redistributive) welfare state are dismantled. For Dee Cook, it is the value of redistributive justice which New Labour must cling on to, especially if it is to tackle the causes of crime at their source.

Tim Blackman and Amanda Palmer share similar fears, arguing that the erosion of public and universal by private and targeted provision undermines the ability of the welfare state to be an ‘active agent of social and democratic
progress’ (p. 124). Blackman and Palmer see the ‘trajectory’ of New Labour’s social policy reforms as having been set by the Conservatives in the 1980s: the shift from welfare to work; the policy of a primary-care-led NHS; the retreat from universal state-funded provision (as in pensions); and the pathologising of the ‘underclass’ in debates about social exclusion. On housing, Peter Kemp argues that the Labour government’s policy of ‘making the market work’ shows that they accept ‘the Conservatives’ privatisation discourse, but without the ideological posturing’ (p. 183). Sharon Gewirtz’s contribution on Education Actions Zones also highlights the continuity with Conservative social policy: the consolidation of managerialism, the experiments with privatisation and the commitment to pedagogic traditionalism. But alongside these neo-liberal and neo-conservative policy agendas, Gewirtz argues, are more social democratic strategies concerned with redistribution and welfare integration. And what characterises the third way for Gewirtz is ‘this apparently pragmatic fusion of strategies’ (p. 147).

John Clarke’s essay provides a timely reminder that ideas like the third way are not always as neat and tidy as they are often made out to be: ‘ideologies/discourses/cultural formations can be more than random collages of bits of knowledge or ideas without being forged into rigorously unified templates of thinking’ (p. 83). Like the New Right, New Labour is a mixture; some elements are more social democratic than others; and the combination may be more or less coherent – Clarke’s ‘unstable equilibrium’. As Hilary Land points out in her chapter, New Labour appears to be working with different models of the family, each with its own objectives and policy implications: one is concerned with work, a second with children, and a third with family forms. The mistake is to read such a plurality of agenda as necessarily contradictory. The key to what’s new about New Labour must in the end concern itself with how the elements of this political formation are, as Clarke puts it, negotiated, accommodated or managed.

STEPHEN DRIVER
Roehampton Institute London


These three edited collections are characteristic products of contemporary European scholarship in Social Policy. They contain thirty-two separate chapters and it is impossible in a review of this length to ‘notice’ each individual contribution. In general the chapters are interesting and coherent but, with the exception of some in the Gough and Olofsson book, they are not exciting or innovative. Indeed, the main impression which I have derived from reading through them is that Social Policy scholarship is limited in terms of theoretical perspective, empirical knowledge and coherent understanding. To a considerable extent
it is becoming a self-referential scholastic game in which more attention is paid to internal conceptual debate than to the reality of a social order in change. This criticism is not made in a spirit of ‘anti-intellectualism’, quite the contrary. The deficiencies of the scholarship lie less in terms of unwillingness to ‘engage’ (although the forms of engagement are conventional and safe), than in the real deficiencies of social scientific method and consequent social account demonstrated in so many of these pieces. They have a dreadful tendency to be the products of ‘mere political theorising’.

This is least true of the Gough and Olofsson edited collection which is the product of seminars held at the Copenhagen Centre for Social Integration and Differentiation. The book is informed throughout by Lockwood’s original formulation of the distinction between system integration and social integration, enhanced (and well enhanced) by reference to Polyani’s notion of ‘embeddedness’ understood as a historical precursor of Lockwood’s formulation. In consequence there is a coherence of argument and real engagement with social theory here. In Lockwood’s own chapter we find a clear expression of the way in which social theorising must be embedded in real knowledge about the nature of the social world and changes in that world. In particular, Lockwood has a sense of the role of organised capitalists as agents in what Andersen in another good chapter calls ‘the change from market economy to market society’ (p. 134). I particularly liked Andersen’s formulation of New Right criticisms of welfare in terms of an increasing incompatibility at the level of system integration between the market economy and the welfare state, and the consequent failure of social integration in terms of the generation of a benefit dependent and market irrelevant ‘underclass’ – a critical formulation I hasten to say! His conclusion that New Right programmes in consequence attempt to achieve system integration purely through mechanisms of individual incentives rings true of programmes of the so-called centre left as well.

In conceptual terms this is a good collection. Olofsson offers an interesting synthesis of Lockwood and Polyani; Mortensen brings Habermas and Luhmann into the debate in a way which helps us with the understanding of their ideas, even if for me they are not particularly useful in engagement with the changing social world; and Mouzelis offers a synthesising conclusion which does draw the collection together. However, that conclusion demonstrates the empirical inadequacies of the collection. Mouzelis, a seriously interesting, coherent and intelligible social theorist, simply takes for granted the notion that social divisions in contemporary post-industrial capitalism are to be understood in terms of a two-thirds okay, one third excluded formulation and premises his remarks around that wholly erroneous account. We have good and serious theorising here, but poor social contextualisation.

The other two collections are weaker, precisely because they are not informed by any really rigorous theoretical framework and therefore work with the general character of European Social Policy debate. In other words, they take something like Esping-Andersen’s idea of different forms of welfare regimes, a useful heuristic tool when it was first formulated but one desperately in need always of contextualising, and specific histories, and use them to drive forward a series of accounts and arguments. This vastly over-institutionalised history – that is to say a history of institutional forms without adequate reference to collective
social actors and ideological programmes – is enhanced by ‘derivations’ from the ethical component of political philosophy as this has become part of the tool-kit of contemporary academic political scientists.

The Lind and Moller collection is very much in this vein. It originated in a European conference on ‘work and social integration’ which was a derivative of an EU funded thematic network on social inclusion policy and which involved collaborators from Denmark, the UK, the Netherlands and Portugal. There is some overlap with the Gough and Olofsson collection both in terms of personnel and perspective, with reference again to system integration by the editors (who constitute the overlap). However, this book is sustained by comparative referent rather than constant theoretical thematic. In empirical terms it is quite interesting, with lots of good titbits on the societies being discussed but without a general overview of the overall character of global post-industrial capitalism, a general failing of all these books despite the occasional use of post-fordism and similar terms. Hespanha’s chapter on Portugal illustrates the virtues of the collection – I know almost nothing about the country and learned a lot. The discussion of the debate on citizens’ income in Denmark, described in both this and the Gough and Olofsson collection, was likewise informative. However, despite a useful introduction and a constant concern with work as imposed integration, the collection lacked a unifying thematic and was somewhat bitty – usefully bitty often, but bitty all the same.

The collection edited by Bussemaker was the one I liked least. The editor, now a female Dutch Labour MP, does start her introduction with an effort at setting the general socio-economic context but the collection rapidly moves from the social world to academic debate informed by particular instance, and there it stays. At least the chapters are clear and coherent. Mullard’s discussion of citizenship as resistance is interesting, but it does not engage with the distinction between public and private spheres made in a subsequent chapter by Siim. In consequence, I was left wondering just why there should be any contradiction between a universalist public citizenship with a defined sphere of operation and as much difference within the criminal law as anyone would want in a private sphere. Again there is a lot of useful description but authors can go badly wrong – Siim’s assertion that there is no public childcare in the UK is not absolutely true even now and ignores a long history of dispute about exactly this issue through the Fordist era when the wartime system of general childcare was being dismantled. The editor’s own chapter here is about the changing form of life-courses between industrial and post-industrial capitalism, a vastly important topic, but it doesn’t engage with the emerging empirically founded literature on this topic in any serious way. Again this is an interesting collection but I was dissatisfied with it.

Overall, these books are certainly worth having in the University Library, although I wouldn’t buy any of them, not at those prices! I do think that they demonstrate what is wrong with Social Policy as a field, not so much that it won’t engage with social theory, because the Gough and Olofsson collection certainly does do that in a serious way, but that writers on Social Policy themes are stuck in the institutional domain in scholastic engagement with the institutional literature, and know far too little about the actual character of the post-industrial capitalism which is the social world within which institutions are embedded (compatible with Polyani’s conceptualisation I wonder?) and in which people lead their lives. Of
course, other than for Lockwood and Andersen, collective actors for change hardly figure here.

DAVID BYRNE
University of Durham


The Joseph Rowntree Foundation has sponsored a great deal of research into disadvantaged neighbourhoods and their regeneration. These five reports present material from a recent phase of this work, involving a ‘mini-programme’ embracing studies in four localities. The focus is on how areas function, their social networks, the extent of activity, and how residents view future prospects. Interrelated factors highlighted include the ‘social glue’, civic infrastructure, physical infrastructure, external links, and attitudes and expectations. Each locality is reported on individually, with *Joined-up places?* providing an overview.

There is much here that is useful, and it is hard not to be convinced by the central message. This was captured by the Foundation’s own headline (in its *Findings in Focus* summary in March–April 1999), which stated that ‘Disadvantaged neighbourhoods do not lack sense of community.’ The studies gathered information about residents’ local activities and commitments, exploring facets of neighbourhood, social cohesion and community life. It seems that people will do a great deal constructively to ‘get by’, even in very difficult situations. Thus disadvantaged areas may contain considerable human resources. Each report offers interesting specific insights. The Nottingham study deals with ethnically mixed housing areas, and also comments informatively on experiences with the Nottingham Partnership Council. The Liverpool study gives particular attention to gender and to age, and is instructive on both. The Teesside report reveals that stigma and social exclusion remain, despite expensive regeneration initiatives, and that tenure diversification may not provide a positive way forward. The analysis for East London shows some ingredients of social divisions, operating within and between localities and age groups, and indicates that contentious issues like ‘sons and daughters’ housing allocation policies are still in people’s minds. Each report could have considerable interest locally, although the cover price is high for relatively short documents. If a £2 charge makes a swim too expensive for locals (as the Liverpool report indicates), then readers are likely to be mainly professionals and politicians.
One of the best features of these studies is that they transcend the central agenda set implicitly for them, as attention is drawn to specific problems or relationships which fall outside the scope of debates about meanings of community, cohesiveness and neighbourhood. Many of these ‘outside’ issues themselves deserved greater in-depth study in a programme of this size. More could have been obtained to show how particular problems are perceived, and what strategies have been tried to counter them locally. Examples include the mismatch between youth housing needs or preferences on the one hand, and allocation practices in conditions of surplus on the other; or the links between particular public sector cuts and decline of local job opportunities and services; or policing practices differentiating between neighbourhoods; or the failure in contracting processes to share jobs with locals; or gaps in child care assistance; or the interaction between national trends in banking, credit, insurance and retailing provision on the one hand, and declining local benefits, wages and pensions on the other. At a general level the teams might more explicitly have explored assumptions of ‘whiteness’ as an aspect of community orientations and nostalgia. None the less, a conclusion that this reviewer drew was that what mattered most to residents seemed likely to be a decent home, pension, job, physical security, benefit level, or improved service, rather than enhanced social cohesion. An interesting research issue concerns the extent to which people with few resources can engage collectively with any of these externally determined issues, rather than with managing their own conditions of relative poverty on behalf of the institutions that claim to assist them. The Nottingham team suggest that active membership of a city-wide organisation (in the context of minority ethnic communities) may take energy and drive out of the immediate neighbourhood. Yet a collective capacity to mobilise and participate beyond that neighbourhood is crucial to influencing change.

There are two further important issues. These are good studies, but one wonders whether they are being called upon to prove too much. There are bold assertions made, especially in the overview, yet the empirical base and research time-scale were limited. An example of doubts this creates is when the East London study discusses the influence of housing design and layout on cohesion and co-operation. Given the available material, the conclusion here perhaps implies direct effects in too deterministic and unguarded a way. One underlying problem might be that studies are expected to be directly policy-relevant, and to come up rapidly with clear answers. Funders may be unwilling to support the kinds of detailed, cautious, lengthy and extensive researches that are really required to answer their questions.

There is another more profound concern, about the Rowntree Foundation’s mission. The Foundation has an honourable record of funding research, and certainly compares well with other funders in its dealings with researchers. These reports, however, suggest a research agenda that is politicised and moralistic. Unless this reviewer has misunderstood, the interest is not only in discovering ‘what works’ in regeneration, but also in policies encouraging cohesion amongst the poor. Perhaps it would be unfair to borrow phrases from *Joined-up places?*, and suggest that the Foundation are the well-paid ‘men in suits’, or would-be ‘entrepreneurs of regeneration’, coming into disadvantaged areas from the outside. None the less, there is a sense of an enterprise closer to the concerns of current political elites than to the tradition of using research to understand. Few researchers can be (or wish to be)
free of normative purpose, but for funders a strong vision can mean top-down approaches which marginalise alternative formulations, doubts, innovative lines of inquiry, and tentative or exploratory research. A cynic might argue that if we concentrate research on looking for social cohesion and active human agency, then that is what we are most likely to find. In finding neighbourhood cohesion (if such a thing can be meaningfully defined), we will neither have proved its relative significance, nor have demonstrated that our notions of it have great importance, nor necessarily have placed it adequately in people’s lives alongside other matters. Indeed, despite the skills of our research workers, we may even be fiddling while Rome (or the disadvantaged area) burns.

MALCOLM HARRISON
University of Leeds

The central argument of this thoroughly researched and timely book is that while individuals are required to make complex economic choices with increasingly significant consequences for their own well-being, the theoretical framework which policy-makers and most social scientists use to understand these choices is in conflict with empirical findings.

The volume arises from the Economic Beliefs and Behaviour Programme of the Economic and Social Research Council which ran between 1994 and 1998. Twenty-three contributors to nine chapters, using methodologies from in-depth interviewing to secondary analysis of large-scale datasets, marshal evidence on our decisions as consumers, workers, investors, entrepreneurs, employers, benefit claimants and taxpayers. Such diversity could easily have proved the book’s undoing, but is turned into one its strengths by the effective ‘topping and tailing’ in the editor’s introduction and conclusion. Taylor-Gooby begins by enumerating reasons for the increased scope and significance of economic decisions faced by individuals – more flexible working and family life, higher disposable incomes for some, and, perhaps most importantly, successive governments’ ideological commitment to reducing state intervention while promoting consumer choice. According to neo-classical economics, individuals making such choices function as utility-maximisers. The approach rests on a number of assumptions – that actors have a narrow set of motivations, and operate under conditions of certainty and perfect information – but is so widely employed that the assumptions are rarely made explicit. Theoretical challenges by psychologists, sociologists and experimental economists have failed to dislodge rational choice theory from its dominant position – hence the need for this collection of empirical studies examining how people make decisions in ‘real life’ situations.

One theme running through several chapters is the range of factors people consider when making economic decisions. Respondents to Parker and Clarke’s survey expressed reservations about buying private insurance for long-term care to fill the gap left by means-tested state provision – despite the fact that they tended to over-estimate the risks of needing care – since they felt the state was unfairly reneging on its promise to provide support from ‘the cradle to the grave’. Concepts of fairness also enter into wage-bargaining for both workers
and employers, according to Dickinson and Sell-Trujillo’s research, and into the self-rationalisation of some benefit claimants who are ‘fiddling the dole’ (Dean). In Modood, Metcalf and Virdee’s chapter, British Asians are reported to consider cultural appropriateness, as well as likely financial returns, when weighing up the benefits of self-employment, while Brook, Preston and Hall’s analysis of attitudinal data shows that willingness to pay taxes is affected by what is perceived to be good for the country as well as direct self-interest.

Another theme is the strategies people develop – some more satisfactory than others – to make difficult economic decisions. Potential buyers in a volatile housing market, for example, simplify the decision they face by breaking it down into several stages (choice of tenure; when to move; where to live) and regard the decision reached at each preceding stage as fixed (reported by Munro, Madigan and Memery). The compulsive shoppers interviewed by Dittmar and Beattie manage the choice between satisfying strong desires to purchase particular goods, and avoiding large personal debt, by segregating the immediate decision from its longer-term consequences.

A response to these two themes – the relevance of moral and cultural factors to economic decision-making, and strategies for dealing with difficult decisions – could take two forms. One would be to amend the traditional rational choice framework, first, to allow factors other than personal financial gain to enter the calculation, and second, to allow preferences to vary over time. Among other things, decisions may be felt to be conditional on previous decisions, even where the first decision is not irreversible.

The other response would be to say that individuals are not best understood as utility-maximisers at all, and that we need an alternative framework incorporating insights from sociology and psychology. It is not clear which of these responses the authors of the book would advocate. In particular, how are policymakers to respond to this body of evidence that the rational choice framework is inadequate even in some of the most basic kinds of economic decision-making, such as wage bargaining and shopping? Taylor-Gooby outlines three implications. First, policies cannot afford to assume self-interest is the sole motivation of those implementing, or subject to, the policy. Second, if a change in culture is required for a policy to be successful, this will take time (as described in Ennew, Feighan and Whynes’ account of GP fund-holding). Third, disenchantment is to be expected where there has been rapid change in the balance of responsibilities between state and individual, and this disenchantment may in turn inhibit change. But in the absence of a comprehensive, verified alternative to rational choice theory, it seems unlikely that we will see a change in approach. This research lays the foundation for such an alternative but does not provide it.

The book should become essential reading for undergraduates and masters students in social policy, sociology, politics and – if they dare to challenge the orthodoxy of their discipline – economics. It also provides a cautionary tale for any policy-makers (or advisers) considering pushing market reforms further into the welfare sphere.

TANIA BURCHARDT
Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion
The London School of Economics

If the apparent success of liberal democracy has cultivated a sense of conceit or complacency among Western nations, *In the Name of Liberalism* sends a powerful message that the principles and practices of these polities warrant much greater consideration. With characteristic thoroughness, Desmond King probes how and why liberal democracies periodically pursue illiberal policies. A master of the comparative case method, King traces the agenda politics of three sets of illiberal social policy in the United States and Britain, two countries with strong liberal democratic traditions: eugenics policy of the 1920s and 1930s, the work camps of the 1930s, and more recent workfare measures. Each case violates the equality of treatment and freedom of choice principles so elemental to liberalism by imposing mandatory (or only nominally elective) obligations upon the target group. Yet despite violating liberal values in sometimes spectacular ways, each infraction found its rationale within liberal theory. Eugenic policies were explicated in the name of liberal reason, collectivist work camps in the name of liberal amelioration and compulsory workfare schemes in the name of liberal contractualism.

The crux of King’s thesis is that these recurrent transgressions from liberal values find their source within the very fabric of liberalism itself. Not simply justified in the name of liberalism, these malignant social policies are inseparable from the liberal democratic order. The reasons for this apparent anomaly are threefold. First, elected officials are naturally tempted to provide dramatic solutions to pressing social problems, such as the collectivist work camps instituted during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Second, designed for the politically weak, illiberal policies need not be unpopular policies. When expedient, therefore, elected officials may seek to shift the delicate balance between liberal and illiberal principles in favour of the latter, as evident in workfare’s shift from social rights to compulsory obligations. Third, liberalism’s esteem for high-minded traits, including sound reasoning capabilities, may tacitly invite intolerance towards those who are less well endowed with these senses, as illustrated by eugenics policy. Social policy may be particularly prone to contravening liberal principles in that by design it engages in social planning, isolates classes of people for differential treatment and, arguably, is innately anti-individualist in its thrust.

None of the above directly implicates the electorate as the principal instigator of illiberalism. To the contrary, the episodes considered by King were all, first and foremost, driven by policy elites. Eugenicists’ arguments for sterilisation were eventually rejected in Britain due to parliamentarians’ anticipation of public opposition. Even workfare initiatives were primarily championed by policy advocates and experts. While political considerations were clearly vital to politicians’ implementation decisions, these illiberal initiatives were developed, framed and delivered by policy elites. Indeed, of the conditions fostering the system’s illiberal proclivities – a broad-based consensus across the political right and left, scientific data, ‘experts’ willing to assume the mantle of political advocate, and possibilities for framing the initiative in the language of liberalism – the role of the mass public seems to be a reactive one at most.
With illiberal propensities so deeply nested within entrenched liberal democracies such as Britain and the United States, this study sends the timely message that illiberal social policy will be an integral part of our future. Taking his analysis beyond episodes of unusual turmoil or crisis, King’s examination makes patently clear that the conditions promoting illiberal policy may be found in a far less dramatic confluence of events than the Great Depression. Indeed, the real cautionary tale here is that when framed within liberal discourse, illiberal policies can appear highly consistent with liberal values in their contemporary context, as is so manifestly apparent with current workfare initiatives. More reassuringly, however, King’s analysis also demonstrates the ‘unassailable boundaries’ of these polities, indicating the fundamental robustness of liberal principles and ideals despite repeated violations.

To disentangle the protean character of liberal democratic principles and policies, King draws on a wealth of archival and primary data, leading to a considerably more nuanced and measured appraisal, especially of work camp policy, than found in much of the literature. The racial sensitivity of this analysis also deserves applause. Students of comparative politics more generally will find the case studies littered with interesting findings. It is revealed, for example, that institutions are not always as sticky and resistant as portrayed in the scholarly literature. Nowhere is this more apparent than in trans-Atlantic workfare initiatives, where in the collision between entrenched institutions and new ideas the latter have triumphed. Likewise, the cases will prove to be of considerable interest to students of policy learning and transfer, while eugenics initiatives and workfare schemes superbly illustrate the influence of ‘expertise’ in policy formulation.

Overall, In the Name of Liberalism is an eloquently written, conceptually innovative and empirically rich inquiry. It is unusual to find such a study worthy of praise on so many fronts, yet this valuable investigation deserves to attract widespread interest within and beyond the scholarly community.

FIONA ROSS
University of Bristol


This book is a compilation of articles on both sides of a debate that has been going on in America for about twenty years in its current form. The undercurrent is the old, familiar tension between what Wilensky and Lebeaux called the residual versus the institutional view of welfare.

At stake in the current debate is the particular part of the Social Security Act of 1935 which embodies Old Age, Survivors, Disability, and Health Insurance (OASDHI). Commonly called Social Security by the American public, OASDHI is clearly an ‘institutional’ programme. All workers pay a tax (currently 7.65 per cent which includes the Medicare portion) through payroll deduction. This payment is matched by their employers. The self-employed pay 15.3 per cent, but can claim half as a deduction on their income tax. There is a cut-off of tax liability, currently at an income of $72,000 (about £45,000) per year for the pension
portion of the tax, although the 1.65 per cent that finances Medicare, the hospitalisation insurance, is levied against total wage or salary. In return, a worker who is retired or disabled (or his or her dependants, if he or she dies prematurely) has a claim on the system for a monthly cash payment and hospitalisation insurance (Part A of Medicare. The pensioner pays a monthly fee for Part B which covers physician’s charges on a schedule determined by the government).

The difficulty, both sides agree, is that, under present regulations, the outlays of the system will exceed the tax receipts somewhere (depending on the projection one uses) before the year 2050. The fight starts over what to do about it. The editors identify one group as viewing the problem through the lens of ‘generational equity’. These are the authors who view the problem as a crisis that demands dramatic action. The other group, those whose frame of reference is called ‘generational interdependence’, admit that ‘there is no dispute that America’s older citizens receive the lion’s share of the income, in cash and services, that the nation’s social programs distribute’ (p. 191) and that the young are worried about the future of Social Security. They believe that fundamental reform is unnecessary, however, but opt for maintaining the current system through ‘a few modest technical fixes’ (p. 18). They accuse the other side of trying to turn OASDHI into a ‘residual’ programme, because one of the radical ideas floated by the generational equity side is to reduce the payments to well-off older people in favour of larger payments to the less well-off. This reverse means test, usually referred to as an ‘affluence test’, is believed by its opponents to threaten the political stability of the programme.

It doesn’t take the reader long to discover that the editors frame the debate along ideological lines, even though they include an article by Lester Thurow, a left-of-centre economist on the generational equity side. For the editors, generational equity is a thinly veiled right-wing attack on Social Security while generational interdependence is the proper stance for people who have a concern for redistribution and the plight of the poor. This latter point is somewhat bogus, since OASDHI has a minimal overall redistributionary effect across classes and, since the tax is on wages and salaries, the chronic poor who have spotty work records are marginal participants in the programme.

Some on the generational equity side have argued for the partial privatisation of the state pension system, somewhat along the lines of what has been done in the UK. Another radical idea is the rationing of health care as Europeans do instead of offering everything technically possible which forces up the overall cost for everyone. The generational interdependence side calls such radical ideas unnecessary and, in fact, dangerous.

It is hard to identify an audience for this book. Specialists have already read the arguments in the journals and the popular press. I’m afraid it will be too specific to the American situation to be much use to British readers, even for comparative purposes. Further, events have made the book a bit dated. Congressional policy discussions have taken these arguments into account, and there seems to be general agreement that some fairly serious reform is necessary and inevitable, but nobody wants to be the first one into the water.

I should admit that I am one of those who believe that our OASDHI system is in genuine trouble and that ‘moderate benefit reductions and payroll tax increases’ (pp. 210–11) will not fix it, although I am dubious about the advis-
ability of privatisation of part or all of the system. My guess is that any type of reform will be delayed as long as possible. Recent budget surpluses have shifted some of the economic assumptions that are used in this discussion, and any sense of urgency has been lost on a treasury that appears to be awash in cash.

CHARLES ATHERTON
Tuscaloosa

Christopher Hood, Colin Scott, Oliver James, George Jones and Tony Travers, Regulations Inside Government: waste-watchers, quality police, and sleaze busters, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1999, 267 pp., £42.50.

The long title and author list announce an important research contribution from the London School of Economics to the ESRC’s Whitehall Programme. Hood (the overall editor) and his colleagues appraise the bodies that have marched across the British public sector in recent years, replacing earlier concepts of reflexive self-regulation with a new division of labour between those who deliver services and face clients on the one side, and those who inspect, allocate, censure and reward on the other. The fact that this latter function may attract greater esteem and reward for less pressure mirrors occupational stratification (even if poachers and gamekeepers sometimes change places), and fuels two controversial features of regulatory growth – a cavalier attitude by the regulator to the compliance costs of meeting their demands, and a Parkinsonian tendency for the number of regulators to expand as the number of service deliverers contracts.

The authors make a distinction between regulation in the economy in general, and regulation inside government where there is ambiguity as to whether the players are on the same side (using the concept of ‘relational distance’, which generates an excellent typology of relative formality and recruitment from regulatees). They begin with a four-way typology of regulatory styles – oversight (command and control), competition (rivalry and choice), mutuality (group processes) and contrived randomness (unpredictable processes or pay-offs). The latter three are seen as collegial alternatives to control by oversight, but also offer an extended repertoire to the overseers (respectively league tables, peer group reviews, and unannounced inspections). Mirror-image or reversed polarity, in which freedom to manage is conceded at the same time as more regulation is imposed, is an important related hypothesis. The conclusion is that all four techniques have their place and that present practice displays ‘deficits’ in all of them.

Like most books of this kind there is a balance between general analysis and case studies. Here there are only two focused case studies – on the prisons and on state schools – and three more general discussions of regulation in central government local government, and at the European level. Appendices list budgets and staff for 135 regulators, and provide profiles of 28 of them, but the universe under study is too broad to be fully satisfactory, encompassing the personnel and finance divisions of government departments, inspectorates, funding agencies, ombudsmen, auditors, and a catch-all unspecified group of civil servants who supervise local government and the health service. Their total numbers have increased (the authors estimating over 10,000, and costing more than £2 billion a year) but many of them are central players themselves, not just the detached appraisers of some other centre.
The chapters of most direct interest to social policy are those on prisons and schools (the latter carrying the memorable title ‘From Secret Garden to Reign of Terror?’) The prisons chapter is rather flat, but the schools one engages well with the themes of the book and gives a good level of detail and discussion of personalities The authors find that, rather than a mirror-image of performance autonomy and regulatory control, there is a ‘double whammy’ of constraint on both counts. Here the theme of regulation inside government breaks down somewhat: prisons have a history of administrative distinctiveness, now expressed in their status as an executive agency, and schools are doubly removed as professional entities within local government. The focus would have been more precise if Hood and his colleagues had concentrated on services where delivery and monitoring have previously been fused and so the recent division between regulator and regulated seems more contrived. The lack of any extended discussion of the health service is a weakness in this regard.

The book stands in the tradition of Hood’s other work – intellectually virtuosic, speculative in argument, and lifting itself above the detail it addresses. It is a long way away from the dry textbook or worthy research resource that an exercise of this kind might have produced; on balance a gain, but not necessarily for readers seeking a thorough treatment of social policy. What we have here is a continuation of Hood’s engagement with new public management (Hood, 1998); the authors seem most at home when looking at the changing ‘village life’ of central government (the title of one of the chapters) rather than the day-by-day content of regulation away from the heart of the political action. Our understanding of regulation requires a balance between political science, management science and social policy, and the Hood team’s sparkling focus on the first of these is a major contribution that still leaves room for other perspectives on the topic.


RICHARD PARRY
University of Edinburgh


McKay and Rowlingson set out to explore the structure of Britain’s social security system, within a comparative and historical setting, with a lay and student readership in mind. They have done an admirable job. The book has two quite distinctive features. The first, which they emphasise themselves, is their recognition that Britain’s social security system has multiple (and conflicting) objectives, poverty alleviation being only one of them. The second is their treatment of behavioural responses arguably induced by social security programmes, in recognition of their importance in the contemporary policy discourse. They are to be commended.

The book is quite accessible for the lay and student reader. Its structure conforms to what most readers would probably expect to find. Chapter 1 seeks to define what social security means in Britain (thereby demarcating its boundaries with fiscal welfare, occupational welfare and informal welfare) and to identify its multiple objectives (insurance against risks, poverty alleviation, income redistri-
bution and compensation for extra costs). Chapter 2 endeavours to set the relevant international context, one that allows British idiosyncrasies of policy development and programme design to be identified. Chapter 3 provides an excellent historical context, starting with the Elizabethan Poor Laws rather than the 1832 amendments. Chapter 4 describes the contemporary social security provision, distinguishing between means-tested benefits, contingent benefits and contributory benefits. Chapter 5 begins the detailed programmatic description by asking the question ‘Who receives Benefits?’ Detailed chapters follow this on benefits targeting special costs of living (housing, local taxes and special needs), and on benefits administration and its implications for access, take-up and fraud. Chapter 8 explores the behavioural responses that may be induced by social security (relating to work, marriage, completed family size and savings). Chapter 9 weighs up the seriousness of the problems Britain’s social security system is facing, and considers possible reforms. The conclusions drawn are that ‘the prevailing mood seems to be that social security, if not actually creating problems, is falling to address the aims it is set’ (p. 200); and that ‘to rein back spending to a greater extent is likely to involve either very radical change in the structure of the system or cuts in benefits to a much greater extent than has previously been tried’ (p. 200). The book concludes with a useful summary, an appendix on relevant data sources, a quite comprehensive set of references and a short index.

McKay and Rowlingson have produced a predictable book on British social security, as they defined it and as they conceptualised the issues surrounding it. That said, it is well written with excellent graphics, and is very accessible. But it is a book about which I do have two regrets, given the authors’ very evident desire to comparatively contextualise Britain’s social security practices. My first regret is that it does not paint a complete picture. Because it did not make use of the social security definitions used by international agencies in the field (the ILO, the International Social Security Association and the US Social Security Administration), their chosen definition precluded any serious discussion of how Britain addresses some of the internationally acknowledged social security contingencies – notably work injury and death provisions, maternity provisions and sickness provisions – that are addressed in other countries as part of their social security systems (Dixon, 1999). Instead, they were assigned to the peripheral realms of ‘private welfare’.

My second regret is that the authors have not looked to the rest of the world to gain insights into the emerging global social security reform agenda and its implications for Britain in the new millennium. The ‘possible radical reforms’ that McKay and Rowlingson identify and review very well (pp. 188–93), are three-fold – a return to social insurance, more means testing and tax-benefit integration, and basic income schemes – but they make no mention of the robust discourses around the privatisation of mandatory public provision (which has occurred in twenty-seven countries around the world and which is being currently considered in many more (Dixon, 1999)). In fairness to the authors, however, it must be said that they did include a very useful section critiquing New Labour’s Third Way reforms (pp. 193–9).


JOHN DIXON
University of Plymouth
The issue of tuberculosis and ethnicity in Britain after the Second World War provides an interesting illustration of connections between race, medicine and science. Social scientists have suggested that the stress placed on medical examination at ports of entry – because migrants were thought to be ‘bringing in’ tuberculosis – became a way of reinforcing racist immigration policies. However, historical investigation indicates that the reality was more complex. Although researchers were concerned with ‘port health’ issues, they also emphasised the socioeconomic causes of the disease. Policies adopted by central government departments did not rely on medical examination at ports of entry, but were based on a simpler (and ineffective) system that relied on the forwarding of addresses to local doctors. And, at the local authority end, the response was often more bound up with housing issues such as ‘multioccupation’.

This new collection, edited by Waltraud Ernst and Bernard Harris, provides a thorough and sophisticated treatment of the links between race, science and medicine in the earlier period. More particularly, one of its focuses is to examine the shift in emphasis that occurred in the early twentieth century, as race was increasingly encoded, not as biologically determined, but also as culturally based. The book comprises an introduction and a further eleven chapters by different contributors, arranged in chronological order. The outcome of a conference held originally at the University of Southampton in 1996, it is the most recent in the ‘Studies in the Social History of Medicine’ series published by Routledge.

It is not possible here to do justice to the full range of issues that the volume deals with, or to mention every chapter. One of its strengths is the long time period that it spans, as well as the geographical range that it covers – Britain itself, British India and South Africa, as well as German bacteriology. Highlights include Paul Weindling’s vivid account of the bathing and cleansing stations that were established on Germany’s eastern frontiers before the First World War (pp. 221–7), and Jonathan Sawday’s elegant essay on the Piltdown Man fraud (1912–15) and its aftermath. Mark Jackson examines how racial metaphors helped to define constuctions of ‘mongolism’, concluding that ‘medical constructions of idiocy were not merely derived from debates about racial inferiority and the origins of racial difference but were also a principal ingredient of those debates’ (p. 172). And Bernard Harris provides a thorough and sensitive analysis of the medical profession’s responses to the immigration of Eastern European Jews into Britain in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

One theme running through these accounts is the ambiguous nature of race itself, and of its influence on science and medicine. Thus David Arnold points out that race was not homogeneous but nebulous and self-contradictory, and was internalised by colonial subjects (p. 123). Mathew Thomson notes that British psychology in the 1930s, at least in its domestic form, was more noteworthy for the relative absence and moderation of scientific racism (p. 237). And Waltraud Ernst concludes from the chapters as a whole that, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, scientific racism was ‘variously and diversely refashioned during this period in biologicist as well as cultural terms’ (pp. 5–6).

As the editors themselves are quick to concede, the collection does not make any
pretence to offer a comprehensive treatment of its subject. In terms of theme, the range is quite broad – psychiatry, bacteriology, anthropology, psychology, public health and archaeology comprise the areas of science and medicine covered. But nearly all the essays deal with Britain or its colonies, and only Weindling’s chapter on Germany offers a comparative European perspective. Apart from the chapters by Norris Saakwa-Mante and Hanna Augstein, on the surgeon John Atkins in the 1730s, and the spread of the Caucasian theory, the focus is very much on the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although they were covered in the original conference, literary and visual representations of race and medicine had to be left out of this volume – an omission made only more frustrating by the analysis of group portraiture in the chapter on the Piltdown Man controversy. And readers hoping to find discussions of the eugenics movement will be disappointed.

But unlike many edited collections, this one has a coherence that is difficult to attain, and is as well produced as the cover price implies. Each chapter displays both an impressive grasp of the huge secondary literature on the subject, but also skill and imagination in the use of primary sources. Readers will be left with a more ambiguous and fragmentary set of ideas about race, medicine and science than perhaps they had at the beginning. But the editors have rightly resisted the urge to set up binary oppositions and provide clear-cut judgements. The approach of the historian has recently been under attack from postmodernists. Through its subtle exploration of the complex and contradictory connections between race, medicine and science, this collection provides an effective riposte.

JOHN WELSHMAN
Lancaster University


The position of the asylum at the heart of formal provision for those with mental health problems has been researched at local and national levels. As Enoch Powell commented, they dominated the local landscape: a motif that was both physical and mythical. This book turns to the world outside asylums and how it managed social relations between individuals and their families when mental health, illness or learning disability was a matter of concern. It also provides a commentary on the relationship between asylums and their local communities, again suggesting that this was dynamic and negotiated rather than static and separate. Whilst asylums had ‘walls’ these were at times breached and their influence was not always undiluted.

This book then forms part of a series of publications reappraising the nature of both community care and institutional provision. Community care, especially that provided by family and kinship systems, is less recorded than formal systems. As a number of the contributors to this book illustrate, much of our knowledge of community care (a phrase more commonly associated with recent rather than past political initiatives) derives from records of the Poor Law and to a lesser extent the writings of medical practitioners. Both Wright and Digby (1996), writing on the development of services for people with learning disabili-
ties, and Johnson and Thane (1998), charting perspectives on old age, point to the fragmented nature of our knowledge of the past. Aspects of the lives of the very poor and very rich are recorded but even these are partial.

This book presumes a good grounding in British social history and some fair knowledge of mental health problems. Puerperal insanity, for example, forms the subject of the third chapter and is clearly an excellent example of a malaise that might have been assisted outside the asylum walls but came to be claimed by the hospital or asylum professionals. A brief depiction of its current as well as its past position might have been useful for the lay reader. Some of the difficulties of achieving this balance between too great a detail and the painting of the broad picture are possibly an inevitable risk of an edited book with a broad scope, particularly since this book spans a wide geographical area of Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England. The 250 years covered are also an extensive time explored with some unevenness, so while the earlier period provides engaging local and personal details the more recent past is covered with a more general report of policy.

One of the temptations of taking such an historical overview is the wish to compare current concerns with past preoccupations. For example, recent thinking about community care in rural areas mirrors community care in rural Wales two centuries ago, when the local parish found it expensive to place its ‘imbeciles’ or ‘insane’ in a distant asylum and set up a local cheaper system to keep most in family households. As Hirst and Michael also reveal, in some instances there are recorded concerns about the inappropriateness of placing Welsh speakers in an English institution.

Current critiques also exist in respect of the abuses of community care: both at the level of family or domestic mistreatment and at the level of regulation of the quality of care. This book provides evidence that such concerns are long-standing. As Melling, Forsythe and Adair illustrate in their discussion of admissions to the Devon asylum, 1845–1914, there are substantial records of relatives’ mistreatment or neglect of individuals with mental health problems. Psychiatrists and asylum advocates could argue that the ‘vulnerable lunatic’ was at risk in the community and needed care and protection. In this and other chapters embryonic systems of regulation of ‘care in the community’ are outlined with a range of visits or inspections which seem ahead of contemporary practice. For example, much useful material in respect of Scotland’s extensive boarding out system for adults with mental health problems is provided by Sturdy and Parry-Jones. Contrary to the lack of progress perceived by those who point to the relative endurance of Scotland’s long-stay hospitals, this level of meticulous detailing of local provision points to Scotland’s radical commitment to community or domestic support during the nineteenth century and the latter half of the eighteenth.

Most of the book focuses on mental illness, with one discrete chapter on people with learning disabilities. Walmsley, Atkinson and Rolph offer interesting case study material from Somerset and Buckinghamshire to chart the type and level of concern in respect of people, adults and children, with learning disabilities. Here the interplay of central government and its Board of Control, local authorities and active voluntary sector groups is carefully outlined. As Walsh argues in respect of psychiatric provision in Ireland, such local variations and combina-
tions make it impossible to talk of a blanket of provision but make the analogy of a patchwork quilt more apposite. Asylums are the product of local and national pushes and a number of chapters argue that they also respond to a push and pull from family or kinship groups.

Four chapters conclude the collection with a focus on the twentieth century. Among these, Welshman provides a short case study of Leicester’s map of post-war services up to 1974. This recent past seems more difficult to analyse, for we are perhaps too close to the period. Again the problem of recording community care is evident and it will be interesting to see what survives in respect of contemporary services with, perhaps, weaker traditions of archiving materials and possibly just too much paperwork to separate the wheat from the chaff.

Also from ‘modern’ times, Campbell’s useful chapter on Northern Ireland provides a critique of the nature of health and social services integration at a time when such integration is held to be a solution to resource duplication and tribal territorial disputes between professionals. Such integration is again affected by the local context and in this case those professionals situating themselves in community care may choose it as a preservation strategy which distances them from local politics. To me ‘community care’ does not necessarily infer community connections or accountability.

This book makes accessible a great deal of historical research to the broader communities considering post-asylum care. It forestalls the portrayal of asylums as edifices set aside from their communities. It raises questions about the value of local variations and traditions. It also challenges current providers to think about their recording and legacy. In particular, it will provide more evidence that simplistic notions of ‘community as good’ and ‘institutions as bad’ or vice versa, do not stand up to historical scrutiny. However, institutions’ ability to record and retain the data of the time means we have a partial view, both in respect of the absence of voices of patients but also in respect of successful but uncharted community provision where nothing particularly went wrong. This book adds to our knowledge of past provision and policy at local levels.


JILL MANTHORPE
The University of Hull

This book is a frontrunner of a new, more qualitative approach to comparative social policy. Based on a five country study, it is also a prototype of the outcomes of larger-scale comparative projects now being funded by the European Commission, in this case the Equal Opportunities Unit within DGV. These studies are likely to alter significantly the face of comparative social policy, intensifying European cultural dialogue and enhancing mutual understanding of diversity.
In this case cross-national collaboration was involved in the process of project planning and a three-tier structure of data collection involving legal case studies, statistics and semi-structured interviews, while the analysis and interpretation of the interviews was mainly conducted in Britain.

By drawing on feminist research methodology and qualitative, experiential material, the book is able to explore the meanings and outcomes of policy for individual lives – a facet of policy which eludes the bluebook approach. By focusing on gender, it points not only to the neglect of women in traditional approaches to social policy, but to how cultural assumptions shape policy formation in ways which diverge sharply from lived realities. And by including case law from the European Court of Justice (ECJ), the book underlines the importance of attention to this strand of incremental development within social policy.

All this adds up to a major challenge to mainstream approaches to social policy, so that the book is much more than a study of the patterns, policies and experiences which surround the migration of women within the European Union. Indeed, there is some tension in the book between the theoretical ground clearing and the empirical material, although since the book is relatively long, all aspects are eventually covered. It would be helpful if the chapter headings signalled more clearly their very different contents. The first three chapters are primarily conceptual, providing useful and up-to-date reviews of feminist research principles, issues surrounding ‘citizenship’, and the limitations of the ‘structured diversity’ approach in comparative social policy, with its neglect of agency and the informal sphere. Chapter 4 contains fascinating case study material from the ECJ, demonstrating the way in which social entitlements have been broadened by legal challenges to free movement provisions, which incrementally bring a closer alignment between policy and social realities of shifting marital states and household formations. As the book points out: ‘it is in its capacity as guardian of the rights of internal migrants that the EU behaves most like a modern welfare state’ (p. 1).

Chapter 5 combines a critique of mainstream migration studies literature with clear graphic presentation of women’s migratory patterns, and quotations from the qualitative interviews concerning motivations to move. Here again, the contrast between actual lives and policy assumptions is dramatically highlighted, especially the assumption that women move in support of husbands, whereas the more common pattern is for single women to move for their own purposes and form partnerships and marriages later, their needs changing in highly differentiated ways across the life course. The remaining three substantive chapters centre on qualitative interview material, dealing respectively with the balancing of family and employment, experiences of different welfare systems, and the ways in which webs of caring responsibilities span the countries of residence and migration.

While these later chapters are predominantly descriptive, they do return to the theoretical themes of the book, which are rounded up in the concluding chapter. The fact that the analysis of many of the interviews remained cursory, and was conducted unilaterally rather than in cross-cultural collaboration, does show through, however. In many places the quotes are little more than illustrative, serving to bear out an argument rather than to deepen the analysis. The striking exception to this is Chapter 6, which is based on a case study approach
as opposed to interview excerpts. This not only presents a more rounded view of the trajectories of the women, but also their reflections on differences, especially cultural ones, between countries. The chapter focuses on women now living in just two societies, Sweden and Ireland, though Sweden is dealt with in more depth, and also more comparatively. Significantly perhaps, this chapter was first drafted by Heloisa Perista, a project partner from Portugal, whose own more ‘Southern’ perspective reinforces the questioning by the women interviewees of some of the ‘certainties’ of the Swedish model. All this constitutes a most interesting discussion of conflicts and different values surrounding employment and the quality of mothering, of the different nature of partnership relationships, of the relative advantages of state and extended family support to issues of communication and autonomy, and of contrasting feminist perspectives and dilemmas. The anthropological insights of the interviewees are impressive and bear witness to the effectiveness of high quality ‘open’ interviewing, and the importance of cultural perspectives to any analysis of social policy outcomes.

The chapter on caring, while more descriptive, and the conclusion, provide a firm reinforcement of several of the key themes in the book, such as the complex intertwining of exploitation, interdependency and autonomy, and of the false separation in citizenship debates between issues of motherhood and paid work as opposed to caring and services. Underlining the main message of the book, these chapters show the far removal of policies aimed at the ‘facilitation of mobility’, which are invariably underscored by a breadwinner model of marriage and the family, from the realities of the lives of most migrant women, and from a citizenship model which aims to address women’s needs and autonomy. An ‘autonomy’ model would have to provide far more information, so that women moving from one country to another were equipped with knowledge of the welfare, employment and citizenship system to which they were moving, and how the relevant parts of that would affect them in future stages of the life course – which they could of course not predict. This seems a very utopian aim, although greater transparency and accessibility of information could certainly be achieved.

Some improvements could have been made to the book. The inclusion of the experiences of, for example, Black, Asian or Muslim British or French women in moving within Europe would enhance the study. There is also a tendency to generalise about particular countries from decontextualised single cases, and the frequently mentioned Sala case in Chapter 4 could be more coherently presented. None of this detracts too much, however, from the important contribution of this highly readable and pioneering book, which will be of great use to students and researchers.

PRUE CHAMBERLAYNE
University of East London

This collection of thirteen essays, plus an introduction and conclusion by Clara Greed, sets out the case for putting the ‘social’ back into planning. Greed argues that the needs of minorities have received only half-hearted consideration from
physical planners. In future, planners must embrace the ‘social’ agenda and ‘the
culture and composition of the planning profession must change, particularly to
be more representative and reflective of the people they are planning for, in
terms of gender, race and minority composition’ (Preface).

Huw Thomas and Nigel Taylor set out the general argument that, in the past,
planners have neglected the ‘social’ with Taylor interrogating the work of Lewis
Keeble – whose Principles and Practice of Town and Country Planning (1952) pro-
vided a ‘bible’ for post-war town planners – to demonstrate the supremacy of
physical planning. Chapters on gender and rural policy, elderly people, disabled
people, transport, ethnic minorities and planning for cultural diversity offer spe-
cific illustrations of the proposition that planning has ignored ways in which
minorities can use land. Other chapters offer accounts of tourism, sustainable
development in Scotland and the changing agendas, perspectives and policy in
Europe and in the wider global setting. They are included on the grounds that
such developments ‘might influence the UK approach to town planning and
enable a more socially inclusive approach to policy-making and practice’ (p. 11)
but tend to disrupt the central theme of the book.

The main arguments put forward by Greed and her co-authors are reminiscent
of the debates in Social Policy that occurred in the early 1980s. The Social Policy
community will be familiar with several of the central propositions and will gain
most from the chapters on cultural planning and time planning, transport and
the accessibility requirements of disabled people. The collection is long on the
critique of existing physical planning practice but short on concrete proposals for
action – hence the editor’s call for a shift in the culture and composition of the
planning profession and the construction industry in the hope that this change
will produce new ideas.

Income and class do not feature as analytical variables; they are dismissed as
the only part of the ‘social’ agenda that was embraced by physical planning in
the past. This is a disappointing omission given the role of land-use planning in
the creation of residentially segregated, excluded communities and the potential
of physical planning to remedy the mistakes of the past (Lord Rogers of
Riverside, 1999). The omission also warps the analysis of specific issues and the
policy conclusions that may be drawn from each analysis. Thus, for example,
Jo Little’s account of gender and rural policy ignores the class and income
dimensions of women’s experience of rural life and may lead to undifferentiated
policies that disadvantage low-income, working-class men and women.

Given the extensive literature on disability, ‘race’ and gender, it appears sur-
prising that – in the late 1990s – planners can be accused of failing to embrace
the agendas of the ‘new social movements’. The rigid definition of ‘planning’
adopted in the past by the Department of the Environment offers a partial expla-
nation. However, perhaps the professional, bureaucratic and administrative
divisions in local government – restricting ‘planners’ to their professional
domain of physical planning with the ‘social’ dimension supplied by profession-
als from other departments – have also played a part. If this is the case, then the
remedy may reside not in enlarging the professional hegemony of physical plan-
ers but in more corporate, ‘joined-up’ approach to social, physical and
economic planning plus greater involvement of minority groups in the planning
process. This is New Labour’s agenda and Jean Hillier, in her excellent chapter
‘Culture, community and communication in the planning process’, sets out ways in which such participation can be achieved.

Social policy and physical planning share common origins in Fabian socialism and the ‘New’ liberalism but, according to Greed, parted company in the post-war period and now require to be reacquainted. If Greed’s portrait of the myopia of physical planning is accurate then this book, ‘aimed at good second year students who are studying town planning, urban geography and social policy’ (p. 3), will assist in promoting greater understanding of social policy issues in the physical planning community and enhance ‘joined-up’ thinking. Perhaps the Social Policy community can reciprocate by taking a greater interest in physical planning and its potential to overcome social exclusion.


BRIAN LUND
The Manchester Metropolitan University


The chronic evil of Scotland: an oppressive multitude of idle, wandering people and beggars. (Domestic Annals of Scotland from the Reformation to the Revolution, 1665)

The beggar and the vagrant transgress the social order of modern society and symbolise the weakness or contingency of that order. In early modern Britain and Ireland they were subject to severe repression by the state. Fear of the vagrant arose from the more general threat to the social order that they represented. There was an essentially moral and symbolic motive behind the punishment of vagabonds. They were part of a general panic over uprooted and ‘masterless’ groups of people, something that has occurred time and time again throughout the history of Europe. Their punishment and segregation authenticated the social order and helped to establish the work ethic. Significant numbers of ‘out of place’ people are threatening to the social and moral order. They tend to appear, or become more visible, at times of social upheaval, and are easy scapegoats for the widespread uncertainty and insecurity brought on by rapid social change. There are some parallels in the historical record with the moral panic over street beggars and New Travellers in Britain during the 1990s. Such ‘restless bodies’ symbolise societal disorder and boundary violation. Home Secretary Jack Straw’s introduction of curfew orders on teenagers who spend much of their leisure time on the streets likewise springs from a concern with fragmenting social structures and blurring boundaries.

In a world of footloose capital the function of the nation-state is increasingly oriented towards the management of space and the creation of benign zones, quiet spaces for the insertion of international capital. The intensified institutional management of space has opened up a sphere of struggle and contest over the occupation and surveillance of space. When these space wars are fought between the excluded and the institutions of the nation-state or capital they are
mostly conducted in a one-sided fashion. The rights of surveillance and spatial management are asserted as overriding civil liberties, in the name of creating ‘safe zones’. An aspect of this increased regulative intervention is the extended control of space, of which control and surveillance of beggars, and other marginalised groups such as Gypsy- Travellers, is one instance. However, the work in Begging Questions illustrates how beggars and other marginalised populations are able to resist or manage these practices of surveillance and control.

Begging Questions is a fascinating contribution to what has been an underresearched area. It examines begging as an economic activity conducted at the margins of society. It places begging within the context of citizenship and social exclusion, the failures of social policy, the establishment and enforcement of social stigma, and discourses of risk and blame. It covers three main areas: the historical and social context of begging; recent research on begging; and attitudes towards beggars. Showcasing some very original and interesting research, the authors present the experiences of participants in both sides of the ‘begging encounter’: beggars and members of the public approached by beggars. It is this face-to-face aspect of the encounter that separates this negotiated and situational altruism from the mechanical altruism of the modern welfare state.

The most impressive aspects of this book are the research work with beggars. They are a largely voiceless group, and it is refreshing to see them being given the opportunity to speak for themselves. The authors make many interesting and original observations, which stem from an impressive array of original work. They puncture a few myths about ‘aggressive’ and ‘work-shy’ beggars, and use their research to inform some very deft and subtle theoretical observations. My only criticism is that one or two of the contributors are a bit too quick to chime in with the left-wing consensus that the Labour government’s social policy is all about punishing the poor, and as such is little different from that of the Conservative governments which preceded it. Even if critical of the government, one has to acknowledge its changed orientation from previous administrations, especially in its commitment to tackling social exclusion. To be fair, most of the British left uses that same stale ‘New Labour equals Old Tories’ equation. I feel that if the pressing problems of social exclusion and marginalisation are to be tackled effectively, then those on the left who are critical of the government will have to muck in whether they like it or not.

ANGUS BANCROFT
University of Edinburgh

Recent historical scholarship has thrown considerable light on the centrality of children and of the family to the creation and subsequent strategies of welfare regimes, in Britain and elsewhere. Important examples of such work includes that of Abrams (1998) on Scotland; Hendrick (1994) and Lewis (1980) on England; Pedersen (1993) in her comparative study of Britain and France; and Skocpol (1992) on the United States. To this must now be added Bronwyn Dalley’s work on New Zealand. As the author herself argues, child welfare policies, and the operations of its Child Welfare Branch, ‘occupied a crucial place in the development of New Zealand’s welfare state, and one which has been largely overlooked’
(p. 95). Dalley’s carefully researched and well-written book, covering the period from the beginning of the century to almost the present day, fills this gap.

One of the work’s undoubted strengths is the sense it conveys of the particularities of New Zealand’s child and family welfare policies (for example, in their complex and changing relationship to Maori children and families), and the role of specific individuals and institutions in its implementation. None the less, readers will find much that is familiar in this account: for instance the scares over ‘national efficiency at the turn of the century, and over ‘juvenile delinquency’ in the post-1945 era; the tensions between voluntary and state provision; the evolution of the concept of children’s ‘rights’; and the impact of ‘New Right’ thinking on welfare from the 1970s onwards.

What this suggests is that, as with other areas of social policy, child and family welfare have clear international dimensions. Different societies borrowed and adapted ideas from other societies in their respective attempts to deal with what were perceived as common ‘problems’. To give a recent example, there appear to be interesting parallels between New Zealand’s Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act of 1989 and Britain’s Children Act of the same year. It should also be borne in mind that New Zealand, despite its relatively small size and apparent geographical isolation, was on occasion seen by social reformers in other countries, including Britain, as both ‘progressive’ and a ‘laboratory’ for social legislation. Dalley is extremely careful to stress this international perspective. Her book is therefore of much wider interest and significance than might at first appear.

Any work of this length has, of course, some shortcomings. Occasionally (although only occasionally) the prose is rather dense, and there is also a sense in which two books – one on children and another on the logically distinct institution of the family – are contained within one set of covers. But, overall, this is a timely, scholarly and important work on which the author is to be congratulated. Her publishers have, incidentally, served her well in terms of production values.

Abrams, L. (1998), The Orphan Country: children of Scotland’s broken homes from 1845 to the present day, John Donald, Edinburgh.

JOHN STEWART
Oxford Brookes University

Fed up with New Labour? Then this is just the book to send you scurrying back to the party. It’s my belief that David G. Green is not really the Director of the Health and Welfare Unit at the IEA but a closet Millbank undercover agent who has written this book solely to boost Labour Party membership. The policies he
sets out in this book are a terrible warning of what we could have one day if any future government ever embraced this libertarian nightmare.

Having denounced every bit of social security from 1906 onwards (except for the wage stop; he liked the wage stop) as the reason why the nation is now full of spineless individuals who refuse to take any responsibility for themselves, Green’s proposals are nothing if not logical. He proposes the abolition of all welfare benefits, contributory and non-contributory, and their replacement with short-term transitional assistance for anyone not in work. But they won’t stay out of work for long because if they do they won’t get any benefit at all, except possibly for some residual hardship payment. He’s never very clear about this; he keeps saying that ‘no-one must be allowed to suffer severe hardship’ while at the same time saying that if you don’t work you don’t get anything from the state. In his brief history of welfare in the nineteenth century he harks back wistfully to the humane reforms of 1834 which gave everyone the ‘choice’ of either independent labour or being cared for in a beneficent workhouse, so I think I can guess what he might have in mind by way of alleviation of severe hardship.

And he does not intend that we should all just work. We have to ‘work till you drop’ (his phrase) because there would be no state pensions. If you expect any form of in-work benefit you have to work all the hours you need to in order to meet the costs for yourself and your children. The test of whether you are working ‘reasonably’ would be that you would have to put in 50 hours a week. In case you’re thinking that if you worked 50 hours a week you probably wouldn’t need any benefit anyway, Green is surprisingly coy on the subject of low wages. His one mention of it is to say that if you do not get paid much then you have to work longer, unless of course you are a woman, when if you can not earn enough to keep yourself and your children you do not need a job, you need a husband. Poverty, you understand, is nothing at all to do with wages or your place in the labour market or anything like that, it is solely due to your own fecklessness and inability to plan prudently over a lifetime, exacerbated by a century of overgenerous welfare.

Anyone can plan prudently over a lifetime. Private insurance will cover you for all possible contingencies, but ‘you may prefer other methods of self-sufficiency, including simple saving, or investment in shares, or to purchase property or durable goods which can be sold if the need arises’.

As you might have guessed, he saves his best ideas for lone parents. These would be required to go back to work when their children reached the age of 18 weeks (sic) and any future children would not attract any increase in benefit. They would all, of course, be fully supported by the absent fathers. (How? I don’t know; he doesn’t say what happens if they haven’t got any money.)

Green’s vision is of a land where, deprived of welfare, we shall become a nation of hard-working, share-buying, married (definitely married), responsible people all limiting our family to the number we can sustain. Or, to put it another way, a nation where you have to go out to work at whatever pittance you can get for as many hours as it takes; you have to watch your children go hungry if you have more than one out of wedlock; and while the rich cash in their investments the poor have to work till they drop. Yummy.

The irony of all this nonsense is that Green berates the Old Left for attempting social engineering! You can not help wondering if Green has ever met a real unemployed person or lone parent in his life. The television programme *Spitting Reviews*
Image once had the extra-terrestrial John Redwood asking of a bemused voter ‘How many moons does your planet have?’ I doubt if Green could tell him.

JOHN JACOBS
University of Sussex