

## Book Reviews

Glenn C. Loury, Tariq Modood and Steven M. Teles (2005), *Ethnicity, Social Mobility and Public Policy: Comparing the US and UK*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 660 pp., £30.00 pbk.  
doi:10.1017/S0047279405219451

The political and geographical history of the settlement of minorities in the UK and US is very different. In the US, an indigenous peoples – the American Indian population – was displaced and almost exterminated by incoming European settlers from the seventeenth century onwards; this European population then drew in a substantial Black African and South American population through the practice of slavery. The descendants of this first slave population was one of the foci of, first, the American Civil War and then – many generations later – the civil rights movement of the post-Second World War period. Many of the great American cities – or at least their centres – are now dominated demographically, if not politically, by Black and Hispanic populations (the latter coming north from Mexico and beyond). In the last century, immigration – particularly from across Europe – was used as a tool for nation-building so that people of Italian, Black African, Swedish and Irish descent ended up living alongside each other.

British ethnic diversity goes back historically to the time of the Romans, but, although a significant number of Black Africans stayed in Britain as a corollary of the slave trade, the majority of Britain's present minority populations can trace their arrival to the demands for people from the Caribbean, South and South East Asia and, more latterly, Africa, to fill gaps in the labour market after the Second World War. Recently, again as a consequence in part of Britain's imperial history, many refugees have fled to the UK, leading to the present moral panic against asylum seekers. At the present time, the UK, in common with many northern European countries which have identified significant labour shortfalls as a result of the ageing of their populations, are recruiting targeted populations with specialist skills from developing countries. Throughout this latter period, the US response to immigration has been, if not overtly, more receptive. In 1996 a powerful lobby within Congress both fought to cut benefit for immigrants and opposed tighter restrictions on immigration. As a result, the number of migrants entering the USA that year, at over one million, was the highest for more than 80 years. Despite these historical differences, this is where the similarities between minorities in the UK and the USA are manifested, as in both countries, and despite the relative successes of some minority groups (the Chinese and Indian population in the UK, for example), these migrants have often been found amongst the poorest of the population, living in the worst houses and working in the most exploited sectors of the labour market (Alcock and Craig, 2001, especially the chapter on the USA; Craig *et al.*, 2005), the consequence of profound and continuing individual and structural racism.

One might expect a comparative study of these two countries to reflect both difference and similarity and this indeed is the overwhelming conclusion of the book, which points both to the common experience of minorities but also to the different experiences of, in particular, Black people in the two countries.

The book is a long one, adding (for UK readers in particular) to Modood's impressively extensive canon on ethnicity. It covers a wide range of perspectives and issues, including education, the labour market, housing and patterns of settlement, political organisation and public policy more generally. The 21 chapters are organised into five sections, covering overviews of the historical and demographic pattern of settlement; the growth of informal networks (with a focus on the importance of family, and on social capital); the influence of formal structures and institutions (where the significance of racism is brought to the fore more clearly); the role of political institutions; and a concluding section in which Loury (for the USA) and Parekh (for the UK) reflect on the philosophical, moral, policy and political questions facing each country as they struggle with the specific meaning of multiculturalism as it is understood in each national context.

The structure of the book is, in reality, somewhat artificial in the sense of it trying to give meaning to what is a disparate collection of essays, some of which have appeared before in other forms and in other places. But that is not really a major criticism. Until the last few years, detailed evidence on the position of minorities in both countries – and particularly in the UK and for minorities other than Blacks in the USA – has been fairly hard to come by and this volume offers a wide range of such evidence. As such, this book will stand as a valuable resource and exemplar of work in progress, useful for teachers, researchers and policy makers alike. For me, the critical issue is what we – or rather the USA and UK states – do with such evidence. The continuing failure of both countries to provide a framework of public and social policy which gives – other than rhetorically – both equal opportunity and equal outcomes other than to a privileged minority elite, demands an ever-stronger political commitment to change. At a time when 9/11/01 and 7/7/05 have generated increased suspicion and resentment against minorities, both internal and external to these two countries, it is difficult to see this happening quickly. Yet happen it must if minorities are not to remain substantially on the economic, social and political margins of both countries.

Loury's answer for the USA (which, for some bizarre reason was bound upside down in my review copy) is to recognise diversity, but not through the 'disgusting little (tick) boxes' of affirmative action; to dispense in public policy with race-blindness in favour of being aware of race difference. Quite what that might mean in practice is hard to see. Contrast that with the UK where, following the Stephen Lawrence Enquiry, there is increasing pressure for public agencies to introduce effective monitoring systems to ensure the efficacy of policies to promote equal opportunity and end racial discrimination. In this context, Parekh argues strongly that the experience of the US (and other countries) is of limited use and the UK, building on its own historical experience, should actually move to a firmer foundation of affirmative action. Given that these prescriptions are apparently moving in opposite directions to achieve similar goals, it seems appropriate to ask the editors to produce an entirely new volume in ten years time, reflecting on the impact of recent shifts in public policy.

## References

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Jan Mason and Toby Fattore (eds) (2005), *Children Taken Seriously: In Theory, Policy and Practice*, London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 272 pp., £22.95 pbk.  
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This edited collection of papers from mostly Australian researchers and practitioners is concerned with how children can be recognised as social actors rather than passive consumers or victims. Drawing on the paradigm of the new childhood studies, it crosses disciplinary boundaries and covers policy and practice over a range of topics, including child labour, active citizenship, Family Group Conferencing, pre-school programmes and child protection. Its target audience is 'those who have the desire and the power to promote children being taken seriously individually and as a group' (p. 27), including social workers, teachers, mental health professionals and others working with children.

Early chapters point out that children have traditionally been invisible in much data and research, even when the issue concerns them directly. This is long recognised, although there have always been exceptions and much progress has been made since the 1980s. Recent research has, for example, involved taking children as the unit of analysis and not subsuming them in the family unit. As Ridge (2005) shows, this can cast new light on the perceived benefits and drawbacks of particular policies.

The chapters in this volume concentrate on viewing the world from the child's perspective. For example, Danby examines children's play and challenges the traditional distinction between this and the constructive activity of 'work'. Mayall reinforces the value of this perspective, with her study of 57 nine-year-olds, suggesting that children do 'regard childhood as a period of life when one charts a course' (p. 86).

Underpinning this book is the assumption that adults, in particular policy makers and practitioners, regard children as 'becomings' not 'beings' (p. 26). So, Osman tells us that schools reinforce lopsided adult-child relations, with children reporting the unjust and devaluing behaviour by teachers and that feeling unable to negotiate or control things left them feeling powerless. Similarly, Holdsworth contends that the 'school ethos' often betrays a concern with deferred (or future) outcomes and stresses the value of children's involvement in both school governance and the shaping of curriculum content.

Although when reading the contributions I felt generally sympathetic to these views, some of the criticisms of the adults who are responsible for child welfare policy and practice seemed misplaced or at least anachronistic. This may be a product in part of some of the chapters being written a couple of years ago – the field is moving fast – and in an Australian context. For instance, in England the government's new vision for children's services, embodied in the *Children Act 2004*, pursues an ambitious agenda aimed at improving children's well-being. Widely hailed as a progressive programme of reform, it enshrines in legislation five desired outcomes that were selected in close consultation with children – health, safety, economic well-being, enjoyment and achievement, and contributing to society. These should drive all services for children.

Also running through most contributions to the book is the belief that children are an oppressed group in much the same way that women have been. This may well be so and may need stressing in the current climate so unsympathetic to children and adolescents. But from a perspective of planning services, it is surely more helpful to separate children out into discrete groups according to their similarities on critical risk and protective factors, so generating a taxonomy that can be used as the basis for designing and implementing targeted, needs-led services (Sinclair and Little, 2002).

This illustrates a tension at the heart of much discussion about child welfare, namely between need and rights. The side of the fence that people fall on informs the solutions they

propose as much as it does their diagnosis of the problem. Thus, many would take issue with the book, arguing that simply 'taking children seriously' is unlikely to be sufficient to reverse worrying trends in aspects of children's well-being in many western developed countries, including the UK (e.g. Nuffield Foundation, 2004). Indeed, some of the proposed courses of action might be regarded as a distraction. For instance, smacking may not be desirable *per se* – it could be said to infringe the child's right to protection – but from a pragmatic perspective, empirical studies of parenting, in the UK at least, show that most parents hit their children at some point and that, viewed from a need perspective, it causes little long-lasting harm in all but a few cases. Rather than seeking to ban all forms of corporal punishment, efforts might better be channelled into identifying those cases of abuse or neglect, where poor outcomes are likely to follow physical chastisement and providing those children with proven preventive and treatment services.

On the plus side, the accounts in the book are invariably rich and interesting and offer useful hints for practitioners about listening to and working with children. They rehearse important sociological themes regarding child welfare that are easily lost amidst detailed analyses by psychologists using complex statistical models of the relationships between, say, child abuse and neglect and a handful of hypothesised predictive factors. Moreover, the argument that child maltreatment is often trivialised in the media – backed-up with simple descriptive analyses of headlines (Saunders and Goddard) – illustrates well one of the levers that needs to be pulled in order to improve child welfare and serves as a reminder that implementing evidence-based services can only ever be part of the solution.

This leads to a final comment regarding the nature and tone of the book. Most chapters provide a commentary linking together various pieces of research – or other commentaries – and/or draw on qualitative research, e.g. media coverage of children, interviews and focus groups with children, the in-depth analysis of conversations between a child, mother and teacher. With this in mind, in my view the lessons drawn might have been stated more modestly. Of course, in some instances passionate calls to treat children better are necessary to address or avert serious abuses of children, but I also think that they can appear a bit naive to people undertaking valuable work in the child welfare field: the best brains seeking to understand children's development; policy makers using that knowledge to design evidence-based services; skilled practitioners implementing those interventions on the ground; and researchers evaluating such provision to detect its impact on child well-being – isn't this taking children seriously?

## References

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Bill Edgar, Joe Doherty and Henk Meert (2004), *Immigration and Homelessness in Europe*, Bristol: Policy Press (with FEANTSA and JCSHR St Andrews University), 208 pp., £19.99 pbk.  
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*Immigration and Homelessness in Europe* is the latest report from FEANTSA (European Observatory on Homelessness). Unlike some previous reports, it is not a collection of chapters

written by delegates from each country, but rather jointly authored work. It is, however, based on the 2002 reports of FEANTSA delegates on the situation with regard to immigration and homelessness in their country. The book focuses on four sets of issues: the social construction of protection and exclusion through each nation's immigration laws creating ever greater discrimination between the documented and the undocumented (Chapters 2 and 3); housing exclusion and homelessness as particular aspects of the integration of migrants (Chapter 4); female domination among new wave migration and the associated needs for services (Chapter 5); the lack of service provision leading to many homeless agencies becoming front-line services for migrants (Chapter 6). It utilises a three-fold classification of immigrants: documented immigrants (including legal labour migrants, family reunion and repatriates); refugees and asylum seekers; and undocumented migrants.

Chapters 2 and 3 reviews current EU legislation and evidence of national xenophobia, to argue that legislation is creating a hierarchical order of exclusion from those eligible for citizenship down to those without rights. Although some hope can be found in the movement of the 'illegals' themselves (the French 'sans papiers' movement) and in the initiatives of local municipal governments that seek to create the integrated city (Barcelona, Bologna, Stuttgart and Paris for example), a critical issue is that the arrival of 'new-wave' migrants, welcomed as workers but rejected as citizens, has coincided with a fundamental transformation of housing markets in many European states.

Across many states in the EU there are crises in the provision of affordable accommodation. From the 1980s state housing expenditure has been in decline; social rental housing has been privatised (most extensively in the UK but also elsewhere) and there has been less new build in those European countries where housing had previously been a strong element of the welfare state. Excepting Sweden and Denmark there has been a shift from supply-side (social housing) to demand-side provision (payments) resulting in a rise in housing costs and a shift to marginal and informal housing among all migrants. In European states without social housing the results can be extreme, for example beds rented for eight hours a day (three shifts) in Madrid, overcrowded and over-priced private rented dwellings, and also camps of caravans and substitute dwellings (found in France as well as Spain and elsewhere).

Chapter 4 then reviews levels of owner-occupation among settled migrant communities across Europe to argue for the existence of 'enforced home ownership' as a strategy for avoiding high rental slums. In those states with a social housing market of one-fifth of dwellings or more (UK, Austria, Denmark, Sweden, Netherlands), migrants and existing ethnic minorities have increasingly occupied social housing; in the Netherlands in particular an agenda of support for the most excluded migrants led, in the past, to an uptake of social housing among immigrants. However, in three European countries (France, Germany, Netherlands) there has also been particular emphasis on the 'social mix' of estates that can mesh with a racist agenda.

Chapter 5 discusses the key factors increasing migrants' vulnerability to homelessness, including changes to their legal status and the introduction of central reception and dispersal. Undocumented migrants are among the largest groups of users of emergency homeless services, as are those waiting for asylum applications to be heard. In Paris, for example, half of those using emergency or bed and breakfast accommodation were foreign nationals, of whom 31 per cent were asylum seekers and 35 per cent were failed/undocumented asylum seekers. Undocumented migrants formed half of the users of 43 per cent of homeless emergency services in seven Italian cities. In the UK a similar crisis in emergency/social housing accommodation in London led to a policy of dispersal in 1999 to areas that often had social housing but poor employment prospects. A Dutch study reported two distinct groups of undocumented migrants: women and children using women's aid shelters, and single men using night shelters and day centres.

In other countries undocumented migrants are denied access to homeless services and to welfare including Austria and Germany and, recently, the Netherlands. In many countries,

therefore, migrants rely on NGOs that are themselves hampered through lack of resources (Chapter 6). A report from Spain argued that the needs of homeless migrants has led to a lack of services and conflict with 'native' homeless people. Moreover NGOs face particular difficulties with language and with providing services to particular groups (women, young people and those with mental health issues) following displacement.

The book proposes two systems of classifying EU countries. First, there is a four-fold classification of countries by size of social housing sector (large/small) and immigration history (long/short). Second, EU countries are grouped into four in a different way: recent immigration (Ireland and Finland); colonial immigration and recent immigration (France, Netherlands, UK); government directives (Austria and Germany); and countries whose homeless services have not been affected by immigration (Belgium, Denmark, Luxembourg and Sweden). It would have been easier to assess the value of either model if they had been used as devices to plot some of the mass of data.

The strength of the book is in the broad and comparative discussion of immigration, housing and homelessness across 15 EU member states made possible by the reports of FEANTSA delegates (which can also be found on the FEANTSA website). The text could have been improved by a shortened preliminary discussion of immigration, leaving more space for in-depth exploration of the issues in relation to housing and homelessness raised by the country reports. However, as the book itself states, the key to the integration of migrants lies in housing provision. This text is therefore an important part of the argument for a reversal of the current drive towards supply-side housing and on-going privatisation of an inherited social housing provision.

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Julia Brannen, Peter Moss and Ann Mooney (2004), *Working and Caring over the Twentieth Century*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 248 pp., £50.00 hbk.

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This fascinating book documents the stories of 12 families as recalled by the great-grandparent generation (born 1906–1935), the grandparent generation (born 1937–1955) and the current parental generation (born 1962–1980). In total, 71 family members in the year 2000 were invited to reflect on their lives, 'bearing in mind that the focus of the study is work and care'. Using a biographic-interpretive narrative interviewing and analysis approach, the interviews provide a rich tapestry of recollections through different time lenses, from women and men in four-generational families.

By the end of this immensely readable study, I felt as if I knew the 12 families and the characters within them. What struck me forcibly was the significant level of continuity between the generations, despite the enormous social, political, economic and technological changes impacting on all aspects of day-to-day living. Seemingly, approaches to and experiences of employment and care across the generations had not changed as much as might have been anticipated.

Perhaps this is not so surprising, however. While advances in education, health and economic well-being have provided many more opportunities for today's parents, belief in the centrality of family life and kin relationships and the emphasis placed on having a job, saving for the future and being 'independent' of state support are enduring features in the accounts of different generations of parents.

Mothers have combined childcare with paid work across the generations. Work was frequently a necessity for women born into the great-grandparent generation: as Brenda Smith, born in 1924, recalled, 'I've always worked.' Her daughter, born in 1947, described how she had worked continuously since leaving school and had had a very similar employment career to that of her mother. By contrast, the youngest of the Smith women, born in 1965, had worked until the birth of her first child and then opted to be a full-time mother, although many of her generation are also working in a social climate which encourages women to mix career with childcare. Whereas the older generations of Smith mothers had had to work to supplement the family income, the youngest of the three women has been able to make choices. Similarly, in many families, all three adult generations took the provision of family support (sometimes financial, sometimes in terms of care-giving) for granted, 'as perfectly natural'.

Although several fathers in the current parental generation seemed to be at pains to point out that they are 'hands-on' parents, whereas the grandfathers and great-grandfathers were more likely to describe themselves as family-centred by virtue of their 'provider' status, parenting remains a gendered activity. The accounts of mothers from three different generations demonstrate their pivotal 'gatekeeping' role to parenting. 'Doing' parenting has been and is largely mediated through mothers. Moreover, the ethic of care continues to be shaped primarily by traditional gender divisions, reflecting 'the prevailing beliefs of a still largely maternalistic society'.

So, continuities across the generations are more striking than the discontinuities in the families in this study. But, how far are these particular families representative of a larger population? As the authors point out, the processes of change 'are likely to be uneven, complex and ambivalent'. In order to understand the deeper meaning of work and caring responsibilities, the researchers opted for depth rather than breadth as a 'strong foundation on which both to generate and to examine theoretical questions'. Families were sampled to stratify the grandparent generation by occupation, using postal questionnaires, surveys of employees in the public sector in London, advertisements in local newspapers, and the researchers' own social networks. Families generally lived in London and the Home Counties. However, in order to rule out too much complexity, the grandparent and parent generations included only those living with the other parent of their children. This study, therefore, is mainly about work and care in 'intact' families who have not experienced the disruptions and transitions (and economic and social consequences) of separation and divorce. Nor are there any minority ethnic families.

Given the increasing numbers of families experiencing parental separation over the past 40 years, there is a large section of the population absent from the study. Research on divorce and parenting suggests that the intergenerational transmissions in disrupted families will be much weaker and attitudes towards and practices of balancing work and care are strongly influenced by situational factors. For mothers, life usually gets tougher when they have to parent alone and support from kin is not always available, particularly as divorced families are highly mobile. It would be particularly helpful to repeat the study with families where intergenerational solidarity is less marked and parental separation has impacted on both work and caring. Understanding whether the narratives of these 12 families are reflected across varying cultures and different kinds of families is a matter for further research.

Perhaps the relative stability of the 12 families explains some of the continuities. The different generations, for the most part, were living in close proximity. This increases opportunities for reciprocity in care giving: geographical proximity is undoubtedly a determining feature of frequency of contact between the generations. Other research indicates significant changes in families in terms of time use and a gradual convergence between men and women's patterns in the work roles. Since there is a tendency, however, for people to partner someone

with similar educational attainment, there is a high correlation between income abilities intergenerationally, which is reflected in this study.

Welfare regimes also influence work and care, as is evident from studies across Europe. Is the focus of policy to be gender-neutral, or is it to reinforce traditional gender roles? How will policies designed to move people from welfare to work impact on caring? Can grandparents continue to play a pivotal role in the intergenerational transfer of resources? What is an appropriate division of responsibility between the state and the family, particularly with regard to financial support in retirement? Whatever the limitations in terms of breadth in this study, it provides some important insights which force us to focus on issues of *time*: 'time passing and time as it is perceived and experienced'; and time in terms of life course and history. Inevitably, the present shapes the reconstruction of the past in personal biographies, but this helps us look at the juxtaposition between lived experiences, values and expectations. The narratives demonstrate that working and caring are closely interwoven into people's lives over the life course and across generations. Uni-dimensional policies which fail to acknowledge this may fail to achieve their objectives.

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G. Mooney and G. Scott (eds) (2005), *Exploring Social Policy in the 'New' Scotland*,  
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This is an excellent edited collection that makes a crucial contribution to a small, but growing, literature on social policy in Scotland. Furthermore, the authors go beyond this to provide a reflection on how global, international, national and sub-national economic and political forces interact to produce the conditions and constraints within which welfare settlements are made in particular territorial boundaries. A major achievement of this collection is that it recognises the accountability of the individual and collective actors complicit in these processes that create and reproduce social inequalities and divisions. The editors have been successful in drawing together ten substantive chapters to form a coherent and critical evaluation of the 'newness' of social policies in Scotland and the extent to which these diverge from the strategies pursued in the other parts of the UK. The contributions to the collection are accessible, relatively short, tightly structured and well focused.

In Chapter 1, Poole and Mooney provide a subtle, informed and multi-dimensional analysis of devolution as a new mode of governance within the New Labour modernisation project. This is the chapter that provides the greatest conceptual insight and has the widest relevance to readers outside of Scotland. Law builds on these arguments in Chapter 2 by considering the significance of Scottish welfare nationalism and the balance between the pursuit of social justice and market concerns. This is an interesting reflection on links between national identity and social democracy and forms a thoroughgoing critique, verging on condemnation, of neo-liberalism, New Labour and Scottish politics.

The topics of Chapters 3–10 are well chosen and thought provoking. Unfortunately, the limitations of space have prevented separate discussion of housing and a rural dimension. The authors of this part of the book evaluate the distinctiveness of Scottish social policies in relation to pre- and post-devolution approaches. In some cases, e.g. criminal justice (Chapter 7) and education (Chapter 10), there is more evidence of a particularly Scottish approach than in others, e.g. urban policy (Chapter 6). Comparisons with the other parts of the UK are variable,

with the chapters on health (Chapter 8) and education (Chapter 10) making the most systematic comparisons with England. References to Wales are most prevalent in the early chapters, while there is little mention of Northern Ireland throughout.

Chapters 3 and 8 address two of the most prominent and interconnected 'Scottish problems': poverty and ill-health. The authors demonstrate that the Scottish Parliament has shown clear intentions and evidence of intervening in both fields, with policy support for anti-poverty measures and a commitment to eradicate child poverty. Similarly, there are clear impulses for better health services and motivation from within the Scottish Executive to address health inequalities and to improve performance in international health league tables. However, these chapters are also the most salient in recognising that the major decisions about funding and the necessary instruments for meeting these aims (social security, tax credit and employment policies) lie in the hands of Westminster, thus precluding or at least undermining truly effective 'Scottish solutions'.

Chapters 4 and 5 challenge the formation and maintenance of structures and processes that create inequalities and divisions between rich and poor, men and women and different 'racial' or ethnic groups. McKay and Gillespie, for example, recognise progress in gender equality and positive developments in the fields of domestic abuse, community safety and safety on public transport, while De Lima points to the difficulties in establishing debate and policy action on the subject of racism. Chapter 9 identifies a crisis in social work in Scotland and reflects on tensions in approaches to social care and challenges facing the profession of social work. Finally, in Chapter 10, Arnott argues that secondary school education is as significant an area of divergence for Scottish policy as the more frequently cited example of university tuition fees; identifying from this a lowering of public expectations of what the Scottish Parliament is likely to achieve.

Expectations for change were founded on the emergence of new political processes. Most notably this was seen as possible through the formation of coalition governments (made possible by proportional representation) and the involvement of smaller and more diverse political parties, greater engagement with citizens through consultations and the committee structure and through the possibility of breaking from the economic assumptions and ideological traditions accepted by the UK government. Overall, the assessment is that despite important gains, devolution has failed to bring radical change. Key limitations to the scope of Scottish social policy development are identified as under the control of macro-economic policy by Westminster, the power of the Treasury, the conventions of the Barnett formula and a deficit of political will.

This book is a key source for undergraduate and postgraduate students, researchers, academics and policy makers who are based in or interested in social policy in the devolved administrations of the UK, particularly, but not exclusively, in Scotland.

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