
Andrew F. Johnson, Stephen McBride, Patrick J. Smith (eds.), *Continuities and Discontinuities: The Political Economy of Social Welfare and Labour Market Policy in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994, 374pp. \$45.00 (hardcover), \$18.95 (paperback).

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This edited volume consists of twenty chapters plus an introduction and "epilogue." The twenty substantive chapters were developed from papers and lectures presented at the 5th Conference on Social Welfare Policy, held at Bishop's University, in 1991. The book is divided into three parts: Political Economy in Transition: Implications for the Canadian Welfare State (five chapters); Canadian Social Welfare Policy (eight chapters); Canadian Labour Market Policy (seven chapters). Because the book is an edited volume of twenty papers covering a wide range of material, it is impossible to do justice to each contribution through summarization or commentary. Instead, I will outline the organizing themes of the book, and the chapters in which these are elaborated.

The central concern of this book is the ascendancy of a "new policy paradigm," neo-conservatism, and the relationship of ideological shifts and a changing political economy to social welfare and labour market policy. The introduction provides an excellent synopsis of the main features of neo-conservatism. The latter is considered both "as a technical set of economic doctrines and prescriptions and as a philosophical critique of the collective ethos and corresponding institutions" of Western welfare states. Students, in particular, should find this short section (pp. 6-9) a very useful introduction to the question of defining "neo-conservatism" and a helpful handle on this ubiquitous but slippery term.

As the editors (and book title) emphasize, the book's primary interest is in the continuities and discontinuities of contemporary social welfare and labour market policies with the Keynesian principles that prevailed in the "three decades" following the Second World War. This interest is most consistently pursued in the introduction and the chapters contained in Parts I and III.

The main thesis of the book is that global economic restructuring is exposing domestic welfare systems to the exigencies of a global market economy. The Canadian nation-state is therefore at a "historic turning point" where national power is being eroded and post-fordist productive principles, such as "flexible specialization," prevail. The cost of this transition is borne by labour¹ affecting, in particular, women, visible minorities and immigrants.²

The influence of neo-conservatism is said to capture Canadian governments' response to pressures of globalization. The contradictions of this influence, however, are emphasized: in order to "free the market" (one of the main objectives of neo-conservative economic policy and philosophy) an activist and strong state is required. This theme is pursued, in particular, in the chapters by Resnick ("Neo-Conservatism and Beyond"), Mullaly ("Social Welfare and the New Right: A Class Mobilization Perspective"), McKenzie ("Decentralized Social Services: A Critique of Models of Service Delivery") and Durst ("False Economies in Newfoundland's Social and Child Welfare Services"). Furthermore, accomplishing certain neo-conservative ends, for example, "downsizing" social services and reducing social expenditures, is thwarted by high levels of unemployment (the result of monetarist and supply-side economic policies) that fuel demand for social assistance and raise costs. Consequently, the "traditional relationship between social policies and labour market policies is becoming increasingly tangled" (p. 9), as evidenced at both the federal and provincial levels (this is the subject of the case study chapters in Part III).

Whereas neo-conservatives assert that nation-states have little choice in rejecting Keynesian-inspired welfare state policies because of internationalized market forces, the editors indicate that comparative evidence suggests that global restructuring can produce very different labour market and social policy outcomes to those inspired by neo-conservatism. Therefore, although globalization "matters," nation-states are not simple hostages to economic forces: "many of the problems of Canadian society . . . are not economically determined; they are the product of the mediating ideology of neo-conservatism" (p. 9). This theme is pursued by Poirier ("Neo-Conservatism and Social policy Responses to the AIDS Crisis"), Bella ("Rhetoric and Reality: Health Care Cutbacks in Three Provinces") and the case study chapters in Part III.

Perhaps the most interesting and innovative issue addressed in this volume is the question of the failure of the "left" and "old" political economy perspectives to effectively counter the new right agenda. Answers are sought through an examination of the role of community participation, popular mobilization and democratization in grappling with the new political and economic realities. This is the central concern of all five chapters in

Part I, as well as several other chapters (e.g., McKenzie, "Decentralized Social Services . . ."; Schaan, "Holistic Social and Health Services in Indiana Communities"). Both Resnick and Panitch call for an alternative social welfare policy vision, based on greater (democratic) participation. They locate the inability of the left to counter the new right agenda in its failure to break with a vision (Marxism-Leninism, collective/state ownership and organization and delivery of services etc.) that is a century out-of-date. Instead, they call for an alternative humanistic socialism/communitarianism (Resnick) and institutional transformation (Panitch) in which participation rights and popular mobilization are considered to be at least equal to (if not a precondition for) economic rights (class). In contrast, Mullaly, using a power resources analytic framework, emphasizes the increasing salience of class in the current restructuring of the welfare state. He argues that the inability of the left to counter the new right agenda stems from its neglect of working-class mobilization in favour of academic critique.

Andrew also challenges "old" political economy for not coming to terms with the issue of "intervention or practice" (the organization and delivery of social services in ways that recognize and move beyond the conventional public/private sector divide). In addition, she points to the continuing disregard for "multiple social identities" ("class and gender, class, race, and gender, class, race, gender and sexual preference," p. 67) despite the flourishing of feminist research.

The contributions to this volume do not escape this critique. The introduction itself sets an inauspicious tone by the use of an unfortunate analogy in which the editors equate public sector "downsizing" with "*emasculating* social welfare policy services" (p. 4, emphasis added), leaving the reader the impression that their "manly" form (strength) should be preserved against the weakness of a "womanly" cast. Arguably, one could interpret the statement as a thoughtless remark of little consequence or importance. However, despite the fact that the editors also suggest that the cost of the transition to a post-fordist globalized economy affects women, visible minorities and immigrants, only a few of the chapters included in the edited volume (Andrew, Lord, Clark, Shields and Russell, and to some extent, Durst) actually attempt a systematic incorporation of these categories into their analysis. Despite this shortcoming, the papers in this volume are very useful and the currency of the issues is as strong today as it was in 1991.

NOTES

1. Outlined in the chapters in Part III by Bickerton ("Regional Development Policy and Labour Markets in Atlantic Canada"), Johnson ("Towards a Neo-Corporatist Labour Market Policy in Quebec"), McBride ("The Political Economy of Ontario's Labour Market Policy"), Smith ("Labour Markets and

Neo-Conservative Policy in British Columbia, 1986–1991”), Muszynski (“Defending the Welfare State and Labour Market Policy”), Shields and Russell (“Part-Time Workers, the Welfare State, and Labour Market Relations”), and Haddow (“Canadian Organized Labour and the Guaranteed Annual Income”).

2. Delineated in the chapters by Lord (“Social Assistance and ‘Employability’ for Single Mothers in Nova Scotia”), Clark, (“Mothers and Children: Ensuring Acceptable Standards of Living”), and Shields and Russell (“Part-Time Workers . . .”).
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John O’Neill, *The Missing Child in Liberal Theory: Towards a Covenant Theory of Family, Community, Welfare and the Civic State*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994, 136pp. \$40.00 (hardcover), \$14.95 (paperback).

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The Missing Child in Liberal Theory could have been an important book. O’Neill challenges readers to rededicate “the Canadian commons to the well-being of the civic person” which he confidently claims will provide “a model of survival and governance among the nations of the twenty-first century” (p. 120). At a time when politically and fiscally neo-liberal forces are joining with the economic forces gathered in the global market to threaten the very existence of the welfare state, a call for a “second-generation welfare state” (the present generation of children being supported by the first generation) could provide the kind of ammunition needed to fight the diminishing life chances of children today growing up in poor and modest income families.

O’Neill’s intentions for distributional justice for children are admirable. But his arguments to build his case, as to who besides their parents should support children, take him into a strange direction. O’Neill turns his argument into a battle of absolutes—contractarian justice versus “civic covenant,” the politics of liberal individualism against the “norm of reciprocity within and between generations”—ignoring that there are clear limits to what can be settled by philosophical argument. His plea is for a moral exchange of quid pro quo—“to extend ourselves in a community of civic obligations towards others whose recognition simultaneously affords us our own moral worth” (p. 86), which he claims can only be achieved through “a shift from liberal contract paradigm to a covenant paradigm with maximum recognition of the social endowment.” This “cannot be inherited,” he contends, “except as an obligation to serve it as stewards of