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Social Work After the Americans with Disabilities Act: New Challenges and Opportunities for Social Service Professionals.
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Book Notes

John T. Pardeck, *Social Work After the Americans with Disabilities Act: New Challenges and Opportunities for Social Service Professionals*. Westport, CT: Auburn House, 1998. \$17.95 papercover.

The Americans with Disabilities Act was a major legislative development in the history of social policy in the United States. Enacted in 1990, it gave expression to well established social policy ideas about social rights. It also demonstrated how governments can effectively use regulatory legislation to ensure that people with needs are protected against discrimination and offered opportunities to participate fully in the mainstream of society.

John Pardeck has written an excellent account of the legislation and the way it is being implemented. He describes the main features of the statute and provides interesting case studies to illustrate its main provisions. He focuses particularly on the implications of the legislation for social workers. Social workers have long served people with disabilities and obviously need to understand the legislation in depth if their practice is to be effectiveness. However, as Pardeck points out, social workers are themselves subject to the legislation. Social work agencies are required to make reasonable accommodations for their own employees who are challenged by disabilities and they must take steps to ensure that people with disabilities have full access to their services. As with any other employer and service provider, social work agencies are themselves subject to the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

In addition to outlining the main provisions of the legislation, Pardeck also includes a useful account of the way social workers can collaborate with people with disabilities to advocate for recognition and services. In keeping with the spirit of the legislation, he places less emphasis on the delivery of services to clients with disabilities and instead stresses the positive, proactive role that social workers can play to change attitudes and bring about improvements in the lives of people with disabilities. The final chapter of the book dealing with the implementation of the

statute is particularly interesting and informative. This is a well written and useful book that deserves to be widely read.

Steven Shardlow and Malcolm Payne (Eds.), *Contemporary Issues in Social Work: Western Europe*. Ashgate Publishing Co., Brookfield, VT: 1998. \$63.95 hardcover.

Just a decade ago, few comparative studies of social work had been published. Despite the fact that the journal *International Social Work* had been in existence for many years, comparative research in the field remained underdeveloped. Very few books on the subject had been published and articles appearing in the journals tended to focus on developments in particular countries. Few attempts had been made to contrast social work education and practice in different world regions.

Today, the situation is very different. Numerous books about international social work have been published and increasingly, these books seek to identify the key features of social work around the world. Some of these books are concerned with particular world regions while others are more general in scope, focusing on international trends in general.

The publication of a book about social work in Western Europe adds to the growing body of knowledge about social work in different parts of the world. Although this is not the first book about social work in Europe, it contains country case studies which report comprehensively on social work in diverse Western European nations. These nations include Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Britain. The book also contains a brief introduction and concluding section.

The book's various chapters are detailed and provide a wealth of information about social work in Western Europe. However, despite the editor's efforts to standardize the material, the individual chapters cover different topics which make it difficult for readers to cross reference key points of information. Also, the chapters are primarily descriptive and it is difficult to extract the key similarities and differences between social work in these nations. The concluding chapter would have been more helpful if it had attempted a summary of this kind. Nevertheless, this is an important reference work which provides valuable information about recent developments in social work in Europe. It should be