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Charitable Choices: Religion, Race and Poverty in the Post-Welfare Era. John P. Bartkowski and Helen Regis.

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its development, core principles, practice applications and case examples. This is helpful for in-depth comprehension. Of note is the inclusion of frameworks not typically recognized in this area—communication and constructivism. Respectively, they contribute an important understanding of the processes and dimensions of communicating, and of the different ways of knowing and interpreting reality. Both seek to reduce the misunderstanding that can occur between diverse peoples.

However, similar-sounding frameworks are not compared clearly and systematically, such that a student could turn to a summary chapter that readily identifies differences in principles and practices. Given the interesting mix of frameworks contained within the text, the inadequate use of disability and sexual orientation perspectives is perplexing. They are mentioned within social justice and feminism, but diversity nevertheless remains confined to ethnic-based world views. Yet, this shortcoming is mitigated by the “how to” approach of this book that enables a flexible use of the various practice guidelines. A vital theme ties together these guidelines; the multi-dimensionality of individuals requires a balance between assessing the diversity within and the diversity between people. This dynamic is recognized throughout the chapters, and informs the development of solid practice skills.

Rose Barreto, University of California, Berkeley

John P. Bartkowski and Helen Regis, *Charitable Choices: Religion, Race and Poverty in the Post-Welfare Era*. New York: New York University Press, 2003. \$69.00 hardcover, \$19.00 papercover.

Since coming to office in 2001, the Bush administration has moved decisively to implement its faith based approach to social welfare. Informed by evangelical Christian writers such as Marvin Olasky and political advocates on the religious right, Mr. Bush had previously declared his dislike for government social programs. During the 2000 presidential election campaign he indicated that, if elected, he would shift the responsibility to care for those in need from government agencies to religious organizations. He agreed with Christian conservatives that religious organizations, and the Christian churches in particular, were far better equipped than government to help needy people. Unlike

impersonal social service bureaucrats and detached social work professionals, the churches have a historic commitment to help those in need as well as an inherent compassion and empathy for their plight. By allocating a greater share of government resources to fund sectarian social agencies, government may eventually withdraw from the welfare services field.

It is in this context that this interesting book provides a detailed account of how faith based social welfare programs operate in three counties in Mississippi. Although the authors use the term 'charitable choice' rather than faith based social welfare, the connotation is the same. The term was popularized in the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act which permits the use of public funds by religious organizations providing services to clients in receipt of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (or TANF) services. Previously, sectarian agencies could contract with governments to provide services but they were required strictly to segregate their social service and religious programs. Under the 1996 legislation, these restrictions have been eased and despite claims that the new rules violate constitutional provisions concerning the separation of church and state, funding for sectarian welfare programs has increased.

The book provides a thorough historical overview of the events that led up to the Bush administration's decision to promote faith-based social welfare. The authors show that efforts to support faith based welfare are not new, and that religious advocates had long campaigned to divert government funds to support sectarian welfare programs. They also show that the churches and sectarian welfare organizations have long been involved in the provision of social services. This point is amply illustrated by their account of how local congregations in Mississippi have sought to assist needy people. They point out that under Governor Kirk Fordice's administration, Mississippi had been a pioneer of faith based provisions. The Faith and Families initiative was introduced in 1994 and it supported the efforts of local churches and sectarian welfare agencies. Although the program was abandoned by a subsequent Democratic administration, it boosted faith based programs. The book reports on a detailed empirical study of the congregations that were involved in the

program. The authors show that the provision of social services by faith based organizations is not a simple or non-controversial matter. They conclude that there is scope for enlarging the involvement of religious organizations in social welfare, but believe that issues of access to resources, the independence of religious bodies, differences in culture, realities of race and other issues need to be more thoroughly debated. This thoughtful book is a useful addition to the growing literature on the subject and should be widely consulted.

James Midgley, University of California, Berkeley

S. M. Amadae, *Rationalizing Capitalist Democracy: The Cold War Origins of Rational Choice Liberalism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003. \$19.00 papercover.

Conventional social policy scholarship has been compelled to address the rapid expansion of market-based social welfare over the last two decades and a good deal has now been published on the subject. Generally, the social policy literature has been highly critical of the marketization of social provision, and the market is usually characterized as being inimical to human welfare. The concept of social justice has often been used in social welfare writing to support the critique of market based welfare. Reflecting the legacy of social democratic thinking in the field, many social policy scholars have argued that social justice is best served through statutory welfare provision. But, as the author of this extremely interesting book reveals, principles of freedom, fairness and equality of opportunity have also been woven into a neoliberal conception of justice that supports arguments for a market-based welfare system. Critics of welfare marketization have paid little if any attention to these arguments. This book provides an excellent summary of the views of neoliberal scholars who support a market-based welfare system and should be widely consulted by anyone working in the field of social policy today.

Although the term 'neoliberalism' is generally preferred in social policy circles, Amadae uses the term 'rational choice liberalism', and relates this school of thought not only to the promotion of market capitalism but to the advocacy of liberal democracy and wider individualist values. He pays particular attention to the