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Review of *Culture and the Welfare State*. Wim van Oorschot, Michael Opielka and Birgit Pfau-Effinger (Eds.). Reviewed by James Midgley.

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parents' struggle to guide their children's assimilation in New York just a few years earlier, making this a natural point of comparison. Despite these limitations, *Inheriting the City* is an impressive piece of scholarship and is extremely well written. It is highly recommended for social scientists and non-academic readers alike.

Joanna Doran, University of California at Berkeley

Wim van Oorschot, Michael Opielka and Birgit Pfau-Effinger (Eds.) *Culture and the Welfare State: Values and Social Policy in Comparative Perspective*. Williston, VT: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2008. \$140.00, hardcover.

Comparative social policy scholarship has amassed a great deal of empirical information over the years to investigate the factors that account for the differences as well as similarities in the social policies of different countries. This research has spawned a variety of hypotheses which are by now widely known, if not widely accepted. These hypotheses posit the importance of industrialization, class conflict, electoral politics, ideologies, diffusion and a variety of other factors in the emergence of welfare systems in different countries. More recently, the importance of historical traditions in the emergence of durable welfare institutions has been stressed. Although an analysis of institutions leads logically to a better understanding of the role of culture in the emergence of social policies, scholarly work on the importance of culture in social policy has been neglected.

The editors of this wide-ranging book seek to contribute to a better understanding of the role of culture in social policy by bringing together a collection of original contributions that focus primarily on ways values and ideologies shape social policies in different parts of the world. The book's 14 chapters are divided into four parts, dealing respectively with the foundational ideologies that inform welfare thinking, particularly in Europe. Part two examines the role of values in specific countries and reaches, while part three focuses on cultural change in social welfare. The last part discusses popular values and beliefs about social welfare, mostly in the European context.

The book begins with an overview of the issues, as well as a summary of its contents by the editors.

As with other edited collections, different readers will find some chapters to be of more interest and value than others and it is difficult to differentiate between them. Nevertheless, some of the chapters make for particularly interesting or novel reading and will be briefly mentioned. In view of the neglect of conservatism in mainstream social policy circles, the chapter by van Kersbergen and Kremer provides an interesting account of the impact of conservative thinking on social policy in Europe. Similarly, Opielka's chapter on the role of Christian ideas in shaping a Christian Democratic approach to social welfare is very informative. Ferge questions whether there is a particular East European cultural tradition which may inform social welfare in the region, while Peng considers policy changes in Japan and Korea with reference to cultural factors. Oorschot considers popular conceptions of "deservingness" and their implications for social welfare in Europe, while Walker contrasts European and American welfare values with reference to welfare reform.

While these and the other chapters of the book make a useful contribution to an understanding of culture, the editors do not distinguish theoretically between ideologies, values, institutions and culture, and despite its promise of originality, there is much in this book that has already been debated in social policy circles. Another question is the book's Eurocentric emphasis. Despite including a chapter on Korea and Japan, its focus is primarily on European welfare policies and their links to Western ideologies. Another drawback is the book's high cost, which may even limit library sales in these economically challenging times. Nevertheless, as has been noted already, the book contains very useful chapters that will be of interest to readers in the United States. Hopefully, it will also spur more research and debate into this neglected topic.

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