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BOOK NOTES

Michael B. Fabricant and Steve Burghardt. *The Welfare State Crisis and the Transformation of Social Service Work*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1992. \$42.50 hardcover, \$16.50 papercover.

The damaging impact of the Reagan era and its policies on the human services has been well documented. Numerous studies have shown how budget cuts, the increased privatization and commercialization of programs, and the greater use of purchase of services contracting have limited the ability of public agencies to serve those in need. Introduced ostensibly to promote greater efficiency and to enhance "value for money", there is little evidence that these changes have met their intended objectives. Today, the problems of poverty are greater than ever before, and few social policy analysts believe that the retrenched welfare state has responded effectively to social need.

While research into the impact of the radical right's policies on the poor and deprived abound, the affects of these changes on the providers of the social services has been neglected. By focusing on this issue, Fabricant and Burghardt have made a major and novel contribution to the literature. They show, often in poignant detail, how dedicated professionals, civil servants, voluntary workers and managers in both the public and not-for-profit sectors have struggled to protect their clients in the face of severe budgetary reductions and other resource constraints. Their findings contrast sharply with the currently fashionable belief that those in public service are motivated exclusively by self-interest. Not only do they provide an alternative to Public Choice's ungenerous view of human nature, but shed important light on the way the social services have attempted to cope with unimaginable fiscal and managerial difficulties. This is an important book which addresses a neglected topic of significance for the study of social policy.

F. Ellen Netting, Peter M. Kettner and Steven L. McMurtry. *Social Work Macro Practice*. New York: Longman, 1993. \$35.50 hardcover.

The term 'macro-practice' has been bandied about in social work circles for some years but it has not been satisfactorily

defined. It is still used loosely as a synonym for community organization, administration or social policy, and sometimes it is employed to denote any form of social work intervention other than clinical practice.

In this book, Netting, Kettner and McMurtry attempt to define macro-practice in more precise terms as a social work intervention that seeks to bring about change in communities or organizations (in other words as community organization *and* administration). The bulk of the book is subsequently devoted to a study of the dynamics of communities and organizations and to defining strategies for social change. The notion of social change is largely conceptualized in social problem terms, and the strategies for problem solving will be familiar. These strategies include planning, lobbying, negotiating, capacity building and use of the media. While the use of the term macro-practice may be a novel and effective technique for capturing a share of the textbook market, the book largely recapitulates the existing literature. Nevertheless, this is a well written and thoroughly illustrated book which social work students will find useful.

Christopher Jencks. *Rethinking Social Policy: Race, Poverty and the Underclass*. New York: Harper Collins, 1992. \$12 papercover.

Jencks is best known for his pioneering study of the affects of education on the life chances of individuals but he has also gained a reputation as a astute commentator on diverse social questions. His articles in magazines such as the *New York Review of Books*, *The New Republic* and *American Prospect* have been widely read.

Rethinking Social Policy is an updated collection of previously published articles in these and similar magazines. Covering a wide range of issues, they reveal Jenck's ability to articulate complex arguments that challenge the simple minded rhetoric to which those on both the political right and left frequently have recourse. Jencks does not mind being criticized by liberals for challenging their uncritical assumptions about the inevitable goodness of human nature, and he certainly invites attack from those on the right for demolishing the myths on which the Reagan administration built its popularity.