



**WESTERN
MICHIGAN**
UNIVERSITY

The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare

Volume 22
Issue 2 June

Article 23

June 1995

The Sociology of Social Work. Martin Davies.

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw>



Part of the Social Work Commons

Recommended Citation

(1995) "*The Sociology of Social Work.* Martin Davies.," *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*: Vol. 22: Iss. 2, Article 23.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15453/0191-5096.2259>

Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol22/iss2/23>

This Book Note is brought to you by the Western Michigan University School of Social Work. For more information, please contact wmu-scholarworks@wmich.edu.



problem of child poverty and social deprivation. Child welfare's focus on child abuse has not only resulted in the deployment of resources to deal with a relatively small proportion of children in need but there is little evidence to show that these services have been effective in reducing the incidence of abuse. While large sums of money have been spent on child protective services, little is done to meet the needs of those who are not abused but who grow up in poverty, who have inadequate access to health care, whose educational opportunities are limited and who live in unsatisfactory housing. This larger group, Lindsey argues, is equally deserving of help. While poor children may not be neglected or abused by their parents, the social conditions under which they live are tantamount to societal abuse and neglect.

The book contains several important policy proposals. Like many other commentators on current social conditions in the United States, the author believes that concerted action is needed to address the pressing problems of poverty and deprivation which afflict many children and their families today. This requires economic and social policies that create jobs among the poor, foster improved housing and promote better education and health care. Lindsey argues for a re-orientation of the child welfare system. Problems of abuse and neglect should, he believes, be dealt with by the criminal justice rather than child welfare system. The author also recommends the introduction of a new system of income support for children in the form of an individualized social savings account which can be used to pay for education and other needs. Based on the 'asset' approach, it offers a useful means of addressing the problem of child poverty. Like the other policy proposals contained in this important book, this one deserves to be widely discussed. The book itself should be widely read and debated.

Martin Davies (Ed.), *The Sociology of Social Work*. New York: Routledge, 1994. \$17.95 papercover, \$23.95 hardcover.

In the profession's early days, social work enjoyed a close association with sociology. Social work drew theoretical sustenance from sociology and social work research was substantially

infused with sociological techniques. In many universities, social work programs had close organizational links with sociology departments. In time, however, the link between social work and sociology weakened. Social work turned increasingly to psychology and especially clinical psychology for inspiration and in the macro area, the insights of public policy rather than sociology informed debates on welfare issues.

In view of the weakening ties between social work and sociology, a book dealing explicitly with the subject is to be welcomed. Although a few books about sociology and social work have previously been published, the issue deserves comprehensive treatment. Unfortunately, this book will not meet expectations. It does not deal systematically with the topic but consists instead of a collection of disjointed articles dealing with different aspects of sociology and social work. While the authors of the various chapters seek to demonstrate the relevance of sociology to social work, the lack of an integrative theme undermines their efforts. Even the discursive introductory chapter by the editor fails to provide a comprehensive introduction to the book. Nevertheless, while this book is disappointing, it does attempt to deal with a neglected issue and some of the chapters are both interesting and useful.