



**WESTERN
MICHIGAN**
UNIVERSITY

The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare

Volume 23
Issue 1 *March*

Article 24

March 1996

Social Welfare: Structure and Practice. David Macarov.

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



Part of the Social Work Commons

Recommended Citation

(1996) "*Social Welfare: Structure and Practice.* David Macarov.," *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*: Vol. 23 : Iss. 1 , Article 24.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol23/iss1/24>

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.



David Macarov, *Social Welfare: Structure and Practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1995. \$24.95 papercover.

David Macarov has written a handy introductory social policy text for undergraduates which transcends the descriptive accounts of the social services that pervade the literature. Unlike many other introductory texts, Macarov does not seek to list the major social services and describe their functioning but focuses instead on the role of ideas and wider social forces in social welfare.

The book is divided into four parts. The first attempts to formulate a workable definition of social welfare based largely on the work that has been done on the concept of social need. Part II traces what the author calls 'motivations' for social welfare: these include mutual aid, the family, religion, politics and economic institutions. It also discusses the role of ideology as a motivator of social welfare. Part III examines 'influences' on social welfare such as the work ethic and social Darwinism. The final part discusses 'issues' in social welfare including poverty, unemployment and welfare reform.

The division of the material into these sections appears to be somewhat arbitrary. For example, it is not clear that why the work ethic or social Darwinism are influences rather than motivators. Also, some of the topics are dealt with in a limited way. The chapter on ideology deals primarily with individualism versus collectivism, ignoring the influence of many other ideologies in social welfare. However, these limitations do not detract from the book's overall value in stimulating undergraduates to think about social welfare from an issue-based perspective. Instead of memorizing the facts of social service provision, the author challenges students to consider wider conceptual issues. The book is easy to read and thoroughly supported with recommendations for additional reading. It is a useful addition to the literature.

John McKnight, *The Careless Society: Community and its Counterparts*. New York: Basic Books, 1995. \$21.00 hardcover.

The author of this readable book claims that traditional forms of social organization at the community level, which previously provided extensive support networks and effective responses to social need, have been undermined by professionalization, the