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### *Lost Fathers: The Politics of Fatherlessness in America.* Cynthia R. Daniels (Ed.)

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on the pervasive role of power in shaping human behavior and social relations will have relevance to other societies. Since it is written for undergraduates, the book is somewhat basic but its readable exposition shows how the Foucauldian perspective has influenced social policy thinking. However, it is somewhat depressing to think that students of social policy, who are often motivated by a desire, however naive, to help and improve the world, may conclude that their well-intentioned efforts are little more than a subtle way of ordering lives and exerting social control.

Cynthia R. Daniels (Ed.), *Lost Fathers: The Politics of Fatherlessness in America*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000. \$16.95 paper-cover.

Contemporary social policy analysis has neglected the views of those who believe that government should formulate and implement social policies that seek to re-assert cherished social values which, it is claimed, have been undermined by individualism, industrialization, secularism and modernity. Traditionalists have exerted increasing influence in social policy since the 1980s when both President Reagan and Prime Minister Thatcher began to emphasize the virtues of 'family values' and 'Victorian morality'. Traditionalists urge governments to curb what they regard as immorality in the media and entertainment industry and they advocate a greater role for faith-based organizations in social service provisions. They have campaigned against abortion rights and many blame feminism for undermining traditional gender roles. With the election of President George W. Bush, traditionalists are likely to exert greater influence than before in shaping national social policy initiatives.

This fascinating book deals with the debate over traditional family forms in Western societies, and particularly with the role of fathers in family structure. Traditionalists view the increase in divorce, illegitimacy and single parent families with growing alarm. They are committed to reversing these trends believing that the cohesion and integrity of society depends on return to a more responsible and morally virtuous past. Social policy, they believe, should promote responsible fatherhood and a commitment among men to care for their children (and 'their' women).

The book consists of nine informative chapters by different authors who deal with various aspects of the debate. The traditionalist point of view is articulated by David Popenoe, a family sociologist at Rutgers University who has written extensively on the subject of fatherhood in America. This views are challenged by several writers but notably by Judith Stacey of the University of Southern California. Although all the contributions have social policy implications, the book contains chapters that examine the issues with particular reference to welfare, teenage mothers, the way divorce affects children and the implications of absent fathers for African American families. The chapters discuss the politics of fatherhood from diverse perspectives, and they offer challenging insights into an issue that is likely to remain contentious in the future.

David Stoesz, *A Poverty of Imagination: Bootstrap Capitalism, Sequel to Welfare Reform*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000. \$19.95 papercover, \$50.00 hardcover.

Recent debates about poverty and welfare have been preoccupied with work and the active promotion of labor force participation. This new focus has moved social policy away from its historic concern with entitlements and social rights. This trend has become increasingly marked in social policy not only in the United States but in Europe as well. 'Labor market activation' as it is known in Europe and 'welfare to work' as it is known in the United States, is now a central social policy goal.

The prominence of work in social welfare today lends credence to the claim that the purpose of social policy is to control the poor and promote the interests of capitalism. Although proponents of the liberal and social democratic institutional approach to social policy have long rejected this claim, it is becoming increasingly hard to sustain the view that social policy represents society's conscience and collective wish to care for those in need.

In this intriguing book, David Stoesz fulfills the claims of those who believe that social policy is designed to serve the interests of capitalism. He believes that the problems of poverty and deprivation can best be solved by actively integrating the poor into the capitalist economy. This can be achieved primarily