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A Poverty of Imagination: Bootstrap Capitalism, Sequel to Welfare Reform. David Stoesz

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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

through labor force participation but also through tax credits, asset accounts and the promotion of community capitalism.

Unlike many others who claim that capitalism offers the promise of ending poverty, Stoesz is not an advocate of *laissez faire*, arguing that purposeful policy measures are needed to address the problem. He is also unsympathetic to those who believe that behavioral regulation is required to achieve economic participation. He points out that many welfare clients are, in fact, economically entrepreneurial but that their efforts on the fringe of the formal economy do not result in sustained improvements in standards of living. The answer, he contends, lies in creating incentives that will more effectively integrate the poor into the capitalist economy, propel them into the middle class and provide them with the means to achieve the American Dream. On the other hand, Stoesz has little time for liberals and social democrats who continue to insist on social rights and unconditional welfare transfers to the poor. Indeed, he believes that they are largely to blame for the problems of welfare dependency and deprivation that have for too long characterized the world of the underclass.

While this book is unlikely to be acclaimed by Stoesz's social work and social policy colleagues, it makes an important contribution. Its articulation of a strategy of 'bootstrap capitalism' conceptually systematizes various programmatic proposals for economic integration that have gained currency in recent years. Stoesz provides a coherent rationale for these proposals and offers a normative perspective that can be contrasted with other approaches that seek to provide a new rationale for social welfare in an era of global, capitalist predominance. His systematization of these ideas should provide an opportunity for far-reaching future debates.

Victoria Getis, *The Juvenile Court and the Progressives*. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2000. \$34.95 hardcover.

Today, the juvenile court is a commonplace judicial institution which exists all over the United States and in many countries around the world. It is generally viewed as a beneficial institution which meets the needs of children and protects young offenders from the punitive rigors of the adult criminal code. But, when the first juvenile court was founded in Chicago just over a century