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Book Reviews

Theodore J. Stein, *Social Policy and Policymaking by the Branches of Government and the Public-at-Large*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001. \$49.50 hardcover.

This book adds to the growing number of social welfare policy texts addressed to social work students. I think it is suitable for introductory social welfare policy courses at the undergraduate or graduate level. A quick look at the title made me think that the book was primarily about policymaking by legislative bodies, courts, and executive departments of government. It probably gives more equal attention to each of the three branches than many other texts do, but it also contains a great deal of descriptive information about social welfare policies and programs, including historical and contemporary information.

The book's 18 chapters are divided into five parts. In Part 1, Stein's purpose is to "identify the ways in which the practice of social work is inextricably connected to social policy" (p. 1). Since textbooks generally cover many topics, it can be difficult to decide which to include and how to organize them. The introductory material in Chapters 1 through 3 addresses a wide range of topics. Among them are social values, the goals of social policy, history of the early years of social work and social welfare, and the legal auspices under which social welfare organizations operate. Chapter 3 also includes discussion of social work credentialing, confidentiality, and the duty to warn. Though these latter policies are specific to many social workers' practice functions, it is not entirely clear why they make up the bulk of Chapter 3. Instructors may be expecting more focus on social welfare policies that affect disadvantaged groups and citizens in general.

Part II contains more historical information, including information on Colonial America, abolition, immigration, and Native Americans. Stein then proceeds to discuss agenda setting and policymaking and the federal budget process. Once again the topics chosen for inclusion are an interesting assortment, and they may be an attempt to mix historical and contemporary information in a way that will be more appealing to readers rather than letting all the historical material in the text stand alone.

Part III covers poverty, including definitions and incidence, followed by programs that address poverty, both social insurance and public assistance. Stein also addresses health care policy and civil rights policy in this section. Section IV covers social services and includes various block grant programs that address problems such as mental illness, substance abuse, domestic violence, and child maltreatment, as well as services for the elderly. There is a chapter on education which includes educational services for homeless and other poor children and children with disabilities. The final section of the book is comprised of two chapters, one on implementation and the other on policy practice.

The book covers a wealth of topics that would certainly fill a semester-long course on social welfare policy. For social work education programs that may have only one course entirely directed at social welfare policy, this book contains a decent amount of material on the history of social welfare as well as a description of current social welfare policies and programs. The book is clearly written and easy to read. One of the nicest features of the book is that Stein uses a wealth of examples to illustrate his points. The examples cover many policies and programs of interest to social workers. When it comes to many of the topics, the book's strength is in its breadth rather than depth of coverage, as is typical for an introductory or survey text.

No textbook does everything an instructor hopes it will do. This one does not include a framework or frameworks for policy analysis. An instructor wishing to include this material would have to look to other sources. Although Stein includes a chapter on policy implementation, the book is obviously not meant to teach policy evaluation, again requiring an instructor who wishes to include this material to look elsewhere.

I have long thought that textbook writers are disadvantaged because their books have no plot. It is, therefore, much more difficult to write a book that the reader just can't put down. This textbook may be short on excitement. Despite its emphasis on policymaking, it does not do sufficient justice to the highly contentious debates that permeate social welfare policy. Perhaps the book's breadth of information and easy-to-read style will compensate for that. The author has certainly taken great care in writing this substantial work. Though the book might have done

more to inspire prospective social workers to take up policy practice, it has many qualities to recommend it for use in introductory social welfare policy courses.

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Giuseppe Bertola, Tito Boeri and Giuseppe Nicoletti (Eds.), *Welfare and Employment in a United Europe*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 2001. \$32.95

This is an important and timely book that analyses some of the macro-economic arguments about European welfare states. The authors are European economists and they are mostly concerned with the interconnecting effects of economic and monetary integration in the European Union on social protection systems, labour and product markets. The book is in two main parts. The first looks at European “welfare systems” as a whole and their relationship to labour markets; the second looks more specifically at product and labour markets. For readers of this journal, the primary interest will lie in the first half of the book and it is there that I concentrate in this review.

The first point for an international readership is that the book is primarily aimed at other Europeans. Terminology, especially the use of the term “welfare” to describe states, systems of social protection, and other social interventions could leave American readers somewhat confused. But this terminological difficulty also obscures more fundamental assumptions about what is being analysed. Essentially, the authors focus on cash transfers through social insurance and social assistance—with references to employment protection legislation and taxation—but there is little emphasis on services in kind—especially education and training provision, and also, crucially, childcare. The emphasis on cash transfers, combined with the economic theoretical emphasis, represent both the book’s major strength and weakness.

The strengths of the book are in the quantitative analysis of cross-national profiles and trends in social policy. Boeri in the opening chapter takes some of the simplistic theories put forward about the effects of European integration and then demonstrates that they are not substantiated by the facts. This introductory