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Hans Goran Eriksson and Torill Tjelflaat (Eds.), *Residential Care: Horizons for a New Century*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004. \$79.95 hardcover.

Residential care is one of the most neglected areas in social welfare today. This is hardly surprising since the use of residential services for children, people with disabilities, and the elderly is generally viewed as an inappropriate way of addressing their needs. Also, as a result of deinstitutionalization, retrenchments in social service budgets and professional antipathy towards the use of residential care, residential services are no longer widely used. Today, most social workers and social welfare administrators believe that residential services should play a very limited role, and serve as a last resort for those with special needs that cannot be met in community settings.

Nevertheless as this edited collection reveals, residential services are still an important resource for social workers providing services to people in need, and particularly to children and young people. The book seeks to examine different aspects of residential care for children and young people today and it does so by drawing on the expertise of social work scholars and practitioners in different European and North American countries. The book is organized into four parts dealing respectively with innovations in residential services, the use of foster care, mainstreaming the educational experiences of children in residential care (with particular reference to ethnicity and cultural issues), and the role of research in residential and foster care. In addition, a recurrent theme in the book is the use of anti-oppressive practice in residential care.

Although there is an urgent need to debate issues of residential care, this book lacks coherence and its chapters deal with disparate topics that are not well connected to each other or to the theme of the book. Despite the editor's intention to use an anti-oppressive practice perspective to frame the material, few chapters even make reference to the subject and the opening chapter, which deals explicitly with the anti-oppressive practice perspective in social work, makes little reference to residential care. Instead, this chapter raises important and skeptical questions about anti-oppressive social work which apply not only to residential care but to all forms of social work practice.

Nevertheless, there is much in this book that will be of interest to social workers everywhere. It asks important questions about the role of residential care in social welfare today and provides useful comparative information. Since residential care is often perceived as a means of exercising control over people with severe behavioral problems, the notion of anti-oppressive practice in custodial residential settings is particularly interesting. Hopefully, the book will serve as a catalyst for more extensive debates on the role of residential care in social work and permit a thorough review of this much neglected field.

Jordi Estivill, *Concepts and Strategies for Combating Social Exclusion: An Overview*. Geneva: International Labour Office, 2004. \$11.95 papercover.

The concept of social exclusion is frequently used in social policy circles in Europe today, and although it has not been widely adopted in the United States, many more American social work and social welfare scholars now employ the term. However, as in Europe, the term is still poorly defined. While some use it as a synonym for poverty, others relate it more specifically to the notion of the underclass. In this latter sense, the excluded are a sector of poor people with particular needs arising out of an inability to engage with the wider society. These ambiguities have called the usefulness of the concept into question, and some have concluded that it should be abandoned.

However, as this publication reveals, the concept is now being used by international agencies such as the International Labour Organization and it is likely that scholars in many more countries will adopt the term. It is also likely that it will be more frequently used in international social policy and social development circles. For these reasons, there is a need to standardize the term and ensure that social welfare researchers around the world are clear about its meaning.

Estivill devotes the first chapter of the book to a discussion of the concept and the way it has been defined. He acknowledges the problems of seeking to standardize the term, and shows that it has been used loosely in much social policy writing. He