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MICHIGAN**
UNIVERSITY

The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare

Volume 41
Issue 4 December

Article 13

2014

Review of *Caring For Our Own: Why There Is No Political Demand for New American Social Welfare Rights*. Sandra R. Levitsky.

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Recommended Citation

Glikman, Helen (2014) "Review of *Caring For Our Own: Why There Is No Political Demand for New American Social Welfare Rights*. Sandra R. Levitsky. Reviewed by Helen Glikman," *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*: Vol. 41: Iss. 4, Article 13.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15453/0191-5096.3991>

Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol41/iss4/13>

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provides an enormity of information and a cogent analysis of the changes that have taken place there over the past 25 years. It provides strong evidence that a capitalist economy that once provided universal public services and economic supports can easily reverse course, resulting in more stringently provided benefits to a more unequal society, when external and internal social, political and even intellectual dynamics change. My one quibble is that while the table of contents is very detailed, there is no index to help the reader focus and review specific topics, but any scholar wanting to understand how the Swedish welfare state has arrived at its current form will gain a lot from this book.

*Marguerite G. Rosenthal, Prof. Emerita,
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Sandra R. Levitsky, *Caring For Our Own: Why There Is No Political Demand for New American Social Welfare Rights*. Oxford University Press (2014). 224 pages, \$24.95 (paperback).

Political sociologists and others who study social movements typically question why and how people mobilize around causes that they care about. This, of course, was the focus of the work of Piven and Cloward in the 1960s, and research interest has continued. Less studied, however, has been the question of why some people do not take these actions and come together to advocate for their self-interests. This forms the context of Sandra Levitsky's fascinating new book, *Caring for our Own: Why There is No Political Demand for new American Social Welfare Rights*.

Drawing upon her background as both a lawyer and a sociologist, Levitsky looks specifically at the issue of long term care in America. She notes how the landscape has drastically changed, with social policies and programs failing to keep up with the changes. The population is aging, and care needs are becoming more intense as hospitals discharge patients "quicker and sicker." Add to this the huge shift of women into the labor force—women traditionally being the stay at home caregivers for their family—and one sees the issue quite clearly. What is not so clear for Levitsky is why more people

do not mobilize politically around this new landscape and set of unmet needs. She sees the key role of family responsibility and the way this centuries' old value has held fast, despite demographic changes. Americans have just grown up with the notion that they must care for their own and not turn to the state for assistance, as people in other countries typically do.

Levitsky puts her research hat on and undertakes an extremely thorough study of the dynamics at play, with an eye toward how one might shift toward a greater politicization of those most affected by these caregiving needs. She observes many support groups, she runs focus groups, she interviews individual caregivers themselves, and she interviews social workers and other organizational actors. The large number of observations and interviews, and their depth and intensity, are really quite impressive. Through this multi-method qualitative design, she powerfully gives voice to caregivers and to the challenges they face.

The author begins by looking at the "transformation of private needs into public issues"—the first step of politicization. The caregivers poignantly report the huge difficulties of taking care of their loved ones, all the while feeling it is their responsibility to do so. The small group of caregivers who begin to see the state as socially responsible for the care of their loved ones tended to be those who also took on a group identity as caregivers. This move from an individual to collective consciousness around caregiving was often facilitated by social workers, in the name of self-care and self-advocacy.

Once some caregivers have begun to consider asking for help, they begin to question what the state can do for them. Levitsky describes a process of "injustice framing," which takes caregivers through the steps of naming an issue (need for help with care), blaming (usually themselves before the state), and claiming a course of action to help (typically around financial support, subsidized adult day care, respite care, and in-home care). This group of caregivers who expect some help still weaves this need together with the higher value of family responsibility, noting they turn elsewhere only when all else fails.

The third step in politicization is "communicating grievances" and organizing for action. Even in a group of caregivers

who have come to see their individual issues as social ones and who imagine a set of demands they can make of the state, very few individuals take this next step of political action. Levitsky looks to a more politicized time (the late 60s and early 70s) when many social service agencies—anti-poverty groups, legal aid clinics—were politically active themselves and encouraged political activism among their clients. She notes that times have changed and, in general, caregivers receiving social services are not encouraged to take the next step toward action; the focus remains more on their own individual needs, and whatever social action is taken tends to be by professional advocates, and not by the caregivers themselves.

Despite these obstacles to activism, Levitsky does note that her study has identified a certain group of caregivers that has become politicized over the issue of long-term care, and is hopeful that this issue can be nurtured into “full-fledged political demand” as time passes.

This is an extremely well-written and well-researched book. It is especially noteworthy for combining social policy analysis with qualitative method. We indeed learn a lot from hearing the voices of the caregivers themselves, and it is hoped this will move us to act.

Helen Glikman, School of Social Work, Salem State University

Joel Best and Eric Best, *The Student Loan Mess: How Good Intentions Created a Trillion-Dollar Problem*. University of California Press (2014). \$26.95 (hardcover).

Higher education currently faces challenges that cause many to question the existing paradigm that colleges and universities have relied upon for many years. These concerns include rising costs, decreased college access, the financial stability of institutions, the role of the faculty, assessing teaching and learning, the emerging role of technology and the governance of the university (Baum, Kurose, & McPherson, 2013). Each of these questions potentially threatens the university system and the fate of many individual institutions.

One concern that is reflected in these many challenges is the adequacy of student loans and the corresponding