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Rethinking Social Policy: Race, Poverty and the Underclass. Christopher Jencks.

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defined. It is still used loosely as a synonym for community organization, administration or social policy, and sometimes it is employed to denote any form of social work intervention other than clinical practice.

In this book, Netting, Kettner and McMurtry attempt to define macro-practice in more precise terms as a social work intervention that seeks to bring about change in communities or organizations (in other words as community organization *and* administration). The bulk of the book is subsequently devoted to a study of the dynamics of communities and organizations and to defining strategies for social change. The notion of social change is largely conceptualized in social problem terms, and the strategies for problem solving will be familiar. These strategies include planning, lobbying, negotiating, capacity building and use of the media. While the use of the term macro-practice may be a novel and effective technique for capturing a share of the textbook market, the book largely recapitulates the existing literature. Nevertheless, this is a well written and thoroughly illustrated book which social work students will find useful.

Christopher Jencks. *Rethinking Social Policy: Race, Poverty and the Underclass*. New York: Harper Collins, 1992. \$12 papercover.

Jencks is best known for his pioneering study of the affects of education on the life chances of individuals but he has also gained a reputation as a astute commentator on diverse social questions. His articles in magazines such as the *New York Review of Books*, *The New Republic* and *American Prospect* have been widely read.

Rethinking Social Policy is an updated collection of previously published articles in these and similar magazines. Covering a wide range of issues, they reveal Jenck's ability to articulate complex arguments that challenge the simple minded rhetoric to which those on both the political right and left frequently have recourse. Jencks does not mind being criticized by liberals for challenging their uncritical assumptions about the inevitable goodness of human nature, and he certainly invites attack from those on the right for demolishing the myths on which the Reagan administration built its popularity.

The chapters in the collection cover social concerns as diverse as affirmative action, the genetic causes of crime, the 'underclass' phenomenon and the incomes of welfare mothers. Each chapter is thoroughly researched and meticulously argued. The chapter on 'welfare' (which is written with Kathryn Edin) is a good example of Jenck's incisive analytical style. It demolishes popular beliefs about welfare mothers, and exposes the policy and administrative mess into which social assistance policy in the United States has degenerated. Its powerful condemnation of a system gone wrong should stimulate immediate meliorative action. This extremely readable and interesting book confirms Jenck's status as a leading commentator on critical social issues.

Fay Lomoax Cook and Edith J. Barrett. *Support for the American Welfare State*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1992. \$49.50 hardcover; \$16.50 papercover.

During the 1980s, the rhetoric of crisis permeated academic debates about social policy. The welfare state was said to be struggling with a major fiscal crisis and, at the same time, to be facing a crisis of legitimacy. The legitimacy of the social services was being undermined as programs were becoming increasingly costly, inefficient and unable to meet expectations. Reagan's electoral victories appeared to confirm the view that popular support for the welfare state was rapidly evaporating. Indeed, the Reaganites frequently claimed that the American public had rejected the welfare state and wished it to be replaced with increased individual responsibility, commercial social services and charitable provisions.

Apart from opinion polls about popular attitudes towards welfare programs published by Gallup and similar organizations, the accuracy of these claims were not seriously tested until Cook and Barrett undertook the study reported in this book in the mid-1980s. The study consisted of telephone interviews with a national sample of 1,209 respondents as well as in-depth interviews with 58 members of Congress, and it concluded that there is overwhelming support for existing social programs among both the public and Congressional representatives.

Cook and Barrett vigorously refute the belief that the public is opposed to the welfare state and that citizens are unwilling