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The Careless Society: Community and its Counterfeits. John McKnight.

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David Macarov, *Social Welfare: Structure and Practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1995. \$24.95 papercover.

David Macarov has written a handy introductory social policy text for undergraduates which transcends the descriptive accounts of the social services that pervade the literature. Unlike many other introductory texts, Macarov does not seek to list the major social services and describe their functioning but focuses instead on the role of ideas and wider social forces in social welfare.

The book is divided into four parts. The first attempts to formulate a workable definition of social welfare based largely on the work that has been done on the concept of social need. Part II traces what the author calls 'motivations' for social welfare: these include mutual aid, the family, religion, politics and economic institutions. It also discusses the role of ideology as a motivator of social welfare. Part III examines 'influences' on social welfare such as the work ethic and social Darwinism. The final part discusses 'issues' in social welfare including poverty, unemployment and welfare reform.

The division of the material into these sections appears to be somewhat arbitrary. For example, it is not clear that why the work ethic or social Darwinism are influences rather than motivators. Also, some of the topics are dealt with in a limited way. The chapter on ideology deals primarily with individualism versus collectivism, ignoring the influence of many other ideologies in social welfare. However, these limitations do not detract from the book's overall value in stimulating undergraduates to think about social welfare from an issue-based perspective. Instead of memorizing the facts of social service provision, the author challenges students to consider wider conceptual issues. The book is easy to read and thoroughly supported with recommendations for additional reading. It is a useful addition to the literature.

John McKnight, *The Careless Society: Community and its Counterparts*. New York: Basic Books, 1995. \$21.00 hardcover.

The author of this readable book claims that traditional forms of social organization at the community level, which previously provided extensive support networks and effective responses to social need, have been undermined by professionalization, the

medicalization of social problems and the imposition of services by formal agencies. For most of its history, American society has solved its own social problems through the intervention of relatives, neighbors and caring community members. In recent times, these endogenous forms of care have been replaced by outsiders who have succeeded in imposing a medical interpretation of social problem on local communities and in persuading them that they need professional help to deal with their problems.

McKnight provides a graphic illustration of this argument by arguing that professional bereavement counselors have infiltrated local communities to provide professional assistance at a time when the bereaved previously turned to relatives and friends for support. Through their intervention, there has been a decline in the support offered by traditional carers. To make matters worse, professional undermine personal care. The author contends that unless the process of medicalization and professionalization is reversed, the very moral basis of American society will be subverted creating serious problems in the future.

McKnight's book will have resonance with many Americans. This is, after all, a culture where communitarian and populist beliefs are deeply ingrained. However, the book overstates a problem that has been debated before. The writings of Illich, Lasch and other popular intellectuals who are hostile to formalized responses to social need are now well known. Nevertheless, McKnight's book is worth reading. It provides interesting insights into the way populist ideas continue to exert a powerful cultural influence and, despite its tendency to exaggerate, it demonstrate the need to maintain a balance between community and formalized systems of support.

Desmond King, *Actively Seeking Work: The Politics of Unemployment and Welfare Policy in the United States and Great Britain*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1995. \$17.95 papercover.

The modern welfare state is based on the notion that employment is the primary mechanism by which people earn income and thus maintain adequate levels of welfare. Social policy and the social services should function to supplement income earned from employment or substitute for it when employment is interrupted or terminated. This idea was institutionalized in