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Society, Work and Welfare in Europe. Christine Cousins.

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avoid obfuscating the narrative with jargon. For this reason, the book should appeal not only to academics but to all those who are interested in contemporary social questions. For example, the chapters on gender and globalization, and gender and the welfare state do not focus exclusively on the gender dimension, but succeed in summarizing the field in its entirety, successfully demonstrating that gender issues cannot be relegated to the margins of social policy discourse. The authors also show that their subject is exceedingly complex and that it contains few simple and universally agreed upon generalizations. Their ability to combine sophistication of presentation with a readable and easily understood exposition of the field is impressive.

This book will be an essential resource for students, faculty and researchers in the social sciences. As suggested earlier, it should also appeal to those with a wider interest in contemporary social issues. It deserves to be the standard resource book on the subject.

Christine Cousins, *Society, Work and Welfare in Europe*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999. \$55.00 hardcover.

It is only in relatively recent times that social policy scholars have again focused on the role of employment in the promotion of social welfare. Although full employment was a fundamental component of both the New Deal and Beveridge proposals, mainstream social policy paid little attention to labor market issues and focused instead on the social services, and on issues of social service delivery. Today, employment is once again an important element in social policy. The requirement that needy people be required to work is central to so-called welfare reform in the United States and Britain. In Europe, where unemployment rates are comparatively high, labor market flexibility is a perennial theme in social policy discourse.

In this interesting and ambitious book, Christine Cousins examines diverse aspects of employment policy in Europe and its relationship with social policy. The book traces developments in four European nations—Britain, Germany, Spain and Sweden—and examines the way changing employment patterns over the last fifty years have affected social policy thinking. The four countries chosen offer examples of both policy divergence and

convergence. All four have been described as 'welfare states' and all four have adopted policies that link employment to social welfare. On the other hand, there are significant differences in the way these policies operate and the way they address fundamental social needs.

The book covers an enormous field and at times, appears to lack coherence. However, this is largely due to its ambitious sweep over a wide range of topics. These include discussions of Fordism and flexible specialization in industrial production, the growth of 'non-standard' employment, the increasing role and significance of women in the labor market, regional differences in labor markets and industrial production, gender inequality and discrimination in employment, and the merits of social exclusion as an alternative concept to that of poverty. The book also provides an excellent summary of employment trends in the four European nations since the Second World War.

Although Cousin's does not attempt to compare European trends with those in the United States, her book contains much information that will be of interest to American readers. The problem of persistently high unemployment; the idea of social exclusion as a uniquely European approach to conceptualizing social welfare; and the idea that active labor market policies are a major responsibility of government deserves the attention of readers in the United States and indeed, other countries as well. This book should be widely read. Hopefully, it will encourage social policy scholars to pay more attention to issues of employment and social policy.

Stephen P. Wernet, *Managed Care in Human Services*, Chicago, IL: Lyceum Books, 1999. \$32.95 papercover.

The term 'managed care' is widely used today but there is still much confusion about its meaning and implications. In the popular media, it is used primarily to criticize HMOs for failing to provide adequate medical services to people with serious health conditions. In psychotherapy, it gloomily foretells the imminent end of private practice. In the social services it is more broadly used to refer to the contracting out of services to non-governmental organizations. Frequently, it connotes the involvement of for-profit groups in the provision of these services.