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Transformation of the Welfare State. Neil Gilbert.

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Differences in altruistic behavior are found on the bases of education, sex and age. Individuals who are more socially embedded volunteer more than their less embedded counterparts. Individuals with different demographic characteristics also engage in different types of volunteer activities, at different times.

Much of the data used in this study comes from the National Survey of Midlife Development in the United States (MIDUS). The research methods are sound and fully discussed in the appendix. The editor's introduction is useful because it places the research into historical context by providing a substantial overview of social trends over the last century and how they relate to current ideas about civic participation. This sets the stage for a thought provoking, holistic account of civic participation which will not only inform but challenge widely held views about the alleged decline of people's involvement in social life. Its conceptualization of what civic participation involves and its thorough analysis of empirical data make an important contribution to the literature.

Neil Gilbert, *Transformation of the Welfare State*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002. \$29.95 hardcover.

Over the last twenty years, comparative social policy scholarship has become very interested in the question of whether the welfare state has been retrenched, dismantled or reconstructed and if so, to what extent and with what consequences. This debate has generated a number of very different answers which range from an optimistic assessment that the policy changes introduced since the Reagan years have not made much difference, to a pessimistic assessment that the 'Golden Era' of the welfare state is over. Neil Gilbert's new book takes up this question and offers a definitive answer. Reviewing a mind boggling amount of information, he concludes that the welfare state has indeed been transformed. The era of institutional welfare based on notions of social rights and entitlements and is over and has been replaced by what he calls an enabling state which seeks to integrate the poor and needy into the market economy and to provide social services through market mechanisms. In an era of triumphant market capitalism, social policy has been reshaped to conform and compliment the logic and ethic of the market.

In the core of the book, Gilbert explores various dimensions of this new, market conforming social welfare system in more depth. He shows, first, that the social protection approach of the traditional welfare state has been replaced by an emphasis on social inclusion which, in effect, means that needy people are now expected to work if they are to receive social benefits. Second, he points out that, rather than provide services through public agencies, governments now make extensive use of the market to deliver these services. He shows, third, that this trend has been accompanied by a far greater use of selective social services and targeted income benefits than before. Finally, he suggests that there has been a noticeable trend away from notions of welfare as citizenship to the communitarian idea that people are members of communities and that social welfare should be more directly linked to the idea of community.

Gilbert's account of the way social policy has changed as a result of the emergence of the enabling state is masterful, but it will be contested by those who believe that he exaggerates the extent to which state welfare provisions have been modified. It will also be contested by those who believe that governments are still far too excessively involved in social welfare. They will argue that the notion of the enabling state still smacks of welfare paternalism and interference. Despite Gilbert's careful analysis, his own normative assessment of the enabling state and its reliance on the market is ambivalent. On the one hand, he derides those who oppose privatization but on the other hand, he regrets the loss of collective responsibility and caring. Unfortunately, he does not devote much space to this issue using only one chapter of the book to discuss the way welfare capitalism has harmed rather than helped those in need. Although Gilbert alludes to the benefits of a communitarian solution, this deserves more discussion and explication.

This is a book of great interest and profound scholarship from one of the country's leading thinkers on social welfare issues. It makes a major contribution to the social policy literature and deserves not only to be widely read but widely discussed. Hopefully, it will provoke an extensive debate on how an enabling state can transcend a commitment to promote market solutions to human ills and be worthy of the term's connotation. Perhaps,

in the future, governments will adopt policies that will truly enable human beings, families and communities to attain the high standards of living the market has provided for some but not for others.

Huw T.O. Davies, Sandra M. Nutley and Peter C. Smith (Eds.). *What Works? Evidence Based Policy and Practice in Public Services*. Bristol, UK: Policy Press, 2001. \$81.00 hardcover, \$32.50 papercover.

The growing interest in evidence based practice in social work is being accompanied by a similar interest in using substantive research evidence to inform social policy making. Although social workers have for many years emphasized the role of professional opinion, values and emotional responses in social work practice, many now believe that decisions effecting clients should be based on scientific research findings. As proponents of evidence based practice point out, this is increasingly the case in medicine and other professional fields. Although this proposition would not appear to be particularly original or contentious, advocates of the evidence based approach contend that much professional practice is still based on opinion, beliefs, tradition and anecdote. This is certainly the case in social policy where policy making has long been shaped by ideological predispositions. Indeed, because of its ideological character, it is almost inevitably that the many complex decisions policy makers reach on issues affecting human welfare should reflect their values and beliefs and those of their constituents.

However, as this interesting and informative book reveal, scientific evidence can be used to inform social policy decisions and, in this way, make social service programs more effective. The book is compiled by three British academics and its chapters deal with diverse aspects of public policy in Britain. Nevertheless, its central argument is relevant to policy makers in other countries as well and the examples and case studies provided in the different chapters should be of wider interest. The book begins with a general overview of the meaning and history of evidence based policy making and successive chapters focus on the application of these ideas in different policy fields such as health care, education, social welfare, housing and urban development. Another five chapters are concerned with methodological issues showing how