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Globalization and Human Welfare. Vic George & Paul Wilding.

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Book Notes

Vic George and Paul Wilding, *Globalization and Human Welfare*. New York: Palgrave, 2002. \$75.00 hardcover, \$25.00 paper-cover.

Globalization has become a popular concept not only in academic circles but in the media and in everyday discourse as well. A huge number of books and articles on the subject have been published and, as the street protests that accompanied meetings of international trade organizations and officials reveal, it has evoked strong passions. The idea of globalization has also attracted the attention of social policy scholars and generally, they have taken the view that globalization has resulted in increased unemployment, poverty and other social problems. In addition, most social policy scholars contend that globalization has exerted powerful pressures on governments to reduce social expenditures and retrench social programs. Although these conclusions have been challenged, the prevailing wisdom in social welfare circles is that globalization has had very negative consequences for human well-being.

In view of the current interest in globalization, the publication of a textbook on the subject by two leading British social policy writers is to be welcomed. The authors are well-respected scholars whose previous work on welfare ideology and other social policy questions has been acclaimed. The purpose of their book is to provide students with a comprehensive account of the subject of globalization and to introduce them to the debates and controversies attending the topic.

The book begins by defining globalization in a narrow economic terms as the transnationalization of the world economy which, the authors contend, occurred in the latter half of the 20th century. The authors are aware that other scholars dispute the idea that globalization is a recent phenomenon, and they allocate space to discussing alternative views. However, they do not discuss alternative definitions of globalization. Like many other social policy writers, the authors adopt a narrow economic definition

which equates globalization with the spread of international capitalism. Using this definition, the book discusses the impact of globalization on social conditions in what the authors call the 'advanced' industrial countries and the developing countries. In addition, a chapter is devoted to gender issues and another to international migration. These are followed by a chapter on what is described as 'global social policy'. The book concludes with a discussion of the future of global social policy.

Although the book covers a large subject matter, its narrow economic definition of globalization is a major limitation. This is unfortunate because it ignores the many other ways that increased international integration affects communications, mobility, culture, political initiatives and wider social relationships. Another problem is that the book presents the arguments as if they were new. Some of the chapters, such as the one on social policy in the Global South and on the development of global social policy are blissfully ignorant of the substantial body of literature which had previously addressed these issues. While British writers have only recently begun to promote the idea of forging a global social policy, international agencies such as the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health organization have been actively engaged in this task for decades. Although the book's intention is commendable, it does not succeed in exposing students to the issues in a way that will promote critical thinking and an appreciation of the complexities of the processes that are currently shaping the world.

Cecilia Winkler, *Single Mothers and the State: The Politics of Care in Sweden and the United States*. Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield, 2002, \$69.00 hardcover.

Single motherhood is deeply stigmatized in the United States. Although there are several ways in which women can become single mothers, once a woman is parenting alone she faces many challenges including the daunting task of raising of her children on her own. There is little relief for women in this position, fathers often do not assist in the raising of children, the welfare system may decline assistance or become a cycle in which women are trapped with no opportunity for a more promising future. Single mothers in the United States are stretched emotionally, physically