

In Chapter Nine, the development of social work in Philippines is seen by Jem Price within a wider international context. Religious teachings have influenced social politics in many Catholic countries. However, as early as 1947, it was primarily the American-trained social workers that set up the first schools of social work and constituted the Philippine social workers association. In 1965, the first law was passed to regulate social work, and this also regulated the operation of social work service centres. Overall, the colonial and American political influence, as well as the contributions of the United Nations and international welfare NGOs, made significant impact on the social work situation in the Philippines.

Singapore's social work development, as narrated by Rosaleen Ow in Chapter Eight, also puts forward the key idea that the type of social welfare policies and programmes will determine the political will and actual room for the development of professional social work services. Singapore, with the many helping hands approach, has developed a welfare state in a class of its own being influenced by British social workers during the colonial days. Social work was first introduced in 1952. Two professional associations emerged, the almoners and the professional social workers; their amalgamation, in 1971, formed the current Singapore Association of social workers. Singapore's social policy reflects the incremental welfare ideology with the government consciously choosing not to go the welfare state route.

Singapore has recently launched The National Social Work Competency Framework to provide a 'clear articulation of social work roles across the profession with the corresponding knowledge and skills required' for effective delivery of interventions, so as to be 'future-ready, social workers', who are grounded in core competencies (NSWCF, 2015:1). This may be a trend, in the years to come, for the East Asian countries, as social work continues to quest for professional upgrading.

This book promises to keep up with the trends, providing an understanding into the rapid development and the efficacy of social work in this region. As with most edited books, however, the chapters vary in the consistency and depth of analysis. Despite the fact that two of the chapters, Japan and Philippines, were written by non-local social workers, in the book overall, the chapters expound social work development with current insights, making this book a useful document to scholars of comparative social welfare policy and social work.

References

- National Social Work Competency Framework (NSWCF) (2015), *National Social Work Competency Framework*. Singapore: Social Service Institute <http://www.socialserviceinstitute.sg/Resources/DigitalResources/NationalSocialWorkersCompetencyFramework.pdf> (viewed March 2016).
- Tan, N. T. (2006), Regional perspectives from Asia Pacific. *International Social Work*, 49(2): 277–284.
- Tan, N.T. (2014), Social Work and Social Development in Asia, in Healy, L.M. and Link, R.J. (2014), *Handbook of International Social Work: Human Rights, Development and the Global Profession*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 372–376.

TAN NGOH TIONG

SIM University

tannt@unisim.edu.sg

Jonathan Dickens (2016), *Social Work and Social Policy: An Introduction*. 2nd Edition, London and New York, NY: Routledge, £25.99, pp. 212, pbk.
doi:[10.1017/S0047279416000489](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047279416000489)

The book sets itself an ambitious task in attempting to respond to its key questions, namely: 'what is social work for' and 'who is social work for'? It approaches answering these questions

by referring to the constantly ongoing changes that take place in society; and how these changes have an impact both on the way in which social policies inform social work practice and on the way in which social workers enact and 'make' social policy through their everyday practises. By referring to ongoing changes in this way, the book shows that social work is very much a subject that is alive, one that adapts, and one that is potentially influenced by several different agents, operating individually and/or collectively.

The book is jam-packed with relevant information. At times, it adopts a critical approach, such as when exploring whether resources are brought together effectively in order to be responsive to the full spectrum of needs of service users, and if not, who is being left out. At times, it adopts a relatively more postmodern stance, such as when it looks into how state intervention can be 'pictured' differently by different people, and consequently, how through 'unpacking' their own understanding of 'the state', can instigate them to reflect on why they tend to subscribe to one understanding of social policy rather than subscribing to another. For instance, the book carefully locates social policy in both a governmental and wider political context, noting how factors such as international bodies, voluntary organisations, and even businesses can influence it. This is in contrast to earlier understandings of social policy, which gave by far more importance to such 'traditional' facets as education and health.

The book is divided into three parts, each of which draws on a rich literature that reflects the multidimensional character of the policy and practise dimensions of social work. Each part, and indeed each chapter, follows on from the previous one logically and sequentially. Having said this, each chapter can also be read individually by readers who want to focus on a particular aspect of social work, or who want to know more about a particular aspect of the work that social workers carry out and why they do it. The book offers well researched material in a readily comprehensible manner and, for this reason, certainly deserves a highly merited place on recommended reading lists at colleges and universities, particularly for students who are following courses in social work and/or social policy, or who have a keen interest in these disciplines. The well-structured layout of each chapter also serves to make the book a useful resource for lecturers requiring easily accessible material that they could use when planning and delivering their lectures.

Having said this, I would like to recommend to the author that, in future editions of the book, the second section be divided into two separate sections rather than one. I would suggest that the first of these sections would focus on 'need', 'poverty' and 'inequality'. Then, the second section would be focused on the areas of 'rights', 'participation' and 'regulation'. I believe that subdividing the book in this way would make it easier for people who would be reading it as an introductory text to follow. Based on my own experience as a lecturer of social work, I suspect that students who are new to social work/social policy may find it easier to associate 'need' with 'financial needs' (and therefore 'poverty') and thereby more likely to come to see 'poverty' as one of the manifestations of 'inequality'. Likewise, I believe that 'rights' and 'participation' tend to be closely intertwined, and it is practically impossible to imagine effective 'regulation' taking place in a society where people have no rights and where participation is non-existent.

The last chapter, on funding and spending, should prove to be of particular interest to those who wish to explore further the complexities of the financial aspect of care provision, and to understand, in greater detail, the particular dilemmas that are faced when deciding which of the different categories of service users gets 'what, when and how'. It brings to a close a section of a book which is centred on the effective use of personalisation.

Personalisation is, in turn, strongly associated, by the author, with the impetus of modern day social work to ensure that people's needs are responded to with sensitivity and flexibility. Particularly through emphasising the need for integrated service provision, the last part of the book illustrates how, at the heart of the social worker's role is not only an understanding

of social policy, and the impact of social policy on people's lives, but also an examination of whether, through the wide medium of social work activity, social policies serve to enhance people's social well-being holistically and, if not, what can be done to change this.

DAMIAN SPITERI
University of York
damian.spiteri@york.ac.uk

Louise Humpage (2014), *Policy Change, Public Attitudes and Social Citizenship: Does Neoliberalism Matter?* Bristol: Policy Press. £75.00, pp. 272, hbk.

[doi:10.1017/S0047279416000490](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047279416000490)

While it is not clear from the title the most interesting feature of this book is that it is a substantial case study of social policy and public opinion in New Zealand since the 1980s including some extensive comparisons with Australia and the United Kingdom. A dearth of monographs on social policy in New Zealand and Australia over the last two decades or so has seriously impoverished our general level of debate. For this reason alone, Humpage's book will be widely welcomed by academics and students seeking a broad understanding of the quite momentous developments across that period in those two countries. At the same time the substantial comparisons with the impacts of neoliberalism in the UK makes the work of broader international interest.

The book has a twin focus on developments in policy and in public attitudes, with a roughly equal space allotment to each. Readers not so familiar with the literature on public opinion – like this reviewer – can be assured that Humpage's substantial scholarly expertise in this field is worn lightly and the technical discussions of public attitudes is interwoven smoothly with the larger narrative of the book.

The author has real literary skills. She engages the reader from page one with strong images contrasting the life her parents led in the 1970s in the days when the social rights of citizenship had substance with the more precarious economic and social life which was to follow. The very well structured account which follows invites us to see the phenomenon of "Neoliberalism" as the factor making all the difference. Here she takes from the work of Peck and Tickell the idea of a two phase development in terms of "roll back" and then "roll out" – the former referring to the Thatcher period and the latter to the Third Way – and then she adds a third, called "roll over", which covers the period since the global financial crisis. Thus the reader is left with an irresistible incentive to follow the story and discover whether the publics of New Zealand, Australia and the United Kingdom have finally "rolled over" and accepted the neoliberal view of the world, or not!

How to organise such an ambitious overview would have been a challenge but this is very well managed. A chapter giving an overview of policy implementation is followed by one each on particular policy areas: employment and wage related issues; social security (or income support for the unemployed, sole parents and people on disability support); health, education and superannuation; and issues of tax and redistribution. A substantial Conclusion summarises the main findings as the basis for a new policy agenda to renew the social rights of citizenship.

The really substantial contribution of the book is the detailed account of public opinion change in relation to the variety of policies under each chapter heading and extensive theoretical discussion of the policy/public attitude interaction. The fine grain reveals "roll over" in some policy areas, unemployment benefits for example, but "support for social citizenship survived" in other areas like health, education and superannuation.