

fact that the development of professional social work, the cultivation of social organizations (NGOs) and the purchase of services by the government are used as important governing tools by the Chinese government. Focusing on the policy development and implementation of the government purchase of social welfare services provided by the newly emerging social workers organizations, this chapter illustrates the social innovation in welfare provision and delivery in China, particularly in Guangdong, the most prosperous region in China.

The eighth chapter is the concluding section of the book. Highlighting the social challenges facing the third turning point in China's welfare trajectory, Professor Leung argues that China needs urgently to ensure inclusive, broad, sustainable and equitable growth in the years to come (p. 172). He even points out that a sustainable welfare state is important for the Chinese government to maintain social stability and cohesion and to support continuous economic growth (p.173). For the future of China's welfare development, Professor Leung believes that China will not become a fully-fledged welfare state with universal coverage and entitlements, but a largely residual welfare state will be created with the increasing social expenditure driven by the ongoing social reforms and the building of a mixed economy of welfare. Finally, Professor Leung warns that if the Chinese government is not prepared to achieve substantial and long-term social reforms through a new developmental state in the face of new social challenges and risks, China will be caught in the middle-income trap and fail to become a high-income economy (p. 184).

To a large extent, *China's Social Welfare* can be treated as a companion piece of *Authority and Benevolence: Social Welfare in China*, a book co-authored by Professor Leung and Nan, R.C. in 1995. Though the book has given a comprehensive, broad, and clear account of social policy development in the post-Mao China, especially in the new century, it seems that whether social welfare in China is redistributive or regressive, the key concern expressed by the authors (p.15) has not been examined clearly. In addition, though named as China's social welfare, the book shows less interest to portray a clear picture of the current social welfare system in China. In fact, the term 'social welfare' has not been differentiated strictly from other terms such as 'social protection', 'social security', 'social services', 'social development' and 'social policy'. Nevertheless, *China's Social Welfare* will become an important reference for students and researchers who are interested in contemporary China, especially for those who engage in social studies and policy research.

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Peter Alcock (2016), *Why we need welfare: collective action for the common good*, Bristol: Policy Press, 14.99, 193 pp, pbk.
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This is a short primer about social policy in the UK. In eight chapters, Pete Alcock discusses the nature of the British welfare state, the range of needs and services in the UK, issues in service delivery and some social issues. The material is briefly and descriptively stated. The headings of the main chapters give a fair idea of the scope of what is covered: "What do we mean by welfare?", "What are the main welfare issues?", "How should we deliver welfare?", "Where should planning and delivery take place?", "Who benefits from welfare?" and "What challenges does welfare face?" The basic agenda is a whistle-stop tour of issues in social policy, covering familiar topics in 1000–2000 words – there's a bit more on poverty or taxation, a bit less on disability or old age.

The title, the subtitle and the promotional quotations on the cover have little to do with what's inside. This is not a book about why we need welfare: unless you think that the reasons for delivering welfare are self-evident, describing welfare policy or issues in provision are not equivalent to offering a justification for doing it. The international organisations have been bubbling with other arguments for expanding welfare provision, such as solidarity, social capital, basic security, human rights or social cohesion, but they don't get as much of a name-check here. Nor is this a book about the common good: there are only a couple of hundred words on what that might mean, and almost nothing on the theoretical debates behind it. The concluding chapter asserts that welfare is important for social investment and for civil society but adds very little by way of discussion. Alcock claims that this perspective offers us "A new case for collective welfare", but neither of those positions is at all 'new': Giddens was writing about a social investment state in 1998 (Giddens, 1998 p 117), Robson to a welfare society in 1976 (Robson, 1976) – Walzer's 1991 essay on "The civil society argument" is also worth considering (in Walzer, 2007). There are no references to the best known writers about collective action or the common good in social policy, such as Titmuss or Bill Jordan (1989) – the first of those has to be a deliberate choice, because Pete Alcock has previously co-edited an edition of Titmuss's work (Alcock *et al.*, 2001). If you wanted a book of arguments in defence of welfare, or hoped to find a developed case for collective welfare provision, you'd need to look elsewhere.

Books need to be reviewed on the basis of what they do, not on what they don't. As it stands, this is a serviceable short textbook about services in Britain. There are many of the standard features of a textbook – paragraphs describing well-known contributions to the subject, bullet lists, recommended readings and short points made in boxes. There's stuff on education, health and social care, and brief coverage of class, race and gender; other staples of social policy such as benefits, housing or child protection get shorter shrift and are touched on only in passing. Those choices may reflect a desire to improve the subject's fit with basic sociology courses – Alcock genuflects in the direction of the 'sociological imagination' – but they make the book rather less relevant to professional studies.

The kind of material that is covered is not untypical of an introductory set of lectures in social policy, for people studying the subject along with sociology. Teachers on that kind of course may want to recommend this book as a reasonably succinct, accessible account of British social policy. However, the market for introductory student texts is crowded: this book will find itself in competition with substantial, detailed textbooks covering related ground in much greater depth, with alternative short introductions to social policy (such as the somewhat superior *Short Guide*, from the same publisher: Hudson *et al.*, 2015) and with resources on the internet which are accessible and free. There's not enough here either to commend the book in its own right or to distinguish it from the pack.

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