

come the profession most prominent in helping the rest of us make sense of illness, physical suffering, and death but failures insofar as they have not matched the ministry in finding moral meaning in these afflictions. I am not so sure. I do trust some doctors to find moral meanings, but the doctors I have in mind are two old friends from college who share many of my experiences and many of my sensibilities, not the skilled technicians I actually go to for diagnosis and treatment and certainly not the American Medical Association. Neither do I particularly want those technicians or that association to exercise authority. Trust has its uses, but they are very easy to overestimate.

Out of Reach: Place, Poverty, and the New American Welfare State. By Scott W. Allard. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2009. Pp. ix+266. \$35.00 (paper).

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Though welfare has been in reform for decades now, most of our scholarly and political attention has focused on cash public assistance, most recently on work incentives and employment-related elements of that assistance. Little attention has gone to the transformation that has taken place in terms not only of exchanging cash for work-related services and supports but also of moving the locus of that assistance from government to the nonprofit and private sectors. In *Out of Reach: Place, Poverty, and the New American Welfare State*, Scott W. Allard shifts our perspective about welfare reform away from considering public policy and what government has explicitly done and toward understanding the complicated constellation of local, predominantly nonprofit-based services that sprinkle our cities and countryside. He presents this new paradigm as one that happened simply as we were looking in the other direction; all of a sudden, we now provide a vast array of services in our welfare state that are quite distant from the state itself and instead are embedded in our communities.

Most of Allard's spatial and distributional analysis of community-based organizations that serve low-income populations relies on the Multi-city Survey of Social Service Providers (MSSSP) in Washington, D.C., Chicago, and Los Angeles. Although these cities are diverse in their geographies and histories, they do not represent all types of cities, and it is uncertain whether their patterns of nonprofit service provision are indeed generalizable. Regardless, evidence is compelling from both Allard's analysis and other similar analyses that he draws from in the literature that antipoverty-related nonprofit services are not co-located with low-income populations. In general, *Out of Reach* informs us that community-based service providers are between 30% and 50% more accessible in low-poverty (0%–10% poor) census tracts than in tracts with extreme poverty

(40% or more poor). In addition to poverty status, race and ethnicity are associated with less accessible services, highlighting some very important issues for social equity. That said, the type of service provided mitigates this inequity, with food assistance and employment assistance being more favorably situated to poorer neighborhoods.

After considering the spatial accessibility of social service agencies, Allard also examines the financing structures and the spatial implications of changes in how these organizations are funded. Funding of social service exploded between 1960 and 1995, with more than a fivefold increase in expenditures on job training and adult education, subsidized child care, mental health and substance abuse treatment, and domestic violence assistance. This expansion includes not only increases in federal government dollars but also state and local assistance, with all these government sources supplemented with private giving as well. Allard's analysis reveals that more recent government retraction of funding has exacerbated the inequalities evident in the spatial distribution of service providers, with providers in higher-poverty census tracts experiencing much greater losses and subsequent service cuts than those in low-poverty tracts.

Another especially useful addition to our knowledge base on this topic is Allard's analysis of faith-based organizations (FBOs) and the extent to which they are similar and dissimilar to secular organizations, both in terms of their locations and their financing. The FBOs in the MSSSP "appear to operate with a purer antipoverty mission than other types of service providers" (p. 141), and "faith-integrated" organizations are the most accessible of all, being both more accessible than other FBOs and secular service agencies and "*more than twice* as accessible to persons in high-poverty neighborhoods as government agencies" (p. 142; emphasis added).

Out of Reach is well focused, clearly organized and written, and would make a nice addition to a specialized graduate course in social welfare policy. The highly decentralized new American welfare state as Allard presents it is indeed more layered than one might think at first glance, and this book provides useful methods and substance to consider why and how. Allard is critical and complete in his consideration of the implications of fragmentation and the decentralization of welfare state programs and supports. The American Dream rests on the premise that of equality of opportunity, but current conditions demonstrate the opposite: that race, ethnicity, poverty status, and location of residence prevent needy populations from having equitable access to community services that could help. The fact that we have ignored the spatial dimension of social services provision in assessing the successes and remaining challenges of our social safety net is now remedied by the contributions of this book.