

trepreneurship is interested in understanding the displacement of existing institutional arrangements, the introduction of new ones, and the conditions under which new practices become diffused and taken for granted. However, the theory puts the institutional environment at the forefront, acknowledging that interests and strategies of entrepreneurs are institutionally and historically shaped and constrained, even when they appear to run counter to prevailing wisdom. Hence, to frame their case and gain support for their projects, entrepreneurial actors often succeed by appealing to master rules of society or prevailing schema. In the case of microcredit, for example, it is probably no accident that Yunus's ideas took hold in the context of a neoliberal political climate that champions market solutions to social problems. The literature on institutional entrepreneurship also pays attention to power, recognizing that the creative destruction of prevailing equilibriums will be resisted by dominant actors who benefit from current arrangements. The literature also recognizes that entrepreneurial projects will succeed or fail (at least partly) on the outcomes of power struggles, probably those involving the mobilization of collectivities.

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Out of Reach: Place, Poverty, and the New American Welfare State. By Scott W. Allard. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008. Pp. 280. \$35.00 (paper).

It is most refreshing that social work researchers are once again focusing on poverty. Scott Allard reminds us that social work has a deep historical commitment to poor people, but one rarely sees new research or policy papers coming from social workers and dealing with this topic. Indeed, social work as a profession has neglected the study of poverty and, with the exception of a few academic poverty-focused programs, most schools of social work only give lip service to the topic. Furthermore, the Social Security Administration and the state welfare offices are rarely staffed by social workers. Instead, graduates from programs of economics and public administration dominate a field that was once a key social work domain. It is my hope that others will follow Allard and that this is the beginning of a new age.

The theme of this book could not be more timely. While Allard could not have predicted the economic meltdown and the recession that followed, his study is most relevant today. Tens of thousands of people find themselves unemployed with very little prospect for gainful employment. Compounding the economic hardship, as Allard correctly points out, is the fact that social welfare spending in times of economic recession tends to shrink rather than grow. The many newcomers to the circle of poverty will soon find that the reality portrayed in this book is relevant to them, and they will be most disappointed. America does not like poor people. The working-age poor are viewed as intentionally lazy, and the public is unwilling to spend funds to support the poor.

Allard makes some very poignant points regarding the collective official care of the poor. He recognizes, first and foremost, the national shift from cash assistance to the provision of social services over the past 30–40 years. In the past, poor people received assistance through monthly checks, but suspicion and hostility became collective attitudes toward the poor. With that shift, cash assistance stopped, and the norm became programs to help poor people get back into gainful employment. Allard correctly laments the demise of Aid to

Families with Dependant Children (AFDC), the last universal cash allowance to working-age poor people, but the shift started in the 1960s; almost every state had a public or general assistance program that provided some form of cash support to working-age adults who were not eligible for AFDC. With the rise of the conservative political movement, qualifying for these programs became increasingly difficult and, one by one, they were eliminated. As Allard shows, the shift from cash assistance to social services provision was advocated by right-wing intellectuals such as Charles Murray and adopted by the politicians who enjoy vilifying the working-age poor.

As a consequence, the bulk of public money earmarked to assist the poor is benefiting nonprofit organizations and their workforces. Allard notes that these agencies receive 20 times more money than what is publicly allocated to direct cash assistance. It should be noted that this statement and the book in general exclude the elderly and the role of the Social Security Administration. The focus is on working-age, low-income populations whose benefits now come through services and not through cash assistance.

Allard notes the proliferation of nonprofit organizations that focus on providing human and social services. Services are no longer delivered directly by government but through private providers. As Allard justifiably notes, however, government support for these for-profit and nonprofit organizations is on the decline, typically short-term, and very volatile. Instead of concentrating on long-term programs that are often effective, these organizations constantly focus on short-term interventions, on the next cycle of funding (or how to renew an existing contract), on whether they have enough clients to bill for, and on assessing whether they need to lay off workers. The end result of this system is that social services are rarely measured for effectiveness. If one uses Allard's findings, it is easy to assume that allocations to support the work of these organizations will rise and fall with tax revenues. In times of economic hardship, these services will be stressed and limited in their ability to serve America's poor.

These services could be significantly more helpful and functional than they are, but as Allard demonstrates, they are not located where poor people can easily access them. Service locations are mostly housed in city centers or along major roads but away from the neighborhoods where people in need reside. I must applaud Allard for this important finding. In a study of Philadelphia reentry services available to ex-prisoners, Beverly Frazier and I find that the majority of services are indeed in center city and that very few services are located in the 10 top neighborhoods where ex-prisoners reside.¹ Allard's urgent focus on place should therefore serve as a red flag for policy making and service planning.

Allard also demonstrates that, due to the geographical imbalance of services' location, the accessibility to services is even more difficult for blacks and Latinos than for whites. As Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton show, residential structure is segregated ("Residential Segregation of Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians by Socio-economic Status and Generation," *Social Science Quarterly* 64, no. 4 [1988]: 797–817). Very few neighborhoods are integrated, and a service located in one area may favor those who live nearby. Allard demonstrates that this is indeed the case. Cash allowances do not vary by where one resides, but provision of assistance through location-specific services discriminates against blacks, Latinos, and the rural poor. Allard summarizes the argument: "A safety net rooted in social service programs that promote work activity, address barriers to employment, or provide assistance with basic needs, however, is less readily available, equitable, and reliable than is commonly assumed" (6).

Allard's study does not cover the lack of coordination among services. The study of services for ex-prisoners suggests that this lack of coordination is a consequence of the constrained environment in which agencies barely have

time to provide services, complete and submit reports, and plan for the next budget cycle (Cnaan and Frazier 2007). A worker's time for service coordination is not reimbursable, and coordination is prohibited or kept to a minimum. Clients, however, often require more than one service and receive multiple services at a time. The result is that, when a client is served by multiple agencies, one agency is unaware of the others and is not flexible in scheduling meetings with the client. Ex-prisoners told us that they can spend a full day attending two brief service appointments because the distance between the appointments means that they spend most of the day on public transportation (Cnaan and Frazier 2007). Furthermore, if the client misses one appointment, he or she must wait for a full week for a new one. Service coordination, a crucial part of social service systems in the 1960s, is once again an Achilles heel that hampers the quality of the services offered to poor and needy people.

Allard, in the spirit of the past administrations, devotes a full chapter to comparing secular and faith-based organizations on their ability to help the poor. In this chapter, he votes for the secular organizations. The problem is that Allard is not as versed in faith-based services as he is in public services. Although Allard recognizes that the faith-based community is exceedingly diverse and cannot be studied as a whole, he lumps together all organizations that acknowledged having any faith element. He distinguishes faith-integrated nonprofit organizations from faith-segmented nonprofits, a distinction offered by Stephen Monsma (*Putting Faith in Partnerships: Welfare-to-Work in Four Cities* [Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004]). This is still a very limited approach, however, as it excludes important elements of the faith-based social service community.

The 400,000 local religious congregations (from all faith traditions) in the United States are different from the social services that are run according to religious principles and financed exclusively through religious donations. These, in turn, are different from faith-based organizations that accept public money and adhere to public regulations. Distinctions are even more complex than suggested here, and attempts to generalize them are futile. Allard makes numerous generalizations about the publicly funded groups alone. In fact, as numerous studies show, local religious congregations are the backbone of the U.S. safety net.² The majority of the poor in America receive through local religious congregations the basic support services that are provided in most advanced democratic countries through public cash assistance (lengthy unemployment benefits or welfare benefits). Most congregations are involved in providing food (distribution or preparation, from food pantries to soup kitchens), clothing (direct supply of clothing and donations to thrift stores), and shelter. The overwhelming financial support for these programs comes from members' donations, and this long-standing benevolent behavior is found throughout the nation. Finally, the studies mentioned above find that religious organizations, when compared with public agencies and nonprofit service providers, are more accessible to poor people and people of color since they are located in neighborhoods where people reside.

In every recession since the Depression, congregations have been at the forefront in serving the poor. This help is limited but badly needed, and public officials happily abdicate it to local religious congregations. Despite the shift from cash assistance to social services, poor people still need food, clothing, and shelter. Allard recognizes this point. Sadly, the most commonly available support in this society is in-kind assistance provided through the generosity and care of religious congregations.

I found this book as a whole to be innovative and important. Allard provides a new picture of welfare in America, recognizing that the focus on entitlements and public cash assistance is the perspective of yesteryear. He shows that social

services to encourage labor participation are the true welfare services of today. These services are dependent on nonprofit organizations and, as such, are fragile, inconsistent, and selective. This innovative book will serve as a foundation for numerous studies to follow and will be a required text in many social welfare forums.

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Notes

1. See Ram A. Cnaan and Beverly D. Frazier, "Assessing Philadelphia's Social Service Capacity for Ex-Prisoner Reentry," Report to Mayor's Office for the Reentry of Ex-offenders (University of Pennsylvania, School of Social Policy and Practice, Philadelphia, 2007), http://www.phila.gov/reentry/pdfs/research_study.pdf.

2. Mark Chaves, *Congregations in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004); Nancy T. Ammerman, *Pillars of Faith: American Congregations and Their Partners* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Ram A. Cnaan with Stephanie C. Boddie, Charlene C. McGrew, and Jennifer J. Kang, *The Other Philadelphia Story: How Local Congregations Support Quality of Life in Urban America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

Impossible Democracy: The Unlikely Success of the War on Poverty Community Action Programs. By Noel A. Cazenave. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007. Pp. 282. \$80.00 (cloth); \$24.95 (paper).

The Community Action Program (CAP) of the 1960s was a centerpiece of Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty. It sought to address poverty and associated social problems through the development of locally specific programs and organizations. At its core was a vision of participatory democracy captured by a key provision in the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 (78 Stat. 508). That provision required community action agencies receiving federal funding under the act to develop, conduct, and administer programs "with the maximum feasible participation of residents of the areas and members of the groups served" (78 Stat. 516 [1964]). Although CAP was national in scope, a primary focus was to challenge the white power structure entrenched in major northern urban areas and across the South. The program was popular among its participants, but CAP was essentially gutted by 1968; it fell victim to mayoral backlash and to the Green Amendment of 1967 (81 Stat. 691), which effectively eliminated the maximum feasible participation clause.

Since Daniel Moynihan's 1969 book, *Maximum Feasible Misunderstanding: Community Action in the War on Poverty* (New York: Free Press), the War on Poverty and CAP have been portrayed largely as examples of unrealistic and irresponsible ventures that reflect the shortcomings of federally sponsored social programs.¹ Although much scholarship supports the War on Poverty, the dominant contemporary narrative remains negative and hostile.²

In this compelling, ambitious, and thought-provoking book, Noel Cazenave challenges the notion that CAP "was a failed social experiment" (172). He argues against a "make-believe world where today there are no Community Action Agencies and their political legacy is simply one more lesson that conservative critics are right in their claim that government-sponsored social programs don't work" (172). Cazenave adds: "The real lesson of privately and federally funded