

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.

With all of that accomplished I did find the final sections proposing a renewal of social rights a little less inspiring. Ending the deserving/undeserving dichotomy in social security was emphasised, together with a renewal of universalism with devolution, while building trust and reciprocity. Fine principles but they lack the kind of policy traction which makes the book itself a strong contribution to our understanding of policy and opinion.

For some readers – including this reviewer – this book will be a really useful starting point for future dialogue rather than a final word. While it works very well within its own terms of reference I think some of these terms will generate further thinking. For example, setting up New Zealand and Australia as models of Marshallian welfare in the 1970s does beg a lot of questions arising from an existing historiography which sees the wage earner welfare model as a handbrake on the kinds of “decommodification” through social rights found in other countries at that time. Moreover, I would want to argue that this productivist social policy legacy should be much more to the fore in the articulation of a post-neoliberal future than Humpage’s focus on social rights appears to allow.

Other readers will not share the book’s framing in terms of Peck and Tickell’s ideas of neoliberalism. Indeed, recently, there has even been a strong view that we should stop talking about neoliberalism because it has never really existed! (Weller and O’Neill, 2014). Either position is, I think, extreme. In the Australian case, for example, I believe it is really important to distinguish between the very positive pro market economic reforms of the era like lowering excessive tariffs, from the truly neoliberal interventions like the abandonment of full employment. While in terms of social policy itself, the Rudd-Gillard Labor government reforms have been judged by a number of authors as a period of major social policy innovation which, in my view, it is not useful to understand as neoliberal roll out. Indeed, when their prime ministerial successor, Abbott, attempted a roll back to Thatcherism, he lost office. A roll over?

Of course, every good book is going to generate a diversity of response. And this is a good book. Clearly conceived and stylishly executed it will hopefully open a new discussion about the impact of neoliberal policy and opinion in these three countries.

Reference

Weller, S. and O’Neill, P. (2014), ‘An argument with neoliberalism: Australia’s place in a global imaginary’, *Dialogues in Human Geography*, 4(2): 105–130

PAUL SMYTH

University of Melbourne
p.smyth@unimelb.edu.au

Malcolm Torry (2015), *101 Reasons for a Citizen’s Income: Arguments for giving everyone some money*. Bristol: Policy Press. £9.99, pp. 136, pbk.

doi:[10.1017/S0047279416000507](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047279416000507)

Britain’s system of social security, complex and widely misunderstood, is in crisis. It is failing to fulfil its primary function – to provide a guaranteed and secure income in times of need. It is ill-equipped for dealing with the surge in inequality caused by the increasing fragility of the labour market and the growing insecurity and ill-paid nature of work.

In search of reform, a growing number of researchers and campaigners have argued the case for replacing the existing model with a Citizen’s Income (CI), a guaranteed, unconditional and non-contributory basic weekly income paid to every individual as of right. One of the most