

## SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL WELFARE DIVISION NEWS

SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS – SPRING 2018, Part Four

DIVISION CHAIR: William Cabin, CHAIR: (2017-2019), Assistant Professor,  
Social Work, College of Public Health, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA.

Email: tuf34901@temple.edu AND wcabin@umich.edu

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Note from the Chair

Greetings SSWD members! I hope you all are doing well. Our main focus is the upcoming annual meeting this August in Philadelphia. I hope you all can

attend. The preliminary program is available online. Check it out and register if you have not already done so.

Sincerely

Bill

Bill Cabin, JD, Ph.D., MSW, MPH

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Member News and Accomplishments

Recent Publications

\* S. E. Terrana & R. Wells (2018). "Financial Struggles of a Small Community-Based Organization: A Teaching Case of the Capacity Paradox. *Human Service Organizations: Management, Leadership & Governance*, 42 (1), 105-111.

\* Melissa Osborne (2018). "Who gets 'Housing First'? Eligibility determination in an era of Housing First homelessness." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*. [Doi.org/10.1177/0891241617753289](https://doi.org/10.1177/0891241617753289).

\* Joan Maya Mazelis (2017). *Surviving poverty: Creating sustainable ties among the poor*. NYU Press.

\* Gross, Christi L., Jacob Church, Tiffany Taylor, and Jackuelyn Towne-

Rose. (Forthcoming 2018). "Between a Rock and a Hard Place": The constraints of Welfare-to-work bureaucracies." *Poverty & Public Policy*.

\* Taylor, Tiffany, Brianna Turgeon, & Christi L. Gross. (Forthcoming 2018). "Helpers 'Here on the frontlines': Welfare-to-Work managers' moral identity work." *Symbolic Interaction*.

\* Taylor, Tiffany, Christi L. Gross, and Brianna Turgeon. (Forthcoming 2018). "Becoming a good welfare manager: Paternalistic oppressive othering and Neo-liberal boundary maintenance." *Sociological Focus* 51(4).

#### Other Member News

Dr. Michael Johnston ( William Penn University; Oskaloosa, Iowa) presented his work, "Down Lovers' Lane: A Brief History of Necking in Cars", at the American Society of Environmental History Conference, March 15, 2018, Riverside, CA. He also became a host recently on New Books in Sociology, a channel on New Books Network (<http://newbooksnetwork.com/>).

Dr. April M. Schueths (Georgia State University, Statesboro, GA.) was appointed chair of the transition committee for Jonathan McCollar, the recently-elected and first African American mayor of Statesboro, GA. Dr. Schueths is also co-chair of Statesboro's Commission on Diversity and Inclusion, one of three citizen commissions created by Mayor McCollar to focus on job creation, youth development, and diversity and inclusion.

Dr. William Cabin has two Distributed Papers accepted at the International Sociological Association Conference in July 2018 in Toronto, and two accepted to the European Society for Health and Medical Sociology Biennial Conference in July 2018 in Lisbon.

Awards and Announcements: None

JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL WELFARE IS:

Looking for reviewers. If interested, please contact: [rleighn@berkeley.edu](mailto:rleighn@berkeley.edu)

Looking for analyses of the impact of the Trump presidency on any aspect of social welfare for a possible future Special issue. Contact:  
[rleighn@berkeley.edu](mailto:rleighn@berkeley.edu)

SSWD Members on the Job Market

No News

REMINDER: Graduate Student Paper Competition Winner!

Caitlin Carey has won our graduate student paper competition. Caitlin is a PhD candidate in the Department of Public Policy and Research Assistant in the Center for Public Policy at the John M. McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies at the University of Massachusetts-Boston. Her paper will be presented at the August 2018 conference. It is entitled: "Hostile Architecture Aimed at the Homeless in Boston, Massachusetts: A Spatial Analysis." CONGRATULATIONS Caitlin.

If you are a graduate student, it's not too early to think of possibly submitting your paper for next year so think about it.

Open Positions

NO NEWS. Let me know if you have anything to post for our next issue

## Newsletter Contributions Invited

We encourage members to submit news such as publications, new appointments, and other professional accomplishments for inclusion in a future newsletter.

Suggestions and inquiries about less conventional content are also welcome—

consider editorials, book reviews, teaching notes, department/program

profiles, calls for contributions to journals and edited books, obituaries...

Please direct such inquiries to the current Division Chair, Bill Cabin at:

[wcabin@umich.edu](mailto:wcabin@umich.edu)

## BOOK REVIEW

Below is our first Book Review by Dr. Ethan Evans. We encourage you to contact dr. Evans if you want to do a book review. He can be reached at: [ejevans@ucdavis.edu](mailto:ejevans@ucdavis.edu)

*Social Work Practice and Social Welfare Policy in the United States: A History*

Philip R. Popple. 2018. Oxford University Press.

Review by:

Ethan J. Evans, PhD, MSW, is assistant professor, Division of Social Work, California State University, e-mail: [ethan.evans@csus.edu](mailto:ethan.evans@csus.edu), and research affiliate of the Center for Healthcare Policy and Research, University of California, Davis.

## Overview

This book pulls together the history of the U.S. welfare state and its associated profession, social work, with impressive depth and detail. The author is particularly keen to point out that while the histories and trajectories of each are co-joined, they are not necessarily one in the same. However, impulses, currents, and even tensions that shape each have commingled into a story that many have deemed, “exceptional.”

The outline follows a familiar structure, covered elsewhere by this author in: *Social Work, Social Welfare, and American Society* (1990), and *The Policy Profession-Based Profession* (1998), and by other writers in: *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse: A Social History of Welfare in America* (Katz 1996), or *From Poor Law to Welfare State* (Trattner 1999). It includes chapters on: Pre-Colonial origins and the English

Poor Laws, the Progressive Era, developments leading to and during the Great Depression, the New Deal, the Second World War period, and the War on Poverty. The presentation of parallel chapters to each period that address historical developments in the theory, practice and organizational infrastructure of the profession is a unique feature. Additionally, being the first new social work history written in over twenty years, it includes a pair of chapters devoted to the post-1974 period: "Ending Welfare as We Know It" and "Social Work in the Conservative 21<sup>st</sup> Century Welfare State."

### **Contribution**

The contribution made in this work, as Popple puts it, is "to survey social welfare history, addressing the needs and reviving the vision segment of the social work profession." In specific, Popple couples traditional coverage of periods within the development of the U.S, welfare state with attention to "the lives, work, and perspectives of the practitioners charged with actually implementing the plans of elites and negotiating with the intended beneficiaries of these plans" (p.5). In total this work provides a rich portrayal of the policy, theory, and practice of social welfare in America.

### **Weaknesses**

- 1) This work draws from the authors previous writings, pairing chapters on historical coverage with those on evolution of the professional. As a result, repetition taxes the reader. While useful to contain both, this book could be edited and condensed without losing impact.
- 2) The bulk of the book deals with pre-1974 history with only 41 pages of 364 devoted the most recent period. Moreover, the treatment of all periods, while skillfully grounded in narrative lacks revision that seems called for out of the contemporary social consciousness, even tumult, evidenced by the Occupy, Black Lives Matter, Make America Great Again, and #METOO movements. While the author discusses the impact that revisions, such as *The Other America*, have had to better understand the American story, Popple's telling retains a muted tone toward the power and pervasiveness of exploitive colonialism, racism, xenophobia, sexism, heterosexual normativity—forms of systemic power imbalance—that thread through our past and are being contested in the present. An example of this tone can be seen on p. 18 where the author describes "what we generally think of as progress", stating, "as the feudal system declined, trade routes opened, new industries developed, *the New World began to open up, and in general the potential for great prosperity was everywhere.*" In another section, Popple acknowledges that the history of social welfare (especially its early periods) is "largely a white history." (p.126) but devotes little attention to rectifying the history or drawing out the implications of this blind spot.

### **Strengths**

- 1) Popple is particularly adept at drawing out fundamental divisions in philosophy and approach that have shaped the American welfare state and the social work profession. For instance, he contrasts rational humanistic progressivism, which grounded a social work

practice akin to scientific management, with radical humanistic progressivism that gave way to practice in settlements and has links to labor and the women's movement (p. 136-137). Throughout, the author continually returns to important tensions, for instance the recognition that for "however liberal the motivations and intentions of advocates for social welfare may be, the social function is conservative: maintaining a smoothly operating society with the least possible threat to the status quo" (p. 7).

- 2) The author grounds coverage of periods and specific points within a broader narrative that identifies the actual people, the clients, caseworkers, activists, policy-makers, etc. who populated the times. For example, Chapter 6: Progress in Social Welfare, 1895-1929 begins with the birth of Robert Nash Baldwin, a Mayflower descendant who went on to direct a settlement house, Self-Cultural Hall in St. Louis, and then to lead the newly formed American Civil Liberties Union. Stories that bring the history to life in this way makes for an enjoyable read when covering such a breadth of material.

### **Summary**

Popple has bound together a thorough and useful history of the U.S. welfare state and its profession, social work. He does so through compelling narrative and with tremendous skill for drawing out the theoretical, even philosophical, lines that have shaped their development. While the length and coverage of the book make it in my opinion less useful for assignment to undergraduate classes, it could easily be considered required reading for MSW students and current professionals.