

claims on time taken for granted. It is a must-read for anyone interested in the topic as it helps to better understand the discursive nature of time. Further, my partial discontentment suggests how fruitful it might be to incorporate the insights provided into a broader debate around capitalocentrism and social change. Future attempts to challenge the unquestioned norms of neoliberal capitalism will surely gain from this work.

References

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Joe C. B. Leung and Yuebin Xu (2015), *China's Social Welfare: The Third Turning Point*, Cambridge: Polity Press, pp. 224, £15.99, pbk.
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Since 1949 when the People's Republic of China (PRC) was established, China's social welfare has been transforming in line with the changing social and economic environments. At the turn of the new century, as a response to the increasing number of critical social problems produced and accumulated in the market-oriented economic reform, such as rural and urban disparity, regional inequality, and unbalanced social and economic development, the Chinese government decided to prioritize social protection and strike a balance between economic growth and social development. Thus, an expansion of social policy came into practice since 2003. The social issues and government's policy responses to them in China have aroused more and more academic interests both domestically and overseas. The last decade has witnessed increasing publications on China's social policy and social welfare. *China's Social Welfare* is one of the most updated books.

Co-authored by Joe Leung and Yuebin Xu, *China's Social Welfare* aims to provide an objective and wide perspective on the social issues and policy responses in contemporary China. The book starts with a passionate preface by Professor Joe Leung, a Hong Kong-based pre-eminent scholar on social welfare in China, where he told his life-long story of doing social welfare research and engaging in social work education in China. By reading the preface, it is easy to feel Professor Leung's high commitment to the wellbeing of the Chinese people.

The main body of the book consists of eight chapters, addressing the key aspects of social welfare development in China, including China's welfare trajectory, the formidable social challenges faced, the emerging social protection system in both urban and rural areas, social care services, social work profession, and the ongoing social governance innovation.

Chapter 1 provides the background and objectives of this book project as well as the conceptual issues in analysing social welfare in China. Putting the critical social problems in the context of "the rise of China", Professor Leung argued that the determinants of Chinese social policy will need to shift focus, from a primary concern with facilitating economic growth towards a more balanced development that addresses the needs of vulnerable groups. He also asserted that China has to formulate an innovative model to guide future development in the face of profound and unprecedented challenges (p.3).

Under the title of 'from socialism to modernization', the second chapter provides a historical overview of the development of social policy from the establishment of the PRC in 1949 to the beginning of the Xi Jinping Era. In doing so, Professor Leung illustrated the three turning points achieved in China's social policy development process. Each turning point indicates a major transformation or social revolutions in China. The first turning point occurred shortly after the establishment of the PRC, which brought about an employment-based, urban-biased egalitarian security network, the so-called iron rice bowl. The economic reform and open door policy in the late 1970s gave rise to the second turning point in China's welfare development, which was characterized by marketization and socialization of welfare as well as the government withdrawal from welfare provision. The serious social consequences caused by the marketization of welfare forced the Chinese government to achieve the third turning point at the advent of the new century. Under the policy strategy of building a harmonious society, the third turning point has brought about a rapid expansion of social policy in China which is characterized by a number of social initiatives introduced since 2003. The third turning point indicates a significant departure from the previous growth-oriented policy. These three turning points highlight the key transformation in China's social policy system, reflecting the construction, deconstruction and reconstruction of China's welfare regime in the transition to and from socialism. However, the author failed to indicate whether the advent of the era of Xi Jinping and his comprehensively deepening of reform implies the fourth turning point in China's welfare development.

Chapter 3 discusses some key social challenges facing China's market transition, including demographic transition, rural migrants, left-behind children, income inequalities and poverty. All these social problems are cross-cutting and interrelated, which are attributed partly to social and economic changes and partly to a segmented and inadequate social welfare system. In other words, these social problems are related closely to the second turning point in China's welfare trajectory.

Chapters 4 and 5, contributed by Professor Yuebin Xu, a former PhD student of Professor Leung. Under the title of 'Urban social protection' and 'rural social protection', these two chapters introduce the social security systems in both urban and rural China with a focus on social insurance and social assistance programmes. The key social security schemes and their updated reforms and developments have been explored, which presents the significant improvements in social protection in China, especially in rural areas. Besides the detailed analysis of the key social security schemes in both urban and rural areas, an overall appraisal of the strengths and weakness of the current social security system was provided. However, the separate presentation of the urban and rural social protection makes it difficult to grasp the emerging convergence of the urban and rural social security systems represented by the combination of the old age insurance scheme for the rural residents and the old age insurance scheme for urban residents.

The sixth chapter attempts to analyse the social care services in China with a focus on the services for the elderly. Facing the rapid ageing population, social care services for the elderly has begun to become one of the major focuses of China's social policy. This chapter explores the development process of social care services and the key forms of social care services provided by both the government and non-government sectors. Though the Chinese government has made great efforts, social care services for the old people in China are marked by acute shortage, low quality, uneven development (p.142).

Chapter 7 addresses the most updated welfare development in China, that is, the emergence of social work organizations and the role of professional social workers in welfare services delivery. Within the policy framework of 'innovating social management' (preferred by Hu Jintao) or 'innovating social governance' (preferred by Xi Jinping), this chapter exhibits the

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.