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**Author:**

Social Policy Research Centre Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences, UNSW

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# SPRC NEWSLETTER

Social Policy Research Centre

## THE MEANING OF POVERTY

BY PETER SAUNDERS

Recent debate over the measurement of poverty in Australia has become bogged down in the minutiae of the poverty statistics. As a result, it has failed to address more important issues concerning what it means to be poor or deprived in an affluent country at the end of the twentieth century. It is tempting to agree with the recently expressed view that the main beneficiaries from the 'poverty debate' are those who wish to see poverty kept well off the policy agenda (Manning and de Jonge, 1996).

Against this, measuring poverty is important because it raised *structural* issues concerning the measuring of poverty and what should be done about it. This debate has used the Henderson poverty line as its frame of reference, but only because that has been a convenient entry point into engagement with the broader issues. If we hadn't had a poverty line to help give order and

coherence to the debate, we would have had to invent one.

The study of Australian living standards by Travers and Richardson (1993) is significant in this context because it adopts a broad perspective to the definition of 'welfare' without engaging in a debate over the merits of the poverty line. Subsequent research undertaken by Travers on commission to the Department of Social Security has extended this work by confirming a weak association between income adjusted for need and direct measures of deprivation, at least among a sample of DSS clients (Travers, 1996).

This strand of research has focused on broader issues surrounding what it means to be disadvantaged in Australia today in the sense of not being able to enjoy things that the vast majority of the population take for granted and being thus effectively excluded from participating in the normal life of the community.

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## FEATURE

### The Meaning of Poverty

Peter Saunders provides a critical perspective on the ongoing debate over poverty measurement.

# SPRC STAFF

Social Policy Research Centre

## **Director**

Peter Saunders

## **Deputy Director**

Sheila Shaver

## **Senior Research Fellows**

Michael Bittman

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## **Research Fellows**

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## **Senior Research Assistants**

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## **Publications & Information**

### **Officer**

Sharon Hancock

## **Librarian**

Lynn Sitsky

## **Secretarial**

Lynda Pawley

Gil Szrednicki

**Phone:** +61 (2) 9385 3833

**Fax:** +61 (2) 9385 1049

**Email:** sprc@unsw.edu.au

### **Internet:**

<http://www.sprc.unsw.edu.au/>

### **Postal Address:**

Social Policy Research Centre  
University of New South Wales  
SYDNEY NSW 2052.  
AUSTRALIA

## STAFF AND VISITORS UPDATE

PROFESSOR JONATHAN BRADSHAW from the University of York visited the Centre during March and April 1997. He participated in the Centre's budget standards project.

DR SALLY HORTON, a family economics specialist in Cooperative Extension from Washington State University, will visit the Centre in July 1997. She is Assistant Director for Family Living and an Associate Director of Extension. Her interests are in family economics, welfare reform, single-parent family spending patterns, distance education and leadership development.

GILLIAN PARKER, the Nuffield Professor in Community Care and director of the Nuffield Community Care Studies Unit at the University of Leicester, will visit the Centre in August 1997. Her current research interests include disability and informal care, evaluation of community care policy, the boundaries between health and social care and the relative responsibilities of the state and the individual for paying for long-term care.

JOHN MYLES, the Director of the Pepper Institute on Aging and Public Policy at Florida State University, will be the 1997 SPRC Visiting Fellow. He will visit the Centre during the first two weeks of July. His interests include ageing, social security, employment and comparative social policy.

DENISE THOMPSON will be leaving the Centre after successfully completing the development of budget standards for Household Goods and Services. The Centre wishes her well with her future endeavours.

## THE SOCIAL POLICY RESEARCH CENTRE

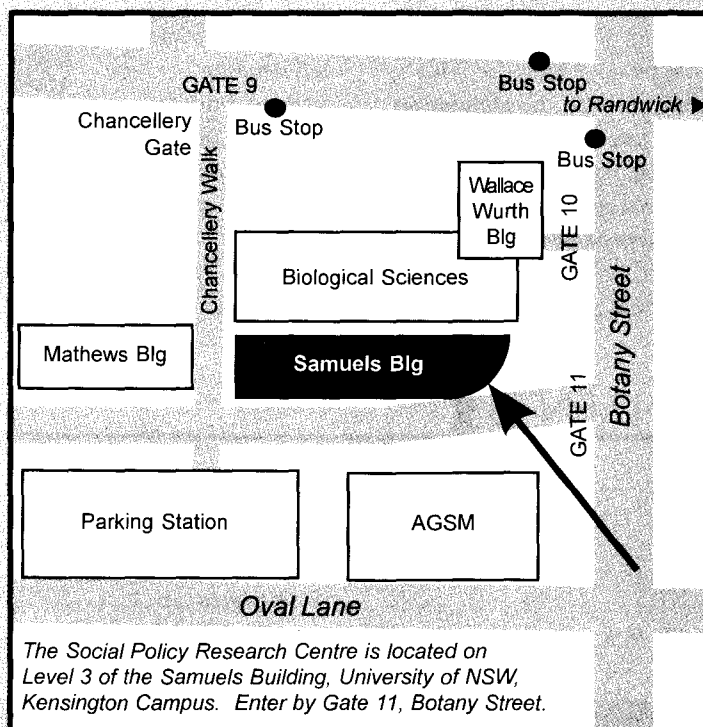
was established in January 1980 (originally the Social Welfare Research Centre) under an agreement between the University of New South Wales and the Commonwealth Government.

The Centre is operated by the University as an independent unit of the University. The Director receives assistance in formulating the Centre's research agenda from a Board of Management, and in periodic consultation with the community. The Director of the Centre is responsible to the Vice-Chancellor for the operation of the Centre.

The Centre undertakes and sponsors research on important aspects of social policy and social welfare; it arranges seminars and conferences, publishes the results of its research in reports, journal articles and books, and provides opportunities for postgraduate studies in social policy.

The Centre's current research agenda covers social policy issues associated with changes in employment; levels of social and economic inequality including poverty and the measurement of income and living standards; the changing structure of the mixed economy of welfare and the roles of state, market, household and non-government sectors in meeting social needs; in policies and programs in social security, taxation and the labour market, and in community services policies and programs.

*The views expressed in this Newsletter, as in any of the Centre's publications, do not represent any official position of the Centre. The SPRC Newsletter and all other SPRC publications present the views and research findings of the individual authors with the aim of promoting the development of ideas and discussion about major concerns in social policy and social welfare.*



# FROM THE DIRECTOR

BY PETER SAUNDERS

One of the consequences of perceiving and analysing social programs from an economic perspective is to regard them as involving the 'production of welfare'. This implies that they combine resource inputs to produce specified outputs, using processes which can achieve this with more or less efficiency and thus involving higher or lower costs of achieving a given end product.

This has led governments around the world to try to separate the production and finance elements of their social programs and to ask of each of them one simple question: could this be done more efficiently or effectively outside of the public sector? The answer, to date, for many public programs, including an array of social programs, has been 'possibly' or even at times a qualified 'yes'.

The result has been that deregulation and privatisation (or at times, often with equal effectiveness, the threat of them) have been used to encourage competition as a spur to improving efficiency. This has been seen not only as inherently good practice in itself, but also a means of delivering the same quality of service at reduced cost, or improved quality at the same cost. Either option is attractive to those keen to reduce taxes.

In retrospect, the speed with which these ideas have risen to prominence in social policy is little short of remarkable. Who would have thought ten or even five years ago, that the delivery of labour market programs or the payment of social security benefits could be contracted out to private organisations on a competitive tendering basis? Australia has, so

far, proceeded cautiously down this road - and rightly so. It is still too early to be able to reach firm conclusions regarding whether such policies can actually deliver all that has been claimed for them by their advocates.

Notwithstanding this, Australia may have much to gain from these trends in selling its expertise in designing and implementing social programs overseas. International trade in services has grown rapidly and has a very important role to play in offsetting the balance of payments impact of adverse movements in the terms of our commodity trade. The community services sector is one where Australia's past experience with designing, implementing and evaluating a targeted welfare system has placed it in an excellent position to market that expertise to others.

We have already learnt how profitable this can be in the tertiary education sector, where revenue from fees charged to overseas students has become extremely important in providing universities with operational autonomy and financial independence in an era where government funding has been severely constrained. There is no reason in principle why the same cannot happen in the social security field, although here our comparative advantage lies mainly in providing advice and technical assistance to those who wish to implement social security arrangements similar to ours.

The market for this in the Asian region is potentially enormous. We are surrounded by nations whose rapid economic and demographic changes are placing increasing demands for social provision. Even accepting that most Asian countries do not wish to develop a European welfare state, they will still need to design

the kinds of social interventions with which Australia has extensive expertise and practical experience.

The issue for Australia is how best to exploit our natural advantages in these areas in ways which are sympathetic to the needs of our Asian neighbours. This will involve accepting that, in order to be most effective, social programs must be in harmony with the broader social environment in which they operate.

As so often in international trade, the trick is not to assume that the benefits you offer are self-evident, but rather to tailor what you have to sell to the needs of prospective buyers. That sounds like an elementary principle of marketing, and so it is, but there is much to be gained from applying such basic principles in the new world of social policy that lies ahead.

*"... Australia may have much to gain from these trends in selling its expertise in designing and implementing social programs overseas."*

## 1997 NATIONAL SOCIAL POLICY CONFERENCE

STATES, MARKETS,  
COMMUNITIES:  
REMAPPING THE  
BOUNDARIES

To find out more about the future of social policy register for this year's SPRC conference.

Papers presented will address the following themes:

- ◆ Work and Welfare
- ◆ Social and Economic Inequality
- ◆ Families, the Life Course and Social Policy
- ◆ Services and Service Provision
- ◆ Citizenship and the Public/Private Welfare Mix
- ◆ Open Section

For details on how to register see the back page of this newsletter.

## THE MEANING OF POVERTY

CONTINUED  
FROM PAGE 1

*"It is tempting to agree with the recently expressed view that the main beneficiaries from the 'poverty debate' are those who wish to see poverty kept well off the policy agenda"*

Peter Whiteford has recently criticised mainstream poverty research because;

*'...virtually no modern study of poverty tells us whether people living below the poverty line have an unacceptably low standard of living. This does not mean that relative poverty in rich communities is not real, but rather that we need different sorts of research to link demonstrated problems with living standards and the statistical measures of low income commonly used as proxies for poverty.'*  
(Whiteford, 1997, p.44; italics added)

This is not entirely true. There is a growing body of outcome research in Australia and overseas which is investigating the consequences of poverty. A study released by the SPRC last year demonstrated that those below the poverty line have poorer health outcomes than those above it (Saunders, 1996). Similarly, a number of studies have investigated the linkages between poverty and its

various correlates and rates of criminal activity (for a critical review of this literature, see Watts, 1996).

A strong case can, however, be made for the view that one consequence of devoting so much time and energy to debating the merits of the poverty line has been that too little attention has been paid to the *meaning* of poverty.

It is not easy to develop a clear definition of poverty, even in its narrow meaning in relation to material well-being or 'primary poverty'. One definition that does have considerable merit is that proposed by Mack and Lansley in their study of poverty in Britain, where they define poverty as *an enforced lack of socially perceived necessities* (Mack and Lansley, 1985, p.39).

This is not only an admirably brief definition, it also embodies two features that are central to the meaning of poverty: the idea that poverty is a situation where choice is severely limited, and the idea that what 'severely' means in this context can only be decided within a specific social context. These two features define the meaning of poverty as

a situation in which the capacity to function in a specific cultural context is restricted by external factors.

Thus far, discussion has focused on the meaning of poverty in the limited definitional sense of those who study it. An alternative approach to the meaning of poverty views it from the perspective of those who actually experience it. This is a more fruitful approach which leads more naturally into questioning the outcomes of poverty and away from the cul-de-sac into which the poverty measurement debate has taken us.

In order to illustrate where this approach can lead, research being conducted at the SPRC on commission to the Department of Social Security (DSS) has provided an opportunity to explore what poverty means to a large sample DSS clients. Before presenting the results, it is important to emphasise that they are preliminary and have been derived from a series of questions that are themselves exploratory.

In the course of conducting a survey into the effects of the social security reforms introduced in July 1995, respondents were asked (in a face-to-face interview) the following question:

*There's been a lot written recently in the papers about poverty in Australia. Which of these statements BEST describes what being in poverty means to you?*

The descriptions of poverty from which respondents were asked to choose and a breakdown of the 1149 responses are summarised in Table 1.

They indicate that the vast majority (over 68 per cent) of those interviewed couched their



TABLE 1

## PERCEPTIONS OF THE MEANING OF POVERTY AMONG DSS CLIENTS

Not having enough money to make ends meet	12.3%
Having a lot less than everyone else	1.8%
Not having enough to buy basics like food and clothing	41.9%
Having to struggle to survive each and every day	26.4%
Never having enough to be able to live decently	8.6%
Never being able to afford any of the good things in life	6.7%
(Don't know)	2.5%

Source: SPRC  
Longitudinal Survey of  
DSS Clients, First  
Wave of Interviews  
(preliminary)

perceptions of poverty in terms of not being able to afford basic needs without having to struggle to make ends meet all the time. Less than 10 per cent equated poverty with not being able to live decently, while only 6.7 per cent accepted that poverty means having to forgo the 'good things in life', and very few saw poverty purely in terms of having less than others. In general, the responses reinforce the idea that poverty is characterised by a lack of choice.

The overall impression one gets from the responses is that the aspirations of this group of DSS clients are surprisingly modest; they want enough money to be able to get by with, but expect no more than that. It is also worth noting, however, that most DSS clients also said in response to another question that they need more money (often a good deal more) in order to make ends meet.

These results are both exploratory and preliminary. They do, however, suggest that there is value in further investigation along these lines in an attempt to articulate better what poverty means to those most directly affected by it. Such research will not provide 'the' answer to what poverty means or

how it should be defined, but it holds the promise of producing a new meaning of poverty that is academically robust and has credibility among the poorer section of the community.

## REFERENCES

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2. Manning, I. and A. de Jonge (1996), 'The New Poverty: Causes and Responses', in P. Sheehan, B. Grewal and M. Kumnick, eds, *Dialogues on Australia's Future. In Honour of the late Professor Ronald Henderson*, Centre for Strategic Economic Studies, Victoria University of Technology, pp. 351-362.
3. Saunders, P. (1996), *Poverty, Income Distribution and Health: An Australian Study*, SPRC Reports and Proceedings No. 128, Social Policy Research Centre, University of New South Wales.
4. Travers, P. (1996), 'Deprivation Among Low Income DSS Australian Families: Results from a Pilot Study', in R. Thanki and C. Thomson, eds, *Mortgaging Our Future? Families and Young People in Australia*, SPRC Reports and Proceedings No. 129, Social Policy Research Centre, University of New South Wales, pp. 27-45.
5. Travers, P. and S. Richardson (1992), 'Living Decently', *Australian Economic Review*, 3rd Quarter, pp. 29-42.
6. Watts, R. (1996), 'Unemployment, the Underclass and Crime in Australia: A Critique', *Australia and New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, Vol. 29(1), pp. 1-19.
7. Whiteford, P. (1997), 'Measuring Poverty and Income Inequality in Australia', *Agenda*, Vol. 4(1), pp. 39-50.

## RECENT SPRC PUBLICATIONS ON POVERTY

- ◆ Peter Saunders, 'Poverty, Choice and Legitimacy', March 1997, SPRC Discussion Paper No. 76.
- ◆ Michael Bittman, ed., 'Poverty in Australia: Dimensions on Policies', April 1997, SPRC Reports and Proceedings No. 135.
- ◆ Bruce Bradbury, 'Are the Low Income Self-employed Poor?', December 1996, SPRC Discussion Paper No. 73.
- ◆ Peter Saunders, 'Poverty, Income Distribution and Health: An Australian Study', June 1996, SPRC Reports and Proceedings No. 128.

"An alternative approach to the meaning of poverty views it from the perspective of those who actually experience it."

◆ Cartoons by  
Denis Robertson

# FROM THE PROJECTS

## NEW COMMUNITY CARE PROJECTS

BY KAREN TURVEY

The Social Policy Research Centre (SPRC) has recently been commissioned to conduct two new projects in the field of community care: *The Evaluation of the Shared Care for Older People Project (SCOPP)* and *A Survey of Discontinued Home Care Service Customers*. Both projects address issues which are at the centre of the community care debate concerning the impact of targeting policies and the need to coordinate the provision of care.

### SURVEY OF DISCONTINUED HOME CARE SERVICE CUSTOMERS

This study, which commenced in March this year, builds upon previous research carried out by the SPRC on the effectiveness of low levels of service provision for Home Care Service of New South Wales (HCS) customers (Turvey and Fine, 1996). The previous research conducted by the Centre was exploratory and highlighted the need for a separate study to be conducted on the impact of withdrawal of services for HCS customers.

The HCS is the largest single provider of community support services in the country. Faced with the demand for services exceeding supply, the HCS has been targeting resources towards people with higher levels of dependency requiring personal care, and away from people with lower levels of dependency who only require small amounts of help with housework. This was done partly by discontinuing or reducing service to customers who were found on reassessment to have a lower level of need. The targeting strategy employed by the HCS is reflected in statistics which show an increasing number of hours of personal care provided to clients and a reduction in the number of hours of general housework over the same time period, as shown in Table 1 (Home Care Service of New South Wales, 1996).

The study will involve a telephone survey of approximately 200 ex-Home Care Service customers across New South Wales whose service was discontinued during the second half of 1996. 'Discontinued' customers have been defined as those people who have been assessed by the HCS as being of a lower priority for receiving assistance, as distinct from those people who either no longer wanted the service or who were assessed as no longer requiring a service. Information will be sought from discontinued

customers in a number of areas, including their experiences on how the service was discontinued, the coping strategies they, and their informal caregivers employed when the service was withdrawn and how they have been managing since that time.

The study, funded through the Home and Community Care (HACC) Program and commissioned by the HCS, aims to address many questions, such as: What is the impact of withdrawal of services for HCS customers who are assessed as having a lower priority of need after a period of service? What are the implications for the HCS of changing patterns of service provision?

### THE SCOPP PROJECT

SCOPP was launched in August 1996. It was established by the South Eastern Sydney Division of General Practice and is being trialed over a twelve month period. The project is funded by the South Eastern Sydney Division of General Practice and the Department of Health and Family Services.

The project was developed to establish greater cooperation between GPs and existing aged and community care services. The project uses GPs as medical case managers for older patients with acute illnesses or complex health problems requiring ongoing management and coordination of a range of different resources. It is intended to enable older patients with multiple pathologies to be managed appropriately in a primary care setting with the intention of

preventing or minimising their need for hospitalisation and institutional placement.

The role for the SPRC researchers is to evaluate SCOPP over

TABLE 1: SELECTED SERVICES PROVIDED BY HOME CARE SERVICE OF NSW

% OF TOTAL HOURS OF SERVICE PROVIDED BY YEAR					
TYPE OF SERVICE	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
General Housework	56.1	53.0	49.5	46.8	42.5
Personal Care	22.8	27.0	30.7	34.5	38.2
Handyperson	3.2	2.8	2.1	1.6	0.8

Source: Home Care Annual Report, 1996



the period of its operation, documenting the project's achievements and identifying difficulties that may require further attention. SCOPP will be evaluated in a number of areas:

- ◆ the process and procedures through which the SCOPP project develops;
- ◆ patient outcomes - such as rates of hospitalisation and mortality, residential outcomes and community service use;
- ◆ SCOPP patient satisfaction;
- ◆ GP and participating staff satisfaction; and
- ◆ the cost effectiveness of providing such a system of coordinated care.

The data will be collected through a Health Services Record Booklet which will be kept by SCOPP patients. The booklet is a centralised record of patient information including, demographic details, medical details, the patient's care plan and services provided and the medication they receive. Measures of satisfaction with SCOPP will be collected through the distribution of satisfaction surveys to patients, GPs and service providers.

The project raises many important research questions: What are the consequences or outcomes for the patients involved in SCOPP, for their care providers, GPs and for service funders/government? And how does this compare with the outcomes and care of other comparable patients not included in the trial (a control group)?

SPRC researchers on the projects are Karen Turvey and Michael Fine. Both studies will be completed and final reports produced towards the end of October 1997.

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- ◆ Turvey, K and M. Fine (1996), *Community Care: The Effects of Low Level Service Use*; Social Policy Research Centre Reports and

Proceedings No. 130, November 1996.

◆ Home Care Service of New South Wales (1996), *1996/96 Annual Report*

## RENT ASSISTANCE FOR RESIDENTS OF RETIREMENT VILLAGES

BY TONY EARDLEY

Retirement villages are complexes of special housing for older people, often with a range of services and activities available alongside the accommodation. A growing number of villages provide a mix of independent 'self-care' units, serviced apartments, hostel accommodation and nursing home facilities. There are several different types of retirement village and they are regulated under legal frameworks which differ according to the State. Mostly, however, people entering a retirement village in order to live in self-care or serviced units have to pay an 'entry contribution', which may variously be treated as the purchase price of their units, as a loan to the management organisation or, in the case of some charitable organisations, as a donation.

The level of this entry contribution is one of the main determinants of whether residents of retirement villages are eligible for Rent Assistance from the Department of Social Security or Veterans' Affairs to help with their ongoing housing costs. If the entry contribution is greater than the difference between the assets test threshold for home-owners and non-home-owners (known as the 'extra allowable amount' and currently set at \$88 500), residents are regarded as home-owners and not entitled to Rent Assistance. The entry contribution is then not counted as an asset under the age pension assets test. If the entry contribution is

equal to or lower than the extra allowable amount, residents are treated as non-home-owners and may be entitled to Rent Assistance towards their ongoing charges, but the entry contribution is counted under the assets test.

This policy has been based on the perception that people making smaller entry contributions are likely to be less well-off than those buying into more expensive properties, and that maintenance/service charges tend to be proportionately larger where entry costs are lower.

However, there is some concern that as the retirement village sector has expanded and diversified, cost structures have become more complex. Thus it is not clear whether the current policy is targeting Rent Assistance accurately.

Since there has been little data available about a sector of older people's housing which is growing in importance, the Department asked the Social Policy Research Centre to carry out a study to provide an information base for any future policy decisions.

The research has involved creating a national database on retirement villages as a source of information about the sector and as a sampling frame for two surveys: one of the managers of a sample of mainly resident-funded retirement villages and the other of their residents living in self-care or serviced accommodation. The surveys have collected information about types of provision, costs, facilities and services provided in villages, and the characteristics and financial circumstances of residents. The project will be approaching completion as this newsletter goes to print and the results will be available in the near future.

**FOR FURTHER  
INFORMATION ON THE  
STUDY PLEASE CONTACT  
TONY EARDLEY ON  
(02) 9385 3850.**



# BOOK REVIEW

## WELFARE, LAW AND CITIZENSHIP

HARTLEY DEAN

Prentice Hall/Harvester  
Wheatsheaf, 1996, pp. xi plus  
260. RRP: \$40.95

BY MERRIN  
THOMPSON

***"Welfare,  
Law and  
Citizenship ...  
explores the  
multitude of  
work  
analysing and  
expounding  
citizenship  
and related  
concepts such  
as social  
rights, the  
welfare state,  
social policy  
and social  
legislation."***

Citizenship has become a popular theoretical framework in social policy and other related disciplines. Citizenship theory has been applied to diverse yet overlapping topics such as the welfare state, the content of policies, policy institutions, social movements and strategies for social change.

If one theory can shed light on all that, no wonder it's fashionable! However, citizenship is better thought of not as a single theory, but as encompassing a variety of theoretical approaches tied together by concepts such as social rights, notions of participation, and/or reference to the grand-daddy of citizenship, T.H. Marshall.

Any theory is like a lens: the one we choose will afford a particular view of the object or issue we are looking at. Another lens will furnish a slightly different perspective of the very same thing. Still another will distort the phenomenon beyond recognition. In all sorts of disciplines, we choose the theory that best illuminates the features we wish to concentrate on, and social policy is no different. There can also be much variation within theories that carry the same name. Citizenship theory is a case in point: it has many mutations, each of which will highlight certain aspects of what we are looking at.

Different authors and approaches stress diverse aspects of citizenship and rights: authors such as Esping-Andersen (1990) are concerned with the comparison of welfare states on the basis of the quality of social rights; others such as Barber (1984) stress the strategies used to create a richer and more democratic citizenship; still others are primarily concerned with citizenship as participation in the life of the community.

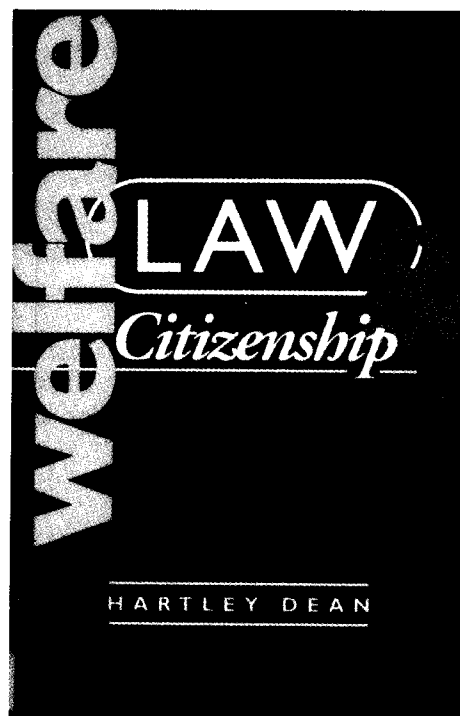
Similarly, within the SPRC there are two very different research projects taking place under the broad umbrella of

refers to the status of individuals, who as members of a democratic nation are all equal before the state and possess equal rights in relation to the state. Beyond these basics, the content of citizenship rights and correspondingly, duties, is a matter of opinion and debate. So too is the qualitative relationship between the citizen and the state as well as between citizens.

*Welfare, Law and Citizenship* (1996) explores the multitude of work analysing and expounding citizenship and related concepts such as social rights, the welfare state, social policy and social legislation. The book is about 'welfare rights' in the 'democratic-welfare-capitalist' state, that is, most western welfare states. Dean explains the analytical and practical debates surrounding these constructs against the backdrop of the contemporary British welfare system.

The book is divided into four parts. Part I draws from the fields of sociology, philosophy and social policy to canvass the many debates surrounding social rights and the content and evolution of welfare states. In Part II, theory is applied to the policy areas of housing, income support and employment, developing a picture of the welfare rights of the present day British citizen. Part III focuses on the legal aspects of social rights, and the role of the court and administrative systems in the process of redress. Finally, Part IV pulls together the themes weaving through the book, discussing the question of whether social rights can deliver social justice and exploring the future prospects of welfare rights in advanced capitalist democracies.

Dean conveys the complexity and variability of theories of citizenship in a clear and accessible way. In the first and final sections



citizenship. Sheila Shaver and myself have adopted a perspective which focuses on social rights and class, enabling us to explore and compare people's views on public income support in retirement (the age pension) and what is ostensibly private saving (superannuation). By contrast, Ariadne Vromen, a PhD scholar at the Centre, is studying the involvement of women in locally-based political activity as an expression of participatory citizenship.

At its most essential, citizenship

of the book he brings together the threads of various disciplines to build a comprehensive picture of abstract citizenship.

The book's initial chapter, 'Class, Citizenship and Commodification', details the theoretical constructs associated with citizenship while noting their inevitably ideological nature. The second, 'Poverty, Need and Rights', explores the debates surrounding the concepts which are inextricably linked to the welfare state. It is here that Dean makes the observation that 'welfare rights are not equal rights', an idea which is developed throughout the book. Dean acknowledges that citizenship and the institutions of the welfare state have tended to advantage some members of society more than others: men over women; the able-bodied over the disabled; whites over ethnic groups; the young over the old.

Chapter Three, 'Social Rights in Global Perspective', discusses the role played by social rights in alleviating poverty in the western, ex-communist and developing worlds. Dean does not, however, explore an issue which is becoming critical in current social policy: the consequences of globalisation for the funding of welfare state. Indeed this is an issue worthy of attention, given that it lies at the heart of strong criticisms levelled at theories of citizenship.

'Social Rights and Social Control' thoroughly and clearly summarises the various theoretical criticisms of citizenship: the neo-liberal, Marxist, feminist, anti-racist and post-structuralist critiques. I found myself particularly intrigued by the latter, in which social rights are exposed as often encompassing a negative power. Here Dean cites writers influenced by Foucault, who conduct a 're-examination of the history of the welfare state and of the increasingly sophisticated surveillance and disciplinary processes associated with the

administration of welfare rights and social legislation'. Indeed this idea in another guise becomes something of a theme throughout the book: of the duties or obligations accompanying welfare rights which may actually disempower the citizen.

The chapters in Part II of the book, where theory is applied to current provisions, are less useful for people investigating Australian welfare provisions, since here Dean's focus is solely on the British situation. While there are many parallels between 'us and them', gleaned what is relevant demands a good knowledge of Australian social welfare arrangements.

The final chapter, 'Social Justice: A Question of Rights?', like the rest of the book, carefully and thoughtfully presents the debates surrounding the issues at hand. Here Dean reaches again into the deeper philosophical debates underlying such questions as whether social rights ought to remain subordinate to political and civil rights, as they tend to be in Western welfare states. Dean's concluding discussion of the future of welfare rights necessarily presents the issues as complex. He seems rightly aware that as we move further into a post-industrial social order with little agreement on social goals and strategies, we cannot afford to adopt a simplistic conception of the future of social rights.

On the whole, the book is more concerned with the aspects of citizenship theory which relate to the welfare state than with politics. Further, Dean is less concerned with the political mobilisation of actors towards the enhancement of social rights - as in the work of Korpi and Esping-Andersen - than with the content of social rights.

A criticism which may be levelled at Dean's book is that he does not really add anything new

to the area. While he artfully weaves together the threads of many debates to build up a vivid picture of the various elements and forms of citizenship, he fails to contribute anything original. This assertion is not altogether fair: the section exploring the legal or jurisprudential facets of citizenship and welfare rights is a rare yet important complement to the often-reported sociological and philosophical underpinnings of citizenship theory and practice. Nevertheless, I found myself wanting to know more of Dean's stance on certain issues, and *his* reasons for adopting a particular standpoint.

*Welfare, Law and Citizenship* is, I believe, a source which is a springboard to others. Put simply, the book is more about other people's ideas than Hartley Dean's. Thus the book is, I think, less useful for those already conversant with the theories and debates surrounding citizenship than for those who wish to become familiar with them. Dean's writing is clear, accessible and thorough and hence has much to offer anyone who desires a solid grounding in the many lenses and aspects of citizenship. The book provides much evidence for the conclusion that citizenship theories aren't simply faddish. Rather, they are rich and substantial in content, with consequences for both analysis and advocacy.

## REFERENCES

- Esping-Andersen, G. (1990), *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Korpi, W. (1983), *The Democratic Class Struggle*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London.
- Barber, B. (1984), *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age*, University of California Press, Berkeley.

*"Dean does not, however, explore an issue which is becoming critical in current social policy: the consequence of globalisation for the funding of welfare state."*

# NEW PUBLICATIONS

## SPRC REPORTS AND PROCEEDINGS

### **POVERTY IN AUSTRALIA: DIMENSIONS ON POLICIES**

*SPRC Reports and  
Proceedings No. 135*

*Michael Bittman (ed.)*

What is an adequate level of income in Australia today and how might we determine what this level should be? Are some workers paid such low wages that they (and their dependants) are forced to live in poverty? Often the lowest yearly incomes in Australia are found among the self-employed: does this mean that, on the whole, those who work for themselves are poor? In the 1960s poverty was 'rediscovered' and found to be widespread among sole parents. How are they faring now, after thirty years of policy aimed at alleviating their poverty? What is the role of industry policy in the standard of living found among the various regions in Australia? Who lives in poverty in Queensland? All these issues, and more, are addressed in *Poverty in Australia: Dimensions on Policies*.

This publication reports the proceedings of a one day conference jointly organised by the

Social Policy Research Centre and the Department of Social Work and Social Policy at the University of Queensland, 26th November 1996, in Brisbane. Held to mark the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, the conference dealt with current issues about the incidence and measurement of poverty, with an emphasis on the regional level, especially Queensland. Contributors include:

- ◆ Michael Bittman, 'Calculating the Cost of Living Modestly' and 'Barely Making Do'
- ◆ John Buchanan, 'The Living Wage and the Working Poor'
- ◆ Tony Eardley, 'Not Waving but Drowning? Low Incomes and Poverty Among the Self-employed'
- ◆ Sheila Shaver, 'Sole Parents and Poverty: How Does Australia Compare?'
- ◆ Peter Walsh, 'Poverty in Queensland: Putting a Human Face to Debates about Poverty'
- ◆ Paul Smyth and Tim Reddel, 'Responding to Poverty in Queensland: Social Policy and Administration at the Regional Level'
- ◆ Bettina Cass, 'Policy Making Against the Odds: Preventing and Reducing Poverty in Multicultural Australia'.

## SPRC DISCUSSION PAPERS **POVERTY, CHOICE AND LEGITIMACY**

*SPRC Discussion Paper  
No. 76*

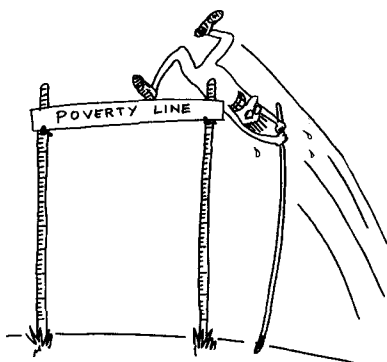
*by Peter Saunders*

This paper begins by arguing that the 'poverty measurement debate' has become bogged down in the poverty statistics and has failed to

evolve into a consideration of the causes and consequences of poverty. In order to redress this imbalance, it is necessary to develop poverty measures that lead more naturally in these directions. It is argued that poverty can be given a meaning from two different perspectives, the first focusing on what poverty means to those who study it, and the second focusing on what it means to those who actually experience it. In attempting to shed some light on the latter interpretation, the paper presents some survey data in which DSS clients indicate what poverty means to them. The paper then explores three different approaches to measuring poverty, each of which draws on the two key features of poverty: that it is a situation in which choice is severely restricted, and that there must be some socially determined relevance to any poverty measure. The first method estimates and compares poverty using both income and expenditure data as a way of better understanding the choices and circumstances of the poor. The second method estimates a poverty line income as a situation where all resources must be devoted to meeting immediate consumable needs and where there are no expenditures on durable and luxury items. The third method, budget standards, is described briefly from the perspective developed in the paper with the aim of highlighting how budget standards research addresses issues of choice and social relevance.

## **1996 SPRC ANNUAL REPORT**

The SPRC 1996 Annual Report has been mailed to all SPRC Newsletter subscribers with this issue of the newsletter. In the future, however, we will provide SPRC Annual Reports only to those who specifically request it. If you wish to receive next year's annual report please join our



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## 1996 DIARY OF SOCIAL LEGISLATION AND POLICY

This annual joint publication  
between the Australian Institute of

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offers a comprehensive survey of  
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The diary is an excellent research  
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