

Book Review

Social Policy and Social Change: Toward the Creation of Social and Economic Justice (2nd Edition), by Jillian A. Jimenez, Eileen Mayers Pasztor, Ruth M. Chambers, and Cheryl Pearlman Fujii. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2015, ISBN: 1452268339, 520 pp. \$69.88, paperback.

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Although the book title suggests social change, the focus of the book is social justice, particularly in social work policy and practice. In this second edition of their seminal exploration, issues of inequality and the widening gap between the wealthy and poor, health care disparities, discrimination, and developing issues are investigated and analyzed in a reader-friendly format.

While the second edition does not present new themes, or break new ground, it is a refinement of existing evidence by augmenting, expanding, and updating the first edition. Some additions and revisions in the second edition include realignment and reorganization of chapters, updated statistics, expanded leadership profiles, inclusion of recent social policies such as the Affordable Care Act, and other social and economic issues. As stated in the introduction, the Affordable Care Act was added, but the brief summarization and discussion in Chapter 10 are already outdated. Chapter 11, “Social Justice in the 21st Century,” has been updated with discussions about trafficking, international adoption, Barak Obama’s presidency, and recent wars in the Middle East. Although Chapter 10 and Chapter 11 contain some obsolete material, the contextual themes are timeless. The inclusion of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and the *National Association of Social Workers Ethics Code* further demonstrate the timeless and contemporary approach. As stated in the Preface, the authors collectively agreed to include the *National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics* in every social work course syllabus, with the rationale that social work is unlike other professions, as the canon highlights social justice principles embedded in social work practice. The biographical Profiles in Leadership are aligned with the subject matter of each chapter and represent a broad range of well-known and obscure social justice reformers and activists including Mary Harris “Mother” Jones, Jane Addams, Frederick Douglass, Ida B. Wells, Dolores A. Philip Randolph, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Martin Luther King Jr., Fannie Lou Hamer, Cesar Chavez, Harry Lloyd Hopkins, Jesse Jackson, Terry L. Cross, Marian Wright Edelman, Margaret Sanger, and Nelson Mandela.

As stated by the authors, the triumvirate theoretical framework includes the “intersection of historical ideologies, economic structure, and discrimination” (p. 3), as they represent the most pressing issues impacting social work practice. The overarching message for informed readers who are not social workers are the widening gap between the rich and poor in the United States, development of a global viewpoint, and examination of social issues as a precursor to becoming agents of social change as opposed to agents of social control. They describe social work as a “paradoxical profession” (p. 47), as their altruistic attributes have placed them in a position to advocate for social change while also working with marginalized populations as agents of social control.

The second edition retains the thematic concept of social change from a macro, social justice, autonomous perspective, a departure from the current trend toward micro “personal, psychological

perspectives” (p. 71) that permeate current social work practice. While Jimenez et al. addressed social reform from a global and national perspective, they also illuminated the need for an image makeover for social workers and promoting the discipline as a profession. Long-held attitudes and perceptions question the scientific nature of social work and whether it is a profession at all. Social workers as “female charity workers” (p. 71) and lack of autonomy are obstacles to overcome.

The profession of social work began as a service organization, and today, social work struggles with image. Throughout the book, the authors acknowledged a contradiction, suggesting that social change, social control, and social work have been dichotomously interrelated. Jimenez et al. described the evolution of social work as altruistic charities staffed by well-meaning social feminists to address the “problem” of poverty and inequality in settlement houses. In the late 19th century, the Charity Organization Society’s “friendly visitors” promoted social control by interviewing families, investigating clients, gathering information about them, and providing aid to “worthy and improvable recipients.” They made agency referrals, but no policy changes were developed as a result of those efforts (p. 64). Later, in the 20s and 30s, social workers divided into two factions; the elitist progressive *rank and file* that promoted social work education and the unionized social workers on the front lines who viewed professionalism of social work as social control. Conversely, Jimenez et al. emphasized that social work is the only profession promoting social change for marginalized and oppressed populations. For example, the job has evolved into one that supports government-sponsored programs; yet America has developed policies to “contain” the problem of homelessness by building shelters, which has been criticized as extreme social control and similar to incarceration. Further examples of opportunities for both social control and social change are the juvenile justice system, psychiatric hospitals, welfare bureaus, public schools, and child welfare. To address these inconsistencies and work toward reducing or eliminating social control, Jimenez et al. suggested a commitment to social change by reaffirming ~~their~~ our goals of working toward social policy change in pursuit of social justice (see p. 88).

There are inconsistencies in their global agenda. Jimenez et al. wrote, “Two overriding pressures—globalization and rising inequality—are likely to define the context of social work in the coming years” (p. 443). While Jimenez et al. promoted global approaches for addressing human trafficking, international adoption, humanitarian assistance, caregiving for older adults, environmental concerns, refugees, pandemics, population trends, and developing countries, there is no mention of the formalized, collaborative Global Agenda partnership composed of the International Federation of Social Workers, the International Association of Schools of Social Work, and the International Council on Social Welfare (Truell & Jones, 2013). The partnership, developed in 2010, was designed to “strengthen the international profile of social work and social development and it enables social workers to make a stronger contribution to policy development” (p. 3).

Their thoughtful approach and historical examination of social problems, social justice, and social change are presented within the scope of social work policy and practice and how the U.S. market economy impacts service delivery. The 11 chapters are supported with a total of 1,040 footnotes, including a wide variety of scholarly sources and documents. However, the generous compilation of footnotes included tertiary sources, old websites, and outdated Census findings. The comprehensive 20-page index is easy to navigate.

The intended audience is clearly social work students, scholars, academics, and practitioners. However, this seminal examination of social change and social justice is appropriate for anyone in the helping professions. Jimenez et al. suggested that finding answers is directly related to first identifying and tackling the problems. Each chapter addresses a social issue within the alignment of social justice including social work as a profession, historical influences, the market economy,

oppression, income disparities, housing dilemmas, child welfare policies, housing, health care, and mental health.

The second edition is beautifully arranged and user friendly, with questions at the beginning of each chapter that serve to focus the reader on the chapter's goals and objectives. It is divided into headings and subheadings, and the figures and tables enhance learning. Each chapter includes at least one biographical Profile in Leadership, numeric footnote lists at the end, and multiple photos documenting social issues both historical and contemporary. Discussion questions at the end of each chapter encourage critical thinking and reflection but also serve as a self-evaluation of learning goal achievement.

Social Policy and Social Change: Toward the Creation of Social and Economic Justice is an engaging, foundational text that illuminates not only the social issues and problems but also inspires and challenges the reader to delve further by being mindful of the core problems that disrupt social equilibrium and also challenges them to become proactive agents for social change. The authors' pragmatic and antioppressive approach, combined with passion for challenging injustices, shined through on every page.

While Jillian Jimenez is listed as the principal author, she died suddenly after the publication of the first edition, in 2009, but her work was also included in the second edition. Principal authors include noted master of social work, Eileen Mayers Pasztor, who teaches at California State University, Long Beach; renowned professor Dr. Ruth M. Chambers, also from California State University, Long Beach, who teaches courses in child welfare and social welfare; and Cheryl Pearlman Fujii, who founded the California Child Welfare Resource Library at University of California, Berkeley. Combined, the four principal authors represent a well-rounded and diverse expertise in social work practice and social justice.

Reference

Truell, R., & Jones, D. N. (2013). *The global agenda for social work and social development: Extending the influence of social work* (Research Report). Retrieved from http://cdn.ifsw.org/assets/ifsw_24848-10.pdf

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