

approach to rights and the more broadly family-focused approach to rights. His description of that tension does much to make clear that there are varying and sometimes competing cultural models of disability and of family-related policy.

Chapter 9 contains Zimmerman's view from above, his concluding remarks. They are not brief, but they are valuable. He notes the lack of consensus among scholars regarding the definition, nature, and scope of family policy; here, he speaks directly to the research community and exhorts it to address the variety of definitions, nature, and scope, arguing that, without consensus, cross-national analyses will be difficult and not necessarily as broadly useful as they might be. He also argues that the two basic approaches to defining a family inhibit universalistic policy, such as the UNCRPD ambitiously seeks.

These are the model of individualism (focus on the person with disability) and the model of communitarianism (familism); they too inhibit universalistic policy such as, again, the UNCRPD seeks. This chapter next speaks to the nature of research about families and disability policy; it notes that the UK's combined liberal and conservative approaches, France's conservative corporatist approach, Sweden's mixed socialistic democratic approach, and the USA's liberal and individualistic approaches reflect not just governmental policy but more fundamentally cultural variations within the west. Although Zimmerman does not explicitly say so, he intimates that the cultural model of disability policy explains the UNCRPD's emphasis on the individual and its resulting lower appreciation of the role of the family with respect to a person with a disability.

Zimmerman's book is especially valuable to those who seek a typology of models for policy analysis. Its focus on four different countries, each representing a different model, and on the UNCRPD, whose legislative history reflects a tension about the focus of policy, is welcome. So too is his recognition that economics – not just of a particular country but of regions of the world and of the world economy in the aggregate – plays a foundational role in policy-making.

Those who seek typologies will find Zimmerman's book to be invaluable. Those who are brave enough to do cross-national research will find it to be sobering. Those who are concerned about the issue of primary and secondary beneficiaries will have a clarifying time in reading this book. And those who regard themselves to be value-free scientists will be dismayed to learn that the science of policy analysis is value-laden, for it rests on models/typologies that influence even the questions scientists investigate, as well as the data they create or evaluate.

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Matthew Gritter (2015), *The Policy and Politics of Food Stamps and SNAP*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Pivot. £45.00, pp. 126, hbk.
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To the extent that basic human rights entail the provision of essential food, clothing, and shelter to all of a country's inhabitants, the United States falls remarkably short of that standard. The Food Stamp program (now known as SNAP – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) has for decades been one of the mainstays preventing the U.S. from diverging even further. Yet Food Stamps has always been controversial. Matthew Gritter's question in this brief volume is why the program has shown resilience despite its vulnerability, especially in the present era of neoliberalism, welfare austerity, and conservative ascendance.

His answer emphasizes three factors: the inclusion of Food Stamp authorization within the omnibus Farm Bill, facilitating logrolling; the portrayal of Food Stamp recipients as hard-working and deserving poor; and the role of Food Stamps as a safety net of last resort given the erosion of TANF benefits and the repeal of TANF entitlement status. Gritter correctly shows the importance of key Republican defenders of the program who, whether from strategic calculation or positive advocacy, at various times have worked to prevent benefit reduction and ensure coverage for needy families.

At the core of the volume are three case studies, extending the available scholarship. In 1996, under President Clinton, a major effort to transform Food Stamps into a block grant to the states failed to receive sufficient support in Congress. In 2002, under President Bush, Food Stamp coverage was actually restored for certain legal immigrants. In 2012, under President Obama, the House voted to divorce Food Stamp authorization from the Farm Bill, making the program potentially easier to attack, yet the final bill was enacted with only moderate changes.

The cases could have been more detailed and might have contained somewhat less repetition. The best segment addresses the George W. Bush administration's conscious inclusion of Food Stamps as an aspect of compassionate conservatism, using it as an illustration for the objective of regulatory simplification and pointing out the unfairness entailed by restricting eligibility only to citizens, despite objections from extremist critics insisting that this was mere pandering for votes and that it would encourage immigration for benefits. The section nicely demonstrates the combination of institutional structure and conceptual framing that has somewhat protected Food Stamps against sweeping anti-welfare attack.

Nevertheless, those attacks continue and Gritter concludes with a cautionary tale. Proposals exist from right-wing think tanks to fully devolve Food Stamps to the separate states, removing its entitlement status and its standing as a safety net of last resort. Proposals exist to emphasize work activation over nutritional support and to drug test recipients, weakening the ideological connection of Food Stamps and the deserving poor. Proposals exist to sever Food Stamp authorization from the Farm Bill and to relocate it from the Agriculture Department to Health and Human Services, effectively ending the institutional basis for political logrolling and denying to Food Stamps the appearance that it is not simply another welfare state program. A shift in the present partisan alignment in Washington might well portend ominously.

However, effective as this brief volume is, it misses the opportunity to delve somewhat deeper. In the introduction, the author notes the existence of some other means-tested U.S. programs, such as Medicaid and the EITC, that have generally escaped conservative attack. By considering Food Stamps as relatively unique, he leads away from a discussion of those systematic factors that help to provide welfare state defense. Comparing across programs, what has been the importance of targeted or in-kind assistance versus direct cash payments? What might be the explanatory significance of such factors, neglected in the text, as the perceived racial or gender composition of recipients. Methodologically, case studies have both value and limitations. Gritter's manuscript does not quite provide enough detailed process tracing or new empirical data for a stand-alone study, especially given that the research questions extend beyond the Food Stamp program, *per se*.

Even further, one must wonder what kind of country allows basic food provision for needy families to become an issue of highest controversy. As Gritter correctly understands, the politics of Food Stamps has largely been defensive. There has been little hint of a positive national comprehensive nutrition policy, addressing the sustainable, just, and healthy production and distribution of food. Is it that Americans simply care less about their fellow citizens than do individuals in other advanced industrial nations? Has the belief in the American dream blinded us to the socio-economic reality of poverty and near-poverty? Has our historic individualism gotten in the way of compassion? Alternatively, is the problem one of power, that the enormous

rise of economic inequality in the U.S. has undermined our democracy? Does the U.S. political system no longer respond to the demands and interests of average citizens? The struggle to sustain even the partial U.S. social welfare state is a matter simultaneously for outrage and careful academic analysis. The story of Food Stamps can provide a critical starting point for insights about the current state of the American political character.

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This is a well-titled book which focuses on the poverty reduction strategies in Bangladesh and looks into how the elites behaved during the PRSP exercise. It tries to give an empirical evidence on how participation was practiced in making the PRSP in Bangladesh. The author also argues that it will not be implemented effectively too (p. 170). At the same time it has to be accepted that everything cannot be incorporated in one policy document (which the author himself admits, p. 178). According to the author, PRSPs are the latest in the series of previous prescriptions like HIPC (Heavily Indebted Poor Countries) initiative, Country Assistance Strategies (CASs), Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) etc. For example, PRSP proposed reducing subsidies in agriculture and privatizing the state-owned industries (p. 124). To him, a universal neo-liberal growth-based model has been imposed accompanied by a sweetener called participation. He argues that a major weakness in the approach is its lack of importance to the local variation (environmental, accessibility, composition of communities, culture, etc.). (p. 174). The author argues that in addition to aid dependency the poor countries do not have a fair and balanced trade relationship with the developing countries.

Some points made in the book are sometimes weak. For example, the author says that there is a common presumption that civil society is clearly a good thing (p. 41). It is not clear how this conclusion was drawn. In some cases, the lure of international funds has drawn internationally savvy entrepreneurs to form organizations that are little more than a personal fiefdom dominated by a group of individuals who have become, in effect, career civil society leaders. As a result, the organizations remain shallow, dependent on the ideas, contacts, and vision of one leader or a small set of leaders, thus retarding their broader institutional development. Many of the CSOs that donors support in the name of democracy are themselves not internally democratic. CSOs sometime work on single issues for a limited constituency. Ultimately, it is the political parties that build broader collective identities, mobilize citizens around the broader themes of politics, balance competing interests and provide a political/electoral counterweight to the concentration of power by single leaders. Ironically, CSOs are increasingly filling the gaps left by political parties, but civil society cannot replace a party system and in fact increases the need for strong political parties. Most powerful CSOs are more intellectual, capital, city-based, donor-funded and linked with Transnational CSOs. They usually find it easier to mobilize external funding; they have staff with relevant management and communication skills; and therefore do not need to mobilize large domestic constituencies.

There is a good discussion on the dollarization of poverty. He has made a detailed discussion on the weaknesses of the 1US\$ international poverty line (pp. 58–59). However, it is currently the most convenient way of defining poverty. The author argues that poverty