

Continuities and Discontinuities: The Political Economy of Social Welfare and Labour Market Policy in Canada

Andrew Johnson, Stephen McBride, Patrick J. Smith



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Continuities and Discontinuities assesses the making of Canadian social and labour market policy in the context of two factors—globalization and neoconservatism. Specialists from a variety of fields and disciplines examine the relation between Canada's changing political economy and its social welfare and labour market policy. These essays analysing continuities and discontinuities in policy emerged from research that initially was presented at the 5th Conference on Social Welfare Policy held at Bishop's University in 1991, and that since then has been revised to reflect the situation of the mid-1990s.

Part I introduces the three broad areas explored in the volume. Part II addresses new trends in Canadian political economy and their relation to public policy.

Part III analyses social welfare policy. Of the essays included, several investigate the democratizing of the Canadian welfare state and controversies in the conception and definition of poverty. Others address the AIDS crisis, health policy, and social policy issues that primarily affect women, children, and native peoples.

In Part IV recent Canadian labour market policies are investigated and appraised, and alternatives suggested or evaluated. One essay argues that employment security and high wages could generate high productivity and international competitiveness; another examines the impact of the growth in part-time employment on the welfare state; a third probes the relation of organized labour to a guaranteed annual income; others investigate the impact of neoconservatism on labour market policy-making in various provinces and regions.

Globalization and neoconservatism continue to shape change and require constant evaluation. These thought-provoking and informative essays are an important contribution to the ongoing debate on social welfare and labour market policy in Canada.

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