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CANADIAN SOCIAL POLICY

A New Introduction

 Pearson

FIFTH EDITION

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*For my parents, Elaine and Ed; and to Susan Graham
and Tatyanna Morgan*

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Preface

There are numerous books on social policy in the United Kingdom and the United States. *Canadian Social Policy: A New Introduction* is a response to the need for a Canadian perspective. It is a single-volume introduction to a highly diversified field, one that provides a framework for analyzing social policies and understanding the social welfare context. Our thinking owes much to recent forces in social policy practice and scholarship, particularly as they relate to feminist, postmodern, social diversity, and civil society writings, widely construed, and to the concerns of social justice raised by this scholarship.

Social policy is a fundamental component of social work practice and should never be seen as an ethereal or aloof add-on to the curriculum. It is important in other ways, perhaps more so than at any other time either in our country's history or in the history of the social work profession. The now prolonged assault on universal programs, the ever more limited scope of policies, the ascendancy of neo-conservative ideology, the growth of globalization, the imperative of diversity, the increasing reliance on citizen participation and nonprofits, and new social financing initiatives to fund services—these issues, among other phenomena, will greatly influence social work practice and social policy analysis in future years. It is essential, therefore, that students introduced to Canadian social policy understand these dynamics and have at their disposal an analytical frame of reference that will make them sensitive to the nuances of policy work and to the diverse needs of society's most marginalized people.

Canadian Social Policy: A New Introduction examines major social policy considerations in Canada. It is intended for an audience of graduate, senior undergraduate, and senior community college students in social work, and for professionals who want to update their knowledge of current policy contexts. It is also intended to offer insights to students and practitioners of other disciplines, such as anthropology, business administration, Canadian studies, clinical psychology, development studies, divinity, economics, education, geography, history, nursing, occupational therapy, political science, public administration, rehabilitation studies, and sociology.

This textbook is now in its fifth edition and has a history extending back to the late 1990s. The first edition started out as a proposal submitted by Roger Delaney. Once a publishing contract was received and the work begun, Roger invited John Graham and Karen Swift to be co-authors. The textbook's initial focus then expanded to place greater emphasis on the historical origins of Canadian social policies and on the impact of social diversity on all aspects of policy formation and analysis. This fifth edition sees the addition of a fourth author, Micheal Shier, with the continuation of Roger Delaney, now – like a previous coauthor, Karen Swift - retired. The addition of Micheal Shier to the text has resulted in a significant rewrite of several chapters in the book, all of which is intended to provide an up-to-date account of contemporary realities in social welfare development and social policy practice in Canada. The writing process has been truly collaborative, with Graham and Shier contributing to the others' sentences, paragraphs, references, and ideas, and acting as a sounding board for all matters related to authorship. Micheal took

the lead in Chapters 1, 7, 8, and 9, with updates to the whole of Chapter 6 and the latter part of Chapter 5; John in Chapters 2, 3, 4, and the first part of Chapter 5. We are, of course, grateful for the longstanding influence that Karen and Roger continue to have on the book and on our thinking.

The authors are grateful for so many things, including the kind encouragement of readers and our press; and for the resulting opportunity of these influences and broader social and intellectual forces that have shaped the progress of the book over a nearly 20-year period. The second edition, released in 2003, expanded beyond the first edition to include greater discussion of Canada's welfare-state institutions, social welfare theory, socio-economic class, social policy practice, globalization, the physical ecology, and social movements. The third edition considerably updated and provided further analysis of social policy practice and social policy development in a market-state era of less government and ascendant liberal capitalist ideology. The fourth edition expanded the scope of analysis used in the third edition. It was updated with new secondary literature on Canadian social policy and social policy writ large, and with new social policy theories that emphasized the increasing importance of globalization, the escalation of income inequality, neo-liberalism, and the changing patterns of international relations.

The fifth edition has seen a most significant amendment to our thinking, largely in the expansion of writing on third sector/civil society influences upon social policy, and the organizational and community contexts of social policy practice. The entire book has been updated with new secondary literature on Canadian social policy and social policy writ large (written for Canadian and non-Canadian audiences). It has likewise been updated with new social policy theories that emphasize the increasing importance of globalization, the escalation of income inequality, neo-liberalism, third-sector and participatory models of governance, the nonprofit and voluntary sector, the social economy, and social innovation. Chapter 1 has been rewritten to provide greater conceptual clarity to the terms *social policy* and *social welfare* used throughout the text, and to provide an overview of contemporary theories of social welfare, in particular the emergence of the nonprofit and voluntary sector in shaping social policy and social welfare development. Chapters 2–5 have been updated to draw attention to the role of the nonprofit and voluntary sector in both historic and contemporary periods of Canadian social welfare, and highlight existing realities affecting the focus of social policy efforts. Chapter 6 has been updated with new statistics and secondary literatures. Chapters 7 through 9 have been rewritten to focus primarily on the application of social policy in direct practice—whether through engagement in socially innovative efforts at an organizational level of practice or through efforts of assessing the impact of social policy on the lived experiences of service users. Together, this revised edition provides opportunity for discussion and development of a broader perspective of the Canadian social welfare system and the role of social work in shaping social policy.

Chapter 1 outlines some conceptual ideas that form a foundation for social policy practice, analysis, and application. Chapter 2 considers historical influences on Canadian social policies; Chapter 3, some of the country's major social welfare programs; and Chapter 4, significant policy-related ideological, social, and economic facets. Chapter 5 covers globalization, the environment, social inclusion, and citizen participation. Chapter 6 introduces the key notion of diversity to social policy formation; Chapter 7 presents how social policies are applied to social work practice and to social service delivery in general,

with emphasis on the mezzo-level (i.e., organizational) of practice in influencing social policy and social welfare development. Chapter 8 provides an overview of social policy analysis and the theoretical context of social policy development, with clear examples of application throughout. The final chapter provides a summation of the book and highlights four intersecting areas of future social policy and social welfare development in Canada: social rights, socio-economic equality, Canada's social economy, and citizen participation.

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Many people, too numerous to mention, have been extremely influential in the completion of this text throughout its five editions. Special thanks are extended to Tanjeem Azad, Helen Boukos, Andreas Breuer, Cathryn Bradshaw, Xiaobei Chen, Stefanie Kaiser, Patricia Bianchini, Susan Graham, Sarah Meagher, Nikoo Najand, Louise Querido, Andrea Newberry, David Sandoz, Josée Couture, Heath McLeod, and Elena Esina, to whom we extend sincere thanks. Likewise, thank you to Leslie Stirritt for his contribution to the HST case study. John Graham's father, Russell Graham, read the entire first-edition manuscript and provided, as always, exceptionally valuable editorial advice. Staff at Pearson Education Canada remain unendingly cooperative and encouraging.

In the early 1970s, the late Albert Rose of the Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto, conceived a social policy chart for teaching purposes. In light of substantial policy changes since then, part of the conceptualization in Chapter 3 is loosely based on Dr. Rose's original chart and is dedicated to his memory. A major contributor to the development of Figure 4.2 is Raika Abdulahad, a Ph.D. student at the University of Calgary. Keith Brownlee, Issam Dawood, Paul DeBakker, M.D., Gayle Gilchrist-James, Jacqueline Ismael, Margaret McKee, and Bob Luker were among colleagues who provided much-appreciated support and advice. Funding from the University of Calgary Starter Grant for newly recruited faculty provided money for research assistanceship for the first edition; particular thanks are extended to the University of Calgary and the Alberta government for this critical support. Grateful acknowledgment is extended for grant support from SSHRC to the Caring Labour Network and the project on "Risk and risk assessment in child welfare," influencing a previous edition. A Senate Research Grant from Lakehead University was likewise instrumental in moving the first edition toward completion. Finally, thanks are extended to the Caledon Institute of Social Policy, the Canadian Council on Social Development, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, the National Council of Welfare, Statistics Canada, and those publishing companies that allowed us to cite various research.

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Chapter 1

Introduction to Canadian Social Policy

Social policies have a range of implications for all members of a society. They define the mechanisms for the provision of social services and their emphasis. For instance, provincial government frameworks on the provision of service for developmentally delayed adults concentrate on efforts that support independence and inclusion in employment and social life for this group of people. Social policies establish the guidelines and regulations for which individuals, families, groups, and communities can meet their basic needs. This can become manifested in eligibility requirements to receive income support—such as age requirements for pension benefits or income eligibility for social assistance. Social policies also establish standards and thresholds of entitlement and expectation among citizens. For example, the *Canada Health Act* guarantees a standard of health care that is accessible in every provincial and territorial jurisdiction in the country. Similarly, social policies establish the way people should be treated by other individuals, groups, and even the government. For instance, the enactment of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* established a foundation for the rights and freedoms of all Canadians.

Social policies have implications for the day to day life of individuals and, in particular, the focus of efforts for social service delivery and intervention. As subsequent chapters will explain, every social work intervention—be it with an individual, a family, a group, an organization, or within the wider community—is somehow related to multiple social policies. For example, assisting a family to seek adequate housing invariably relates to social housing and income security policies; assisting an individual to re-enter the community after a prolonged period of incarceration may relate to employment support policies; or supporting an individual with serious mental health issues will relate to policies associated with health and mental health care. These considerations therefore influence the nature of Canadian social work practice and education. From a curriculum perspective, the Educational Policy Statements of *The Manual of Standards and Procedures for the Accreditation of Canadian Programs of Social Work Education* (1996), approved by the Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work (CASSW), state that the social work curriculum at the first university level (HBSW) shall ensure that social work students learn “critical analysis of social work and social welfare history, and social policy as socially constructed institutions and their implications for social work practice” (CASSW, 1996, 3). Developing a foundation of knowledge on social policy, and more generally social welfare, is required in the professional training of social workers. And this is certainly one of the purposes of this book. However, we also want students to gain an appreciation of how macro-level discussions of social policy and social welfare shape the

overarching identity of the profession of social work and a social worker's professional sense of self.

Social policies are a source of constant debate and reframing. These considerations are typically rooted in cultural traditions, ideological beliefs and stereotypes, a range of international (such as the global capitalist economy) and domestic (such as the changing demographic base of the population) conditions, available resources and changing priorities, and research investigating the conditions of groups of people that are meant to benefit from a particular policy. Moreover, it is quite likely that there will be differing perspectives among your social work colleagues and even instructors about what is the best approach or method to address a negative social situation for a group in society. However, it is widely perceived that the ideal approach is to support greater citizen engagement and advocacy to promote advancements in government services and mandates for the provision of social services. Therefore, ongoing efforts to promote equity within Canadian society are fundamental to the discipline of social work. As a student of social policy and social work, it is necessary that you maintain a firm understanding of how this network of social policies impacts the lives of Canadians within our current context, and subsequently constrains and supports efforts to create social change through direct practice efforts at individual and organizational levels of practice.

We will discuss the meaning of social policy shortly. But first, it is imperative to take a step backwards and understand the context of how and why social policies emerge. This more general context is widely referred to as *social welfare*.

CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL WELFARE THEORY

Social welfare is an abstract concept. It refers to something that cannot be seen or held. However, there are several proxies that can help illuminate what social welfare might be. It can occur at multiple levels—among individuals and families; within communities; and via such formal instruments as non-governmental institutions, as well as through governmental policies. At its most basic level, social welfare can be seen in acts of kindness (or reciprocal exchanges) within families or between neighbours. This is a common form of exchange, and we do this regularly without even realizing it is happening. For example, you might shovel your neighbour's driveway after a snowfall, or you will help your brother and his family move into their new house. I am sure if you thought about it, you will find you have engaged in several acts of reciprocal exchange during the past week. In more formalized ways, micro-level forms of social welfare are carried out by individuals who donate money or volunteer their time. For example, you might donate winter jackets to a local homeless shelter, organize a fundraising function for your church, or provide a large endowment to the local library.

There are also more structured ways in which social welfare is manifested. For example, service delivery organizations (like shelters or daycares) and income security programs (like the Guaranteed Income Supplement and provincial social assistance programs), both of which demonstrate the existence of redistributive exchanges between governments and groups of individuals that meet some set of eligibility criteria. Those eligibility criteria can be defined by a maximum annual income, citizenship status, age, health status, and many other ways that the population is divided into groups.

Together, these examples highlight that social welfare can be economic in nature; where reciprocal and redistributive forms of exchange are simply just mechanisms that support the economic integration of individuals in society (Hettne, 1995). While it might be hard to relate to, given the current hegemonic position of capitalism in contemporary society, reciprocal and redistributive economic integration mechanisms came into existence long before the presence of the capitalist marketplace. However, as argued by Karl Polanyi (1944) in his book *The Great Transformation*, both reciprocity and redistribution had been undermined in some way by the emergence of market exchange (i.e., the commodification of land, capital, and labour). Summarizing Polanyi's thesis, Hettne notes:

“As the market principle penetrated all spheres of human activity, thereby eroding social structures, redistribution had to be reinvented in order to provide people with the necessary social protection. Polanyi called this type of reaction on the part of society the second part of a ‘double movement’, the first part being the expansion and deepening of market exchange. This was the origin of the modern welfare state, as well as of other types of interventionist economy. Thus, modern industrial societies were typically distinguished by a market-redistribution mix. Depending on the nature of this mix, we called some ‘capitalist’ and others ‘socialist’. In neither system does reciprocity play a role in economic transactions outside the family and kinship groups.” (p. 5)

The welfare state refers to those governments that commit themselves to the development of social policies for the collective well-being of all. One of the welfare state's objectives has been to redistribute wealth; some refer to that activity as traditional social welfarism (Evers, 2009). In most social policy textbooks in Canada (including previous editions of this book), the notion of social welfare has focused predominantly on these redistributive efforts (which are discussed in detail in Chapter 3). The present edition continues to emphasize the extreme importance of governmental intervention, as well as of social workers' professional responsibilities to advocate for the sorts of policies at any level of government that would maximize social justice across a range of issues covered throughout this book. But this edition emphasizes a further range of analysis beyond this: the historical and contemporary role of local community-based efforts in shaping the social policy efforts and focus in our country. This revised approach, in our view, is with good reason. Writing more than two decades ago about the transition in contemporary social welfare, Hettne (1995, p. 5) points out:

“After the present phase of neo-liberal hegemony and social marginalization, reciprocity—or what in other theoretical frameworks is called ‘community’ or ‘civil society’—is bound to become more important again, simply as a mode of survival when the protective redistributive political structures break up.”

Increasingly, non-profit organizations, volunteerism, and philanthropy have taken growing roles in Canada's social welfare tapestry, and their influences deserve sufficient attention. Canada's approach to social welfare has changed. Beginning with retrenchment efforts in the mid-1970s, the scope and activities of governmental policies were systematically—and in our view, most problematically—eroded. And at the same time,

there has been a growing appreciation of the importance of social inclusion of minority groups on the basis of ethnicity, gender identity, geography, race, range of ability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic class, and other identifiers—each of which intersects with the others to help create a distinct sense of identity (Rice & Prince, 2013). Social, economic, and political advocacy for social justice generally, and the rights of minority groups in particular, have been a part of this phenomenon. Grassroots organizations and civil society or non-profit institutions, as well as private sector entities, have been actors in shaping and providing social welfare, sometimes in collaboration with governmental efforts.

Some go so far as to claim that contemporary social welfare in Canada is emerging as a shared effort between government, the for-profit sector, and the nonprofit and voluntary sector (or civil society). Each has a partnership role to play in the social welfare development of Canada's contemporary *welfare regime* (Evans & Wellstead, 2014; Jenson & Saint-Martin, 2003; Jetté & Vaillancourt, 2011; Phillips, 2012; Vaillancourt & Tremblay, 2002). Unlike a welfare state, a welfare regime refers to the intersecting roles and responsibilities played by dominant societal sectors that produce social welfare in a country. Canada's contemporary welfare regime, like most industrialized and developing nations, can be envisioned through a metaphor of a diamond. This has been referred to as a *welfare diamond* (Evers, Pilj, & Ungerson, 1994).

Picture a diamond in your mind. It has four points—one on the top, the bottom and one on each of the two remaining sides. Each of the four points is covered by one of the following groups:

1. Government
2. Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector (also referred to as civil society, community, or the “Third Sector”)
3. Private Sector or Market
4. Individuals and Families

In this sense, Canada's contemporary system of social welfare has participation of all four sectors, each of which potentially influences the others. As well, there could be varying rates of participation of any of these four sectors in social welfare across a given time period. Some scholars see third or voluntary sector actors taking on increasing importance as governments in Canada have contracted their scopes of social welfare involvement (Rice & Prince, 2013).

A few further comments on the above-mentioned social welfare “diamond” of four points. We do not, in describing it, intend to leave the impression that we are advocates for this four-sided approach, or that we in some way or another celebrate the rise of any one of the four sides against the very real decline in governmental ranges of social welfare responsibility that Canada has experienced since the mid-1970s and as discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2. The first edition of this book, published in 2000, greatly lamented governments' decreasing responsibility in scope and coverage across virtually all domains of social welfare. As scholars and citizens of the country, we lament it, and in pursuing just social policies, we encourage activists to hold governments accountable for their social welfare responsibilities, generally. We are not stating that private or market-sector activities are desirable in the human services; there are aspects, indeed, in which

private-sector involvement in prisons—to cite just one example—could have enormously worrisome impacts on social justice practices. But a growing conceptual and empirical literature has shown the importance of all four domains in social welfare in advanced industrialized societies such as, and extended beyond, Canada (Anheier, 2009; Holosko, Holosko, & Spencer, 2009; Powell, 2007; Prince, 2014; Ryser & Halseth, 2014; Salamon, 1993, 2002; Shier & Graham, 2013). And to this precise extent, it is important for the reader to have some knowledge of each domain.

There are many examples of each of these four sectors having a fundamental role in the development of Canada's social welfare regime in contemporary times. For example, the government maintains income security programs and establishes frameworks for the provision of specific types of social services. These are examples of redistributive social welfare efforts. The nonprofit and voluntary sector has grown considerably over the last two decades (which is discussed further in Chapter 2 and 6). With 170000 nonprofit organizations, Canada has the second largest per capita nonprofit sector in the world (Imagine Canada, 2015). Nonprofits are responsible for developing programs and initiatives to support improved outcomes among service user groups, for meeting the needs of vulnerable populations, addressing negative perceptions among service user populations, and advocating for service users (Shier & Handy, 2015). The efforts of these organizations are examples of reciprocal social welfare efforts. The private sector or market has also begun to take on an increasing role. We have seen a steady increase in the level of involvement in philanthropic activities from wealthy Canadian families and corporations through the establishment of foundations. During the period from 2002 to 2012, there was nearly a 100 percent increase, to \$23.7 billion, in assets among all grant-making foundations that provide funding to social, cultural, economic, and environmental causes in Canada (Philanthropic Foundations Canada, 2014). Furthermore, nonprofits have been engaging in market-based activities—such as social enterprise. Together, these act as examples of market-based social welfare efforts.

And finally, families take on social welfare responsibilities: for example, in caring for sick or aged relatives or in sponsoring migrating family members from other countries. Likewise, there has been greater emphasis in the child welfare system to keep children with family members. Yet there are worrisome aspects to family responsibility as a last resort, particularly when governments do not provide sufficient ranges of social support or social care for individuals whose only other resort is the family—should there even be family members who are known to the individual and who are able to help. Governments have responded to social pressures to support individual and family care structures in certain instances, such as the inclusion of compassionate care benefits in the Employment Insurance program to support individuals to care for terminally ill family members. As you read this book, it is important to think critically about these emerging dynamics in Canadian social welfare. Similarly with other dominant eras of Canadian social welfare (discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2), our contemporary social welfare system is far from perfect. For instance, with cutbacks to government income security programs, reductions in resources to build affordable housing, and shifts in eligibility criteria, many social groups have become more vulnerable than they previously were. And, it is presently unclear, if not doubtful whether, other dominant sectors—such as the for-profit and the nonprofit and voluntary sectors—will be able to make up the difference.

This emerging model of contemporary social welfare fits into a wider theoretical discussion of contemporary governance. As social workers, it is important to understand these theoretical debates, as they provide the impetus for understanding your fundamental occupational role in providing support to service user groups. Distinct from government, governance is “the actions of government, but also the role of citizens, both individually and organized in various forms of association, and the way groups and communities within society organize to make and implement decisions of general concern” (Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2002, p. 5). Governance refers to the range of actors that have an influence on the way decisions are made. Historically, we have seen the role of social work in governance through political advocacy efforts to change or create legislation to provide improved social welfare outcomes for vulnerable groups in society. However, due to changing relationship dynamics between government and civil society actors (such as direct social service nonprofits), the role of social workers has expanded to also include social welfare leader, social entrepreneur, and social innovator. The roles of social work in relation to social welfare development and social policy are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 7.

This model of governance has emerged in response to a number of theoretical advancements pertaining to the social and economic failure of governments and the market to address the persistent and emerging challenges experienced by citizens (Anheier, 2004; Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2002; Hansmann, 1980; Muukonen, 2009; Nichols, 2006; Smith, 2011; Weisbrod, 1975). For instance, the role of nonprofits in traditional welfare state countries has continued to grow as a result of the enactment of neo-liberal economic policies (which has reduced government influence on the social and economic well-being of citizens), and a transition from a welfare state predicated on income redistribution, to one that emphasizes community-based support (Anheier, 2009; Smith, 2011). This book’s authors do not celebrate this transition, but we recognize its occurrence, and we cite scholarship that refers to it.

While the manner in which social welfare is achieved has changed throughout Canada’s history, the purpose of social welfare has not. *Social welfare* is the promotion of, and provision for, improved societal level well-being. These improvements might be efforts to address the experiences of a single group of service users, such as improvements to the average number of days of housing loss experienced by the episodically homeless. They may also be efforts that address the needs of a single individual, such as a crowd-sourcing campaign for a person diagnosed with a disabling illness. This latter example improves societal level well-being by promoting citizen engagement and participation. Moreover, these improvements can be made to the overall population in a country, such as the creation of a minimum wage. Taken together, the United Nations uses measures of societal level well-being to make statements about the social health of nations on the basis of data collected on a variety of quality-of-life indicators. These include:

- physical and mental health;
- education and occupational achievements;
- development in the arts and sciences;
- production and consumption;
- wealth and income (including child poverty);

- conditions of the natural environment;
- patterns of recreation;
- patterns of social participation;
- patterns of social morality; and
- social deviance and alienation.

Quality-of-life indicators allow social workers to compare their country's social welfare programs internationally (a focus of social policy analysis discussed in Chapter 8). These quality of life indicators can fit into four broad categories of well-being:

1. Socio-economic well-being. Includes efforts to mitigate increasing income inequality, to redistribute resources, to alleviate poverty, and to increase the social inclusion and upward social mobility of lower income populations.
2. Socio-political well-being. Includes efforts to create equal political representation, to improve human rights, and to create shared power relationships between members of society.
3. Socio-cultural well-being. Includes efforts that promote respect for diversity, the prevention of discrimination and racism, and efforts to promote social cohesion among diverse groups
4. Psycho-social wellbeing. Includes efforts that address the mental and emotional health needs of the population and improvements to individual level functioning.

Each of these aspects of societal well-being is discussed in further detail in Chapters 4, 5, and 6. For example, socio-economic well-being has traditionally been wrapped up in discussions about income inequality and poverty. Socio-political well-being is achieved in part by social movements and the work of advocacy groups to create political change. Socio-cultural well-being is addressed through efforts to prevent discrimination, such as public awareness campaigns or efforts to better address the needs of diverse cultural groups. You may be able to begin to see the relationship between social policy and social welfare. In Canada, there are many examples of policies at the various levels of government and within service delivery organizations that aim to address these areas of well-being. The extent to which these efforts achieve outcomes is the subject of social policy analysis (Chapter 8).

It is important to note too, while these areas of well-being might be presented here as distinct categories, you should recognize that they overlap. For example, in social work we might be concerned with the psycho-social well-being of a group of service users experiencing symptoms of psychological distress, and we might implement an intervention that focuses on aspects of individual level coping or resilience to address the mental and emotional health needs of this group of people. However, the source of the mental health condition might be a result of individual experiences with discrimination. For example, in the case of sexual minority or transgendered youth who have had negative experiences with bullying in the secondary school system, the discrimination they have experienced can be directly related to their mental health. As a result, to adequately address the psycho-social well-being needs of this group, you would have to also address elements affecting individuals related to their socio-cultural well-being.

Together, these four areas of well-being have been the focus of a substantial body of interdisciplinary social science research and literature, globally. While this book focuses on the social policy and social welfare context in Canada, with content related to training and education of social work students specifically, it is important to recognize that the study of social welfare and social policies is of interest across the social sciences and humanities disciplines. Understanding and determining the optimum conditions for human well-being has been the focus of scholarship and action for centuries. How it has become manifested in our historical context in Canada is described in detail in Chapter 2.

WHAT ARE SOCIAL POLICIES?

Social policy is a dominant mechanism (although not the only mechanism) through which societal well-being can be improved. Unlike social welfare, social policy is less abstract. For example, legislation exists that provides income security to individuals and families; frameworks define how services are provided to specific service user groups; and regulations are in place that constrain the way people are supported. In Canadian academics, there have been several definitions of social policy that provide meaning to what social policy is and what it is not. Many of these define social policy in relation to competing choices or opportunities to improve the social well-being of the population (or specific segments of the population based on some eligibility criteria).

Considering the structure and nature of contemporary social welfare described in the previous section, social policy must encompass a wide range of government, nonprofit, and private-sector decisions that seek to improve some aspect of societal well-being. Historically, it would be common to refer to social policies only as those which were legislated by a level of government (such as a municipal, provincial, or federal government). However, social policy is being created by nonprofits, and other formal voluntary sector forms of association, through the development of service delivery frameworks and models of practice. Across all domains, social policies are influenced by social activists and other committed individuals and groups who play an important role in advocating just and inclusive policies and societal responsibility for responding to needs. Social policy is being created in the private sector through policies that shape investments in Canada's social economy and in the creation of employee assistance programs. These are all discussed in further detail in Chapters 7 and 9. The following section describes the range of social policy definitions that exist, or have existed. Some are more abstract than others. However, more recent discussions begin to provide a description of social policy in relation to the multiple actors (for-profit, non-profit, and government) that influence or shape the social well-being of Canada's citizens.

Definitions of Social Policy

Richard Titmuss—Models of Social Policy Richard Titmuss (1974) argued that social policy is basically about “choices between conflicting political objectives and goals and how they are formulated” (p. 49). These choices are influenced by views of what constitutes a good society, based on that which “culturally distinguishes between the needs and aspirations of social man [sic] in contradiction to the needs and aspirations of economic man [sic]” (p. 49).

Titmuss argues that social policy can best be understood in terms of the following three models or functions:

1. *The Residual Welfare Model of Social Policy*: This model argues that the private market and the family are responsible for meeting an individual's needs. Only when these options break down should social welfare institutions intervene. As discussed in Chapter 3, proponents of neo-conservative and liberal ideologies favour this model.
2. *The Industrial Achievement-Performance Model of Social Policy*: This model argues that social needs should be met on the basis of merit, work performance, and productivity. Known as the *Handmaiden Model*, it is favoured by positivists (Federico, 1983) and other economic and psychological theorists who advocate incentives, effort, and reward.
3. *The Institutional Redistributive Model of Social Policy*: This model argues that social welfare should be a major, integrated institution in society, providing universal services outside the market, based on the principle of need.

Policy can emerge from these approaches only in areas of life where choices exist. Without choices, there is no policy; rather, there is a law, either natural or legislated. For example, since people cannot control the weather, societies have no policies concerning weather control. However, should science ever learn how to control weather, then societies would have to make choices about how to control the weather. Tension might arise between people who want warm sunshine and farmers who want rain (*preferential choices*). Further, controlling the weather might cause well-known ecological effects, such as sterilizing some insects or wildlife (*anticipated consequences*). Finally, controlling the weather might have detrimental effects that are not even known (*unanticipated consequences*). In this example, the choice to control weather would result in an anticipated consequence for insects and wildlife, some potential unanticipated consequences, and a decision about whether the farmer gets rain or the public gets sunshine.

Martin Rein—Value-Driven Policy The weather example shows that values and beliefs are important to decisions in social policy. The American scholar Martin Rein (1974) suggested that “social policy is, above all, concerned with choice among competing values” (p. 298). From Rein’s perspective, society consists of people holding diverse values (world views), and these people compete with one another and one another’s values in an effort to achieve maximum power. So ingrained are values in every aspect of social, economic, and public policies that many social policy theorists—such as Rein (1983), Gil (1998), and Wharf and McKenzie (2010)—warn that a major role of policy-makers is to learn how to control their own values and prejudices.

Rein suggests that values influence social policy in five major ways:

1. Values influence the definition of the purpose of the policy, especially policies dealing with “moral” decisions. An example would be a policy addressing abortion.
2. Values influence priorities by assigning greater “value” to some courses of action than to others. An economic example would be the decision to reduce the rate of inflation by increasing interest rates. This decision assigns higher value to the protection of business interests and lower value to the maintenance of employment levels.
3. Values demand change when they are formally and legally articulated. Once a position is articulated and the means to bring it about are put in place, people will assign