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Review of *Shifting the Color Line: Race and the American Welfare State*. Robert C. Lieberman. Reviewed by Jill Quadagno, Florida State University

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systems approach" in developing cultural awareness and cross-cultural competence, especially in serving immigrant populations. It is important to highlight the impact of level of acculturation and of client-worker match upon social service delivery.

In conclusion, the book offers a comprehensive literature review relevant to various human services disciplines. There are substantial changes from the earlier (2nd) edition including new and updated information. It contributes an unique ethnographic perspective useful for helping workers achieve cultural awareness and service competence.

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Robert C. Lieberman, *Shifting the Color Line: Race and the American Welfare State*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998. \$45.00 hardcover.

Ever since Gunnar Myrdal identified the dilemma created by the conflict between an ideology that emphasized liberty and equality and the reality of racial domination, social scientists have sought to understand the association between race and American politics. In *Shifting the Color Line*, Robert Lieberman adds a new chapter to this historical saga. He makes a forceful and convincing case that race has inhibited the development of a strong, unitary and centralized welfare state and that the fragmented welfare state, in turn, has reshaped the politics of race and the place of African Americans in the United States. His institutionalist thesis reflects a subtle variation on the argument initially advanced by Gosta Esping-Anderson that welfare states not only reflect existing patterns of stratification but also are themselves agents of social stratification.

In his first chapter, Lieberman explores the events that led to the creation of the Social Security Act of 1935, probing the role of race, class and region in the development of this legislation. He explains how the New Deal programs were structurally organized to sort African Americans into the locally administered welfare programs and out of the national social insurance programs. Although this chapter recounts a familiar story, it provides a crucial underpinning for his subsequent analysis of the effect of this

institutional arrangement on three key programs, Old Age Insurance, Aid to Dependent Children and Unemployment Insurance. In each case he asks whether African Americans were treated equally under programmatic structures or whether they were subject to discrimination. His answers to these questions highlight an interesting paradox about American political development.

No program has experienced a more revolutionary transformation than Old Age Insurance. When OAI was first legislated, it did not cover agricultural laborers or domestic servants, thus automatically excluding three-fifths of all black workers in the U.S. at that time. As the program matured, however, it was recast into a racially-inclusive welfare benefit. According to Lieberman, OAI's transformation was the result of its institutional structure. OAI was administered by a centralized national bureaucracy that was autonomous from local political influences. Eligibility criteria were established by federal authorities, not local politicians and welfare workers, and eligible workers received social security benefits as a statutory right. As a result, the program was able to transcend the local racial state in the South. As benefits were extended to a wider array of occupational groups, OAI automatically became more inclusive. Indeed, by the 1960s it could be described as the only color blind social program in the nation.

Aid to Dependent Children also began as a racially exclusive program but, unlike OAI, decisions about eligibility and benefit levels were left to states and local welfare authorities. This institutional design gave local politicians and bureaucrats substantial influence on the program's development. As a result, in the South African Americans failed to receive benefits in proportion to need, while in the North ADC became entwined in local patronage politics. In northern cities, Lieberman argues, the racially-biased dispersion of benefits through patronage networks created a continuing attachment among African Americans to local political institutions. The long-range consequence was a white backlash against public assistance and the isolation of African Americans from the political and economic mainstream.

Perhaps the least examined program of the American welfare state is Unemployment Insurance. Like OAI UI initially excluded agricultural workers and domestic servants, a restriction that meant that benefits were reserved for a population that was

primarily white. Because African Americans historically have had higher rates of unemployment than white workers, UI might have alleviated racial inequality. Instead, in Lieberman's view, the program exacerbated it. Structural limitations made the program incapable of protecting workers against chronic joblessness and frequent and extended periods without work. Equally important, UI has become a substitute for a national employment policy, limiting the nation's ability to address the more intractable problems of the underclass.

At times Lieberman's application of an institutionalist perspective is rather heavy-handed and unconvincing. For example, as he surely understands, AFDC's means-tested structure was only one of many complex factors that created a backlash against the program. Indeed, a number of programs targeted to the poor, such as Medicaid, have remained remarkably impermeable to budget cuts. In the case of each program, one wonders what factors, other than program structure, were responsible for its developmental trajectory. Still, Lieberman's analysis provides yet another lens from which to view the development of the American welfare state, one that can be usefully combined with alternative perspectives to provide a thorough explanation for the impact of the New Deal on racial stratification in the United States.

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Mary C. Comerio, *Disaster Hits Home: New Policy for Urban Housing Recovery*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998. \$39.96 hardcover.

It is widely recognized that a home is more than a roof over one's head. It is the center of a web of human relations. In *Disaster Hits Home: New Policy for Urban Housing Recovery*, Mary C. Comerio makes a compelling argument that housing is more than a key sector in the nation's financial infrastructure. It is fundamental to the social infrastructure of our cities. People choose housing not by price alone but also by the quality of schools, proximity to jobs, availability of transportation, and access to parks, shopping and other social amenities (health care, child care, recreation facilities, churches). Understanding the nature of urban housing stock and