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cjdseditor@uwaterloo.ca

Jameel Hampton (2016). *Disability and the welfare state in Britain: Changes in Perception and Policy 1948-79*. Bristol: Policy Press. UK. ISBN 978 1 44731 642 8

Reviewed by Fallon Burns
Paralegal, York University
fburns@yorku.ca

Jameel Hampton's book *Disability and the welfare state in Britain: Changes in Perception and Policy 1948-79* provides a tactful historical record of the history of disabled people in Britain and how they were included, alienated and isolated from participating with dignity in British society. Hampton draws on recently available archival material from several significant institutions located throughout England, including archives of political parties, local authorities, and the central government. His book is timely and thought-provoking and his criticism and discussion are a welcome and necessary contribution to the canon of disability analysis as it applies to public administration. Hampton asserts that his book "is the first to contextualize disability in the welfare state and under each government of the period 1948-79." (Hampton, p.1)

Hampton argues that despite the progressive political discourse of the 1960s, governments' claims of recognition of the plight of people with disabilities and the closely related creation of allowances and other supports for people with disabilities, these governments were deeply reluctant to depart from contributory welfare models. Consequently, many of the benefits that were created by these governments were available to only a fraction of the population in need of care services. The few who did qualify for these supplemental care funds were vulnerable to clawbacks during annual income tax periods. At their height of political acceptance of and attention to disabled people's concerns and political issues, the economic

downturns preceding neoliberalism and the rise of Thatcherism derailed the welfare state. Issues of disability were displaced by shifting government agendas.

In his engagement with the politics of disability and welfare, Hampton reviews the public administration of supporting people who are disabled from a congenital disease or chronic condition¹, showing how British law has compounded their poverty. Hampton discusses the prominent and nuanced political and cultural assumptions that produced a hierarchy of subaltern figures. This hierarchy caused people with disabilities to be denied adequate attention from legislatures and bureaucrats in favour of responding to the issues of other demographics. Hampton highlights how the not-for-profit advocacy association the Disablement Income Group (DIG) propelled people with disabilities into the sphere of public debate by providing compelling public education campaigns, providing services to people with disabilities and, most importantly, acting as a sophisticated lobbying body of the central and regional governments. Notably, DIG's research projects created the data relied upon by the Ministry of Social Services.

Throughout the book, Hampton artfully introduces many complex issues addressing the host of criteria that the UK has applied to understand a person as *a person with disabilities*. These qualifiers are seemingly intuitive, but Hampton exposes their arbitrariness and draws parallels between the categories of the deserving and undeserving poor and the deserving and undeserving disabled person. Hampton applies useful intersectional analysis to understand how applicants of disability services were deemed “worthy” based on their gender, their age and whether they have dependents. He also examines how disability, considered along with moral blameworthiness, justified the exclusion of some bodies from necessary financial and service support.

¹ Rather than a person injured at work or at war

What is most troubling, as Hampton notes, is that following deinstitutionalization in the 1950s, disabled people saw little expansion in financial benefits, creating demands on families, particularly homemakers, as caregivers for their disabled relatives. This shift towards mandated community care and services saw an increase in independence for disabled people, but limited access to housing, mobility, and finances sustained a lack of agency and control over their lives. Moreover, depending on an individual's geographical location, the local funds or services available to them differed tremendously. The effect of providing inadequate care services while providing subsistence funds placed significant pressure on people with disabilities to find paid work. Indeed, Hampton traces instances where public administration infrastructure favoured the teaching of working skills and careers to people with disabilities rather than providing adequate funds to assist and empower people with disabilities to better participate in their community.

In keeping with the theme of participation in the community, Hampton explores the issue of social citizenship in depth, noting the use of government funds to provide social services was not conceptualized as a tenet of social citizenship in Britain until the 1960s. Instead, the "charity model" of providing support to individuals with disabilities dominated the public administration dominated. Distributing monetary or care support through private agencies, churches, interest groups and local, regional government entrenched the stigma faced by people with disabilities. Rights-based social security benefits remained associated with poor law assumptions and motivations which were devoid of dignity; all other pensions or potential sources of income relied on the contributory principle as eligibility thresholds.

Hampton's vast and thorough primary research fixes our perspective in the 1940s and 1950s as governments voted not to increase financial support for disabled people. He demonstrates, using primary documents, the public tactics that governments used to continue to

exclude people with disabilities from other social benefits. Key trends persist; governments refused to depart from what Hampton calls a “contributory principle” meaning many disabled people were excluded from different social benefits for not working enough years or not contributing enough to the proverbial pot to be eligible. In essence, government spending on people with disabilities decreased following the closure of institutions; the dollars previously spent on institution budgets were not necessarily redirected to community care service providers to assist people with disabilities. Finally, Hampton compellingly illustrates how people with disabilities remained impoverished due to clawbacks of their support payments against their social insurance income. Hampton explains how an average member of the public reading the newspapers would learn about the different disability allowances and see these incomes as appealing or even generous, unaware of the clawbacks that represented willful enforcement of poverty.

Jameel Hampton’s book introduces and addresses many complicated questions about the challenges and changes that arose during the post-war period. Throughout his discussion of the archival documents and historical events, Hampton integrates longstanding questions in the social sciences about the function and status of workers and the value of unpaid, gendered care work. Coupled with his useful glossary, Hampton provides delightful little pockets of engaging references to critical theory including a critical feminist analysis of the care work of homemakers in the era of deinstitutionalization.

The book is thoughtful, it is considerate to readers across the political spectrum, and it contributes to knowledge about disabled people. Fundamentally, Jameel Hampton’s text contemplates and criticizes the nature of politics within a liberal democracy. Democracy requires

constant maintenance and protection and support from the administration of justice to guard our civil rights; Hampton's book prompts us to question our own governments and administration.