Risk and Citizenship: Key Issues in Welfare

edited by Rosalind Edwards and Judith Glover

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Reviewed by Ian Horwood

This book starts by stating that contemporary welfare provision poses serious challenges for social policy. Large and rapid changes are said to be taking place in the way we live, work and relate to each other, characterised by anxiety and insecurity.

The book contains a collection of short papers by leading analysts addressing what are described as 'key questions' related to welfare, citizenship and risk, including: the nature of insecurity and social protection; the balance between inequality and egalitarianism; the changing relationship between government and citizens; the parameters of citizenship; and the impact of risk assessment and risk management.

Without exception, the papers are erudite and well researched. First impressions gained from simply looking at the index of contents might be that many of the papers have little relevance to risk and its management. However, the papers repay careful reading as the link between risk, its management and citizenship soon becomes clear. The fact that the book is a collection of short papers turns something which has the potential to be quite heavy going into something which can be absorbed and pondered on in smaller chunks. Clearly, the papers would be of most relevance to those involved in welfare and citizenship issues. On the other hand, as they discuss the changing nature of citizenship and its potential impact on our society they should also be of interest to those involved in the future development of organisations such as local authorities and central government departments, who are in the business of providing community care, welfare and other services to citizens. Altogether a book that should provide students, practitioners and policy makers with some thought-provoking reading.

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