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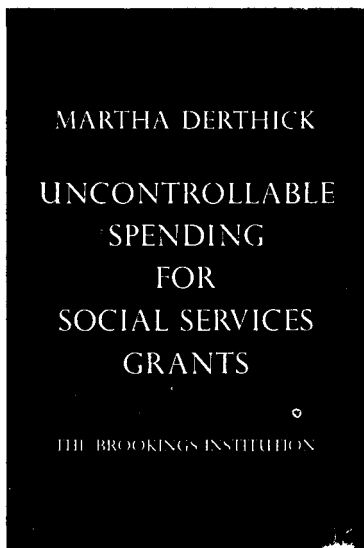
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The Power Lovers. Myra MacPherson. Putnam.

Wildly Out of Control

by Walter Shapiro

There is a certain look and feel to the books which bear the imprimatur of the Brookings Institution, Washington's most prestigious research center. Their unadorned covers and their unwieldy titles presage a terribly detailed analysis of a narrow aspect of economics or public policy. Despite Charles Colson's alleged interest in bombing the building, Brookings seems the least likely place in Washington to arouse a passionate response.

That's why it is so surprising to discover that the best political book of 1975 was a Brookings study. With its plain brown cover and off-putting title, Martha Derthick's *Uncontrollable Spending for Social Services Grants* appears to be the kind of Brookings report which will be little noticed by anyone but graduate students in public administration. Such are the dangers of deceptive packaging. In 115 tightly written pages, Martha Derthick has managed to produce the most lucid analysis of the internal workings of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare since the publication of Daniel

Moynihan's *The Politics of a Guaranteed Income* in 1972. Such a detailed account of the inner-workings of a federal program is a rare accomplishment. But if we are going to reform government, we will need more analyses like Derthick's which tell us what government is actually doing.

Derthick tells the story of an expensive HEW program gone wildly out of control. Given the complexity of the subject, it is difficult to convey all the details without resorting to oversimplification. Yet the story should be disseminated as widely as possible because it illustrates the difficulties that the next President—no matter who he is—will face in attempting to tame the HEW bureaucracy.

Uncontrollable Spending is a history of the social services component of the welfare program, with a particular emphasis on the critical period between 1969 and 1972. The program in question had its genesis in 1962, during the optimistic days of the Kennedy Administration, when it was a cardinal principle of liberal faith that if you hired enough social workers to provide services to the poor, it would somehow reduce the

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