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# Book Reviews

G. Delanty and C. Rumford, *Re-thinking Europe: Social Theory and the Implications of Europeanization*, Routledge, London, 2005, 232 pp., £19.99 pbk.
doi:10.1017/S0047279406210547

The main thesis of this book is that, to understand Europeanisation, we need a social theory. Only by understanding social transformation, and the way in which society needs to be reconceptualised in the light of social transformation, can we see that Europeanisation is not to be equated with the construction of European Union institutions. As Delanty and Rumford write towards the end of the book: 'From this perspective it makes great sense to study Europe, not in terms of integration, but in terms of the social transformations which have a much wider and more profound impact; indeed they form the context for the shaping of European polity-building' (p. 184).

This reference to polity-building points towards what was, to my mind, the most interesting chapter of the book, in which Delanty and Rumford discuss the idea of Europe as a polity. They take up Beck's account of a polity as 'the institutional construction of the political community with which society organises itself' (cited at p. 158). In that same chapter they make a link between this notion of polity as the self-organisation of society and the so-called 'world polity thesis' which in turn can be compared to the notion of 'international society' found in the English School of international relations. Common to all these approaches is the view that the notion of society is not to be conceived in terms of territorially bounded units but rather that social relations exist on a transnational scale from which some ordering principle, whether in the form of international norms or a polity, emerges.

Delanty and Rumford put alongside this thesis the claim that reflexive modernity has replaced modernity, so that in place of a class politics focused on the nation-state aligned with a faith in scientific progress, modernity should be conceived as plural and multiple, with the notion of the 'risk society' replacing belief in scientific progress (pp. 186–7). From this perspective the pluralisation of modernity can be equated with the decentring of Europe in the world, but in a world with the global culture of human rights. To be European is thus to be cosmopolitan.

Though a provocative thesis, this account of Europeanisation is problematic in a number of ways. Consider the notion of a polity as the institutional construction by which a society organises itself. If this is to be taken as something more than a metaphor, then there will need to be an account of the processes involved in that construction. But any account of those processes makes the link between reflexive modernity and polity construction very odd historically. Europe's would-be polity emerged during the high point of modernism in the 1950s. Moreover, it had been preceded in the twentieth century by many schemes of European unification, none of which was successful. To be sure, polity construction accelerated during the 1980s, when governments learnt some of their limits in a period of mobile capital, and EU enlargement can be taken as some form of polity construction. But in each case we are dealing with the effects of political strategies and choices.

This neglect of the political element of polity construction helps explain, I think, why the chapter on the European social model is one of the least satisfactory in the book. Delanty and Rumford dismiss the view that the difficulty that the European social model faces is that with the creation of the single market, economic policy is now conducted at a supra-national level, whereas social policies remain national responsibilities (p. 110). Their argument here is less than satisfactory, and consists simply of agreeing with some advocates of the European social model that the model is not a barrier to economic policy. Perhaps there is an ultimate compatibility between social protection and high economic growth. But it would be difficult to understand the problems the French and German governments have encountered in recent years with the Commission over their budget deficits or the fears of those who voted in France and the Netherlands against the ratification of the constitution, without also understanding that the dislocation between the level on which economic policy is conducted and the level on which social policy is conducted is causing problems. To displace the European social model merely into the equivalent of the learning society, as Delanty and Rumford do, is to neglect a crucial political and social dynamic.

In short, a social theory of Europeanisation may be necessary, but it will not be sufficient. And a social theory in which the idea of plurality plays such a big role ought also to recognise power and political struggle.

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H. Obinger, S. Leibfried and F. G. Castles (eds), *Federalism and the Welfare State: New World and European Experiences*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2005, 380 pp., £19.99 pbk.
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Issues related to welfare state management have, over the last few years, started to post increasingly significant challenges to territorial politics in most of those larger countries – federations or not – which take pride in looking back at a sound history of welfare provision over several decades. Past achievements aside, however, in more recent times financial constraints in the public sector, major demographic shifts, and new developments in territorial governance have brought welfare matters firmly into the realm of territorial politics – particularly in federal countries. The main aim of this book is to investigate to what extent modern federalism and welfare state retrenchment are complementing or contradicting each other.

The introduction, by the editors, elaborates on two well-established basic understandings. Firstly, the welfare state has – for some time now – left its supposed 'golden age' (p. 5) of expansion and proliferation of provisions, financed by the 'old politics' of 'tax and spend', and has entered a new phase of conservation and rearguard action, responding to the increasingly evident financial constraints by a 'new politics' of 'blame avoidance for cutbacks'. Secondly, federalism is not a homogenous concept. There is a great variety of approaches to federalism, not only in constitutional and institutional terms but also in terms of established practice in the management of public policies such as welfare provision. The subsequent country studies are designed to investigate the links (and interferences) between these two phenomena.

The first main empirical part, *New World experiences*, deals with Australia, Canada and the United States. The Australian chapter (Francis G. Castles and John Uhr) notes that the Australian welfare state was slow off the mark to begin with, 'old politics' reaching its climax not until the 1970s, because federally collected taxes were slow in reaching the service providers in the states. Thus, initially federal institutions seemed to hinder the development of the welfare

state. However, recently two federal institutions, the Senate and the High Court, have developed into staunch institutional defenders of welfare provisions. By contrast, the Canadian case (Keith Banting) is an example of federal-level welfare promotion as a means of nation-building in the face of apparently lack of solidarity among the various communities – not exclusively a problem of Quebec. If lack of solidarity between communities was seen as a problem in the Canadian case, the USA (Kenneth Finegold) clearly started from an even weaker base, as the whole point of federalism was to promote economic and social freedom (and thus diversity), as far as possible unencumbered by government interference. However, while in the USA the concept of welfare never amounted to a comprehensive welfare *state*, key economic and social crisis points acted as catalysts for a steady increase in federal programmes to combat specific social problems. At present, no administration, regardless of political preferences, can ignore or off-load the task of federal welfare management altogether.

The second main empirical part, *European experiences*, investigates the cases of Austria, Germany and Switzerland. The European cases differ significantly from the non- European ones insofar as, at least in Germany and Austria, the welfare state tradition is longer than the federal one. The Austrian case (Herbert Obinger) can be regarded as the classic centralist model, with the welfare state being shaped by social movements rather than territorial interests, and implemented in a centrally managed fashion in line with party-political government preferences. The system went through the (for Europe) usual cycle of early twentieth-century infancy, massive post-World War II expansion, and late twentieth-century funding crisis – always with the federal government acting as the motor, not the breaks. To a lesser extent, the same is true in Germany (Philip Manow), with the added ingredient – in both the Weimar Republic and the present FRG – of strong territorial influence on federal welfare legislation through the 2nd chamber of Parliament (*Reichsrat* and *Bundesrat*, respectively). This influence, however, has by and large served to promote policy homogeneity rather than diversity. The Swiss chapter (Herbert Obinger, Klaus Armingeon, Giuliano Bonoli and Fabio Bertozzi) emphasises the co-operative nature of welfare policy making, despite the (initial) lack of formal federal government powers in this field. However, successful welfare experiments in the Cantons serving as federal role models, plus a series of national referenda in favour of welfare state harmonisation, have left modern Switzerland with much less welfare diversity than theory would lead one to expect.

The concluding chapter, again by the editors, reinforces the book's overall message that the 'new politics' of welfare retrenchment has arrived in all the federal countries investigated. Perhaps more tentatively, the reader is also left with the impression – though the authors refrain from saying so explicitly – that in times of economic problems federal welfare regimes 'revert to type': those with a longer tradition of central steering (Germany, Austria) seek common solutions for all territorial units, while greater territorial divergence is more accepted (though not usually actively promoted) in countries with a history of more diverse policy arrangements.

The main overall strength of the book lies in its thorough historical approach, investigating not only the present but also the past of welfare provision in the federal countries under investigation. This puts the present apparent 'crisis' into a broader perspective. Large sections of the book are, of necessity, essentially descriptive. Nevertheless, many of the findings confirm the validity of existing models of welfare state development, and the authors successfully started to link these to federal institution building, and to territorial management issues. This book, laying essential groundwork, can be regarded as a starting point – and an invitation – to further investigate many of the issues addressed, from social policy perspectives as well as from political and legal perspectives.

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I. Shaw and K. Kauppinen, *Constructions of Health and Illness: European Perspectives*, Abingdon, Ashgate, 2004, 143 pp., £45.00 hbk.
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Derived from the European Sociological Association's conference in Helsinki 2001, this edited volume seeks to address the 'constructionist debate' within the sociology of health and illness, arguably one of the most important discourses within the subject. Outlining aspects of health, illness and medical practice within a small range of European countries, the collection of nine papers explores the way in which definitions and constructions of health come about at different levels. Chapters 1 and 2 provide an examination of doctors thinking and beliefs and the way in which they are able to influence which issues get on to the public medical agenda. Chapters 3 to 6 each present accounts of lay beliefs about disease, illustrating how the 'common sense' notions of people in society shape their interaction with medicine and account for their own distress. Chapters 7 and 8 develop this theme by focusing on how lay people can operationalise their understandings into resistance and political pressure. Finally, Chapter 9 discusses the notion of 'medicalisation' and the way in which medicine comes to make claim over areas previously thought of as 'natural'.

The text has several useful features. It is highly readable with a wealth of diverse and interesting material. Each of the (short) case study chapters provides detailed and rich descriptive accounts of their topics, some, such as the piece by Elianne Riska on the work of pathologists, demonstrating the powerful contribution good qualitative research and writing can make to our understanding of complex phenomena. Given the shortage of comparative medical sociology and health policy texts, the 'international' nature of sections of this volume is particularly welcome – with material spanning Finland, Ireland, Russia and different ethnic populations within the UK.

However, the volume does have a number of distinct limitations. Most fundamentally it does not quite fulfil either of its stated intentions, that is of providing comparative analysis or of contributing to the 'constructionist debate'. Apart from one explicitly comparative chapter by Hannele Palosou, which nicely portrays the methodological challenges of developing survey instruments for cross-cultural research, none of the other papers is placed in an explicitly comparative framework. There is no attempt either within or across papers to use the (albeit limited number of) individual country analyses to strengthen our understanding of the culturally specific way in which attitudes and behaviours are formed – or even to identify and explore the similarities and differences in health issues between countries. Even if explicit 'typologising' and hypothesis testing are not the desired intention, the volume could have done much more to contextualise its descriptive case studies. Neither does the volume really add much to the development of constructionist theory or the conceptual tools needed for its study. None of the papers explicitly places their accounts within a constructivist framework or engages with the current key debates. Again much more could have been done with the data to explain and analyse rather than merely describe.

Part of the problem is that the volume suffers from the lack of solid introductory or concluding chapters, which provide any systematic discussion of the findings from the individual studies. There is no ending chapter that draws any definite conclusion or relates the various case studies to a broader discussion of the dynamics that underlie the social nature of belief systems or health behaviour. Equally, the introductory chapter which might have been used to set up both the comparative and theoretical framework is extremely short and inadequate. Subsequently the various papers read as a series of disparate and loosely connected essays rather than an integrated text.

Despite these (quite fundamental) criticisms, this is still an enjoyable and highly readable collection of papers, which will be useful to a range of audiences interested in social research that explores beliefs, knowledge and experience of health and health care.

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A. Walker and C. Wong (eds), *East Asian Welfare Regimes in Transition: From Confucianism to Globalisation*, The Policy Press, Bristol, 2005, 235 pp., £24.99 pbk.
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*East Asian Welfare Regimes in Transition: From Confucianism to Globalisation* is a timely publication providing the critical treatise of the state of welfare in East Asian countries with a Confucian heritage. Confucianism is likened to conservative corporatism (Jones, 1993) with the state being run like an extended family. These states are known to emphasise education along with the values of diligence and responsibility to the community.

While the term 'welfare state' refers to the provision of universal welfare and social protection for its citizens by the government, 'welfare regime', coined by Esping-Anderson (1990), is a more fluid term indicating state provisions of health, education, employment and retirement benefits or income security. The role of globalisation in the development of welfarism has been highlighted by many scholars (Mishra, 1999; Midgley, 1997; Tan and Rowlands, 2004).

This book starts with the charge that the 'welfare state' conception is a Western construction (p. 4) and that East Asian economies often shy away from the negative connotation associated with 'welfare.' In opposing welfare, many Asian governments prefer 'workfare', which values industry and does not erode the incentive to contribute to society.

Most East Asian States are driven on the one hand by economic imperatives and on the other the need to provide up-market education and training essential for the development of human capital, which in turn fosters economic competitiveness. The key to enhancing social wellbeing for these nations is in the development of work opportunities and increasing income through raising wages.

Wilensky's (1975) work on welfare spending shows that the main determinants of spending are the age of the system and the structure of the population. This is particularly true in developing or recently developed states, and is considered in this book by looking at case studies of six countries: China, Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore.

The first case study chapter (Chapter 3) focuses on the reforms in post-Moaist China, highlighting changes in policy relating to pensions, unemployment and health care. These along with better services, e.g. for disabled people, are argued to have contributed to China's progress in human development.

The next two chapters focus on Hong Kong. They reinforce the pillars of social policy in this Special Administrative State of China – that of 'positive non intervention (by the state) and familistic residualism' (p. 13), with cuts in welfare expenditure resulting from economic crisis (which has since rebounded) appearing to lead to a strengthening of economic supremacy.

Turning to Japan, enterprise welfare is known to supplement the family-based informal welfare of Japanese society. The chapter's author, Makoton Kono, notes a shift from conservatism to neo liberalism for Japan and, together with this, a change in policy goals towards a pro-market economy with a residual welfare system.

Taiwan, like other Asian economies emphasises education and the development of health insurance and a pension system. Their approach to welfare tends towards social insurance with minimum welfare provision.

According to Ahn and Lee (pp. 165ff), the export-oriented economy of South Korea has recently developed a welfare state framework as a 'stop gap' to appease the working class, but the survival of this approach is questionable. In the face of the regulations imposed by the ruling government, the system can be termed as one which emphasises selectivity (p. 15).

Singapore's model of welfare is based on political economy – a pragmatic approach which avoids dependency on the state for social provisions and strengthens the informal system and civil society or the voluntary welfare organisations. The government, while relying on community partnerships for meeting welfare needs, concentrates on enhancing the competitive edge through training and education. The development of the Central Provident Fund as an instrument for social policy is notable in providing for housing, education, income upon retirement, medical expenses and insurance.

Overall, Confucianism as a philosophy invokes the obligation of care for immediate family members and extends it to the greater family of the state. The formula of thrift, and consequently high savings, plus diligence and minimal government intervention (see Chapters 2, 10) seemed to have worked for phenomenal growth in these East Asian states. The authors argue then that welfare ideology in these states are not western conceptions but, along with Confucian concepts, comprise a combination of family, market and the third sector, supplemented with governmental actions as when the need arises.

There is an attempt to include a comparative approach to welfare in the final chapter. However, without a clear systematic framework for analysis, the book lacks a binding integrative thread. The complexities of these East Asian societies, coupled with the forces of globalisation and change, make it difficult to pin point the dynamic concept of welfare in Asia or, for that matter, anywhere in the world.

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T. Brandsen, *Quasi-Market Governance: An Anatomy of Innovation*, Lemma Publishers, Utrecht, 2004, 224 pp., £20.50 pbk.
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Quasi-markets should be familiar to most, if not all, readers of the *Journal of Social Policy*. Quasi-markets are an attempt to bring the benefits of competition and market allocation into the public sector whilst maintaining minimum service or quality standards. As Brandsen concludes, this is the description of quasi-markets – it is also their paradox. Quasi-markets are places of exchange in which market values (efficiency and choice) are tied to public values (responsiveness, equity) in ways that differentiate them from 'real' markets. These differences are reflected in two fundamental elements: the state decentralises financial risk to the providers of services (impelling providers to behave differently than they would within a hierarchy); and

there is strict regulation of supply and demand (through budgets, competition rules, and formal relationships or structures).

The first part of this book sets out a theoretical review of quasi markets: where they come from and how they can be understood. Brandsen's approach is to take the analysis of quasi-markets on from that of Bartlett and LeGrand (1993) and Bartlett *et al.* (1998). He applies three theoretical perspectives to a field previously 'dominated by the transaction cost' literature'. These perspectives are: resource dependence (actors aim to reduce dependence on others), cognitive institutional theory (innovation can be individual or collective, and it can be spread by dissemination of co-operation) and that of context (product characteristics, inter-organisational relationships, regulation and social structures). Occasionally there are gaps, for example Brandsen alleges failings of the 'transaction cost' literature, but in doing so fails to refer to the work of Oliver Williamson (1985, 1996). Brandsen constructs a 'theoretical toolkit' based on the argument that actors in quasi-market organisations are faced with uncertainty. At the start of a quasi-market there is uncertainty about where resources will come from and about the rules of the game that will provide them.

Brandsen tests his toolkit against the experience of the social housing market in the Netherlands. Social housing comprises 36 per cent of the Dutch housing stock – since 1997 *all* of it has been provided by social landlords, 'foundations', working in a quasi-market.

The case studies both support and test the theoretical toolkit. They highlight the different pressures and influences on actors during the 'introductory phase' of the quasi-market. Brandsen finds that in this early stage of high uncertainty the providers (small, local, bureaucratic) have to reconstruct themselves to work in the new environment. This reconstruction process is aided by pre-existing networks that enable actors (and their organisations) to learn and innovate co-operatively. This collective action is *necessary* for the quasi-market to work, but leaves it vulnerable to action that undermines competition.

The case studies test the theoretical toolkit and allow Brandsen to state four conditions for an 'effective quasi-market'. These are: a competitive market structure, effective intervention, voice and 'good preparation'.

The competitive market structure is necessary – but not without problems. These include questions about how performance is measured in a quasi-market and the steps that purchasers (both individual and institutional) take to avoid being taken advantage of. Alternatively, purchasers revert to trust mechanisms of 'soft contracting' or they employ 'people like us' (i.e. 'anti-competitive' action). The quasi-market is also subject to problems in the extent to which competition is *actually* possible: can poor performance lead to sanction; can customers easily transfer to other providers? Brandsen suggests that both his own case studies, and evidence from other quasi-markets, suggest that competition is, at best 'dampened'. The logic of this is that if competition cannot be made possible then the quasi-market should be abandoned. And if the quasi-market is operating, there still needs to be a 'watchful eye' (a regulatory mechanism) looking for harmful practices.

Intervention to adjust the market has itself to be handled carefully. Brandsen differentiates between intervention to protect the market and intervention to protect people. Too much intervention – or intervention too late – questions the legitimacy of market and competition mechanisms. Brandsen suggests that policy makers should restrain from 'intervention at will'. It should be clear in the rules of the game when and how there will be intervention.

As quasi-markets are political constructs there must be a role for 'voice'. Brandsen makes the case for voice as a supplement to competition mechanisms – because of the political and moral issues and choices that arise in quasi-markets. An effective quasi-market has to be designed with knowledge about the products/services to be exchanged, appropriate market and organisational structures and existing social structures and networks.

In summary then, *Quasi-Market Governance* is a valuable addition to our understanding of the initiation and implementation of new forms of inter-organisational relationships. It provides theoretically based, and empirically tested, guidance that can be used to design, or test, quasi-markets.

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H. Hendrick (ed.), *Child Welfare and Social Policy: An Essential Reader*, The Policy Press, Bristol, 2005, 558 pp., £25.00 pbk.
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This reader is a substantial collection, drawing together extracts from across the broad field of 'child welfare and social policy' to provide a comprehensive overview of key concepts, debates and authors and as such it should prove an invaluable resource for students, academics and professionals. It is accessible, thorough and informative and provides a unique collection exploring historical, current and emergent debates.

Social policy for children and families is currently undergoing a series of considerable changes in England, following from the *Every Child Matters* Green Paper and subsequent Children's Bill (2004) but also through policy and legislation concerning crime, anti-social behaviour and 'respect', health and education. Government rhetoric around 'participation' and 'involvement', particularly of the most disadvantaged in our communities, and 'partnerships' provides themes and models of working to achieve outcomes for children. Reviews of policy can only ever take us to the time they were published (and in actuality quite some time before); although Hendrick's collection is UK-centric, it aims to equip the reader with the knowledge and tools to critique and engage with policy development and practice.

The sheer breadth of this collection is one key to its success, with extracts from across a range of sources and with children and children's experiences at their centre. Hendrick provides discussion for the reader around each of the sections with clear and considered analysis and overview of the themes presented by the assembled contributions. The collection successfully provides a sociological analysis alongside a more policy-centred approach, and thus conceptual and theoretical considerations are drawn together with applied and historical ones. The reader is organised to tell a story of child welfare and social policy from the past, through the present, to the future, but the organisation of the content makes it possible for each contribution to be read apart from the others and each is strong in itself. There are four sections that organise the extracts. Firstly, a historical overview takes us back to the Victorian age, with Christine Piper providing this essential backdrop; the second chapter here is Hendrick's own and takes us from this crucial period through to the present day and where his qualities as a historian of social policy are shown by this succinct yet authoritative review.

The second section explores the ways in which children and childhood have been conceptualised within welfare and the formation of social policy. This is the first of two main sections and has a sociological flavour, containing contributions considering amongst others: the links between morality about, and effective action for, children (Michael King); 'risk' in child welfare (Nigel Parton); critiques of 'social capital' and how this might relate to children and childhood (Virginia Murrow); and the importance of race and culture in understanding the experiences of children from ethnic minority communities (Kwame Owusu-Bempah). The third section addresses specific policies or policy arena's, drawing on research from across social policy and often addressing areas at the forefront of policy and service analysis. These include: children's rights (Jeremy Roche); the move towards punitive sanctions within and around the criminal justice system (Barry Goldson); health (Malcolm Hill and Kay Tisdall); ethnicity (Lucinda Platt); education and the narrowing links that tie it to the economy (Sally Tomlinson); and the role of 'daycare' (Penelope Leach).

The final, shorter, section has two chapters that look to the future by identifying current trends as indicators of possible future developments. Ruth Lister discusses the conceptualisation of children within an emergent 'social investment' paradigm, where children are seen as workers of the future, while her historical analysis provides a link back to the early chapters. The final extract builds upon this theme, as Alan Prout discusses the paradox within 'late modernity' of increased recognition of children as social actors (as theme of the extracts throughout the reader) alongside social policies and programmes that extended control, surveillance and regulation.

A final discussion by Hendrick brings the themes of the collection together and explores and reflects upon the move to a more theoretical and political approach to thinking about child welfare, which this collection draws together. This reader provides a comprehensive overview from the last ten years of writing and thinking about child welfare in the UK. It is a thought-provoking and considered collection.

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P. Malpass (2005), *Housing and the Welfare State: The Development of Housing Policy in Britain*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 241 pp., £19.99 pbk.
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There can be little doubt that Peter Malpass is as much a housing policy historian as he is an academic analyst of housing policy. This is clearly reflected, for example, in his long-running co-authored (with Alan Murie) housing textbook: *Housing Policy and Practice* (currently in its fifth edition) and the more recent singularly authored book: *Housing Associations and Housing Policy: A Historical* (Malpass, 2000). In many ways, this new volume may be viewed as an ambitious sequel to *Housing Policy and Practice*. *Housing and the Welfare State* stands apart from the former book in the sense that Malpass pours over the evolution of British housing policy and its relationship with welfarism through a more critically analytical lens. As to the ideological tone of this new work, it would seem, to me at least, that it is a 'leftist' critique of British housing policy. Thankfully, however, the analysis is more pragmatic and realistic than dogmatic and idealistic. Saying that, this book cannot – should not – be (mis)read as a 'third way' analysis. If anything, I came away with the feeling that the overall sentiment was a Fabianistic one!

Re-examining my own copy of *Housing Policy and Practice* (3rd edition) (Malpass and Murie, 1990), which I have had since my postgraduate planning days, it was immediately clear

to see some similarities in content structure and general focus with Malpass' new book. A stand out message in this most recent work is that '[t]he housing–welfare state relationship must ... be understood as dynamic (p. 1). Whilst dynamism is acknowledged as a facet of housing and welfare policy, there is both an implicit and explicit resistance throughout this book to accept that some of the paths (e.g. home ownership and stock transfers) housing policy has gone down had to be taken because the situation was so dire that what was seemingly unpalatable at the time, whether it be 1979–1997 or 1997 to the present, had to be embraced. Of course, these new policy paths have had unintended consequences and created new policy problems. But, it would be naïve to think that problems such as residualisation, social exclusion and the underclass would never have materialised or could be solved if governments had continued to pursue an overly welfarist approach. Such problems have always been with us, albeit under monikers and in spite of 60 years of formal welfare policy. As commentators such as Lawrence Mead in the USA and Peter Saunders, from the Centre for Independent Studies, in Australia would argue, the welfare state of yesteryear was set up under very different social and economic circumstances than today and it was meant to provide temporary support to those affected by economic (and social) downturns. The rise of increasing welfare dependency amongst sections of those already in long-term unemployment and its relative attractiveness to those in low-skilled and low-paid jobs means that it is ultimately unsustainable (Saunders, 2004). Consequently, reform of welfare and housing policy was to be expected, necessary even.

Another major theme that runs through this book is the lamenting of traditional social housing (i.e. housing owned and controlled by local government), which has been replaced by new forms of individualised and institutionalised managerialism. Privatisation, through the right-to-buy policy, and quasi-privatisation, through stock transfers to registered social landlords, of social housing represents the slow euthanasia of social housing and the welfare state for Malpass; a point that he makes quite forcefully in Chapter 10 ('The new organization of social housing'):

> the analysis presented here is that although local authorities continue to exist, and although government speaks piously of modernization and democratic renewal, in practice local government has a rapidly diminishing role in relation to social housing. The model of accountability through local democratic processes has been abandoned in favour of direct accountability to service users on the one hand and to central government (or its agents) on the other. (p. 206)

I could not help feeling that Malpass seemed to be harking for, at least, a moratorium on the diminution of social housing and, at most, some kind of return to the halcyon days of mass public housing. He actually stops short of expressing explicitly whether the new forms of housing managerialism are better or worse than what they have replaced by stating that this 'is not a question to be answered here' (p. 206). This lack of follow-through was disappointing. I was expecting him to come down firmly on one side of the fence on this matter. I suppose he will turn his attention to this question in the near future if he has not already done so elsewhere.

In this book, Peter Malpass has provided us with a detailed dissection of the historical evolution of housing policy and the welfare state in Britain. As the 'sequel' to *Housing Policy and Practice*, he has stuck to a tried and tested formula. Personally, I wish that he had been a bit more explicit as to his ideological standpoint and committed himself to taking sides on what he considers to be 'good' and 'bad' policy decisions over the period he considers. Despite this criticism, Malpass demonstrates that he has an uncanny knack of being able to unpack things and explain them in a straightforward and understandable manner. As such, this book is

very accessible and will undoubtedly find its way on to the core reading lists of undergraduate housing studies and social policy degree programmes across the UK. It will be very interesting to see if this sequel grosses (i.e. makes it to a 5th edition) as much as its predecessor.

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S. Lace (ed.) (2005), *The Glass Consumer: Life in a Surveillance Society*, Policy Press, Bristol, 259 pp., £12.99 pbk.
doi:10.1017/S0047279406280541

'We are all "glass consumers", says Susanne Lace; '. . . others know so much about us, they can almost see through us'. The reason given for this state of affairs is that today our lives are unavoidably woven into the 'personal information economy' (PIE) such that all our experiences and choices as consumers are affected. Yet the processes through which this occurs are little understood, not least because they are well out of the public eye. Lace continues, it is in the 'offices of public and private sector organizations, where our personal information is relentlessly processed, our worth or risk abstracted from our profiles, that our opportunities in the future will be determined' (pp. 1–2). And, one might add, the same forces are shaping the contours of an emerging socio-economic class system relating to the PIE that has yet to be at all adequately analysed.

This welcome book sets out admirably an appropriate framework for the analytical and policy issues, starting with Lace's introduction. The material is organised into four sections: 'orientations', 'contexts', 'case-studies' and, finally, the 'personal information agenda of the NCC (National Consumer Council)' – under whose auspices this book appears. The orientations are at once economic, legal and technical; the contexts are public sector personal data handling and private sector marketing; and the case studies have to do with the use (and abuse) of personal data in credit and insurance agencies, on the one hand, and in health care services (the National Health Service), on the other. The new agenda for dealing appropriately with personal data carries through from the findings of earlier sections and completes the argument.

Perri 6 likens the work of geo-demographic profiling companies to the 'energy giants', the oil companies of the twentieth century, although he also stresses the role of state agencies such as the census in enabling some basic aspects of these. He rightly argues, however, that current data protection or individual information privacy concerns hardly address the issues raised by the personal information economy, which are above all the uneven distribution of life chances in the consumer marketplace. And he also insists that these outcomes are less actuarial unfairness as the rigidity and unforgiving character of the meritocracy thus created (a theme elaborated in later chapters). The problems are deepened, too, by the trans-nationalisation of consumer markets, thus calling for new forms of action and solidarity beyond the present nationally based consumer groups.

Charles Raab underscores these points – the inadequacy of 'privacy' concerns and the internationalising of personal data – in his helpful summary analysis of relevant legal remedies.

He is far from sanguine about the prospects, either, suggesting that future responses to personal data handling will have to be far more aware of actual processes and sensitive to issues of common cause and common definitions of the problem than is currently the case. As he says: 'the globalization of flows of personal data in the era of internet commerce, employee mobility and movements if immigrants and asylum-seekers makes it difficult for single states to regulate transactions. . .' and protect their citizens – especially in the case of online and multinational transactions (p. 63).

In a chapter on the 'data-informed marketing model', Martin Evans adds to the comments made by Perri 6 by questioning the nature of 'relationships' in Customer Relationship Marketing (CRM) and suggesting that the erosion of trust could become a more urgent issue. 'Permission marketing' should be taken much more seriously, he insists, and companies should go beyond legal and voluntary limits currently in place. This is especially true in the light of the extensive data-sharing between organisations (mainly in the public sector) discussed by Christine Bellamy, Perri 6 and Charles Raab in the following chapter. And both these treatments cast doubt on the extent to which privacy-enhancing technologies, advocated by John Borking in Chapter 3, could ever really mitigate the problems raised by CRM and personal data-sharing within large organisations. While Borking 'strongly believes' that 'owners and controllers of information systems do have a moral obligation to protect consumers and citizens', this refers only to 'privacy intrusion', which is unlikely to touch the real social and economic divisiveness of the personal information economy discussed in other chapters.

In the case-study chapters, Harriet Hall looks at how unfair outcomes may be controlled in credit and insurance situations, and Jonathan Montgomery questions how far 'patient interests' are rising (or demising) in the NHS. While discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, disability, raw postcode data and (possibly) genetic data is prohibited, says Hall, issues of fairness still loom large in both private a public contexts. In the NHS, on the other hand, Montgomery hints that individual patient needs are becoming the main focus within the new 'integrated records system' but that there is some way to go before one might be confident about this. The convenience of health professionals that has hitherto dominated the system is, he says, certainly less marked.

None of these chapters is naïve about the new PIE, but, equally, none is gratuitously negative about new technologies or new systems for personal data handling. Within the overall rationale of the book, the policy goals are clearly articulated. In Lace's final chapter these are set out programmatically in terms of shifting to risk-based analysis and information policy, on the assumption that, if the PIE is to be democratised, attention must be paid to 'principles of social justice and distributional fairness, quality of life and the notion that privacy in particular can be socially beneficial' (p. 211). And while the need for greater consumer awareness and informed, concerted action is made plain, the book also rightly accents the social responsibility of those organisations that process personal data. Practical proposals are made in relation to several areas discussed, including vexed questions of fairness and also of internationalisation.

Overall, this book is well-conceived and well-written and the kinds of analysis provided here are exemplary for future work in the field. There is a certain urgency about this work, however, and a need for it to be complemented by studies of personal data processing under the now ubiquitous sign of 'security' and 'safety'. Although some insights are offered on how the PIE is articulated with concerns about other risks than the primarily economic, especially since 9/11, these also drive changes – some of which are mutually reinforcing – that cry out for critique and policy based on cognate criteria of social justice and fairness.

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A. Bottoms, S. Rex and G. Robinson (eds), *Alternatives to Prison: Options for an Insecure Society*, Willan, Cullompton, 2004, 448 pp., £25.00 pbk.
doi:10.1017/S0047279406290548

These are challenging times for the National Probation Service as it faces up to major reforms in the areas of sentencing and sentence management. This edited text (commissioned by the Coulsfield Commission) is therefore extremely timely and the question asked by the editors in the opening chapter – 'how did we get here?' – is one that many of the contributors subsequently attempt to explain. As one would expect, the central theme of the book is how can we effectively reduce the prison population. In his chapter on trends in crime, victimisation and punishment, Chris Lewis suggests that the increases in the prison population are more a result of political choices rather than the inevitable consequence of uncontrollable social and economic forces. He argues that we should consider attempts made by other European jurisdictions to reduce their prison populations by introducing the concept of administrative crime for minor offences and giving the Crown Prosecution Service powers to impose financial sanctions for such offences (p. 54). In a similar vein, Anthony Bottoms examines the empirical evidence in relation to sentencing and concludes that there is little evidence that an increase in the rate of imprisonment will achieve a reduction in crime levels (either through incapacitation or general deterrence) and that demographics, economic and social conditions, and detection rates are all more likely to have an impact on crime rates than sentencing patterns.

The relationship between public opinion and community penalties, considered by Shadd Maruna and Anna King, is central to the subtext of the volume in questioning how alternatives to imprisonment can garner public support in a climate of increasing fear of crime and disorder. Based on the University of Cambridge public opinion project (UCPOP) they found that greater involvement by members of the public in the criminal justice system can increase satisfaction levels as does the presentation of those on community supervision as '*givers*' rather than '*consumers*' of help (all of which will be music to the ears of those promoting the civic renewal agenda within government). Chapter 15 by Bottoms and Wilson complements Maruna and King's findings (in Chapter 4). The authors considered two high crime, high offender rate communities in order to ascertain how residents view offenders within their localities. They questioned respondents on levels of punitiveness scales and found high levels of support for the notion of '*redeemability*'. Using the concept of 'signal crimes' and 'signal disorders' (Innes and Fielding, 2002), they conclude that the majority of residents wanted offenders to be dealt with constructively, based on an 'adequate understanding of the fears and hurts of other residents living in the area' (p. 398).

In Chapter 5 the communicative potential of community sentences is examined by Sue Rex. She argues that a future policy orientation in offender management should move away from its current preoccupation with 'confronting offending behaviour and focus more on the process of encouraging "*desistence*" amongst those who commit criminal offences' (p. 131). The next four chapters consider various forms of alternative to imprisonment. In Chapter 6, George Mair considers diversionary and non-supervisory sentences (fines, conditional discharges, police cautions) but focuses mainly on the decline in the use of financial penalties in sentencing. He considers potential alternative approaches such as the prosecutor fine (introduced in Scotland in 1988) and a return to the unit fine system as a means to reverse this trend and recalibrate sentencing. The chapter by Gill McIvor considers those community disposals based on reparative and restorative approaches. She points to the fact that research studies report that both mediation and reparation and family group conferencing have high levels of victim satisfaction, although the effect on recidivism is less clear. She argues that the way in which such schemes

are implemented is crucial as is an appreciation of the wider social context in which offending occurs (a recurring theme throughout the book). In common with Rex she suggests that positive offender involvement is more likely to lead to a positive outcome in terms of recidivism as opposed to those in which offenders feel 'disengaged or stigmatised' (p. 185). Many of the concerns raised by McIvor are echoed in Chapter 8 by Peter Raynor, who looks at rehabilitative and reintegrative approaches within community penalties. Although a leading proponent of the 'what works' agenda, Raynor accepts that the initial evaluations are somewhat mixed and may fail to live up to the initial aspirations in terms of reducing recidivism. Like McIvor, he points to the emphasis on programmes as being at the expense of other contextual issues that might have an impact on their implementation such as case management, enforcement and the overall sentencing framework (p. 213), He calls for a middle way between the centrally driven approach taken by the National Probation Service in the roll-out of accredited programmes and the piecemeal (and difficult to evaluate) approach taken by the Youth Justice Board in England and Wales and favoured in Scotland. However, in the following chapter on growth in the use of electronic monitoring, Mike Nellis highlights how political expediency is likely to determine government law and order policies rather than sustained evaluation. He argues that in criminal justice terms we are moving from the '*humanistic-rehabilitative*' paradigm to one of '*surveillant-managerialism*' driven by efficiency and effectiveness criteria (p. 240).

The next two chapters then focus on specific groups of offenders. Judith Rumgay in Chapter 10 explores the links between substance misuse and crime and the wider implications for the development of community-based programmes for offenders. Whilst acknowledging the expansion of routes into treatment that has taken place in the last decade, she too is critical of the implementation of accredited programmes which inevitably exclude large numbers of offenders whose needs are different from those targeted (and funded) by the programmes. In a different take on the issue of implementation of such programmes, she highlights how this has led to probation staff attempting to place offenders in programmes for which they are unsuited, resulting in high non-completion rates. The balance between support and control is also central in Chapter 11 in which Anne Worrall and Rob C. Mawby focus on intensive projects for prolific/persistent offenders. They note that, whilst these schemes are resource intensive, expensive and their impact on recidivism largely unproved, they have wider potential benefits beyond reduced offending such as cost-effectiveness in terms of the health, education and social benefits for participants, improved working relationships between agencies, better information exchange between the partners involved in the schemes and enhanced intelligence on prolific offenders (p. 285).

Gwen Robinson and James Dignan consider the processes in which community sentences are implemented and managed. The authors fear that collaborative and coordinated working relationships among agencies in the supervision of offenders could be undermined by the introduction of a purchaser–provider split into offender management and lead to further fragmentation, with services being commissioned on the basis of cost effectiveness (p. 333). This point is further reinforced by Hazel Kemshall, Rob Canton and Roy Bailey who consider the provision of community sentences for minority offender groups (women, ethnic minorities and mentally disordered offenders). They conclude that the evidence suggests that minority groups have a significantly differential experience within the criminal justice system and they argue that alternatives to custody should be subject to a '*diversity test*' and terms of access, impact and consequences rather than focussing solely on programme content and responsivity (p. 357).

This is an excellent text and the various contributors make the case for the promotion of community sentences as alternatives to imprisonment, forcibly and with considerable authority. The editors state that 'there is scope for innovation and creativity as we look to the future'

(p. 406), although it will take strong and consistent political leadership if the current prison population is to be reduced rather than merely contained.

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P. Smith and K. Natalier, *Understanding Criminal Justice: Sociological Perspectives*, Sage, London, 2005, 225 pp., £19.99 pbk.
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There appears to be an increasing, and as yet unnoticed, link between the growth around the world of prisoner numbers and the growth of criminology and criminal justice student numbers. One consequence of this is the apparent necessity to produce more and more textbooks outlining for this growing student body the problems of crime, of crime control and of too many prisoners. At a first glance, *Understanding Criminal Justice* could well fall into this category. However, the title aside, this is no such book. Smith and Natalier have provided us with a book that goes beyond the usual static descriptions of criminal justice agencies and administrative solutions to crime to an arguably much more important and neglected debate on the sociological explanations for the operation of the law and criminal justice agencies and the cultural, social and political context in which they operate.

The core questions and issues that it seeks to address are to understand why the legal system and criminal justice system are as they are, what the implications are for social exclusion and inequality and an analysis of the relationship between that system's organisation and culture. This latter issue is largely ignored within the criminal justice literature. This book discusses the hugely important and often overlooked nature of cultural ideology in the establishment and practices of the law and criminal justice system. Understanding organisations and organisational change is in good part understanding culture and cultural change. Discretion amongst criminal justice professionals is extensive and in order to seek to understand the actions of an organisation, sociologists have always favoured cultural explanations. The study of culture has traditionally been the bed-rock of anthropology, but it has only been of fleeting and periodic interest to other parts of the social sciences. However, culture is staging something of a 'comeback' and is now being used not only as an academic tool of discovery but also as an organisational tool of reform. The emergence of 'cultural criminology' is part of that development.

Once the reader has waded through the lengthy discussions about what the book will not cover (although I do think that a sociological discussion on the issues surrounding the extent of crime and the perpetrators of crime would have been merited) one is treated to a consideration of the theoretical approaches to law and criminal justice. It takes us through consensus and conflict theories, post-structuralism and post-modernism in an attempt to later locate law and criminal justice agencies within cultural and historical frameworks. The authors discuss the prominent thinkers past and present, and manage to move the discussion on to contemporary issues but within the same framework. Occasionally there is imbalance. The analysis of Weber and Norbert Elias comes after the discussion of post-modernism and ironically, given the later content of the book, the criticisms of conflict theories far outweigh those of consensus theories. However, at all times, the debate remains manageable, aided by examples and explanations. If all authors could manage to integrate stories of administering strychnine to a chicken into their work, academia would suffer from fewer criticisms of elitism. It is unlikely that Thomas Aquinas has been accused of 'hedging his bets' before, but this is all akin to the style of this book, accessible yet challenging.

The book then analyses the law, the police, the courts and punishment within a sociological context. The theoretical approaches remain prevalent throughout. As stated above, the intention of the book is to go beyond the agency descriptions that are so common but in straying from that, the book does assume some prior knowledge on the part of the reader. If the book had been able to provide more basic descriptions of the work of the criminal justice actors involved, the debates could then have been set in context. Clearly, this is difficult when references are made to three different jurisdications – but then this moves the book on from one that may appeal to undergraduate students in their early stages. A discussion, for example, on how sentencing works would be a useful precursor to the discussion of how it does not work.

In relation to the comparative nature of the book, which provides examples from the USA, England and Australia, this does enrich the theoretical considerations. However, given that these countries have markedly different legal and policing systems, not to mention vastly different cultural and political histories, comparison does not always work. Discussing racism in American courts and the 'elimination of parole' as if these are worldwide issues could confuse the reader. I would also add that those across the Welsh borders may be slightly surprised at their exclusion from the debate.

I have argued that the sociological approach to this book is one that is overdue. However, it also needs to be contemporary. Within this book, there are at times a return to some rather well-worn arguments that perhaps need some modernisation of their own. For example, the debates and policies surrounding domestic violence and discrimination within sentencing have changed significantly in recent years. The rise of 'new public management', the impact of the victims' rights movements, privatisation, the rise of New Right ideologies for example, have all significantly altered the landscape within which the criminal justice system operates and are understated here. The 'nothing works' debate that is discussed throughout the book appears to be the message in this book. The tone is highly critical and not even restorative justice escapes its grasp. However, the relative weight of criticism falls upon the police. Policing is a rapidly changing organisation in many countries around the world. In Smith and Natalier's book, however, the police are seen to be a 'major source of criminal activity' (p. 107) and it is even argued that any inequalities present in prosecution cases are likely to be the result of latent or manifest discrimination from the police. Despite claims to the contrary, public attitudes towards the police, when compared with other criminal justice agencies are actually fairly positive. The arguments contained within this book surrounding corruption, racism and culture have moved on little from 20 years ago, despite some convincing evidence from academics like the Australian writer, Janet Chan, about the changing nature of police culture (1996).

A book which considers the major debates within criminal justice within a framework of sociological theory is an area of study that is too easily overlooked within university curricula. However, to do that, whilst largely ignoring issues of class, limits its comprehensiveness. Class is now the poor relation of gender and ethnicity within sociology and it is ironic that the New Right denial of class as a pertinent factor in social relations seems to be replicated with this shift. If a complete understanding of the implications of the operation of the criminal justice system for social exclusion and inequality is to be achieved, then the role and significance of class needs to be more thoroughly addressed.

In concluding their book, Smith and Natalier refer to the importance of digging deeper than 'standard stories' of everyday explanation and instead of seeking to find 'higher order explanation[s]' (p. 198). Smith and Natalier have achieved that within this book. They offer a highly critical, at times controversial but immensely readable book that will appeal to later-stage undergraduates and postgraduates alike. It offers what more textbooks should be offering – an alternative reading of the criminal justice system, grounded in both classical and contemporary sociological theory.

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J. Phoenix and S. Oerton, *Illicit and Illegal: Sex, Regulation and Social Control*, Willan Publishing, Cullompton, 2005, 209 pp., £17.99 pbk.
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Men do violence and women and children suffer it. Decades of feminist consciousness-raising and campaigning have brought this commonplace to light and put it on the agenda of many policy-making bodies. This idea and reality, known variously as gender violence, sexual violence and violence against women, has formed part of a general movement to implement gender equity in all areas of social life, one of the latest aspects of which is known as gender mainstreaming. The ubiquity of these terms might appear to indicate that we are getting somewhere, that awareness is now so high that we are actually managing to do something to prevent violence. But, according to Phoenix and Oerton, the movement itself, with its requirement to *neutralise* gender in laws and policies on sex, inevitably ends up masking the concrete social reality: that men do violence and women suffer it.

Society is changed by people who believe that something must be done about harmful practices. Becker theorised those who crusaded for new legislation as 'moral entrepreneurs'. Here, the authors analyse how the moral enterprise plays out in six categories of sexual violence: rape and sexual assault, child sexual abuse, prostitution, nudity and harassment, sexual misconduct by professionals and cybernetic sex. For each, they show how not only official language (Home Office, Sexual Offences Acts) but also quasi-official language such as ethics statements emitted by professional associations, universities, fire and rescue services, charities, constabularies, city councils, energy companies, Marks & Spencer and the Bristol Recreation Centre have the effect of *detaching* us from the nitty-gritty bad acts we want to prevent. The problem is the neutralising that occurs with the language of victim–perpetrator and the generalising to ideas like 'negative environments' that may be created by violence. The authors' message could function as a serious critique of the current tendency in social policy making relating to sex and gender, including mainstreaming, or suggest to feminist campaigners that they need to change the shape of their campaigns. Unfortunately, other aspects of the book will prevent its having such an effect.

The introductory chapter compresses too much material, omitting to explain adequately some basic theoretical concepts. There are, for me, too many lists, and I was distracted by so much explanation of what the book is *not* about. The writing style is too turgid for anyone but very close insiders to penetrate, and the hyper-use of inverted commas adds to the abstract quality of the prose; with everything problematised and deconstructed, it is difficult to know which values can anchor us. Some historicising at the beginning of the book would also help, for example of the idea called 'the problem of men', which dates from 1980s activism (Kelly and Radford, 1987).

The six chapters with specific themes lay out how concrete violent acts have evolved into abstractions. Here there is a great deal of information but also a great deal of repetition, and the style continues to be abstruse. It does not help that the authors quote extensively from Home Office and other institutional documents, in which directness and clarity shine by their absence. Given that this is the primary material for analysis, is there any way to make it feel

more compelling? The issue is discourse, but those who contribute to discourse are people doing ordinary jobs; perhaps attention to some actual individuals and how their job responsibilities culminate in documents would bring so much abstraction down to earth (strings of paragraphs cited as Home Office 2000 inevitably make me wonder how many people participated in their writing, and in how many drafts, and how alienated they felt). Governmentality theory could illuminate some aspects of their research. As they stand now, the chapters contribute to the phenomenon under critique, which is the disembodiment of current discourse from its 'material origins'.

I believe with Phoenix and Oerton that impulses to problem management often impede achieving a more equitable society. I believe, therefore, that it is important to communicate this message outside the academy in a more grounded, more concrete way, so that an actual drafter of guidelines at the Home Office can understand them, or someone sitting on a consultative committee. If we cannot do this, how can we hope to influence policy makers? Or the media, for that matter? As I write this review, panels of social commentators are blaring away about the Home Office's recent policy statement on prostitution, the revelation of one politician's gay relationships and another politician's having paid for sex. No one questions that all the talk is essential or seems to doubt that we are *getting somewhere* in how we understand sex and deal with its misuses. There seems to be a huge gulf between this kind of analysis and that of a book such as this one, so I want to know: How can arguments such as those in this book actually reach public awareness?

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C. Barnes and G. Mercer (eds), *Implementing the Social Model of Disability: Theory and Research*, The Disability Press, Leeds, 2004, 233 pp., £16.50 pbk.
C. Barnes and G. Mercer (eds), *Disability Policy: Applying the Social Model*, The Disability Press, Leeds, 2004, 216 pp., £16.50 pbk.
C. Barnes and G. Mercer (eds), *The Social Model of Disability: Europe and the Majority World*, The Disability Press, Leeds, 2004, 218 pp., £16.50 pbk.
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The 'orthodoxies' of disability have, until relatively recently, remained rooted in 'individualistic' bio-medical/welfare paradigms. In these paradigms 'disability' is assumed to be synonymous with flawed individual 'impairments' of a biological nature, rather than a consequence of the environment in which individuals live. The flawed approach to disability presents impairment as a 'personal tragedy' or misfortune. This view united non-disabled service providers and policy makers in developing support for those concerned. Behind or beneath such support, however, are assumptions of the battle against deviancy and abnormality. The 'social model' of disability made a significant challenge to these 'normalised' and 'othered' conceptualisations of disability and disabled people. In the social model, disability is 'recast as a historically contingent relationship' (Barnes and Mercer, 2004: 2). It is this contingent relationship that lies at the heart of this thought-provoking collection.

The complexities and implications of deploying a social model approach are outlined across three volumes. Each of the three books involves well-established figures in the disability field such as Gerry Zarb, Mike Oliver and Dan Goodley. A few newcomers have been allowed in but the work nonetheless exemplifies the somewhat closed nature of the disability field. In this three-book set, the contributors sought to reflect on and evaluate social model thinking to date, and to build on and apply social model thinking to a variety of contexts. The result provides the reader with a whirlwind tour of the intricacies of disability theorising.

In Volume I *Implementing the Social Model of Disability: Theory and Research* the controversy surrounding disability politics and research are regarded by the editors (Barnes and Mercer) not as a hindrance but as beneficial to the continued evolution of the relatively young social model, in contrast to its elderly majoritarian medio-welfare counterpart (see also McLaughlin and Byrne, 2006). The value of earlier structural and materialist approaches is acknowledged but it is *development* of the social model which is the goal of this collection. As with modern social theory more generally, disability theorising has benefited from the utilisation of post-modernist and post-structuralist perspectives. The shortcomings of the social model are addressed, by Oliver (Chapter 2) Thomas (Chapter 3), Reeve (Chapter 6) and Watson (Chapter 7). All call for greater consideration of the internalisation of oppression related to impairment; that is, the 'psycho-emotional' dimensions of disability. Attention to internalised oppression, however, is neither easy nor safe politically. Although welfarism and welfare professionals have largely resisted the social model challenge, it is a necessary task within the ongoing challenge to biomedical–welfare–scientific domination. As Carol Thomas (Chapter 3) says 'It might be said that the journey has only just begun' (p. 32).

Volume II *Disability Policy: Applying the Social Model* utilises the social model in social policy contexts wherein individualistic bio-medical models of disability have gone relatively unchallenged. The topics explored in this volume include education, human services employment, housing, the emergence of independent living and an overview of disability policies more generally. Common across all of these policy domains is the way in which disabled people have been categorised and oppressed by the structures, rules and procedures developed by and for the non-disabled majority and the professionals employed to 'help the disabled' and maintain the majority's belief and self image of 'civilisation, decency and altruism. Despite the changing nature of the welfare state, the disability focus in social policy has remained on 'restoration' of the capabilities of innately 'flawed' individuals – that is, the emphasis remains on the adaptability of the impaired person to market demands and needs. While the contributors highlight the resistance of welfarism to political challenge, it is evident that it has gained increasing momentum even within the human services fields. Many of the contributors to these works have personal experience of impairment and disability, directly or indirectly. Their experiential knowledge adds depth to the analyses and data presented.

The 13 chapters in Volume III *The Social Model of Disability: Europe and the Majority World* explore the social model of disability in its international context. The work suggests that despite the contingent nature of disability and, in that sense, its specificity, there is much to be learnt from the lived experiences of disability across both the majority and minority world. Although the social model of disability is associated with English language scholarship, the contributors to this work apply this model on a global scale, examining such topics as disability policy in Egypt, the provision of services in Bangladesh, personal assistance reforms in Sweden and European Transport law. Concerns are raised about the nature of the relationship between the social model and the human rights approach. A human rights approach and social model thinking have both been articulated in and have informed various United Nations Declarations and European Frameworks, yet aspirations of these approaches have not always materialised

in practice. The limited potential of a human rights model in achieving substantive change for disabled people is highlighted throughout this volume (see also Quinn and Degener, 2002). While the necessity and desirability of a rights approach to disability is not denied, authors such as Hurst (Chapter 5), Priestley (Chapter 2) and Sheldon (Chapter 8) contend that the rights approach tackles the 'symptoms' of disability rather than its root cause(s). The social model, on the other hand, advocates not only legal protection, but also more fundamental restructuring and social change. This is not to deny the progress the human rights approach to disability has made at international level. The *United Nations Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities* (1993) and the *Treaty of Amsterdam* (1997) have both been critical in elevating the visibility of disabled people and giving new impetus to disability politics. Given ongoing debates around the potential for a European identity and greater harmonisation of social policies across the Union, the application of a disability perspective to these issues is particularly illuminating and timely for those with a general interest in transnational policy development. The growing relevance of the European Union to disability represents a new terrain, which could benefit from a common social model of disability. At present there is little uniformity between member states' definitions of disability (Mabbett, 2005).

What is absent from the second and third volumes is a coherent understanding of 'disability policy'. It is taken for granted that disability policy exists but the naming of a policy subfield by reference to a population subgroup itself needs to be challenged for its presumption and social moral paternalism (see also Walker, 2002). The social problems approach in social policy misses the mark in relation to analysis of the state–disability relationship, and gives undue prominence to special provisions targeted specifically at disability. If such a thing as disability policy exists however, it consists of both special provisions and the impact general social policies have on the population group concerned. The combination and interaction of the special and the generic in relation to disability requires greater theorisation and analytical power than is present in these works.

Nonetheless, the trilogy is a welcome addition to the 'canon'. The texts can be read individually or as a set. Each maintains a distinct focus, whether on research, policy or trans- and international developments. Students and scholars of disability, as well as those outside the academy will enjoy the varied menu served. Indeed, policy makers who spend so much time discussing and treating disabled people as the objects of policy through rose-tinted glasses would do well to pay close attention to the integrated experiential and expert knowledge brought together in these works.

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