**News Culture**

**Stuart Allan**

(ISBN 0-335-19956-9)

Allan’s book is part of a series, ‘Issues in Cultural and Media Studies’, which he edits. It aims to ‘provide a lively, topical and comprehensive introduction’ together with ‘important insights into how new modes of enquiry might be established’ (Foreword). Accessibility is embodied in the series format. *News Culture* is a well-made and well-designed book, with a useful glossary of terms and suggestions for further reading with each chapter. It is also unusually up-to-date, citing recent academic sources and discussing media texts dated less than a year before publication.

The opening chapters are historical. First, Allan interestingly recounts the rise of ‘objective’ reporting in newspapers, and its consequences for journalism’s professional and institutional claims and, second, the rise of radio and television news in the United Kingdom and United States. The next three chapters deal with the ‘cultural politics’ of news, for instance the discursive construction of credibility by choice of informant and style of presentation. Two concluding chapters deal with ‘The gendered realities of journalism’ and ‘“Us and them”: racism in the news’.

To be both wide in sweep and penetrating in analysis is a difficult objective, and the book does not achieve it. There is – ironically – a problem of audience. No doubt the publishers wanted some North American content, but only the chapter on radio and television history pursues this in detail. Elsewhere comparisons are occasional and uneven, as with the discussion of US ‘supermarket tabloids’, which have no real British equivalent. Nor is the ‘address’ always fitted to a book for newcomers to the issues. In an attempt to cover the ground Allan sometimes reverts to bullet-pointed paragraphs of telegraphic density. When discussing the ‘new modes of enquiry’, by contrast, the register is of an academic journal article, speaking to the already converted.

Allan is right to avoid tedious catalogues of, for example, the structure and powers of the bodies that regulate British broadcasting, but there is not enough factual background. To understand media messages and the ideological work that news media do, which is the pivot of the book, some material of this kind is essential. For example, the Press Complaints Commission does not appear in the index. Presumably an American reader would be at least as interested as a British reader in a brief account of the structure of the British newspaper market: that there is a national press, say, and that the party political alignment of papers is a crucial aspect of their branding.

Perceptively analysing a classic passage from the *Daily Mail*, Allan describes it mildly as ‘“mid-market” in its appeal and “respectable” in its mode of address’ (p. 154). Locating the *Mail* as Conservative, systematically pro-patriarchal family and anti-feminist would have strengthened his argument: in a consumption-driven capitalist economy its investment in a conventional gender division of labour is multiplex.

The unresolved issue of the impact of media on the audience must be one of the most dismal in the whole of social science. Allan’s chapter on the audience is – mostly – lively and accessible: how does media consumption fit into our everyday routines? Do people take The *Sun* seriously? But the chapter gives no hint of the fierce and politicised controversy over the issue, notably in relation to children and violence in visual media. Moreover, Allan hovers somewhere between endorsing the ‘active reader’/agency and an analytic frame which focuses on structure. This
uncertainty pervades the rest of the book. On the one hand there is extensive and approving
discussion of authors who argue that new media underpin the structures of dominance, like Hall
and colleagues in the United Kingdom and Hallin in the United States. On the other, the chapters
on race and gender imply that the presence of enough right-thinking and tenacious employees
who are women or from minority ethnic groups would change the culture of news organisations.
Structural disadvantage disappears from view.

Why, finally, does a book declared as future-oriented says nothing at all about internet-based
sources of information? More important even than regulators’ or media organisation’s own web-
sites, is access to more-or-less current ownership information from, for example, The Newspaper
Society for the UK regional press or the Columbia Journalism Review for transnational
corporations.

University of Nottingham

MERYL ALDRIDGE

Dis/Agreeing Ireland: Contexts, Obstacles, Hopes
James Anderson and James Goodman (eds.)

Dis/Agreeing Ireland should be required reading for Mo Mowlam, Tony Blair and the ranks of
British civil servants who have seen it as their job to hinder rather than facilitate a settlement in
Ireland. It is a searching examination of the background to the conflict in Ireland and the problems
confronting those in favour of peace. But it is not content to engage in critique alone; many of the
authors also point the way with practical solutions which could advance the cause of a settlement.

Editors Anderson and Goodman open and close the book and contribute an individual
chapter each. They argue that the nationalist project has failed and that solutions require us to
think beyond what they call the ‘zero-sum game’ of territorial imperatives. But notably Anderson
and Goodman and almost all of the contributors to this book are not simply referring to Irish
nationalism in the way of mainstream pundits, politicians and journalists. They also mean the
nationalist projects of both the British government and the unionists in the North. It is in this that
the book is strongest, with a number of chapters advancing complementary arguments in analyses
of the economy, British and Irish nationalism and the role of Europeanisation.

Denis O’Hearn advances the argument that the economy of Northern Ireland is doing
comparatively worse than the Southern economy. We should not, however, be sanguine about this
but insist on a wider transformation of economic organisation than just North-South integration.
Liam O’Dowd contributes an account of the much neglected role of British nationalism in
Northern Ireland, by which he means both the nationalism of the British government and of
unionism/loyalism. Typically, this is forcefully argued but gently written and highlights the extent
to which even the British left suffers from attacks of British nationalism to which they are
oblivious. O’Dowd specifically mentions Eric Hobsbawm as a case in point. Robbie McVeigh
makes a characteristically trenchant argument for recognising the colonial legacy as a key
animator of the conflict of the last thirty years. Ronnie Munck provides a critique of the recent
strategy of the republican movement and James McAuley surveys loyalist attitudes to peace.
Rosemary Sales gives an account of the role of women in the peace process and Christine Bell
examines women’s participation in politics. Bell analyses how gender issues in the Northern
Ireland context are ignored or trivialised in the media, politics and academia. This provides a
splendid introduction to her thoughtful account of the problems of feminism in the context of the
colonial and class hierarchies.
The book also includes a number of chapters by activists, which is welcome. Jerry Fitzpatrick denounces Labour party policy from within the party, but then suggests that Labour just might make the difference this time, especially since key sections of the British political elite and – crucially – financial capital now have a stake in a resolution to the conflict. Conor Foley of Amnesty International describes the human rights deficit, situating his analysis in between a short report of his experience as a legal observer at the attempt of the Protestant Royal Black Preceptory to march through the nationalist village of Bellaghy in South Derry.

There is little on racism (in any of its variants) and sectarianism and nothing substantive on culture in the book. However, these are minor quibbles in a book which takes its inquiry seriously and hopes to contribute to a brighter tomorrow. Overall, it shows the prospects for a postcolonial social science of the Northern Ireland conflict are bright. Although very good books on the Northern Ireland conflict were written before the peace process emerged, this book does bear the marks of its historical period. It would be difficult to imagine this book having been produced even five years ago. The ceasefires and the peace process have themselves opened a space in which Northern Ireland may be debated openly. For too long Northern Ireland has been ignored by British social science and those who have written about it have often found it difficult to express themselves freely without the stigma of ‘terrorist stooge’ being applied by colleagues, the media or even government ministers. *Dis/Agreeing Ireland* provides a consistent and coherent, critical and engaged social science. British social science take note.

*Stirling University*

DAVID MILLER

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**Between Cultures: Continuity and Change in the Lives of Young Asians**

**Muhammad Anwar**


(ISBN 0-415-04648-3)

Professor Anwar provides a description of changing attitudes, experiences and relationships between generations among young British people of South Asian origin and their parents. He focuses on change in the ethnic community’s attitude to education, employment, housing and family relationships. He also relates these to changes in attitudes and behaviour within the United Kingdom in general, particularly racial discrimination and harassment of the South Asian community.

This study is based on considerable long-term work by Anwar and others. In 1975, Anwar undertook a national study of relationships between generations in the Asian community in the United Kingdom. He conducted further research in 1983–84, and most recently conducted ethnographic research in Birmingham in the early 1990s. He incorporates a considerable amount of statistical data from other surveys, most recently that produced in 1997 by the Policy Studies Institute. He includes summary statistical tables from relevant censuses and other surveys. This quantitative data is further explicated by a selection of quotations from interviews with young South Asians and their parents.

Attitudes among the different ethnic communities (Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Indian and African Asian) and religions (Muslim, Sikh and Hindu) are contrasted. Some material on the white and Afro-Caribbean community is included. Selections from interviews with professionals who
work with the South Asian community are also discussed and analysed. His chapters on policy makers and community political activity, like his discussion of the ethnic community, are firmly based on empirical research.

Anwar presents a longitudinal description of changes in the South Asian community: he reports that parents have become more tolerant of differing attitudes towards social and cultural issues, while children attempt to combine elements of both cultures. This is not discussed within a context of more theoretical material concerning immigration, ethnicity or social change.

The book does not address questions of cultural translation, inter-ethnic mobilisation and communication, hybridity and creolisation. Ignoring this work, which highlights (and frequently documents) the fluidity and indeterminacy of ethnic differences weakens the book. Anwar contextualises his description of differences in generational attitudes by describing the demographic, economic and political differences between the mid-1970s and the early 1990s. There is little discussion of contemporary arguments within ethnic communities over issues of essentialism versus cross-cultural and multi-ethnic alliances. This seems to me to ignore a considerable amount of data as well as theory.

This work does not make a theoretical contribution to current debates on ethnicity and social change. It is, however, a sound, solid, extensive summary of quantitative work over the past twenty years, and will be extremely useful to other workers in the field.

University of Kent at Canterbury

Developing Focus Group Research: Politics, Theory and Practice
Rosalind S. Barbour and Jenny Kitzinger (eds.)

Focus groups have received considerable press coverage due to their use in political campaigns and image management. This leaves the method with an image problem itself in terms of its use in academic research. The collective objective of the articles in this book is to defend the use of focus groups, making varied claims for their potential uses. But the editors also caution against the use of a ‘formulaic approach which fails to develop the full potential of this method’ (p. 1). They claim that social scientists risk ‘uncritically adopting market researchers’ models of such research’ (ibid).

The introductory chapter gives a broad overview of the basics of using focus groups. The editors take a flexible and inclusive approach to focus groups (giving no fixed definition of what a focus group is) and stress that they are best used in order to explore experiences, opinions, wishes and concerns (p. 5). They cover issues such as the combination of focus group research with other methods; what size focus groups should be; where they should be held; how to get participants; how to deal with gatekeepers; initiating discussions; researcher skills; the status of the researcher; transcription versus notetaking; and ethical and political issues.

Many of these questions are further elaborated by other authors in the book and a particular strength of the book is the way in which it allows for the presentation of rich and diverse case-study material. Lynn Michell, for example, provides compelling evidence of the need to combine focus groups with other forms of information gathering. In her research with children on social hierarchies, she found that the lowest status girls, excluded from general social life, were unsurprisingly excluded from the focus groups. However, in one-to-one interviews they opened up and gave moving accounts of their experiences. In a different context, that of conducting focus
groups with already established lesbian groups, Clare Farquhar and Rita Das argue that it is difficult to predict what subject matter will prove to be ‘sensitive’. They also argue that focus groups may be suitable for potentially ‘sensitive’ research as they have the potential to dilute power relations between the researcher and researched and enable research participants to ‘interview’ each other.

Issues of power and the nature of participation are also developed in other articles. Rachel Baker and Rachel Hinton reflect on two research projects undertaken in Nepal, and Sue Wilkinson examines the potential of focus groups for feminist research. Baker and Hinton are cautiously optimistic about the potential for participation. Wilkinson is even more positive, suggesting that focus groups can enable non-hierarchical research – although she does not deal with the issues previously raised by Lynn Michell concerning the structures of hierarchy within the focus groups themselves. Other articles, particularly that by Lai-Fong Chiu and Deborah Knight concerned with obtaining views of minority groups, deal with the issue of the researcher him/herself and particularly the impact of race.

The book also tries to fill a gap or scarcity in the literature by dealing with how the gathered material should be analysed. Jane Frankland and Michael Bloor take the reader through the processes involved in analytic induction or deviant case analysis. Whereas, using a very different approach, Jenny Kitzinger and Clare Farquhar present an analysis of ‘sensitive moments’ within focus groups and emphasise the importance of being attentive to what is silenced as well as what is said in a group. In an article by Greg Myers and Phil Macnaghten, focus group material is also analysed using conversational analysis.

These differing approaches to the analysis of focus groups highlight the ways in which the method can be used for different purposes and under different theoretical frameworks. This suggests a potential problem about the framing of the book. Whilst the book achieves its objective in making the case for the use of focus groups in qualitative research, it does raise certain questions about the treatment of one method in isolation. Focus groups are one of a bundle of methods available to qualitative research and there is insufficient evidence of its uniqueness as a method or approach. The book raises many issues which would be relevant to all social researchers and it seems a shame that, by dealing with this one method alone, the book excludes many potential readers.

University of Sussex

BRIDGET BYRNE

The Ethnographic Self – Fieldwork and the Representation of Identity

Amanda Coffey


This text moves beyond standard and traditional methodological texts by challenging the collective assumptions that the researcher should remain distant from the research participants and site to maintain objectivity. The aim of the book is to assert the need for comprehensive narratives of research experiences in the field. Coffey addresses the relatively unspoken issues surrounding ‘the impact of the self on the research process and the impact of the research process on the self’ (p. 6). As such it is addressing an important gap in the literature surrounding the relationship between the self and fieldwork.
The text is arranged thematically with Coffey’s own empirical research experiences interwoven into the debates. Theoretically, it is founded upon the ideas which are influenced by the development of ethnography, referring in some instances to feminism and postmodernism.

The first chapter serves as an illustrative overview of the presence and marginality of the researcher self. It emphasises that personal and emotional references by the researcher are rarely regarded as appropriate in textual presentations. Chapter 2 acts as the foundation for the following debates and argues for ‘the overt positioning of the researcher self, as an intrinsic part of the fieldwork’ (p. 18). The traditional ideas of over-familiarity and strangeness whilst undertaking research in the field are questioned through a consideration of the tension between ethnographers and methodologists. However, it is unclear as to whether Coffey is arguing for ethnographic or methodological epistemologies. The analytical debates on familiarity and strangeness are carried into Chapter 3 where field relations are discussed. Chapter 3 is a comprehensive synopsis on the nature, construction, establishment and difficulties of social relations within the field. I believe that these chapters can be equated to the early stages of the research process when decisions have to be made about the researcher’s role and field relations.

In contrast the following two chapters could represent the tangible considerations made in the field. Chapters 4 and 5 are founded upon the argument that the researcher self is inevitably embodied in the fieldwork and can be epistemologically productive. In Chapter 4 the management of the researcher’s body and external appearance is explored, as it is seen as an instrument of cultural reproduction, whereas Chapter 5 discusses the concept of sexuality and its role in establishing and sustaining identities. Coffey asserts that exploring sexuality in the field creates an improved comprehension of the personal and emotional elements of fieldwork, highlighting the importance of the researcher self.

Chapter 6 diverges from the concepts of the researcher self and body by exploring the relationship between love, romance and ethnography. Coffey draws together material, which is discussed in other contexts, to feed her original analogies and cliche’d sayings. In this she suggests alternative concepts for the future study of the relationship between fieldwork, the personal and the self.

The writing-up phase discussed in Chapter 7 defines the manner in which the researcher self has been and can be embodied in the textual presentation of ethnographic work. Coffey argues that understanding and representing the researcher self in the field and textual presentation produces an improved method of knowing. As a conclusion Chapter 9 is a succinct but adequate overview of the themes and debates running throughout the text.

My main criticism is that Coffey fails to place and bring into the discussion classic ethnographic monographs and how they could have represented and acknowledged the self. Nevertheless, throughout the text there is a varied use of work by contemporary ethnographers interwoven with that of methodological writers, which creates a stimulating altercation. There is much critical discussion by methodologists on the presence of the researcher in the field, but Coffey’s text goes beyond supplementing these outmoded debates by creating a new debate on the self.

In conclusion, it is an interesting and thought-provoking book aimed at those about to embark upon ethnographic research and those in the field. This text successfully makes a substantive claim for representing the researcher self within ethnographic work and its textual presentations. It therefore creates a place for the researcher self in future ethnographic and qualitative research.

University of Warwick

SALLY-ANNE BARNES
One of the most interesting developments to emerge out of the intersection of sociology and cultural studies has been the growing concern with consumption. An argument shared by these very different books is that the domain of consumption has been neglected by more traditional forms of analysis. How has this come about? They point to the fact that both sociology and cultural studies have historically been overly preoccupied with processes that are involved in the production rather than the consumption of culture. However, if Corrigan and Miles are in agreement here, they offer very different readings and trajectories that might emerge from a more sociological concern with consumption.

Corrigan’s book is an introductory account of a variety of consumptive practices from shopping to watching television advertising. He argues that we need a sociology of consumption that can tell us what happens to commodities once they are purchased and brought home. Although Corrigan does not offer a detailed theory of consumption, he does provide an account of a variety of practices that link the consumption of goods to questions of lifestyle and the social communication of meaning. In this reading, the goods that we consume become ‘bridges’ to a desired lifestyle. The reason that we can never consume enough is that these lifestyles are necessarily idealised and are more lived in fantasy than in reality. The turning of objects into desirable commodities is a key feature of tourism, advertising and the department store. In this Corrigan is particularly alive to the gendered aspects of consumptive experience. He points out how women’s magazines, advertising and shopping have become pleasurable social practices in that they have commodified different aspects of femininity. The formation of women’s (and men’s) identity is forged through a variety of consumptive practices. In this respect, Corrigan provides both an accessible and valuable introduction to the sociology of consumption. I am sure that many students will enjoy his jargon-free style and the wide scope of the many of the examples that he uses. There is a problem that Corrigan is so concerned to stress the separateness of consumption from production that he rarely connects these dimensions to an analysis of capitalist society. This seems to me to be a mistake. While it is important to do justice to the meanings invested in goods by the consumer, it does seem odd to write a book on consumption while barely mentioning its connection with the emergence of design capitalism.

No such criticism could be levelled at Steven Miles. Miles’s focus links the diverse and meaningful arenas of consumption to how these practices might be related to the emergence of consumerism. This makes his book into a more ambitious attempt to map the field of consumption studies. In this respect, Miles offers the more stimulating book of the two, identifying what he calls the paradox of consumption. By this Miles means that a more designer oriented mode of capitalist production has obvious ties with the polysemic meanings that consumers are able to invest in ‘symbolic’ goods. The key point here is that consumerist ideologies are popular because they offer ‘personal freedom through economic means’. Turning to questions of structure and agency Miles then asks whether contemporary consumer society allows for ‘individual’ forms of creativity, and how much of what we do with the goods is already decided by wider structural processes. This issue, which productively preoccupies Miles for much of the book,
opens wider dimensions for the ‘critical’ sociologist beyond a concern with the communication of inter-group meaning. Throughout Miles demonstrates that, while consumerism appears to offer a means of self-exploration, it actually undermines more genuine forms of individualism by propagating mass consumerism and the obscene inequalities of global capitalism.

Miles illustrates his case by pointing to the manufacture of boy bands in popular music, the prioritisation of image over substance, and the increasing exclusion of working-class people from premiership soccer. For Miles consumption cannot be conceived of as radically separate from production. This is because our consumptive practices have to work within the ideological frameworks, material spaces and resources that are all largely determined by the operation of the market. Consumerism then is as enabling as it is constraining and encompasses the primary arena within which we conduct our everyday life. Indeed, it is the focus upon everyday life that enables Miles to evade some of the pitfalls of earlier generations of radical critique. Rejecting an analysis of false needs, Miles argues that we need to attend to the pleasures and exclusions of consumption within the broader framework of consumerism in modern capitalist society.

Miles has written a lively and spirited book that deserves a wide readership. Unlike many of the works in the current publishing wave that has accompanied the rise of consumptive studies he carefully ties the consumption of culture into the wider frameworks of consumer capitalism. The problem here is that this considerable strength also contains some of the book’s major weaknesses. While Miles provides a corrective to much that passes as consumption studies by linking the ideological dimensions of consumerism to particular practices of consumption, more ambivalent features are lost in this ideological gambit. Take popular music and football. Miles emphasises that the increasing penetration of capital into these domains has led to the emergence of a mass market. Whereas the advent of the Spice Girls has seen music reduced to a commodity, football has become increasingly oriented around the middle-class consumer. These arguments pick up on certain aspects while passing over others. In terms of popular music, we might also point to the wide availability of different kinds of music, the hybridisation of different styles and the opportunities that remain available for the promotion of aesthetic and radical sensibilities despite aspects of commercialisation. As for football the advent of the premier league has witnessed the exclusion of poorer sectors of the population, while witnessing an increase in the number of female supporters and the appearance of some of the world’s best players in the English league. Miles occasionally sacrifices some of the more complex aspects of consuming cultures at the alter of late capitalism. Unlike Corrigan’s book, I found that the later chapters of Miles’s account could easily be anticipated. Further, given that Miles has a particular political axe to grind, it is noticeable that he does not try to spell out what a more just future might look like, or distinguish at least some of the values upon which it could be based. As with a lot of books in this area Miles’s account exhibits a political deficit.

These books then can be taken as representative of some of the best and worst features of the sociology of consumption. While both remain important additions to the literature of the field they also signify that more thinking needs to be done. We await an introduction to the sociology of consumption that can adequately locate the specificity of consumption while relating it to a wider story of the development of consumerism and citizenship. Until consumption studies can locate the meanings we generate in our everyday practices to features of capitalism and democracy (I am of course here raising questions of exclusion, ecology and cultural policy amongst others), the picture that we paint will continue to be unnecessarily narrow.

University of Sheffield

Nick Stevenson
Each of these books aims to fill a gap in the ever-increasing literature on the sociology of health, illness and health care. As editors of *Sociological Perspectives on Health, Illness and Health Care*, Field and Taylor offer their collection as an up-to-date and in-depth ‘post-introductory’ text to the broad field of the sociology of health and illness (pp. xi–xii). The book aims to reflect the range and diversity of sociological approaches to the study of health and illness in contemporary Britain and to raise conceptual and methodological points that have relevance for sociologists working in other parts of the world. The text is, therefore, directed at readers with an existing knowledge of sociology and its application to the field of health.

In contrast, Iphofen and Poland’s *Sociology in Practice for Health Care Professionals* is designed as an alternative to more academic introductions to the sociological study of health, illness and health care. Today, a growing body of health-care professionals are required to have some understanding of sociology and its application to their discipline. Iphofen and Poland have devised a text to meet this diverse range of learning needs. They describe it as a ‘work book’ (p. viii), with exercises and key questions for the reader to address on their journey, ‘a voyage involving discovery, thought, dialogue and imagination’ (p. xi).

Breaking the book into fifteen short chapters makes it user friendly, and yet the subject matter remains challenging. The first chapter gives a short introduction to some of the main assumptions and theoretical viewpoints in sociology. Subsequent chapters address issues of power and inequality, the role of waged and unwaged carers, health education, gender, ideology and social welfare. The contemporary use of ‘classic’ concepts, such as stigma, socialisation and the sick role is offered along with some debate surrounding risk, reproductive technologies and resource allocation. The exercise boxes and key questions are thought-provoking and relevant. It is not the authors’ intention to provide comprehensive coverage of the field. Thus, each chapter ends with a short list of other sources that deal with the issues which Iphofen and Poland invite their readers to explore.

With its clear layout and well-written text, this book covers fundamental sociological concepts and theories and raises serious issues about health care. It succeeds in its aim of providing health-care professionals with the potential to engage in informed, rigorous and critical analysis of the impact of social issues in the everyday care of their patients.

Field and Taylor’s edited work, *Sociological Perspectives on Health, Illness and Health Care*, also stands out as by no means a run-of-the-mill text. The contributors have international reputations for their research. The book is divided into three sections. Part I is concerned with problems of conceptualisation and research. Kelly and Field (pp. 3–29) argue for a reformulation of the way chronic illness has been conceptualised by sociologists. Prior (pp. 21–38) provides a sophisticated understanding of how psychiatric cases are routinely constructed according to organisational requirements rather than towards some concept of the clients’ needs, symptoms or circumstances (p. 31). Taylor and Tilly (pp. 39–57) discuss the relationship between theory and method in the sociological interview. They offer an illustration of the implications and possibilities for data analysis. Bolton, Fitzpatrick and Hart’s chapter, ‘Researching a Public Health
Issue: Gay Men and AIDS (pp. 58–76), examines some of the key methodological issues involved in undertaking policy-driven research.

Part II addresses social divisions, such as gender, childhood, old age and their impact on health and illness. Part III, the final section, is given to the examination of the social context of health. Here, Baggott (pp. 155–91) challenges the presumed total breakdown of the post-war consensus on health policy. Saks (pp. 174–91) focuses on professionalism in health care. Field (pp. 192–210) discusses the changing nature of the care of dying people in the United Kingdom during the second half of this century. James (pp. 211–29) addresses the issue of the huge proportion of people being cared for by partners and families, and usefully points to the millions of ‘unwaged’ carers who form the very foundation of health and social care in Britain. James believes that these carers should be brought into the broader picture of health provision. Taken together, these three sections cover a range of theoretical issues and empirical work related to the sociology of health and illness.

The value of this book is that each chapter brings the sociology of health, illness and health care into the late 1990s. The book as a whole provides fresh insights into well-trodden areas of sociology as well as an examination of virtually unresearched areas. One of the real strengths of Sociological Perspectives on Health, Illness and Health Care is the way that this collection unpacks the theoretical assumptions that underlie sociological analysis. The book presents the complexity and diversity of social phenomena and provides the reader with the evidence to evaluate the arguments that have been raised. This collection offers a deep insight and the contributors convincingly convey their knowledge and its application for public health.

University of Nottingham

Elizabeth Chisholm

Crime and Social Exclusion
Catherine Jones Finer and Mike Nellis (eds.)

Understanding Crime Prevention: Social Control, Risk and Late Modernity
Gordon Hughes

Crime and Social Exclusion is the first in a series of books especially intended to stimulate fresh thinking by bringing a wide range of disciplines and approaches to bear on the social policy debate. It explores aspects of social exclusion and the measures taken to reduce its impact from the perspectives of criminology and social policy.

A link is made by the authors of two chapters between the spatial concentration of crime and victimisation and the spatial concentration of council housing, while other chapters stress the necessity of building a stronger sense of community, to decrease the incidence of alienation from the community, measures which are aimed at promoting social inclusion and thus reducing social exclusion.

The chapter entitled ‘Probation and Social Exclusion’ is an intelligent, well-written piece that draws on both quantitative and qualitative evidence to suggest that young people on the caseload
of the probation service are excluded, and the basis of this exclusion lies in poverty, unemployment, social and personal insecurity, lack of access to benefits of education and training, and housing and health problems. The authors of this chapter contend that despite their exclusion, young people have predominantly conventional hopes and aspirations, and that there is definite scope for a viable programme for their social inclusion. They then reveal several ways in which the Probation Service can reduce social exclusion: by decentralising probation offices, which should be regarded as community services; by ensuring that probation offices are open and accessible; by the Probation Service employing a wider range of people with more diverse skills; by the Probation Service developing supportive links; and by encouraging more research to generate knowledge about the Probation Service and its end users. These are valid suggestions which contain elements of common-sense, as does the contention that the Probation Service promotes social exclusion by aiming penal policy at an individualistic level, rather than aiming it at changing social circumstances.

Andrew Rutherford’s chapter provides a useful historical overview of the eliminative ideal, which was used to solve present and emerging problems by getting rid of troublesome and disagreeable people, with methods which were (and are) widely supported. Transportation – Britain’s use of Australia, Russia’s use of Siberia and France’s use of New Caledonia and Guiana – was explored, followed by the modern day example of the ‘three strikes’ law in California. It is a compelling chapter which provides an account of how socially excluded people tend to be treated within a legal and socially acceptable context.

In Understanding Crime Prevention Gordon Hughes aims to foster a broader and more critical understanding of what crime prevention has been in the past and may become in the future. This is presented within two closely linked analytical frames in contemporary social theory – the late modern risk society thesis and the debate around communitarianism. Hughes states that the late modern risk society thesis has emerged from sociological theorising on the changing nature of society in the late twentieth century and the gradual shift away from the certainties of modernity and the growth of fears of ‘new’ risks. Therefore, the late modern risk society thesis alerts us to the centrality of concerns over risk and insecurity. Furthermore, he adds that it is the routine activities of ordinary people in the mundane contexts of shared social life which are the key to successful crime prevention specifically and to social control more generally.

In this absorbing account, Hughes examines the work of Giddens and Beck in Chapter 7. Giddens’s views on the growth of ontological insecurity are discussed, as are Beck’s views on risk society. Giddens is also discussed in Crime and Social Exclusion, in the chapter entitled ‘Dangerous Futures: Social Exclusion and Youth Work in Late Modernity’, where his concept of ‘late modernity’ is utilised as it captures both continuity and change within society. Hughes, after exploring the work of Giddens and Beck, introduces three possible models of social control for the future. He terms them ‘fortress cities’, ‘high trust’ societies and ‘safe’ cities. He states that these scenarios are not likely to be realised in a ‘pure’ form as presented in these models, but believes that elements of all three are likely to resurface and converge in specific situations and locales.

The one unsatisfactory analysis in Hughes’s book concerns the examination of high-trust societies – notably that of Singapore. This criticism is also valid for Crime and Social Exclusion, concerning the chapter entitled ‘Framing the Other: Criminality, Social Exclusion and Social Engineering in Developing Singapore’ by John Clammer. Both authors fail to mention the difference between Eastern and Western moralities, and how these moralities shape attitudes towards social policy. Eastern morality may be conceptualised in terms of honour-based systems, whereas Western moralities may be conceptualised in terms of justice and rights. Clammer particularly conceptualises Singaporean society through his own framework of Western-based morality, and grounds his comprehension of that culture within gross generalisations.
This, however, does not stop both books being an enjoyable and educating read, and would be particularly suited to students and researchers who wish to know more about the discourses surrounding the topics of crime prevention and social exclusion.

Introduction to Therapeutic Communities (second edition)

David Kennard


Therapeutic Communities: Past, Present and Future

Penelope Campling and Rex Haigh (eds.)


These are the first titles in a new series exploring issues and practice in therapeutic communities. Kennard’s book updates the 1983 original. Whilst chapters on the history of the various types of therapeutic communities remain relatively unchanged, the book brings the reader up to date with new developments particularly in specialist areas, such as prisons and voluntary sector organisations. The major difference is that whereas in 1983 therapeutic communities were disappearing under advancing budget cuts and mental health reorganisation, today they are re-emerging, though often in different places and for different clients. Thus we are nowadays less likely to find therapeutic communities in hospitals, and more likely to find them in prisons, or small housing schemes: less likely to find them embraced with new enthusiasm in Britain, and more likely to see them developing in Italy or Greece. Kennard is well placed to provide this update: as ex-editor of the international journal *Therapeutic Communities*, he has been privy to therapeutic community developments all over the world, and meanwhile his clinical work at the Retreat in York has kept him in touch with events as they happen. The book is thoughtfully written, covering the arguments which have been put for and against therapeutic communities (do they liberate their clients or brainwash them?) and detailing core concepts and practices. Some therapeutic community variations are explained, especially the major differences between the democratic model, used mainly for personality disorder, and the concept-based model, aimed at drug abusers. The first edition has become an authoritative text, widely-cited and accessible to lay and professional readers alike; this version looks set to continue in that role.

*Therapeutic Communities: Past, Present and Future* is addressed to those who believe that growth and development is an essential part of being human, and that the capacity to care well for each other is a measure of our humanity (p. 11). Twenty authors, all practitioners, describe and reflect on therapeutic community theory and practice, and explore the difficulties and shortcomings of their work, as well as the benefits. The modern democratic therapeutic community movement began during World War II. Psychiatrists, charged with returning men to active duty, stopped delivering individual treatment, and began to enable the patient community to treat itself, by encouraging here-and-now confrontations about behaviour and explorations of intra-group tensions. The demise of therapeutic communities in the 1970s and 1980s is seen as a result of the dispersal of care into the community and a modern preoccupation with control and predicting dangerousness, which has decimated the time and energy available for creating therapeutic
relationships. Those therapeutic communities which have survived, or recently emerged, largely work with severe personality disorder. Research has shown that, for patients who stay the course, this treatment can greatly improve subsequent behaviour, feelings, outlook and (importantly in these resource-aware times) use of services. Several of the papers give detailed descriptions of the ordinary difficulties of working with such disturbed and damaged people. These show how difficult and slow it can be to create any kind of lasting therapeutic alliance with someone who has been seriously abused or neglected, and who displays high levels of suspicion, destructiveness and untrustworthiness. They show how expertly such patients can create rifts and splits in the community, and the consequent amount of honesty and self-awareness which staff need to keep the community together. They show, too, how sometimes none of this works, and communities seem to fall apart, and patients leave, never to return. The phrase ‘living learning community’ is repeated by several authors: the requirement for therapeutic communities to continually question why they are doing things, to avoid unthinking routine and institutionalisation of activities. There is an expectation that communities will rarely be in a state of equilibrium. The very instability of the group, though hard to live with, is only to be expected in a community of people learning about themselves and the consequences of their behaviour. Writers emphasise the need for tolerance towards anti-social behaviour, since this is not just unusual in a treatment setting, but very hard to maintain. Patients are often unpleasant, unhelpful, uncooperative, self-harming, destructive and hurtful, and tolerance is required if this behaviour is to be examined and understood by the community and the perpetrator. There is always the tendency for the community to drift towards stopping it or punishing it, and this too has to be watched. A section on specialist communities describes the particular structures and practices which have developed when working with personality disorder, offenders and children, and two papers describe how the approach is being used successfully with chronic schizophrenics, helping them learn to understand and manage their illness, and develop responsibility for looking after themselves. Relating the origin of his work with schizophrenia to the anti-psychiatry of the 1960s, Geoff Pullen underlines egalitarianism as one of the core features of therapeutic communities. He writes: ‘for me, the enduring contribution of Laing and the anti-psychiatrists was their pointing out that differences between staff and patients are trivial compared to what we have in common’ (p. 148). Other papers explore the cost-effectiveness of treatment, modes of training and appropriate methods of research.

Therapeutic communities were hailed in the 1950s as an antidote to the inhumanity of the large asylums. Today, attitudes have changed, and particularly for psychopaths and schizophrenics, concern has swung away from the patient and towards public safety. Patients are seen as too disturbed for ‘talk therapy’, or untreatable. Policy debates talk of ‘containment’ and ‘control’. This collection of short, often lively, and engaging papers, points out that there are other ways to view and treat mental and emotional disturbance, which are tried, tested and far more optimistic.

University of Manchester

BARBARA RAWLINGS

Gender and Catastrophe
Ronit Lentin (ed.)

Zygmunt Bauman claims that ‘the experience of the Holocaust contains crucial information about the society of which we are members’ (1989:xiv). He bemoans the lack of sociological inquiries into
the Holocaust and sees his book not as adding to specialist knowledge on the subject but as a way of feeding that knowledge into ‘the mainstream of our discipline’ (1989:xiii).

In a way, this edited volume continues Bauman’s project but extends it in two major ways. The first relates to the specificity of the Holocaust, and the second to its gendered character.

Lentin objects to the use of the word ‘Holocaust’ because, she says (p. 14), it ‘derives from the Greek Holocauston and literally means “whole burnt”, which many Jews, conscious of the implicit Christian notion of Jewish sacrifice or Calvary, reject’. The term which is used in Hebrew is ‘Shoah’. Claude Lanzman in his long important but problematic film Shoah used the Hebrew word as the name for his film, as part of the film’s project, which was to show the Holocaust as an event which was completely unique to the Jews. None of the others who were murdered by the Nazis for their origin, politics, religion or sexuality is mentioned in the film. Nor are the millions of Jews murdered by the Nazis by other methods, more comparable to other genocides. Lentin uses in this book the English translation of the word ‘Shoah’ – ‘Catastrophe’ – and one of the strengths of her book is that she links the Holocaust with other ‘man-made’ genocidal catastrophes. She collected in this volume articles about a whole range of contemporary and past catastrophes – from the war in Former Yugoslavia to nuclear testing in the Pacific to Comfort Women in Japan in World War II to the famine in Ireland, and more.

Lentin also argues that ‘in order to understand the full impact of extreme situations … definitions of catastrophe and of genocide itself, must be gendered … well beyond the discursive level’ (p. 5). She points out the specific targeting of women in many of these situations, as well as women’s participation as benefactors or perpetrators of genocidal processes. However, she argues against considering ‘women’ as a category of analysis across contexts. ‘Patriarchal and sexist gender relations and racism are not independent but are products of social relations of power and subordination along different constructions of difference and identity’ (p. 5).

Lentin’s examination of women’s roles ‘between victimhood and agency’ (p. 10) is highlighted in the other introductory article to the book, written by Joan Ringelheim, in relation to the process of remembering itself. Ringelheim claims that because ‘gender is considered irrelevant to the holocaust (p. 20), women survivors often have had ‘split memory’ in which specific forms of gender persecution and molestation remained overshadowed and unstated by other ‘nongendered’ memories.

This is not the case in catastrophes that have happened towards the end of the twentieth century. As the articles in the rest of the book demonstrate, gendered aspects of ethnic and national conflicts in Former Yugoslavia, Northern Ireland and Latin America, have been highlighted, both as victims – of rapes and displacements – and as agents. Women’s groups and networks have been crucial in resistance and anti-war movements during the last twenty years.

The nineteen individual articles in the book were all interesting, even if their style and level of analysis was somewhat uneven and the sequence of presentation somewhat arbitrary. My main disappointment with the book is that the articles as a rule focus on women without developing the more general side of gender analysis, which would have involved an analysis of masculinity too. However, given the general innovatory character of the book in a domain of analysis that until recently tended to be viewed with a hegemonic gender-blind gaze, the book adds an important contribution to the field.

Given the vast range of case studies in the book, there is only space here to give the readers some flavour of the book in outline. The book is divided into five parts: Part I, ‘Genders and Genocides’, includes the introduction by Ronit Lentin and a discussion on the significance of gender in memories of the Holocaust by Joan Ringelheim. Part II discusses ‘Women in a War Zone’ and includes discussions on constructions of gendered identities in the wars in Former Yugoslavia, Guatemala and Northern Ireland. Part III, ‘Captured Subjects: Displacing Women’s Bodies’,
discusses effects on women of partition in the Indian subcontinent, the cultural genocide in Tibet, nuclear testing in the Pacific and fundamentalism in Iran. In a way this part of the book looks the most eclectic. Part IV, 'Sexualized Slaveries', discusses 'Comfort Women' in Japan, women and slavery in Brazil and black slavery. The last part of the book, 'Gendered Victimization', deals with the gendered effects of migration, poverty and famine in Australia, Russia, Israel, Ireland and Bangladesh.

Together these form a wide selection of case studies from different parts of the world, making interesting and important reading, suitable for undergraduate as well as postgraduate students. The absence of some case studies, such as Rwanda, for instance, is regrettable, but as anyone who ever attempted to edit a book knows, it is never possible to include all the articles one would like.

REFERENCE

University of Greenwich

The Play of Reason: From the Modern to the Postmodern
Linda Nicholson

The Play of Reason is a collection of articles written between 1983 and 1997 on issues of modernity and postmodernity, gender, multiculturalism and the sociology of history. Linda Nicholson seeks to show the defects of totalising, foundationalist and universalist theoretical frameworks. The main target of the book is false generalisations that result from the hypostatisation of a particular to a universal. In contrast, Nicholson emphasises that the social is characterised by a multiplicity of intertwined differences and identities, which can only be grasped and criticised using theoretical categories that are historical and immanent. By looking at debates, especially within contemporary feminism, she shows that identity cannot be understood as clearly demarcated and fixed identities, but that identities and differences intersect in multiple ways, including historical.

Thus, Nicholson rejects much of what we may call modernist theory, as well as much of liberal thinking in terms of rights. Nicholson explicitly subscribes to a postmodern position, though she distinguishes herself from the postmodern particularism of Jean-François Lyotard, because she believes that we also need categories and theoretical tools to support critique of grand-scale injustices and societal structures. In addition, identities are never closed particularities. Central to the problems that Nicholson grapples with is the question of how to combine the particularity of identities with the generality of political struggle. Her solution is what she calls a 'coalition politics', that is, a political project in which different oppressed groups seek to find common ground for social struggle without cancelling out their differences.

The articles, culled from writing during the past two decades, are examples of historically oriented analyses (for instance, the family, the public/private distinction) as well as commentaries on and critiques of debates and other theorists’ work (for instance, Karl Marx, Lawrence Kohlberg, Charles Taylor). Although I am sympathetic to most of the readings and criticism in The Play of Reason, the book does stay on the surface, and it appears as merely an appetiser for further
readings. The book does not provide a comprehensive and theoretically well-founded analysis of
the problems of modern totalising theory, and it does not provide an alternative framework. For
instance, it would have been interesting to know more about the idea of ‘coalition politics’ and how
this type of politics is related to identity as a non-essentialist category and, hence, to the formation
of identity. There are good parts to the book, though, principally the concrete historical analyses,
but – because of the format of the book – even these remain at surface level.

University of Essex

Lasse Thomassen

Social Movements: An Introduction

Donatella della Porta and Mario Diani


This book provides a comprehensive overview of theory and research on social movements since
the 1970s by two of the most prominent scholars currently working in the field. The authors define
the aim of their book as ‘not a reconstruction of the “state of the art” in this field, or capable of
recognising the worth of all significant contributions in this line of research. It is, rather, an
attempt to present certain central problems of recent debates’ (p. 23). The book is an important
achievement; although not based on new research, it represents one of the most wide-ranging
surveys of social movements studies available in English. In addition to its scope, one of the best
features of this book is the inclusion of accessible and engaging sections on specific movements to
open each chapter; such sections will provide an effective way-in to the subject for new students.
While it is subtitled and marketed as an ‘introduction’ aimed at students, the book also contributes
to ongoing debates about the development of an integrated approach to social movements
analysis which would incorporate elements from the different ‘schools’ currently discernible.
However, this leads to some variation in the style and accessibility of individual chapters.

The opening chapter introduces the main theoretical perspectives on social movements which
have emerged in Europe and North America since the late 1960s: the collective behaviour, resource
mobilisation, political process and New Social Movements (NSMs) approaches. Drawing on
elements from both ‘European’ and ‘American’ traditions, the authors then propose a synthetic
definition of social movements as ‘(1) informal networks, based (2) on shared beliefs and
solidarity, which mobilize about (3) conflictual issues, through (4) the frequent use of various
forms of protest’ (p. 16). According to the authors, this definition serves to distinguish social
movements from related phenomena such as political parties, interest groups, religious sects and
isolated protest events.

The use of such an inclusive definition as a point of departure may be challenging for students
with a limited understanding of the distinct historical perspectives. Moreover, while the authors
indicate the NSM theories have been strongly criticised, later chapters tend to use the concept
fairly unproblematically (Chapter 8). In addition, other chapters use religious cults and terrorist
groups as examples of social networks and movements (Chapter 5); this sits uneasily with the
authors’ previous attempt to identify the specificity of social movements. However, these
problems are at least partly a reflection of the difficulty of constructing an integrated approach to
social movements analysis.

Following on from the definition quoted above, the authors indicate the four main ‘levels of
analysis’ of social movements in terms of which the rest of the book is structured: the structural
bases of conflict, collective identity construction and symbolic production, organisational forms and networks, and the political opportunities for protest. Each chapter combines case-studies with theoretical analyses, focusing on the key concepts and themes in the field: social networks, repertoires and cycles of protest, collective identities, the symbolic and cultural dimensions of collective action, organisational forms, political opportunity structures and the impact of social movements. However, given that this is an introductory text, the addition of a general conclusion summarising the main issues and debates covered in the previous chapters would have been useful.

The authors draw on an interesting array of movements from a range of European countries as well as from the United States. However, with the exception of a very informative discussion on protests against French nuclear testing in Mururoa (Chapter 7), most chapters focus exclusively on movements within ‘western democracies’. In the light of the growing body of work on movements elsewhere (which the authors acknowledge), an engagement with the important contribution of, for example, Latin American scholars would have been welcome.

As the most up-to-date and comprehensive review of social movements studies, this book will undoubtedly secure a wide readership. The bibliography of over forty pages is a particularly excellent resource and will be of great value both to students and researchers.

ROBERT GIBB
LOUISE RYAN

Caste
Ursula Sharma


Ursula Sharma’s Caste is a stimulating and topical discussion of a social concept full of controversies and arousing antithetical views among Western and Eastern sociologists. The fact that Sharma has had the opportunity to do research in India has been significantly important. It has helped her to place Western writers who have studied Indian caste into perspective. It has also helped her in locating the error of transplanting a concept from its original country to another. In Caste Sharma promises to update the theoretical field: to raise various possible dimensions of the applicability of caste as a concept in social science discourse, to embrace the discourse that will open up and to offer a critical exploration of the concept of caste as a tool for cross-cultural analysis.

The early chapters in this book are a precise and accessible discussion of the rationale behind the subject which is addressed by the author in the later chapters. While providing an overview of caste as a concept in various discourses the author not only narrates what happened in the intellectual world of the post-colonial period but also finds space to record her own critique. This evinces perceptive acumen; to quote: ‘if colonial rule did not actually invent caste then it certainly ensured its continued existence and exerted a powerful influence upon its modern form’ (p. 9).

Sharma discusses the writings of Max Weber and Celestin Bouglé, for they held diametrically opposite views on caste. ‘The one provides a theory of caste, the other a theory of the caste system’ (p. 14).

The author has noted that caste and race have been addressed as the typology of inequality. Comparing caste in India to race in the United States gives race a ‘glamour’ which covers up the
violence and injustice in its functioning. The author hints at it subtly. The comparative sociologists either criticised or were puzzled over the peculiarity of the Indian caste system in securing the compliance of those whom it oppressed, but Sharma points out a greater peculiarity of the Indian caste system which continues despite social reforms.

In the later chapters of the book she examines selected situations to decide how far caste as a concept is applicable within India for various cultural communities and outside India without overstretched it. She first focuses on the Indian communities, especially Muslims and Christians, and finds that though they profess to be egalitarian, they still have castes in an embryonic stage. Unable to secure a respectable status within the caste system, they have espoused a religion which has no caste (p. 50). The practice and the ideology, therefore, differ. The writer concludes that in all three communities – Hindu, Muslim and Christian – in India, there are groups which have a common identity and keep a degree of endogamy, but despite religious differences caste is still practised ‘patchily’. To sum up, ‘caste’ is a variant present in the non-Hindus as much as in the Hindus of India. Therefore, the author poses a question as to whether comparative sociologists still need to refer to caste or whether a general term like ethnic group would be better for comparative purposes. While examining cases of the application of the caste concept outside India, the author notes that caste-like structures are found among African (especially Christian) and Asian settlers abroad, as well as in Burukamin in Japan. Social scientists have used caste for social stratification purposes – for example, to distinguish blacks from other groups in the United States, as opposed to the class concept or even to find a solution to the cultural ambiguity of blacks. Can caste apply to ethnic relations? The writer holds that ethnicity and racialisation are quite sufficient to delineate differences in Western societies. Theorists of ethnic relations have probably dropped caste from their tool kit.

The eclectic approach of the author to a subject rife with controversies is reflected well in her frequent references to the limits she sets for her discussion. The conflation of contradictory views on caste is in itself interesting no doubt, but the question of the validity of its application outside its birthplace renders the issue much more absorbing. The manner of its discussion is such that the presentation is provocative.

University of Warwick

VINOD CHANDRA

Solution Centered Sociology: Addressing Problems Through Applied Sociology

Stephen F. Steele, AnneMarie Scarisbrick-Hauser and William J. Hauser


There is still some daring involved in declaring sociology to be a form of practice. The advocates of a radical version have been quiet for a long time. There are few open advocates of the social engineering version either. As for teaching sociology as a practical problem-solving subject, to European ears this sounds like New World Innocence. Certainly the authors of this book are unashamed society builders. With an all-American optimism they seek to translate years of professional experience into an introductory text. Within two chapters they ask their students to design new social structures; by the end of the third, they are encouraging them to recommend the introduction of new processes in organisations.
This rush to action in the early chapters is likely to put many instructors off before they get to valuable ideas for teaching in the remaining two-thirds. There are separate chapters on changing organisational strategy, leadership development, multicultural awareness, analysing trends, deviance, emergencies, demography. Taken together they make up an impressive repertoire for a teacher who shares the authors' enthusiasm for the idea that there are no real-life problems to which sociology cannot be applied. The weakness of the first part of the book arises because the converse is not true. There are themes in sociology which are fundamental and pervasive but do not convert easily into widely acceptable practical lessons. Recall Garfinkel's trust-breaching exercises, or Gouldner's theoretical communities. For basic ideas of structure, culture and process the authors might have been better advised to adopt an observational or learn-through experience model rather than repair and deliver.

It is not always obvious what previous level of knowledge of sociology the authors require. They are experienced in research, management and consultancy. Hauser and Steele have been presidents of the American Society for Applied Sociology. They exude confidence that there is no trade secret that cannot be conveyed in elementary terms. But one chapter on demography can scarcely bring the kind of student the authors address (‘Yes, we are talking about math, but not difficult math’) to the point of being able to supply a marketable skill. Nor are many executives going to be impressed with the scenario they have commissioned if it declares, as the book does, ‘Another macroscopic trend is economics'. Since all real-life problem solving in which sociologists are going to be employed will involve other professionals too, the authors definitely need to address relations with other disciplines much more extensively.

Notwithstanding these criticisms, the authors deserve enormous credit for putting sociology’s claims to be a practical discipline in the forefront of their concerns. Our subject has a pervasive influence as a cultural precondition and as a contribution to public discourse. This has not happened without the input of practising sociologists, but too often they have been content to let this happen by osmosis rather than with the explicit identification and advertisement of the skills they employ. Often, as the authors say, they ‘disappear’ as sociologists, not acknowledging the identity any more. The result is craft rather than professionalism. Sociology becomes subterranean mystery, with an occasional notoriety represented symbolically through the Introducing Sociology textbook, the only legible title on the shelf of the student hooker to whom Tom Cruse is drawn in the film Eyes Wide Shut.

In fact a vast amount of the reporting of current events in the United States could hardly begin without a sophisticated knowledge of social structure. Reporting the Columbine massacre has displayed the understanding of the peer-group process for which the authors’ chapter on deviance would make an admirable introduction and which indeed, in its examples, almost anticipates that terrible event. Hardly a day passes without a sociologist being cited in a quality paper like the New York Times. Sociology is out in the open, but the codification of its core competencies has scarcely begun and in this respect the authors are pioneers and deserve our gratitude. The fact that Bill Hauser has combined a successful career in a corporation ranked by Fortune 500 as most admired in the United States (Rubbermaid Inc.) with this disciplinary commitment to sociology should serve as an example and encouragement to those who faintheartedly have never seen an alternative to the sell-out or opt-out dilemma. For British sociologists in particular, it can make a very useful contribution to the discussion of core competencies, which is a necessary part of Chris Middleton's curriculum project.
The fashion for purely descriptive commentaries on social life within the academy, along with managerial and administrative prescriptions for massaging contemporary social ills, has marked a shift from critical scholarship that seeks to investigate social problems within deeper transformations in the material rationale and organisation of contemporary societies. This shift is particularly acute in approaches to understanding crime – the return to a concern with the ‘individual’ and his/her ‘motivation’, socio-biological make-up and/or culpability heralds the rise of a populist common-sense criminology abstracted from historical, political and social processes. A ‘critical criminology’, in Taylor’s sense, must redress this by investigating etiological links between crime and contemporary social relations, increasingly characterised as market relations.

In questioning these new orthodoxies Taylor’s agenda is more sociological and seeks to contextualise our understanding of the vexed issues thrown up by the contemporary ‘problem of crime’ – its representation; the fears, panics and anxieties it provokes; its changing character and form; its seemingly inexorable rise; the crisis in responsibility for crime control – within an analysis of the material and political changes that have restructured labour markets, family structures and gender relations, the nation state and the increasing gulf between rich and poor. More specifically, Taylor seeks to argue ‘that the transformations in economic life in the last two decades have produced a new social reality, with specific and analysable implications for the “life chances” and opportunities for individuals situated at different points in the new social reality’ (p. 224). Taylor’s comparative analysis marshals evidence from across Europe and North America, where this new social reality is structured through a series of transitions discussed in terms of the job crisis (creating new forms of inclusive social structure); the crisis of material poverty and social inequality; the fear of falling and fear of the other; the crisis of the nation state (fiscal constraints and a crisis in competence to address a range of social problems); the crisis of inclusion and exclusion; the crisis of culture; the crisis of masculinity and the gender order; and, lastly, the crisis of the family and parenting. These series of perplexing changes are not always mutually exclusive and will inform patterns of criminal activity and victimisation. This is evidenced in Taylor’s discussion of young black men in the United States (and to some extent Britain) who have been disproportionately affected by ‘deindustrialisation’ alongside patterned discrimination, racialisation and poverty. The turn to informal economies of crime, underpinned by a reaffirmation of a ‘muscular masculinity’, contextualises the high crime rates and patterns of victimisation within black communities (pp. 30–1).

Alongside these developments is the ninth and over-arching transformation – the shift to the ‘post-Fordist market society’. Taylor’s thesis is that the marketisation of social relations with its culture of competition, initiative and accumulation has been central to the production of crime regarding its incidence, form and patterns of victimisation within different locales in the new market order. Thus, individuals may ‘drift into crime’ within the changing configurations of market opportunity. For example, the range of frauds committed by professionals in the City of London encouraged in the name of ‘flexible accumulation’ has taken place in an increasingly internationalised market place characterised ‘by an endless war of “enterprising individuals” and corporations for financial position and return’ (p. 227). At the same time new patterns of social marginalisation have encouraged different ‘local economies of crime’ as the most publicly visible material adaptations for survival within local markets (see Chapter 5).

The rise of insecure, ‘flexibilised’ labour markets, the ‘new’ class struggles over housing, the
crisis of masculinity encouraged by the decline of discipline and male bonding found in the factory are some of the areas discussed as representative of the decline of the old certainties associated with ‘Fordist societies’. Taylor documents change in these areas with cogency, linking them to the contemporary contours of crime, in its real and imaginary forms (for example, the strife for dominance in public space of ‘angry young men’), and responses to crime (as displayed in the ‘turn towards a private or tribal form of self-protection’ (p. 26)). The ‘condition of youth’ in market society is dealt with in Chapter 3 and covers the risks faced by young people (withdrawal of benefits, insecure work, the increasing use of illegal and legal drugs, intensified policing in schools and public space) and the risks they are perceived to pose to others (most usually in the form ‘the aggressive colonisation of street space by young men’ (p. 77)). The sense of ‘losing out’ is felt particularly acutely amongst ‘the young’ in market society who may be more likely to enter alternative criminal careers.

Chapter 4 charts the segregation and policing of the industrial/Fordist city which has been placed alongside the Utopian sensibilities of planners that came to prominence in the post-war period. The development of the post-Fordist city, with its emphasis on a business-led repositioning and re-imaging of the urban centre in line with global competition for inward investment, has heightened concerns to do with the lack of a governing custodial authority over space, particularly in the light of the visibility of homeless people, gangs of young men and other dangerous categories set at unnerving the pleasures of consumption (p. 129). Taylor (in Chapter 7) describes how market society is transforming the delivery and practice of social control away from state-sponsored, more or less coherent strategies of order, towards privatisation, which is gaining particular purchase within the public spaces of residence and consumption. The involvement of private interests in the business of policing and punishment (indeed justice) provokes one of Taylor’s central concerns – the possibilities for the identification and defence of a ‘public interest’.

In this his latest work, Taylor is less concerned with a critique of market society ‘in which there is a self-evident alternative’ (p. 64) and more with situating the analysis of crime within the reality of market society. The book is therefore not so much about ‘what can be done?’ but how we can adequately theorise crime. Disappointingly, Taylor, in his final chapter, calls for a reworking of Merton’s theory of conformity and deviance within the new market situation that has posed the problem once again of what counts as a ‘legitimate’ opportunity structure and, therefore, crime.

There are other fruitful ways, which this book does not emphasise, in which links between the market and crime can be explored. First, it can be noted that market society puts forth no ‘opportunities’ regarding the possibility of alternative ways of defining crime. Some of the new and not so new forces and technologies of regulation and policing in market society are aimed at some fairly old ‘Fordist’ enemies, albeit reconstituted under market conditions. The over-emphasis on the de-centring of policing agencies misses the ideological congruence with established and ‘older’ practices regarding the targets of surveillance and criminalisation associated with the penal-welfare state. The re-scaling of the state needs to be explored with respect to the opportunities for powerful interests discursively and materially to attempt a normative re-ordering of ‘public’ space – using as one component arguments around ‘crime’ – in line with market rationale. Secondly, the problem of power and domination in contemporary societies still needs to be articulated and where necessary challenged, for example, in investigating the strategies of local growth coalitions who, as a set of ‘new primary definers’, are concerned hegemonically to construct a ‘public interest’, usually around common enemies to do with highlighting particular forms of crime. Like Taylor’s ‘angry young men’, the colonising impulse of these partnerships for growth upon public space are beginning to be a focus of concern for communities concerned not just about ‘crime’ but the implications for social justice that flow from local entrepreneurial strategies.
In a book that—for me—captures so well a sense of entrapment and even despair, particularly concerning young people, within the realities of the market, is there not a role for positing alternative visions of social order? Or is there really no alternative to the market? Any arguments for a just set of social arrangements (even arguments for ‘socialism’) need not shy away from ideals of equitable forms of social solidarity, justice and human rights. In this sense the call for a defence of ‘some notion of a public interest’ (p. 234) (on which the author is vague in this book), if taken seriously, must take us beyond criminal acts—and more critically problematise the category of ‘crime’—and into a concern with social justice.

Liverpool John Moores University

ROY COLEMAN

Transforming Managers: Gendering Change in the Public Sector
Stephen Whitehead and Roy Moodley (eds.)

The public sector has undergone considerable transformation over recent years as attempts have been made to replace the old ethos of public service with a more ‘business-focused’ approach. This shift has had a profound effect on the character of employment in the sector. Importantly, there is evidence that gender relations are in the process of being redefined. The representation of women in managerial positions has increased, and it has been suggested that the new management practices being adopted are more ‘feminine’ in style. However, despite these transformations, the gender implications of restructuring in the public sector have been neglected by academics.

In this context, Transforming Managers: Gendering Change in the Public Sector is a timely publication, and one which addresses an important research gap. The book is an edited collection of thirteen chapters written by academics from a range of backgrounds including education, organisational analysis and sociology. The volume is split into two sections, reflecting the authors’ shared belief that a focus on ‘gender’ should involve the study of both men and women. Part I, ‘Women in the management arena’ consists of six chapters concerned with the responses of women managers to recent transformations in public sector management. Part II, ‘Unmasking men and management’ turns to explore men’s experiences of organisational restructuring.

The contributors to this book are united by an interest in exploring the ways in which gender identities are socially constructed in the workplace. Rather than viewing gender as a fixed set of characteristics, the authors emphasise that gender identities are continually reshaped. A common thread running through each of the chapters is a concern with how individuals experience these gender transformations. As Whitehead and Moodley observe, the book engages with an interesting debate centring on gender, change, dominance, resistance and management, with the contemporary public sector the specific research focus.

The editors claim that a key aim of this collection is to examine critically the ‘often random, generally unpredictable, yet political (gender) transformations that occur in public-sector management’ (p. 2). However, it is the view of this reader that this claim is not fully justified by the contents of this book. The main problem is that the collection is rather unbalanced. This is largely because the book emerged from a conference entitled ‘Men in Management: Changing Cultures of Education’, and as a consequence, eight of its thirteen chapters focus on the education sector. The only other organisations examined in any detail are the House of Commons (Whitehead) and a local authority (Maile). A further chapter bundles together the diverse experiences of women
managers working in higher education, the social services, local government, the National Health Service and the Probation Service in order to discuss how women managers in the public sector ‘experience their bodies at work’ (Brewis).

As an outcome of the restricted range of organisations studied, this book does not capture the complexity of the gender transformations at work in the public sector. However, the eight chapters on education do provide a wealth of rich information on the gender implications of current changes taking place in secondary, further and higher education. The chapters by Meehan, Thom, and Ozga and Walker, for example, together successfully demonstrate how the masculinist culture of managerialism has put new obstacles in the way of women managers, and discuss how these might be challenged. A further strength of the book lies in the authors’ emphasis on their personal experiences of employment in the education sector. None of the contributors to this volume attempts to write from a detached position, and some explicitly ‘write themselves into’ their stories of organisational change.

There is undoubtedly much in this book for those with interest in, or experience of, management in the education sector. The book will also be of relevance to those readers interested in feminist theory and Foucauldian organisational analysis. However, despite the title of this book, there is less for readers seeking a more general text examining the complex changes currently taking place in the public sector. After reading this book I was convinced of the need for an edited volume examining the gender transformations now occurring in a broader range of public sector organisations.

*University of Newcastle*  
VICKI BELT