This is a very dense volume. The origins of the book are set out clearly in the first lines of the introduction: the chapters are the result of a large-scale collaboration funded by the EU under the Seventh Framework Programme call. The volume is organized around three themes, each of which is awarded its own self-contained section. Within each section are a set of chapters, which starts with, what the editors describe as, a general introduction before moving on to the specialist material.

The first theme, multidimensional poverty, starts with a chapter on the measurement of poverty to introduce the field before covering topics such as poverty and the dimensionality of welfare, income, deprivation and social exclusion, and fuzzy set measures of poverty. Of these chapters, the fourth (dealing with income deprivation and social exclusion) is a stand-out contribution, partly because it presents a case study grounded in real data and real poverty processes, and partly because the authors reflect critically about the topic with which they are engaged. This is something that is frequently missing in the other chapters.

The second theme, longitudinal and chronic poverty, starts with a detailed discussion about the time-dimension of poverty before covering material deprivation, chronic poverty, poverty policy options and finishing with a chapter on world poverty and the options that may exist for reducing inequalities. The first chapter in this section is well laid out and introduces the topic well but, as with many of the contributions in this book, the focus of the work is on the data and the variables not on the individuals to whom the data relate or to the processes that may contribute to the temporal dimensions of poverty. Anyone hoping that the policy chapter (Chapter 9) would provide a link to the world of policy will find the chapter wanting: the empirical example contained within the chapter is there as an illustration of what might be possible and not as the focus of the discussion.

The third section on small area estimation (SAE) methods is introduced by the only genuinely accessible overview in the book. The following four chapters then provide specific case studies into micro aspects of the SAE problem and solutions or methods to address them.

The final chapter returns to the editors, who attempt to provide not only a conclusion in the traditional sense, but also to bring together the three topics within the book and provide methods that can combine the measurement and temporality within small areas. At this point, the volume begins to make more
sense as a collection of work, as a coherent set of ideas that are interlocking and not just as three distinct sections. The purpose of the book is to explore better, more robust and more revealing ways to describe poverty at the local level. Contributions to the methodological literature include the introduction of the fact that areas change over time and that poverty now is also a function of poverty in the future. More importantly, the thread that appears with the fuzzy set analysis is brought implicitly to the fore: whilst we can measure poverty, we should understand that the final numerical value ascribed to an area is not the definitive value. Rather, there is uncertainty around that value and that uncertainty is important and should be measured, reported and understood.

Ultimately, this is an intriguing book on many levels. The breadth of topics covered and the detail of the methods used are without doubt outstanding. I learnt much about how poverty could be measured, and the challenges that face analysts in so doing. Within this volume, some of the leading names in SAE have provided interesting and provoking contributions. However, this is also the weakness of the volume: for all the depth and breadth about poverty it is still a methods book, and at times it would have been useful to get a sense that the authors and editors could stand back and view the world beyond the variables in the analysis and consider the meaning of their estimations and the processes that underpinned the descriptions of poverty that they were reporting. This volume will make a useful addition to the economics sections of many libraries and to the bookshelves of those who routinely deal with the estimation, identification and measurement of poverty. For those dealing with the day-to-day realities of poverty there are glimmers of interest, but their shine is lost in the density of the methodological work all too often. This might appear strange given the title of the book firmly states that the contribution is methods-based. However, just as Chapter 2 observes that without considering data and variables poverty theory lacks base, so without theory and consistent focused empirical examples the methods become abstract and intangible.

David Manley, University of Bristol

Practising Social Inclusion
Edited by Ann Take, Beth R. Crisp, Melissa Graham, Lisa Hanna, Sophie Goldingay and Linda Wilson

With social inclusion remaining a key policy focus globally, this text provides a contemporary focus on social inclusion practice, drawing together a range of international case studies. Subsequently, it offers a wide-ranging view of social inclusion practice, providing insights into a number of key issues and discussions. Its first chapter engages with the difficult challenge of providing a theoretical overview (the focus of a previous book) establishing a foundation upon which the chapters are built. Consequently, there is limited discussion of some of the nuance and challenges that exist in social
exclusion conceptual debates, but contributes a good grounding. It moves on to explore some of the wider issues for each substantial section of the book (practising inclusion in policy; practising inclusion in service design; practising inclusion in service delivery; practising inclusion in community life; and practising inclusion in research). Again, a brief overview is provided drawing in theoretical and research issues of each section to set the foundation for the case studies.

Each section is built up of a series of chapters exploring a specific case study related to the theme of that section. Here is where some of the difficulties with the text start to show. Whilst Chapter 1 goes some way to establishing an overarching narrative, how this narrative is brought into the chapters varies greatly. Some chapters make clear their links to social exclusion debates, demonstrating key links to core conceptual ideas and thinking, others are less clear and make vague associations to their case studies and some of the themes highlighted in Chapter 1. Chapter 2’s exploration of ‘conscience clauses’ is an example of this, in that it offers an interesting discussion of the issue, but does not provide a fully convincing account as to why this is an important consideration within social inclusion or how it links to the focus of the section, ‘Practising Inclusion in Policy’. In contrast, Chapter 17 examines informed consent forming a number of associations to practising inclusion in research and demonstrating the wider relevance to research practice from a social inclusion standpoint.

Chapter 17 is also an example of one of the more critically analytical chapters in the book. A number of chapters provide insightful examinations of their chosen case studies, but these are often positive tales of how effectively these examples lead to social inclusion. Whilst it is important to present these outcomes, there is limited discussion of the problems, challenges and barriers experienced during the efforts to create and establish inclusive practice. The messy reality seems to be missing from a number of the chapters, and often this is where frontline learning is at its most effective. Some chapters offer such insights (i.e. Chapters 9 and 14) and others are more cautious and critical of the use of key ideas within social inclusion discourse (i.e. Chapter 16). But this more critical consideration is generally limited.

For the social policy audience, this book will be of interest to those researching community-based interventions and social exclusion. However, the text is a more sociological exploration of such initiatives. By this I mean that less attention (if any) is given to actual practice, organizational structure, day-to-day operations and the facilitation efforts of frontline practitioners to engage citizens. Rather, the chapters, generally, offer interesting insights into community practice, making clear the guiding principles and values of practice. How these are put into practice is often unsaid; the title of the text gives the impression that these are the very issues that will be discussed. A number of chapters provide interesting accounts of users’ experiences to support the conclusion drawn by authors, that these initiatives can facilitate social inclusion; but the how is often absent. In the concluding chapter, the editors claim that the chapters have gone beyond identifying mechanisms and processes to consider how to work towards inclusion. Whilst this is true, it would have been illuminating for the reader to have more information on the
mechanisms and processes that allow community organizations to work towards inclusion.

Lee Gregory, University of Birmingham

Social Capital and Health Inequality in European Welfare States
By MIKAEL ROSTILA

This book examines different aspects of social capital (social trust, social contacts and social resources, although argues that the former two dimensions are pre-conditions rather than social capital per se) and how these relate to health and health inequalities in European welfare states. It is refreshing that this book considers a balanced view of social capital by examining both its positive and negative effects on health and health inequalities whilst taking into account the impact of broader historical and political contexts for the creation and maintenance of social capital. It tests the assumption that greater spending in universal welfare states weakens social bonds due to the promotion of individualism and therefore less dependence on family and friends.

The book is empirically strong as it presents cross-national statistical analyses that challenge what has previously been hypothesized about universal welfare spending and social capital: in fact, the opposite is found to be true, with higher social protection spending in social democratic welfare states stimulating rather than ‘crowding out’ social capital, measured by social trust and social resources. That said, within-country analysis of Sweden reveals that inequalities in social capital could lead to health inequalities. This unequal distribution of social capital is significant when thinking about its darker sides. The book argues that this set of analyses presented in Chapter 7 coincided with a decrease in state generosity in Sweden during the same period, which may explain why we see an unequal distribution in social capital between social class groups. The darker sides are considered further in Chapter 8 by empirically testing the well-known phrase, ‘birds of a feather flock together’, through an exploration of migrant homophily in a Swedish context, whereby detrimental health effects were found for migrants with highly homogeneous and closed networks, whereas no such association was found for native Swedes. Importantly, the book critically reflects on limitations of the statistical analyses using cross-sectional national data and the inability to tease out reverse causality, although these are common problems in most analyses which are not unique to the analysis presented in this book. Attempts are made to examine longitudinal data, but only several years’ data is examined here and a longer trajectory would have been beneficial.

Conceptually, the book bridges together both collective and individual notions of social capital. It also discusses the multi-dimensional attributes of social capital using various concepts, such as bonding and bridging, strong versus weak ties, and so forth. It recognizes the importance of not lumping together different aspects of social capital. Pathways between these different
aspects of social capital and health are discussed but they could have been expanded on in some places, especially when reflecting on the empirical findings.

So where does this book leave us in terms of thinking about public health policy implications? Rostila argues that we need to consider increasing levels of social capital in order to promote health. At the same time, he recognizes that this is not an easy task given the historical and political contingency of social capital. Second, universal welfare policies appear to be important for stimulating social capital so he advocates more investments in welfare and social goods. Lastly, he states that policymakers should acknowledge the broader social contexts when trying to build social capital since bridging social capital is extremely important, particularly as Chapter 8 demonstrates some of the more detrimental effects of belonging to homogeneous groups.

Overall, an interesting and compelling read. To my knowledge, this is the first book to comprehensively examine the impact of welfare state regimes on social capital and how this relationship may impact on health and health inequalities. There is much focus on social democratic welfare regimes compared to post-socialist regimes, with comparatively little attention paid to the other regime types, which may have enhanced this book. I would highly recommend this book to academics and policymakers alike. Chapter 2 would also provide a sound theoretical foundation for students new to this widely debated concept.

Jo Cairns, Durham University

Critical Leadership: Leader–follower Dynamics in a Public Organization

By Paul Evans, John Hassard and Paula Hyde


There can be little doubt that the topic of leadership is an important preoccupation within our everyday lives. Leadership, in one form or another, seems to be the cause of, and solution to, just about any issue we might care to think about. Public services have not escaped this trend; in the reform of UK public service, leadership has been an important theme and much has been written about the ways in which we might seek to produce more effective leadership of public services. However, this literature has largely been dominated by a rather functionalist research paradigm which contains both a number of assumptions about the roles of leaders and followers, and unquestioned social and cultural norms aligned with the Western industrial (and largely American) context that it has been forged out of. This book is situated within a different kind of perspective to these more mainstream studies. It adopts a ‘critical lens . . . to examine the dynamics of the relationship between leaders and followers in their normal work context, and the impacts of these dynamics’ (p. 1).

Critical Leadership is based on an in-depth study of an English local authority as it went through a particular leadership challenge initiative. The study focuses on the dynamics of the leader–follower relationship and explores these as they play out through a series of different work situations. The book
is organized into three main parts: the first part examines the literature base and methodology of the study; the second part sets out the research data gathered in the study; and the third part examines the discussion and conclusion component of the book.

Part I provides a comprehensive account of the literature on leadership studies, providing a historical and methodological critique of more mainstream literature concerning the relationship between leaders and followers, and setting out an account of what a Critical Theory of leadership studies involves. This is followed by an account of the context that the case study was operant within and an overview of the methodological considerations involved in the research. Given the claims made about the unique nature of this study within the field of leadership, much of this chapter is given over to rehearsing the ontological and epistemological aspects of methodological debate rather than detail of the research approach.

Part II sets out research evidence in chapters according to a range of different work contexts. The contexts include a seminar on the leadership challenge that the research covers (Chapter 5), a meeting concerning assessment of the local authority’s corporate and children’s services (Chapter 6), a management team meeting chaired by the chief executive (Chapter 7), an initiative led by human resources to establish a new management accountability matrix (Chapter 8), a director’s management team meeting (Chapter 9), and meetings between elected politicians and senior managers (Chapter 10). Whilst all of these events are interesting and the data is presented in a detailed and considered manner, to some extent by choosing these particular examples the authors are perpetuating the very tendencies that they accuse the mainstream literature of. These are all examples of highly ritualized events where the ‘rules of the game’ will largely transcend the particularities of that meeting. One of the challenges of this is that it speaks less to, or perhaps underplays, the importance of the everyday warp and weft of organizational interactions – and which a critical ethnography-based approach would be well equipped to speak to.

Part III sets out the conclusions that can be drawn from this study, stating:

we have set out a challenge to the ideological foundations of leadership and in doing so we have outlined a politically relevant interpretation of the dynamics of the leader–follower relationship that balances the power relations inherent in that relationship and provides a framework for enhanced explanatory enquiry of leader–follower relations in a wide variety of organizational settings. Many of the constructs contained within normative leadership models correspond directly to constructs of observable political behaviour, and so we conclude that there is a direct correspondence between leadership and political behaviour (p. 190)

Whilst these conclusions are in line with the discussion set out in the book and the authors are right to draw attention to this often neglected component of these dynamics, it also misses some important contributions that have been made to this literature in recent years. Specifically, it misses the work that Jean Hartley has developed (e.g. Hartley et al. 2013). Whilst these
contributions may not be from a Critical Theory perspective as such, there is
much here that can speak to the issues of leader–follower dynamics and could
perhaps further enhance the framework set out in this book.

Reference
Hartley, J., Fletcher, C. and Ungemach, C. (2013), Political Astuteness in Organizational

Helen Dickinson, University of Melbourne

Public Management and Complexity Theory: Richer Decision-Making in
Public Services
By Mary Lee Rhodes, Joanne Murphy, Jenny Muir and John A. Murray

This is an interesting and brave attempt to apply complexity theory to the
nitty-gritty and messy world of public services. Too much complexity writing
is content with broad theoretical musings or formal model building, devoid of
empirical engagement. This study may not entirely succeed in its ambition;
but the ambition itself is a noble one.

The opening chapter lays out a framework for analysis in terms of
complex adaptive systems. It also introduces the empirical terrain for the
chapters that follow: urban regeneration projects and healthcare informa-
tion systems in Northern Ireland and the Republic, both understood by
references to the larger social, economic and administrative contexts in
which they sit. The two chapters that follow apply to each of these terrains
the analytical framework elaborated in Chapter 1. In both cases, the authors
conclude, it is reasonable to claim that these are empirical examples of
complex adaptive systems; this is the argument of Chapter 4. Nevertheless,
this claim rests on somewhat modest foundations. What Chapter 1 offered
was a list and short description of six ‘core elements’ of complex adaptive
systems: what the ensuing chapters do is to discover expressions of each of
those elements within the chosen empirical terrains. The analytical leverage
that Chapter 1 offers is, however, only modest; and the reader not previ-
ously familiar with complexity literature may find it difficult to understand
the analytical value-added that it brings.

Part 2 of the book is intended to make up for this, by a more detailed
exploration of the complex adaptive system dynamics that the case studies
reveal: and to do so in terms that are relevant for both the researcher and the
practitioner. Some nice linkages are made to other policy literatures, includ-
ing for example Kingdon. Importantly, moreover, the discussion brings
centre-stage the discussion of power: central to any serious analysis of policy
and social change, but marginal to most writing on complex systems (espe-
cially insofar as this arises out of scholarship in the natural and information
sciences). This part of the discussion might have been used as a vantage point
from which to develop a more fundamental critique of complexity theory as
applied to the social world, but that opportunity has not been taken.
Notwithstanding what is said above about formal model building devoid of empirical engagement, it is important that, in applying complexity theory to the social world, we make use of the non-linear – and often counter-intuitive – models that this literature affords. This also is an opportunity that has not been taken. Nevertheless, it is on this that the final paragraphs of the book focus, and to which the authors seem disposed in due course to turn.

_Graham Room, University of Bath_

Transformation of the Employment Structure in the EU and USA, 1995–2007
Edited by Enrique Fernandez-Macias, John Hurley and Donald Storrie

This book is a study of patterns of labour market change, focusing mostly on experiences in European countries. The primary concern is to examine the distribution of new jobs growth during the period 1995–2007 and to assess whether this growth was concentrated among jobs which were considered to be ‘good’, or among those which were less good (or ‘bad’). In doing so, it provides an evidence base for progress towards the aim of the EU’s Lisbon Agenda – to grow ‘more and better jobs’ across Europe.

The authors’ present an analysis drawing from a large body of research carried out under the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) JOBs project. The central method of study, termed the ‘jobs approach’, is to use a quintile distribution of jobs to examine the patterns of employment growth. This is an extension of the methodology developed by the American sociologists Erik Olin Wright and Rachel Dwyer (2000) to study labour market change in the USA during the 1990s. For the most part, job quality is benchmarked using wages, although in some sections of the book other measures using skills and an index of objective and subjective measures are introduced.

The book is structured to use the ‘jobs approach’ to develop learning about how changes in employment structures may have impacted differentially across different countries and particular groups. It contributes to recent debates about labour market polarization which have been most widely associated with the work of labour economists (Goos and Manning 2007; Autor et al. 2006). In their analysis of European countries, the authors find support for the notion of the structural upgrading of employment, with the strongest employment growth in many countries being orientated towards higher-skill/higher-wage jobs. However, they also find evidence of growing polarization in some countries.

The book is an edited volume consisting of eight chapters with contributions from authors with expertise in specific countries and issues. The first two chapters provide an overview followed by a relatively detailed description of the methodological approach. Chapters 3–6 provide the core empirical
sections. These address patterns of change in the employment structure of European countries, the USA, by gender and for migrants. The later chapters of the book address issues relating to the role of policy in post-socialist accession countries and the role of the institutional context in skills and wage mismatches. The authors also develop alternative measures of job quality. The final chapter considers the impact of previous recessions and recoveries on the employment structure, and extends the analysis to look at patterns of change during the crisis. The chapter evidences a relatively consistent (though not universal) pattern of higher wage jobs being more resilient to the recent recession, while jobs around the centre of the wage distribution were lost in greater numbers.

Overall, the book provides a wide-ranging evidence base for the structural changes to European and US labour markets during the long period of economic growth from the mid-1990s to the late 2000s. It presents an impressive range of analyses of substantive changes in the labour market and how these differ between countries and groups of workers. There is, however, a drawback to the way in which the book is structured. It is very wide in its scope and this means that important issues which are raised briefly cannot be given the depth of focus which they deserve. In particular, while the book demonstrates differences in national patterns of structural employment change, the analysis of the drivers of these differences is much less developed.

The book will be of interest to scholars seeking an overview of employment change in European countries as well as those with interests in the labour market experiences of particular groups of workers. The chapters can largely function as standalone contributions for those with specific interests. The book should also be accessible for advanced undergraduate students studying labour modules. In addition, it should be of interest to policymakers concerned with employment issues.

References


Paul Sissons, Coventry University