happened in other systems. Second, most of the essays and certainly the emphasis pre-dates the current financial crisis and the return (in some countries more than others) to high unemployment and sluggish rates of growth. The book contains all the conceptual apparatus to consider what might be the effects of this latest recession, the latest in a long line of challenges to welfare systems.

Stephen McKay

Leading Public Sector Innovation: Co-creation for a better society
By Christian Bason
Policy Press, Bristol, 2010. ISBN 978-1-84742-633-8; £21.99 (pbk).

Innovation implies a sense of improvement for public services, with Bason's book providing a timely comprehensive guide to its theory and practice. The general argument is that public services face a number of wicked social problems that are complex in their causes and often open to interpretation: chronic health issues and an ageing population being two examples. Bason claims that in their present state, public services are not up to the task of providing solutions to these problems, and as such there is a need to innovate to meet these shortcomings. Bason is open about the prescriptive nature of the book to offer both insights into innovation theory but also a practical guide for its implementation. The book is structured around the four Cs (consciousness, capacity, co-creation and courage), providing an almost step-by-step account of how innovation can be achieved.

After a context-setting chapter, the book is split into four parts, based upon each 'C'. Part one explores 'consciousness' and explicitly discusses the need to raise awareness of innovation within public sector staff and organizations and with politicians. A number of forms of innovation are presented alongside the four key values of public services which, it is said, innovation should enhance: productivity, service experience, results and democracy. Part two focuses on the innovation capability of public service organizations. Some attention is given to internal barriers to innovation processes, alongside a discussion of how to strategize and organize to foster innovative practice. Together, these sections provide an awareness of why innovation may be an important factor in public service provision alongside the prerequisites of the third stage: co-creation.

Part three is perhaps the most important, as focus on co-creation is an exploration of the 'how-to' of innovation. It presents an argument for developing solutions to wicked social problems, working with people, rather than for them. The virtues of design thinking are presented as a key aspect of co-creation, before discussion of citizen involvement and chapters on orchestrating the process and setting up measurement and evaluation methods. Frequent references are made to the need to work with service users/citizens within innovation processes, while making clear that citizen involvement is not to do with democratic participation but finding better solutions (p. 153). From this point, the presentation of the co-creation reads more like advocacy for the use of qualitative research methods within policy-making. Co-creation

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is presented as the use of a number of qualitative techniques (from interviews to video-recordings) of citizen interactions with services to generate solutions based upon new insight into user perspectives. As such, it feels like the results of qualitative research are seen as more important than bringing service users directly into the joint production of services. Despite a short discussion of the relevance of co-production, often direct citizen inputs are illustrated by the use of information technology and e-government, without thought as to how this fits into different types of participation (from tokenism to empowerment). Co-creation, presented in this way, did not seem to explain how solutions are created with citizens, who were presented more as research subjects than engaged actors in policy processes.

The final section on courage explores a number of leadership roles and how they can develop faster innovative practice. Bason reiterates how co-creation can be developed in a way that reduces risk to the public sector. Subsequently, the four-part structure offers a useful guide for those seeking to develop innovative practice, assisted by the 'How-to' section at the end of each chapter. This provides a brief summary of the key points before presenting a number of questions the practitioner should ask when setting up effective practices. Overall, Bason provides a clear introduction to practice and theory, complemented by a comprehensive use of the literature and an accessible writing style.

However, the book seems to offer only a partial discussion of barriers to innovation. There seemed to be little discussion of issues around needs, equality, entitlements, rights and responsibilities, and how these would be impacted on by an innovation agenda. Where, for example, equality is mentioned (pp. 56 and 96) the complexity of the issue is addressed, the potential to 'kill off' innovation is highlighted, but how these issues are resolved is largely left unsaid. This does not limit the potential value of the book, but illustrates the need for more rigorous research and additional theorization to fully explore these issues.

This book can be recommended to those interested in developing innovation within their own services, for no other text has provided such a rich, detailed and accessible guide. Additionally, those interested in exploring innovation, co-creation or co-production from a more critical, academic, perspective will find this book a useful insight into a set of ideas already impacting upon governments across the world.

Lee Gregory

Governing Electronically: E-Government and the Reconfiguration of Public Administration, Policy and Power
By Paul Henman
Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2010. ISBN 978-0-230-20588-8; £60.00 (hbk).

This book represents the culmination of around two decades of work undertaken by Paul Henman on the impact of information and communication

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technologies (ICTs) on public and social policy. As he notes at the outset, this means that the intellectual origins of his thinking on this subject 'began before the internet became commonplace and euphorically accepted' (p. xi).

Henman's long perspective is critical to the direction of the book. In analyzing ICTs, it is tempting to focus attention on the latest technologies or trends. Yet, as he rightly notes, such an approach rests on the mistaken assumption that new technologies have an *automatic* impact when, in fact, it is new uses of technology rather than new technology that matters. Indeed, he suggests 'it is the more mature technologies, which have evolved in terms of their use and their integration and transformation of organisational practices, that provide deeper insights about the ways in which technologies are incorporated into and contribute to social transformations' (p. 12). Consequently, he offers some rich welfare state based case studies of change in Australia that avoid the ahistorical assumptions (and associated rhetoric of technological transformation) of so much writing on ICTs and government.

Henman is also keen to avoid presenting an atheoretical analysis (p. xi) and he offers a nuanced understanding of the complex ways in which technology interacts with social actors and political processes. Although wary of the dangers of a technologically determinist perspective, Henman also avoids the polar view that technologies in themselves and, therefore, the analysis of them, do not matter. Indeed, he argues the impact of technology can be real and profound, and that 'we need to reach beyond an emphasis on human intention in the use of tools and reflect on the way in which instruments can transform the way in which we understand and see the world' (p. 21). Latour's actor-network theory, but particularly Foucault's notion of 'governmentality' feature strongly, Henman stressing the latter precisely because it encourages an examination of the ways in which governments use their power (and tools) to direct the conduct of individuals and organizations.

As well as being a long-standing analyst of ICTs in government, Henman has long advocated the value of the governmentality perspective, and fusing the two works well here. In particular, Henman illustrates well how long processes of ICT change have, in turn, influenced social policy choices and administrative procedures more broadly. For instance, he advances a bold argument that the increasingly targeted nature of welfare in Australia is intertwined with the roll out of increasingly sophisticated ICTs that allow detailed digital surveillance of recipients, arguing:

> Information flows need to be established and maintained for such policies to work. However, it would be a mistake to think that networked ICTs are simply providing a means by which to make possible political dreams and schemes. Networked ICTs also precipitate and stimulate the introduction of the new conditionality and, thus of these political rationalities. [. . .] In this respect, it is not political imagination that leads policy change, but new technological capacities that emphasise the possibilities of networked forms of government (p. 164)

As the above suggests, this is a wide-ranging text. Although the case studies sometimes zoom into the fine detail to illustrate key points and demonstrate

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the complexity of change, the book in no way confines itself to the consideration of technological minutiae. It is in connecting the analysis of ICT-related change with much broader social policy changes that this book is at its strongest and Henman's theoretical framework is key in achieving this. Indeed, I would suggest the book is at its best in Parts I and Parts III, which lay the theoretical foundations and then explore them in more depth following the case studies outlined in Part II.

Although the case studies themselves are certainly of value – and the book as a whole benefits from its detailed engagement with empirical illustrations – there were times when a broader approach might have been useful, not least because it would have allowed for examples from a broader range of countries to be included in the discussion. Nonetheless, this is an important book that shows us how and why technology matters to social policy and administration. Issues around ICTs are often pushed to the sidelines of the subject – at times it is possible to sense a cry of frustration from Henman at the lack of attention to these issues – and this book certainly deserves the attention of a broad audience of social and public policy analysts.

John Hudson

Remaking Community? New Labour and the Governance of Poor Neighbourhoods
By Andrew Wallace
Ashgate Publishing Limited, Farnham, 2010. ISBN 978-0-7546-7854-0; price £50.00 (hbk).

Andrew Wallace's analysis of the way 'community' was exploited as a key social policy instrument under the 'New Labour' government of 1997–2010 remains pertinent to critiques of current policy debates around the 'Big Society', the 'Broken Society' and the promise of 'community empowerment' launched by David Cameron's Tory-led coalition. Wallace's analysis succeeds in achieving the key aim he sets himself – that is, to trouble the assumption of a 'unified social experience' that the mainstream discourse of 'community' continues to educe. In the aftermath of the August 2011 'riots' in England, this lack of unity should now be unequivocally understood by our 'moral guardians'. However, it is unlikely that any such understanding will ever be acknowledged by the powerful. For to do so would require some explanation of why a unified social experience does not exist – that is, some acknowledgement of the structural factors that shape differential life experiences (based largely on 'race', class, gender, disability, sexuality and age).

Wallace's tome illustrates effectively how 'projects of government' built on the appeal of 'community as unity' – in this instance, a case study of New Deal for Communities (NDC) in Salford – are primarily motivated by the state's desire to experiment with 'new forms of governance' aimed at 'the moralisation and activation of poor citizens' (p. 2). It is an approach that has dominated urban policy for the best part of the last half century as a means of

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distancing the threat from dangerous people and places to 'civilised society'. It is an approach exquisitely Benthamite in that it achieves its objectives in the most economically efficient and effective way – that is, by mobilizing resident against resident living in the same bounded geographical space. The winners from this experiment are invariably the respectable 'decent majority' able to 'take responsibility for policing the behaviour of the deviants in their midst' (p. 133). Specifically in relation to neighbourhood regeneration, the outcome of this expectation is often a tension 'over the use of physical space within the community, generally manifesting in a conflict between young people who consider themselves reliant on public space, and older people who define such occupation as a nuisance to be controlled' (p. 134).

Working-class and black youth have perhaps been most disadvantaged by the neo-liberal (dis)order imposed over the last 30 years – particularly due to economic and welfare restructuring (which has both exacerbated youth unemployment and eroded welfare protection for young people). Added to this, as one youth worker explained to Wallace, under New Labour 'lowered tolerance levels [have] widened the parameters of bad behaviour' (p. 127) and led to the increasing criminalization of so-called 'anti-social behaviour'. I pondered this change recently whilst walking the dog in Snienton, an inner-city district of Nottingham. As I came around a corner I witnessed a man, about my age, yelling at a group of young Asian men by the side of his house, 'Fuck off out of here! I don't want to see you in my street again!'. When I asked him what his problem was he shouted at me, 'They're playing football in the street'. I responded by saying that I thought that he was 'a miserable old git', that 'I used to play football in the street' and that I bet he did. The man's wife then called for him to come back into the house and that she had called the police. I then reflected on who, in this instance, the police would determine had been 'anti-social': the man for shouting abuse at the young Asians? Me for abusing the man as 'a miserable old git' and frightening his wife? Or the young Asian men for playing football in the street in the first place? I did not hang around to find out, but my guess would have been the latter. As Wallace argues, the availability of freepost 'anti-social behaviour' forms within the Salford NDC neighbourhood, encouraging residents to report 'misdemeanours' anonymously, merely fostered such conflicts. Wallace makes an important point here about how social exclusion is experienced – i.e. exclusion is not merely a symptom of external structural factors but also 'takes place within a relational context' (p. 111). Given that young disadvantaged people are increasingly losing out in this context, it is not surprising that *The Guardian*'s analysis of court data on the perpetrators of the August 2011 unrest in England showed strong correlations with neighbourhood deprivation, youth unemployment, poverty, and age (66 per cent of those appearing in court were aged 11–24 years) (Taylor *et al.* 2011: 4). As Wallace observes, social policies aimed at activating citizens to use their agency in 'desirable ways' may lead some to act in ways that were never intended.

Given this clear indictment about the way English society treats its most vulnerable young people, it is unfortunate that Wallace's analysis makes no attempt to 'engage . . . with a *positivist* concern with finding the "correct" form of intervention or solution to the "problems" of the slum [sic]' (p. 5, emphasis

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added). Surely it would have been a humanitarian concern to at least conclude with a call for a new consensus – one as imaginative and radical perhaps as the 1942 *Beveridge Report* – on how to address the symptoms of a deeply divided society? There needs to be a more nuanced debate about the kind of society we all want to live in than that currently offered within the confines of neo-liberalism. Does the current model of economic organizing provide all of us with sufficient economic security and well-being? Do current social policies provide all of us with sufficient social security, educational opportunity, protection from rooflessness, and adequate health care? And does the existing political system provide all of us with sufficient opportunity to influence decision-making processes affecting our lives?

Perhaps what will come out of such a debate is the realization that neo-liberalism – for me the fundamental cause of much that Wallace laments – is not an inevitability, as we are told, but a choice. By troubling some of the assumptions underpinning neo-liberalism, Wallace is contributing to this debate and his book is therefore to be recommended.

Reference

Taylor, M., Rogers, S. and Lewis, P. (2011), Young, poor and unemployed: the true face of England's rioters, *The Guardian*, 19 August.

Charlie Cooper

Welfare states and public opinion. Perceptions of healthcare systems, family policy and benefits for the unemployed and poor in Europe
By Claus Wendt, Monika Mischke and Michaela Pfeifer
Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, 2011. ISBN 978-1-84844-806-3; £65.00 (hbk).

Over the past couple of decades, there has been a genuine boom in research on welfare states' impact on public attitudes. Dozens, if not hundreds of books and academic articles have investigated whether it actually matters for citizens' preferences and values to live in welfare states as diverse as those found across the Western world. This new volume by Wendt, Mischke and Pfeifer offers a fresh perspective on this question as well as interesting empirical findings that advance the research field.

The authors' take on the analysis is impressively encompassing. They include data from 15 European countries on three different social programmes, namely health care, family services, and unemployment benefits and social assistance. In my opinion, their most valuable contribution is that they depart from the all too common default expectation in the literature that identical clusters of nations – i.e. welfare regimes – exist across very diverse social programmes and, consequently, similar structures of public opinion across programmes within any given country. Esping-Andersen and the other founding fathers of the 'welfare regime business' almost exclusively studied labour market programmes, but due to a combination of the parsimonious-

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ness of the original typologies and intellectual laziness on the part of modern-day researchers, the typologies are applied on social programmes they are not meant for. This volume helps to mend that problem.

Wendt, Mischke and Pfeifer begin by presenting their theoretical framework, which draws on historical institutionalism, and which posits that the institutional setup of a social programme must be expected to impact on the attitudes of the public. They show empirically that different distinct clusters of institutions exist in each of the three programme areas, and they deduce a series of specific expectations based on a careful consideration of how these institutions might be expected to interact with the generic characteristics of the programme area.

The cluster analyses of the institutional programme characteristics are by themselves interesting, given the rather wide scope of empirical indicators used. However, the volume's approach becomes especially valuable when applied to the question of, for example, public preferences for more/less spending and satisfaction with existing programmes. I cannot go into the details of the findings, only highlight how it very clearly is borne of the empirical analysis that the more disaggregated path chosen by the authors is fully justified. One thing deserves mentioning, though. Reading the book it becomes extremely evident how special unemployment benefits and social assistance really are compared to the (in monetary terms much larger) area of health care and family services. On the former, the attitudinal preconditions for the traditional class-based social conflicts that are the backbone in many of the most prominent theories of the politics of welfare states are very pronounced. On the latter two, this is much less the case. For political scientists, at least, this is important news.

Carsten Jensen

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