instance, to engage with the ideas of writers such as Bourdieu, T. H. Marshall, Machiavelli, De Tocqueville and Gramsci as well as Nietzsche and Pope Benedict XVI. He also explores historical and contemporary developments in civil society in a number of European countries as well as the United States. The sheer breadth of coverage does, however, come at a price. At times the reader feels like a tourist visiting a French vineyard where the enthusiastic proprietor only permits you the briefest of moments to savour a particular wine before moving you on swiftly to the next. Powell’s discussion of civil society in East and Central Europe, for example, includes all too brief sketches of developments in Poland, Hungary, Slovenia and the Czech Republic when a focus on one or two nations might have served his purpose better.

Powell’s expert scrutiny of the implications of the changing relationship between civil society and social policy is fascinating, though not entirely successful. A more concentrated discussion of this intricate relationship, possibly in a distinct chapter, would have been useful. He could then have expanded at greater length on such thorny issues as whether an enhanced welfare role for the third sector, which has attracted support from the ‘cultural’ left as well as the neo-liberal right, might have adverse social consequences. Clearly the advance of this sector has the potential to undermine both the egalitarian potential of the welfare state and the morale of ‘selfless’ public sector workers.

These observations should not, however, detract from the many positive features of this book. In an era when the academic study of social policy seems to be retreating to the narrow, technocratic focus of traditional social administration, it is refreshing to find an author who is still willing to engage with broader social questions and debates.

References

Robert Page

Domestic Violence: The Five Big Questions
EDITED BY MANGAI NATARAJAN

There has been a rapid increase in the numbers of readers, anthologies and handbooks published in the social sciences over recent years, and criminology is no exception to this trend. The ‘International Library of Criminology, Criminal Justice and Penology’, now in its second edition, targets researchers, teachers and students to provide ‘an overview of the latest theories and findings’ (p. xiii). It aims to collate ‘the most significant journal essays in contemporary criminology, criminal justice and penology’ (p. xiii) in this case with a focus on domestic violence. Mangai Natarajan, the editor of this
collection, has a background in Criminal Psychology and is an associate professor in the Department of Sociology, John Jay College of Criminal Justice of the City University of New York.

In a field such as domestic violence with fiercely contested definitions of the concept and critically opposing theories (which have very important political dimensions), an anthology could potentially be highly valuable in presenting articles in close proximity from opposing perspectives to aid comparison. On the other hand the diversity of approaches found in this field presents a challenge if the aim of the anthology is representational coverage. Moreover, this series claims international coverage, which further multiplies the difficulty of the editor’s task. Sadly, the editor is not particularly forthcoming on the aims and parameters of this book but rather gives a brief introduction to domestic violence and an overview of the chapters included. In choosing the ‘most significant journal essays’, she asserts that those selected address five main questions that are ‘repeatedly raised in the literature’ (p. xvi). This approach is less likely to ensure representational coverage and is more likely to skew the text towards the conservative end of the spectrum of work on domestic violence.

The text is organized in five parts around the five questions selected: Has domestic violence increased or is it increasingly being reported? Have the major factors been identified that determine/precipitate domestic violence? How well are the main theories of domestic violence supported by empirical evidence? What measures have been taken to control domestic violence, and what works? Is domestic violence better dealt with as a public health or criminal justice problem? Setting to one side the question as to whether these are the most significant questions being asked on domestic violence for the moment, an anthology with the aim of presenting the most significant journal articles must surely pay attention to rival disciplinary schools of thought and ensure a fair representation of each. However, an analysis of originating journals in this anthology reveals serious problems in this respect, with the majority (19) having a psychological/medical disciplinary background which overwhelmingly takes a family violence perspective. Those essays (11) drawn from criminal justice disciplines also largely adopt an individualist or family violence approach. There is only a nod here to work drawing on critical feminist sociological or criminological perspectives which engage with the gendered (and raced, classed, sexed) nature of human lives.

This is problematic since anthologies are viewed as having authority in constructing the boundaries of knowledge on a given subject. As Foucault has pointed out, the way in which knowledge is ordered establishes hierarchies of dominant and subordinate knowledge/s, indicating which knowledge is significant and which can be ignored. For a text aimed broadly at students, teachers and researchers new to, or already involved in, the domestic violence field, this text hides (once again) the strong and extensive range of feminist work in this field. It was feminist challenges to the dominant construction of male violence in the home as private and personal which brought domestic violence on to the public agenda in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and since then feminist researchers and activists have continued to study and work on and with criminal justice agencies to improve their services for
victims/survivors and perpetrators. To ignore this work, which views domestic violence as thoroughly gendered, is a grave gap in this text. Of course men experience violence from women, and there is same-sex violence, but this cannot be considered as the same phenomenon experienced by heterosexual women since in the latter case domestic violence fuses with the social constraints experienced during women’s lives and the continuing second-class status of women.

To return to the question as to the choice of ordering of this text, this is also important as it impacts on the reader’s assumptions about which subject areas are significant and which are not. To start the book, a section was surely needed that brought together essays on the significant debates on the different ways of defining the concept of domestic violence. This is, and has been, crucial, since definitions give rise to very different social and criminal justice responses to this serious social problem. The section on methodology is important since estimating incidence and prevalence of domestic violence remains a particularly fraught area. The lack of feminist critique of psychological scales, such as the Conflict Tactics Scale, as well as the lack of qualitative research capturing survivors’ and perpetrators’ voices, are significant gaps in this section.

The section on the major factors determining or precipitating domestic violence largely draws on medical models of domestic violence, thus limiting the usefulness of this section as well. The section on the empirical support for the main theories of domestic violence again lacks any feminist critique of the medico-psychological approach, although Kristin Anderson’s article attempts to integrate feminist and family violence approaches. The fourth part, looking at domestic violence interventions and ‘what works’, has a broader remit and is a more successful section for it. The final part is restricted to two essays, one taking a public health approach and the other a criminal justice approach.

To conclude, this is a conservative anthology of work on domestic violence drawing mainly on psychological and medical approaches. There are, of course, useful essays in the anthology but the reader should approach this text with care and in the knowledge that significant knowledge from feminist (and other) perspectives is not to be found here.

Paula Wilcox

Family Homelessness: Causes, Consequences and the Policy Response in England
By J. M. Grimshaw

As the author of this book notes, family homelessness is a subject on which relatively little has been written in comparison to single homelessness. The reasons for this are open to debate, but one key factor appears to be that