young adulthood experienced by poorer groups in society is spelt out in a clear and accessible way. Importantly, reiteration of this kind also serves to emphasise the slow pace of change. The final chapter in this section highlights the socially constructed barriers that those born into poverty face in trying to improve their economic and social circumstances.

As with Carr-Hill's (1987) earlier review of health inequalities, the authors recognise that there is little to be gained from collecting additional evidence about the extent of poverty and disadvantage in British society. What is more urgently required is effective political action. To this end, a number of recommendations, all be they uncosted, are put forward in the concluding section of this book. These include a reaffirmation of the government's child poverty pledges, an initial review and annual audit of life chances, increased maternity support for disadvantaged mothers, a statutory right to a year's paid parental leave (part of which must be used by fathers) and universal high-quality childcare provision. Specific targets and policies for reducing inequalities in educational attainment are called for, as well as an Income Support premium for pregnant women and higher benefit rates for children (including an enhanced role for Child Benefit in the pattern of such support). Increased benefit levels for unemployed adults (with and without children) are recommended as well as a carefully calibrated increase in the minimum wage, a more progressive tax system (including a clear target to reduce income and wealth inequalities) and the (re)convening of a Royal Commission on the Distribution of income and wealth.

While these proposals are both progressive and attainable, it is questionable whether this or any future Labour government will be willing to adopt such overtly egalitarian measures. While this government has shown itself willing to challenge some of the more extreme opportunity barriers that have blighted the life chances of the least advantaged, their 'pragmatic', not to say 'principled', governing strategy of not frightening the horses, middle England or the Murdoch media empire will continue to leave many progressives frustrated. Arguably, it is not more research or new policy initiatives that are required to improve the life chances of the many. It is locating or constructing an appropriate political entity, such as a revitalised Labour Party, which has the conviction to bring about a more equal tomorrow.

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John Flint (ed.) (2006), *Housing, Urban Governance and Anti-Social Behaviour: Perspectives, Policy and Practice*, Bristol: Policy Press. £24.99, pp. 350, pbk.
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There was a time when discussions on social quality and housing were focused on housing shortage and poor housing conditions. Remember the vivid descriptions of lodgings in George Orwell's *Down and Out in Paris and London* or *The Road to Wigan Pier*. Over the twentieth century, both the number and the quality (and prices!) of houses has increased considerably. For instance in the Netherlands, in 1900 on average 4.52 people lived in a single house and they

averaged 1.65 persons to a room. In 2000, this reduced to 2.46 people in a house, with only 0.48 persons per room! Add to that the availability of running water and sanitation (heralded early 2007 by the *British Medical Journal* as the all-time most significant contribution to improved health), electricity, central heating, telephone, television, internet, and it is clear that there have been tremendous improvements in housing.

It is good to explicitly acknowledge those improvements, as new aims in terms of housing quality tend to push the achievements out of our memory. Over the past couple of years, there has been an increased interest in the contribution of neighbours to the quality of our housing. Frank Field was probably one of the first to label the issue as 'neighbours from hell'. It's no longer the physical infrastructure that's critical, but the social infrastructure. The erosion of good neighbourliness and the proclaimed rise of anti-social behaviour are new items on the agenda of housing policy. They constitute an extension of the surveillance of formerly private spheres of conduct (p. 327). Social landlords are expected to not only provide good housing, but also safe and secure environments, free of nuisance. This calls for new policy instruments, the so-called 'politics of behaviour'.

John Flint has edited a volume on this issue, bringing together fourteen academic papers and his own introductory and concluding chapters, structured into four parts. Part 1 focuses on the definition and construction of anti-social behaviour in the UK. Among the chapters is one by Pauline Card offering a concise twentieth century history of housing policy and the role of social landlords in anti-social behaviour. Part 2 of the book deals with the current legal techniques used to address anti-social behaviour. These include tenancy agreements (the contractual relationship between landlord and tenant), anti-social behaviour orders (ASBO's), acceptable behaviour contracts as well as mediation (e.g. chapter by Pawson and McKenzie).

Part 3 focuses on emerging mechanisms of addressing anti-social behaviour in housing governance. This includes a welcome chapter on the Shelter Inclusion project. The authors rightly argue that controlling anti-social behaviour calls for prevention, enforcement and rehabilitation. The Shelter Inclusion project, as well as the Dundee families project, are described in the next chapter. Both focus on providing support to families who are the origin of anti-social behaviour. These are mostly poor and disorganised households, not having enough resources to independently address the situation they are in and the nuisance they are causing others. While most research and practice tends to focus on enforcement and anti-social behaviour interventions, these chapters draw our attention towards support and rehabilitation. Coverage of the Irwell Valley Housing Association 'gold service' approach as a strategy to work with positive incentives in promoting good tenancy and social behaviour towards neighbours would have merited another chapter in this part of the book. However, almost as if that might tip the balance away from enforcement, the other chapters in this part of the book describe visible patrols, the private security market and gated communities.

The final part of the book takes an international perspective, gathering examples from Australia, France and the US. In another 2006 volume edited by Kevin Harris and published by Russel House, I have myself described the experiences in the Netherlands and Flanders. The chapter on France in this book is of course most interesting, given the recent massive riots in several French cities and the emergence of large-scale urban violence. However, that situation also makes this chapter different from the others and less relevant to the UK situation, in which anti-social behaviour is much less a collective phenomena and less organised.

Flint's edited volume claims to be the first comprehensive volume exploring the role of housing and urban governance in addressing anti-social behaviour and combining theoretical perspectives, critical analysis and empirical research (back cover blurb). Of course, this is not

the first nor the last volume on this subject, but it is certainly a welcome addition to the existing literature and a valuable source for further research and policy development.

Having said that, there are some elements that one would expect to be included that are missing from the book. For one, citizen surveys indicate that a lot of anti-social behaviour is experienced within transport. Similar to the visits paid to other countries in the fourth part of the book, a discussion of controls against anti-social behaviour in (public) transport would have been a welcome addition. Also, the book doesn't really dwell upon the causes of the presumed rise of anti-social behaviour. Is it the result of a decline in public moral (like Dalrymple's analysis), the effect of closing down residential mental health care, the impact of geographical concentration of poverty or the consequence of many different cultures living together and not having compatible housing traditions, let alone sharing a common language? Such an analysis of the causes would have strengthened the book's coverage of the solutions. Finally, some 'thick descriptions' of cases of anti-social behaviour, and practice dealing with it, would have added a lot of value to the book. Embedded journalism, very similar to what George Orwell did so many decades ago, can strengthen the academic perspective presented by Flint and his co-authors.

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John T. Pardeck (2005), *Children's Rights: Policy and Practice*. New York: Haworth Press, £23.99, pp. 276, pbk.
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The field of children's rights has opened up significantly in the latter half of the twentieth century to reach global proportions. In this regard, many writers have expounded on legislation, policy and practice in attempts to enlighten the population to the fact that children are now accepted as having their own rights. This book is no different in that respect. The author presents a good overview of significant American laws and policies, which have the common aim of safeguarding and developing children to the highest degree. As a British academic, I found this book particularly useful in providing a comparative perspective on legislation for child protection, having both breadth and depth of knowledge. Being very well written in clearly understandable discourse, the author ensures the text is accessible to a wide-ranging audience. This being so, it is a useful resource for many readers, including, but not limited to, undergraduate students in the social sciences, education and early years studies, and in the professional world of social workers, psychologists, lawyers, and child welfare workers; especially for those with interest in the human rights movement. In addition, the book will be valuable reading for parents as an aid to understanding their child's care and development in relation to the law.

The only misgiving I have is that the more sophisticated reader may be a little frustrated by what I perceived to be somewhat over-simplistic 'clipped' sentences with no clear linking to previous and subsequent themes. Furthermore, there was an apparent uncritical stance towards previous research, with a descriptively 'taken for granted' flavour. Personally, I would have preferred a more critical stance to research in relation to policy which would then open up spaces for deeper thought and reflection on major issues of child protection. Notwithstanding, the book was an easy read and sat well with my own academic and research experiences of children at risk of social exclusion and the related area of children's rights.

Chapter 1 draws the reader into the book by establishing the background to the children's rights movement that surfaced in the 1960s, then linking these to the psychological pitfalls