

organizational development, ethnic-specific organizations, and community-based reentry programs. Researchers may find the book suggestive of future avenues of research, especially as it relates to program outcomes produced by grassroots, non-profit prisoner reentry efforts.

Price-Spratlen and Goldsby, however, fall short of providing compelling evidence of how sustained involvement with Reconstruction, Inc. affects desistance for individuals, families, or the community it serves. This may be due to the all-too-common tendency to take on too much within one book. The authors acknowledge as much, noting that the subject of women's roles in the organization detailed in Chapter Four could have been a book in itself. While Chapter Eight presents six "best practices" utilized by Reconstruction, Inc., these are essentially descriptions of the organization's activities rather than a true evaluation using either qualitative or quantitative evidence of program outcomes. The authors do not, for example, present descriptive statistics on the number of individuals or families served by the organization over time, nor any measure of recidivism or other more desirable program effects. The book does not contain an explanation of the authors' analytic methods, an omission that makes it difficult to assess the nature and quality of the data sources and methodological approach, even for the historical narrative. Readers may also find the book challenging to follow, given the wide array of program components and terminology and the lack of a straightforward introductory chapter to orient readers to the overarching structure of the complex organization under study.

While the book does not deliver on all that it promises at the outset, it does represent an important and at times engaging foray into a relatively unexplored area for social policy research. As states tighten budgets post-recession and ponder reductions in prison populations, evaluations of such community-based, collaborative reentry programs are needed, especially those efforts that target the populations most profoundly impacted by decades of mass imprisonment.

The Political Economy of Human Happiness: How Voters' Choices Determine the Quality of Life, by **Benjamin Radcliff**. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2013. 205pp. \$29.99 paper. ISBN: 9781107644427.

DAVID BARTRAM
 University of Leicester
 d.bartram@le.ac.uk

Social science research on happiness has experienced very significant growth in the last two decades. Rather than assuming that people who enjoy various forms of objective well-being surely enjoy high levels of subjective well-being (SWB) as well, happiness researchers treat that issue as a question for empirical research. One key strand of this research, covered regularly in the media, asks whether economic growth increases individuals' happiness, particularly in countries that are already quite wealthy.

In this context, one inevitably finds significant interest in deriving "policy implications" from empirical results. Several researchers have made book-length forays into that territory, though in the main these efforts are reasonably characterized as tepid and/or timid. In contrast, Benjamin Radcliff's book, *The Political Economy of Human Happiness*, goes straight to the heart of contemporary ideological and political disputes, asking whether unrestrained markets or social democratic welfare states are more likely to facilitate happiness.

Early theoretical chapters leave little doubt about the nature of Radcliff's expectations. Markets enhance individual freedom (at least in its "negative" sense) and organize production in ways that increase the overall material wealth of societies—but market-oriented societies also "commodify" workers, leading to pervasive feelings of insecurity and disempowerment (among non-workers as well). Unions and social-democratic political parties seek to mitigate the extent of commodification, enabling workers and their families to secure some independence from employers and gain a larger share of the output of their labor. Radcliff reviews some of the conservative critiques of the welfare state and concludes that its benefits for individuals'

subjective well-being are likely to outweigh any drawbacks quite heavily.

Via quantitative analysis of data from a range of OECD countries, Radcliffe finds that life satisfaction (a “close cousin” of happiness, as the cognitive aspect of SWB) is significantly higher in countries that use social welfare and other policies to mitigate the commodification of workers. This result emerges in models that focus on differences in net total social spending, government consumption, taxation as a share of GDP, and size of government—and also in a model that uses a “decommodification score” developed specifically to operationalize Gøsta Esping-Andersen’s arguments. (Models contain an array of control variables as well.) Stronger regimes of employment protection and higher levels of union density are also associated with higher life satisfaction.

These associations appear consistently in individual and aggregate-level analyses; they are significant not only in a statistical sense (alpha levels) but in substantive terms as well (as measured by comparison to other known determinants of life satisfaction, e.g., unemployment). A noteworthy feature of some models is that they use indices developed by conservative think-tanks seeking to measure “economic freedom” (e.g., freedom from regulation); Radcliff does a good job of insulating himself from any concern that his analyses might benefit from selection of data produced by ideological allies.

Radcliff’s findings rest on international comparisons, but he also analyzes differences among U.S. states, in part to address the possibility that the international differences might be mainly a matter of “culture.” As to the comparisons of countries: life satisfaction is higher (controlling for other factors) in American states that score higher on measures of transfer payments, economic regulation, control by the Democratic Party, union density, and union membership.

Critiques of Radcliff’s earlier work raised the question of reverse causality: the possibility that happier people might be more inclined to support larger welfare states (as against welfare states contributing to people’s happiness). Radcliff responds here by (inter alia) pointing to research showing that conservatives in the United States are generally happier than liberals. That

response is persuasive on its own terms, but the critique hints at the need to consider the broader issue further in a more historical way. In simplified form, Radcliff’s argument is that if the United States adopted a Scandinavian-style welfare state (thus decommodifying labor to a similar degree), Americans would be happier. The analysis in this book certainly offers some very persuasive support for that contention. But the argument would be reinforced via other ways of addressing the issue: when countries build ambitious welfare states, what happens (e.g., to individuals’ happiness)? No less important: *how* could the United States adopt a more ambitious welfare state? At least in this regard, some readers (even sympathetic ones) might not be convinced that the findings “provide clear instructions on how to proceed” (p. 135).

More broadly, using happiness research to help settle a longstanding ideological debate such as this might strike some as an unlikely prospect, particularly for America in the Tea-Party era. Committed ideologues on the right are likely to ignore or dismiss Radcliff’s argument (a search of several dozen popular conservative blogs produced only one result—where is the outrage??). The analysis is of a very high standard, but as with quantitative analysis generally there is scope for other researchers to develop competing models constructed to tell a different story. Earlier work on this topic by other scholars suggests either that the welfare state does not contribute to happiness or that “economic freedom” is a more important determinant (though in both cases the research included a wider range of countries, some at a lower level of economic development—the Philippines, Uganda, and El Salvador). There is no easy path to consensus here. We can anticipate further research on this topic, some of which will critique Radcliff’s work, and we will then be in a better position to evaluate a range of arguments and analyses. Whether such evaluation will be guided more by rational deliberation than by ideological predilection is another matter.

But even if this book cannot by itself settle the markets-vs-states debate, it makes an impressive and invaluable contribution to that debate and is certain to become an enduring touchstone in any discussion that

considers empirically rather than axiomatically the well-being consequences of different social models. Among the book's many other virtues, the writing is exceptionally clear and well organized; even readers with limited general understanding of quantitative analysis can read and understand this book with ease. Some skepticism regarding a big argument of the sort Radcliff makes is inevitable, but social scientists who skip this book will miss something important.

Arrested Justice: Black Women, Violence, and America's Prison Nation, by **Beth E. Richie**. New York, NY: New York University Press, 2012. 229pp. \$22.00 paper. ISBN: 9780814776230.

MARLESE DURR
Wright State University
marlese.durr@wright.edu

As feminism moves into its third wave of examining gender inequality, Beth Richie reminds us of the unfinished business of the second wave. To make this point, she revisits black feminist efforts to end an inheritance of private humiliation and public angst to forge a new social and political reality. *Arrested Justice* clearly elucidates how, collectively, feminists' eight stages of advocacy activism won the campaign but lost the war through dependence on the criminal legal system and crisis intervention strategies (e.g., Title II, Violent Crime Victims Assistance Act, The Victim of Crimes Act, and The Violence Against Women's Act) that worked for white women, but not for their black sisters. More important is Richie's analysis of a set of institutionalized social services accessible via legislative processes and criminal legal systems that place these black women in precarious situations, grounded in suspicion of law enforcement for their aggressive tactics and occasional maltreatment, gender performance and life circumstances and/or sexuality threatening normative standards, protection of themselves, and choosing bad options due to victimization for safety's sake.

Akin to Derrick Bell's *Faces at the Bottom of the Well* (1993), Richie chronicles the life histories of lower status African American

women by highlighting their need for intervention in what appears to be a permanent trauma resulting from victimization in this race-gender-stratified society. From the introduction and through each chapter, Richie's analysis of these women's narratives leaves readers querying how did/do they survive the physical and psychological abuse coupled with social and cultural hostility. As readers ponder their question, it quickly becomes clear that *Arrested Justice* decries the sustained sidelining of black women in the face of narrow-minded men, public policies, and institutionalized social structures—feminism notwithstanding. Richie argues forcefully that the oratory of second and now third wave feminism's (mainstream white-dominated feminism) theoretical apparatus is not applicable to lower status black women. Not only is this due to their lack of compliance to dominant standards of womanhood, but even more so to the fact that feminist ideals and goals have become one-size fits all, using a white dominant standard. Consequently, the analysis of the forms of violence these women face reveals that they are under assault in a *prison nation*. The land that they inhabit is constructed and maintained in their communities, at the neighborhood-level, complete with inside locking gates guarded by social, cultural, and physical violence patrolling its perimeters. No regard is given to these women's emotional and mental well-being in this homeland. Its exclusivity is its male-dominated organizations' (and individuals') denunciation of the power, need, impact, or contribution of feminist's linking of gender inequality and racial justice. For many race-conscious African American women, this is a powerful dynamic, albeit one that hinders their moving outside of this homeland. By identifying these tensions, depth is added to the social, political, and cultural spaces these women occupy. Richie's analysis also calls into question the failure of mainstream feminist frameworks to link domestic-based anti-violence movements to the impasse of these women. Thus, these women reside in a land of fear, despite public policy changes in the last two and a half decades.

Embedded in her analysis of the adversity endured by lower status black women from