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## The Sociology of Elite Distinction: From Theoretical to Comparative Perspectives

Shamus Rahman Khan

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## REVIEWS

*Plural Masculinities: The Remaking of the Self in Private Life*, by **Sofia Aboim**. Burlington, VA: Ashgate, 2010. 196pp. \$99.95 cloth. ISBN: 9780754674672.

TODD MIGLIACCIO

California State University, Sacramento  
[tmigliac@csus.edu](mailto:tmigliac@csus.edu)

In *Plural Masculinities*, Sofia Aboim engages the changing dynamics of masculinity in the lives of men, and ultimately how the growing plurality of performances impacts the gender order. In emphasizing the existence of a diversity of masculinities, she claims that “different routes to change” (p. 10) can impact the hegemonic standard. She is, in a sense, deconstructing the homogeneous form of hegemonic masculinity to show that change is possible by conveying how “complicit” men produce alternative versions of masculinity based on an individualized experience, as opposed to historical institutionalized beliefs.

She utilizes multiple methods from different data sources, which strengthen the claims that the diversity of masculine performances within the “private” sphere are impacted by social and familial changes. While Chapter Four derives from cross-cultural data, the final two chapters (Five and Six) are based on data drawn from men in Portugal, which limits specific application in other cultures, but is extremely useful when discussing change in general. Whether it is factor analysis of cross-cultural quantitative data concerning attitudes of the breadwinner role versus practices of work in the home (Chapter Four) or qualitative interviews with men as they respond to changes in family structures (Chapter Five), Aboim’s findings emphasize how gender expectations are slow to change even as the structure and organization of the family changes. Furthermore in Chapter Six, her qualitative analysis of sexuality and gender roles claims that, over time, expectations are changing about men’s and women’s roles in sexual relations (albeit slowly) which she argues impacts the hegemonic standard. Developing masculinities are

hybrid masculinities, offering alternative masculinities that borrow from feminine experiences. The text exhibits that changes in masculine expectations and displays are apparent and they are linked to societal change, which impacts the gender order. Her use of multiple methods offers strong credibility to her claims, as each finding supports the overall idea. Although the interpretation of hybrid masculinities cannot be challenged, it can be debated.

Throughout the text, Aboim demonstrates a complete understanding of the field, drawing on a range of theoretical ideas to express an inclusive discussion about the topic of masculinities, often moving beyond masculinity studies, and even feminist theories. In Chapter One, she offers a brief history of the development of the field to establish the context of her argument. The author, however, extends the discussion beyond the gender field, locating it within larger sociological discussions. For example, she reviews discussions of family (Chapter Three) and domination and hegemony (Chapter Two), allowing readers to comprehend the basis of her argument and the theoretical underpinnings that have helped to develop the ideas. This is a great tool for any graduate student who is interested in the field.

But Aboim’s extensive theoretical development also appears to be a key limitation in the book. Although all aspects of the theories appear to be applicable to the discussion, the thorough discussion leads a reader to get mired in the theoretical discussions, losing focus on the key points the author is attempting to convey. The author dedicates the entirety of Chapter Three to justify family, or at least the “private” sphere, as an important venue for discussion, setting up the following three chapters. The author engages the discussion of the separation of spheres, which is interesting and thorough, but does not explicitly identify which aspects of it are relevant, nor does she offer examples to help the reader follow the context of the discussion. She relies predominantly on in-depth theoretical discussions, which tend to be extremely abstract, making it difficult to

recall the key points made in Chapter Three when reading Chapters Four–Six. Furthermore, the author presents complete discussions of topics that could have been summarized to identify key, relevant points. At the beginning of Chapter Five, when addressing cross-cultural comparisons, coverage of the field and its importance in research was over-indulged beyond what appeared relevant to the discussion. Overdeveloping discussions made it difficult to reflect on the theoretical arguments when reading the findings and conclusions within the last three chapters, in which the research is addressed. It was not explicitly clear how theoretical development at the beginning was related to each of the chapters at the end.

Overall, *Plural Masculinities* offers a thorough and in-depth discussion of the changing and fluid dynamics of masculinity within the lives of complicit men. Aboim's book adds to the field by presenting research that engages the theoretical discussions that persist within the field by extending theoretical discussions that have been previously addressed. By offering concrete evidence of men's changing experiences and expectations of masculinity, the text displays masculinity as fluid and changing. Even more important, the text is able to display how the hegemonic standard adjusts as society transforms, whether due to changes in the family structure or women's positions in society. This also allows future researchers to engage how larger social changes influence expectations about masculinity, as well as how the hegemonic standard alters itself. Ultimately, the book adds to the discussion of the gender order and the power that derives from masculinity, which the author recognizes as an important avenue for future research.

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*Low-Income Students and the Perpetuation of Inequality: Higher Education in America*, by Gary A. Berg. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010. 198pp. \$79.95 cloth. ISBN: 9781409401544.

MARY FISCHER  
*University of Connecticut*  
 mary.fischer@uconn.edu

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In *Low-Income Students and the Perpetuation of Inequality*, Gary A. Berg takes on a very important topic in higher education that is grossly understudied in my estimation. Berg seems to recognize this void. He sets an ambitious agenda for his book to cover everything from the preparation to attend college, to differential returns on a college education, with a few detours in between. The primary source of data for the book comes from interviews and participant observation conducted by the author on two university campuses, which is complemented in each chapter by statistical data (or archival data in one chapter).

The qualitative sample consists of approximately 50 individuals across the two campuses representing a variety of roles, including alumni, faculty, students, administrators, and students. More details were needed about the strategy behind the qualitative data collection because the logic was not obvious. Basic information about the demographics of the sample was also lacking (except for the alumni sample), making it difficult to assess the data presented. This is particularly crucial given the scope of the author's investigation. Berg apparently wanted to examine not only issues relating to low-income individuals but also inequalities relating to race, gender, and immigrant status. This is a tall task for any one book, but particularly one that draws on interview data from less than 30 students (exact *N*'s are a bit difficult to discern).

Despite a fuzziness on the details about the analytical strategy, the qualitative vignettes presented in the book were the best part of most chapters. In fact, emphasizing these data more and narrowing the scope of the book to focus on just issues facing low-income students would have made this book much stronger. The chapter on public perceptions

of low-income students in the media and film seemed out of place in the book. While it is an interesting idea to conduct a longitudinal examination of media portrayals, it is far too broad a topic to cover in one chapter. In addition, the author does not discuss his methodology for his archival analysis at all, which makes it hard to discern the representativeness of the examples highlighted.

Berg also at times draws conclusions that are not supported by data. One chapter focuses on gender and race inequalities in higher education but fails to discuss how women of all groups are overwhelmingly more successful than their male counterparts. Another chapter asserts that the poor benefit less from having a college degree than do the affluent. The basic idea behind this claim is the opportunity cost of attending college in the form of wages one must forgo in order to be a full-time student for four to five years. While this is an important factor to consider, particularly in the short run, the author does not adequately make the case with the data presented. In fact, the data presented in this chapter are a good illustration of the problem with many of the statistics in the book, and that is a lack of attention to the populations to which the data in the tables refer. This results in the author often making apples-to-oranges type comparisons in his analysis. It is difficult to find secondary data sources that are an exact match for the task at hand, but the author should have at least mentioned some of the shortcomings in the data presented and been more careful in drawing comparisons across very different data sources and populations.

The author clearly has a great deal of experience with low-income students in higher education, and insight into the challenges facing these students, but the data do not always present a coherent picture to substantiate the author's claims. Where the book does shine is in the vivid qualitative studies presented. Particularly interesting is the chapter on recent immigrants to the United States, which was based on a case study of a summer program that the author participated in for the children of migrant workers at California State University. In fact, a longitudinal study following the participants in this summer program would be fascinating.

*The State of Sex: Tourism, Sex, and Sin in the New American Heartland*, by **Barbara G. Brents, Crystal A. Jackson, and Kathryn Hausbeck**. New York, NY: Routledge, 2010. 302pp. \$31.95 paper. ISBN: 9780415929486.

ELIZABETH BERNSTEIN  
Columbia University  
Eb2032@columbia.edu

*The State of Sex: Tourism, Sex, and Sin in the New American Heartland* is a book that begins with great promise. Drawing upon a decade of qualitative research in Nevada's legalized brothel system, this collaborative effort by Barbara Brents, Crystal Jackson, and Kathryn Hausbeck fills a void in contemporary sociological research on sex work—and departs from an important premise. The authors make the case that by virtue of its status as the only legalized prostitution in the United States, as well as its location within the fastest growing state and one of the most elaborated sectors of the tourism industry, Nevada's brothel system has important lessons to offer students of prostitution and of the contemporary leisure economy. Yet despite a solid rationale for their project, generally clear writing, and an analysis that is convincingly rooted in an awareness of the interplay between sex, social structure and political economy, the authors' dedication to a secondary if unstated aim—the rigorous defense of a particular model of legalized prostitution—makes this book less successful than it might otherwise have been as a scholarly intervention.

The book's initial chapters provide a synthetic social history of the development of the legalized brothel industry in Nevada and an exposition of the theoretical framework that the authors will be deploying. Their theoretical model—which situates recent changes in sexual commerce within the broader late capitalist leisure sector—is generally derivative of other scholars' work (including my own), but the authors usefully build upon this to set up a contrast between the small-scale, rural brothels that still prevail in the more remote regions of the state and the growth of new upscale, suburbanized brothels at the outskirts of urban centers. While the former cater primarily to locals

and truckers, the latter cater to a more affluent clientele that is steeped in the state's broader tourist sector. As the authors go on to demonstrate in subsequent chapters, these distinct kinds of brothels are accompanied by divergent sets of labor practices and paradigms of sexual exchange—from the line-ups and relatively efficient sexual encounters that characterize the rural brothels to what they term the "holistic" sexual labor of the upscale brothels, which involves the commercial packaging of physical intimacy, caring labor, and sex-workers' "authentic" emotional engagement.

The authors' original and very interesting empirical material is primarily presented in the second half of the book, although the degree of theoretical analysis that they apply to this material is somewhat uneven. They have a nice touch in conveying the ethnographic details provided by their interviewees about the nature of the sexual commodities that are bought and sold. For example, they note the significance of women's attempts to "hypnotize" potential clients with their eyes: "The idea that you can hypnotize with eye contact and a smile means that connection is a significant part of what is being sold in a brothel" (p. 120). The discussion of sex workers' adoption of stage names and alternate identities through extracted quotes from workers like Charli, who claims that "your inhibitions go away with your name" (p. 206) is also effective and insightful. Perhaps most stunning of all is Chapter Five, "Paths to Brothel Work," which situates women's entry into the brothels as a labor issue, not a question of sexual pathology. The authors observe that many women enter the brothels after previous employment in other segments of the service sector, having worked in jobs such as "a receptionist, a nanny, a pizza chef, a gas station attendant, a video store clerk, and a health club employee" (p. 172). Once in the brothels they discover that the labor they perform there is not qualitatively different from capacities they had drawn on in their previous work, although it is inevitably better paid.

Less theoretically unpacked by the authors are brothel workers' accounts of being drawn to sexual labor because of their straightforward and unambiguous enjoyment of sex.

When noting that sex workers often indicated in their interviews that they "like to have sex" and "like to have sex with different people" (p. 167), it is surprising that the authors press no further in the analysis, neither explaining this propensity sociologically nor considering the possibility that such statements might come readily to the lips of those for whom frequent and ubiquitous professions of "liking sex" are a daily marketing strategy. Given the authors' own observation of sex workers' propensity to create fictitious life stories to please their customers ("complete with a pseudonym, new personality type. . . family background, and childhood history," (p. 201) this is a particularly striking omission.

This neglect also raises the more troubling methodological issue of the authors' decision to conduct their interviews on the brothel premises, a decision which could incline the workers to paint a rosy picture of working conditions and the balance of freedom and constraint. Research with sex workers who formerly worked in the brothels but now reject the system might also have conveyed a very different vision of its relative strengths and weaknesses. Finally, it is disappointing that the authors chose not to interview any of the disparate groups of male clients of sex workers for the current study, given their centrality to one of the main theoretical arguments of the text. As the authors write, "A working-class masculinity that puts a premium on clandestine encounters in a sexualized, bawdy home away from home is slowly giving way to a masculinity that relies on consumption to form identity," (p. 227), a claim which might have been more effectively bolstered with ethnographic data.

Ultimately, *The State of Sex* can be read as both a sociological treatment of prostitution and a political manifesto for the legalization of brothels. Situated within the present climate of gathering anti-prostitution and anti-trafficking activism, the authors' continued insistence that not all brothel workers are sex slaves is in and of itself a critical intervention. Yet one of the most unfortunate things about the current moral panic around sex trafficking is that critics can spend so much time and energy disputing it, that attention to other problems within the sex industry—such as oppressive labor conditions—is obscured. The authors offer

a hearty endorsement of legalization but only a few tepid comments about the importance of unions for improving labor conditions, and surprisingly, do not deal with the question of sex-workers' rights organizations' own critique of legalization (and support for decriminalization as a less exploitative alternative). Despite these problems, *The State of Sex* constitutes a welcome addition to contemporary sociological treatments of commercial sex and a much needed examination of Nevada's burgeoning leisure industry.

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*Consuming Politics: Jon Stewart, Branding, and the Youth Vote in America*, by **Dan Cassino** and **Yasemin Besen-Cassino**. Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2009. 261pp. \$54.50 cloth. ISBN: 9780838641453.

CYNTHIA BOGARD

Hofstra University

Cynthia.J.Bogard@hofstra.edu

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At the end of 2010, partisanship in a gridlocked, lame-duck Congress threatened even the passage of legislation to assist 9/11 first responders suffering from ongoing respiratory problems. Jon Stewart came to the rescue, devoting an entire episode of his 11-year-old political satire half-hour TV show, *The Daily Show*, to the first responders' cause. The bill passed, and Stewart was lauded by New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, among others, as an instrumental player in changing its momentum. *The New York Times* suggested that Stewart was practicing advocacy journalism akin to that practiced by Edward R. Murrow and Walter Cronkite.

In Dan Cassino and Yasemin Besen-Cassino's book on current American youths' attitudes towards politics, Jon Stewart — comedian, satirist, and youth political engagement catalyst — figures prominently. The argument the book mostly convincingly makes is that, politics, to today's college-attending youth, is just one more product vying for time and attention in their already crowded daily lives. Life, to our students, is mostly made up of brands that they decide are "cool" or "not-cool" and engage with or not accordingly. Coolness is largely determined by what

groups are thought to be associated with the brands. McDonalds, associated with the lower classes, is not cool, especially as a workplace. Starbucks, a solidly upper-middle class brand, does better. Brand acceptability breaks not only along perceived class associations but also generational ones. Most political issues are viewed as "not relevant" by college-attending youth. Healthcare, social security, the deficit, even war, are issues of concern to the stodgy, such as parents. Media companies and shows are branded similarly. Though the respondents in this study did not have the knowledge to identify whether NPR is conservative or liberal, they absolutely knew it was uncool — the pace was slow, the speakers boring and the technology (radio) archaic. Definitely not cool. Fox News Channel fared no better — regardless of the political affiliation of the youth interviewed, Fox political programs were seen as for "older people" — not them. Indeed, one Republican youth succinctly characterized Fox News as where "clueless rich people argue on a screen" (p. 74). In this rather two-dimensional world view, Jon Stewart has been branded as "cool." Thus, a proportion of the vast majority of college-attending youth who think politics is a product of little interest to them are still willing to check out *The Daily Show*, despite its yawn of a subject matter (politics).

*Consuming Politics* begins by laying out a general theory of youth decision-making and engagement that is modeled on the capitalist product model. Consumption preferences, even more than for previous generations, have become core identity markers. And parts of life, such as politics, that generations not so mired in the ethos of the consumption lifestyle have thought about with other lenses, have been drawn squarely into a world where everything can be signified, categorized and attended to or dismissed with reference to whether cool people or uncool people care about it.

The authors next explore the context of college-attending youths' lives and find that work among middle class youth not only sustains a consumption-focused lifestyle, but is itself a core source of identity (a Gap gal, an Abercrombie & Fitch guy). This makes political identification or engagement less necessary, and, since politics is more complicated and therefore problematic than clothing

stores, students often just decide to opt out. Indeed, if pressed, most call themselves “independents” — but more as a signifier that they have decided that structural problems with our current two-party system make “politics” not a very cool product and therefore not one deserving of much attention. As chapters about each of the three groups reveal, the few Republican-identified youth feel powerless and disconnected to current leaders, while the few Democratic youth find the issues of concern to them are not addressed. Independents and the other two groups are united, according to in-depth interviews with 50 New Jersey college students, in their disengagement. They are nudged only grudgingly from their apathy by the emergence of politics packaged in an appealing, hip, cool fashion. Thus Stewart. Thus Obama.

What the chapter on *The Daily Show* revealed is that Stewart provided a crucial service to these highly disengaged members of our democracy and provided it in a satirical, sound-bite, jump-cut studded fashion, guaranteed to appeal to Millennials and Gen Xers to whom everything is instant signification. He taught these young citizens *how* to think about their representatives and what they were doing and not doing and how the political game was played in a way that these young people — way less schooled in civics than their baby boomer parents — could absorb. The authors call this “strengthen[ing] their political knowledge structures” (p. 215). Stewart’s *Daily Show*, much more than the standard “talking heads” political and news shows, provides a context in which to think about politics for low-engagement youth. The book ends with a call for rebranding political content itself, because these generations have categorized this “product” as breathtakingly dull.

The authors could have taken a tip from Stewart by contextualizing the presentation of data and methods. The book, presumably, was written for an undergraduate audience (as a secondary book in an American Politics or Political Sociology course). Several data sets were employed to shore up the findings from the small but entertaining sample of New Jersey college students ( $N = 50$ ) they interviewed in depth, but the use and nature

of these large data sets as well as why they added validity to the authors’ arguments could have been more clearly explained. On the other hand, sometimes the reasoning for using certain measures or methods was explained in too much detail for their presumed audience, and sometimes they seemed to make less of their findings (especially in the chapter on Stewart) than they merited. These caveats aside, the book is sure to inspire discussion in an undergraduate classroom and prove thought-provoking to those who long for a more engaged youth electorate.

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*Growing Up in America: The Power of Race in the Lives of Teens*, by **Brad Christerson, Korie L. Edwards, and Richard Flory**. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010. 201pp. \$21.95 paper. ISBN: 9780804760522.

CARISSA M. FROYUM  
 University of Northern Iowa  
 carissa.froyum@uni.edu

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Scholars continue to debate the sources of persistent racial and ethnic gaps in well-being, particularly the roles that culture and social class play. *Growing Up in America* tiptoes into the fray by examining the racialized socialization of teenagers within four social institutions: family, peers, school, and religion. The authors define socialization as the process of developing “capital portfolios,” a blend of various forms of capital which young people can convert into social advantages and disadvantages. They draw their conclusions by comparing the backgrounds, beliefs, and experiences of African American, Asian American, Latino (broken down by generation) and white teens using data from the National Study of Youth and Religion, a nationally representative survey of English- and Spanish-speaking thirteen- to seventeen-year-olds. The study also included in-depth interviews with 267 adolescents.

While reading the chapters on family and peers, readers will likely fixate on what appear to be inconsistencies within racial/ethnic groups’ beliefs, practices, and well-being. Asian American teens were

most likely to think it morally okay for teens to have sex but were least likely to have had sexual intercourse. Independence from parents, closeness to peers, and risky behavior did not seem to inhibit whites' life chances. Readers are left wondering, why do those with the least positive influences fare well in formal institutions and those with the most positive, more poorly? The early chapters leave the question hanging in the air.

Yet the answer, spelled out most clearly in the conclusions of the schooling chapter and book entire, points to *Growing Up's* most interesting contribution: socialization across institutions shores up white advantage by positioning white teens as negotiators of equal relationships with authority figures and of institutions which serve their needs. While education researchers make similar arguments, the authors rightly claim that socialization research too often generalizes from white, middle-class samples without examining white youth as the products or producers of racialized processes. Additionally, this book reveals how the privileges that whites enjoyed within one institution were connected to their experiences within other institutions. White teens developed independence from their parents at the same time as teachers provided personalized attention, encouragement, and advice on college admissions. They also developed religious beliefs and practices characterized by "therapeutic individualism" as sources of happiness and problem solving rather than authority and obligation to others. Socialization across institutions, thus, provided whites confidence, sense of entitlement, and relationships to use to their advantage. Influential peers and risky behaviors, in turn, are less likely to harm their well-being because whites enjoy an otherwise profitable capital portfolio.

Socialization across institutions created consequential patterns of capital portfolios for each racial and ethnic group. Asian Americans experienced especially high expectations from parents and teachers, creating a nearly omnipresent control mechanism. The emphasis on pragmatic and long-term consequences and the human capital of their parents inhibited their risk taking while investing them in community and education. Respect for authority, tradition, and family

were primary foci for African American and first- and second-generation Latinos. Impersonal relationships with teachers burdened families with preparing teens for educational achievement, while religion provided guidance and obligations to the institution and family. Socialization, thus, produced their capital portfolios oriented toward community integration and psychological well-being but not necessarily socioeconomic achievement. Third-plus-generation Latinos were autonomous from their parents and peer-oriented, but they lacked the educational resources of whites and the religious integration of first- and second-generation Latinos.

What initially appear to be inconsistencies *within* racial and ethnic groups, thus, reveal important social processes that account for differences *across* them. These differences in capital portfolios, the authors theorize, likely explain some of the racial gaps in well-being. Despite the shift toward class-based explanations elsewhere, this book argues that race-based processes produce decidedly racialized experiences and outlooks among teens.

*Growing Up* avoids many of the traps of research looking for differences across groups. Difference research persistently uses the dominant group as a reference category, which standardizes whites' beliefs and practices as normative and taken-for-granted. While the regression analyses presented do use whites as the reference category, the theoretical arguments in the empirical chapters do so to a lesser degree. Each chapter introduces the patterns of socialization with teens' stories from the interview data, one from each of the examined racial/ethnic groups. Yet the authors stress the similarities across groups and highlight when the differences are relatively small. They also explain that socialization affords groups of color advantages over whites, primarily through extensive family and community integration. The analysis of Latinos compares first- and second-generation teens to third-plus-generation teens. Most importantly, the authors draw heavily on their qualitative data to explain the social processes that lead to and follow from similarities and differences. Thus, the conclusions focus on the *how* of inequality rather than the *what* of racial/ethnic differences.

Some shortcomings are worth noting. Experts who specialize in one of the social institutions will take issue with some of the theoretical arguments, the inclusion and exclusion of particular control variables, and the speculation of relationships or interaction effects that the book does not test quantitatively. A glaring omission is quantitative analysis associating the socialization patterns within families to teens' beliefs and practices in other institutions. The study does not explain how the researchers measured race or ethnicity, nor do the authors define the various capitals until the conclusion chapter. We also do not know the characteristics of the interviewed subjects, the qualitative data collection method (the authors point readers to another book), or the qualitative data analysis strategy. Many interview questions called for teens' generalized impressions rather than finely detailed descriptions of their experiences or interpretations. The interview data, thus, are heavy on general beliefs, and are not necessarily accounts which may reflect actual practices. Nonetheless, students will find the qualitative data engaging, and the book's central findings will challenge many students' assumptions about race/ethnicity. *Growing Up in America* calls on more specialized scholars to consider how interconnected relationships shape teens' beliefs and practices which together create group-level advantages and disadvantages.

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*Both Hands Tied: Welfare Reform and the Race to the Bottom of the Low-Wage Labor Market*, by **Jane L. Collins** and **Victoria Mayer**. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2010. 219pp. \$22.95 paper. ISBN: 9780226114064.

DAVID WAGNER  
 University of Southern Maine  
 wagner@usm.maine.edu

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Jane Collins and Victoria Mayer's *Both Hands Tied: Welfare Reform and the Race to the Bottom of the Low-Wage Labor Market* provides the reader with a good idea of what "welfare reform" has done to millions of poor women in the last decade and a half. It is not a story any American should be proud of.

Collins and Mayer's book is based on interviews with 33 women who were on Wisconsin's first-in-the-nation model for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (called the W-2 program since 1996). The interviews conducted in Milwaukee and Racine provide considerable data about the retrospective through current lives of the adults (and their children) over the last decades. Unlike other books on "welfare reform," Collins and Mayer focus on welfare recipients as members of the workforce. Indeed all of those interviewed have worked before, during, and after receiving assistance (belying the popular political labeling that "welfare to work" is a new idea). Collins and Mayer coin an important term—the "solitary wage bargain"—which they argue has replaced the earlier Western ideal of the "family wage." In the days prior to deindustrialization, the model of a wage-earning male securing enough pay to provide for his family promised a means to social reproduction in society through supporting women's giving birth, caretaking of children, and housekeeping, cooking, and the other needs of families. In theory at least, the authors do not explore if this ever worked in practice for the lower half of American society. With the new "solitary wage bargain" it is now every woman (and man) for themselves. Everyone is held to the contradictory bargain that they **must work**—no matter how minimal the pay and benefits or how poor the working conditions—while simultaneously somehow providing for their children without adequate economic or social means of social reproduction.

Collins and Mayer argue persuasively that these women are functioning with "both hands tied behind their back." Since most recipients enter welfare (and often other forms of assistance) either when giving birth, to stay home with an ill child or to care for others who are ill or are themselves disabled or ill (see Chapter Four), the bureaucratic rules that force these women into "work first" programs create a brutal no-win situation for these workers. They **are workers already**, and some have held decent jobs often better than the jobs they may be referred to. Now they are forced within a short time to go to a community service job or the most difficult low wage jobs or else be cut off from benefits. They do so without any recognition

(much less assistance) and in many cases these families need help with child care, caretaking, medical attention, and disability funding. If the failure of welfare reform to remedy the crisis in social reproduction is tying one hand, the other hand is tied by the loss of autonomy and citizenship through programs of workfare which do not provide real jobs. Rather than reflect the rhetoric of autonomy and pride that welfare reform's proponents suggest, the authors argue persuasively that these recipients live in a liminal work world—not as full workers but somewhere between workers, interns and the paupers of the earlier periods—which serves the needs of low-income employers for cheap labor.

This book will open eyes for those who have not studied the debates about welfare reform, and is to be commended for dealing in a more complete way with the workforce status of recipients. There are a couple of ways in which it might have been improved, particularly from the point of view of scholars of welfare. The cases of the individual women interviewed were rather underdeveloped: the authors spend most of the book making the broader case, but given the hard interview work they did and the need to destigmatize recipients, more focus on at least a few of the subjects would have been helpful. A second issue with almost all studies of welfare reform is their apolitical nature. Although Collins and Mayer are correct in locating the change in worklife to deindustrialization and the victorious drive of capital to lower labor costs, that explains the nature of social welfare only in an economic way. After all, the drive to lower labor costs has been going for several decades, and affects, as they acknowledge, men and women, and people who were formerly middle class as well as poor. But the changes in the economy in the case of state clientele (and workers as well) is battled out in the political system. They speak as if welfare was inevitable. How did changing welfare assistance from an entitlement cash benefit to a work-based system which forced recipients into the low wage workforce come so easily and early here in the United States compared with elsewhere? No names are given, no milestones provided. The reticence of the authors and other leading writers on welfare reform

may be in their reluctance to name centrist Democrats like former President Bill Clinton, who after all, ran for election in 1992 to “end welfare as we know it” and later signed the 1996 Personal Responsibility Act. It would also be interesting to look at our current President's view of PRWORA, which he has cited as a major policy change and has come to embrace. The quick political consensus on “welfare reform” allowed these massive changes in our social welfare system, and while coinciding certainly with economic and gender norm changes, they have a life of their own which is an important story.

Since there is nothing rational about this policy change (even to employers, as the labor shortage of the 1990s is long gone and these workers are no longer needed), we ought to observe its repressive practices as part of the ongoing state policing of the poor.

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*Suburban Affiliations: Social Relations in the Greater Dublin Area*, by **Mary P. Corcoran, Jane Gray, and Michel Peillon**. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2010. 333pp. \$39.95 cloth. ISBN: 9780815632146.

NIAMH HOURIGAN  
*University College Cork, Ireland*  
*n.hourigan@ucc.ie*

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*Suburban Affiliations* seeks to situate life in four Irish suburbs within broader international sociological debates on suburban experience. The authors problematize this literature from the outset noting a tendency to characterize suburbs as either “alienated deserts or highly organised communities” (p. 257). Mary Corcoran, Jane Gray and Michel Peillon seek to offer a more nuanced intervention into these debates by examining suburbs as “arenas of affiliations” where residents experience a form of communality which is “neither entirely superficial nor deeply intimate” (p. xix). The study opens by locating Irish suburban experience within the contrasting bodies of research on suburbs in the United States, Britain and Europe. Surprisingly, Irish suburbs appear to embody many of the problems evident in the studies of American suburbs where low rates of public transport, high levels of car use and lack of public infrastructure impact residents’

capacities to build affiliations. In addition, there is a tendency for residents of Irish suburbs to be clustered at similar stages of the life-course, particularly in Dublin's newer dormitory suburbs where the needs of school-going children provide a strong basis for building affiliations.

A key feature of the study is an attempt to interrogate the embeddedness and attachment to place experienced by Irish suburban residents. Of critical interest in this context is the experience of the residents of the new suburb of Rathath, who live in housing estates built around a small Irish village outside Dublin city. These residents move to this suburb with a dream of an Irish rural village experience which is not matched by the suburban sprawl and weak infrastructure which then engulfs this rural idyll. As one resident shrewdly observes "I think the problem before was, people bought houses, they bought into what they thought was country living. And then suddenly realized it was not going to be, it was going to be suburban living" (p. 206). Despite these challenges however, these affluent middle-class pioneers of Ireland's new suburbs manage, with some success, to build their own sense of community and identity far away from friendship and family ties in the greater Dublin area.

The disappointed expectations of these suburbanites contrast sharply with the experiences of residents in the suburbs of the Irish country town of Mullingar who in many cases, have been brought up in the town and look to family and friends rather than neighbors for their affiliations. The tendency of these residents to rely on extended family networks in particular demonstrate the continuing importance of family within Irish social networks and Irish value systems—a feature highlighted in the very earliest sociological studies of Irish society (Arensberg and Kimball 1940).

The findings on community activism are particularly important as Ireland is often characterized as a society where the demands of community supersede society-wide projects in terms of social movement activism (Connolly and Hourigan 2006). Corcoran, Gray and Peillon find evidence of a wide variation of community activism motivated by grievance, with a focus on service as well as commitments to secularization. However, these community-level actions remain fragmented

and do not at any point translate into wider social protest. Thus from Alberto Melucci's perspective, the "we" of these organizations does not become transformed into the more coherent "we" which might generate a more broad ranging political transformation of Irish suburban experience (1996).

The authors conclude by making a strong case for the importance of "affiliation" as a model for examining connectedness and embeddedness within suburbs as opposed to the overused concept of social capital. "What we are arguing is that an affiliated suburb constitutes a 'good enough' suburb as a place to live. The affiliated suburb implies communality which should not necessarily be considered inferior to community: it simply constitutes a different social configuration" (p. 269). Thus, their research points to a view of Irish suburbs which is similar to Janowitz's characterization of suburbs as a "community of limited liability" (1991).

*Suburban Affiliations* is a detailed and nuanced study which makes a significant contribution to sociological research on suburbs in Ireland and beyond. The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods used by the authors yields a rich seam of data which will be invaluable to future scholars of suburban experience. More importantly, the research presents a range of interesting questions which require further explanation and interrogation. The continuing salience of extended family, the lure of suburban pastoralism and the vibrancy of activism around education and secularization are themes which would benefit from more detailed ethnographic research. If there is a weakness, it is that the model of affiliation itself would have benefited from further elaboration and theorization in a form which draws more coherently on recent sociological research on emotion. Overall however, the book provides a fascinating insight into an aspect of Irish society which has been subject to little sustained empirical research.

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*Crime and Racial Constructions: Cultural Misinformation about African Americans in Media and Academia*, by **Jeanette Covington**. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010. 335pp. \$80.00 cloth. ISBN: 9780739125915.

NANCY WANG YUEN  
*Biola University*  
*nancy.yuen@biola.edu*

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Do racist media images lead to racist policy? Many cultural scholars would answer yes, but theorizing its path is more complex. *Crime and Racial Constructions* takes on this daunting task of linking images of black violence in media and academia to policy-making in the post-civil rights era United States. In terms of cultural studies of black media images, this book follows in the tradition of bell hooks, Stuart Hall, and Herman Gray. There are also in-depth discussions of how academic studies of black criminality exaggerate and essentialize black violence. The book is divided into two sections by gender, and then further divided into subsections on film and academic studies.

In the first section of the book, Jeanette Covington demonstrates how U.S. films in the post civil-rights era misrepresent black males as apolitical thugs inherently prone to violence (e.g., blaxploitation films like *Shaft* and ghetto-action films like *Boyz n the Hood*). In contrast, films on white violence (in particular, *Bowling for Columbine*) do not frame the violence as a “white” problem, but as a societal problem (i.e., lack of gun control in the United States). Covington also critiques some criminologists’ take on black violence—specifically those who employ cultural (e.g., Lynn Curtis, William Oliver) and psycho-biological (e.g., Alvin Poussaint, Blau and Blau) explanations—for perpetuating the “notion that violence

is the primary way that black males accomplish race” (p. 155). The second half of the book is devoted to film and academic representations of black female violence. Black women, constructed as hypermasculine and hypersexual in both media and academic studies, fail to meet the standards of “true womanhood” and thereby become unprotected and subject to punishment. One theory in particular—sexual symmetry—frames black women victims as equally or even more violent than their male abusers, further solidifying the misconception that black females are as prone to irrational violence as black males.

Throughout both sections, Covington argues that these constructions of black violence are false (crime rates among blacks have decreased over the years) but have real-life consequences. The belief that blacks are inherently violent and need to be controlled as a race has led to zero-tolerance policing and policy actions taken against black men, women, and youth. As a result, even minor infractions such as public drinking, tagging, or urination become occasions for the police to perform identity checks, searches, and even arrests. In domestic violence cases, more dual arrests occur when black women (not white women) are the victims. Covington contends that these policies are not only racist (applied only to black and not white violence) but fail to lower crime rates. As a solution, Covington implores scholars to “Americanize” black violence, or take a race-free analysis of criminology that avoids constructing black violence as something foreign and different. Similar to William Julius Wilson, Covington believes that factors, such as class, have greater explanatory power than race when it comes to high rates of black poverty and violence. She advocates privileging age, gender and socioeconomic status over race.

*Crime and Racial Constructions* is worth reading for its content analyses. Covington’s shrewd treatments of recent Oscar-winning films like *Crash* (Best Picture 2005) and *Monster’s Ball* (Best Actress 2001) detail the stronghold of racist/sexist imagery in Hollywood. Rather than promoting racial tolerance or quality roles for black actors, Covington shows how these movies paint

a skewed picture of irrational black violence deserving punishment and white control to restore order. Perhaps even more insightful than her content analyses are Covington's discussions of what is missing in film representations of black violence. She argues that films rarely show black men and women taking part in justifiable violence such as in some organized protests or social movements. They also fail to display historical racial/sexual oppression of black females. Missing are images of public beatings and white males' easy sexual access to black female slaves. Instead, Hollywood represents black women only as oversexed Jezebels and hyper-masculine Sapphires, sexual and physical aggressors in need of control and oppression. Covington contends that these images (think *Birth of a Nation*) are part of an historical system that fails to protect black women from white rapists, but severely punishes black males for even the suggestion of raping a white woman.

While the content analyses are strong, a lack of a sound methodology weakens the validity of some of her claims. For instance, while Covington's reviews of blaxploitation and ghetto-action films seem comprehensive, her comparison to "white violence" films hinges on a single documentary film, Michael Moore's *Bowling for Columbine*. The reader is left to question whether explanations for black and white violence look radically different because of race (Covington's claim) or because of film format—narrative film vs. documentary.

Covington has undertaken an ambitious endeavor to cover media and academia, black men and women, violence and victimization all in one book. As said, Covington makes some innovative and compelling arguments, but her purpose in juxtaposing media and academic constructions of black criminality is never explained. In fact, the book lacks a concluding chapter to bring all the disparate pieces together. As a result, *Crime and Racial Constructions* reads more as a series of well-written essays than a coherent book.

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*The Sociology of Elite Distinction: From Theoretical to Comparative Perspectives*, by **Jean-Pascal Daloz**. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. 220pp. \$85.00 cloth. ISBN: 9780230220270.

SHAMUS RAHMAN KHAN  
Columbia University  
Sk2905@columbia.edu

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It has been thirty years since *Distinction*. And it is time to move on. This is not to say that we leave Bourdieu behind, only that we build upon and transform the insights provided in this seminal text into a broad research project. Was Bourdieu right? Does anyone care? This is the wrong question. The right question is if he is useful or not in helping us to better understand the social world.

In *The Sociology of Elite Distinction*, Jean-Pascal Daloz begins with Bourdieu—the intellectual weight of *Distinction* is so heavy upon our thinking that to do otherwise would mean that few readers would take Daloz seriously. But the weight of Bourdieu is soon cast aside. Daloz tells us that Bourdieu was not the first to think of the importance of distinctions to elites and social life more broadly. Indeed, we can begin with Plato—or even earlier. Surveying 2,500 years of thought, it is a whirlwind tour of erudition, and one learns as much as to be expected when covering Aristotle through Baudrillard in less than forty pages.

We learn of Veblen's "notorious lechery" (p. 18) and Sombar's similar womanizing (p. 24). We learn that Spencer had much to say about distinction. We even learn where he said it (Part IV, the Second Volume of his *Principles of Sociology* in a 225-page chapter on "Ceremonial Institutions"). Unfortunately, we do not learn what Spencer actually said in these pages. And so this book goes: we keep packing our bags for a trip that we never take. I have never felt so much like a character in *Le charme discret de la bourgeoisie*. Two can play the erudition game!

To be fair, Daloz makes the reasonable point that no single theory of distinction can explain all empirical phenomena. The ways in which people distinguish themselves varies across time and space, and so too must our explanations for why. Yet this is

hardly the “eclectic perspective” (p. 52) it is presented as. Who among us would disagree that no single theory can explain all phenomena? *The Sociology of Elite Distinction* fights a kind of Parsonsian totalizing opponent who has not been around, in America, for at least forty years. To be fair, for a European audience, and most of all for a French one, such a call for diversity of approaches is welcome. But for the American reader, the fight is with a side that no longer exists.

Regardless, Daloz brings us a unique approach to distinctions by thinking comparatively. This is a welcome turn. In the process we learn that elites use adornment, residence, transportation, and food to distinguish themselves. We learn that they have done so differently in different times. And we learn that different theories explain different manifestations of these clothes, houses, cars, and meals in different centuries and nations.

The value of such comparison is not clear. Unlike in the field of comparative historical sociology, where the claims and stakes of comparative research are central to the work (indeed, where the comparative method is taken seriously as a methodology to be evaluated), we have no clear delineation of why the comparisons are necessary, useful, or what work they achieve. While the comparative method is usually used to adjudicate *between* competing explanations, in this instance it is deployed *in favor* of them.

This is a curious approach. Frustratingly so particularly because the empirical material is covered as cursorily as the theoretical. In addition to food, clothing, houses, cars, we also hear about relatives, connections, glamorous female company, servants, art patronage, manners, appearance, linguistic competence, assertiveness—all across more than two millennia in countless national contexts in less than 50 pages. There is no systematic comparison here, no “comparison” at all, just a list of how elites have variously made distinctions.

At this point we step back and ask a basic question. Have we lost sight of why distinctions matter? It does not matter that elites once used facial makeup to distinguish themselves, or that they were “aggressive” in some contexts and “refined” in others. What matters is why, and what the social work of such distinctions does. The great

insight of the omnivore thesis, for example, is not that elites like a range of things instead of particular things. This is simply an observation, not an explanation. The great insight is that the character of elites has shifted, and that this shift tells us something meaningful about the new character of inequality. Exclusion has been replaced by inclusion, and so elites increasingly frame themselves as being part of a more democratic, meritorious world. Daloz is correct that such an insight can and should be critically evaluated comparatively, and that a single theoretical framework is unlikely to make sense of the entire world. But *The Sociology of Elite Distinction* would be far more rewarding if instead of simply telling us this, it demonstrated the usefulness of such an approach.

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*Injustice: Why Social Inequality Persists*, by **Daniel Dorling**. Portland, OR: Policy Press, 2010. 387pp. \$32.95 cloth. ISBN: 9781847424266.

DENNIS GILBERT  
Hamilton College  
dgilbert@hamilton.edu

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In a 2009 article titled, “All in the Mind? Why Social Inequalities Persist,” Daniel Dorling previewed his book, *Injustice*. The note of irony introduced by that question mark may have been an editor’s contribution, but it captures the problematic character of the author’s argument. Dorling’s starting point, for the article and the book, is William Beveridge’s list of the five great social evils (ignorance, want, idleness, squalor, and disease) from a 1942 report that outlined goals for Britain’s post-war welfare state. He maintains that Beveridge’s evils have been largely overcome in Britain and other “rich countries,” only to be replaced by five new, more insidious evils (elitism, exclusion, prejudice, greed and despair), evils of the mind that, he claims, are responsible for growing social inequality.

Dorling, Professor of Human Geography at the University of Sheffield, focuses on developments in Britain and the United States. But he argues more broadly that inequality persists in the advanced capitalist countries because the powerful in these societies

believe (incorrectly) that elitism is efficient, exclusion is necessary, prejudice is natural, greed is good and despair is inevitable (p. 1). At a minimum, Dorling should be able to show that these notions are pervasive among national elites, however defined, and to describe the mechanisms through which their beliefs promote inequality. He should also be able to discount other explanations for persistent inequality such as economic change or class differences in socialization. But there is little systematic argument or marshaling of evidence in this book.

Dorling sets a low bar for himself. He contends that the powerful are often coy about expressing their beliefs and may delude themselves into thinking their ideas are free of elitism or prejudice. There is some truth in this, but it allows Dorling to interpret texts freely. For example, he cites Tony Blair's concern with helping children to develop their "God-given potential" (pp. 115, 340n) and quotes sociologist John Goldthorpe's speculative observation that children of different classes tend to do better or worse in school on account, one may suppose, of a complex interplay of sociocultural and genetic factors (pp. 73, 115). These remarks are, says Dorling, evidence of a thinly disguised "geneticism" shared by academic and political elites. Perhaps. But Blair was pleading for greater equality of opportunity. And Goldthorpe's comment—which must appeal to Dorling since he uses it twice—was prefatory to a research report whose main conclusion is that Britain and similar societies are far from realizing their own meritocratic ideals: after measurable differences in ability are controlled for, class remains a powerful determinant of educational attainment and occupational success.

Dorling unequivocally rejects any idea of differential abilities among individuals, whatever their source. Citing a 1974 text, he asserts that there is "not a single reputable scientific study" establishing the heritability of intelligence (pp. 112, 340n). He never mentions the work of Pierre Bourdieu or American sociologists like Annette Lareau and Melvin Kohn pointing to the profound class differences in cultural and social capital that accompany children to school. If the children of the affluent have better educational outcomes, Dorling says, it is because they are

"becoming better at passing examinations" (p. 71).

Apparently innocent of sociology, Dorling is openly hostile to economics. He compares "orthodox economists" (the only kind he considers) to Nazi Adolf Eichmann (p. 228). For Dorling, the basic mechanisms of capitalism are simply evil. Profit is "profiteering." Lending money at interest is "usury." Competition is "inefficient." A rising stock market is evidence of "bloodsucking." Economic growth is "not essential." It never occurs to Dorling that the capacity of capitalist economies for growth has contributed to overcoming Beveridge's five great evils, especially "want." On the other hand, he shows no interest in examining how economic change since the 1970s has contributed to rising inequality in the United Kingdom and the United States. Dorling does not simply yearn for a gentler capitalism, but if he has any notion of an alternative system, he will not say. To speculate about such matters is "rather like asking how you would run plantations after abolishing slavery" (p. 308).

The five central chapters of *Injustice* successively examine the five great evils of the new era. The first of these, on elitism, concerns the social construction of the intelligence quotient and the use of IQ tests as a social sorting mechanism. Subsequent chapters are less focused; they float from topic to topic and, in part because the new great evils themselves overlap, often return to matters covered in earlier chapters. Generally, they concentrate on evidence that inequality is rising and life is hard at the bottom, without explaining why (as Dorling's subtitle promises). There are a few useful nuggets in these chapters, but the reader must process a great deal of low-grade ore to find them. It does not help that Dorling, who has published 25 books, is an indifferent writer.

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*Feminism Seduced: How Global Elites Use Women's Labor and Ideas to Exploit the World*, by **Hester Eisenstein**. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2010. 293pp. \$26.95 paper. ISBN: 9781594516603.

CHRISTINE L. WILLIAMS  
*University of Texas at Austin*  
*cwilliams@austin.utexas.edu*

I came of age in the seventies when there were very few feminists in the academy. Even today, identifying as a feminist sociologist feels radical and transgressive. But the truth is feminism has entered the mainstream: women candidates are at the top of both parties' tickets, the National Football League is beribboned in pink for breast cancer awareness week, major oil companies highlight women scientists in their PR campaigns, and so on. Granted, none of these groups would label themselves "feminist," but that is beside the point. A number of recently published histories of the women's movement underscore the point: feminism won.

But I am in no mood to celebrate, and neither is Hester Eisenstein. Her new book, *Feminism Seduced*, is a reflection and analysis of how the feminist movement has gone astray. It is at once a deeply personal book describing Eisenstein's forty years of engagement with feminism and a sweeping indictment of globalization. Eisenstein has become convinced that feminism has been co-opted by corporate capitalism. This in itself is not surprising, since corporate capitalism co-opts every social movement. What is surprising and disheartening to Eisenstein (and to me) is that certain strands of the feminist movement have aided this process. Liberal feminists wholeheartedly embraced the model of competitive individualism for women, playing into the interests of global capitalism. Moreover, by denying gender differences, they unintentionally denigrated the importance of caring work in society, leaving legions of poor women without the support of their advocacy.

How did this happen? Eisenstein argues that liberal feminism's single-minded focus on promoting women's careers in business and the professions dovetailed with employers' interests in exploiting women's labor. She

describes the second wave of feminism as women's "bourgeois revolution," drawing a comparison to men's revolt against feudalism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (p. 64). In the 1970s, women were freed from the feudal institution of the family and became independent economic actors for the first time. With the combined pressures from feminists pushing women out of the home and employers pulling women into burgeoning service sector jobs, the "powerful taboo" (p. 28) against married women working was finally broken. Many individual women like me benefited because we gained access to education, employment, and birth control. But the vast majority of women were left behind, as men abandoned their (gendered) responsibilities to the family and as employers became unwilling to pay a (now understood as sexist) family wage.

Eisenstein develops her argument (she calls it a polemic) about feminism in tandem with an exposition and critique of neoliberalism. This model of managerial or "free market" feminism fits with the neoliberal drive to deregulate the economy, dismantle the welfare state, and expand incarceration and policing. Both neoliberalism and this model of feminism conflate dependency with weakness and independence with strength and virility. The problem is that when autonomy becomes the principal or only virtue, women with primary caring responsibilities suffer, seen all too clearly in the U.S. experience with welfare reform. Although the National Organization for Women opposed the implementation of workfare requirements, the rank and file of the organization supported it. Apparently, the only entitlement that women (and men) now deserve is the entitlement to work for a living. But as Eisenstein notes, forcing poor women into the low wage workforce does not promote their independence; it promotes the feminization of poverty and the profitability of multinational corporations.

The brand of feminism that Eisenstein targets is being exported globally—and cynically—by Western governments and corporations. For instance, the Bush Administration embraced women's rights in its defense of the war in Afghanistan as they were also imposing a global ban on abortion. Even today, mainstream feminist ideas are used

to demonize Islam as “patriarchal” and “traditional,” and to promote Western society as “liberated” and “modern.” She writes:

The whole point of this book has been to say to my sisters and colleagues in the women’s movement (and to our brothers in the struggle): “Red alert! Red alert! The globalizers are using our ideas to further their goals and to frustrate ours.” To me, feminism was and is about global justice, about taking care of those in need, giving a voice to the voiceless, letting people determine their own destiny. All of these goals are in danger of being defeated by a system of global imperialism that tells the Iraqis and the Afghans and so many other peoples around the world how they must live (p. 200).

*Feminism Seduced* is a departure from some of Eisenstein’s previous work, which argued that feminists working within the system could transform it. This was the goal of the femocrats in Australia, of which she was a part. Now she is less convinced that a feminism divorced from radical politics can actually improve the lives of any but a very few elite women.

Eisenstein wants to resurrect socialist feminism as an alternative to the ascendant free market feminism. She sees Venezuela as a model, although she recognizes that a great deal of sexism remains in Marxist/leftist circles. She also thinks that alliances with women-of-color movements are a potential salvation for feminism. Postmodernists get the boot, but mothering and maternal values are redeemed and redemptive. In the end the solutions are fraught and the conclusions seem old-fashioned. But her analysis of the “fit” between liberal feminism and global capitalism is spot on. Feminists need to realize how our conceptualization and fight for gender equality can promote the interests of corporations. Global class interests must be considered or else feminism can do as much harm as good.

*The Public and Its Possibilities: Triumphs and Tragedies in the American City*, by **John D. Fairfield**. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2010. \$37.50 cloth. 355pp. ISBN: 9781439902103.

JEFFERSON POOLEY  
Muhlenberg College  
pooley@muhlenberg.edu

*The Public and Its Possibilities* re-narrates American history as a left communitarian morality tale. Rapacious capitalists and misguided reformers battle “honest producers and competent citizens” across the centuries, in John Fairfield’s sprawling synthetic history. The book’s title, a hopeful rewrite of John Dewey’s 1927 classic, suggests Fairfield’s thesis: public life has been emptied out, but there is buried treasure to be recovered in the country’s civic-minded past.

Fairfield, a professor of history at Xavier University, draws on two generations of historians who have located “civic republican” strands in American history. This “republican synthesis,” as Robert Shalhope called it, was well underway by the late 1960s as an explicit challenge to the post-war consensus history. Where Louis Hartz found Locke and rights-based liberalism, Gordon Wood, J.G.A. Pocock and others uncovered competing claims rooted in civic virtue and the common good. Among historians, the source, extent, and duration of republican influence is contested, but the idea has proven remarkably supple—one reason Daniel Rodgers’ (1992) “Republicanism: The Career of a Concept” is a neglected classic in the sociology of ideas. The success of the republican historiography has dovetailed, since the early 1980s, with the revival of pragmatism as well as that multi-pronged assault on individualist liberalism that gets called communitarian.

Fairfield’s book highlights “roads not taken” in our “excessively privatized world,” in much the same vein as political theorist Michael Sandel’s *Democracy’s Discontent* (1996). But Fairfield narrates his usable civic past with a small “p” populism less pervasive in Sandel. The populist flavor is among the clues that point to Christopher Lasch, the late historian, as a key influence. There is also Fairfield’s hostility to experts and

professionals, his accent on the middle third of the 19th century, his anti-materialist, life-in-common leftism, his plaint about public culture in long-term decline, even his peculiarly Laschian take on the expert-besieged family. The book is indeed dedicated to Lasch, whom Fairfield met as a University of Rochester college student, and who went on to supervise Fairfield's doctoral work at Rochester. *The Public and Its Possibilities* might be read as the synthetic American history that Lasch never wrote.

The book is organized into four parts, with chapters variously devoted to a given period's culture, economy, or its politics. Following a brief summary of Revolutionary era republicanism, Part I recasts struggles over work in the nineteenth century as a battle between a "civic conception of free labor" and the values of an emerging market society. "Free labor," a term with other contemporary meanings, is here used in Sandel's sense, as work that prepares a laborer to perform his civic duties. This free labor ideal stayed in the fight through the first two-thirds of the century, until its civic aspirations were squashed by the "powerful elites" of the Gilded Age. Part II tells that story of decline in more detail, first pointing to the tragic irony that white workers failed to connect their civic ideal to slavery's injustice. Here Fairfield also portrays the post-Reconstruction political culture as an unholy alliance between Liberal Republicans, misguided reformers, and plutocrats bent on silencing the average citizen.

After "thirty years of decay," republican values were "rediscovered" in the early Progressive Era—which, in Fairfield's Part III, becomes a window of civic revival. "Progressive Era Americans," he writes, "recaptured the nineteenth-century ambition to create an economy and culture based on democratic participation and popular abilities" (p. 191). That window was soon shut by World War I, when George Creel's domestic propaganda campaign served as the "requiem for a participatory democracy." After the war, "corporate progressives" and chastened realists like Walter Lippmann largely acquiesced, Fairfield argues in Part IV, to a democracy without citizens. Yes, Dewey made nods in the right direction, and the early CIO's campaign for industrial

democracy was an important last redoubt. But labor leaders opted for social security over economic democracy, joining with other interwar elites in constructing a "Welfare/Warfare State." In place of democratic politics, Fairfield writes, Americans got democratic leisure: the "private pleasures of consumption" over "civic values and public experience."

Fairfield's writing is excellent throughout. He has somehow managed to condense entire book-shelves of work into seamless, quote-rich prose. Still, the book's manichean cast—the forces of light locked in struggle with darkness—are grating to even a sympathetic reader. There is a running moral ledger with just two columns:

In the late nineteenth century, working people mounted a spirited challenge to the values of the emerging corporate order. Against the ethic of limited liability, they championed sympathy; against hierarchy, they asserted equality; against competitiveness, they upheld cooperation; against individualism, they practiced solidarity (p. 194).

That is a rousing line, and its populist stridency is typical to the book. The passion is catching, but Fairfield is painting with just two colors. And the villain role shifts with startling speed: Gilded Age good-government reformers seek to shut out the unwashed, while turn-of-the-century Progressives are democracy's leading lights. Fairfield's unifying concept of civic virtue is also asked to do too much work. Republicanism, especially as the decades roll by, seems to slip into a much thinner (if still compatible) notion of participation by the underprivileged. Revolutionary resistance to British corruption is a far cry from machine-era partisan politics, yet Fairfield wants to praise both, and much else besides, as expressions of republican virtue.

The book's subtitle suggests that cities will be a particular focus, and urban settings are frequently invoked. The book's argument, however, does not seem dependent on the city per se, since Fairfield's struggle plays out across popular culture, national politics, and a changing economy. The city comes

into true focus only in his superb last chapter, which pegs twentieth century civic decline to the relative post-WWII fortunes of cities and suburbs. Fairfield's chronicle of post-war urban decay is the best short summary I have seen, but his account is only tangentially linked to public participation and its eclipse. The end-of-book shift to an urban frame helps explain the otherwise puzzling case Fairfield makes in the closing pages for a tax on land speculation.

Fairfield's book is an unapologetic history-cum-polemic, so perhaps its binary employment is not really a fault on its own terms. That may be, but perhaps the past the book seeks to recover would be more usable without the air-brushing.

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*Serving Country and Community: Who Benefits from National Service?*, by **Peter Frumkin** and **JoAnn Jastrzab**. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010. 310pp. \$45.00 cloth. ISBN: 9780674046788.

JOHN WILSON  
Duke University  
jwils@soc.duke.edu

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Non-military national service programs exist in many countries but there is something quintessentially American about AmeriCorps, based as it is on the premise that service to one's country not only improves society but also the person involved. AmeriCorps is actually comprised of three discrete programs, all operating under the aegis of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), established in 1993. AmeriCorps State and National mobilizes volunteers by offering a stipend in the form of education credits and a living allowance in exchange for a one-year work commitment. Its programs

are run through nonprofit organizations with which it forms partnerships. The aim is not only to perform public works, such as building affordable housing, but also to change the lives of people who serve to make them better citizens. Besides AmeriCorps State and National there is AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America), a service program begun in 1964, and the AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC), a ten-month residential service program for young adults.

The book under review focuses on these three programs with the aim of recounting the history of the idea of non-military national service in the United States, describing the various and sometimes conflicting opinions about the proper goals of national service programs, assessing the effects of service on AmeriCorps members, describing some of the programs staffed by AmeriCorps members, analyzing the political fortunes of the parent CNCS, and making recommendations about strengthening AmeriCorps for the future.

Americans have always preferred that social problems be tackled in a decentralized, bottom-up, voluntary way. They are wary of government-sponsored service programs not only because they threaten to undermine the "genuine" spirit of volunteerism, but also because they resent government intrusion into the private sphere. It is testimony to the influence of communitarian thinking in the 1990s, personified by Bill Clinton, that the proponents of AmeriCorps could overcome these political obstacles to set up what has become a very elaborate national service program with funding from the federal government.

The authors make a persuasive case that the goals of AmeriCorps have been partially distorted by these political conflicts, shifting priorities to programs that promise measurable outcomes and spending too much money on evaluation studies to show concrete achievements to a hostile Congress. AmeriCorps was particularly vulnerable to these distortions because at the outset it failed to articulate definite objectives for the program. In recent years it has narrowed its mission to four areas of public work: education, public safety, the environment and child poverty.

While a complete assessment of the value of AmeriCorps should cover both the effectiveness of the program in the community and its effects on those who serve, the former is harder to measure than the latter. This is why the book devotes most attention to a before and after assessment of the effects of serving as an AmeriCorps volunteer, using as a comparison group those who contacted AmeriCorps for information but did not enroll. No comparison groups were created for studies of VISTA or NCCC.

Of the various outcome measures, AmeriCorps had a positive effect on the likelihood of volunteering post-service, felt obligation to contribute to the community, self-confidence in defining and dealing with community problems, feelings of efficacy, grassroots activism, and "connections to the community," but in almost all cases the effect was stronger for those with no previous volunteer experience. The resulting assessment is therefore rather mixed. To some extent AmeriCorps is preaching to the choir. It has little impact on the "personal development" of those already civic minded. It does benefit those who have not previously thought about volunteering and who are, perhaps, attracted by the stipend and living allowance or the opportunity to obtain job skills and job contacts. (It is worth mentioning that interest in national-service positions has mushroomed recently thanks partly to the tight job market.) Surprisingly, despite the educational incentives, AmeriCorps members end up no better educated than the comparison group although they do acquire more basic work skills and they are more likely to find a job in the public sector. With these findings, the study makes a valuable contribution to the research on the effects of volunteering on the volunteer. While not all members benefit, the money is going where it is most needed: to those young people who would otherwise not develop much interest in being good citizens in their community. As the authors note in their conclusion, AmeriCorps would achieve its mandate even better if it extended its recruitment efforts to excluded populations who would otherwise be inactive.

One of the best sections of the book recounts the tortured history of the CNCS and its foster programs as it suffers from gross financial mismanagement, inchoate

mission statements, misguided evaluations, proliferating sub-agencies with overlapping and confusing mandates, failure to ensure proper volunteer training, and high rates of attrition. Ironically, the turnaround in the CNCS is attributed to the hiring of David Eisner, a former AOL Time Warner executive. The resulting stabilization of CNCS and its programs has not only ensured the program's survival but paved the way for an increase in funding. The Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act (2009) authorized an increase in membership from 75,000 to 250,000 by 2017.

The material on VISTA and NCCC in the book is interesting but absent comparison groups, strict evaluations of effectiveness are impossible. VISTA still "operates with a more activist model of public work" (p. 188) and is therefore subject to greater tension between helping and advocacy roles and more vulnerable to attack from the political right wing. In response, VISTA has shifted to helping the unemployed find jobs, the poor get welfare, the sick get health care and the homeless find shelter. The authors conclude that this mission drift has led to so much overlap with AmeriCorps it should be terminated.

This book skillfully blends historical, public policy and sociological analysis to provide an intriguing, well-informed and well-written study of the CNCS and three of the national service programs it sponsors and oversees. It is essential reading for anyone interested in how national service is conceived and executed in the United States today, and for scholars looking for more information on how participation in service programs does or does not affect the personal development of those involved. It leaves open the question as to whether AmeriCorps is the best way of spending taxpayers' money on tackling social problems.

*Coming to Terms with Chance: Engaging Rational Discrimination and Cumulative Disadvantage*, by **Oscar H. Gandy, Jr.** Farnham, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2009. 240pp. \$99.95 cloth. ISBN: 9780754679615.

GEORGE WILSON  
*University of Miami*  
 Gwilson1@miami.edu

In the last several decades, sociologists have analyzed racial discrimination in an increasingly complex and sophisticated manner. The notion of the atomized individual motivated by malice and ill-will in playing out the dynamics of a bigoted personality has faded from analytic view. Complementing (if not replacing) it have been institutional analyses of the constraints and context in which actors produce (from often ostensibly non-racial intentions) results that have a disproportionately negative impact on the life-chance opportunities of minority groups. If elements of traditional “Jim Crow” prejudice are invoked, they tend to be expressed more symbolically and indirectly than in the past, emerge in relatively benign sets of symbolic phraseology and invidious stereotypes and may, but not always, undergird the pernicious institutional practices.

In a dense, scholarly, and wide-ranging book that reads like an impassioned theoretical treatise, Oscar Gandy’s *Coming to Terms With Chance: Engaging Rational Discrimination and Cumulative Disadvantage* accomplishes a major task—enlarging the range of extra-individual and institutional factors that drive racial discrimination. Similar to various well-known recent perspectives—such as “laissez-faire racism” by Bobo and colleagues, and Bonilla-Silva’s “color-blind racism”—Gandy focuses on aspects of daily, taken-for-granted phenomena that constitute part of our accepted “cultural logic.” In his case, it is the formulation of probability and statistics which guides stratification-relevant decision-making by institutions of business and government. This then contributes toward the economic marginalization of the poor and particularly African Americans, the historically dispossessed group with whom he shows the most interest.

At the heart of Gandy’s analytic framework is his notion of “rational discrimination,”

which is how race-based disparate outcomes are produced via probability and statistically-based predictive decisions (called “technologies”). Rational discrimination is premised on the assignment of minorities into stratification-relevant risk categories that produce disparate outcomes. This form of discrimination is based on negative stereotypes and even past aggregate behavior—that is, significantly, a product of the legacy of ongoing discrimination—but is replete with a business logic that is devoid of overt attempts or intent to marginalize minorities. African Americans are handicapped when they pay relatively high medical insurance premiums, which because of lower life expectancies and a history of greater incidence of illness/disease, is a cost effective economic strategy. African Americans suffer when they experience less intensive educational curricula and a lesser allocation of resources than whites because of lower standardized test scores and graduation rates. And African Americans pay higher mortgage rates and securing credit for housing because—relative to whites—they have a history of higher foreclosure rates.

Gandy is scholarly, bringing in a range of sociological literatures to drive home his thesis. From aspects of housing, the health care system, as well as the insurance and the criminal justice systems, Gandy documents how seemingly rational economic decisions determined by financial risk, structure rules that have a disproportionately negative impact on minorities, the poor generally, and African Americans in particular. These forms of rational discrimination, Gandy argues, are particularly pernicious because they constitute forms of “cumulative discrimination”: inequities buildup not only across the individual-course but also through generations, and the vicious cycle of discriminatory risk assessment is continually re-created. Finally, Gandy implicates the media in creating and reproducing this cycle. Through mechanisms as diverse as the coverage of perceived risks (moral panics about inner-cities suffering from crime waves), selective attention on certain issues (sensationalism associated with natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina), and the presentation of issues in terms of language use that is actuarial and risk-oriented, all serve to

communicate the propriety of adopting pernicious risk and statistically-based approaches to addressing social problems.

Statistical/probability models emerge in Gandy's framework as analogous to the role of the advocacy of "individualism," "race-neutrality," and the "unfettered labor market" in Bonilla-Silva's well-known "color blind" perspective which uncovers the insidious role of subtle and ostensibly non-racially-based systems. Its presumed objectivity is replete with ideological considerations and masks the stratification-relevance of the legacy of discrimination in promoting present and future race-based inequity. This is a powerful argument, though Gandy could have been more systematic in relating his formulation to Bonilla-Silva's and others that have become prominent on the landscape of race in sociological analysis. Also troublesome was the inconsistency at times in theoretical statements about the causal ordering of variables (e.g., the use of statistics "generates" discrimination and later "supports existing discrimination") as well the failure to document adequately the crucial portion of his argument that risk-based statistics are responsible for kinds of discrimination across institutional spheres that accumulate longitudinally across the life course and generations, an argument that is plausible but, in this text, is assumed.

This is an important treatise, though its technical nature and difficult prose will likely land it on the desks of only those most committed to keeping up with the most recent developments in race-based stratification theory. Noteworthy is its expansion of institution-based analyses of race as well as its policy ramifications, namely, that the legacy of racial discrimination in America is much more than a vestige of bygone days and it must be factored into present policy prescriptions to address ongoing racial disparities. Hopefully, Gandy's effort will be rewarded by its being significantly integrated into racial theory by sociologists.

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*Restoring the Power of Unions: It Takes a Movement*, by **Julius G. Getman**. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010. 381pp. \$55.00 cloth. ISBN: 9780300137002.

DAN CLAWSON

*University of Massachusetts, Amherst*  
clawson@sadri.umass.edu

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Although it is marketed as one (long) book, *Restoring the Power of Unions* is probably better regarded as two (short) books bound together, and often cross-referencing each other. Book One is the story of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees (HERE) union in the last forty years; Book Two is lawyer Julius Getman's overview of the current state of labor law, how we got where we are, and what changes should be made in the law (and it is definitely not labor's priority, EFCA, the Employee Free Choice Act).

Roughly half the book is the story of HERE's transformation. The hero of this story is Vinnie Sirabella, born in 1922, a waiter with a 9<sup>th</sup> grade education, a union insurgent in Providence, Rhode Island, where he caused so much trouble that in 1958 he was offered a position as "business agent for the nearly extinct Local 217 in New Haven, Connecticut," a local which had 60 members at the time. For the past many years that local has included the food service workers at Wesleyan University. Knowing nothing about Sirabella, I had long considered the Wesleyan food service local a model for what a union should be: democratic, militant, with active rank-and-file engagement, and workers reaching out to students and involving them. That this can be said more than fifty years later is evidence that Sirabella's approach builds a foundation for the long term.

In 1969 the HERE workers at Yale University asked Sirabella to become their full-time business manager, so Sirabella sought a successor to be the sole paid staff member of Local 217, placing an ad in the New Haven newspaper: "Wanted: labor trainee, person willing to work long hours for low pay in order to learn to be a labor leader. Must be unmarried." John Wilhelm, an honors graduate of Yale who had been active in SDS (p. 44)

got the job, even though he was married; for the last decade Wilhelm has been the national head of the hotel workers union. In Getman's account, most of what Wilhelm knows, and most of his approach to labor, was taught to him by Vinnie Sirabella, who also, Getman reports, hired most of the other dynamic leaders of the past generation in HERE.

With SEIU's star tarnished by its recent internal turmoil and battles with other unions, HERE is poised to take the mantle as the exemplary union: militant, progressive, effective, and in HERE's case built on a foundation not just of member involvement, but of member leadership. According to John Wilhelm, "the function of the organizer actually is . . . to train the rank-and-file leaders" (p. 65). As Getman argues, "It is the constant use of the rank and file as part of the organizing process that is the hallmark of a HERE campaign" (p. 106), and in order to build rank-and-file strength, HERE campaigns often take a long time.

HERE relies as well on the comprehensive campaign, a broad-based attack on the employer, an attack which focuses *not* on labor law, but on a range of other laws and policies or public relations. For example, in order to open a new hotel, ownership has to get a great many permits and go before a great many public boards. In ordinary circumstances, the majority of those hearings and actions are attended by almost no one, and the employer's requests are uncontested. But what happens if every hearing is fiercely contested, if every example of past employer wrongdoing is brought forward, if experts and the public are mobilized to oppose (say) employer environmental requests? After a time, the employer may offer a truce: we will agree to stay neutral in your organizing campaign, and leave it up to the workers to decide whether they want a union, if you will agree to stay out of public hearings on our needed permits. If the union can gain an employer pledge of neutrality, combined with an agreement to accept "card check" — proof that a majority of workers have signed cards asking to be represented by the union — then the workers and the union are highly likely to win. SEIU as well uses comprehensive campaigns, but what distinguishes HERE is that it always insists on building worker

leadership and worker power; in recent years SEIU has often relied almost exclusively on comprehensive campaigns, and skipped the step of building worker power.

The other half of *Restoring the Power of Unions* is Getman's review of labor law, and probably is of less interest to non-specialists. Getman argues that labor's priority of EFCA would make little difference even if it were won; what matters is employer neutrality, not card check, and in any case the courts would gut EFCA. Instead, he argues, unions should be fighting to prohibit employers from replacing striking workers, and fighting that during organizing campaigns unions should be given as much access to workers as employers: if the employer gets to address all the workers during work time, the union has to be given the same right.

Part of what makes Getman's book so useful is that he does not rely on the same struggles, and the same books/articles, used by most sociologists of labor—I suspect Getman has not read much of that literature. But he has been involved with labor at least since 1959, when he went to work for the National Labor Relations Board, he clearly loves militant rank-and-file workers wherever he finds them, and he relies on extended interviews with (the now long dead) Vinnie Sirabella, John Wilhelm, and key organizers of both HERE and other unions. Getman approaches issues very differently from most of the sociologists studying labor today. His examples and sources are not the same as those most of us are using; he often challenges what we take for granted and argues that what really matters is something that few others are discussing. That makes this surprisingly readable book especially valuable.

*Forced to Care: Coercion and Caregiving in America*, by **Evelyn Nakano Glenn**. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010. 262pp. \$29.95 cloth. ISBN: 9780674048799.

KARLA A. ERICKSON  
Grinnell College  
ericksok@grinnell.edu

Before I say what Evelyn Nakano Glenn writes *about*, let me first say *how* she writes about it: brilliantly. Glenn's prose is concise and elegantly crafted, and despite the complexity of the subject matter, the reader is swept along with the force of the narrative structure. In *Forced to Care*, Glenn unravels how the burden of care—in terms of expectations and actual labor—has become so differentially distributed according to race, class, gender, and nationality. Glenn begins with the demographic, geographic, and gendered shifts that have resulted in a care crisis in the United States. Then she spins back from the sorry state of current care to examine the legal, social, and political structures that have marginalized caretaking as something to be avoided, as work that is poorly paid, and unprotected by state and federal laws.

Glenn's work clearly demonstrates how paid care operates outside the market principle that would predict a higher demand would produce better wages. Rather than supply and demand, she argues that various forms of coercion have been used to supply caregiving to those who need it. She connects the current system to a history of compelling women to perform domestic service through two primary modes of coercion: status obligations, and racialized gendered servitude. She traces these two forms through history first in the transition from primarily agrarian to industrial production. Next, in the most remarkable chapter from the text entitled "The Movement to Reform Women's Caring," she connects current ideologies about care and entitlement to the history of using gender regimes and domestic chores as modes for "civilizing" peoples including Native Americans, newly arrived immigrants, and incarcerated populations. She explains that the continuity of coercion emerges from examining these three cases

together to "demonstrate how women's and subordinates' obligation to care was recodified during a critical period in American history when women's citizenship was being expanded" (p. 44). This chapter captures the major contributions of Glenn's work: she draws out connections and patterns of coercion by laying the cases alongside each other. She bases her conclusions on a wealth of primary documents and archival research, connecting the tactics used to "domesticate" Native American, immigrant, and incarcerated women, and as such, to build a nation. Here we see Glenn at her best, connecting citizenship to care, and care to inequality in new ways that shift the reader's perception of the foundations of our current crisis. She situates the current construction of caring in earlier relations of indenture, slavery, coverture, and therefore principles of property. This chapter makes this book essential reading.

In subsequent chapters, Glenn digs out the ideological and material foundations of the contemporary care crisis, tracing how historical, social, and legal changes have transformed caring from a moral responsibility to a legal obligation in the United States, particularly for poor people, immigrants, and women of color. In the United States, notions of independence and the myth of the nuclear family have largely freed the state from providing collective approaches to caregiving. Instead, she characterizes the social organization of care as feminized, racialized, and privatized.

Glenn argues that because caregiving is viewed as a status obligation rather than labor, it is devalued and care workers are deprived critical rights including minimum wage, retirement benefits, and workers' compensation. Status obligations are internalized assumptions of responsibility for meeting dependency needs of family members that are also incorporated into law and social policy. Glenn explores the legal tradition of denying compensation to family care providers, and withholding state subsidized care to elderly or disabled citizens who have close kin living nearby. Glenn reveals how the state and society operate together to naturalize women's care, and to normalize the family as the first resort for care, disguising the material conditions that motivate and often coerce care provision. The costs of this

system are dramatic for caregivers, care receivers, and also contribute to the care deficit that the United States now faces.

Glenn concludes that although the forces shaping care have changed, the imposition of coercion is a constant, and the expectation continues that women will provide free care as part of a status obligation or for low pay, with increasing costs to caregivers, their dependents, and care recipients. In the final chapter, she lays out some goals for revaluing caregiving labor, caregivers, and care recipients. She argues for caring to be recognized as "real work" and valued service on par with military or community service, formal recognition of caring as a public responsibility rather than a private family matter, and finally, working standards to protect care providers which could entice new workers to enter the field, and result in high quality care provision.

As a scholar of labor and inequality, I seek books that will capture for my students the dynamic of intimate labor within capitalism—how some of the work that might be the most important becomes devalued and gets passed on to the members of a society with the fewest options. Glenn systematically reveals the underlying systems of control that have coerced care from women and particularly from African American, Latina, Asian American, Native American, and immigrant women. Evelyn Nakano Glenn masterfully weaves together the history of women's labor and of social and legal attitudes toward caring with the rise of neoliberalism and the movement of goods, services, and people within globalization. *Forced to Care* will have many applications for scholars and students in Sociology, Gender and Women's Studies, History, Feminist Studies, Law, Ethnic Studies, Policy Studies, and Labor Studies.

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*Motherhood, Absence and Transition: When Adult Children Leave Home*, by **Trish Green**. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010. 186pp. \$99.95 cloth. ISBN: 9780754677338.

BARBARA A. MITCHELL

*Simon Fraser University, British Columbia*  
mitchelo@sfu.ca

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Those studying family life are well aware that most research focused on parenting has tended to focus on the primary years of childrearing — that is, on the time frame spanning the raising of infants, children, and adolescents. Given this tradition, Trish Green's book offers a refreshing contribution to family scholarship by shining the spotlight on midlife motherhood experiences and the launching of young adult children. And while it is recognized that there has been a growing interest in home-leaving patterns, the subjective realities of "empty nest" transition parents have been largely neglected.

In Chapter One, "Becoming and Being a Mother," we are introduced to the theoretical approach whereby the author presents the conceptual underpinnings of the study from a life course perspective. In particular, Green explicates notions of time and place, as well as the identity and relational dimensions attached to this time of transition. This socio-cultural framework adeptly anchors us toward the central theme of the book—that mothers' meanings and experiences of separation when children leave home are particularly salient to our understanding of contemporary Western motherhood. This research fills a gap for several reasons. First, it is argued that these mothers have been "silenced by the sociocultural constructions of motherhood" (i.e., since motherhood is natural and taken-for-granted) and secondly, by the "privileging of the child's transition to adulthood" (i.e., the tendency to focus on the younger generation's perspective). Green further asserts that prior research has been characterized "by a masking of the transformation of the mother/adult child relationship with its ensuing transition in women's mothering as praxis" (p. 20). From this lens, the chapters that follow show how the shifting identity of the mother is enmeshed not only in the life course trajectory of the child,

but also within cultural, social, and political locations.

In Chapter Two, "Researching Mothers' Experiences," the methodological basis of the study is presented, which relies heavily on the rich narratives gained from semi-structured interviews. Research participants ( $N = 25$ ) were recruited via a snowball convenience sample. Most were living in the same town, self-identifying as white British/English. All were able-bodied, financially secure, in academic or professional employment, similarly aged (44 to 58), and all were homeowners. The only criterion for participation was that they were waiting for, or had experienced, at least one child leaving home. Despite the methodological limitations of a fairly small and homogeneous sample, a noteworthy feature of this chapter is the extent to which Green exposes her own feminist biases, value judgments, and personal difficulties at the time of separation from each of her own children. Green should be commended for this transparency and her strong self-reflexive stance since it allows the reader to appreciate how researchers are intertwined in research processes.

The focus of Chapter Three, "Modelling Motherhood," revisits the conceptual theme of socio-cultural representations of mothers and children and illustrates how images, societal expectations and "expert" advice infiltrate norms and practices, as well as ideologies of motherhood. An interesting theme that surfaced was the extent to which respondents' aspirations (i.e., to be "ideal" mothers and to be "looked after" by their husbands) reflect time and place, as well as the blocked opportunities of women growing up in the 1950s and 1960s. A provocative analysis of how multiple levels of temporality are simultaneously lived is also included. Chapter Four, "Managing the Process of Separation," similarly elaborates how social constructions of motherhood shape women's goals. Notably, Green examines how these mothers prepared for their children's home-leaving, their emotional experience of separation, and the aftermath of separation.

The issue of post-separation communication is explored in Chapter Five and develops the earlier theme that many mothers experience mixed emotions. Many women felt ambiguous about the separation since they

simultaneously craved freedom for their children and a continuation of the parent-child relationships, especially with respect to their desire for the affirmation of a maternal identity and sense of belonging. This material compliments the growing scholarly interest on the paradoxes and ambivalence inherent in intimate ties. The discussion of communicating over space and time (e.g., using technologically mediated communications) and changes in contact patterns over time (e.g., due to travel opportunities for young people) is also relevant. It contributes to theoretical debates on the effects of advances in communication technology and geographical mobility by considering whether these changes are positive or negative for family/social relations and interactions.

Chapter Six, "Mothers' Futures," further expands how the lives of women changed once their children left home and the opportunities that were available to them once they successfully mothered their children to adulthood. Over time, mothers were found to "settle-in" and accept their children's home-leaving, albeit with some tensions and mixed feelings. Green also considers how the current phenomenon of "boomerang kids" affects mothering experiences. This analysis, although somewhat cursory, is highly welcome, particularly since home-returning has become a relatively common transition "reversal" in industrialized societies. She also provides analysis of the role of mother's partnerships (e.g., marital, cohabiting) and family/employment transitions (e.g., grandparenthood, retirement) on home-leaving experiences and trajectories. Finally, in Chapter Seven, Green concludes with a number of summary reflections on motherhood, child absence, and transition.

Overall, this work makes not only an academic contribution to those interested in aging, identity and the life course (e.g., sociologists, social workers, cultural geographers), but it can also be used to inform individuals—both professionally and personally. Indeed, this work should be of great interest to a wide audience, with the caveat that it is premised on "successful" empty nest experiences. Moreover, the small sample does not include the experiences of fathers or allow adequate attention to issues of class, ethnicity, or sexuality—topics which Green rightfully

acknowledges deserve further attention. Despite these weaknesses, this novel qualitative study offers a valuable addition to the literature. It captures the voices and the rich and complex experiences that these mothers face as young adult fledglings leave the parental nest, and I highly recommend it.

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*Pole Dancing, Empowerment and Embodiment*, by **Samantha Holland**. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. 212pp. \$84.95 cloth. ISBN: 9780230210387.

PATTI GIUFFRE

*Texas State University, San Marcos*  
pg07@txstate.edu

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The cover art for Samantha Holland's book raises interesting questions for feminist scholars: it shows a woman, lean and muscular, wearing provocative pink clothing and pink spike heels, hanging upside down on a floor-to-ceiling pole. Women who enroll in pole dancing classes, or what they refer to simply as "pole," say this is not a stripper pole. Rather, it is a pole that allows for exercise or dancing, and ultimately empowerment and liberation. Holland draws on primarily women's experiences in pole classes to explore meanings of gender, sexuality, agency, embodiment, and empowerment. Her basic research question explores why women (and a few men—but this is not the focus of her book) attend pole classes, and what going to these classes means to the respondents in her study.

Feminists have long debated about what constitutes empowerment for women. How do we know as researchers, sociologists, and/or feminists when women are empowered and liberated? Holland's book speaks to this debate. Holland conducted qualitative interviews and online surveys with pole class teachers and participants, and participant and non-participant observations of pole dancing in New York, Sydney, and the United Kingdom. She and her respondents believe that pole dancing is not necessarily exploitative, nor are pole classes for exotic dancers only, or only about sex. Some feminists have claimed that pole dancing is ultimately for the gaze of heterosexual men, and women who say they are empowered by it are

actually duped victims of false consciousness. "Pole" instructors and students largely refute this critique. Holland herself states that she was surprised by how empowered she felt during the pole classes in which she participated. Though feeling sexy is a part of the experience for some participants, the classes also allow women to connect socially with other women in a safe space and supportive context. For one respondent, pole classes were "the most loving, feminine, supportive environment that I have ever come across" (p. 60). Another agreed, "It is liberating. I find it empowering...you...show everyone how confident you can be" (p. 102). Though some participants experienced negative reactions when they told others that they enrolled in or taught pole classes, at an individual level, most felt that their experiences with the classes were enjoyable, and contributed to their own increased self-esteem.

In the conclusion, Holland reviews the debates about empowerment without taking a firm side. She states, "For me, pole classes are a wonderful thing for those women who find the classes transformative, and a beautiful awe-inspiring thing to watch" (p. 186). While we must listen to women when weighing these debates about agency and structure, at the same time, we must engage in critique. Third wave or postmodern feminists are likely to interpret this book differently from second wave or radical feminists. From a second wave lens, I might maintain that pole dancing is heterosexualized and ultimately for heterosexual men's pleasure, regardless of whether women who attend pole classes say they are liberated and empowered by them. From a third wave feminist point of view, I might argue that women in pole dancing classes are doing this for themselves because they say they are, and emphasize their sense that this form of exercise or leisure makes these women physically and emotionally stronger. This book raises interesting questions about feminism and multiple interpretations of the women's reports.

One critique of the book is the lack of an intersectional analysis. The chapter on diversity, in which Holland discusses the class, race, ethnic, age, and cultural backgrounds of the women, seems appended. An intersectional analysis is not incorporated

throughout the book, though Holland addresses the fact that the pole dancing classes she studied had a predominantly white membership. This racial and ethnic homogeneity is significant enough to address more explicitly. The analysis downplays the underlying heterosexualized nature of this form of exercise/dancing/leisure. Did all of the women in the study claim a heterosexual identity? Knowing the sexual identities of instructors and class participants has potential to add more to the debate about agency and enrich our understanding of the intersections between sexuality and gender. Finally, some portions of the book are repetitive, and there is too much literature review. The best book-length analyses focus on the author's findings and arguments, not other scholars' findings.

Overall, the book would contribute to useful discussions about feminism, gender, and sexuality, in graduate or advanced undergraduate courses. Scholars who are interested in qualitative methods and in particular, feminist ethnographies (to which Holland devotes a chapter), embodiment, exercise, and leisure, would also find this book to be a useful source. This is an interesting topic and a study that raises compelling questions about gender, sexuality, feminism, and agency.

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*Women and Family in Contemporary Japan*, by Susan D. Holloway. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2010. 243pp. \$28.99 paper. ISBN: 9780521180375.

ALLISON ALEXY  
Lafayette College  
Alexya@lafayette.edu

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Current research on family lives in Japan has to grapple with the overwhelming demographic changes of recent decades: a rapidly aging population, falling birth rate, and rising age at first marriage. In the eyes of many politicians—particularly those unwilling to change Japan's restrictive immigration policies—these patterns portend the end of Japanese society, and such discourse is so common that it is quite possible to fall into conversation with random strangers about Japan's demographic woes. Everyone—from

politicians, to academics and average citizens—is aware of Japan's changing demography, and the current debates concern how to address or mitigate those challenges.

Susan Holloway inserts her fascinating research into these discussions in order to examine how individual women are organizing their lives in relation to the changing norms of maternity, femininity, and family life. With concerted attention to what she calls "women's voices" generated from interviews, she describes how individual women understand their roles as wives and mothers in light of popular discourse and governmental policies. The research is based on longitudinal interviews with mothers who do not work outside the home, culled from preschools in Osaka and Sapporo, and traces how women feel about their skills, success, and happiness.

Trained as a psychologist, Holloway organizes her research in terms that might be most helpful for scholars of that discipline but nevertheless would engage all social scientists interested in questions of gender and family. The research specifically measures women's sense of self-efficacy—how effective they feel as wives and mothers. Holloway discovered that many women have low levels of self-efficacy and are unsure or conflicted about their own choices as mothers. The book reconstructs this as a central motivating question—Why are these Japanese women likely to have such low levels of self-efficacy?—and adds a second: How do they understand their lives in relation to, but not hegemonically determined by, dominant social norms?

In Holloway's analysis, a fundamental cause of these women's low sense of efficacy comes from their demands for role perfectionism. Such ideals suggest that successful people enact their social roles, be it mother or salaryman, with true dedication. Because role perfectionism makes infinite demands—one can always improve performance—any commitment to one role precludes others. In this thinking, the best way to be a good mother is to do very little else than be a mother. This is not to suggest that mothers aren't busy; they absolutely are. But the ideals of role perfectionism induce women to fill their lives with activities

like cooking or PTA leadership that serve the larger purpose of child rearing.

A second link with low self-efficacy comes for women who believe there is a single ideal form of maternity. Women who believe that there is a right way to be a mother are also much more likely to think they are falling short of that ideal. Holloway includes a painful story of one mother who was unsure how to diaper her new baby and refused to trust her own instincts or even her relatives' instructions. It wasn't until a hospital official told her of a method that this young mother felt confident—the task for her was not about discovering what worked for her and her child, but finding an authoritative example and working to match it. Holloway links this pattern with the “manual culture” of contemporary Japan, in which people are willing to look to guidebooks to find singular models for behavior. In contrast, the women in this research who had high levels of self-efficacy were more likely to believe that there are multiple ways to be a good mother. One of the most satisfied and efficacious women described herself as trying hard to be “my kind of mother,” an inclusive and flexible phrase that Holloway uses in her concluding recommendations.

Those recommendations situate the possibilities for social change within current patterns of beliefs. One particularly surprising finding: Japanese women in this study are likely to believe that education is not necessary or advantageous for girls. Holloway quotes an informant saying, “Having a brain is not necessary for girls, who will do housework and raise kids” (p. 143). What is surprising is that many of the women describe longing for careers only possible through education—this book includes many detailed narratives of women describing the goals and dreams they gave up in order to become mothers. Holloway suggests this gap between mothers wanting to go to college themselves but not pushing daughters in education reflects the contemporary employment system. There are, after all, relatively few positions for well-educated women and still substantial pressure on women to “retire” upon marriage or motherhood.

While these dynamics accurately describe the experiences of some women in Japan, it is important to remember the sample in

Holloway's study: mothers of young children who do not work outside the home. In recent decades, because of changing gender norms and economic stagnation that have pushed even young mothers into work, this category has been shrinking and no longer represents the average experience. This is not to suggest that these women do not tell us something about Japan more generally—they certainly do. But their perspectives are best viewed as important outliers rather than firmly in the mainstream.

Men's voices of experience are also clearly needed on all these topics. Despite a growing boom in masculinity studies, I suspect that most of the best work on the topic is still in production. Given the changing economic patterns in Japan that have restructured employment options for men, it will be fascinating to see how Holloway's astute analysis compares with masculine narratives about definitions of fulfillment and the possibilities for happiness.

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*Youth, Drugs, and Nightlife*, by **Geoffrey Hunt, Molly Moloney, and Kristin Evans**. New York, NY: Routledge, 2010. 274pp. \$44.95 paper. ISBN: 9780415374736.

ALASDAIR J. M. FORSYTH  
*Glasgow Caledonian University, Scotland*  
*Alasdair.Forsyth@gcal.ac.uk*

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The opening line of this book's introduction asks why anyone should write “another book on raves” in 1999, given that the height of this scene passed nearly two decades ago. Although this is hardly the most inviting start for the reader, it quickly becomes clear that what has passed is the salience of rave to the media, lawmakers, and consequent levels of academic interest/research funding. This does not mean that this scene has gone away, nor that the world of *Youth, Drugs, and Nightlife* is restricted to raves.

Indeed, this time lapse presents an opportunity to fill the gaps in our understanding of rave. To many who were involved in rave research a decade or more ago (this reader included), these gaps will be familiar themes; however now that the “moral panic” over ecstasy has subsided, we are free to discuss the obvious without fear of

recrimination. The book argues that there has recently been a shift away from research which pathologizes youthful drug use (the "problem paradigm"), often using quantitative "epidemiological" methods, toward mainly qualitative research that attempts to understand why youth engage in such activities.

This shift in research emphasis becomes the starting point for the book discussing various lacunas, which become recurrent themes throughout its pages. Under-researched issues such as users' agency, pleasure, gender (especially masculinity), "glocalization" (the virtual world) and cultural contexts are explored—though whether quantitative methods could have investigated these is not discussed.

Perhaps what is most pleasing is that this book documents the rave scene from the perspective of its participants, who describe themselves as neither passive victims of a drug epidemic (like swine-flu) who *must* be helped, nor as dangerous risk-takers of a type requiring a more punitive intervention. Instead, a picture is painted of "flexible" drug use patterns, neither uncontrolled (addiction) nor meticulous (as with steroids). Nor do they passively ignore risk. Indeed, negotiation of risk including drugs' illegality, is cited as a reason for use, as in J. Young's "voluntary illicit risk-taking" (p. 25). In Chapter Seven the value of drug prevention literature's focus on risk is questioned. If this is distant from users' own experiences then it is hardly surprising that such prevention strategies have failed them.

As well as having neglected users' agency, the book argues that research has also failed to place this use in context. By focusing on this isolated behavior, research has contributed to a process of Wagner's "decontextualization" (p. 120) of drug use. Rather than the "routinization of caricature" (p. 78), portrayed by the media and reflected in much drug research, ravers are otherwise unremarkable citizens (voters?). This begs the question of how much all this agency, pleasure and "othering" is also true of other drug subcultures, including those at the problematic end of the spectrum?

The book sets out to be the first in-depth sociological account examining the rave/ecstasy scene in the United States. To date,

most research into this now global phenomenon has been conducted in the United Kingdom, especially England and Australia. This may reflect the more "mainstream" adoption of rave culture in these countries during the early 1990s. Much of the historical material here may be familiar to the lay public of the United Kingdom, but new to the U.S. reader. A comparable book might be an in-depth analysis of English hip hop.

Rave/ecstasy became popular more recently in the United States, and never attained the level of research attention that the more mainstream hip hop youth culture or more demonized methamphetamine has. However, this lacuna hides the extent, diversity and difference from the English scene of American rave culture. Chapter Four details how this relative paucity of academic attention reflects a greater lack of familiarity with the scene among the American public and lawmakers.

One of this book's strengths is its analysis of rave as a global youth culture. This exploration of "glocalization" details how rave, based on the Ibiza-English template, spread across the globe, often virtually, to be refracted through local cultures. Chapter Three compares three divergent local scenes: the "gabber scene" of Rotterdam, the Netherlands which this Scottish reader can identify with; Hong Kong, China, where ecstasy is prominent at present according to recent U.N. Office of Drugs and Crime data; and the authors' own San Francisco scene, an area with a pre-Ibiza history of ecstasy and dance-drug use. These geographical areas are found to display generic global similarities, as well as their own unique local differences and internal divisions by social class, age, gender-orientation, language or ethnicity.

This theme is advanced in the final chapter by the additional analysis of San Francisco's Asian diaspora, and how identity or agency impact upon levels of involvement in the local "electronic dance music" scene. Ecstasy use among other groups appears to be missing (e.g., rural, working class, or African Americans; also how "ecstasy" quality varies across sub-populations).

Chapters Nine–Ten are perhaps the most groundbreaking. Here the effects of two drugs (ecstasy and alcohol) upon gender are

compared, and the concept of gender is even applied to the substances themselves. Ecstasy is seen as subverting normative male roles, alcohol the opposite transgression. Given that much previous gender analysis has focused on the experiences of women in the dance scene, the highlighting of MDMA (ecstasy)/rave culture's well-known effect on male behavior is most commendable (e.g., reducing violence/predatory sexual activity, and participants using this as justification for MDMA over alcohol). This apparent gender convergence might be compared against recent explorations of alcohol intoxication and hyper-masculinity (i.e., increased violence and risk taking) among women in the U.K.'s "binge drinking" culture which followed rave.

Perhaps what this book illustrates best is how rapidly youth nightlife cultures evolve, meaning that by the time in-depth analyses have been conducted, the quantitative surveys are already flagging-up "something else." One minor quibble: the book's cover conveys a shadowy "underworld" impression at odds with the text's stance against the "othering" of youth and drugs.

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*Valuing the Unique: The Economics of Singularities*, by **Lucien Karpik**, translated by Nora Scott. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010. 280pp. \$39.50 paper. ISBN: 9780691137100.

RICHARD SWEDBERG  
Cornell University  
rs328@cornell.edu

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Since Harrison White's publication in 1981 of "Where Do Markets Come From?" the sociological study of markets has developed at a fast pace. Today there exist important studies of special markets, such as art markets and financial markets. There also exist studies of the role of status in markets, the role of networks in markets, and quite a bit more.

Lucien Karpik makes an interesting addition to this literature by focusing on a very special type of markets: those that deal with unique products or "singularities" as he prefers to call them. Karpik is a sociologist at l'école des Mines and Centre Raymond

Aron in Paris. French economic sociology is of special interest to U.S. readers for a number of reasons, one of which is that French sociologists cultivate their independence from mainstream American sociology. *Valuing the Unique* is no exception on this account. Most of its references are to French studies. It is also an original work and theoretical in its orientation. In many ways it is reminiscent of *On Justification: Economies of Worth* by Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thevenot.

Karpik's work falls into two parts. He starts out by discussing unique products or singularities and the problems that these pose for the analysis. He then presents seven different types of socio-economic structures in which this type of goods typically exists ("economic coordination regimes"). *Valuing the Unique* also contains a chapter on prices, one on the historical evolution of singularities, and one on their relationship to individualism.

Karpik argues that neoclassical economics is unable to handle the phenomenon of singularities, since it conceptualizes markets in terms of demand and supply of homogeneous goods. While Edward Chamberlin and George Akerlof have made interesting attempts to deal with unique products, mainstream economics has pushed these to the side. To properly address the issue of incommensurable products, Karpik argues, you especially need to work with such notions as quality uncertainty and judgment. Other concepts that are central to his analysis include judgment devices, trust devices and *Homo singularis*.

The notion of judgment is contrasted to the neoclassical concept of decision, and is characterized by the fact that it deals with a plurality of evaluation criteria. It also results in knowledge as opposed to decision, which results in information. So-called judgment devices are used to dissipate the opacity of markets in singularities and consist of rankings, networks and the like. *Homo singularis* looks for a "good product" and the "right" product, and in doing so relies not only on means-end rationality but also on value rationality.

The economic coordination regimes are, to repeat, seven in number. Their names give an indication of what kind of singularities they deal with: authenticity regime, mega regime, expert opinion regime, common opinion

regime, reticular regime, professional regime and inter-firms regime.

The authenticity regime, to pick one of Karpik's types, is characterized by originality, impersonal knowledge, specific knowledge and moderate profit. The mega regime, to choose another one, is similarly characterized by originality and impersonal as well as specific knowledge. As opposed to the authenticity regime, however, it yields high profit.

A concrete example of the authenticity regime is the market for fine wines in France. Karpik discusses the problems that consumers encounter when they try to choose the right wine and how attempts have been made to assist them in this. Readers will enjoy the knowledgeable discussion of various wine guides as well as the account of the rise of the modern wine critic.

A concrete example of a mega regime is the luxury megafirm. Karpik presents the rise of the luxury industry and the norm of good taste. The notion of handicraft is still central to modern luxury goods, according to the author, who also discusses the "democratization" of luxury goods and how the luxury industry these days not only caters to the elite but also to the middle class.

*Valuing the Unique* represents a fine addition to the sociology of markets and may well become the standard work on unique goods or singularities. American readers may miss a discussion of certain works, such as Charles Smith's *Auctions* and Joel Podolny's *Status Signals*. This, however, is a price well worth paying, not least since it is the very lack of immersion into American sociology that accounts for some of the originality of French sociology these days.

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*Tours That Bind: Diaspora, Pilgrimage, and Israeli Birthright Tourism*, by **Shaul Kelner**. New York, NY: New York University Press, 2010. 261pp. \$35.00 cloth. ISBN: 9780814748169.

SASHA WEITMAN  
Tel-Aviv University  
sashaw@post.tau.ac.il

*Tours That Bind* is about Taglit-Birthright-Israel, a travel program (*taglit* means discovery). Launched in 2001, it is an "outreach" program enticing secular North American Jewish students to participate in short tours of Israel, to acquaint them with Jewish culture and history via guided tours of historic sites. Taglit is the latest variant in a long series of programs, dating back over 60 years, which Shaul Kelner calls "Israel-Experience-Tours."

What distinguishes Taglit from its predecessors is the lavish financing and the sheer scale of the enterprise. To date, some \$500 million have been poured into Taglit by a tripartite consortium of Jewish philanthropies, Jewish community organizations and the Jewish Agency. Every year tens of thousands of North American Jewish youths of college-age, *all-expenses-paid*, are grouped in busloads of 30-40, for ten-day intensive tours of Israel's best-known historic sites, shepherded by young Israeli guides, with two objectives. One, to offer North American Jewish leaders a viable, sensible action program to remedy the rapid assimilation of the younger generation, threatening Jewish communities in North America with extinction. The other, to reinvigorate the Jewish identity of these youths the Israeli way, speedily and intensively, so that the reawakened Jewish identity would overlap with Israeli Jewish identity.

Taglit's second salient characteristic was to graft onto the program ongoing social researches, with a view to using object-lessons from these researches to continuously hone the modus operandi of the tours. Kelner was involved in many of these researches and the present book is based on his PhD work on Taglit.

The third is that Taglit has turned into a resounding success story, unprecedented in the annals of Israel-experience-tourism,

indeed of diaspora homeland tourism anywhere. At the end of each trip, participants are asked to relate their dominant impression, and the most frequent answer is a variant of "it changed my life." Recruiting for the program relies largely on word-of-mouth recommendations by "graduates" to fellow students.

What do we learn from this book?

On the macro-level, contrary to expectations, Taglit does *not* perform a Zionist function—not in the classic sense of "ingathering the exiles" in the ancestral homeland. Rather, Kelner offers the counter-intuitive thesis that Taglit serves mainly a *diaspora-building function*. The bulk of the funding comes from North American Jewish sources whose prime concern is countering the younger generation's assimilation, and Israel, having abandoned its illusions about mass Jewish immigration from North America, accepts that Taglit will serve a scaled-down version of Zionism to inculcate young diasporans with an Israel-centered Jewish identity.

Another unexpected and unsettling conclusion of Kelner's book concerns the shallowness of the Jewish identity awakened by participation in Taglit. To Kelner this identity is "consumerist," in that participants absorb Jewish-Israeli myths, symbols, sights, pop-songs, mementos, hence a noncommittal identity, quite different from the sorts that obligate, like religious and classical Zionist identities.

Kelner's most interesting findings and conclusions are at the micro-level, in the nitty-gritty details of his observations and analyses concerning Taglit's modus operandi and their effects. Given the success of these "tours that bind," *how* do they produce their binding effects? Half the book is devoted to providing concrete answers to this broad-gauged question.

The *bridging practices* Taglit deploys counteract the sense of alienation tourists inevitably feel abroad, conveying to them a sense that Israel is also "their" country, potentially their home-away-from-home.

Kelner explores at length the effects on participants of *group-travel*. For example, the fact that the group is bent on "having fun" results in peer-group pressures to discourage criticisms regarding objectionable

aspects of contemporary Israel, like the occupation and oppression of Palestinians.

Taglit is guided by a Deweyian philosophy, in which the participants' *felt experiences* at the sites are considered more important than the cognitive knowledge they glean about them. Kelner explores standard practices by which Taglit elicits such experiences, for example, by staging *embodied site-specific rituals*.

Lastly, Taglit encourages participants to reflect on how their experiences during the site visits affected each of them personally. *Discussion groups* are enjoined to air their innermost thoughts. Kelner reports how some participants volunteer to assist their tongue-tied mates by telling them that what they experienced inchoately was their essential Jewish identity.

Kelner distinguishes emphatically between *structure* (determinism) and *agency* (constructivism), affirming that he cleaves to the latter. By structure he means the organizationally-dictated guidelines by which Taglit *staff* perform their assigned tasks, whereas by agency he means the unexpected ways in which Taglit *participants* reconstruct for themselves that which Taglit guides showed them, explained to them, and sought to make them experience. Kelner's preference of agency over structure is not only philosophical. It is required by the inherent logic of the applied sociology he practices. What interests Kelner are Taglit's actual effects on participants. Since the sponsors are endowed with agency, Kelner's interest is in the effects of Taglit on these agents (in Bourdieu's sense of "agent"). In particular Kelner is interested in whether, armed with their newfound Israel-centered identity, Taglit graduates are likely to fulfil the hopes of the program sponsors by turning into committed, active community-minded, Israel-oriented Jews. Based on his analysis of post-tour debriefings, Kelner's answer to this question is ambiguous and none-too sanguine. This epistemological commitment to an agent-centered research focus enables Kelner to speak this truth to the sponsors/organizers of these highly successful tours, even if that truth is unpleasant for them to hear. Alvin Gouldner used to draw a telling distinction between the clinician and the technician in applied sociology.

Kelner's agent-centered epistemology permitted him to perform as a sociological clinician, rather than as a mere technician.

Kelner characterizes his research methods as inspired by the Columbia School in its heyday. Intended by Merton and occasionally practiced at the Bureau of Applied Social Research, doing sociology in this manner requires relying on multiple methods—here, protracted fieldwork, content analyses of responses to open-ended interview questions, quasi-experimental before/after designs, panel studies, statistical survey research, even what Kelner dubs “natural breaching experiments.” It also requires sociologists to become thoroughly conversant with extensive bodies of pertinent research literature (here, tourism, rituals and pilgrimages, semiotics of tourist sites, identity, consumer capitalism, migration, globalization, transnationalism), as well as mastering pertinent theoretical perspectives (positivist and interpretive, structuralist and constructionist, macro and micro, national and transnational).

Refreshing is the author's old-fashioned commitment to the pursuit of truth (he systematically tests his own pet hypotheses against null hypotheses), and his disarming candidness in divulging autobiographical details liable to expose him to criticism. To his credit, this book is anything but an exercise in post-modernist research: he presents findings in such a coherent way, that they lend themselves to secondary analyses.

*Tours That Bind* is must reading for those who work on homeland/diaspora relations. Ditto for those who research tourism in all its modalities. Likewise, I would recommend it to researchers of the burgeoning “experience industries,” especially their pragmatics, since the production of experiences (belonging, pride, heritage, homecoming) is Taglit's business.

*Tours That Bind* has much to offer to students of political socialization, since state- and elite-sponsored Taglit seeks and succeeds in redefining Jewish diasporans' identity so that Israel occupies a central position. This book should interest sociologists of culture, in particular those engaged in a pragmatic, applied sociology of culture. It may also aid sociologists in providing their graduate students with a model of

intellectually challenging social research, performed on what, ostensibly, is a sociologically unpromising touristic phenomenon.

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*Law and the Disordered: An Exploration in Mental Health, Law, and Politics*, by **George C. Klein**. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2009. 399pp. \$43.00 paper. ISBN: 9780761847335.

MELISSA THOMPSON  
Portland State University  
mthomp@pdx.edu

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George C. Klein presents *Law and the Disordered* as an examination of “congeneric analysis” as a means to understand the processing of mental illness within the criminal justice system, or as he puts it, “this book is about the *politics of mental health*” (p. viii). He relies on moving “downstream” from the courts into hospital admissions and the police, followed by moving “upstream” into Illinois' Department of Mental Health and the state legislature and governor's office. He employs observation, interviews, and analysis of secondary data to understand both the direct and indirect influences affecting civil commitment of the mentally ill in Cook County, Illinois. In addition to this impressive amount of data collection in several different settings, Klein also examines changes in this system from the early 1970s through 2005.

As a result of the massive amount of information collected and discussed, Klein's book provides a sustained—and very thorough—examination of an important, under-studied, and growing problem in the United States: the treatment of mentally ill persons who face inadequate or non-existent services in the community in the wake of the deinstitutionalization of mental hospitals and subsequent underfunding of community mental health services. He also uses the book to argue for research methods employing a “connected series of ethnographies” (p. 379). In Klein's case, he starts with recounting his research from 1971 on involuntary civil commitment of the mentally ill, focusing on observing the mental health court in Cook County for three years. In this initial study, Klein noted that “everyone”

was committed. Because he wanted to understand the process leading up to this commitment of “everyone,” he moved “down” to studying the state hospital’s admission service, finding that “everyone” was admitted. Because many of these admitted patients were brought to the hospital by police officers, he then turned to examining police apprehension of the mentally ill, where—after observing over 1,300 police/citizen encounters in seven years—he found that the “real” decisions were made on the street. Finally, since many of the decisions made by the court were a product of administrative rules and policies determined by others, Klein also moved “up” to study the Illinois Department of Mental Health, the state legislature, and the governor’s office (p. 4). Adding newer data in 1983, and again in 2004–2005, Klein uses this “studying down/studying up” approach to develop what, he hopes, is a more valid understanding of the intersection of mental illness and criminal justice.

In this research, Klein documents a fairly depressing, but not surprising, state of affairs with respect to our nation’s mental health “system”—or, as several mental health professionals interviewed by Klein said: “what system?” (p. 266), suggesting instead that our national “policy” is largely an unplanned, uncoordinated, historical accident. Klein documents disturbing trends such as: unlicensed and undertrained psychiatrists in mental health courts, the assumption that there are no risks associated with involuntary psychiatric treatment, an increasing reliance on police officers to be the first line of defense in dealing with the mentally ill, and inadequate or nonexistent mental health treatment in jails, prompting a mental health director in a jail to state: “there is no treatment. My job is to run a *safe place* and make sure *nobody gets killed*” (p. 237). This finding of disturbing and insufficient treatment is continuously displayed through the many areas of the mental health system examined by Klein. This top/down approach allows Klein to make a robust argument that treatment of the mentally ill is insufficient throughout the many layers of the mental health system.

Ultimately, however, Klein concludes that rather than supporting his original argument

that this type of research should “consist of a connected series of ethnographies” (p. 379), instead he finds that this connected series of ethnographies is unnecessary. Instead, Klein argues that during initial work researchers “should *discover* what program, organization, or institution *penetrates* the social organization” being examined; then, researchers should jump right to that new site to conduct a second study (p. 379). In Klein’s case, jumping immediately into a study of Medicaid, Medicare, and Supplementary Security Income (SSI) would have allowed for an understanding of why and how state hospitals were emptied. This is especially important since policy changes occurred after the initial research in 1971; these changes resulted in the Department of Mental Health moving from admitting or committing “everyone” in the 1970s to committing “no one” in the early 2000s, relying instead on voluntary admission. Due to redefinition of the department’s role and the social context of its functioning in an era of shrinking social and mental health programming—but expanded SSI, Medicare, and Medicaid coverage—state mental hospitals were depopulated and the topic Klein was studying changed dramatically.

Due to the multiple areas being studied (police, courts, legislature, governors, hospital admissions, the Illinois Department of Mental Health), together with the disparate timeframes (1970s through 2005), the book can at times be unwieldy and difficult to grasp the overarching key themes and findings, and specific details of the methodology are not always clear. Nevertheless, Klein’s book provides an invaluable study of the mental health and criminal justice systems and the treatment of mentally ill individuals in Chicago, and has important implications for social policy across the United States. The review of deinstitutionalization, the literature on criminalization of mental illness, and the overview of historical issues in involuntary civil commitment are all impressive and must-reads for those wanting to learn about the historical development of mental health treatment in the mental health and criminal justice systems. I would recommend this book for a variety of advanced undergraduate or graduate-level courses, including courses on mental illness, history,

methodology, and criminal justice. I would also recommend it highly for scholars of mental health and criminal justice policy.

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*Hong Kong: Migrant Lives, Landscapes, and Journeys*, by **Caroline Knowles** and **Douglas Harper**. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2009. 270pp. \$19.00 paper. ISBN: 9780226448572.

CHING KWAN LEE  
*University of California, Los Angeles*  
 cklee@soc.ucla.edu

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This book offers some intriguing sketches of British expatriates who remained in Hong Kong after the city's transition from a British colony to a special administrative region of the People's Republic of China. As a subject of international migration studies, this is a refreshing shift from the more common focus on the subjugated class of traders, migrant workers, domestic maids and undocumented laborers. Entering Hong Kong with this vista, Caroline Knowles and Douglas Harper ask interesting and ambitious questions about race, space, colonialism, post-colonial hierarchy, and global migration. However, the transient fieldwork on which this book is based and the decisively micro-interactive level of analysis produce only a series of touristic snapshots that are as transient and limited as the lives they capture.

Fieldwork for this book was based on six trips to Hong Kong between 1998 and 2005. The authors apparently had no contact with people in Hong Kong, expatriates or local Chinese, prior to the beginning of this project. Starting with three initial contacts in Britain and armed with a digital recorder, they interviewed fifty migrants between three and six times each. They followed them around the city, observed, ate and had tea or drinks with them. The many photographic inserts, with captions deliberately left out, are a key ingredient the authors used to provide "an alchemy," a "staging of the world of Hong Kong migrants." They should help readers without any idea of Hong Kong society to visualize the physical topography these foreign migrants have to navigate in order to live among the majority of Chinese. Besides

familiar pictures of densely built high rises and hectic traffic on neon-lit streets, there are also more intimate and less visible spaces of Southeast Asian maids working for white expatriate families and the manicured green field of the Cricket Club that is now a relic of the British Empire.

These pictures are presented with narratives of a cross-class cast of expatriate characters: a former POW of WWII turned veteran affairs officer, civil servants in the colonial administration, English teachers, small entrepreneurs, expatriate wives, "old China hands" in the bar districts, and managers of expatriate clubs. Along the way, the authors also include interviews with American businessmen, Indian servants, Muslims from other post-colonial territories, Filipino domestic maids and bar maids. Written in the format of a tour book, each chapter usually begins with "our tour" moving to this or that part of the city. Reading these narratives, one gets the sense that they have found the kinds of people whose lives indeed illuminate the complex global processes and agencies that make Hong Kong one of the world's global cities, and the profound transformation of the racial hierarchy as the British Empire collapses.

However, the analytical tool box the authors deploy is woefully inadequate for this task. While the authors privilege microscopic descriptions of the "kinetic" routines of bodies and feet moving through urban landscapes and architectures, the Hong Kong story is at heart one of shifting power and political economy of empires, transformation of global capitalism and Hong Kong class structure, and the rise of a Hong Kong-Chinese identity and local cultural consciousness vis-à-vis Mainland China and other expatriates. Some of the narratives the authors collected allude to how expatriate lives are shaped by these processes which are offered only as background materials. How can we understand the downward mobility of these expats without understanding its replacement by a Mainland and Hong Kong Chinese corporate elite and middle class? Without a serious engagement of the political economic and social structural conditions, we are left with generalizing and generic descriptions of migration, one of which, as the conclusion to a chapter on

multi-ethnicity in Hong Kong, reads: "Many global pathways intersect in Hong Kong. Its tangle of loosely connected bodies, enterprises, activities, moneymaking schemes, friends, and business networks, faith, and food are cast in journeys around, in, and out of the city in many directions" (p. 131).

One of the main questions the authors set out to explore is "whiteness," claiming that they "add the insight that race is continuously produced. Race and ethnicity are generated in concrete relationship with places, with other people, with activities and objects or material culture" (p. 16). The authors, however, fail to articulate the specific contents of whiteness in Hong Kong. Perhaps the difficulty is with the actual linguistic exclusion and social isolation of the expats they study. Without the expatriates sustaining real interactions with local Chinese, it is simply impossible for the authors to examine "whiteness" as an interactional and constructivist phenomenon. The opportunity for probing changing meanings of whiteness has been missed partly perhaps because the authors did not follow through with their interactional and processual analysis. For instance, there are passing comments on how colonial officials have transferrable skills and are recycled, wearing new commercial briefs. At the same time, the top three positions in any government departments are now reserved for local Chinese. Previously racially exclusive club houses have to open to Chinese members who are less "clubbable," preferring tennis to cricket, gold and marble hallways to colonial shabby-chic. Beyond disparaging comments by some of the expatriates about these changes, there is no in-depth analysis of the meanings and dynamics of colonial and post-colonial racial hierarchies as products of interaction between whites and Chinese.

This book is filled with expatriate narratives of their lives truncated by contracts, holiday visits to Britain, children's educational needs, their desire to stay because of financial reward and material comfort. In these "expat bubbles," these "life-style migrants" have no desire or need to learn Chinese (or the local Cantonese dialect) no matter how many years they stay. Unfortunately, like the subjects they study, the authors also operate in an expat bubble, and many chapters merely

offer facile descriptions of the "bodies" and "feet" of their subjects, barely scratching the surface of a complex story of post-colonial Hong Kong, let alone that of global migration.

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*Workplace Discourse*, by **Almut Koester**. London, UK: Continuum, 2010. 191pp. \$140.00 cloth. ISBN: 9781847061157.

JANET HOLMES  
Victoria University of Wellington  
janet.holmes@vuw.ac.nz

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*Workplace Discourse* examines what is accomplished through everyday workplace talk. Its primary audience is researchers and students of workplace discourse, and it will be a valuable resource for those teaching courses in professional discourse, especially at the postgraduate level. Almut Koester's book provides a useful review of research in the area, and convincingly demonstrates the value of combining both quantitative and qualitative methodologies in analyzing workplace talk. The distinctiveness of her book lies in its exploration of what a focus on genre can offer, along with an argument for the contribution of corpus linguistic techniques to our understanding of workplace discourse.

For non-linguists, it is worth explaining that a *genre* is a "goal-oriented, recurring manifestation of certain 'types' of texts and activities" (p. 18). So, for example, procedural and directive discourse, decision-making, and office gossip are cited as instances of genres, indicating a focus on a more detailed level of analysis than has been typical in some earlier genre analyses. Throughout the book features of such genres associated with workplace discourse are identified, and exemplified with authentic workplace talk collected by the author, or taken from publicly accessible corpora of spoken discourse.

The book is structured in two parts: the first, comprising two thirds of the total, focuses on a description of workplace discourse, and the second addresses "Issues and Applications in Workplace Discourse." Chapter One establishes a framework for the analysis. "Workplace discourse" and "institutional discourse" are distinguished from "business

discourse" and "professional discourse" which are regarded as more specific terms (p. 5), and the concepts of "communities of practice" and "discourse communities" are defined. These are familiar terms in workplace discourse research and they recur throughout the book.

Chapter Two introduces three main approaches to genre (focusing on structure, communicative function or text-type) and illustrates their relevance to analyzing workplace discourse, while Chapter Three focuses on corpus linguistics providing detailed quantitative information about frequencies of words, collocations and "chunks" in different workplace genres. While this level of detail will interest linguists, the sections on pragmatic features and discourse structure are likely to be of more interest to sociologists. Interestingly, Koester's review of a range of recent research confirms the centrality of three features noted as long ago as 1992 by Drew and Heritage, the sociologist pioneers in this area. They identified goal orientation, special and particular constraints, and special inferential frameworks and procedures (p. 67) as distinctive characteristics of institutional discourse. Her review also confirms the findings of many more recent studies which indicate that variables such as the goals of participants, their role relationships, and their precise activities result in a great deal of diversity in discourse manifestations across different workplaces (p. 69).

Chapter Four examines procedural discourse, including directives, instructions, and explanations, and relates these to the training of apprentices, while Chapter Five explores relational talk, focusing on small talk and humor. This is familiar territory for sociolinguists, and again Koester provides a valuable synthesis of a wide range of recent research on these transactional and relational aspects of workplace interaction. Her argument for the centrality of relational talk (traditionally regarded as marginal in the workplace), and the close integration of task-oriented and relational sequences is not new, but it is well-exemplified and includes interesting comparisons between British and U.S. data from her own research. (Incidentally, given this argument, it is rather puzzling that Chapter Five is positioned in Part Two.)

Chapter Six ("Communicating Across Cultures") is perhaps the most innovative in content compared to other current textbooks on workplace discourse. Koester here reviews arguments about the status of Business English as a *Lingua Franca* in international business environments, including cross-cultural and intercultural communication contexts. She documents the change over the last decade or so in attitudes to "native speakers" as potential models, especially in contexts where a range of cultural identities and practices are being dynamically negotiated, and where English may be no one's native tongue. The relevance of convergence, or mutual accommodation, as well as the "let it pass" principle in such interactions is usefully noted, and corpus analyses again provide illustrative data. The final section of this chapter on the important topic of "English in the Multi-Ethnic Workplace" seems sadly brief and somewhat of an afterthought.

The final chapter of the book provides practical suggestions for how research in workplace discourse can be used for teaching purposes, and includes a summary of the key characteristics of spoken workplace discourse (p. 150). Its emphasis on the use of authentic materials and on raising awareness, rather than teaching linguistic formulae is consistent with the approach adopted in the Workplace Communication Skills course taught in my own department, and so I can heartily endorse it. As Koester notes, many teaching materials focus only on written genres, or use constructed, artificial dialogues, and the resulting regrettable discrepancy between teaching materials and actual business practice has been documented in a number of recent studies.

Overall, then, there is nothing theoretically startling in this book; many of the insights about the relationship between language and social contexts can be found in the range of published research on which Koester draws, including her own earlier research. What this book does offer is a wealth of information about the linguistic features of workplace discourse which have been the focus of research to date, and a coherent summary of recent research on pragmatic aspects of workplace interaction. While the linguistic detail is unlikely to be of direct interest to sociologists, discussion of the more pragmatic

transactional and relational functions of workplace talk offer more pertinent material. The book also illustrates well how quantitative analysis can provide an entry point for more detailed qualitative analysis, and vice versa. It certainly provides a valuable, readable, and well-exemplified textbook for courses on workplace discourse in departments of applied linguistics, communications studies and business organization.

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*Crime in Japan: Paradise Lost?*, by **Dag Leonardsen**. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. 248pp. \$90.00 cloth. ISBN: 9780230235540.

DAVID T. JOHNSON  
*University of Hawaii*  
*davidjoh@hawaii.edu*

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In Dag Leonardsen's first book *Japan as a Low-Crime Nation* he argued that the West should learn from Japan in order to reduce the social harms of too much freedom. He stressed that policy makers should consider insights from Japan about the crime-control importance of cultural norms.

Times have changed. The book reviewed here begins by asking what has happened in Japan since Leonardsen finished researching his earlier work. It posits that "no country in modern history has moved so swiftly from worldwide adulation to dismissal or even contempt" (p. 35), and it concludes that Japan's crime control "paradise" has been lost in some ways. For Leonardsen, Japanese society is both inclusive and repressive (p. 13). Book one stressed the first theme, book two the second. Most notably, social changes since the 1990s—and a series of economic recessions especially—have made Japan "a less caring" and "less crime-resistant" society, and have driven the Japanese into a "deep existential confusion" (pp. 9, 67-68, 195).

Leonardsen explores crime in Japan with great sociological imagination. He has read

widely and well, he shuns easy answers, and embraces irony, complexity, and contradiction. He also acknowledges major difficulties in discerning Japan's crime realities. Property and violent crime rates have risen in recent years (though the murder rate has remained flat), but in comparative perspective these rates remain low. And official statistics do not reflect serious problems with domestic violence, child abuse, rape, molestation, and white-collar crime. A survey by the National Police Agency in 2010 found that 13.7 percent of Japanese women had been sexually molested during the previous year, and 89 percent of them had never reported it to the police. Another government survey found that 7.3 percent of Japanese women have been raped once or more, half by people known to the victim and half by strangers. Even this large number—one woman in 14—may be a huge underestimate, for other research has found that only four percent of Japanese rape victims went to the police, and only 3 percent to a hospital. In this study, 85 percent of rape victims went nowhere at all.

Japan's official homicide rate may also be higher than it appears (despite the old saw that murder rates are reliable because it is hard to hide a dead body). Japan has few forensic examiners, and one result is many mistaken autopsy reports about the cause of death. Domestic violence and white-collar crime are also undercounted, and for similar reasons: they take place behind closed doors, the offender is "legitimately present" at the scene of the crime, and there are strong incentives for victims not to report these crimes because complaining about the behavior of members of one's in-group can have serious repercussions for the complainant (p. 100).

So this is some of the bad news from a country that is now entering its third "lost decade." But there are some silver (and gray) linings, too. Japan's crime wave is largely unarmed, because guns remain hard to get (p. 83). Drug offenses are low and declining (p. 91). And if you must have a crime wave, you might hope it is geriatric. At present, the most rapid increases in rates of offending are for the elderly—people aged 65 and above—who accounted for 13 percent of all arrests in 2007, compared with 3 percent in 1990, and only 0.6 percent in

the United States in the same year. Thus, while Japan does not have a juvenile crime wave it does have a gray one. The vast majority of crimes committed by the elderly are quite minor (p. 85).

This is more than just a book about how crime has changed as Japan has. It focuses on two other responses as well. The first is "social withdrawal" (*hikikomori*). Estimates are that between 500,000 and 1 million Japanese have completely withdrawn from social interaction for at least six months, with men comprising 70 to 80 percent of the total (p. 146). The second is suicide, which may well be "the single biggest healthcare issue in Japan today" (p. 158). In Japan, 40 times more people kill themselves than kill other people; the analogous figures for the United States and the United Kingdom are 2 and 8, respectively. Yet Japan's government and media devote only a fraction of the resources and attention to suicide that they concentrate on issues of criminal violence. As Leonardson laments, their responses are too often characterized by "active denial" of the problem (p. 159).

The "main question" in a book that is full of interesting questions is "to what extent Japan's collective, Confucian culture as a system of thoughts (and not as an institutionalized welfare system) protects people in times of economic decay" (p. 135). The answer is: not as well as many people supposed 20 years ago. In the end, while it may be "far too early to dethrone Japan from its position among 'nations not obsessed with crime'" (p. 105), social reality is complicated. Crime in Japan is up in some respects, there are large "dark figures" lurking beneath the surface of the country's official statistics, and there are many reasons to wonder whether the nation's most worrisome public order issues are not related to crime per se but rather to how society and government are reacting—be afraid, be very afraid!—to perceptions of it, and not reacting well at all to problems such as social withdrawal and suicide (p. 105).

Leonardson's fine book enables one to perceive this complicated picture; yet Japan's government continues "riding the horses of economic liberalism and social conservatism" that it mounted in the 1990s (p. 196). America mounted similar mares well before

that. It would have been good if the Japanese had paid attention to the consequences.

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*The Struggle for the World: Liberation Movements for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, by **Charles Lindholm** and **José Pedro Zúquete**. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010. 267pp. \$21.95 paper. ISBN: 9780804759380.

PETER L. CALLERO  
Western Oregon University  
callerp@wou.edu

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As recently as 1990, debates over the process of globalization were limited to a relatively small group of intellectuals and academics in the social sciences. Not anymore. Over the past two decades the number of publications addressing this academically contested concept has exploded (a recent electronic search produced a list of over 7,000 books under the subject area of globalization). Today, the concept of globalization is the intellectual focus of a wide range of scholars and the term itself has been gradually seeping into the language of everyday life. Within this public discourse there is little consensus regarding the source of globalization, its trajectory, or whether its processes are inherently progressive or reactionary. Nevertheless, scholars and commentators inside and outside of academia agree on one point: the increasing speed and scope of cross-border communication, transportation, migration and trade has real sociological consequences.

In *The Struggle for the World*, Charles Lindholm and José Zúquete argue that one of the more significant sociological consequences of "capitalist globalization" is the emergence of a wide variety of liberation movements that are fed by feelings of insecurity and rootlessness characteristic of life at the turn of the twenty-first century. Describing, comparing and understanding the common features of these so-called "aurora movements" is the aim of the book.

The idea that modernity disrupts traditional life, challenges identity and spurs a quest for social alternatives is not new, but the application of this theoretical assumption to alter-globalization movements is distinctive and timely. And what makes this book

particularly unique is the surprising mixture of oppositional organizations, groups and individuals integrated within the same analytical frame. The list includes the Zapatista movement, Bolivian President Evo Morales, intellectuals representing the European New Right, The World Social Forum, The Slow Food Movement, al-Qaeda, and rave subculture, among others. The spectrum of political ideology represented here is obviously diverse (“right-wing to left-wing to no-wing”), but it is also structurally eclectic in that it represents a curious blend of individual leaders, informal networks, and groups. Despite the book’s subtitle, analyses are not exclusively focused on social movements—at least not in the way sociologists use the term. Concentrating on this uncommon mix of organized responses to globalization turns out to be both a strength and a limitation of the book.

The opening chapter provides some interesting theoretical and historical context in a ten-page overview, and the authors waste no time getting to the meat of their analysis. Using a method of “archival anthropology” they draw upon primary and secondary sources to paint a detailed portrait of the beliefs and motivations of leaders and activists in “world-saving groups.” The four core chapters are intentionally descriptive and offer very little analysis or theoretical explanation. There is, however, an explicit focus on the utopian and redemptive narrative of resistance, and the common ways in which groups imagine salvation from the evils of a global world. Readers already familiar with these movements will not find much new here. Still, the chapters are tightly organized and well documented, and because the writing is unencumbered by theoretical jargon, students interested in either globalization or social movements should find the book particularly attractive.

The most provocative and creative contribution of *The Struggle for the World* is developed in the final chapter. The argument is uncomplicated and straightforward: despite political and structural differences, the assorted movements, groups, social networks and organizational leaders opposing globalization share a set of ideologies and practices that go beyond a common grievance against American-led capitalist

hegemony. For Lindholm and Zúquete the meta-narrative is a spiritual one with religious and redemptive undertones. Thus all of the groups documented in the book are said to believe in a coming global crisis of cosmic proportions that will lead to the end of the world, as we know it. There is also a common acceptance that this path to hell on earth requires decisive action and an emotional commitment to the cause of salvation. Neutrality is not an option and compromise is not possible. The righteous must stand and lead a rebellion against the soulless force of the market. Finally, all groups are said to believe that a new and better world is possible and that it will be an enchanting place, one of lasting peace and harmony where human potential is no longer stultified (thus the label “aurora movements”).

The authors make a strong assertion in the preface of the book that they seek objectivity. Their expressed goal is to describe, compare, illustrate and contextualize while avoiding either endorsements or expressions of scorn. And to their credit this is achieved, until the final chapter where the derision is subtle but unmistakable. Here they conclude by arguing that all of the movement groups in their analysis are conducive to charismatic leadership, zealotry, totalitarianism and violence. In other words, groups as diverse as al-Qaeda and Slow Food, the European nationalists and rave party enthusiasts, Zapatistas and the World Social Forum, are at their core fundamentalist, utopian and undemocratic. This generalization would be less of a concern if the evidence were more compelling and systematic, and if movement plans, tactics and practices were more thoroughly considered. Instead, the data are exclusively documentary and rely heavily on speeches and other public pronouncements by movement leaders — a context where ideology tends to be emphasized and where rhetorical strategies to motivate action and recruit members can be expected. Moreover, the narrow focus on organizational, intellectual and ideological leaders creates a false picture of unity within a movement. Group membership is not exclusionary, it is multiple and overlapping, but the authors’ selective attention to leader rhetoric masks this complicating fact.

Globalization is disrupting traditional social relationships, altering the distribution of material resources and stirring the emergence of resistance movements. In *The Struggle for the World*, Lindholm and Zúquete present an intriguing look at some of the better known alter-globalization groups and offer provocative evidence that a common imaginary links them together. The book is a small intellectual seed, but it may very well germinate a strong stalk of new ideas and support several branches of verdant debate.

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*Habits of the Heartland: Small-Town Life in Modern America*, by **Lyn C. Macgregor**. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010. 270pp. \$22.95 paper. ISBN: 9780801476433.

MARY GRIGSBY  
 University of Missouri  
 grigsbym@missouri.edu

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Adding her voice and insights to those who have examined the nature of American commitment to community life, Lyn Macgregor grapples with how people in Viroqua, Wisconsin (population 4,335) make meaning of their lives. Responding to those who have expressed concerns about the quality of American community in the face of excessive individualism and material consumption, Macgregor focuses on how people created and sustained community rather than the extent to which they had created a community that met some pre-established criteria. Viroqua had been studied through survey research during the 1930s and 1940s and more recently received media attention because of successful efforts to keep the downtown vital despite the arrival of Walmart, and the fairly large number of alternative newcomers it attracted.

Combining a well-designed two-year ethnographic study and thoughtful analysis of how contemporary small-town community is constructed, the author brings to life three distinct cultural approaches to making community that were held by three social groups: the Alternatives, the Main Streeters, and the Regulars. Each of these groups, she maintains, held their own cultural logics of community that involved

distinct senses of obligation to others and of personal agency.

Alternatives had a strong sense of personal agency and chose to live in Viroqua because they believed it was the type of place where they could remake community to integrate private and public spheres in ways consistent with their values. The Waldorf School, a food co-op, and other businesses modeled on their ideals helped them feel they were fostering social justice and environmental sustainability in the larger world through their lifestyle choices.

Main Streeters were less concerned with the impacts of consumption globally and more concerned with supporting local people. Some of them, for instance, believed that shopping at Walmart supported the local economy. Their commitment was to Viroqua as a specific place. They took pride in their role in historic preservation of downtown buildings. For them improving the well-being of the local community was a priority and they often didn't separate their sense of commitment to family and the larger community. The Main Streeters adopted a collective response to the competition from large enterprises by putting in place organizations such as the Main Street Program and the Viroqua Partners.

Regulars usually had a strong connection to the town and took for granted the extensive social network they were part of, in which norms of reciprocity were strong. They valued spontaneous and informal social activities and did not admire visible efforts on the part of Alternatives and Main Streeters to change or improve the community. Regulars criticized Viroqua more openly, lamenting that downtown revitalization didn't include any stores where normal people would want to shop. They said cost influenced their buying. Regulars did not view individuals as capable of impacting the quality of community life.

Alternatives and Main Streeters viewed Regulars as apathetic. Regulars viewed Alternatives and Main Streeters as show-offs. Where Main Streeters and Alternatives were often able to find common ground in their goals and work together, Regulars largely went their own way. Alternatives shopped and socialized among themselves with some overlap with the Main Streeter's main

habitats, but largely the three groups inhabited what Macgregor calls parallel worlds. Alternatives sent their children to the Waldorf School. Main Streeters and Regulars children attended public school. Yet the community remained vital and business owners cooperated. There was a side walk sale day, an active farmers market, Twinklefest to kick off the Christmas season, free advertising for local businesses in a travel guidebook, a trade show for school staff to highlight products of local businesses, and a bi-annual citywide rummage sale.

Economic capacity did not, according to Macgregor, determine consumption choices in Viroqua nor were the boundaries of race and ethnicity the basis for the boundaries in the town. The lack of racial diversity in the community precluded consideration of the influence of race in the analysis. Instead the boundaries were based on the different "logics of commitment" and "ethics of agency" of the three groups. Macgregor says the role played by social class in shaping belonging was through the different tastes in community culture rather than being economically determined. Pressures to be frugal and stigma attached to flaunting wealth meant there was much overlap in the goods that could conceivably be consumed by people across the groups. People, she found, emulated others within their group and avoided consumption consistent with that of other groups.

Rather than being an instrument of the demise of community, consumption was revealed to be used by Viroquans in enacting their belonging to a community group. In their community making efforts, Viroquans, also made use of other features of modern life that have been theorized to destroy community. Small town businesses used rationalized systems, such as computerized tracking of sales and inventory, to improve their competitive edge while maintaining the personal service and image of small town friendliness to draw customers. The Internet brought expanded marketing opportunities for local artisans and facilitated collaboration among local businesses. Walmart we learn was a place where people, particularly Regulars, networked and shopped, and where consumption was perceived to be more egalitarian and inclusive than that afforded in some

of the other shopping venues in Viroqua. The egalitarianism of Walmart felt by Regulars and some Main Streeters and the discomfort they felt in the food co-op overshadowed the reality of Walmart's exploitation of labor or the intentions of Alternatives, critical of Walmart, involved in the food co-op to promote global equality. The cultural frameworks that people used to make meaning of the situation defined it for the participants, and they acted upon the reality they perceived.

The title *Habits of the Heartland* alone signals that Macgregor aims to make a mark in the on-going sociological debate about community in the United States. She delivers on her promise, making a substantive contribution to our understanding of how community is made and how contemporary culture shapes the process.

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*Making Waves: Worldwide Social Movements, 1750-2005*, edited by **William G. Martin**. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2008. 217pp. \$41.95 paper. ISBN: 9781594514814.

PETER STAMATOV  
 Yale University  
 peter.stamatov@yale.edu

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One influential sociological perspective on global and transnational developments has coalesced around the concept of the world system, defined—in the modern world—by the economic logic of capitalist production. While the capitalist world system and its economic aspects have been discussed in numerous publications, another view of the global political landscape has received much less attention: the various instances of popular mobilization questioning and challenging the logic of global capitalism. Apart from the occasional reference to anti-systemic movements by world system theorists and the discussion of twentieth century labor protests by Beverly Silver, this counterpoint to the growth of the capitalist world economy has largely eluded a thorough examination.

To fill this void is the ambition of *Making Waves*, a collection aiming to present the first systematic overview of social movement activities within the context of—and often in dialectical opposition to—a consolidating

international capitalist system from roughly the mid-eighteenth century until today. The presentation is organized chronologically, with four substantive chapters sandwiched between an introduction and conclusion by William G. Martin, the coordinator of the project. Each of the substantive chapters, the work of different scholars, discusses a period within this larger historical framework: 1750 to 1850, 1848 to 1917, 1917 to 1968, and 1968 to 2005.

The strength of the collection emerges from the project's historical and comparative depth. The chapters display the richness of popular protest in history. This makes the book a valuable concise introduction, particularly useful for those unfamiliar with the history of social movements before the twentieth century. Furthermore, placing these developments in a larger global context transcends the "methodological nationalism" and case-study culture of much of social movement research to reveal important connections between seemingly unconnected events—and to show how for centuries social movements have reacted not simply to "their" national context, but have been deeply embedded in global and transnational dynamics. The historical examination of popular protest is also highly suggestive of the interestingly "lumpy" trajectory of popular protest in history, as individual national and local protest initiatives, organizations, and events formed clusters, waves, or cycles of protest. In addition, the historical depth provides an important context for understanding contemporary forms of global and cross-national political protest. Finally, as Martin's conclusion suggests, the book testifies to the power of ordinary people to shape economic and political structures by showing how "successive world movement waves have radically transformed the world-economy . . . and in so doing . . . have altered the conditions within which future movements form, and the forces against which they protest" (p. 170).

Where the book fails is in offering any new insights into the dynamics and causality of global protest. The introduction criticizes current social movement research, raising expectations of new theoretical contributions. Yet there is no coherent theoretical statement. Throughout, the argument seems to vacillate somewhat uneasily between a recognition of

the importance of social movements and a disappointment that they have not changed radically the nature of the "system." Thus the contention that anti-systemic movements are important and consequential—an obvious point in a book devoted to the history of these movements—alternates somewhat incoherently with the diametrically opposed position: that they are not really that consequential, as the capitalist system triumphs anyway by co-opting most of these movements (twentieth century working class movements being the prime example of such co-optation).

This tension raises questions regarding the analytical depth of a framework that privileges intentionally social movements that are inherently "anti-systemic," that is directed against the logic of the capitalist world system (p. 7). Indeed, several authors admit that the movements they discuss fall short of being full-fledged examples of anti-systematicity in action. Thus Tuba Agartan, Woo-Young Choi, and Tu Huynh talk about "transformative movements" dominating the period between mid-eighteenth and mid-nineteenth century. In the following century, Caleb Bush distinguishes anti-systemic movements from "anti-systemic activity" (pp. 50-51). Fouad Kalouche and Eric Mielants admit that "antisystemic" is "an elusive term over long periods of time" and that many movements are not "antisystemic per se but . . . 'antirepressive'" (p. 129). Upon finishing the book my impression was that the historical texture of protest in the global arena was sufficiently complex not to lend itself easily to a dualistic scheme where popular mobilization is either resistance to the "forces" of the world system or a window-dressing for the political surrender of the oppressed. How useful analytically is the "anti-system" concept? Take for example working class movements. Caleb Bush argues that "While an unquestionable 'success'," they "pulled antisystemic resistance within safer bounds for the ongoing operations of historical capitalism" (p. 55). In short, "anti-systemic movements" end up strengthening the system. What then is the precise difference between them and (hypothetical) "pro-system" movements?

Some characterizations in the book would raise eyebrows among historians. The *sans*

*cullottes* are proclaimed, rather solemnly, an anti-systemic and anti-capitalist movement (p. 16). The only source on Chartism is Engels' *Condition of the Working Classes* (1845)—hardly a reliable source, superseded now by a voluminous historiography of Chartism. In addition, the text would engage the reader better with tighter editing. For example, the excursus on *Das Kapital* (p. 145) does not add anything except to show that Marx's predictions have materialized.

The book could have had more straightforward causal arguments, beyond the simple statements on the connectedness of social movements with the political and ideological structures of the world system. How and to what extent were social movements determined by the logic of global capitalism? How exactly and to what extent did social movements in history change and shape the contours of the world system as we know it? While not giving fully satisfactory answers to these questions, *Making Waves* presents, often engagingly, the rich history of popular protest and thus invites researchers to take seriously the challenge of studying and understanding the logic of this protest in a broader historical and geographical perspective.

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*Social Transnationalism: Lifeworlds Beyond the Nation-State*, by **Steffen Mau**. New York, NY: Routledge, 2010. 201 pp. \$160.00 cloth. ISBN: 9780415494502.

SONALI JAIN  
Duke University  
sj103@duke.edu

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Studies on transnationalism tend to focus on the border-crossing activities of individuals, migrant groups, corporations and social movements. Steffen Mau's book contributes to this literature by following a subset of the non-migrant German population and their interactions, networks and mobility across national boundaries. Drawing from a survey administered in March and April 2006 of a representative sample of 2700 German citizens and official statistics, *Social Transnationalism*, or the "activities initiated and maintained by an entire variety of non-state

actors, including corporate actors and individuals" (preface), seeks to quantify the extent to which German citizens are integrated into transnational spaces, and the nature and geographical range of their relationships. Specifically, the author wishes to explore the lifeworlds of German citizens at the individual level in the transnational arena.

The book is organized into five parts and consists of 26 short chapters. Part One provides a review of the literature and traces how the idea of the nation state has evolved from a "container" model of society to one that recognizes the salience of transnational flows. Reviewing interdisciplinary scholarship, Mau notes the now oft-repeated assertion that in our contemporary era of globalization and transnationalism, the notion of a nation-state as a geographically confined unit is diminishing in significance. He states that increasingly, the social networks of individuals are expanding and they are learning to navigate extended social spaces that overlap and are nested in each other, even if their range is geographically limited.

The chapters in Parts Two, Three and Four focus mainly on the empirical findings from the survey. Key questions posed in Part Two, which addresses respondents' transnational social relations, include the extent to which German social networks are transnational, the frequency and duration of German international tourism, and interactions between citizens and foreign residents of Germany. Some of the findings in this section reveal that close to half the survey respondents' social networks are concentrated in North America, Europe and Australia, and relatively few networks extend into South America, Asia and Africa. Interestingly, Turkey ranks low on this list, and the authors hypothesize that this is likely due to cultural differences between Germans and Turks. Germans were also most likely to interact with Americans, the British and Spaniards when results were weighted according to the relative size of the foreign population in Germany.

Part Three, titled "Transnationalism and the New Cosmopolitanism," explores relationships between social attitudes and involvement in transnational practices for

survey respondents. Again, the author considers a range of issues, including how transnationalism affects respondents' attitudes towards global governance, foreigners, transnational trust and feelings of national affiliation. Some findings from this section note that a majority of respondents had positive attitudes towards foreigners, but over 75 percent of them also believed that every state should retain authority over who should enter and reside. The author also finds a positive correlation between trust and transnational involvement, with transnational trust being most pronounced among men and the highly educated.

Topics addressed in Part Four include differences in levels of transnationalism among respondents depending upon socioeconomic class, being from East or West Germany, geographic location, age and gender. Survey data show that respondents' involvement in transnational networks increases with education, as do contacts with foreigners living in Germany. Part Five, the conclusion, states that Germany has in a few decades, heterogenized and transnationalized, not only due to the influx of immigrants but also because of the horizontal networks and interactions of a large portion of its inhabitants.

*Social Transnationalism* offers a detailed review of the various literatures that speak to the issues of globalization, transnationalism and cosmopolitanism. This will appeal to undergraduates and more advanced readers who wish to understand or refresh their memories on these topics. Moreover, by quantifying the transnational practices of non-migrant citizens rather than migrants, the book covers new ground, and will particularly appeal to scholars interested in understanding transnational behavior and practices from a German perspective. However, the overall structure of the book could have been better organized, so that the theory and empirical findings clearly speak to each other. As it stands, chapters in Part One review the literature while chapters in other parts provide a brief overview of relevant literature and subsequently focus on the empirical findings. Further, although Mau notes that survey findings may be considered an example of the situation in OECD countries, the book could have benefited

from references to other studies on this topic to highlight what is unique or not about the German case. Finally, although findings are clearly presented in tabular form, the empirical chapters of this book read more like a report and so may not completely capture the reader's attention. Still, this study is important and informative: there are few studies that attempt to quantify systematically transnational practices at the individual level, and even fewer that focus on non-migrant citizens.

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*The Shock of the News: Media Coverage and the Making of 9/11*, by **Brian A. Monahan**. New York, NY: New York University Press, 2010. 221pp. \$24.00 paper. ISBN: 9780814795552.

RODNEY BENSON  
New York University  
Rodney.benson@nyu.edu

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Is it so surprising that the dramatic events of September 11, 2001 were presented by news media as dramatic events or that the firefighters who died trying to save lives were lauded as heroes? If there was bravery aplenty on that day, this book is also brave for directly challenging the mythologized collective memory of 9/11. In *The Shock of the News*, Brian Monahan uses a social constructionist approach to show how this already dramatic event was further dramatized by the media and in ways that fatefully helped legitimize policies of foreign military intervention and domestic citizen surveillance.

Part I of the book treads well-worn ground about the premises of social constructionism: news media do not objectively portray social reality but rather emphasize and amplify those aspects that accord with media organizations' needs to attract audiences and advertisers and maximize profits. To achieve these goals, journalists write news articles in ways akin to hackneyed formula fiction. They look for "spectacular moments, compelling characters, human tragedy, heroism, gripping images, and other staples of dramatic storytelling" (p. 9). "Public dramas" represent the apotheosis of this tendency. Rather than dig up new stories from scratch every day, it is more efficient to concentrate news-gathering resources on a few big events that

can then be emotionally amplified to such a degree that audiences will become "hooked." So for Monahan, 9/11 is a public drama in the same sense as the O.J. Simpson arrest and trial or any other sensational event that endures in the news for weeks or months: the difference is simply one of degree.

Monahan argues that public drama has become a more central component of news coverage in recent years, as media have become exponentially more profit-driven and more desperate for news that will help fill a 24-hour-news-cycle on the Internet and cable and attract the attention of increasingly fragmented audiences. Monahan's only evidence for this claim is anecdotal, but it is an interesting hypothesis that deserves more systematic inquiry. Are public dramas—by virtue of their greater duration and intensity—able to exert greater influence over audiences than other types of news coverage? And if so, does this suggest a broader change in the operation of symbolic power?

Monahan's main focus, however, lies elsewhere. His aim is to dissect a particular public drama in painstaking detail in order to show how coverage was systematically organized according to logics of "dramatic amplification" and "cultivating emotionality." This is useful work that will be helpful for future media content analyses. Thus, in Part II of the book, Monahan offers a comprehensive and close reading of NBC morning and evening news programs in the hours and days following the first airplane crash. One interesting finding is that melodramatic personalization of the coverage actually increased over time: as new factual revelations from officials became more scarce, journalists filled their expanded news time by seeking out "particularly sorrowful accounts" (p. 122).

Part III is the most original and interesting part of the book, examining the ways in which firefighters were heroized by the media and politicians, and in turn, how the firefighters sought to use their newfound "moral currency" to ensure their continued central role in the Ground Zero search-and-rescue effort (even after it was clear there was no one left alive to rescue) and to bargain for better benefits. As Monahan notes, symbolic legitimacy is usually linked to

institutional affiliation (such as holding high political office); the 9/11 firefighters' experience illustrates how moral currency can also arise out of specific events. This insight suggests a range of fascinating research questions about how and why agents gain moral currency, what factors lead to an increase or decrease in its value, and what are the limits of its power.

Monahan insists that the public drama form of news crowded out context, contradictions, and complexity, but the persuasiveness of this argument is undermined by the fact that he himself only gives glancing attention to alternative frames. In the case of 9/11, the missing context would include most notably U.S. foreign relations and military and intelligence policies and implementation. In the case of the firefighters, an exclusive focus on them as heroes ignores the fact that not all of them were heroes nor did they always act heroically (pp. 147–48). In order to denaturalize the coverage and show how it might have been otherwise, Monahan could have brought in more examples of "complex" news coverage from foreign and U.S. media, whether alternative, online, or mainstream. Other than NBC, Monahan's only media sample is the *The New York Times'* "Portraits of Grief." But was this series representative of the *Times* coverage as a whole? More broadly, did some news outlets go beyond public drama to incorporate other news "forms" that made room for structural complexity, with or without the drama? *The Shock of the News* cannot answer such questions.

Monahan concludes with the rather tepid hope that his analysis will help readers "be aware of" public drama and thus interpret the news more critically. But another "take-away" is possible and even suggested by Monahan's own analysis that a destructively sensationalistic media logic is largely a commercial logic. Does it follow that the solution lies—at least in part—in expanding and improving non-commercial media? Monahan nods in this direction with an approving reference to PBS's Jim Lehrer in the closing pages of the book—though of course, the problem cannot be solved by PBS alone. Herein lies the new frontier for social constructionist research: exploring the question of whether and how structural variation (in

ownership, funding, audiences) relates to discursive variation. Rather than insisting on a singular media logic, researchers could see how a diversity of media logics are enabled by a diversity of structural conditions, and in so doing, lay the groundwork for a genuine democratic transformation of the public sphere.

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*Faith Makes Us Live: Surviving and Thriving in the Haitian Diaspora*, by **Margarita A. Mooney**. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2009. 296pp. \$21.95 paper. ISBN: 9780520260368.

DWAINE PLAZA  
Oregon State University  
dplaza@orst.edu

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On January 12, 2010, the world once again focused its attention on the Republic of Haiti after a massive earthquake decimated the country. Since being “discovered” in 1492 by Christopher Columbus, interest in Haiti has peaked and waned because of the island’s long, checkered history. Haiti has been recognized as being the “First Black Republic” in the Western Hemisphere. The country has also experienced a series of long-lived dictatorships and perpetual economic difficulties. The poor economy and long-term political turbulence have contributed to the massive emigration of Haitian residents to the Dominican Republic, the United States, Canada and France. Haitians today circulate as legal immigrants, illegal immigrants, and refugees. Despite leaving Haiti, most sojourners maintain transnational linkages to family, kin and fictive kin across the international diaspora. Many of the Haitian emigrants in the 1950s and the 1960s were urban, professional, upper middle-class, likely to be lighter skinned and opponents of the government of François Duvalier (1957–71). Since the 1970s, the Haitian emigrant population has changed. Migrants today are significantly more likely to be from rural working class backgrounds and have a darker skin complexion.

It is within this socio-historical milieu that Margarita Mooney has written, *Faith Makes Us Live: Surviving and Thriving in the Haitian Diaspora*. Mooney’s research helps the reader

understand the complex invisible baggage that Haitian migrants carry to cities like Miami, Montreal, and Paris. In these three locations, Haitian immigrants struggle to find jobs, secure adequate housing, support their children through school, and cope with the stigma of racism. In their new “home” communities it is no surprise that Haitians have turned to the Catholic church and their religious leaders as the main sources of support. Mooney’s research untangles the strong religious connection for the Haitian immigrant community by addressing four main questions: (1) How do Haitians use religious scriptures as agency to cope with their migration and adaptation experiences? (2) How do Haitian immigrants create moral communities that affirm their faith and channel their social justice initiatives? (3) How do leaders in the Haitian religious communities interact with other institutions? And, (4) What, if any, impact do religious leaders have on Haitian immigrants’ adaptations?

*Faith Makes Us Live* is an extraordinary study because of the breadth and depth in exploring how religious organizations serve as mediating structures between Haitian immigrants and their host communities. Mooney succeeds at conveying compelling case study portraits of Haitians in Montreal, Paris, and Miami, while never losing sight of the ways in which they are differently enabled or constrained by the broader social and political environments in which they are embedded. During the sixteen months of field work for her book, Mooney used extensive interviews (n = 150) and ethnographic observations to focus attention on how Haitian immigrants understand their adaptation. She spent countless hours participating in activities at various Haitian Catholic churches, as well as attending social, political, and cultural events. Having mastered the Creole language, Mooney was able to participate deeply in the religious communities themselves, gaining a degree of trust that allowed her interviewees to share their stories. Mooney’s research design allowed her to move between micro and macro levels of analysis in order to understand how religious faith and practice affects Haitian immigrant enculturation and assimilation.

Mooney's case study approach informs the reader about the important cross-national differences in Haitian diasporic adaptation. For the Haitian community in Miami there is a large number of "boat people" with humble origins in Haiti. Census and immigration data however show that Paris and Montreal also have an increasingly large number of low-skilled Haitians. Many Haitians in all three cities thus face similar hurdles to their adaptation, including difficulty in obtaining legal papers, the burden of working in low-wage jobs, racism, and the adversities associated with living in poor and often crime-ridden neighborhoods. Faith has enabled Haitian immigrants to develop coping strategies for dealing with the fact that they arrived in different countries with relatively low levels of human, cultural and social capital.

*Faith Makes Us Live* is an important addition to the literature on migration, assimilation and acculturation to North America and Europe. Mooney provides readers with evidence to understand the positive influence of religion on immigrant adaptation. This does not mean that religion itself is judged to be either good or bad. Mooney's research shows how religious organizations serve as mediating structures between immigrants, their host communities and the state. The book provides readers with a compelling account of how faith matters in the daily lives of Haitian immigrants.

Mooney's book significantly contributes to scholarship on immigration by emphasizing the advantages provided by a cooperative relationship between religious institutions and the state. *Faith Makes Us Live: Surviving and Thriving in the Haitian Diaspora* is particularly relevant for undergraduate and graduate courses in Caribbean or migration studies, religious studies, and race and ethnic relations. The book should also interest non-academic audiences because of the jargon-free and easily understandable style of writing. The book allows sociologists to better understand the complex ways in which Haitian immigrants and their families in the United States, Canada and France have continued to survive and excel despite the economic, social and cultural hardships they have faced both at home and in the international diaspora.

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*The Body Reader: Essential Social and Cultural Readings*, edited by **Lisa Jean Moore** and **Mary Kosut**. New York, NY: New York University Press, 2010. 419pp. \$30.00 paper. ISBN: 9780814795668.

MARCIA MILLMAN

*University of California, Santa Cruz*  
 millman@ucsc.edu

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This interesting, interdisciplinary collection of essays was built around the premise that bodies should be studied as something lived and lived in. Accordingly, the editors encouraged the contributors to consider their own embodiment (which they did to varying degrees) in their empirical or interpretive studies. Twenty-one essays by sociologists and scholars from a wide range of disciplines were organized into four sections: Vulnerable Bodies, Bodies as Mediums, Extraordinary Bodies, and Bodies in the Media. That organization is somewhat arbitrary, but as Lisa Jean Moore and Mary Kosut explain in their engaging and useful introduction, the essays investigate common themes, among them: how the body figures into the performance of self and identity, how we possess and are sometimes imprisoned by our bodies, how bodies are inscribed with meanings, by ourselves or others, and how embodiment may express or reflect both agency and social structure.

The collection is evenly divided between classic excerpts and reprints and new and previously unpublished work. Part I, the section on Vulnerable Bodies, includes essays from writers who have produced paradigm-shifting works, most notably Arthur Frank's illuminating "The Body's Problems with Illness," Barbara Katz Rothman's historical analysis "Laboring Now: Current Cultural Constructions of Pregnancy, Birth, and Mothering," and Patricia Hill Collins' incisive return to the problems of sexual violence, gender and racism, "Assume the Position: The Changing Contours of Sexual Violence."

Arthur Frank offers a new analytic framework, a meta-narrative and typology for analyzing the communications and strategies of people who are coping with illness. His comprehensive and original inquiry is an excellent introduction to the concerns of

vulnerable bodies. Barbara Katz Rothman, who has studied pregnancy since the 1970s, examines the transformation of the fetus and the ideologies and practices of pregnancy and childbirth in a clear and engaging historical analysis. Patricia Hill Collins reviews how sexual violence and a culture of rape have always controlled vulnerable groups in different ways: African Americans, women, the poor, gays and lesbians, and prisoners. Her brilliant examination of contemporary patterns of sexual violence and their implications for social control argues for a new conceptual framework that would foster a more comprehensive and progressive understanding of sexual violence and social justice.

To have these three great essays collected in one volume is worth the price of the book. But the section on Vulnerable Bodies is further enriched by an engaging memoir by Kristen Karlberg who reflects on several stressful years of prenatal genetic testing, and two other excellent essays: Gillian Haddow's study of the evolving practices and emotional complexities of collecting organs from cadavers for transplantation in the United Kingdom, and an inquiry by Steve Kroll-Smith and H. Hugh Floyd, Jr. into the nature and construction of medical knowledge and environmental illness, using the case of the debates surrounding Multiple Chemical Sensitivity.

As with most collections, there are strengths and weaknesses. Through the next three sections, some essays are outstanding and others are less memorable. Lisa Jean Moore's essay on college teaching while leaking (breast milk) after childbirth was especially amusing and touching. Most of us have had our difficult moments trying to maintain "Incongruent Appearances" before the audiences that scrutinize our bodies while we lecture, and her personal memoir was not only fascinating but illuminating. Like most of the other contributors, Moore also demonstrates how the study of embodiment necessarily involves attention to emotions.

Mary Kosut's engaging essay "Extreme Bodies/Extreme Culture" left more questions than answers. She examines the contemporary culture of "modern primitivism" and extreme rituals of body modification and offers an insightful discussion of the "extreme makeovers" of every part of the

body that currently fill so much television programming. Her decision, recounted late in her essay, to do an "extreme ethnography" by surrendering her body to suspension by flesh hook pulls, was taken after she interviewed some enthusiasts of this ceremonial practice and decided she should experiment herself to understand the thrill. She describes the attachment of hooks to her chest, hooks attached to ropes hanging from a high beam, and attempting to join the assembly of participants who apparently enjoy unsupported suspension by flesh hook. It was a relief that she ended this participatory adventure quickly when she experienced only extreme pain. There is a growing interest in extreme sports and extreme body experiences, and while that interest clearly merits investigation, it is puzzling why one of the editors of this collection chose to experiment with this degree of pain, however briefly.

A friend reminded me of the 1970 cult film, "A Man Called Horse" starring Richard Harris in the role of an English aristocrat who is captured by the Sioux. He survives by converting to the culture of his captors (that culture imagined by Hollywood), undergoing painful initiation rites, and most famously, the rite of having hooks implanted in his chest and being pulled and suspended by ropes attached to the hooks. Apparently, this was the scene featured in the movie trailer, and the movie was so successful it spawned two sequels. Perhaps the current generation drawn to extreme body rituals is too young to remember that film; it is not mentioned in Mary Kosut's essay. But Richard Harris' character "went native" in order to survive, not to do a sociological study.

It makes me wonder if there has not always been an audience for observing and participating in extreme risk-taking. In his classic 1967 essay on "Where the Action Is," Erving Goffman described the old and new male traditions of displaying and proving "character" through physical risk-taking, including military battles, bullfights, sports, car-racing, duels, and rituals of gang warfare. Goffman also did research on risk-taking by working as a card dealer in a Nevada gambling casino, where he could observe the patrons who risked their life savings. However, he was dealing out the punishment, not subjecting himself to it.

My only criticism of this excellent collection is the frequent lack of awareness of earlier theorists of the body, especially by some of the younger contributors. In their very useful introduction, Moore and Kosut review the history of the body in sociological theory, and offer several persuasive explanations for why social theory left the body largely untouched until the late twentieth century. They do note the exceptions, and among them, Erving Goffman, who wrote extensively about bodies throughout his career: vulnerable, stigmatized, and incongruent bodies that were constantly being judged and required constant management and control.

It is easier to understand why non-sociological cultural theorists might be unaware of that work, although Goffman's reputation as a social theorist and humanist extended far beyond the discipline. What was more disturbing was that some of the contributing sociologists, as well, complained about sociology's historical neglect of the body, while they were seemingly unaware of the work of Goffman and others of his generation who made significant and brilliant contributions. Think of David Sudnow's study of *Passing On*, and Irving Zola, who practically invented the field of disability studies in sociology, and furthermore, wrote extensively of his own experiences as a survivor of polio.

Perhaps each generation of scholars wants to reinvent the wheel, and younger scholars understandably seek inspiration from other disciplines. Still, it is worrisome that they have not read some of the exceptional theorists in sociology who laid a foundation for examining embodiment several decades ago. Despite this observation, it should be clear that this is a generally excellent collection, commendable not only in the quality of scholarship and ideas but also in the quality of the writing. I appreciate how willing the authors were to consider their own embodiment. The collection also has impressive range and diversity, and would be useful not only in courses on *The Body*, but also in courses in Social Psychology, Disability, The Life Course, Gender/Sexuality, and Popular Culture.

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*Parenting Out of Control: Anxious Parents in Uncertain Times*, by **Margaret K. Nelson**. New York, NY: New York University Press, 2010. 257pp. \$27.95 cloth. ISBN: 9780814758533.

WENDY SIMONDS

Georgia State University  
wsimonds@gsu.edu

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The cover of Margaret K. Nelson's new book features a brightly-colored comic strip drawing in the manner of Roy Lichtenstein, of an alarmed-looking worried white woman holding a phone to her ear; the title is in large black-and-white block letters, accentuated by a spiky zigzagging border of vivid yellow and red: *PARENTING OUT OF CONTROL!!* (There are no exclamation points, but there might as well be!)

Nelson proposes that our day and age have given rise to a "new style of parenting"; this *parenting out of control* is a development among "elite parents," whom she primarily refers to throughout the book as "professional middle class." She contrasts their new style with the apparently morally preferable style of "parenting within limits" of "working class" and "middle class" parents whom she primarily lumps together (p. 5). The distinguishing factors of "professional middle class" status are "educational credentials beyond a bachelor's degree and, when employed, . . . professional occupations" (p. 5). Class is a sticky matter and it is difficult to categorize adequately something so complex into neat subcategories. Nelson acknowledges this problem, but then forges ahead in ways that are both provocative and disturbing.

The subtitle of Nelson's book (in smaller, yet still agitated caps) *ANXIOUS PARENTS IN UNCERTAIN TIMES* introduces an interesting dichotomy, in terms of laying blame for the regrettable situation Nelson describes: fault the parents or indict the current state of our class-fractured consumer culture and our surveillance society that give rise to the "uncertain times." Nelson tends to focus her analytic disdain on the parents, who are mainly mothers, though it is also clear she sees the technological modes of surveillance they use (or discuss) as pretty

ridiculous, too. Nelson interviewed the parents about two categories of technology: devices of "connection" (such as baby monitors and cell phones); and devices of "constraint" (such as "child locators," GPS tracking systems, computer blocking and monitoring systems).

Nelson's "parenting out of control" is similar to Annette Lareau's concept of "concerted engagement" (2003) or Sharon Hays' "intensive mothering" (1996)—both elite strategies grounded in privilege. Nelson's study differs from theirs in several ways: in its focus on parents' philosophical views (as opposed to parenting practices) about parenting and monitoring teenage children (as opposed to younger ones); and she contends, in contrast, that gender matters very little in her results.

Nelson's book is replete with the sort of quotations that make you cringe at the speakers' wide-ranging senses of entitlement—for themselves, for their children, and *in* their relationships *with* their children. Her elite participants demonstrate an almost concerted lack of introspection about their privilege. One of the qualities I admired in Nelson's earlier work was the compassionate, empathetic approach she obviously had toward her participants (see, e.g., *The Social Economy of Single Motherhood: Raising Children in Rural America*, 2005). Here, though, the portrayals of participants feel reductive to me. The professional middle-class parents come across as fraught caricatures (like the woman on the cover) who intensely overindulge, obsess over, and spy upon their children. Nelson raises the specters of isolation and marital dissolution for people like these, who are "parenting out of control." For the children, dangers include prolonged adolescence, a possible inability to form mature identities or lasting healthy relationships, and parenting effectively themselves (p. 179–86).

In contrast, Nelson idealizes those in her "working and middle class" group as practical, noble, and self-sacrificial. For example, Nelson writes that they "are able to find satisfaction in their children's accomplishments without having those satisfactions themselves turn into ongoing difficulties" (p. 103). Even though they do not object to intrusive or covert monitoring measures and say they would under certain circumstances, they

appear much less manipulative than the elite parents. Nelson defends them: "they are less interested in the possibility of stealth (spying) per se than they are in deterrence and keeping their children safe" (p. 162). But really, who doesn't want safe children?

Nelson is not alone in her critical view of elite parents and their current connective and constraining parental practices. A number of scholars whose work appears in the recent anthology Nelson co-edited with Anita Garey, *Who's Watching: Daily Practices of Surveillance Among Contemporary Families* (2010) are also cited here to bolster evidence of this "new" hyper-hovering style. While there is a lot of talk about control in both of these books, there is less discussion of disciplinary practices or other power dynamics particular to parenthood that do not involve technological interventions. How children's delinquency might be discovered receives a great deal of attention, but Nelson only briefly discusses what might or does happen next.

This interesting qualitative study could have been framed not as a black-and-white tale of two types of parents, but rather, as evidence that family life is continually caught in flux, mediated by intersecting forces and social constructions: technology *and* class *and* race *and* gender *and* sexuality *and* geographical location *and* generation *and* more—a complex cultural web (no pun intended). And while this message about complicated fluxy culture may be found in *Parenting Out of Control*, it is not the central one.

Despite my criticisms—in fact, because of them—I would highly recommend this book in courses where parenting is a subject. It is provocative, well-written, engaging, and accessible. It will generate many compelling classroom conversations. Conventional-aged college students are roughly the same generation as the children discussed in this book, and many of us are the same generation and class as the parents.

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*Undocumented Uruguayan Immigrants: Bilingual and Educational Experiences*, by **Silvia Pessoa**. El Paso, TX: LFB Scholarly Publishing, 2010. 259pp. \$70.00 cloth. ISBN: 9781593324032.

APRIL LINTON

*University of California, San Diego*  
aplinton@ucsd.edu

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Over three million students graduate from U.S. high schools every year. Most get the opportunity to test their dreams and live their American story. However, a group of approximately 65,000 youth do not get this opportunity; they are smeared with an inherited title, an illegal immigrant. (The DREAM Act Portal, April 9, 2010. <http://dreamact.info/>)

In *Undocumented Uruguayan Immigrants: Bilingual and Educational Experience*, Silvia Pessoa, who grew up in Uruguay, explores how undocumented status affects the language skills, literacy, and academic achievement of Uruguayan youths who arrived in the United States when they were between nine and fifteen years old. While much has been published on the schooling of young immigrant children, there is less work that explicitly focuses on a somewhat older population or an entirely undocumented one. The youths Pessoa studied entered the United States in middle or high school and were stigmatized by both poor immigrant and undocumented status. This rich, comparative study of ten families (including twelve youths, five of whom were "focal cases") contributes to the literature on immigrant children's second-language learning and overall educational outcomes by highlighting numerous differences between the informants, despite their similar ages and status in the United States. Pessoa effectively demonstrates interplay between factors other researchers have identified to be linked to educational success, notably ties to family and community and certain types of school programs. She goes on to make specific recommendations that could inform theory as well and school and

immigration policies. Her book will interest sociologists of immigration, linguists, education scholars, and practitioners who work with immigrant children or the children of immigrants.

Pessoa does not make a case for Uruguayan exceptionalism. Rather, she uses her heritage and proximity to a Uruguayan community in Elizabeth, New Jersey to advantage. She was able to access undocumented informants and gain their trust, something few researchers can do. Her methods include participant observation (e.g., helping with homework), semi-structured interviews with the youths and their parents, and text analysis of the children's school writing and blog writing using Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). The SFL chapter will be most eagerly consumed by linguists and bilingual education experts, but the rest of the book is quite accessible. The copy editors at LFB are at fault for too-frequent typographical and grammatical errors that at times detracted from this reader's experience.

Pessoa's informants' education experiences were influenced by their time in Uruguayan schools as well as U.S. schools. All of them had college aspirations, but the jobs males aspired to (e.g., mechanic) did not require a college degree. Only a few knew about colleges in the area. Most did not do homework on a daily basis. Half had friends who had already dropped out of school or had low educational aspirations. Most were bilingual, but literacy levels in Spanish and English varied widely. All but two of them attended Elizabeth High School, one of the lowest-ranked schools in the state. This school does, however, have a good transitional bilingual program for Spanish speakers. Many of Pessoa's informants were or had been in this program, and cited advantages such as a familiar, content-based classroom and a more gradual transition to English. On the other hand, the bilingual program was segregated and did not help with first-language maintenance and literacy. Parents' participation in their children's education was minimal, even though most parents cited educational opportunities as one of—if not *the*—reason they came to the United States. Being undocumented made some of Pessoa's informants less likely to stay in high school or pursue further education. And of

course, their families' undocumented status had already affected the quality of their education because the jobs their parents were able to obtain forced most of them to live in a place with substandard schools. But several students, while resenting their undocumented/poor immigrant status, maintained hope in passage of the DREAM Act and went on to attend two- or four-year colleges. The DREAM Act would open a pathway to legal residence and citizenship for undocumented youths who finish high school, avoid criminal activity, serve in the military and/or attend college.

Pessoa's work validates much of the literature about academic outcomes among the children of disadvantaged immigrants, most notably Portes and Fernandez-Kelly's 2008 study of young adult children of immigrants from severely disadvantaged backgrounds who made it against all odds. More generally, Pessoa echoes and expands on findings derived from the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (<http://cmd.princeton.edu/data%20CILS.shtml>). For example:

- Bilingualism *plus* biliteracy is positively related to academic achievement. In Pessoa's study, the students who achieved biliteracy did so with parental support for literacy in their first language.
- Literacy in students' first language promotes second-language development. On the other hand, students who had difficulties grasping academic texts in Spanish had the same problems in English.
- Supportive parents help youths maintain first-language literacy and (in some cases) transmit middle-class human and cultural capital acquired in the home country.

For educators, Pessoa's work yields three main recommendations:

- Create assignments that engage students' interests.
- Do whatever it takes to get parents involved in their children's schooling.
- When possible, institute dual-language (two-way immersion) programs because these support first-language maintenance

and literacy as well as English, are integrated, and are viewed as enriched rather than remedial.

Pessoa's larger arguments are quite persuasive: a theory of language acquisition must include student's "vernacular and contextualized texts with all its imperfection as a basis for academic literacy, instruction, and development" (p. 228). This means that educators should collect and employ more data on English language learners' uses of their home language and English, literacies, and academic histories. And Congress should pass the DREAM Act or an equivalent policy. I could not agree more.

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*Dangerous Pregnancies: Mothers, Disabilities, and Abortion in Modern America*, by **Leslie J. Reagan**. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2010. 372pp. \$27.50 cloth. ISBN: 9780520259034.

ROBBIE PFEUFER KAHN  
 University of Vermont  
 robbie.kahn@uvm.edu

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Oddly, *Dangerous Pregnancies'* cover photo tells the reader more about the book than the title does. The scene is the nursery of a well-to-do young mother. Let's say the year is 1960. The mother sits in an ornate wicker rocking chair; she inclines her head toward her infant's (she has propped the baby up with both hands) in order to touch noses. Their meeting place draws the eye because both noses, like arrows, come to a point. Impractical for carrying a baby, stiletto heels clad the mother's feet. To the left behind the rocker, the gigantic head of a stuffed toy flop-eared dog emerges from a wicker bassinet. Something about its expression is not cute. Also, to the left in front of the chair,

long tips of a faux fur rug extend toward the mother's shoes. Daylight filters into the room, but the duotone is sickly green and black. The atmosphere is full of understated menace: just as a mild disease *rubella* (called German measles) if contracted in early pregnancy can cause miscarriage, cataracts, deafness, heart defects, profoundly diminished intellect, and the death of a mother's baby.

Leslie Reagan tells the largely unknown history of German measles not to fill a gap in Virginia Woolf's no longer "empty shelves"; she wants to show how German measles engendered social changes that led to the disability rights movement and the abortion movement (hence the title of the book). Historically, the fulcrum of Reagan's research is the period between the 1940s when, as Reagan uncovers, *mothers* and doctors discovered the connection between the disease and disabled newborns, and the 1970s when the federal government launched a campaign to immunize all children after the German measles epidemic of the 1960s.

Reagan's research objective is ambitious: "writing a biography of sorts through mass experience of the body and disease" (p. xii). How to construct such a biography? To begin with, Reagan is a consummate storyteller without forsaking meticulous scholarship (there are 86 pages of footnotes). Out of the mass experience she selects individuals and groups of individuals; she foregrounds decisive moments in the social history of a biological disease; she applies multiple theoretical lenses to her empirical findings; she demonstrates an acute awareness of rhetoric, historical and her own; and she decodes visual material from media images, government pamphlets, and photographs resurrected from archival boxes.

First, individuals. In 1941, Australian ophthalmologist Dr. Norman Gregg *listened to mothers* and brought to the medical world the "discovery" of the connection between German measles and serious outcomes for infants. Using a postcolonial lens, Reagan shows how doctors in the United Kingdom and the United States at first dismissed Dr. Gregg's findings because he came from "out there," a former British colony.

Middle-class white women led the fight for therapeutic abortions, but Reagan confounds

this stereotype. She introduces the working class woman Patricia T. Maginnis who advocated for abortion as a woman's right.

Second, groups of individuals. Reagan calls for twenty-first century feminists to appreciate middle-class mothers of the 1960s who should not be judged by their pearls and respectability; they began the groundswell for more radical feminist reforms. Reagan shows how women as *mothers* from all social classes and races made therapeutic abortion seem reasonable, which led the way to abortion rights in a broader sense. In this example, Reagan uses a universalist lens.

When Reagan describes how the word "women" meant "mothers" she does so compassionately. She shows these mothers' deep self-reflexivity—the wish to terminate a pregnancy was anything but frivolous. Eventually institutional reflexivity resulted as doctors and even clergy supported the right to a therapeutic abortion. Pharmaceutical companies developed a rubella test and eventually a vaccine. The federal government launched a campaign to immunize all young children. These empirical facts contribute to the theoretical debate over whether agency influences structure.

Third, decisive moments. Reagan chooses two legal cases—a black family and a white family—that point the way to *Roe v. Wade* in 1973. The details of the legal transcripts allow Reagan to use the theoretical lens of intersectionality—how gender, race, and class intersect. This lens is the opposite of a universalist lens—to her credit Reagan uses both.

Lastly, rhetoric. Reagan puts words such as "malformed," "tragedy," "retarded," in quotes, calling attention to terminology the disability rights movement has replaced with words that dignify. She foregrounds the self-referential phrase "Rubella parents." Dismayed by the lack of educational and remedial services (parents of "mentally retarded" children were advised to institutionalize their children) these parents fought for infrastructural support.

Reagan deciphers the deliberate or unconscious "rhetoric" of visual images. For instance, she studies a 1965 *Life* magazine cover portrait of a white well-to-do mother getting a blood test for German measles.

The mother looks thoughtful, yet determined. The test results will allow her to choose whether or not to keep her pregnancy. Reagan notices the woman's clenched fist (to make a vein stand out), to Reagan a symbol of the future—of a woman's right to choose (abortion was illegal in 1965 and therapeutic abortion difficult to obtain). With regard to her own rhetoric, Reagan occasionally invites the reader to look over her shoulder. In the law case involving a black family, the Stewarts brought their physically and mentally disabled four-year-old girl Rosalyn into the courtroom as "evidence." Reagan says (on single lines to slow the action down), "I want the reader to pause here./To imagine./I imagine complete silence. Careful listening. Close observation" (p. 124). Was Rosalyn proof, as the religiously influenced defense claimed, that the child wants life? Or was she, as the prosecuting attorney argued not a "person," despite the fact that Rosalyn's parents said they loved her very much?

These opposing questions direct our attention, which is Reagan's intention, to the disability rights and abortion movements of the twenty-first century.

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*Decolonizing European Sociology: Transdisciplinary Approaches*, edited by **Encarnación Gutiérrez Rodríguez, Manuela Boatcă**, and **Sérgio Costa**. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010. 269pp. \$69.95 cloth. ISBN: 9780754678724.

RAEWYN CONNELL  
 University of Sydney  
 raewyn.connell@sydney.edu.au

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In recent years there has been increasing attention to the global inequalities and cultural hierarchies embedded within sociology, and other social sciences. The idea that sociology is made up of European theory plus American research technique now appears embarrassingly provincial. Some sociologists think that finding a way to de-colonize the discipline is the most critical contemporary issue for the future of sociology.

This book, edited by a team from Germany and Britain who have interests in postcolonial thought, migration, and modernities, collects

work from a range of thinkers. Diverse in focus and style, the 15 chapters do not pursue a common doctrine. But they do share a concern with the geopolitics of knowledge, showing the relevance of colonial history and its racial hierarchies to the globalized present. All in their own ways develop critiques of Eurocentric thought within sociology.

Some of the contributors are very well known in debates about globalization. There are broad essays by Göran Therborn, Immanuel Wallerstein, Nederveen Pieterse, and Boaventura de Sousa Santos developing and sometimes revising ideas that will be familiar to their readers. Another group of chapters offers case studies of the need for a de-colonizing perspective on specific social issues across Europe. These are studies by Nilüfer Göle on the presence of Islam in Europe, by Jin Haritaworn on moral panic about "migrant homophobia," by Kien Nghi Ha on German citizenship education for immigrants, by Sandra Gil Araújo on Spanish migration policy, and by Shirley Anne Tate on the treatment of race in beauty studies.

For the general reader of *Contemporary Sociology*, however, the most challenging and (potentially) mind-blowing material in the book is a third group of chapters. These focus on the construction of knowledge and attempt to specify what a southern perspective or a postcolonial social science actually looks like. When I have given talks in the United States about social theory from the global South, a common question has been "What does this tell us that we don't already know?" That question itself needs de-colonizing, but it expresses a certain kind of common sense, and needs an answer. These chapters begin to answer it. Manuela Boatcă and Sérgio Costa lead off with a chapter offering a "research agenda" for a postcolonial sociology. They sort issues, conventionally, into macro-sociology, where postcolonial perspectives are needed to resolve problems about modernity; meso-sociology, producing a new political sociology; and micro-sociology, producing a more dynamic account of culture. This classification is not very illuminating, but the chapter is a brave attempt to think systematically about the content of postcolonial sociology.

Gurminder Bhambra's following essay "Sociology after Postcolonialism" is one of the two high points of the collection. Bhambra's clear and thoughtful text shows why a postcolonial critique is needed within mainstream sociology, and why a doctrine of "multiple modernities" will not do the job. She takes apart the agenda of "cosmopolitanism" advanced by Ulrich Beck and others, showing this does not escape Eurocentrism. Finally, she looks at the idea of multi-centered global sociology, offering criticisms of Burawoy's and Connell's versions of this, and briefly showing the depth of the reconstruction sociology has to undergo—including deep rethinking of its basic categories and its history. This chapter would be an excellent text for undergraduate as well as graduate courses on sociological theory.

The chapter by Gregor McLennan, "Eurocentrism, Sociology, Secularity," looks more sharply at "postcolonialism" itself. McLennan notes that the popularity of "postcolonial theory" in cultural studies coincided with a period of emphasis on identity and difference politics, which is now past. He raises some doubts about Bhambra's line of argument, and about the familiar category of "Orientalism." But the core of the chapter is a strong critique of Chakrabarty's celebrated *Provincializing Europe*, and a conclusion that sociology's reconstruction cannot be so radical as to involve irreducible plurality. McLennan has excellent critical points to make, but does not grasp the sheer wealth of social thought to be found in the postcolonial world, which mainstream sociology currently ignores.

Towards the end of the book comes the essay "South of Every North" by Franco Cassano, the author of an important book on southern thinking regrettably little known in the Anglophone world. Being a card-carrying empiricist, I do not find Cassano's style of cultural sociology, which is speculative and abstract, a comfortable one. Some bits of his argument (e.g., on climate) seem factually wrong. But there is also much of great interest, including a discussion of fundamentalism in "western" culture, an attempt to specify what a sophisticated universalism would be, and an argument for emphasising the issue of social inequality in these discussions. A couple of sentences

from the end of this paper sum up much of the book: "...the task of decolonizing European sociology and provincializing Europe is a long, complex process with many passages that need exploring. It cannot only be a theoretical process, but requires other voices, particularly those from the South, to be heard" (p. 223).

The final chapter is by Heriberto Cairo, "Critical Geopolitics and the Decolonization of Area Studies," and this is a surprise and a delight. It addresses the logic of "area studies," in which sociology cooperates with other social and cultural sciences, and shows how the history of this field is interwoven with world politics—the Cold War, decolonization and the War on Terror. Cairo then undertakes an investigation of why Latin America is a recognized "area" for study in social science while Latin or southern Europe is not. I won't give the story away—it is an entertaining read. A fine study in the sociology of knowledge, that is highly relevant to our thinking about how sociology itself should be constructed in the future, this is a valuable book and a significant resource for building a truly global sociology.

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*Usable Theory: Analytic Tools for Social and Political Research*, by **Dietrich Rueschemeyer**. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009. 338pp. \$27.95 paper. ISBN: 9780691129594.

JACK A. GOLDSTONE  
George Mason University  
jgoldsto@gmu.edu

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This is an extraordinarily reasonable book, that is even more remarkable for a wide-ranging work on social theory. Instead of overweening pronouncements, mega-ambitious plans to transform sociology (or our understanding of sociology), or advocacy or condemnations of a particular school or theorist, readers will be delighted to find a thorough, balanced examination of key concepts and issues in sociology. *Usable Theory* is an ideal central text for graduate or even undergraduate classes on social theory.

Dietrich Rueschemeyer builds this volume by moving from micro to macro issues in theory. He begins with Weber's contention that

social action is meaningful action, which can be understood in terms of the knowledge of actors, the norms framing their thinking, the preferences generated by their individual needs and position in society and their interactions with others, and their emotions.

Each of these elements receives a chapter. Knowledge is shown to be socially grounded but also to have its own varieties and trajectories of change. Knowledge is valued for utilitarian reasons, but functionalism alone does not explain what we know; the same beliefs about our roles and others' actions that are vital to negotiate social life are also constantly being challenged. Indeed, in modern societies, the routine invention and dissemination of new knowledge is one of the most distinctive and characteristic elements.

The chapters on norms, preferences, and emotions are similarly balanced in their claims. Norms are shown to act as crucial guidelines for behavior; but they are not rigid constraints that pre-empt individual choice, nor are they immune to challenge and incremental or even rapid change. Preferences are how we glide between personal knowledge and desires and social norms, and provide the basis for understanding behavior. This view inclines Rueschemeyer towards a rational-choice model of behavior, yet he knows and states clearly that rational choice is never enough to understand human action. Emotions are the crucial motor that energizes action, and emotions can sometimes short-circuit and over-ride "rational" choices. Moreover, norms provide an important check on rational calculations that are excessively self-centered; "rational" choices thus always blend aims for individual gain with knowledge of the consequences of choices made with regard to relevant others.

The first half of the book thus builds up what Rueschemeyer calls a "General Frame" for understanding social action. This frame blends elements of rational choice, social norms, preferences, and emotions, all of which inform our understanding of social actions. The result is not a set of axiomatic principles, but rather the development of a set of interlinked concepts, which he labels "analytic tools" to guide research. What stands out after reading this is the sterility of our admonitions to students to seek to confirm or disconfirm elements of social theories.

Rueschemeyer makes clear that what is valuable about social theories is not their absolute statements, but the conceptual tools that they provide to help us understand objects of social inquiry. Learn these tools and learn how to use them, he tells us (and Rueschemeyer provides examples, often from his own outstanding work on the development of democracy, on how these tools can answer important questions), and you will be making good use of social theory.

The second half of the book then moves from micro to macro, with chapters on aggregation, collective action, power and cooperation, institutions, social identities, macro-contexts, and cultural explanation. Rueschemeyer starts by showing the fallacy of simple aggregation; this sets the stage for a discussion of the key asymmetry whereby macro-structures always shape local and group behavior, but the actions of individuals and groups only rarely and on special occasions reshape macro-structures. In these chapters, he shows how norms enable collective action, how power and cooperation shape knowledge and actions, and how institutions perpetuate social inequality and processes. Social identities are presented as multiple and flexible, but still fairly constraining on beliefs and relationships. Culture is considered an irreplaceable element of institutions, and hence preferences, drawing on emotions as well, but significant only insofar as culture is grounded in the beliefs and actions of individuals and groups in everyday life. Culture may be fragmented and varied (no cultural determinism, or any other kind of determinism, here), yet it still infuses and vitalizes social action.

Rueschemeyer has succeeded in his aim of providing *usable* social theory. With patience, exceptionally clear prose, a wide range of empirical examples, and even-handed use of theorists from Marx and Durkheim to Coleman and Giddens and Tilly, he instructs us in the use of key concepts developed in social theory, both micro and macro. Readers will not emerge converted to a new kind of theory, or numbed by specialized vocabulary, or left wanting by overly abstract and detached conceptual schemas. Rather—and this is what makes this book so valuable for students—they will come away with a greater understanding of

norms, preferences, the role of emotion in social life, the micro-macro divide, collective action, institutions, and culture, and a deeper appreciation of how these concepts can be harnessed to explanations of real problems in social structure and social change. To do this in a few hundred calm, engaging pages is an immense accomplishment and huge contribution to our discipline.

In addition, Rueschemeyer has done a great service to instructors with his organization of the book. By presenting a chapter on each major concept, and including a summary conclusion for each chapter that links it to what has come before and what follows, he has made it exceedingly easy to follow his argument, and to assign additional articles or works to the class that focus on uses of each concept. This is a book for those who need to be reminded of how useful social theory can be, and how much it has accomplished. It is also ideal for showing our students the most sensible and useful ways to approach theory. The more classrooms this book finds its way into, the better it will be for sociology.

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*"I Know It's Dangerous": Why Mexicans Risk Their Lives to Cross the Border*, by **Lynnaire M. Sheridan**. Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona Press, 2009. 206pp. \$24.95 paper. ISBN: 9780816528578.

TATCHO MINDIOLA  
*University of Houston*  
 tmindiola@uh.edu

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Mexicans have been crossing the Mexico-U.S. border with and without authorization ever since the Rio Grande was established as the southern U.S. border in 1848 by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Thousands of books and articles have been written about the Mexicans who migrate to the United States but to my knowledge no one has approached the topic from the perspective used by Lynnaire M. Sheridan in her informative book about migrants and the culture of risk. Her concern is how the risk of crossing the border is perceived and managed not only by the migrants but also by Mexican society. Her analysis and conclusions are based upon interviews, newspaper reports, government

documents, and the music and art that she heard and observed in several cities in Mexico. She describes a society imbued with the culture of migration to the United States and its risks.

We learn from Sheridan that the fence and other security measures implemented by the United States since 9/11 at the Mexico-California border have pushed the crossing attempts eastward to the Mexican mountains and Arizona desert, thereby increasing risk and making it more difficult to enter the United States. This has led to more undocumented Mexican migrants staying in the United States for longer periods of time and their attempts to keep their families together by smuggling them across as well. It has also led to more migrants dying.

The difficult risk has led to more reliance upon coyotes and an increase in the number of inexperienced coyotes, because it has become a lucrative business. Informed people manage their risks by relying upon a trustworthy coyote that is known to the family. A family connection is the most important factor is choosing a coyote and minimizing risk. Professional coyotes, usually men, know how to obtain documents, when and where to cross, how to cross safely, and they keep the family members informed of their movements and efforts. They know what to do if caught and when and where and how they should attempt crossing again. Most important they do not abandon or otherwise abuse their clients. Equally important is that the informed migrant never pays a coyote until they or their loved ones have safely crossed. As might be expected, migrants who employ the services of coyotes with whom they are not well acquainted run the greatest risk of being abused or dying. The highest risk is crossing the mountains and the Arizona desert. It is also the least expensive. The least risk and most expensive method of crossing is at an official port of entry using documents that have been stolen, borrowed, manufactured or altered. This is the method most preferred for females and children. Between these two types of risks is being smuggled across the border in a vehicle at night at an official Port of Entry or an area nearby.

Sheridan presents a detailed examination of risk management by interviewing the

Hernández family, a clan of 24 people all of whom have crossed back and forth across the border several times without authorization since the early 1980s. Crossing at that time was not as risk laden as it is now. Rosa, for example, simply ran across the border from Tijuana with thousands of others when the Border Patrol was distracted. Other family members have crossed by riding in the trunks of cars, wading across reservoirs and passing through Ports of Entry with fraudulent documents. Many have been caught several times and others have been deported after being arrested at their place of employment in the United States. Most have returned and now all but two reside in the United States. All of their crossings have been managed by family members on both sides of the border. When it became more difficult to cross because of the fence and increased border security, the family responded by refining their risk reduction techniques especially by finding a trustworthy coyote who is known to the family. What strikes one is how routine and successful the Hernández family has been in crossing into the United States despite the mounting risks.

The Mexican government has responded to the increased risk by publishing warnings about the dangers of crossing, protecting returning migrants from extortion, redefining migrants as heroes and attempting to engage the United States in developing a more humane immigration policy. Most migrants dismiss or are unaware of the government's actions. Artists in Tijuana have responded by putting murals and other forms of art on their side of the fence that speak directly to the risks involved in crossing and suggesting the empty promises of migrating to the United States. One mural for example has blood, skulls and other images of dismembered bodies that represent those who have died while attempting to cross into the United States. These images and the mural's title *Paradise Ahead?* send the message that one can not only die in trying to reach Paradise but even if reached it may not be what one sought.

Musical groups have responded by writing songs about the realities and risks of crossing. Sheridan focuses upon the songs of Los Tigres del Norte and Molotov whom she considers a part of the dialogue surrounding

undocumented migration to the United States. Los Tigres del Norte is a very popular group among Mexicans on both sides of the border who is known as the voice of migrants. One of their songs, for example, is about a young man who leaves his wife to successfully cross into the United States by selecting the best and most renowned coyote only to die by suffocation in a boxcar. The group Molotov is more confrontational and ideological in tone and message. The lyrics of their well known song *Frijolero* (the Beaner) are in English and Spanish and they curse and profane the Mexican and American authorities not only about the border but also about the tensions between Mexicans and Anglos in general. The songs of Los Tigres del Norte provide information to the potential migrant about the risks involved while Molotov expresses the anger that many Mexicans feel toward the U.S. installed fence and electronic surveillance at the border.

In sum, we learn from Sheridan that despite the obstacles, Mexicans continue to cross into the United States for the same reason that people always migrate: for a better life—but we learn it from the perspective of the risks involved and how they are managed and this is what makes *I Know It's Dangerous* a different and informative read.

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*Drawing the Line: Public and Private in America*, by **Andrew Stark**. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2010. 245pp. \$28.95 cloth. ISBN: 9780815703334.

ROBERT J.S. ROSS

Clark University  
rjross@clarku.edu

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Andrew Stark's *Drawing the Line* seeks to clarify and find common ground regarding private market-based and public sphere oriented values in contemporary discussion. The sections of this book concern place, primarily gated communities and schools; health, concerning public and private health insurance issues; and welfare.

Based on interviews and documents, *Drawing the Line* does not distinguish two forms of political and legal behavior and language. One form consists of the struggle among interests and interest groups (or

classes or status groups) for advantage. The language of such struggles in contemporary contexts may be cloaked in populist terms or “substantive justice.” Whatever the public discourse, the strategic game, for example, in tax politics is quite straight forward and everyone understands though few articulate it clearly: make someone else pay for the price of civilization<sup>1</sup>. This is political action.

The second form of behavior and language—upon which Stark wants us to focus—is that of formal rationality, that is, the channels of legal discourse that allow disputes to be settled in courts or legislatures rather than by guns, riots, or meaningful elections. This produces a different kind of discourse, legal to be sure, but basically what one might term “pretextual” as in the use of a pretext to cloak a motive. Such uses are not all ignoble. For example, the “pretext” of public health once produced a substantive bounty in working conditions in industries (e.g., apparel) where women workers were disproportionately employed.

This work does not distinguish serious theory from lawyerly gamesmanship. A tax or land use lawyer with municipal or gated community clients will find useful and thoughtful examples, turgidly explicated, from which to consider strategy and precedents. On the other hand, most of the discourse bears the same relation to social reality as appellate briefs do to life on the streets.

Consider for example the marvelous case of Hidden Hills, a gated community in California, which raised homeowners’ association dues to pay for parks, trails, and golf courses. These dues are not tax deductible as is the property tax on federal and state income tax forms. However, it was in residents’ interest for the cost of some public functions to be tax deductible. To maintain control over them, the community incorporated as a town. Trash collection and public safety were among the services the town administered. However, public law requires municipal buildings to be open to all – even

nonresidents. So the town moved the town hall outside the gates of the town, maintaining the homeowners’ association headquarters inside the gates. The result was that some functions, formerly dependent on the homeowners’ association are now paid by taxes and deductible; and the town hall conforms to public laws of access. Other functions remain private, are restrictively accessible only inside the gates—parks, roads, horse trails. So the affluent Hidden Hills residents can deduct from their taxes some municipal functions, but they are able to exclude the public from access to the community and its recreational facilities. Nice work—we assume the consulting lawyers were well-rewarded.

Now examine a multinational corporation with plants in numerous countries. These factories send goods to subsidiaries in other nations for sale. The firm’s books record high prices for the internal transfers when the commodity is coming from a lower tax environment, lowering its nominal profits in the higher tax environment. This is known as transfer pricing and it boosts higher after-tax profits.

Stark finds the case of municipal Three-card Monte to occasion long reflection on the boundary of public and private, and in intestinally-twisted logic an *equal* dependence on the logic of the market and public goods. Others find the second case reason to reflect on the limits of sovereignty in a world of globalized flows of capital. Both are simply cases of greed and more importantly power (aided by clever lawyers, no doubt) using each crack in a crumbling wall of public interest and popular power to leverage more advantage.

The bottom—life on the streets—involves deepening inequality that motivates the rich to flee from the consequences of poverty. In retrospect, the creation of separately incorporated suburbs surrounding immigrant industrial cities was highly similar, though today’s gated communities are more medieval in their anticipation of siege.

In a chapter on the boundary between private and public in education, Stark engages the problem of parents’ private financial contributions to public schools. The questions of interschool equity (as between rich and poor neighborhoods) and intraschool equity (as between contributions that benefit only

<sup>1</sup> “Taxes are what we pay for civilized society...” Oliver Wendell Holmes in dissent, *COMPANIA GENERAL DE TABACOS V. COLLECTOR*, 275 U. S. 87 (1927), p. 100. Retrieved from <http://supreme.justia.com/us/275/87/case.html> on 20 December 2010.

one's child versus a whole school building) are finely dissected in terms of which behavior is truly charitable versus which is selfish. This is a question which one would not have thought to be central to educational policy or issues of equity. The larger matter, though, is interdistrict equity (e.g., city vs. suburb). That of course might involve state level tax policy – not discussed by Stark. Some states' school funding formulas, for example, give school districts substantial per pupil bounties for low income children. In Massachusetts the FY'11 increment for grades 1 to 8 low-income students is \$3,167 per pupil—apparently the highest such poverty factor in the nation. More like that, and more of that might take some of the grinding pain out of the equity discussion.

The book more nearly borders interesting on health insurance issues – but even here much of real life escapes attention. Stark raises in detail the issue of the tension between deepening public coverage for the poor versus extending coverage for more people. Public sphere values noted here are actually political calculations—Stark says including more people builds support for programs—true enough but not a value-based argument. The assertions about private market-based arguments are all about efficiency—as if advocates for the public sphere do not consider such matters. In one thought experiment, Stark's gloss on knowledge about health insurance is particularly trying. Noting that Vermont's State Children's Health Insurance Program kicks in at 300 percent of poverty (\$52,000)—around median income – Stark is concerned about crowding out the private market. He wonders then if 83 percent of a population with private insurance might opt for public. But only nine percent of the population buys private insurance directly, about 68 percent through employers. Notwithstanding the attempt to force the discussion through the public/private value meat grinder, the real elephant in the room is universal coverage and the ways to finance it—and the essay does not try to even take the first bite of that one.

A final section on welfare adds no particular light on finding a public/private common ground, but the conclusion briefly approaches the point: Stark notes how

American politicians “pragmatically” combine arguments – of course – that is because politics is about interests!

As for the main point: looking for common ground between public and private regarding values appears, from this effort, no more fruitful than categorizing all forms of conservative policy as “neo-liberal” or “privatization.” In both cases the categories hold less than they seem. What remains of value for sociologists—especially those who study law—are some detailed examples of boundary issues in health insurance, property taxation, and education.

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*Watching YouTube: Extraordinary Videos by Ordinary People*, by **Michael Strangelove**. Toronto, CAN: University of Toronto Press, 2010. 265pp. \$29.95 paper. ISBN: 9781442610675.

WESLEY SHRUM  
Louisiana State University  
shrums@lsu.edu

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Michael Strangelove's outstanding treatise provides a unique and thorough introduction to the YouTube phenomenon for both undergraduate and graduate courses on new media. User-produced video represents a fundamental transformation of the most important aesthetic innovation of the twenty-first century. Amateurs outside the principal institutions that produce and disseminate movies are a new force in the social world and it is hard not to applaud the development. With Internet users watching over a billion YouTubes every day, we must ask why, as sociologists, have we devoted so little attention to the subject?

*Watching YouTube* begins with the golden age of home movies, delves (but only appropriately) into the characters who populate many sectors of the medium, and reviews the primary perspectives from cultural and media studies. It would be hard for most academics to win, through intensive YouTube watching, the knowledge they could appropriate with a lesson from Strangelove.

The slickest chapter goes back to the days when Mom posed the kids and Dad shot—but, regrettably, did not edit—the film. The

romance of the traditional American family was preserved not just through broadcasts of *Ozzie and Harriet*, but the beautifully constructed home movies of the 1950s and 1960s. New media practices that represent home and family life by shooters and uploaders today could not be further removed. *Watching YouTube* is based on a deep knowledge of what is actually available on the Internet today—of course, YouTube is one of many such sites. Among the important theses are that: (1) the Internet is transitioning to a video-based medium, (2) mass participation in amateur video is a new mode of production and consumption, (3) while television created new types of power relationships, its monopolistic conveyance of corporate and elite values has been broken, (4) the online watcher/critic community is engaged in a variety of novel self-representational practices that both reinforce and undermine conventional gender and ethnic stereotypes, (5) user-generated commentary is an untapped methodological resource for understanding conflicts over presentational style and content, and (6) social changes are inevitably reflected in this vast library of public video clips.

In the film *Dr. Strangelove*, the “Doomsday Machine” is a technology that would destroy the world if anyone attempted to deactivate it. Will YouTube—or the Internet—become a technology that destroys the world, but not soon? The political and social changes imagined by the most committed watchers and bloggers remain potential, offering both hope and a technological means for global communication and information exchange, but little yet in the way of predictable associations with social and political networks. The presentation of self on YouTube is everything Erving Goffman could have imagined. Like Mom and Dad’s 8mm films, YouTube is everyday life, only moreso.

The language of a YouTube “community” is at least no worse than many other overwrought uses of the term. As *Watching YouTube* makes clear, it is the community of amateur videographers that dominates, but this constitutes a small minority of users (perhaps 1 percent, but no estimate has it higher than 10 percent). A growing global population spends significant time watching,

influenced by and critically receptive of their productions. Not only do some post-broadcast users move from passive to active—but “passivity” is now with respect to amateur rather than commercially funded messages.

The problem with this and many communication studies—not in their own terms, but as they speak to sociologists—is a basic disinterest in sampling. True, it is a difficult problem with over 300,000 new entities added daily, but it is not insoluble. One can be happy with smaller observed regularities based on link sampling (following and clicking systematically), sampling based on user groups, or any other kind of systematic selection. Without systematic selection, the description of videos and people that post, watch, and comment on YouTube can devolve into groups of existential observations (“there’s a lot of this, but also a lot of that”). Too, there is a tendency to get lost in the cultural objects themselves, speculating on motives and meanings, when the YouTube medium is inherently suited to opening communication channels with creators. The author is better at this than most.

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*Laughing Saints and Righteous Heroes: Emotional Rhythms in Social Movement Groups*, by **Erika Summers-Effler**. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2010. 237pp. \$23.00 paper. ISBN: 9780226188669.

LESLEY J. WOOD  
York University  
ljwood@yorku.ca

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This book is tricky. Its lively, compelling stories about a Catholic Workers house and an anti-death penalty group called STOP draw one in, suggesting a quick read. But the complex theories of emotion, time, social movements and interaction these stories illustrate force one to slow down.

Erika Summers-Effler asks a great question—how do social movement organizations sustain themselves when they rarely achieve any visible progress towards their goals? A student of Randall Collins, Summers-Effler looks to interactional dynamics and the management of emotions for her answer.

The product of three years of fieldwork, Summers-Effler describes two organizations that have persisted for years, without any visible success in changing economic or political policy. The first organization, the Catholic Workers with a goal of ending poverty, responds by creating a community, welcoming local poor people into their home, providing food, clothing, and shelter to those in need. With both volunteers and community members living and struggling together, the atmosphere in the house is often chaotic, with fluctuating numbers, resources and emotions. The speed of activity and interaction is fast paced. Emotional shifts are sudden as the group attempts to maintain some sort of stability in what can be a rapidly changing environment. At times, the Catholic Workers group becomes overwhelmed by the needs of the community, and uses humor, prayer, and liturgy to endure. They are the "Laughing Saints" in the book's title.

STOP is a more typical social movement organization, working for a repeal of the death penalty, engaging in street protest, vigils, and confronting state officials. They work towards this goal by targeting state officials and attempting to pressure them into stopping executions and abolishing the death penalty more generally. STOP responds to the challenges of persistence by focusing more on their moral opposition to the authorities they challenge, and by putting energy into building political relationships that will bolster their campaign. Unsurprisingly, they are the "Righteous Heroes."

Summers-Effler shows how both groups attempt to establish and re-establish a sense of stability and continuity amongst participants. Activists do this by trying to anticipate internal and external threats and limit the disruption to the group. Through the process of anticipating and responding to such threats, groups gradually establish an emotional repertoire, a way of responding to challenges, whether those challenges are declining involvement or the death of a community member. Activists within each group establish explanations of their failures, which re-establish group boundaries. The emotional strategies that emerge in consequence influence future options of the organization. As time passes, organizations develop durable

patterns of emotional engagement that are increasingly more difficult to alter.

The author accesses this material partly through her own bodily responses to the tensions and challenges of activist engagement. In her useful methodological appendix, she notes the importance of sensory experience in order to "reveal the visceral dynamics and the implicit assumptions that shape" emotional rhythms (p. 206). At one point, she vividly describes the difficulty faced during street vigils with STOP when passersby challenge her, and fellow activists ignore her and each other. She notes the physical and emotional responses that she experiences, and reflects on the way she learns to interpret and manage these responses.

The book is divided into five chapters. The first sets up the problem: "How Do Chronically Failing Altruistic Social Movement Groups Persist?" The second chapter explains the attraction of such groups, and the emotional intensity they offer participants. The third chapter examines the micro-level interactions within the two organizations, showing how these interactions shape two distinct styles of persistence. This chapter theorizes more fully the relationship between emotion, temporality and spatial perceptions. The book concludes with a chapter that signals what Summers-Effler calls the beginnings of "A Fluid Theory of Social Organization."

Summers-Effler's emphasis on the spatial and temporal aspects of emotional dynamics suggests new ways of thinking about power and action. Using the language of human geography, and the ideas of thinkers like Andrew Abbott, she looks at the ways relational patterns influence emotional dynamics, which influence future relational patterns. She finds that in responding to challenges, what she calls "collapse" of existing patterns or routines, groups develop solutions that have distinct spatial and temporal characteristics. In response to crisis, the Catholic Workers sped up and directed their focus more closely on the relationships around them—expanding horizontally. In contrast, STOP activists slowed down and directed their focus further away, at longer term goals—expanding vertically. This framework suggests a way of understanding the micro-level dynamics that underlie the ways

movements manage periods of decline—both the processes of institutionalization and the move towards prefigurative movements are suggested here. Relatedly, this argument suggests a new way of thinking about strategy, especially strategy in the context of a declining movement. Instead of a product of culture and structure, or a rational calculation, Summers-Effler suggests that we might look at social movement strategy as a particular relationship between efforts to bring about social change and the field in which attention is focussed.

The conclusion goes beyond the case of the two organizations to make a more general argument about social actors as the intermittent construction and decay of patterned action, and suggests that studying such interaction is an epistemological strategy. One wonders, however, whether such a strategy would lose some insight into categorical inequalities with macro-structural dynamics—such as class, race and gender—that are doubtlessly significant, but attract limited discussion in this text.

Truly, this book is a gem. As part of an emerging field of emotion and social movements, *Laughing Saints and Righteous Heroes* is a complement to Deborah Gould's recent book *Moving Politics* (2009) on the AIDS activist organization ACT-UP. Gould argues that emotional habitus influence the possibilities and strategies of movements. Similarly, Summers-Effler shows us how emotional rhythms are the product and producer of social movement life. When this discussion is combined with deft discussions of time and interaction, the implications are significant. All in all, for those interested in thinking about the ways emotion and time manifest themselves in social movement practices, or social life more generally, it is a "must read."

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*The New Political Sociology: Power, Ideology and Identity in an Age of Complexity*, by **Graham Taylor**. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. 234pp. \$30.00 paper. ISBN: 9780230573338.

ANTHONY ORUM  
*University of Illinois, Chicago*  
 amorum@uic.edu

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This is not an easy book to summarize. It covers a dizzying array of materials, condenses complex theories into brief capsules, and then examines key concepts in the area of political sociology, like power and citizenship, in the space of very dense chapters. It is, in brief, an ambitious effort to recast the entire field of political sociology.

Graham Taylor insists that the new political sociology is unlike the old political sociology. The old political sociology represented a modernist project, and invoked certain key figures in the questions and issues it raised. Marx, Weber and de Tocqueville, Taylor writes, produced the foundations for the old political sociology. Moreover, the theoretical problems revolved around issues of class and the state, and the relative weight of the state compared to civil society. The new political sociology has moved beyond foundational statements and meta-narratives, like those of Marx, to issues of social identity and citizenship, and the processes that produce identities as well as the struggles over who is, and who is not, a citizen. Moreover, power itself, is no longer embedded in the institutions of the state or even simply in the hands of economic elites, but rather is to be found everywhere. Invoking the writings and ideas of Michel Foucault, Taylor claims that institutions influence our lives not merely as citizens or members, but more deeply, in the ways we think of ourselves and how we think of our bodies.

This new political sociology, Taylor further argues, can be thought of in terms of the several "turns" it has taken on the issues of power, identity and ideology. There is the "cultural" turn that focuses its attention on questions of narrative, language and discourse; the "global" turn that deals with the ways in which transnational forces and events reshape the elements of politics and diminish

the authority of the state; and finally, the "complexity" turn that essentially transforms questions of stability and order into issues of flows and fluidity. In almost a dozen chapters, Taylor explains in detail how the new political sociology is the product of each of these three "turns," and how the questions raised by the old political sociologists like Weber, have been superseded if not entirely supplanted.

One important example is that of social movements which occupies a full chapter of the book. The old social movements, according to Taylor, dealt primarily with issues of class and labor. These were the certainties of the world examined by the old political sociologists, just as they were the certainties of the world itself. But in the course of the past three decades or so, these certainties have dissolved. For one thing, labor is no longer the power it once was in the scheme of the state-society relationship. Class has given way to other types of social identities, identities based upon gender or race or ethnicity that for many people play a more significant role in their lives. In addition, the old social movements tended to be conceived primarily in a rational and instrumental fashion. But the new social movements are more about the construction of social realities and the invention of new and significant identities. At a broader level, Taylor notes elsewhere that rationality, like science, has been challenged by the realities of postmodern philosophy whereby the claims of the Enlightenment philosophers, like Kant or Rousseau, have been displaced by the arguments of figures like Foucault. Lastly, the new political sociology of social movements has turned its attention away from the exercise of power by the state to its exercise by extra-territorial forms of power and authority like the World Economic Forum or the International Monetary Fund.

Taylor covers just about every major contemporary theory in political sociology, and brings in the contributions of other figures like Foucault and Zygmunt Bauman to shed light on the enduring questions of power and identity. He deftly weaves the theories together, making connections among seemingly disparate bodies of thought and evidence. He writes clearly and provides accurate and concise summaries of key ideas.

There is nothing in his explanation of ideas or of theorists with which to disagree.

I do have several concerns, however. What constitutes the grounds of theory in the theories that Taylor includes? Why are the writings of someone like Alexis de Tocqueville included while those of John Stuart Mill are not? Perhaps, more to the point, what constitutes *important* theory, as opposed to insignificant theory, in political sociology? Secondly, what role does evidence play in support of, or against, the ideas that Taylor discusses? For example, I am aware of the considerable body of evidence that exists for many of the claims and ideas made today about social movements, new social movements, in particular. But evidence is rarely, if ever, invoked in this book. Instead, we move from one set of interpretations, or insights, to another set. Third, the new political sociology, in the eyes of Taylor, does not deal with issues of public policy, and how policies can be developed and gain support in the institutions of government. It is as though government, or the state, has been displaced in this new postmodern world so that the critical issues that confront the public across the world today—of unemployment, home foreclosures, the growing poverty of countless people, the absurdly large bonuses of Wall Street bankers—are not on the radar screens of the new political sociologists.

Finally, there seems to be a vast disjuncture between the concerns of the new political sociology and the daily lives of human beings. Taylor says as much in the last three pages of his book and it is unfortunate he did not say more elsewhere in the book. Marx, for example, was vividly concerned with the lives of real laborers, and he furnished many examples of them as he built his case, especially in *Das Kapital*. But the new political sociology, according to Taylor, is so relentlessly focused on showing the dissolution, the fluidity, the fragmentation, and the instability of the postmodern world that not only has "the self" disappeared from sight, but so, too, have the lives and concerns of ordinary humans. Unless the new political sociology can somehow connect itself to these concerns, unless it can show how notions of citizenship and identity and power matter to the ways people live their days,

it will not be clear how or why it should supplant the old political sociology.

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*Culture Wars and Enduring American Dilemmas*, by **Irene Taviss Thomson**. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2010. 270pp. \$24.95 paper. ISBN: 9780472050888.

ARLENE STEIN  
Rutgers University  
arlenes@rci.rutgers.edu

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Sociologists have long predicted that secularization would relegate religion to the private sphere, where it would cease to be a polarizing influence. But the rise of pitched battles over abortion, sex education, evolution and other issues in the 1980s caused observers to rethink the belief that the United States is a secular culture where religiously-based morality does not play a major role in political life.

Asserting that America is in the midst of a "culture war," James Davison Hunter argued in 1991 that the electorate was increasingly divided between progressives who draw upon human reason, science, and contemporary culture as their authority reference; and the orthodox, who follow an external transcendent authority. The product of waning denominational loyalty and the rise of special agenda organizations such as the Moral Majority, these competing moral visions, Hunter claimed, were burning divisions into the heart of American political culture and corroding democracy.

A variety of events seemed to prove him correct. Culture war rhetoric helped the Republican Party establish itself as the guardian of morality and "traditional values" in the 1980s and 1990s. Battles against gay/lesbian rights, comprehensive sex education, evolutionary theory in school curricula, and arts funding continued. But as the clashes seemed to wane over the course of the decade, some analysts came to question the utility of the concept. Carrying out in-depth interviews and surveys of "regular" Americans, they found tolerance rather than stridency, ambiguity rather than polarization. To the extent that clearly differentiated moral visions exist, they do so in public rhetoric and the actions

of elites, fanned by the mass media. Since most Americans occupy a vast middle ground and were allergic to political demagoguery, we have little to worry about, they assured us.

Consider Irene Taviss Thomson among the skeptics. But unlike those who find culture war rhetoric to be mainly the preserve of elites, Thomson studied political magazines and found little evidence of polarization even there. Tracking *National Review*, *Time*, *The New Republic*, and *The Nation*, she analyzes 436 articles published between 1980 and 2000 on the subjects of abortion, the arts, canon wars, family values, feminism, and a host of other "culture wars" issues. Instead of pitched battles and vitriol she finds contradiction, ambivalence, inconsistency, paradox, a convergence between right and left positions, and a good deal of bluster.

"American culture," she writes, "is embodied in enduring dilemmas rather than enduring values." There is no "simple or unitary 'culture war,'" no "struggle for the soul of America," she asserts. Rather than see culture war battles as new, she argues that we are simply "increasingly aware of such contention and increasingly conscious of the tenuousness with which all cultural ideas are held" (p. 29).

Looking at the "canon wars," and whether history textbooks should be revised to reflect multicultural differences rather than unifying traditions, for example, Thomson finds a striking convergence between critics writing in *National Review* and *The Nation*. On the Right, Harvey Mansfield suggests that multiculturalism is a legitimate perspective if it "focuses on the excellence of each nation and its contribution to progress." On the Left, Elizabeth Pochoda endorses the idea that we should teach Shakespeare and Darwin alongside an appreciation for Pygmy bushcraft. No orthodox-progressive split here. Instead, Thomson finds considerable agreement among the cultural antagonists, and internal agreement within each camp.

*Culture Wars and Enduring American Dilemmas* offers a useful analysis of the political rhetoric of the chattering classes. But one wonders whether the author finds moderation because she studies fairly moderate, decidedly elite national publications. In the 1980s and 90s, the period she studied,

rightwing culture warriors were far less likely to read *The National Review* than watch Christian television or listen to Michael Savage, Rush Limbaugh and others on talk radio. Today, political magazines exert even less influence, overshadowed by blogs, websites and radio; many more Americans obtain their news from the bloviators of cable television and from Jon Stewart than from "serious" journalists.

But if Americans tend to be allergic to political polarization, as Thomson and other skeptics suggest, why then do culture wars-style battles persist, even today? The recent controversy over the decision by the Smithsonian to censor a sexually suggestive and religiously irreverent video installation by artist David Wojnarowicz is a case in point. Local battles around school curricula, same-sex marriage, and other pitched issues continue as well, often under the radar. One reason they persist is that they offer political openings for moral entrepreneurs, particularly on the Right. By taking public stands on controversial issues, they persuade others who are bothered, ambivalent, or simply bored to join them, often in fleeting campaigns that leave little more than embittered souls in their wake.

That doesn't mean that the notion of a "culture war" is a myth, as Thomson and others argue. But maybe it is time to retool the ways we talk about it. Rather than representing a full-out "war," contemporary moral conflicts might be more accurately described as a series of loosely orchestrated clashes around a variety of hot-button issues for which ideological consistency is not a prerequisite. These campaigns, which often take the form of moral panics, seem particularly well suited to a relatively immobilized and cynical citizenry.

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*Diasporic Homecomings: Ethnic Return Migration in Comparative Perspective*, edited by **Takeyuki Tsuda**. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009. 362pp. \$24.95 paper. ISBN: 9780804762762.

CHRISTINE INGLIS

*University of Sydney*

*Christine.inglis@sydney.edu.au*

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International migration has been categorized into many different types of movements by scholars seeking fresh perspectives and understandings of the processes underlying the movements and their outcomes. In this collection of papers, the focus is on movements involving the migration of individuals to their putative "homelands." This privileges the importance of ethnicity and ethnic ties in structuring certain international migratory movements from the perspective of both the "homeland" and the individuals belonging to the "diaspora." Although Takeyuki Tsuda is ambitious in stating that the book provides an overview of most of the world's major ethnic return groups (p. 1), the case studies in this collection nevertheless show that return may be from many different countries to diverse homelands whose rationales for encouraging the return of their fellow "people" ranges from sentiment to instrumentality. The case studies highlight that "return" varies in duration from short tourist visits, to periods of study, longer term migration and even settlement. The chronological distance of groups from the ethnic homeland varies from a single generation to many hundreds of years, as in the case of Russian Jews moving to Israel. They also vary in the extent to which the individuals have maintained social or cultural ties with the "homeland."

In the introduction, the editor explains the focus on "ethnic return migration" and provides an overview of the material covered in subsequent chapters. The first part of the book contains a series of papers which examine the causes of diasporic return in comparative perspective. For the editor, this migration is initiated by economic forces which are structured by transnational ties (p. 36). This, however, overlooks cases such as post-1949 China or the former Yugoslavia where patriotic sentiments were important in

drawing home members of the diaspora. The next chapter compares Asian and European migration policies which positively discriminate in favor of the return of co-ethnics. Despite similarities between policies in both regions, Asian countries such as Japan or South Korea use ethnic return migration instrumentally to overcome strong nationalist ideologies based on the idea of ethnic homogeneity, which limited opportunities for labor immigration. But state policies favoring ethnic return for sentimental reasons are dynamic, illustrated in the comparison by Christian Joppke and Zeev Rosenhek of Israel and Germany. Here, historical changes in nationalist discourse and geopolitical developments are shown to have led to divergences in the importance of policies favoring ethnic return migration. Parts II and III of the book provide case studies based, respectively, on examples of ethnic return to European and Asian countries: Germany, Sweden, Hungary, Israel, Japan and South Korea. While these cases revisit material covered in earlier chapters, they nevertheless provide a holistic view of the experiences of the returnees and in particular, the way in which initial positive sentiment among both the returnees and their homeland can all too often turn sour.

The book concludes with a chapter by the editor drawing together and seeking to explain the very disparate outcomes and experiences of the returnees and their "hosts."

The book's comparative perspective is its major strength since it allows an assessment of the extent to which "ethnic return migration" constitutes a useful basis for examining migration outcomes. Paradoxically, it also illustrates the major limitations involved in seeking underlying structures of similarity in the outcomes for returnees. Indeed, as the editor admits, despite their presumed ethnic similarities, the returnees often experience the same problems as other (non co-ethnic) immigrants in the host society (p. 325). Despite thus undermining the rationale for the book and the focus on ethnic returnees, the book's value lies in the way it questions the simplistic view that ethnic return migration is unproblematic for both the returnees and their hosts. More specifically, it highlights that "culture" cannot be

treated in an essentialist manner when analyzing migration outcomes. Despite this negative conclusion, the detailed case studies in the book are valuable for drawing attention to dynamic and varied aspects of the return migration process. These include the effects of the experience on the returnees' sense of national identity and a distinction between "home" and "homeland." Through the comparison of the returnees from different origins to the same homeland, the case studies also highlight the importance of experiences in the country of birth and their economic circumstances in affecting the reception and settlement outcomes of the returnees.

Several chapters in this collection are based on previously published papers. Nevertheless, the book's strength is a constant editorial presence in which the conceptual focus on "ethnic return migration" is not only maintained but also referred to throughout the individual case studies. These provide valuable information about the migration to particular homelands from a variety of countries. For those without a special interest in the countries involved in the case studies the book is still valuable in providing a new perspective from which to consider the different outcomes which characterize those "returning" to their homelands. Under the influence of globalization such movements are increasingly important for educated members from diasporas seeking opportunities to travel and work outside their countries of birth.

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*Living Through the End of Nature: The Future of American Environmentalism*, by **Paul Wapner**. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010. 252pp. \$21.95 cloth. ISBN: 9780262014151.

RICHARD YORK  
*University of Oregon*  
 rfyork@uoregon.edu

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Bill McKibben's well-known book, *The End of Nature* (1989), described and lamented the extraordinary extent to which the global environment had been modified by humanity, to the point where a Nature free of human manipulation had come to an end. McKibben called for a fundamental change in the way humans interact with the earth so that the splendor and wonder of the natural world

not be entirely lost, and society and nature both be reinvigorated. Paul Wapner's starting point in *Living Through the End of Nature* is where McKibben left off: we are in a postnature world, where, for better or worse and whether we like it or not, the future of the earth's ecosystems is in our hands. This postnature world requires us to rethink traditional philosophical and political perspectives on the environment and environmentalism and remake the environmental movement so that it can address the challenges humanity and the other creatures with whom we share the earth will face over the course of this century.

Wapner argues that wild nature is threatened in two senses, the first empirical and the second conceptual. First, humans have so modified the natural environment that no part of the globe is free from human influence. Second, the rise of social constructivism, which focuses on how humans conceptually construct nature through social discourse, undermines the notion that humans can perceive the natural world in a pure manner, free of the influence of social context. These two threats to wildness have increasingly made untenable the "dream of naturalism," the belief that humanity should look to the natural world for wisdom and guidance on ethical and aesthetic matters, which has historically undergirded the American environmental movement.

Likewise, Wapner argues that also untenable is the "dream of mastery," the view that humanity has the capacity and ethical license to bend nature to its will. In light of the myriad and escalating anthropogenic environmental crises that threaten the future of millions of species, including humans, societies have not proven themselves to be wise engineers of the environment, and the ethical right of humans to control nature is self-appointed, not justifiable based on any higher principle. Thus, the dream of mastery, which has been central to the ideology of modernity, is a dangerous delusion.

Wapner suggests that, at base, the history of environmental politics can be understood as a conflict between these two fundamentally different worldviews, the dream of naturalism and the dream of mastery. He argues that maintaining a conflict along these lines is ultimately fruitless and that, in our

postnature age, both of these worldviews are anachronistic. The future of environmentalism, Wapner believes, lies in a middle way, which draws on, but transcends, both of these outdated worldviews. This middle way takes inspiration from the desire to protect nature, while recognizing that technological and managerial solutions to the environmental problems we face may be necessary. Wapner's middle way accepts that in order to overcome environmental problems, societies must manage the environment, but rather than aiming for mastery, this management should be done in a nuanced and delicate fashion that respects the natural world.

Although Wapner has produced a thoughtful and sincere case aimed at helping environmentalism navigate the challenges that lie ahead, there is not actually much originality or insight in this book. He focuses on presenting both an ecological and a political perspective. The ecological perspective is basically the same as that which ecologist Daniel Botkin (1992) presented lucidly nearly two decades ago: an approach to ecology that recognizes there is no inherently natural state in which we should preserve the environment or to which we should restore it. Ecosystems have always been dynamic, with the particulars of any one moment contingent on history, rather than existing in a state of ordained balance. Botkin argued that rather than striving for a mythical state of wilderness untouched by humanity, we should be thoughtful about how we influence ecosystems with an eye on concrete goals, such as protecting biological diversity. Wapner does not add anything to Botkin's approach to conservation.

While Wapner's ecological perspective, although not original, has its merits, his middle path political perspective and the prescriptions that follow from it suffer from the same kind of tepid appeasement that characterized the Third Way politics of Bill Clinton and Tony Blair. Wapner's position, although uninspiring, is perhaps understandable. He has an astute understanding of political reality and clearly aims to develop a practical political program, rather than get stuck in an ideological quagmire. His proposed route for environmentalism may be the one the movement takes over the coming decades, but I am not so certain that this will lead to

a better world. Nonetheless, Wapner has produced an engaging book that is worth reflection.

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*Familicidal Hearts: The Emotional Styles of 211 Killers*, by **Neil Websdale**. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2010. 322pp. \$35.00 cloth. ISBN: 9780195315417.

FEDERICA SANTANGELO  
*Alma Mater Studiorum, University of  
 Bologna, Italy*  
*federica.santangelo@unibo.it*

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Neil Websdale examines a considerable number of familicides (which he defines as homicide perpetrated against a partner or a former partner and at least one couple's child). For the 211 cases he analyzes, not only does he adopt official crime or media reports, he also conducts interviews with involved parties, collecting where possible complex and informative empirical material.

In this book Websdale achieves an important goal. He historically and socially situates the murders. In particular he points out the relevance (and efficacy) of an interdisciplinary approach, involving psychiatry, psychology, sociology and history. Despite a decrease of intimate partner homicides, family murders appear to follow an opposite trend. The author emphasizes that a full explanation of family murders is impossible and he only aims to determine the necessary, not sufficient, conditions that could facilitate familicides to occur. This goal is only partially reached.

Focusing on "the familial and interpersonal ebb and flow of emotion" (p. 48), Websdale's core subject is to classify perpetrators on a continuum: on the one hand there are those people whom he defines as "livid coercive hearts." They frequently adopt coercive violence in intimate relationships and they

are characterized by strong evidence of attempts to control their victims' lives. On the other hand, the author poses "civil reputable hearts" who in contrast exhibit deep emotional restraints. They are responsible and successful women and men. However when they perceive that their family and their lives are threatened by economic failures, bankruptcy, illness or other forms of ignominy, they feel overwhelmed and might consider homicide and suicide as the only way out. Civil reputable hearts think of their family members as extensions of themselves.

Thirty-nine family murders are classified in an intermediate, contradictory position. Only 1 out of 15 female perpetrators is classified as livid coercive.

Websdale's starting point is to outline the roots of family murders in the *process of civilization*, characterized by mannerly behavior and the control of strong emotions in public life. On the contrary, in the private sphere, love as the basis for marriage increasingly changed intimate relationships and parenting. The author concludes that when the ideal of romantic love rises, the more likely family murders increase. "Familicidal hearts are therefore products of their time, archetypes of modernity" (p. 241).

A second necessary condition the author explores is the social isolation of murderers. The emotion of an empty sense of belonging is something that both civil reputable and livid coercive hearts experience. However, in some civil reputable cases social isolation appears subjectively deducted rather than empirically founded.

Another necessary condition the author identifies is the presence of negative feelings, particularly shame. While civil reputable hearts belong to a greater extent in the upper middle classes, livid coercive hearts are characterized by lower social standings. Nonetheless, livid coercive hearts do not experience shame because of the lack of economic resources. The downfall of their family lives undermines the socially situated ideal type of man in the modern era. On the other hand, civil reputable hearts' shame derives from their failure in maintaining the social standards requested by the capitalist, successful social classes to which they belong. In other words, they miss the ideal type of the sole male breadwinner. Female civil

reputable perpetrators do not achieve as expected in the roles of good wives and mothers. It seems that what familicidal hearts have in common is their failure in the gendered stereotyped roles within the family.

Websdale overturns the well-known "power and control" approach in violent relationships, arguing that anger, rage and shame are the key feelings in intimate partner abuse as in livid coercive hearts' familicides. Mass murderers of livid coercive hearts represent the last attempt to achieve control on their family, which in the largest number of cases they have already lost. Nonetheless, what this extensive discussion does not clarify is to what extent "implosive undoing of a uniquely modern set of lineages and interdependencies, mediated through the expectations of romantic love and increasingly liberal parenting" (p. 259) could help to understand the livid coercive familicide better than the livid coercive intimate partner murder. Websdale devotes an amazing examination of the sociocultural and interactional context that precede murders, but the relationships between perpetrators and their children do not play an important role, with rare exceptions. As a consequence, it remains unclear which figuration of feelings is a necessary condition for familicide rather than for intimate partner homicide. This is especially true in the case of livid coercive hearts.

Websdale understandably refers to "haunted" and mysterious hearts. The reasons why people sharing the same emotional styles decide "to kill or not" are perhaps impossible to highlight. Nonetheless, the civil reputable hearts' figuration of feelings is too general, making it difficult to assess any necessary condition for the occurrence of familicide.

In the very last pages of his book, Websdale affirms "Curiously, in risk-assessment practices [for victims of intimate partner violence] we also see the workings of power; indeed, power and the attempt to control" (p. 277). I wonder how scholars will receive this provocative and debatable sentence. No scientific attempt to explore social phenomena should have been diminished only on the basis of the technique it uses. Risk assessment, exactly as in-depth case studies, fails above all to forecast repeat intimate partner violence and homicide. As a consequence

should we argue that scientific work is useless, or would it be better to broaden it not only within disciplines but within methods too?

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*Myth of the Social Volcano: Perceptions of Inequality and Distributive Injustice in Contemporary China*, by **Martin King Whyte**. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010. 250pp. \$27.95 paper. ISBN: 9780804769426.

SIDA LIU

*University of Wisconsin, Madison*  
sidaliu@ssc.wisc.edu

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Stability has become the key word for understanding contemporary Chinese society. The Chinese government puts "maintaining stability" as its top priority in governance, while journalists and social scientists frequently discuss various forms of instability in both urban and rural China, including rural protests, labor movements, urban community mobilizations, housing demolition disputes, and even attacks on public officials. Many of these social conflicts have origins in the rapidly changing system of social stratification in China, and common wisdom asserts that the new market-oriented distribution system exacerbates inequality in Chinese society and it is a major reason for the rising instabilities, the so-called "social volcano," in China.

Martin King Whyte's *Myth of the Social Volcano* is the first systematic social science inquiry into the feelings of ordinary Chinese citizens toward inequalities generated during the post-Mao market reform. Using a 2004 nationwide survey of 3,267 respondents in both urban and rural areas across China, Whyte asserts that the conventional view of Chinese citizens becoming increasingly angry about rising social inequality in the past decade, is seriously flawed. Instead, the survey shows that Chinese citizens are generally positive and optimistic about current inequalities, especially compared to respondents of similar surveys in other countries. Most Chinese respondents in this survey approve of meritocratic market competition but also favor reducing inequality through government interventions. In

addition, most respondents object to special privileges based on political power and to the systematic discrimination against urban migrants.

The book also presents some inferential statistics to demonstrate the variations in perceptions of inequality across occupational, demographic, socioeconomic, geographic, and subjective variables. Not surprisingly, the results are complex, but there are also several consistent patterns. For instance, rural groups are significantly less likely than urban workers to have critical attitudes toward inequality, and high-status urban occupational groups, who arguably benefited more from the market reform, are not significantly less likely to be critical than unskilled and semi-skilled workers. Furthermore, highly educated respondents hold more critical opinions than others about many aspects of current inequalities. Another surprising finding is that people with access to unofficial sources of information are less critical of current inequalities than others. In comparison, family income and Party membership are relatively unimportant predictors of inequality attitudes. In terms of ethnicity, the Han ethnic group tends to have more critical attitudes than the ethnic minorities in many aspects of the survey, which is also against the common wisdom that ethnic minorities tend to have more grievances in Chinese society.

Overall, the findings of *Myth of the Social Volcano* cast doubt on many conventional views of Chinese society, especially those views popular in the Western media and public discourse, and therefore it contains high policy values beyond the disciplinary boundary of sociology. Nonetheless, for sociologists the study might also generate some theoretical and methodological skepticisms. There is little doubt that this national survey was well-designed and carefully analyzed by a leading sociologist, but its subjective topic (i.e., public perceptions) is inherently problematic given the authoritarian nature of the Chinese state and the enduring socialist legacy in Chinese society. Although survey research is not uncommon in today's China, the general public is often confused between official surveys and academic surveys. It is likely that the respondents tend to report more positive attitudes than they actually feel—Whyte also acknowledges

this possibility but insists that the survey design and the fact that many respondents give critical comments on sensitive issues provide reassurance for survey bias. Methodologically, however, it is a general pattern that people tend to give more negative stories about their lives in ethnographic research than when answering standard survey questionnaires. It is quite possible that an equally well-designed study on the same topic using qualitative methods would find a different picture on public perceptions of inequality and distributive injustice in China.

On the substantive issue of the association between inequality and social instability, the book is probably right that the current patterns of inequality in China do not lead to a "social volcano" as some foreign observers claim, but it is also important to realize that social grievances, protests, and other instabilities may arise from many other sources besides distributive injustice. In recent years, the Chinese government's tight control on citizen and political rights, the deterioration of public confidence in the justice system, the rampant problem of official corruption, and the rapid process of urbanization are all major concerns of the Chinese leaders when they think and talk about "maintaining stability." Social stratification is by far the most researched area of Chinese society in sociology, but to achieve more understanding on the issue of social stability in China requires new research in many other areas, such as urban sociology, political sociology, and the sociology of law.

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*The Spirit Level: Why Greater Equality Makes Societies Stronger*, by **Richard Wilkinson** and **Kate Pickett**. New York, NY: Bloomsbury Press, 2010. 330pp. \$28.00 cloth. ISBN: 9781608190362.

SCOTT SERNAU  
*Indiana University, South Bend*  
 ssernau@iusb.edu

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Does inequality matter? Certainly many sociologists' shelves are filled with books on poverty and the many ensuing problems. But does it matter to the society how many are fabulously rich if few are desperately

poor? Does the spread of inequality itself affect well-being in a society quite apart from measures of poverty or general affluence? It does in many significant ways, contend Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett, and this is what sets their work apart.

The authors may be an unusual team to tackle this fundamental sociological question about the nature and effects of social stratification. They are British epidemiologists with careers invested in health research. That background does color the examples used and the large amount of space given to understanding human stress and physiological responses to inequality, something they contend we share with all social mammals. Yet they adeptly step beyond the laboratory to a larger laboratory of 23 nations. Despite their British roots, they give particular attention to the United States and inequality among the 50 states.

The book uses broad and bold strokes to paint its picture of inequality, and it is clearly written for a general audience. The data presented throughout is always in the form of a scatter plot with a regression line. Numbers are kept to a minimum, at times axes are only labeled "low" and "high." For those unacquainted with even this level of statistics, they begin by explaining the idea of a scatter plot. Two sets of tables are repeated throughout: one takes the 23 richest nations with populations over 3 million. Each country is labeled with an abbreviation. The other table uses data for the 50 U.S. states, also shown by abbreviation. Inequality between countries is measured by an interquintile range (earnings of top 20 percent as a multiple of the earnings of bottom 20 percent), following U.N. practice, and inequality between U.S. states is measured by a Gini coefficient, following U.S. Census Bureau practice.

The resulting international data set is quite small, and tables often look quite alike as countries spread out in a familiar pattern by range of inequality and by various social outcomes and measures of social well-being. The data for the states gives them a larger sample, although also a repeated distribution with little variation. While this may disappoint those looking for more nuanced statistical interpretation, it allows the authors to make their core argument over and again: on a vast array of measures, more equal countries and more

equal states do better, those with greater inequality do far worse. And inequality remains salient regardless of average national or state income, the type of government, or any other factor.

Much of the book is a review of various social measures and how societal well-being is negatively affected by growing inequality. In successive chapters they examine community life and social relations, mental health, drug use, physical health and life expectancy, obesity, educational performance, teen births, violence, and imprisonment. Almost without exception, the greater the social inequality in the country, or in the state, the worse their performance is on measures of these factors. Unequal societies have more personal and social problems across the board. The sole exception seems to be suicide, ironically a problem of otherwise well-off societies. The overall connection between inequality and homicide is also mediated by another powerful factor: the prevalence of, and ease of access to, guns. Overall, citizens of less equal places are in poorer physical and mental health, have poorer educational performance, and are more likely to turn to everything from illegal drugs to comfort foods. To explain this, the authors draw heavily on analysis of the social strains of status competition. Unequal societies are more cutthroat, and everyone they contend, ultimately pays a price.

One result of great inequality is also clearly structural: lower levels of mobility. In unequal societies, those people toward the bottom may simply become discouraged, and they have much greater gaps to traverse on their way up. Thus the authors note, that while the United States has a core ideology of upward mobility in pursuit of the American Dream, in fact the United States now has less social mobility than many of its more equal European and Asian counterparts.

An interesting contention in their "inequality alone matters" argument is the idea that it is social equality, not a generous welfare state, that promotes better outcomes. In their tables, the Scandinavian countries of Norway, Sweden, and Finland, and to an extent Denmark, do very well on measures of health, education and well-being. One might see this as a result of social democratic policies and the

promotion of national welfare. But the authors also point to the high scores of Japan, with much less state involvement, but also low levels of inequality due to historic and social factors. They thus come to a non-obvious and not uncontroversial conclusion: the single thing that a society can do to improve social outcomes is to reduce social inequality. That alone has strong benefits that go beyond levels of public spending on health and education, assistance to the poor, and other programs. The free market works reasonably well in distributing social goods, it seems, as long as everyone in the market has a relatively equal portion of the wealth and can vote with their discretionary spending.

The book may be at its weakest in considering how unequal societies can become more equal. This is the great dilemma of our times. A recent poll of Americans showed tremendous support for much greater equality, as an ideal in fact, a more equal society than Sweden. Yet there has been little broad-based voter support for redistributive policies to get to this ideal. The authors speak of greater political will and of reigning in corporate excess. They are great proponents of worker ownership and control of enterprises. Even as they argue strongly for the broad-based benefits of greater equality, however, these measures remain an elusive goal.

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*Belonging in an Adopted World: Race, Identity, and Transnational Adoption*, by **Barbara Yngvesson**. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2010. 246pp. \$20.00 paper. ISBN: 9780226964478.

SARA DOROW  
*University of Alberta*  
 sdorow@ualberta.ca

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The Spring 2010 conference of the Alliance for the Study of Adoption and Culture — held just an hour's drive from the Massachusetts college where author Barbara Yngvesson holds a professorship in anthropology — was abuzz with the pivotal work of the next wave of transnational/transracial adoption scholars, many of them adult adoptees. *Belonging in an Adopted World* seems a fitting bridge to this new generation

of analysts and interpreters. Written by a respected adoption scholar who is also an adoptive mother, the book foregrounds the meanings and implications of race, kinship, and nation for experiences of "belonging" among adults who were adopted twenty or thirty or forty years ago. It does so more to politicize than to psychologize questions of identity and belonging.

As Yngvesson's first full-length book on transnational adoption, *Belonging* synthesizes and also significantly builds on the accumulated wisdom of her work over the last fourteen years. In a half-dozen widely cited articles she has interrogated some of the key tropes of adoption, from "the gift child" and "the clean break" of adoptive kinship to "home," "loss," and "return." *Belonging* weaves these themes into a meta-inquiry of the constant making and unmaking of identity, taking the adoption of children from Asia and Africa to Sweden as its central case.

The book's seven chapters move in both temporal and spatial arcs. The first third of the book draws on Yngvesson's fieldwork in several cities in India to interrogate the legal and social processes that over the last few decades have made children available and valued as "national resources" for adopting out (or, in some cases, keeping in). The middle part of *Belonging* then moves to the context of the "receiving" nation of Sweden, which has had not only a high rate of intercountry adoption but also, concomitantly, a recent history of ambivalence toward racially and culturally diverse immigrant populations. The tensions these national and transnational histories create for the "belonging" of the adoptee then carry into the last two chapters, where Yngvesson highlights the narratives of individuals who as children were adopted into Swedish families from Africa and Asia. Their experiences undo any easy claim to belonging that family or nation might make on them, including as they make "return" trips to countries of birth and back again.

The arc of *Belonging in an Adopted World* gives the book its fullness, but its latter chapters are its most welcome contribution. The insights of the first part of the book — on the uneven forces of love, desire, commodification, and law that haunt adoption

kinship across racial and national “difference” — have become fairly well embedded in recent adoption scholarship, due in part to Yngvesson’s earlier work. Less established but of immanent significance are the perspectives of the adopted people who have lived and negotiated these forces. The first half of the book thus necessarily establishes the weight of the historical and social relationships that form the stuff of adoptee identity and belonging.

One of the key themes bridging the middle and latter chapters of *Belonging* is adoption’s contrapuntal dance with immigration, a question that has begun to capture the imaginations of a number of us doing adoption research. Sweden is a fascinating place to examine the complex play of race, kinship, and nation that make adoption both recognized and disavowed as a form of immigration, where adoptees both embrace and distance themselves from being an immigrant. Yngvesson deftly teases out the tensions present in her conversations with adoptees about immigration, as in statements like: “[Immigrants] remind me that I, too, am a kind of immigrant, even though I feel that I am not” (p. 127).

Throughout the book Yngvesson draws equally well on cultural, socio-legal, and psychoanalytic theory to puzzle through the questions of belonging that are surfaced by adoptive kinship. She does so in the elegant style many of us in the field have come to admire. But even more admirable is that Yngvesson maintains such theoretical sophistication while keeping her narrative close to the deeply intimate and sometimes unnamable character of human relationships in adoption.

Yngvesson accomplishes this intimacy in two ways. First, she does so through the respect she shows her research material. One of the violations done by adoption scholarship has been the infantilization of adoptees, no matter what their ages. The adoptees in Yngvesson’s book come across not as objects of study, but as co-researchers whose insights on their own lives are offered almost auto-ethnographically. In this way Yngvesson’s representational choices mirror an entreaty from an adoption practitioner — to “allow the child its own history” — that becomes one of the main sensitizing concepts of *Belonging*.

Secondly, Yngvesson integrates into the book her own personal experiences with adoption, beginning with a prologue that relates the enchainment across birth and adoptive families that began even before she formally adopted her son Finn. She does so with a light hand, always turning her gaze toward the interplay of real and fictive kinship that constitutes the main artery of the book.

If there is any criticism to be made, it is that the book could have more fully theorized the cultural operation of law. Yngvesson covers some of the history of adoption policy and regulation, and occasionally discusses the social force of law (in relation to blood or immigration, for example), but the book may have benefited from further application of her unique expertise.

In the end, Yngvesson offers a book that should be taken up by those interested in adoption scholarship at its best, as well as researchers and students of race, kinship, identity, and transnationalism.