

terested in the welfare of children and families and could be useful in both undergraduate and graduate courses.

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Melton, Gary B., **The Individual, the Family, and Social Good: Personal Fulfillment in Time of Change.** Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press. 227 pp. ISBN #0803231857, cloth price \$35; paper price: \$20.

This volume is the forty-second to be published from the Nebraska Symposium on Motivation. Anyone well versed in family policy and research may not find a substantial amount of new material in any given chapter, but the collection overall is broad enough (covering psychology, economics, anthropology, law and politics) that almost any reader will find something interesting and unfamiliar in it.

As Melton states in this introductory chapter, this symposium is not only the most diverse of the entire Nebraska series, but much of it is also uncharacteristically cautionary in tone. (Actually, he claims the chapters are "emotionally charged," which must be relative to the even more academic style of previous volumes.)

The chapter by James Garbarino is typical of his work, both stylistically and substantively, and is one of the best parts of the book. Engagingly written, it argues that the reason that children and families face so many problems in the 1990s is that their social environment—in the form of television, violence, economic and other stressors—has become increasingly "toxic." I have two minor complaints with this chapter. One section seems to blame our torn social fabric on the "decline of community" and "high-risk neighborhoods. My other complaint is that Garbarino's laudable solutions are somewhat divorced from current political and economic realities.

Tom Tyler and Peter Degoey attempt to tie family and community "approaches to the promotion of social good by viewing the dynamics of social good through a social-psychological lens." This sounds very promising and perhaps most central of all the chapters to the focus of this volume and series. It does include some interesting research on attitudes toward procedural justice in terms of the perceived legitimacy of various kinds of authority and of family and community social identification. But it may be a reflection of how far social psychology has strayed from its applied roots that this chapter ignores so much valuable family and community psychological theory, research, and intervention.

Given that Mati Heidments is a professor of social and environmental psychology in Estonia, it is surprising that, except for a brief but enlightening section on communist housing policy, his chapter ignores environmental influences on individual behavior and family well-being. Although it provides an interesting counterpoint to the others, reflecting the recent macropolitical and social upheavals in Eastern Europe, it may be a little too philosophical to have much direct relevance for addressing family problems in either society, and its conclusions are overgeneralized in their point-by-point comparison of communism (bad) and his society's "post-capitalist" (good) future.

The other three chapters seem more thorough and practical, perhaps because they are more narrowly focused on disordered social relations within the family. Allen Parkman examines the deterioration of the family from a law and economics perspec-

tive. Jill Korbin explores cross-culturally the positive and negative influences of social networks and family violence and Eleanor Maccoby discusses the rights, needs, and obligations of mothers, fathers, and children in divorce and custody arrangements.

The Epilogue by Ronald Roesch serves at least two important functions. It connects each chapter to the relevant literature in community psychology, and it reminds the reader how valuable a collection of diverse perspectives, like this book, can be.

Overall, I have just three quibbles with this book. First, it is more multi-disciplinary than inter-disciplinary. There are chapters that bridge law or policy and one of the above social sciences, but most of the book focuses on the research of the author's particular discipline. This may not be surprising, but it is still disappointing, given the distinguished and varied group of authors and the fact that the book reflects post-conference proceedings. Only the Introduction and Epilogue make more than passing reference to other chapters in the volume. In that sense, the book missed a tremendous opportunity to provide a family ecology "State of Union" for the '90s. The much needed update of the kind of systemic analysis of children, youth, families, and services championed by Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Kelly (1966). My other two minor criticisms are that the book is also not ecological enough in two more specific ways. The authors generally ignore the influence of the physical environment on human behaviors and cognitions and on family well-being (cf. Altman & Werner, 1985). Garbarino's chapter uses an environmental analogy, but he is primarily concerned with the social environment.

Although most of the chapters highlight the importance of communities to child and family well-being (a view shared by Hillary Rodham Clinton, 1996), but evidently not the entire political spectrum), few of them thoroughly articulate the various and specific roles the community can play. Garbarino, Korbin, and Roesch do a better job of this than the others. In particular, none of the contributors focuses adequately on the related and key roles in individual, family, community, and societal welfare of participatory behavior (in community service organizations), empowerment cognitions, and communitarian attitudes. (To be fair, Garbarino does conclude that greater political participation is needed, and Tyler and Degoey discuss community identification and authority, but those are quite different from communitarianism, which is the value one places on one's community and *on working to improve it.*) This oversight is startling in a series on motivation and a volume on personal fulfillment.

References

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