

disease can alter the experience of the aging process. The brief vignettes presented at the end of the book offer glimpses into the characters of all 56 study participants. These descriptions help bring to light the diversity of the sample as well as the uniqueness of each individual who participated in this study. The author recognizes that she is following a recent tradition in medical anthropology whereby the disease actually stands as a proxy for community. Accordingly, this study is multi-sited, taking place at Parkinson's disease support group meetings and in the homes of sufferers and their families. Indeed, after having attended over 100 Parkinson's disease support group meetings, the investigator has become an expert on the culture of these settings.

Traditional anthropologists tell us about cultures based on interviews with informants from exotic lands. This study was conducted in rural Iowa, a location representing America's heartland. As a sociologist and gerontologist, this reviewer is content with the insights about coping with aging and disease offered by this volume. Recognition that this study took place in America's heartland thus represents an interesting note regarding the parameters and the limitations of the study. Yet, one wonders if students of culture may be seeking more explicit analysis of the cultural context and influences on the phenomena explored in this book. Perhaps the subtitle of the book, referring to America's heartland, raises expectations about cultural nuances that the book fails to deliver.

The presentation of theoretical approaches relevant to the research in the introduction, the descriptive and analytical sections that follow, and the concluding case studies make this short book well-suited as assigned reading in courses in medical anthropology, medical sociology, aging and life course studies and qualitative methods. The presentations of the theoretical background, the description of ethnographic, qualitative approaches and of quantitative surveys offer a nice introduction to a well designed mixed-methods study.

Solimeo's book affords us valuable insights into the complexities of illness related stress in old age. We get to view at close range the limits of traditional health care

and of informal social supports. We experience both the anguish of sufferers and their ingenuity in coping in very harsh circumstances. In an era when longevity and successful aging are held out with great promise, this book serves as a needed reminder that success in the face of frailty in late life takes many forms.

The opportunity to review this book prompted me to have meaningful discussions with students, colleagues, and friends who represent the age groups studied. Based on the lively responses and interest generated by these discussions, I will be happy to assign this book to students in my own courses.

Two Worlds of Drug Consumption in Late Modern Societies, edited by **Irmgard Eisenbach-Stangl**, **Jacek Moskalewicz**, and **Betsy Thom**. Surry, UK: Ashgate, 2009. 296pp. \$69.95 paper. ISBN: 9780754677758.

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If you were told that this book is a six-city survey report on illicit drug use with 159 tables and figures, you might skip it. But read on, for these great convoys of data are sometimes strafed by fascinating findings. The case studies cover a wide swath of Europe—London, Amsterdam, Turin, Vienna, Prague, Warsaw—and if you look carefully, they are windows onto the tense border zone between law and culture, where conventional drug policy is battling to hold off a new paradigm.

In each city the authors synthesized existing national and city data on drug use and drug problems. They surveyed convenience samples of 100 "socially marginalized" users who had used heroin, cocaine, or amphetamine twice a week or more for the previous six months, located primarily via the treatment or legal systems; and 100 "socially integrated" users who had used cannabis once per week or more and/or cocaine, Ecstasy, or amphetamine at least once per month for the past 6 months, located mostly through clubs and private contacts. The authors also interviewed expert informants

from criminal justice, treatment, and other agencies.

The integrated users look similar everywhere—young, above average education, as often employed as the general population. They use cannabis regularly and sometimes Ecstasy, cocaine, or other illicit. They generally regulate their consumption, rarely use riskier modes of ingestion, and tend to have stable careers and little trouble with health or police. "Despite long drug careers, their social position does not seem to be deteriorated by drug consumption and the pharmacological properties of drugs. . . . All in all the pattern of drug use of an integrated consumer does not look very risky Therefore drug use patterns should not be interpreted from a reductionist perspective based on the pharmacological properties of different drugs only but ought to take into consideration the social class background of their consumers . . ." (pp. 282-4).

The socially marginalized users everywhere are older and have low education, high unemployment, unstable housing, and all the usual correlates of poverty. They tend to prefer opiates but many also use crack cocaine; the authors show that poly-drug use has become normative in this population. But use patterns and problems among the marginalized varied according to local drug scenes. Crack use, for example, is higher in London and Amsterdam than elsewhere; amphetamine use is common in Prague and Warsaw but not elsewhere.

Local drug policies also influenced the contexts and therefore the patterns of use. All six cities have adopted some low-threshold, harm reduction policies (substitution treatment, needle exchange, etc.), and the better the health and welfare services in a city, the less the marginalized engaged in illegal activities. But policies are subject to the swings of political pendulums within nation states and varied significantly across the six cities.

Vienna, for example, closed the "hutten," pubs that unofficially sold small amounts of cannabis. This had the unintended consequence of "de-professionalizing" the market, making it more dangerous and drawing desperate African immigrants into dealing. Vienna also increased the number of drug offenders in prison five-fold in recent years,

yet has seen a four-fold rise in cannabis use among 15-34 year-olds and has the highest rate of opiate use of the six sites.

Ironically, Vienna is the home of the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime, whose officials regularly criticize permissive Dutch harm reduction policies. Yet Amsterdam's marginalized users have the lowest lifetime prevalence of cocaine, amphetamine, and brown heroin use, ingest the lowest amount of opiates, have the lowest rate of injection, and spend the lowest percent of their income on drugs. Amsterdam's integrated users consumed the fewest different drugs and had next to lowest prevalence of cannabis use. Contrary to the core premise of drug prohibition, availability apparently is not destiny.

In Warsaw, the drug of choice for opiate users was once *kompot* or "Polish heroin," homemade from poppy straw. Until recently its cultivation was not criminalized, so users grew their own and shared it in an informal reciprocity system. In 1985 possession was decriminalized to avoid punishing addicts and to separate drug use from crime. In the 1990s Warsaw adopted needle exchanges, substitution treatment, and other harm reduction measures. Less than one percent of prisoners were drug offenders. But in 2000, Poland re-criminalized *kompot* and drug possession (in part to please the United States so as to be allowed to join NATO) and American-style, punishment-based prohibition was reinstated. Now, users' informal reciprocity system has been eclipsed by organized crime's black market. Prices are down, drug use and drug-related crime are up.

Alongside its many interesting findings, this book has some weaknesses. Several chapters were poorly translated and most could not have been graced by the eyes of an English-speaking editor. With small convenience samples, it is difficult to assess representativeness. The authors likely are correct in finding "two relatively homogeneous drug worlds" across Europe, but it is hard to know how much of this is an artifact of their research design. This may have been why they mostly describe findings and do little hypothesis testing or theorizing (e.g., about the relation between welfare or drug policies and drug prevalence or problems).

In fairness, it should be noted that the authors provide much methodological detail throughout, are candid about the limitations of their methods, and cautious in their analysis. Most chapters rightly note the need for more qualitative research on contexts of use and how use practices evolve in response to local laws and conditions.

Limitations notwithstanding, this book provides much thought-provoking data for sociologists who study drugs, addiction, crime, and public policy, as well as for policy makers, and treatment and law enforcement professionals.

Streetwise for Book Smarts: Grassroots Organizing and Education Reform in the Bronx, by **Celina Su**. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009. 246pp. \$22.95 paper. ISBN: 9780801475580.

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In this new book on community-based organizations working to create social change, Celina Su seeks to explain why such organizations choose the tactics and strategies they do, and what that means for organizational success. Her analysis is based on case studies of four organizations of approximately the same size (small), located in the same place (the South Bronx), and pursuing the same goal (public education reform). While acknowledging that standard theories of resource availability and political opportunity provide some insight into the case study organizations' inner workings, Su argues that such explanations are insufficient, especially if we are to understand how organizations might become more effective agents of social change. She points instead to the importance of understanding the role of organizational culture, which, she says, both deeply informs organizational action and serves as the primary platform from which organization members exercise agency.

As Su is well aware, the concept of "culture" has long been a sticky one in social analysis. She thus relies on Ann Swidler's well-known definition of culture as a "tool

kit" (Swidler 1986). In the first chapter of the book, Su presents two basic "tool kit" categories that will guide the organizational analysis presented subsequently: one is based on ideas associated with legendary community organizer Saul Alinsky (the "Alinskyite tool kit"), while the other draws on the work of renowned popular education advocate Paulo Freire (the "Freirean tool kit"). The two tool kits differ in three key practices: the emphasis of organizational activities, the target of organizational work, and the nature of the relationship between paid staff organizers and volunteer members. According to Su, the Alinskyite tool kit emphasizes activities that recruit new members and press forward specific issue campaigns, sees organization-building as the primary goal of organizational action, and envisions paid staff organizers as teachers of leadership skills to volunteer members. In contrast, the Freirean tool kit emphasizes activities that foster emotional exchange among organization members, sees the development of individuals as the primary goal of organizational action, and views paid staff organizers as partners in the efforts of volunteer members to develop their leadership skills (pp. 17-19). Armed with these ideal types, Su proceeds to the analysis of her four case study organizations.

Chapter Two provides background on issues facing public education advocates in the Bronx. Chapters Three and Four offer extended discussions of the Alinskyite and Freirean tool kits. The information in these chapters is necessary, but the book's later chapters are far more interesting and innovative. In Chapter Five, for example, Su addresses the thorny issue of race: how her case study organizations deal with it, and, implicitly, how policymakers and researchers might better approach it. She argues that part of the Alinskyite tool kit is a "color-blind" approach to race. That is, race generally is not discussed for fear that doing so will create divisions in the overall effort to gather as large a constituency as possible for organizational campaigns. The Freirean tool kit, on the other hand, includes open discussion of race, which is viewed as a key component not only of individuals' identities and interests, but also of social hierarchies. Because Freirean organizations