Review of *Handbook of Social Work with Groups.* Charles D. Garvin, Lorraine M. Gutierrez and Maeda J. Galinsky (Eds.). Reviewed by Steven Rose.

Steven Rose
George Mason University

ex machina, a system whose social depredations occur without any human intervention. Such a description not only constitutes too partial a portrait of poverty's structural origins; it may also mislead those committed to social change about the nature of the opposition they will face.

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Joel Blau

Stony Brook University
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Charles D. Garvin, Lorraine M. Gutierrez, and Maeda J. Galinsky (Eds.), *Handbook of Social Work with Groups.* New York: Guilford Publications, 2004. $70.00 hardcover.

Many aspects of social work can be viewed productively from the group perspective. Although, at times, social work with groups is perceived as a social work specialty, it embodies much of social work itself. This handbook shows how social work with groups uses social work knowledge, values, and frameworks to address social problems. The editors select and identify major group work issues and offer their influential views. The handbook explicates the theoretical and conceptual foundations; practice models; purpose and intentionality; locus and adaptability; organizations, communities, and other settings; ties to research and evaluation; and synchrony with technology.

The handbook shows how creative artful approaches are, in many ways, congruent with contemporary social science and strengths-based approaches. The case is made for an empowerment perspective, using conscientization and other theories which continue to guide group work, particularly in the developing world. This handbook points to currently underutilized aspects of social work with groups, including social action. As such, while it reveals its history, it also shows how group work, while effective in the present, can innovate in the future. Consistent with empowerment and consumer-based approaches, family group conferences are among the newer approaches to group work presented. The demand for social-emotional support and the capability of social work groups to meet such needs continues unabated, as is the capability of group work to adapt to increasingly prevalent technologically-based computerized methods of communication, which are among the newest developments and

applications. Acknowledging that much of social work involves working with persons in poverty, an explicit recognition is made that important group work occurs with homeless people. Community organization is a significant field for social work with groups.

The form of social work with groups is largely contingent upon setting. Fully half of the 28 chapters are devoted to group work in settings. Social work with groups must adapt its methods, which are largely appropriate for voluntary clients, to be effective with the preponderance of involuntary clients. A chapter on involuntary groups, based in part upon the application of reactance theory, is essential reading. The importance of group work also lies in its ambitions. Aiming to reduce some of the intergroup conflicts in the Middle East is evocative of earlier work in the USA which preceded large-scale social and legislative reforms.

This handbook fills an important gap in the literature on social work with groups. It will be useful to academics who are interested in reconceptualizing social work with groups. This handbook is distinctive. While most books on social work with groups tend to present a single point of view, by design, this handbook presents multiple viewpoints. Furthermore, although few handbooks present original research studies, to its credit, a study of group work within a global context is included. This handbook helps to fill the gap that exists given that most social workers are educated using a generalist model which provides limited education and training in social work with groups. It is a publication that all college and university libraries with social work programs should offer.

The handbook is uniformly well-written, and provides a thoughtful and nuanced approach to the field. The contemporary breadth of social work with groups is addressed in the volume. For instance, the scope of social work with groups encompasses task groups, and knowledge derived from organizational theories. The arts, popular education, and popular theater are also represented. Even the most established group work authority, and certainly anyone who has not peered into the scholarship on social work with groups recently, will learn something from this wide-ranging handbook.

This handbook reflects the extent to which research, including participatory research, has influenced the field of group work in recent years. Furthermore, although group work is revealed as a method in this handbook, it is also apparent that group work continues to be more than a method: it represents a set of values and a way of examining social phenomena. This book conveys a sense of continuity and unity of social group work from its origins to the contemporary scene. As such, it is a success.

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Steven Rose
George Mason University

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David A. Wise (Ed.), *Perspectives on the Economics of Aging*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2004. $90.00 hardcover.

During the last century there was a remarkable change in social and political attitudes towards the provision of income safety nets for the elderly in industrial nations. Extending beyond the provision of income for mere subsistence, national policies created the opportunity for sustainable retirement through social security systems that ensured protection against the loss of both income and health in old age. This is the legacy of social security programs in all industrialized nations. The sheer magnitude and scale of public and private income and health care programs under social security that have become an indispensable aspect of public policy captured the attention of researchers and policy makers, resulting in an overwhelming body of literature and wide range of disputable perspectives.

In recent decades, the scholarly and public literature has focused on perceived and real threats to the viability of income and health care programs for the elderly, especially social security systems. Much of the discussion has been related to analysis of the impact of aging populations and a shrinking dependency ratio of people who are working and contributing money through payroll taxes to finance those who are not. Research has also been conducted on the impact of diminishing government resources and the ongoing attempts to shift some, or even most, of the government burden for income support and health care from the public to the private sector, including transferring responsibility for managing programs from national to local governments. The