March 2002


Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw

Part of the Social Work Commons

**Recommended Citation**


DOI: https://doi.org/10.15453/0191-5096.2800

Available at: https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol29/iss1/18
concepts that clarify the unique position of the multi-racial couple and of biracial individuals. The book points to the processes that stigmatize and traumatize the black, white and mixed-race members of multiracial families and shows how racial identities are constructed and deconstructed over time. A reoccurring theme is that of white women married to black men with biracial children who no longer claim the racial label of ‘white’ because of the racism they have been exposed to. The incredible stress of ‘tripping’ over the color line is also clearly elaborated. Another, very interesting and neglected aspect is that of biracial children of white appearance and the difficulties they experience. They have to deal with racism and racist talk by whites, rejection by blacks, the problems of ‘passing’ and feelings against their own family members.

A drawback of the book is the failure to undergird the qualitative information with statistical information. For example, Dalmage does not give statistics on the percentage of the mixed race couples or discuss the disproportionate percentage of white women married to black men versus black women to white men. She intimates that there is a difference but a full discussion of the significance of the difference would have enhanced the second chapter of the book dealing with ‘Redlines and Colorlines’. In omitting a full discussion of the role of gender and race as it relates to couple formation, the author misses an opportunity to explore the fact that the multicultural world is mostly comprised of white women and black men.

Nevertheless, Dalmage presents a unique overview of a neglected issue, based on a unique familiarity with the literature on multiculturalism, black liberation, and race relations. Through her strong narrative, she is able to illuminate for the reader the world of those who are multiracial and who are involved in multiracial relationships. This is a very useful book and will form the basis for future policy discussions on race and racialization in the United States.


There has been a rapid increase in the number of academic articles and books on the topic of international social work in
recent years. Although the profession has been engaged in international activities for decades, the literature on the subject has previously been extremely limited. On the other hand, publications in the cognate field of international and comparative social welfare have been plentiful. But detailed accounts of how social workers function in different parts of the world, of the diverse roles they play, of how the profession is organized and of the common features in professional practice in different countries are relatively recent.

Lynne Healy’s book is a welcome addition to the growing literature in the field. Written specifically as a textbook, it will be widely used in the classroom. The book is well organized, comprehensive and very readable. It begins with a useful historical account of international collaboration in social welfare and then provides biographies of leading pioneers in the field. Extensive information about social work in different parts of the world is given and the values and ethics of international professional action are discussed. Healy’s previous work on international organizations in the field is augmented by a thorough discussion of this topic. She also addresses the issue of how social work should function in a dynamic globalizing world and offers a helpful and insightful analysis of this complex topic. A chapter dealing with the relationship between international and domestic social work practice is discussed in some depth.

The book is ideally suited to students interested in international social work and it deserves to be widely adopted. However, the book should not be viewed only as a textbook. It has educational value for the whole profession which is still narrowly focused on domestic concerns. Indeed, as Healy has argued in previous publications, social workers in the United States are still insular and students have a very limited exposure and understanding of the way people’s lives are being shaped by global forces. In addition, as immigrants of non-European origins flow into the country, there is an urgent need to link the profession’s commitment to multiculturalism with a new commitment to internationalism. The fact that the Council on Social Work Education, which accredits social work programs in the United States, has recently adopted new accreditation standards that effectively discriminate against immigrant social worker educators is just one example of how much educating is still required.
Lynne Healy has many years of first hand experience of international activities in social work and she has published extensively on the subject. She is well equipped to produce a textbook that will be widely used by students. Her book should also be read by social work practitioners who need to understand the way societies are changing as a result of being integrated into a global world system. The author shows how the profession needs to adapt to these changes and embrace the opportunities offered by internationalism and increased global integration.


Sociologists have shown that social change comes about in many different ways. Change may be sparked by natural events, technological innovation or government policies to name but a few. But perhaps the most profound and enduring forms of social change are those that result from the organized efforts of ordinary people to address wrongs, educate others and modify existing beliefs and practices. Although previously neglected in sociological research, the study of social movements is now well developed and many examples of how popular movements have changed existing attitudes and social arrangements have been provided.

This book makes an impressive contribution to the understanding of how social movements arise, organize and effectively address entrenched challenges of discrimination and social injustice. However, its contribution is especially impressive for it is written not by professional sociologists but by two people who happen to have a deep personal experience of disability and whose understanding of the issues is uniquely insightful. Its account of how people with disabilities have organized to change stereotypes, challenge blatant discrimination and transform archaic attitudes offers unique insights into the much neglected issue of disability. Indeed, the authors point out that compared with race and gender, disability is seldom identified as a topic worthy of sociological research.

The authors provide a vivid and engaging historical account