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Diversity Perspectives for Social Work Practice. Joseph Anderson and Robin Wiggins Carter (Ed.).

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extent to which market capitalism is penetrating the domain of family life, and presenting new challenges for those who seek to formulate social policies that enhance social well-being.

James Midgley, University of California, Berkeley

Joseph Anderson and Robin Wiggins Carter (Ed.), *Diversity Perspectives for Social Work Practice*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2003. \$42.67 papercover.

Among the many skills that social workers need to possess, competence related to culture and diversity is of fundamental importance. There is a general acceptance that practitioners and researchers in the field must be cognizant of the ways in which the experiences of diverse populations need to guide their work. However, consensus is lacking on the content and means of conveying such a curriculum, while there is also a movement towards greater sophistication in the understanding of diversity. It has extended beyond ethnicity alone to encompass any number of differing life experiences. Moreover, practice skills have evolved from a dependence on knowing "cultural facts" to "learning how to learn."

This text situates itself in this trend as a presentation of the expanded applications of diversity. A commitment to the social work values of social justice and well-being are visibly at the core of each of its chapters. These values are promoted through the use of twelve conceptual frameworks that lie within three broader perspectives. Ethnocultural perspectives aim to sensitize social workers to the relationship between ethnicity and culture, while oppression perspectives examine the consequences of prejudice and power. The "vulnerable life situation" perspectives consider how practitioners can learn from clients about the impact of different vulnerabilities and strengths. At the heart of these diversity perspectives are the strengths and empowerment frameworks. Though familiar in any social work program, this text addresses their specific relevance to diversity issues. The other frameworks consist of ethnic-sensitivity, value orientation, ethnic minority, dual perspective, ethnic-centered/afrocentric, social justice, ethnography, communication, feminism and constructivism.

Each framework has a chapter devoted to expounding upon

its development, core principles, practice applications and case examples. This is helpful for in-depth comprehension. Of note is the inclusion of frameworks not typically recognized in this area—communication and constructivism. Respectively, they contribute an important understanding of the processes and dimensions of communicating, and of the different ways of knowing and interpreting reality. Both seek to reduce the misunderstanding that can occur between diverse peoples.

However, similar-sounding frameworks are not compared clearly and systematically, such that a student could turn to a summary chapter that readily identifies differences in principles and practices. Given the interesting mix of frameworks contained within the text, the inadequate use of disability and sexual orientation perspectives is perplexing. They are mentioned within social justice and feminism, but diversity nevertheless remains confined to ethnic-based world views. Yet, this shortcoming is mitigated by the “how to” approach of this book that enables a flexible use of the various practice guidelines. A vital theme ties together these guidelines; the multi-dimensionality of individuals requires a balance between assessing the diversity within and the diversity between people. This dynamic is recognized throughout the chapters, and informs the development of solid practice skills.

Rose Barreto, University of California, Berkeley

John P. Bartkowski and Helen Regis, *Charitable Choices: Religion, Race and Poverty in the Post-Welfare Era*. New York: New York University Press, 2003. \$69.00 hardcover, \$19.00 paperback.

Since coming to office in 2001, the Bush administration has moved decisively to implement its faith based approach to social welfare. Informed by evangelical Christian writers such as Marvin Olasky and political advocates on the religious right, Mr. Bush had previously declared his dislike for government social programs. During the 2000 presidential election campaign he indicated that, if elected, he would shift the responsibility to care for those in need from government agencies to religious organizations. He agreed with Christian conservatives that religious organizations, and the Christian churches in particular, were far better equipped than government to help needy people. Unlike