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The Other Philadelphia Story: How Local Congregations Support Quality of Life in Urban America. Ram A. Cnaan with Stephanie C. Boddie, Charlene C. McGrew and Jennifer Kang.

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can be enhanced are needed.

Although the book's findings will be disputed by those who believe that current educational, job-training and work support programs do in fact facilitate mobility, the authors have amassed a great deal of evidence that question prevailing beliefs about work, education and opportunity. The detailed accounts of the challenges faced by the families in the study provide ample evidence that much more needs to be done to address these challenges. The book is an important addition to the literature and should be widely consulted.

James Midgley, University of California, Berkeley

Ram A. Cnaan with Stephanie C. Boddie, Charlene C. McGrew and Jennifer Kang. *The Other Philadelphia Story: How Local Congregations Support Quality of Life in Urban America*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006. \$69.95 hardcover.

Since the enactment of Charitable Choice legislation by the U.S. federal government in 1996, there has been a substantial interest in the role of religious institutions in the delivery of social welfare services. In response to the lack of serious academic discussion regarding the links between the faith-based community and social service provisions, Cnaan and associates present a detailed picture of congregations in the city of Philadelphia. Utilizing tenets from social capital theory, the authors seek to ascertain whether congregations are 'saving civil society' and are adept at the production of social capital; the intent is to dissect the role that congregations serve as extended family and informal-formal care providers and to investigate how societal norms, values, and trust are formulated and perpetuated.

The main obstacles of the investigation are outlined in the first two chapters. Due to the ever changing and dynamic formations of congregations and the lack of any single agency to document their existence, identifying the target sample presented the first challenge. Next, the development of an operational definition of congregation was surmounted, which led

to the gathering of data; utilizing a sample comprised of two-thirds of the identified congregations, in-person interviews and structured questionnaires were conducted with clergy and lay leaders. The result was the creation of the PCC database (Philadelphia Census of Congregation).

Most of the book disseminates the data collected, with the intent to provide not only a context, but a broad and accurate picture of religious life in Philadelphia. Beginning with an overview of key characteristics, the authors move to address the role that congregations play in the delivery of both informal and formal services. In contrast to other studies, 92% of the sampled congregations provided at least one formal social service program. The authors conclude that congregations operate more akin to community centers, fostering a variety of social interests and at the community level, 'congregations are the foundational blocks for social care' (p. 279).

In addition to disseminating data by service type, several chapters are devoted to the exploration of special congregations and subgroups that have been previously overlooked within the literature. The focus populations included are African Americans, Latinos, and women, and the discussion is centered on the unique role that each group contributes to social care. Remaining chapters are devoted to organizations that enhance congregational service capacity and include an investigation of collaborative unions that serve to assist a broader population within the realm of social welfare.

The authors conclude that all of the controversy regarding Charitable Choice is somewhat moot—religious congregations have been delivering social services all along. Recommendations for strengthening their role include sufficient funding to increase the partnership between faith-based institutions and the federal government. While the authors successfully provide a detailed investigation as to the many services and functions that congregations provide, a discussion as to the efficacy of programs is not established nor adequately addressed. Now that the extent of services has been descriptively documented, further research is needed to link quantity with quality.

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