

for those interested in reading literature for entertainment.

University of Kansas

Nancy Wert

Moos, Rudolf H., editor. *Human Adaptation: Coping with Life Crises*.  
Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Health and Co., 1976. 438 pp. + author and  
subject index. Paperback.

Moos has edited a collection of articles dealing with human adaptation patterns and concomitant coping strategies employed by people in dealing with a variety of life crisis and/or life transition situations. While the articles draw heavily from psychiatric and psychological literature, the reader will be introduced to literature from other fields such as sociology during the course of the book. Moos is not content to focus on one perspective or "school" concerning human adaptation and coping. Rather he provides a "broad overview" which looks at the "important dimensions of adaptation and of coping behaviors" which may occur during the life course (vii).

The articles are ordered along a life course or developmental lifestage sequence. After reviewing the "state of the field," the subsequent sections consider coping and adaptational situations pertinent to successive life stages. The "early years" are considered in the first three articles, "bereavement in childhood" in the following articles, "the high school and college years," intimacy, marriage and parenthood transitions, and so on, through retirement, death, and bereavement events. Each period or life stage event(s) is considered in three or four articles. The last four sections, consisting of eleven articles, concern "coping with unusual stress." In this last section such things as natural disaster, imprisonment in concentration camps, skyjacking and rape are discussed by authors from a variety of academic backgrounds.

This book will be helpful in several sociological areas; namely, adult development, sociology of aging, social gerontology and certain social-psychology areas. In all fairness, Moos also suggests the book for certain areas in psychology as well.

This is a timely book of readings in that it comes when the subject of human adaptation to life crises and/or life transitions is of particular concern to academicians and researchers alike. With the recent barrage of disasters around the country i.e., the winter weather conditions particularly in the eastern part of the U.S., the concomitant energy and food shortages, etc. they are for certain going to pose new human adaptation situations for which this book will come in handy to anyone interested and concerned about human adaptation mechanisms and coping strategies.

Too, this book offers heuristic academic enterprise. A rarity as textbook readers go. Many of the thirty-five articles are worth reading and it is sure that the extensive footnotes and references will lead to other worthwhile readings. Certainly, *Human Adaptation: Coping with Life Crises* is a "must" reference work for anyone interested in loss and change, life crises and transition, human adaptation, coping capacities, and strategies.

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Jeanne M. Gibbs

Kephart, William M. *Extraordinary Groups: The Sociology of Unconventional Life-Styles*. St. Martin's Press—(New York) 1976. Pp. 311. Paperback.

There is within the current sociological literature an oversized variety of attempts to make sociology, as literature, an appealing product for the bulk of students whom we teach. Perhaps one noteworthy dilemma can be cited regarding such emphasis on generating material which will, hopefully, entice the average student into a more sensitive awareness of social diversity. Too often what is produced tends uncontrollably towards narcissistic Americana. Kephart has written a book better than many aimed at engaging the curiosity of college students while in a subtle pedantic manner slipping in basic concepts such as sanctions, ethnocentrism and social control. The introduction of *Extraordinary Groups* elicits the reader to study these "other groups" in order to gain a more humble attitude towards his own milieu. Yet one cannot but wonder if Kephart has himself avoided

the smugness often sensed in sociological approaches to the exposition of deviance. It appears a bit ironic that the greater bulk of such sociology which is suspect of sensationalism is packaged as paperbacks.

The people and the concomitant social and cultural structures given the dubious distinction of what Kephart has subtitled *The Sociology of Unconventional Life-Styles* are not only "interesting" as the author indicates for his final reason in choosing these groups above others, but they are also worth much more attention as theoretically rich objects of study for those professionally oriented towards the intricacies of social organization. In the long run, whether one will enjoy or utilize *Extraordinary Groups* is probably determined by how satisfied the potential reader can be expected to be with the adequacy of portrayal possible in a 300 page synopsis of voluminous sources which is the vehicle for the simple contextual illustration of approximately fifty basic concepts. All of the concepts are given minimal definition other than that provided by the particular context. Indeed, this book does not do justice to the wealth of data skimmed, or does it present any unified or comparative theoretical schema by which one could designate a sociology of unconventional life-styles. Six distinct groups are presented along with a final chapter devoted to the topic of modern communes. The Old Order Amish, the Oneida community, the Father Divine movement, the Shakers, the Mormons and the Hutterites comprise the topics of the first six chapters. Kephart shows more familiarity with those few on which he has included some meager first hand research. The vast majority of the information gathered in the book is from the work of other researchers. In each chapter the references included cover most of the significant sources on each group. Unfortunately, the theoretical frameworks of those cited who attempted more than a descriptive record of the groups are missing from Kephart's compilation. From all appearances Kephart chose a modest purpose in gathering together the details of these groups' life-styles. Little or no attention is paid to the more intricate questions raised theoretically by these groups. The specialists in social movements, collective behavior, the sociology of religion, marriage and the family, community and social

organization will find that Kephart is dismayingly unconcerned with any issues posed in their respective fields. Yet one can only submit that although the author is not as theoretically oriented as the data allow, clearly the purpose of the book is to fill a gap in the market, not in the literature.

Given the fact that Kephart is simply one of many to attract the beginning student in sociology with groups that are pertinent to both the sociologist and a novice, perhaps the most valid criteria to judge Kephart's *Extraordinary Groups* is by its empirical faithfulness. The Old Order Amish are covered in a little less than forty-four pages. The Perfectionists of Oneida span fifty-two pages. The Father Divine movement, which Kephart seems most familiar with, covers fifty pages while the Shakers are reviewed in thirty-three pages. In the last three chapters, the Mormons are described in forty-six pages, the Hutterites in thirty-seven and the modern communes in twenty pages. Since there is certainly no correspondence between the size and the history of each social organization with the analysis received by each, the obvious assumption is that the author again relied on whether the groups were sociologically interesting in allotting his efforts. If this is the case, and Kephart does emphasize this in the introduction, one can still question his faithfulness to the data both empirically and theoretically. For instance, the Shakers were much more successful empirically than either Oneida or Father Divine. The Shakers have also been researched in a fully elaborated sociological analysis far more comprehensive than either of the aforementioned groups. Upon examination the Shakers were not any less daring and unconventional than all of Kephart's groups. The Hutterites, who have the longest history, are also given less space than warranted. One confusing aspect of Kephart's descriptions is the emphasis on the term Bruderhof. Consequently, a separate group who are specifically known as the Bruderhof is potentially confused with the Hutterites. The Hutterites are Anabaptists presently located in the northwestern American continent who have been persecuted throughout their existence. While the Bruderhof are also Anabaptists, they are a set of three colonies presently located in New York, Connecticut and Pennsylvania. The Bruderhof have yet to become an inbred ethnic

group. This group is in their fourth generation of child-rearing, still retain some original members, and currently maintain a substantial number of relatively recent converts. The Bruderhof are open to recruitment, upon request one can receive literature aimed at potential converts. The Hutterite traditions of population growth and recruitment are markedly different. Kephart fails to mention that the Bruderhof merged with the Hutterites, or Hutterische Brüder, after their own founder's death and their discovery of the Hutterites. While the merger lasted twenty years, an acceptance of Hutterian custom was never completed and the two groups formally severed organizational and spiritual ties in 1950. The final chapter on modern communes is the most disappointing. Both adequate sources are referenced and first hand investigation by the author are present here, yet the chapter is extremely shallow when contrasted to the data available and the other chapters in this book.

Despite the shortcomings mentioned, this book may be perfectly suitable for an introductory reader. The author presents basic concepts within brief but relatively faithful descriptions of a potpourri of intriguing groups in America. As is suggested, however, those who desire more should look elsewhere.

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Robert H. Hingers

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