

aim is by putting clients first and in charge. Although this approach speaks to the practice principle of client empowerment the implicit emphasis is on the professionals (and the worker) being in charge of the decision making process and not the client.

In bridging the generalist perspective and the task-centered approach, the authors utilized three practice concepts: target problem, collaterals and context. According to the authors, context refers to the biopsychosocial and historical factors that surround the target problem and are the recent conceptual development with task-centered practice. In some ways, though, the authors treat these practice concepts as if they were newly discovered principles of practice and unique to the task-centered approach.

Overall, the authors have crafted an interesting conceptualization of generalist practice. Not only have they synthesized a great deal of complex background literature pertaining to the various size client systems, but have established an empirically based approach to practice. However, despite the careful crafting of this text, this reviewer would have liked to see the authors further develop the notion of target problems as something desirable, and thus to be attained (p. 393). The authors have acknowledged that empowering techniques such as identifying and building on strengths, teaching specific skills, mobilizing resources and advocating are generally incorporated in the task-centered approach. Although this discussion was focused on work with special populations only (poor and minorities) (p. 100), it is this reviewer's contention that these techniques, along with empowerment practice, is at the center of generalist practice with all client populations. A final concern has to do with the authors' contention that very little is known about how decisions are made regarding the appropriate system with which to begin work. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the information has not been articulated in ways that clearly suggest a topology of movement in working across systems.

I would like to conclude with the authors' beginning statement that: teaching students to become generalists is a complicated matter since generalists must possess the skills to work with a variety of different systems, problems, settings and populations. In many ways this text represents an impressive movement toward a more integrative approach to generalist practice. However, stronger and more prevalent precautions are necessary to guard against users of this text oversimplifying the complex nature of human beings and or mechanizing the helping process.

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Environmental Justice: Issues, Policies and Solutions. Bunyan Bryant (ed.) Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1995. 278 pp. (paper)

Federal and privately funded studies completed during the last decade have consistently shown that areas most often affected by environmental contamination and toxic hazards are disproportionately populated by minorities. These findings have played an important role in politicizing citizens in minority and low income communities around issues of equity, justice and the same rights to clean air, water and land as affluent suburbanites. The call for environmental justice is growing and the emergent environmental justice movement is gaining the attention and involvement of social scientists and some public policy-makers.

Since 1987 academia has become increasingly involved in the nascent movement. The University of Michigan School of Natural Resources and Environment has been at the fore, holding two conferences on issues central to the movement. The first conference in 1990 led to a compilation of essays titled *Race and the Incidence of Environmental Hazards: A Time for Discourse* (Bryant and Mohai 1992) that provided a wide range of evidence and documentation on environmental inequities. Bunyan Bryant's *Environmental Justice: Issues, Policies and Solutions* is the result of a second conference on environmental justice held in 1993. The book can be read alone or as a follow-up compilation that emphasizes issues similar to its counterpart, but with a new focus. Bryant stresses in his introduction, in contrast to the 1992 publication, this book is not merely centered on "articulating the environmental justice problems" but rather on developing solutions.

Environmental Justice begins with four rather succinct and thought-provoking analyses of the role of professionals and citizens in promoting environmental justice. Of particular import is Rebecca Head's discussion concerning the extent to which present scientific methods and data are adequate (or inadequate) for informing public policy. Her recommendation for both short-term and long-term amelioration of community-based environmental inequities rests on the necessity for site-specific criteria developed in conjunction with citizen participation for determining safety factors involving environmental hazards or the possibility thereof. The accent of the book's middle essays moves towards institutional issues involving urban residential segregation, economic impacts of state and federal environmental policies and the need for a national industrial policy emphasizing planning that would sacrifice neither workers nor production. Robert Bullard's cogent discussion of institutionalized urban housing discrimination leads to a conclusion similar to Head's in the earlier essay. That is, key to combating environmental inequities is the effective incorporation of citizen's (the primary stakeholders in these issues) into decision-making processes affecting their communities. The final chapters focus discussion on the prospects for democracy, sustainable development and global environmentalism in the approaching decades. As Fredrick Buttel observes in the closing essay, local, national and international "environmental policy must be recognized for what it is - broad social policy" (pp. 206). This statement appears to capture the central point of the book.

Bryant emphasizes that this book is "solution oriented" and has included Clinton's Environmental Justice Executive Order 12898 in an appendix as evidence of new social policy to address environmental inequities. But the call for environmental justice underscored in these works, the movement that has emerged over these issues, public policy and, consequently, many of these authors' recommendations are in their formative phases. The "solutions" discussed in this book express tenets of communitarian participatory democracy, "social democracy" as one author puts it, to be combined with ideas for long-term social and political restructuring, new emphases in planning and extensive social programs as important means to achieve environmental justice. Many of the suggestions, however, appear far from the focus of most present political considerations. In a political climate permeated by calls for reduced budgets at local, state and federal levels, the allocation of resources for effectively developing and implementing the social programs and policies advocated by these authors seems improbable and, at present, the workability of many of the recommendations is questionable. However, there are elements in many of the recommendations that emphasize community-based actions. It is here where the author's ideas for social and political change appear to hold the most promise.

Perhaps a better characterization of this book is expressed in the foreword by Charles Moody. He suggests that the ideas presented here should be viewed as a *challenge* to policy makers and citizens alike to think and act responsibly about the environment and civil rights. Tentative solutions are suggested in this book. Now the feasibility and potential for implementation of these projects needs to be thoroughly assessed with careful consideration of the resources available to carry them out. More work must also be done to map out issues that remain uncharted and questions that remain unanswered. For instance the relative effects of race and class on the distribution of environmental hazards remain vague. While these concerns are of particular sociological import, they should not take away from the authors' more pertinent emphases on addressing the conditions leading to environmental inequities and attempting to correct them.

This book and its 1992 companion should be considered essential reading for anyone interested in issues of race, class, social policy, development and environmentalism. Some of the leading authors in the areas of environmental racism, inequality and policy bring important ideas into this work and raise vital questions about the condition environmental policy and civil rights. The clarity with which the arguments are presented, the intelligent editing and the significance of the issues covered should result in a wide readership among scholars, activists, policy-makers and possibly the general public.

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References

Bryant, Bunyan and Paul Mohai. 1992. *Race and the Incidence of Environmental Hazards: A Time for Discourse*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press

Lives in the Balance: Youth, Poverty, and Education in Watts, by Ann C. Diver-Stamnes. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1995. 172 pp.

In *Lives in the Balance*, Diver-Stamnes guides us on a voyage into the riveting, oftentimes shocking and saddening realities of inner-city life for today's youth in Watts. Throughout this journey we are introduced to many individuals for whom poverty and violence are a constant in their lives, and their stories challenge us to confront our own assumptions and (mis)conceptions regarding life in the inner-city.

Diver-Stamnes combines her own experience as a high-school teacher in Watts with current research from a variety of disciplines, such as sociology, psychology, and education, to dispute interpretations of poverty which blame the victims for their circumstances. In contrast to a "culture of poverty" approach, the perspective here is remarkably social-structural. Major issues such as academic achievement, gangs, substance abuse, and families are explored with an eye towards understanding how major social institutions have failed a significant percentage of our population. Each of these issues is discussed individually and in relation to one another. Inequalities in the public education system play an important part in understanding how poverty is perpetuated. While gang membership and substance abuse are often simplistically viewed as indicators of "bad kids," this book digs deeper and examines social as well as personal reasons behind such behavior. Families are also discussed at length, with much attention being given to numerous ways of "doing family" that bring into question the assumptions and consequences of contemporary social policy concerning family.

While the majority of the book examines recent past and present aspects of these issues and some connections among them, the last chapters look toward the future and social change. The Watts riots of the 1960s and 1990s illustrate the tragedy and despair that can result from inattention to massive social and political inequalities. The book gives a resounding call to address these inequalities before a third violent uprising occurs. Although many scholars are quick to point out the problems they find with contemporary society, Diver-Stamnes takes the necessary step forward and offers suggestions for change. She offers mostly long-term solutions for improving family life, academic success, employment opportunities, stress, and mental and physical health. The emphasis is on addressing problems in these areas simultaneously, as "any viable solutions must involve the whole cloth rather than the separate threads" (Diver-Stamnes 1995:148).

It is this final section on suggestions for change that I find particularly impressive. By arguing what she perceives to be major obstacles for youth in Watts and then calling for specific remedies to alleviate these problems, the author challenges readers as social actors to work for social change. While much of the work focuses on how the economic and educational systems have failed the people of Watts, the final message is empowering, reminding us that individuals through collective action can make a difference. Overall, these final suggestions are sound, but I wonder how feasible they would be to implement