Reel Power: Hollywood Cinema and American Supremacy, by Matthew Alford. New York, NY: Pluto Press, 2010. 218 pp. $75.00 cloth. ISBN: 9780745329833.

At a time when the United States is reassessing its support of foreign dictators and the sustainability of its world police ethos, many onlookers have wondered how it is that outlandish defense spending has enjoyed such a fixed and untouchable status in the national imaginary. Matthew Alford’s Reel Power offers what may be an important part of the answer to this complex question. This engaging read considers the discursive and institutional structures through which the film industry and military industrial complex are mutually supportive.

While the book is not unique in its subject matter, it succeeds in a number of distinguishing ways. Critical media scholars frequently bemoan the failure of textual analyses of popular media to discuss adequately the broader political and economic context. Reel Power should be seen as a welcome rejection of this macro/micro binary. Without giving ground to hyperbolic and simplistic conspiracy theories, the first part of the book contains an informed and sufficiently detailed discussion of a variety of “high level structural influences” that surround the processes of film-making, film distribution and film reception. In general, the influence of concentrated corporate ownership, and commercialization are not new ideas, but the specifics of these processes are constantly shifting. Alford’s insights are particularly rare and startling in his discussions of the interventions of public relations divisions of state agencies. Additionally, entertainment corporations relentlessly introduce reworkings of old ideas into the popular cultural canon. Analyses of media industries therefore require relentless updating to remain relevant and Reel Power is engaging and instructive in this regard.

Following a substantial analysis of these contextual factors, Alford considers the effects of these arrangements through the skillful analysis of a large number of contemporary films. While questioning the meaning of traditional genres might be a more sexy scholarly project, the choice to organize these discussions into familiar film genres such as war, action, science fiction, and comedy, lends a user-friendly clarity to the analysis in Reel Power. Alford is able identify the opportunities for political critique that are unique to each genre and the tropes and frames that consistently foreclose these possibilities. Not surprisingly, the book reveals a pattern of simplified, jingoistic, and unproblematic views of United States military interventions and foreign policy. Reel Power is both nuanced and relentless in revealing these tendencies even in films that appear to buck this trend. On the whole Reel Power offers the reader an attractive and up-to-date set of tools for the critical literacy that should be mandatory in today’s media-saturated environments.

Is Killing Wrong?: A Study in Pure Sociology, by Mark Cooney. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2009. 254pp. $39.50 cloth. ISBN: 9780813928265.

Many would argue that homicide violates the basic moral principles of any society. However, as Mark Cooney’s text demonstrates, the actual reactions to homicide are far more variable than any discussion of right and wrong would predict. Rather than being condemned, there are many cases in which those who murder are overlooked or even applauded by communities. This behavior is not unique to any particular culture or world region. In his book, Mark Cooney attempts to address why there are so many legal and informal community reactions to homicide. To do this, he provides cross-cultural evidence in support of a general sociological theory, “pure sociology,” attributed to Donald Black’s “Sociology of Law.” Given the clarity of explanation and the many practical implications of this text, Cooney’s work will be useful to sociologists,
students, and those interested in the legal process. His research provides evidence that pure sociology may have far-reaching applications that span several fields of study.

The basic premise of pure sociology is that many outcomes can be explained by the social geometry of the elements involved. This social geometry can be observed through various types of social distance and direction. Cooney’s text includes discussion of vertical, organizational, radial, cultural, and relational distance. These refer to socioeconomic status, characteristics of one’s social group, measures of social integration, cultural differences, and victim-offender ties, respectively. Cooney provides evidence that shows that the murder of those with lower socioeconomic status, the socially marginalized, those with varying cultural backgrounds, and those with close ties to the perpetrator will be sanctioned less harshly and less often than the murder of victims with higher social status and stronger social ties. Further, murders among those with greater social status are treated as more serious incidents than those only involving persons of lower social standing. Cooney also notes the roles of both partisans and settlement agents (judges, etc.) in relation to different types of social distance. His evidence suggests that partisans, and to some degree settlement agents, side with those of higher socioeconomic status, the more centralized, and those culturally similar. These gravitations put these persons at an even greater legal advantage over others, providing an explanation for some of the inconsistencies evident in our legal system. Overall, Cooney finds broad support for pure sociology as it applies to societal responses to homicide.

*Advertising, Commercial Spaces and the Urban*, by Anne M. Cronin. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. 215 pp. $85.00 cloth. ISBN: 9780230216808.

In *Advertising, Commercial Spaces and the Urban*, Anne M. Cronin explores the outdoor advertising industry and the impact of its products on urban space. The first half of the book draws on an in-depth ethnographic study of the outdoor advertising industry in the United Kingdom. Focusing on the commercial practices of the outdoor advertising industry, Cronin utilizes observation and interviews with employees at several media owning companies, media agencies, market research companies, and industry trade bodies to analyze the effects of the relationships between such organizations on potential consumers’ understandings of space. She highlights the importance of time, space, and movement in the interaction between outdoor advertising and potential consumers. In particular, she posits the existence of a time-space of “commodity rhythms,” which sync people and their movements to the rhythms of commercial innovation and promotion.

The second half of the book explores the author’s photographic studies of outdoor advertising in Manchester (UK) and Detroit (USA). Cronin considers the physical attributes and urban surroundings of outdoor advertising, analyzing in what ways outdoor advertising mediates urban space materially, temporally, and politically. The juxtaposition of the photographs from Manchester and Detroit illustrate the effects of varying socio-economic conditions on outdoor advertising. The book concludes by bringing together the previous analyses and examining them within the context of public space, commercialization, and public address, ultimately exploring the creation of an urban vernacular. *Advertising, Commercial Spaces and the Urban* reads well and offers an insightful and illustrated analysis of the outdoor advertising industry. The book would be particularly helpful for those interested in consumerism and the interaction of people and space.

*HIV Treatment and Prevention Technologies in International Perspective*, edited by Mark Davis and Corinne Squire. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. 210pp. $90.00 cloth. ISBN: 9780230238190.

HIV Treatment and Prevention Technologies in International Perspective is an interdisciplinary collection of articles, the majority of which were presented in the annual conference of the British Sociological Association in 2007. They address questions situated in what the editors call today’s
“post-treatment” or “treatment-possibility” period when medical science has developed antiretroviral treatment that remains inaccessible to most of the more than 33 million people around the world affected by the pandemic. The book brings together a number of case studies that explore the interaction between “HIV technologies” and the social and cultural contexts affecting HIV/AIDS outcomes in countries with different levels of prevalence and resources such as Africa, Canada and the United Kingdom. The authors use a biopolitical notion of technology to illuminate a range of treatment and prevention strategies: biomedical treatments, psychosocial programs, communication campaigns, or social practices such as parents talking with children about sex. They give special attention to discuss the role of community participation and involvement. Theoretical and policy implications are also discussed in this book, offering an updated vision of the field for anyone interested in HIV/AIDS.

Food Justice, by Robert Gottlieb and Anupama Joshi. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2010. 290 pp. $27.95 cloth. ISBN: 9780262072915.

Food Justice is an engrossing introduction to what is becoming an increasingly important mission: to open up global, national, and community food pathways for social and political action in an attempt to “bring about more just policies” surrounding the production and distribution of our food (p. 5).

According to the authors, Food Justice “is organized as a seed-to-table snapshot of the food system as seen through a food justice lens.” It covers everything from the working conditions of migrant laborers to the environmental impacts of farming, as well as gives the reader an idea of the kind of work currently being done by various organizations and political initiatives to improve our food systems. The first chapter of the book focuses on unjust practices in and the environmental consequences of food growing. Chapter Two examines the practical considerations behind the placement of grocery stores and other food sources and how these decisions on the part of corporations impact neighborhoods and obesity rates. The third chapter looks further into how we prepare and eat our food and discusses the resulting health implications. The fourth chapter shifts to a national-level lens and looks at how our country regulates the food industry; sections in this chapter include “Farm Bill Debates” and “School Food Politics.” Chapter Five, “The Food System Goes Global,” describes potential repercussions of the increasingly global nature of our food chains. The sixth chapter, “Growing Justice,” marks the beginning of the second section of the book, which focuses on food advocacy and how some organizations are already enacting change in this arena; it investigates working conditions for farm workers, new farming practices, and workplace organizing efforts. Chapter Seven looks at community access to healthy food. Chapter Eight “describes strategies for developing new food pathways and recounts the efforts of various groups along these lines....” The ninth chapter, “Food Justice Policies,” looks at political movements at the school and community level and how they factor into the larger debate about food justice. Finally, Chapter Ten is a discussion of the nature of the emerging food justice movement. Food Justice is an eye-opening treatment of an important subject that has something to offer every reader, and will prove especially useful to those with a keen interest in learning about, and perhaps changing, where their food comes from.

Educating Elites: Class Privilege and Educational Advantage, edited by Adam Howard and Rubén A. Gaztambide-Fernández. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010. 214pp. $37.95 paper. ISBN: 9781607094593.

Informed by sociology and a variety of approaches within education—including those common to curriculum and instruction, education theory, and education policy—Adam Howard and Rubén Gaztambide-Fernández establish a new research agenda for the investigation of the nexus between...
education and privilege. This agenda, as demonstrated by their work, is capable of revealing the myriad ways that advantage has become a naturalized part of educational systems.

Beginning with the objectively verifiable assertions that ongoing stratification by socioeconomic status exists and that education has increasingly become a globalized phenomenon, the contributions in Educating Elites put forth a novel theoretical view linked by three related insights. First, the works establish that class is one dimension of inequality inseparable from others—accomplished with particular success in the Gaztambide-Fernández and Raygine DiAgoumi chapter on students of color in an elite boarding school. Next, they demonstrate that the reproduction of elites occurs in a variety of educational contexts—driven home most forcefully in Beth Cooper Benjamin’s account of a Girl Scout troop in an affluent community. Finally, throughout the text, a variety of methodological points of view that question the status quo—including feminist, critical, and post-colonial scholarship—are brought to bear on the question of elite education.

Throughout this work, contributors draw upon past scholarship on elite education and seminal works in sociological theory to determine their ongoing relevance to the question of how of social and economic elites are reproduced through education. These investigations are focused on three interlocking environments: secondary schools (primarily emphasizing private schools in general and boarding schools in particular), the colleges and universities (focused on issues associated with college access and student experience while in college), and the broader educational environment (including informal and nonformal educational environments).

While Educating Elites certainly demonstrates that social and economic privilege is reproduced through the educational environment, it also indicates the wide variety of ways that this reproduction is experienced by individuals. Thus, “elite” status emerges as a socially-constructed and socially-contested phenomenon. In its discussion of the structural realities of elite education and its impact on individuals, this work will be useful to sociologists interested in institutionalism or education.

Latino Migrants in the Jewish State: Undocumented Lives in Israel, by Barak Kalir. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010. 262pp. $24.95 paper. ISBN: 9780253222213.

Barak Kalir explores a previously obscure niche of migrants in Latino Migrants in the Jewish State, a book that is ideal for readers interested in migration as a human process as well as anyone interested in contemporary Israeli political and social issues. The book is a culmination of an ethnographic study that looks at non-Jewish Latino migrants who went to Israel looking for economic or religious rewards. The study was conducted in Israel among undocumented Latino workers as well as in Ecuador, where the author was able to connect with former migrants who were deported from Israel. This transcontinental theme provides the reader with a comprehensive understanding of the unique challenges, rewards, and consequences faced by Latino migrants in Israel.

One of the aspects that distinguish migrant workers in Israel from migrant workers in other countries is that they are not competing for jobs with the local population, but rather doing work that Israelis will not do. Kalir unpacks this distinct characteristic by exploring how and why the Israeli government decided to import guest workers as an alternative to the Palestinian unskilled labor force. Kalir also dissects the strict labor laws governing (and exploiting) guest workers in Israel and how those laws have made the illegal status of “undocumented worker” far more appealing to migrants in search of employment in Israel.

Kalir explores every facet of the lives of Latino immigrants in Israel, including employment, lifestyle, family formation, and the various ways migrants from Latin America came to Israel—both on the conceptual and practical levels. Kalir also devotes a substantial amount of time to discussing the factors that allowed the Latino migrant population to become well assimilated into Israeli society. The reader is thus introduced to the concept of “constrained transnationalism,”
which describes the limited ability of Latino migrants living in Israel to travel back and forth to their home country—a factor that ultimately led them to embrace assimilation and extend their migratory status.

*Latino Migrants in the Jewish State* provides the reader with the necessary historical context that made Israel an attractive destination for migrant workers, making this book accessible to those who may not have a strong background in Middle Eastern or Israeli politics. Equally important, Kalir makes a point of placing his analysis of Latino migrants within the geo-political reality of the state of Israel. In discussing the evolution of Israel’s strict deportation policy, Kalir reveals one of many schisms between the Israeli government and civil society. Through the discussion of the lives of Latino migrants in Israel, he illustrates how non-governmental organizations worked to earn rights for these migrants and eventually win citizenships for a limited number of migrants’ children.

*How to Become a Scandal: Adventures in Bad Behavior*, by Laura Kipnis. New York, NY: Metropolitan Books, 2010. 209pp. $24.00 cloth. ISBN: 9780805089790.

In *How to Become a Scandal*, Laura Kipnis discusses the social functions of the public scandal, analyzing the self-destructive tendencies of the offenders and how the public builds such juicy stories. Kipnis focuses on individual scandals rather than institutional ones, “which are a different kettle of fish” (p. 21). The book aims to develop the “virgin terrain” of scandal theory as a cultural phenomenon (p. 7), and to make us more aware of our tendency toward split consciousness, in which the scandalizers “keep ‘forgetting’ about social consequences,” and the audiences “keep ‘forgetting’ about how routine such lapses are” (p. 13). The book is divided into two parts, Downfalls and Uproars, which explore both flavors of scandal respectively.

The two chapters in Downfalls detail the cases of “The Lovelorn Astronaut” and “An Unreasonable Judge.” Captain Lisa Nowak’s unforgettable incident in 2007, where she drove 950 miles to confront the other woman in her “Celestial Love Triangle,” brought her to the headlines when, upon her arrest, she was discovered to have been using diapers during the trip. The “Unreasonable Judge,” is Sol Wachtler, a former chief justice of the New York State Court of Appeals, whose alter ego, Detective David Purdy, tried to help Wachtler out of his difficult situation with a romantic affair. However, the FBI had been following him; Wachtler wrote *After the Madness: A Judge’s Own Personal Memoir* in prison. Kipnis relates him to the archetypal tragic character.

The following chapters, “The Whistle-Blower” and “An Over-imaginative Writer” in Uproars, examine the “situation of the national laughing-stock” (p. 114). Kipnis discusses Linda Tripp’s betrayal of Monica Lewinsky about her affair with former President Bill Clinton. However, Tripp’s attempted exposure (and recorded phone conversations) backfired, leaving her to be ridiculed publicly. “An Over-imaginative Writer” is James Frey, who passed off his almost entirely fictitious tale of a life of adversity and squalor as his personal memoir. Kipnis then discusses the self-defeating tendencies of both Frey and the very angry Oprah Winfrey—a parallel that perhaps, as with scandals, “tell[s] us things we didn’t want to know” (p. 190).

While the book addresses the public scandal based on sociological themes of deviance, norms, and cultural uproar, *How to Become a Scandal* is written in a journalistic style. The author is a professor at Northwestern University in the Department of Radio/TV/Film. There are no in-text or note citations (there is a bibliography at the end of the book), and no index; Kipnis states that the basic facts of these cases are on the public record (p. 199). Her examination and analysis of these memorable headline stories provide fresh insight. This book would be of interest to students in the sociology of deviance, and would be appropriate as supplementary reading on the social construction of deviance in the public media. For both academic and non-academic audiences, *How to Become a Scandal* illustrates how and why laughing-stocks come about, and engages the reader with humor through
the stories’ content and the author’s writing style.

*Someone Has to Fail: The Zero-Sum Game of Public Schooling*, by David F. Labaree. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010. 304 pp. $29.95 cloth. ISBN: 9780674050686.

This book does not claim to provide a solution for solving the problems of public education. Rather, it reflects on the educational system and reform efforts as they have evolved since the common school movement of the nineteenth century. David Labaree describes the shift from a political rationale of educating citizens to the current market rationale, which involves educating consumers. He tells the story of major education reform movements, noting that the common school movement was the “one big success story,” whereas the reform efforts that followed (the progressive movement and civil rights movement) made only modest impacts on the system.

The current structure of the system, Labaree argues, contributes to the difficulty in making real change. In particular, he focuses on the organization of schools and how the structure makes it difficult for reform efforts to reach the classroom level, and as a result, impact instruction. Another challenge within schools is the relationship between reform efforts and teaching. As we expect teachers to address the needs of individual students, they also need latitude to make decisions about what works best in their classrooms.

Throughout the book, Labaree refers to the differing goals of the education reformers and consumers, and how these goals have contributed to the current state of education. The goal of reformers has been to fix social problems through schooling. However, educational consumers (parents and students) have individual goals in mind, such as getting ahead or maintaining a competitive advantage. He argues that consumers have had a greater impact in shaping the system. Although we see education as a mechanism for social equality and mobility, it is difficult to achieve because standards have shifted upward. High school education is no longer the pinnacle of educational achievement; college and graduate school have become the new standard.

Despite a variety of efforts, it seems that each wave of education reform has failed to achieve the social goals of equality or mobility for all. As long as consumers steer the ship, the result of education reform will be what is best for our own children, rather than what is best for all children.

*States and Power*, by Richard Lachmann. Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2010. 233pp. $22.95 paper. ISBN: 9780745645391.

Richard Lachmann’s *States and Power* traces the sociological development of state authority through human history. With such a large scope of inquiry, a noticeable and fully fitting Weberian tint to the work comes as little surprise. Despite its lofty goals, Lachmann here crafts a well-grounded and thorough examination of the sources and expressions of power. Avoiding empty abstractions, Lachmann situates the fountain of political power as existing fluidly between individuals, opportunities, and institutions.

In order to understand the complex relationship and development that have taken place in the process of state formation, Lachmann begins his analysis by examining how and why the first states formed. Out of a barbarous past characterized by acute competition for resources, informal social formation began the process of consolidation that would eventually culminate in the development of the contemporary nation-state.

To understand the ways notions of state power have changed over time, Lachmann cites evidence from the Roman Empire—both in how it emerged out of previous version of statehood and the impact it had on future iterations. This speaks to one of the primary strengths of *States and Power*, the way Lachmann weaves specific cases into the larger socio-political narrative. Each chapter follows the same general outline: a theoretical discussion built on previous arguments encapsulates the contours of a issue, followed by specific cases that provide an historical frame through which to view the theories. Chapter Two, for example, traces the various theories of power and how they interact with the formation of states.
After a brief discussion of Weber, Mann, and Rational Choice Theory, Lachmann offers case studies of Spain, France, Britain, the Netherlands, Russia and Eastern Europe, and Japan.

This structure provides a nice balance to the work, with the interplay between theoretical discussion and case studies strengthening both. Although this interplay gives a solid breadth to the work, it makes for a somewhat abbreviated theoretical debate. There are a number of theories or approaches that would help explain the development of states and their articulations of power. While it is an overall benefit that Lachmann does not get bogged down in overly dense theoretical debates, a somewhat more comprehensive treatment of theories of power would have lent the work a more complete feel.

As it is, States and Power provides a wonderful starting point for someone seeking to understand the development of states and political power. Its fusion of theory, history, politics, and sociology situate the work as an entertaining and informative read. States and Power provides a brief glimpse at the past, present, and future interaction between individuals and institutions in shaping their political environment.

Digital Diversity: Youth, Equity, and Information Technology, edited by E. Dianne Looker and Ted D. Naylor. Ontario, CAN: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2010. 191pp. $38.95 paper. ISBN: 9781554581856.

This book explores the influences of geographic distance and culture on differences in access, use, and practices with information and communication technology (ICT) within Canada. It is an edited volume with many topics and authors, though one consistent theme throughout is a desire to expand the discourse of the “digital divide” to one of “digital diversity,” their intent being to recognize that differences in access, while important, are not sufficient to account for differences in practices among distinct regions and cultural groups. The study of the Inuit culture within Canada’s northern Nanuvit territory illustrates not only issues of access, but concerns of cultural difference that alter functional use patterns, most notably concerns that Internet use may negatively affect attempts at cultural preservation. Among dominant cultural groups, geographic distance from urban centers changes use patterns for youth. Here too, access is an issue, though among rural youth with Internet access use tends to be higher than among urban youth.

Two of the chapters examine the role of ICT in education; the first of which discusses its role in teacher preparation programs. They find little overall coordination of ICT in teacher preparation. Rather, the implementation and usage tends to be left to individual teachers, with widely varying results. The authors acknowledge within most research an implicit and unproven assumption that more integration of ICT equals more effective pedagogy. They call for more public discussion about how ICT should be used in pedagogical practices.

The other chapter on pedagogy examines K-12 teachers and their classroom practices with ICT. Teachers report positive feelings about technology overall, and use ICT to support a wide range of practices, primarily for administrative, support, and planning functions, along with some inclusion in classroom lessons. The authors believe their findings dispute the notion that classroom teachers are the “problem” holding back ICT integration. Echoing other studies, the authors find a general dearth of using technology to support higher-order learning, though they suggest that identifying this as a “problem” speaks to a false assumption among educational researchers which ties adoption of technology into more fundamental pedagogical changes. This book is a worthwhile addition to the literature on the uses of ICT in both culture and pedagogy.

The Healthy Ancestor: Embodied Inequality and the Revitalization of Native Hawai‘ian Health, by Juliet McMullin. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2010. 199pp. $29.95 paper. ISBN: 9781598745009.

The Healthy Ancestor brings you into the everyday world of Native Hawai‘ians in Hawai‘i and California to expose the socioeconomic inequality suffered by Hawai‘ians and the health disparity that is embodied.
Juliet McMullin supports her claims through a series of revealing anthropological interviews and historical context analysis. This work is an important addition specifically to the studies of population health and epidemiology; however, anyone interested in social sciences or history will be enlightened.

The reader is introduced to the topic with a briefing of how the colonization of Hawai‘i has alienated Hawai‘ians from the land and contributed to their poor contemporary health. McMullin discloses how she, as a mainland Hawai‘ian herself, had to manage her identity to ensure objectivity. Traditional medicinal Hawai‘ian practices are explained and compared to modern western biomedical practices in terms of access. The reasons why Hawai‘ians choose one practice over the other or both are analyzed through interview quotes and anthropological quantitative analysis. It is found that inland Hawai‘ians have a more unique community-based Hawai‘ian definition of health, while mainland Hawai‘ians adopt the American mainstream individual-oriented definition of health. Inland Hawai‘ians reminisce about their healthy ancestors and strive to be as healthy, but are eventually discouraged by the social-economic barriers that impede a healthy and traditional diet.

**Changing the Culture of Academic Medicine: Perspectives of Women Faculty**, by Linda H. Pololi. Lebanon, NH: Dartmouth College Press, 2010. 179pp. $24.95 paper. ISBN: 9781584655671.

Changing the Culture of Academic Medicine is an examination of the current state of American medical culture by Linda H. Pololi, a senior scientist at Brandeis University and resident scholar in the Women’s Studies Research Center. In this book, Pololi uses qualitative interviews from two different studies, current sociological theory and her insider insight to support her stance that women and minorities are uniquely qualified to change the culture of academic medicine. This is especially true for women, because while they are attending medical school in larger and larger numbers, they are still not achieving leadership positions in accordance with those numbers. They remain outsiders in a system that does not seem to value their teaching, social justice and team oriented contributions.

Pololi gives many facts such as the shockingly low number of female deans in medical schools in the United States (only 8 out of 131). She also dispels the rumors that are used to explain this discordance in leadership roles, such as women leaving for childbearing purposes, lack of ambition, or necessary skills.

**Why Girls Fight: Female Youth Violence in the Inner City**, by Cindy D. Ness. New York, NY: New York University Press, 2010. 185pp. $21.00 paper. ISBN: 9780814758410.

In Why Girls Fight: Female Youth Violence in the Inner City, Cindy D. Ness, examines the culture of girls fighting in two inner city neighborhoods in Philadelphia. Ness gives the background story of the economic and structural factors that enabled the current culture to emerge, looking at the family structure and kin networks that contribute to patterns of girls’ violence. Ness provides a detailed picture of the girls and how they conceptualize fighting and the role it plays in status. Ness uses the voices of these inner city women to tell with their own reasons why they fight, at the same time exposing the structural inequalities of their world. There is an interesting generational dynamic to the fighting, where mothers fight alongside their daughters, showing that this is not a stage in life which these women outgrow but patterns they continue most of their lives. In the book there is also a section on the neighborhoods and the norms and cultures of these neighborhoods—fighting to protect your honor is a deeply embedded norm in the neighborhood, a way of life for these girls. Ness also dissects the multitude of reasons why girls fight. This is a good ethnographic depiction of girls fighting in the inner city, placing it in a broader context of issues that will appeal to anyone wishing to understand girls fighting in the inner cities as well as scholars in anthropology, criminology, and the social sciences. Why Girls Fight is a very accessible book and would engage almost any reader.
Throughout the book Pololi refers to women’s outsider status as both a way to explain their lack of advancement and an advantage in their ability to critique the status quo. The book makes a convincing case that excluding women due to their refusal to adapt to the system is the reason that the system is perpetuated in its current state. Women are not as suited to a culture that encourages competitive individualistic behavior rather than collaboration. Advancing women into leadership roles without forcing them to compromise their ethics, however, may be the answer. This book is both a critique and a roadmap for academic medicine and women’s place within it.

The Energy Glut: Climate Change and the Politics of Fatness, by Ian Roberts, with Phil Edwards. New York, NY: Zed Books, 2010. 182 pp. $26.95 paper. ISBN: 9781848135185.

Fat—it is a short ugly word with an even worse connotation. By this point, New Year’s resolutions to lose the love-handles have come and gone, with good intentions but minimal results. In The Energy Glut, Ian Roberts and Phil Edwards present an enlightening reflection upon our waistlines, but they do not stop at our widening girth. Despite the modern advances of science, each of us has only one body. Is fatness a lifestyle issue or a part of something shockingly bigger? Roberts and Edwards note the decreasing amounts of physical activity and increased fat intake while also recommending a look at larger trends over the past half-century, rather than just the present. The problem of obesity did not simply happen overnight. Their attention upon the role of cars (less walking due to decreased opportunities and the volume/speed of traffic, etc.) was particularly insightful. They note “transport and food are intimately interconnected” (p. 55).

Roberts and Edwards continue their discussion by looking at the role of genetics, oil, climate change, road safety, and economic profit. They begin focusing on personal body fat but quickly transition to society’s use of fossil fuels and its impact upon our planet. The initial answer for these accumulating dilemmas is the bicycle—it quickens and eases transport while still avoiding bombarding the environment with toxins. The connections between fossil fuel energy usage, climate change, and fatness may be startling, but they are true. In order to tackle fatness individually, we must first confront climate change. This will require reclaiming our streets, neighborhoods, and homes, but we cannot solve this health problem unless we look at the hidden root. This book will be useful for those studying health and the environment.

Beyond Bars: Rejoining Society After Prison, by Jeffrey Ian Ross and Stephen C. Richards. New York, NY: Alpha Books, 2009. 224 pp. $12.95 paper. ISBN: 9781592578511.

The authors are clear in their purpose for writing this book: it is a practical guide for those who are about to be released or have recently been released from jail or prison. As nearly half of the people entering a correctional facility have previously served time, the authors felt it was important to provide guidance to this population to help them avoid parole violations or the temptation to commit new crimes.

However, it may also be helpful for families and friends of soon-to-be released prisoners. As the book discusses the difficult transition from prison life to life outside of prison, it may help families understand the hardships former prisoners encounter. It may also provide a useful resource for those who are part of the criminal justice system or those who study the system.

Each chapter provides information on a different challenge faced upon release, from finding a job to finding housing to re-establishing relationships with family and friends. While each section provides a great deal of useful information, it also includes vignettes of two fictional inmates, Joe and Jill Convict. The challenges these characters face along their journey represent challenges recently released prisoners may face. Though there are many similarities, the authors are careful to acknowledge that male and female inmates face different challenges.

Jails and prisons release hundreds of thousands of men and women each year. The book provides guidance in an area where
some correctional facilities have failed in preparing those reentering society. Though it provides hope that one can succeed upon release from prison, it also is clear that those who do not follow the rules may find themselves back in the cycle of incarceration, or the “perpetual incarceration machine.” This book is a follow-up to an earlier book by the same authors, *Behind Bars: Surviving Prison* (2002).

*Rural Education for the Twenty-First Century: Identity, Place, and Community In a Globalizing World*, edited by Kai A. Schafft and Alecia Youngblood Jackson. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010. 311pp. $29.95 paper. ISBN: 9780271036830.

Addressing the issue of what happens both to students within rural education and the practice itself in the midst of a global mass migration to urban areas, Kai Schafft and Alecia Jackson have brought together a group of authors with backgrounds in education, rural sociology, sociology, demography, political science, and community development. Despite the variety of academic backgrounds and home departments represented by the authors, the work maintains a clear emphasis on qualitative methodologies, critical approaches, and the global-local context of modern schooling.

Successfully establishing rural education as a discursive space through which the identity of students, schools, and communities are written, Schafft and Jackson in their introduction ask their contributors to comment on three related components of that phenomenon. In the first section of the work, including Chapters One through Four, rurality is established as a discursive field within which rural identity is constructed, reproduced, and contested at multiple levels. The second section, comprised of Chapters Five through Eight, contextualizes the local phenomenon of rurality within larger, often global, social currents—including, but by no means limited to, neoliberalism, economic change, standardization, and marketization. In the final section, running from Chapters Nine to Thirteen, contributors share accounts of actual practices that represent a hopeful, if uncertain, way forward for rural education.

A concluding chapter written by Schafft, masterfully pulls together the preceding chapters to suggest that, within a larger movement away from an education sensitive to community and societal needs toward one dominated by bureaucratic institutions, community engagement and educational improvement initiatives offer the unique possibility for rural education to contest these social changes. As such this work is of interest to scholars and practitioners interested in rural sociology, education, and public policy.

*Activity, Incomes and Social Welfare: A Comparison across Four New EU Member States*, edited by Manuela Sofia Stănculescu and Tine Stanovnik. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2009. 283pp. $69.95 paper. ISBN: 9780754677772.

*Activity, Incomes, and Social Welfare* examines changes in economic stratification across four of the newer European Union member states—Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and Slovenia. This volume is primarily concerned with changes to the labor market and household income, systematically comparing shifts in socioeconomic inequality and social benefits from the early 1990s, as these countries faced economic shock while transitioning from a socialist to a market economy, through the early 2000s, as the nations approached EU membership status. The editors first present two chapters of comparative perspectives on all four nations, examining the structure of the population and labor force and then income and poverty. The following chapters explore these issues as they relate specifically to each of the four countries. Overall, while Slovenia and Hungary have had consistently higher incomes than Bulgaria and Romania, which are more heavily dependent on agriculture, changing demographics present an economic challenge across all four countries (similar to the rest of Europe), as an aging population becomes more dependent upon pension income. Although little data is available, the chapters on Bulgaria and Romania
discuss implications of the national economy for the Roma, who have generally fared worse in post-socialist economies.

The strength of this book is the detail of the data presented. Although standards of record-keeping for particular economic indicators have varied within and among the countries analyzed, the information is systematically presented and useful for understanding the subtleties of the economic transition for prospective EU members. Furthermore, the editors suggest that this compilation of information, while interesting in retrospect, might be vital to these nations’ policymakers who now face the challenges of another economic recession—Slovenia and Hungary’s second and Bulgaria and Romania’s third in less than two decades. What is strongly apparent across the case studies, though, is that despite these structural economic changes within each nation, pre-existing financial conditions have clearly influenced each country’s current conditions following the economic transitions of the past twenty years.

Surviving Teenage Motherhood: Myths and Realities, by Helen Stapleton. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. 241pp. $85.00 cloth. ISBN: 9780230579200.

Helen Stapleton’s ethnography of adolescent girls’ experiences with teenage motherhood is valuable for at least two reasons. First, it adds to a growing body of literature demonstrating the wide range of women’s experiences with teenage motherhood. Thus, policies seeking to alleviate the negative effects of nonmarital fertility may have trouble adapting to the heterogeneous circumstances teen mothers encounter. Second, to the extent that we conceive of single motherhood as a family status rather than a singular experience in an increasingly complex life course, these conceptions should view teenage fertility as a reaction to sociostructural constraints and idiosyncratic circumstances rather than as a sub-optimal family structure.

Methodologically, there is much to admire about Stapleton’s study. Stapleton draws on two cohorts, one based primarily in Wales and the other in South Yorkshire. Interviews with the teenage girls, their boyfriends, mothers, and several midwives examine adolescent experiences of teenage pregnancy, from conception to several years after the birth. The amount of rich detail here is noteworthy for theory building. For example, the teens interviewed demonstrated that, at least in some ways, early motherhood may be considered beneficial and normative, rather than problematic and deviant, behavior, particularly if it helps young women escape disadvantaged and sometimes dangerous homes. The literature has yet to explore fully this possibility.

The book does have one minor shortcoming, however. The book is steeped in feminist theory, which may dampen readability for those unfamiliar with these issues. However, the essential point remains clear. Teenage motherhood appears to exact a toll on a variety of people. While a background of poverty, violence, and class disadvantage may not, ceteris paribus, predestine individuals to detrimental outcomes, the cumulative effect of these factors likely predisposes young women to single motherhood. Young girls’ experiences with teenage motherhood are worthy of more study.

The Lifestyle Puzzle: Who We Are in the 21st Century, by Henrik Vejlaard. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books. 245pp. $19.00 paper. ISBN: 9781616141851.

Using the analogy of a jigsaw puzzle, this book seeks to understand the extent to which, in a seemingly disordered and chaotic social structure, there are recognizable patterns and trends to the way we live. Henrik Vejlaard asserts that Americans’ status is no longer easily ascertained considering their appearance and race, and asks how we can read others’ statuses today. He uses in-depth trend analysis to get at this question and considers subtle, non-verbal markers of self-expression—fashion, color choices, logos—to understand these trends. The pattern he discovers, he identifies as modern tribalism, a means of small-group identification.

The analogy of putting together a puzzle runs throughout the book and is a useful means of sorting out American lifestyles. In the two introductory chapters, the author is “laying out” and “sorting” the pieces; trying
to explain various lifestyles and understand the vast diversity of choices available. In Chapters Three-Four, Vejlgaard uses trend analysis to explore how the pieces fit together and the picture begins to emerge. Chapter Five introduces the notion of modern tribalism and explores the ways in which our society today can be classified as tribal. In Chapters Six-Seven, the author further explores the extent to which American society fits his model. Finally, in the concluding chapter, Vejlgaard offers his view of American society to come.

Drawing on fashion and other forms of personal expression as well as on trend sociology, the author provides an interesting and convincing argument for the consideration of modern tribalism. This book will be most interesting to those who study pop culture, fashion, and consumer tastes, but will also appeal to readers with more broad interests in American culture and trend sociology.

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