

party, that the elites sought new schemas that led them to adopt the American lessons with gusto. By contrast, the elites in the Philippines, who were not subjected to the same challenges, continued to use their old idioms with smaller modifications which, in turn, caused them to adjust their political conduct in equally minor ways. What matters most, the book concludes, is whether the elites in each case experienced recalcitrance or validation of their schemas as they tried to make sense of their shifting circumstances.

American Empire seems to be about half right. It makes a convincing case that persistent cultural schemas were behind the Puerto Rican and Filipino elites' similar domesticating response to American tutelary rule. It also makes sense that the Puerto Rican elites sought out new schemas when circumstances repeatedly rendered their existing ones invalid. The book does not, however, demonstrate that changed cultural schemas were responsible for the divergence in the conduct of the political elites later on. Instead, the book relies on the strategy of quickly dismissing alternative social, economic and political arguments so that the cultural argument wins out by default. Upon closer look, these other variables do not appear as insignificant as the book suggests. Even if the American colonial officials and ruling strategies were similar, as the book argues, it is hard to believe that those strategies were implemented in the same manner when colonial authorities on site were operating in such different colonial environments. It might have been much easier to crack down on corruption in Puerto Rico, with its proximity to the U.S. and more singular geography and culture, than in the Philippines, with its many islands, diverse languages and local cultures, and the lingering pockets of militant opposition. And even if the elites in both colonies held similar positions in the social structure, there were important differences between the two cases. According to Table 13 (Appendix, p. 297), the landed class in the Philippines clearly dominated the elite, over the tiny merchant class (61 percent and 4 percent, respectively), while in Puerto Rico, the merchant class was a much larger percentage (22 percent) and was half the size of the landed elite (48 percent). Also, Table 14 (p. 297) shows that a

majority of the Puerto Rican elites (58 percent) were educated abroad while the vast majority of Filipino elites (86 percent) were educated at home. It is plausible that elite cohesion in the Philippines was a potential bulwark against American expectations and pressures, while the diverse Puerto Rican elite, fractured by the economic collapse, might have produced a leading faction that was strongly pro-American. By dismissing these variables, the book foregoes the chance to better explain why some colonized elites embrace American political traditions and others do not, in the past as well as in the present.

Men on a Mission: Valuing Youth Work in Our Communities, by **William Marsiglio**. Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press, 2008. 394pp. \$30.00 paper. ISBN: 9780801888304.

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As Hillary Rodham Clinton (1996) succinctly concluded, raising our children "takes a village." In the United States, however, we generally take for granted that this village is composed primarily of women. Since day care providers, PTO volunteers and teachers are mostly women, there has been very little investigation of how men contribute to and partake in the development of children and youth to whom they are not related. Investigating this understudied aspect of community and caretaking, William Marsiglio's *Men on a Mission* shares with us the joys and frustrations that typify men's work with youth. Specifically, Marsiglio asks us what motivates men who work with youth and how do men make a difference in the lives of young people. How do men relate to adolescents? Moreover, what is the cultural landscape that frames and constrains men's youth work?

Through insightful and inviting prose, Marsiglio draws on interviews and observations with fifty-five Florida men actively involved with young people. Rather than focusing on volunteerism or paid work alone, Marsiglio's sample includes teachers, childcare workers, volunteer mentors, coaches, corrections officers and religious

leaders. He finds that men are motivated by their desire to make a difference for young people, and “give back” to youth. Rewarded by youth work, men find innovative ways to foster their relationships with youth and contribute to a “generative society.” A generative society ensures aid to those coming of age, while at the same time adult men benefit by applying many lessons of their youth work to fatherhood and family.

The book particularly shines with Marsiglio’s discussion of the difficult cultural context within which men work with young people. He provides compelling analysis of the cloud of suspicion that overshadows men’s interactions with unrelated youngsters, especially young children. Marsiglio argues that “stranger-danger discourses” (p. 28) have given rise to a culture where unrelated men are viewed with fear and suspicion. Strangers, he argues, are considered potential child abusers. This landscape discourages men from working with youth and lurks in the background for the minority of men who do.

Out of both feminist convictions and a concern for healthy childhood and adolescent development, Marsiglio advocates men becoming more invested in the lives of young people, and young children in particular. Despite the stranger-danger discourse, or perhaps because of it, he offers a number of suggestions for facilitating men’s involvement. These include making youth work more appealing to boys and young men, increasing pay for child care work and offering adults ways to think about their own work with youth in their communities.

Marsiglio’s analysis offers refreshing insight into men’s work with young people while also convincingly illustrating the considerable impediments and social stigmatization that male care workers face. Somewhat less developed is his argument about the feminization of care work and the gendering of behavior and discourse around working with youth. Although clearly feminist in his stance, Marsiglio acknowledges—with a few brief exceptions—that his research is predominantly about how men relate to boys. This begs a series of additional questions including how women’s work with children and youth might differ from men’s, how girls are impacted by learning

from men and what specific generative aspects of masculinity boys learn from their male teachers, coworkers and coaches. Indeed, by adopting his subjects’ characterization of youth work as a “mission” (p. 106), Marsiglio implies that men’s work with children somehow differs from (women’s) care taking. While he notes that men are most likely to be involved with youth through coaching sports teams (i.e., in the field of play) they are least represented as care workers of young children (i.e., the work of “mothering”). Thus the reader is left to wonder to what extent—through stereotypical venues of adult-child interaction—adults reproduce and model gendered activity for children. Of course, Marsiglio’s goal was not to compare men’s and women’s work. But I was still left longing for greater theoretical development of this implicit and underlying theme.

This is a secondary concern, however, in what is ultimately a thought-provoking study. More importantly, it points us to areas for further research in this underexplored topic. Scholars of youth, youth work and community development, as well as those studying masculinity, gender and care work will find this book an important and accessible resource.

Reference

- Clinton, Hillary R. 1996. *It Takes a Village and Other Lessons Children Teach Us*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.

Saving Forests, Protecting People? Environmental Conservation in Central America, by **John Schelhas** and **Max J. Pfeffer**. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2008. 310 pp. \$85.00 cloth. ISBN: 9780759109469.

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A crucial goal for the conservation community, and a daunting challenge for environmental social scientists, is to identify requirements to reconcile the clashing imperatives of biological conservation and local livelihoods, and to situate that reconciliation in locally acceptable terms in distinct specific contexts. It seems to me that sociologists are