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## Building Community: Social Science in Action

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part through the testimony of a sociologist" (1996:68). Real drama, real life.

This is an intense, engrossing volume which invites the reader into an interesting application of sociology, one that is important, immediate, and involving for its practitioners. Sociology has much to offer to the criminal justice system in this very active interventionist role. This book is a valuable eye into that role.

**Building Community: Social Science in Action**, edited by Philip Nyden, Anne Figert, Mark Shipley, and Darryl Burrows. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press, 1997. 263 pp. \$33.95. ISBN 0-8039-9093-6

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Sociologists have always struggled with the questions of whether they should attempt to use their science to solve practical problems and of whether they are able to solve any problems. This edited volume answers both questions with a resounding yes. The solution that is offered is to espouse cooperative research where both the university researchers and the community activists concerned with the problem are equals, though each has different skills, in defining the problem and executing the research.

The volume is formatted in a unique way. There are three forewords: one by Senator Paul Simon; one by Adele Simmons, president of The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation; and one by Carlos R. DeJesús, executive director of Latinos United. Each represents a significant player in cooperative research and each has a slightly different view of the problems to be undertaken. These forewords reflect both the strength and the weakness of the cooperative approach. There is the stimulation that comes from the willingness to take on unpopular causes and there is the frustration which comes when people with similar values do not reflect a united front.

The introductory section has two chapters, presumably written by the editors, which present the basis for collaborative research. These are followed by 27 case study precis grouped into five parts. These include racial, ethnic, and economic diversity; the environment; new models for community-based research and learning; health; and community control. The case studies describe the collaborative process and its successes and stresses. There is a description of results and at the end, which will no doubt delight students, the editors attach a paragraph which presents the main points of the case. The cases represent an impressive array of issues faced by the poor in urban America. The section on the environment brings a focus to an issue that many

social activists often neglect. The writing is clear and well informed. The senior editor is Director of the Center for Urban Research and Learning at Loyola University in Chicago. He includes the World Wide Web address for this and the Policy Action Group composed of Chicago community leaders and university researchers.

This volume accomplishes its goal. There is convincing evidence that university researchers and poor people can collaborate to do research that leads to social change. While there is ample warning that this is not easy to do and several case studies identify stresses in the collaboration, this reviewer wonders if the volume would have been strengthened by the inclusion of failures. Some context for interpreting the 27 cases would have helped also. Each success reported in this volume is noteworthy but there is no sense that these efforts are part of a social movement that will reduce inner-city misery. The cases seem to be impressive but isolated events.

The questions this reviewer has about this volume can be summed up by saying that it has a Pollyannaish quality. The collaborative model proposed in this volume can also be used by the affluent. When outsiders supply the money there is always the possibility that they will overtly or covertly influence the results. These issues are identified in this volume but they are not stressed enough.

This book is highly recommended as a supplemental text in courses in urban research, the community and community organization. The editors and their contributors have identified a series of issues relating to the role of the university that needs to be more widely explored.

**Citizen Science: A Study of People, Expertise and Sustainable Development**, by Alan Irwin. New York: Routledge, 1995. 216 pp. \$59.95.

ISBN 0-415-115148-5.

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If the post-modern society suffers from the risks engendered by a now lost faith in science and technology, then what changes in the practice of science and use of expertise are required for the necessary shift to a potentially "sustainable" society? Alan Irwin's *Citizen Science* provides a thoughtful analysis of this needed transformation. This new science is informed by the contextual knowledge of citizens as they exercise greater control over their lives, health and environment. Rather than supplanting the modernist ideal of universal science, a citizen science would integrate vernacular knowledge and