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Report From the Field

Community Service-Learning:

A Model for Teaching and Activism

By Sam Beck

Abstract: A pedagogical movement of sorts has been developing over the past several years whereby college students engage in off-campus and out-of-classroom activities for a particular kind of learning experience. This approach, here referred to as community service-learning, has captured the attention of academics throughout the U.S. who believe that service-learning experiences should be added to the more traditional classroom teaching ubiquitous in colleges and universities. This essay reviews the basic philosophy behind service-learning and traces its emergence as a particular kind of pedagogical approach in service of civic engagement and social responsibility. The article also describes the service-learning program developed by Cornell University whereby college students learn by coming to know and by working in low-income neighborhoods that includes interning at a model public school in Brooklyn, New York.

Key words: service-learning, civic engagement, critical pedagogy, New York, higher education

Background: Pedagogical Issues in Off-Campus and Out-of-Classroom Learning

Learning involves decisions about content and process. The nature of learning in general and of service-learning in particular, has been and remains controversial. Michael Polanyi (1983) points to a key aspect of the controversy: when we seek to comprehend something, we simultaneously

objectify and subjectify that which we seek to understand. In this process, knowledge gets produced, and the acquired knowledge then becomes incorporated into our thinking. In this way of coming to know, we assimilate knowledge without necessarily recognizing that we know it or how we came to know it. This is what Polanyi refers to in positing that all knowledge is either tacit or is based on tacit knowledge. As anthropologists, we recognize this course of action as an elementary aspect of the processes of "enculturation" and "socialization." Anthropologists may also recognize tacit knowledge as central to the production and reproduction of "culture."

All societies transmit socio-cultural information from one generation to the next. Much of it takes place in informal, non-institutional settings. Cultural transmission is about knowledge, values and skills, and it is also about advocating for particular roles and statuses, all influencing the personality of individuals and their behavior, contributing to how social groups are generated and get reproduced. Modern educational institutions take on many of the functions, obligations, and responsibilities that once belonged to the family and household, and to the community, neighborhood, ethnic and religious groups.

Schooling our young today ostensibly prepares them for participation in society. Sex and sexuality, health, values and ethics, identity, inter-group

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relations, social interaction, parenting, work behavior, recreation and leisure, conflict resolution and violence reduction are all areas now central to the goals of formal education. Oddly, these matters are most difficult to learn through didactic pedagogies and rote memorization, typical learning styles of schooling in primary through secondary schools and universities today.

Civic engagement is an area that can be taught as an abstract subject in school classrooms. However, there is a difference between knowing something intellectually and being able to put such ideas into practice. The increasingly complex world in which we live has made it difficult for children and youth to be involved in the practice of citizenship. They have few, if any viable role models and virtually no contexts in which their civic participation can take place.

Experience-based learning comes into play on just these pedagogical questions, with internships and community service learning providing an alternative approach for transmitting socio-cultural knowledge (Altman 1995; Argyris et al 1985; Balcazar, et al 2004; Beck 2001; Berg and Schensul 2002; Heffernan 2001; Keane and Sumi 2004; Nyden et al 1997; Zlotowski 1999; Stanton et al 1999).

Social Problems, Social Policy & the Call for College-Based Socialization of Good Citizens

Ira Harkavy, a leader in the field of service-learning, states that "socially responsible civic colleges and universities invested in community problem-solving are needed now, as never before for achieving sustained intellectual and societal progress" (1997:5). This echoes the call by other scholars and educators for universities to be conscientiously engaged with social issues and to become models for students by helping them examine social issues and to be socially responsible (Bok 1982; Horton and Freire 1990; Boyer 1994). This call has been stimulated, in part, by conditions of American society and transformations in America's body politic.

The expansion of the economy over the last decades has brought an increasing separation between the economically and "racially" privileged and those who are poor and of color. This has manifested itself in terms of residential segregation,

ethno-racial divisions of labor, the increasing marginalization of the urban poor, limitations of upward mobility, and disturbingly, from time to time, race-based violence. These factors have combined with the largest ever immigration movement to the United States that has increased an “in-your-face” diversity unimagined before 1965, when a major shift in immigration laws provided a complex set of migration pathways from the Caribbean, South and Central America, Asia, and Africa.

At the same time, no coherent domestic policy has been developed to reduce the kind of urban poverty that we see in the United States, resulting in relatively high crime rates, illicit drug distribution and use, alcoholism, the delivery of inadequate education and other social services, limited opportunities for work with adequate remuneration, and the absence of adequate housing for low and moderate income individuals and households. The impact has been experienced with particular severity among poor people of color whose vulnerability became starkly clear in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

The assault on and unrelenting criticism of the university by government, business, and the general public (Cole and Reid 1986) since the campus-based rebellions of the Vietnam War era, have slowly reconfigured the academy to pay greater attention to the communities that increasingly will send their children to their classrooms. A more vigorous understanding of the relationship that the academy must have with communities, most often those communities in which large university complexes are located, has resulted in the call for rebuilding civil society and providing support, as the state withdraws from local, regional and state economic affairs and much of social life.

The unabated withdrawal of social welfare supports for the most needy and vulnerable in our society generates pressures to replace government funding with resources developed in other quarters. Educating new generations in the art of volunteerism, citizenship, and civic engagement at a time when government resources shrink, brings universities into play as potential instruments of socialization that reorient “American culture” from one based on self-centered individualism to one based on commitment to the common good and to the welfare of all.

Oddly enough, people holding a wide range of political beliefs support such an agenda, albeit for different reasons. On one hand, there are those who seek to build on the civil rights movement, looking for solutions to social problems that are based on civil liberties and social justice. On the other hand, there are those who wish to see the state continue to withdraw from its role as the instrument of protection for the most vulnerable of its people, looking to place the weight of responsibility on local communities.

While historically, problems in society were as complex as they are today, the implications of problems are much more severe than they ever have been. Our physical and human environment in all its complexity is globally implicated in a way that is unprecedented. There is no one answer to solve any one issue that is now confronting humanity. Solutions involve political, economic, social, cultural, biomedical, and environmental dimensions. It is crucial that we now prepare our young -- our students -- for the future whereby they recognize the necessity for holistic and participatory methods, although this is not yet the standard for carrying out research, or interventions. Nor is this necessarily the standard for the way we teach.

Community-service learning is a mechanism precisely designed to be holistic and participatory, an approach that assumes that researchers and community partners will share power. What follows is a description of just such a partnership – a long-term relationship involving reciprocity and mutuality as operating assumptions.

Cornell University’s USP The Urban Semester Program

The Cornell Urban Semester Program: Multicultural Issues in Urban Affairs (USP) is New York City-based, and supported by Cornell University’s College of Human Ecology. College students are engaged in a 15 academic credit program, including three experiential learning courses, each of which approaches learning about diversity and difference in a slightly different manner. Students are also placed in an internship of their choice which they attend three days each week. In addition, one day each week, all students participate in projects at one of several inner-city schools. Finally, students participate in a variety of site visits that provide a basic understanding of the

origin and transformation of New York City as a multicultural city. Students visit a wide range of neighborhoods and community institutions and speak with local leaders about community development. Three out of twelve site visits are in Williamsburg, Brooklyn which we see as emblematic of New York City as a whole. Williamsburg is used as a point of reference for cross-cultural understanding, and as a case study of issues related to access to structural supports or impediments for community development, especially as it concerns children, youth and schooling.

In addition to being a program that enables students to learn-in-action and through reflective practice (Schoen 1983, Schoen 1987, Argyris and Schoen 1974), this comprehensive program deals with personal development issues that students bring into their learning process. We focus particular attention on identity issues, privilege, and "boundary crossing," generically referred to as "multicultural issues" or "issues of diversity." I find that most of my students come out of privileged home experiences and come into neighborhoods like the Southside of Williamsburg with deeply-entrenched stereotypes. They perceive low-income neighborhoods where people of color live as scary and dangerous places. The experiences that the college students come to have with residents in these neighborhoods, teach them of the beauty that is there alongside the terrible issues faced by these communities.

Students learn to reflect on their experiences through journals, weekly seminars, and readings. As interns, they have a chance to experience the workplace and be exposed to careers they have chosen or ones they may want to discover. In the inner-city schools, the college students serve as role models, tutors, mentors, and at times, instructors. At the end of their service-learning experience, most students leave with feelings of hope and the idea that as change agents they, too, can make a difference in communities and in people's lives.

BwCCS: The "Beginning with Children Charter School"

The Cornell USP has developed a particularly long-lived relationship with the Beginning with Children Charter School (BwCCS) and the Beginning with Children (BWC) Foundation, located in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. BwCCS is a

kindergarten through 8th grade public school in the Williamsburg section of North Brooklyn, created by Joseph H. and Carol F. Reich in 1989. The BWC Foundation (www.bwcf.org) is a public 501C3 not-for-profit organization. Grant dollars and all funds raised by the Foundation are allocated to school program support, augmenting the curriculum and provide school designed services, allowing it to fulfill its mission "to provide high-quality education for New York City's deserving schoolchildren using concepts that for the most part were anathema to the public system -- performance and fiscal accountability, ongoing student assessment, and self-evaluation and reflection"

(http://www.bwccschool.org/bwcs_about.html).

The Beginning with Children School got its start as an innovative partnership that included the BWC Foundation, the New York City Board of Education, the local Brooklyn community, Pfizer Inc., and the United Federation of Teachers, opening its doors in September of 1992. The Cornell University USP joined as a partner in 1995. Later, other partnerships were formed that included Pratt Institute, Columbia University, NYU, and the Brooklyn Botanical Garden.

This school was designated as the first "demonstration" elementary school by the Board of Education in 1994. Independent of local district control, the school reported directly to the Chancellor's office. It had the freedom to design its own school model, to participate in the Chancellor's performance-driven budgeting effort, and to work directly with the Vice-Chancellor and his staff to design and implement a fiscal model tied to the educational goals of the BWC School. In 2001, the school became the Beginning with Children Charter School (BwCCS). It has made a very good record for itself, with parents competing for the few openings available in a lottery system for 450 slots.

The school's students come from the surrounding communities of Williamsburg, Bedford-Stuyvesant, and Bushwick, principally representing low income Latino and African American communities. "Middle class" families also enter the lottery and find places for their children in the school. These communities have long histories of neglect, and their residents have

been subjected to massive disinvestments, drug related crime, and social problems. In recent years, the neighborhoods of Williamsburg, Bedford-Stuyvesant and Bushwick have been facing gentrification and ethnic neighborhood replacement and its residents have been facing displacement, processes that have created new tensions and complex social dynamics. At the same time, these tensions have stimulated the rise of new leadership based on community pride and interest in community development.

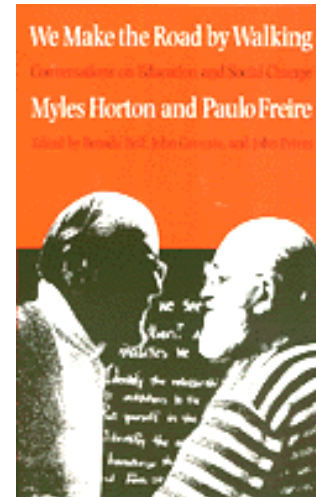
Relationship-Building, Cornell University Interns and the Children of BwCCS

In the fall of 1995, Denise, the first Cornell University intern, arrived at the Beginning with Children School for one academic semester, working in the school three days each week. This was the start of a mutually beneficial relationship between the two institutions and the start of many mutually beneficial relationships between the college students and the students at BWC over the past 15 years.

Denise acted as the glue that held together a relationship in formation during the first two years, and she eventually went to work for the BWC Foundation after graduating. As a Cornellian and an alumna of the Urban Semester Program, she easily moved back and forth between the BWC and the USP, advocating and supporting the work of each, making explicit the needs and visions of each institution. Denise helped develop site visits to other institutions in Williamsburg, essential to helping the college students gain greater understanding about the rationale for developing alternative public schools.

Only a few USP college students interning at BwCCS come in with an interest in education which grows with the internship experience. Students become full-time (three, possibly four, days per week) teachers' assistants in the classroom over the course of one academic semester. Also, since the fall of 1991, USP students with varied career interests and involved in other internships, participate in a community service-learning program in the school one day each week over the course of the semester.

BOOK GALLERY



We Make the Road by Walking Conversations on Education and Social Change Myles Horton and Paulo Freire edited by Brenda Bell, John Gaventa and John Peters

Book Description from Temple University Press:

This dialogue between two of the most prominent thinkers on social change in the twentieth century was certainly a meeting of giants. Throughout their highly personal conversations recorded here, Horton and Freire discuss the nature of social change and empowerment and their individual literacy campaigns. The ideas of these men developed through two very different channels: Horton's, from the Highlander Center, a small, independent residential education center situated outside the formal schooling system and the state; Freire's, from within university and state-sponsored programs.

*Myles Horton, who died in January 1990, was a major figure in the civil rights movement and founder of the Highlander Folk School, later the Highlander Research and Education Center. Paulo Freire, author of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, established the Popular Culture Movement in Recife, Brazil's poorest region, and later was named head of the New National Literacy Campaign until a military coup forced his exile from Brazil. He has been active in educational development programs worldwide.*

For both men, real liberation is achieved through popular participation. The themes they discuss illuminate problems faced by educators and activists around the world who are concerned with linking participatory education to the practice of liberation and social change. How could two men, working in such different social spaces and times, arrive at similar ideas and methods? These conversations answer that question in rich detail and engaging anecdotes, and show that, underlying the philosophy of both, is the idea that theory emanates from practice and that knowledge grows from and is a reflection of social experience.

Both types of students have become role models for the school children. The Cornell students learn about public education issues through hands-on experiences and seminars. They generally help teachers by forming attachments with students and assisting in lessons. This means the college students may teach a class or get involved in tutoring sessions. Some students also are involved in after-school mentoring sessions.

At times, Cornell students bring new knowledge and novel approaches that they share with teachers, staff, and students. The college students are often able to use their particular academic specialization to lend a hand teaching classes. This is particularly so in the subjects of science and math. Students often bring their own special interests into the curriculum as part of their service. For example, college students who play guitar engage the children in sing-alongs, while people with knowledge of science have helped produce science teaching materials. One student offered trumpet lessons to an excited youngster, while another organized an after-school dance course.

Since the USP's involvement with BwCCS, three Cornell University students, graduates from the USP, were hired by the Foundation to further in the effort to increase the effectiveness of public education among the neediest and most vulnerable of New York City.

Concluding Remarks

There are lessons in this work for anthropology, and for the practice of anthropological field research. Service-learning provides a model for research design that is based on collaboration and partnership with people, rather than as a study of people (Lamphere 2002). In such a process, the experience becomes less about encounters with the "other," and more about a learning relationship that generates mutually beneficial outcomes. Research conceived and conducted in partnership with people situated in communities who select the topic to be researched can become an important instrument for local people to refashion their communities and their futures. Anthropologists are coming to recognize that research and interventions that emerge in this way have a better chance of relating and responding to real needs and desires.

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Fostering a Community-Based Learning Culture: A Model for Success and Institutional Barriers

By María (Lorena) Núñez and Elizabeth Chin

Abstract: This article offers a case study in Community-Based Learning by describing a collaborative gang-intervention effort developed for children in Los Angeles. Project G*O*L*D (Goal Oriented Life Decisions), is an educational-intervention effort designed by representatives from Occidental College, Garvanza Elementary School, the LAPD, and the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office and implemented in the elementary school. Both authors are directly involved with the program and offer a first-hand description of the project. They also detail some of the obstacles and barriers to the program's sustainability. Even as Community-Based Learning (CBL) has become more acceptable and its value as a pedagogical approach is gaining attention, Project G*O*L*D remains vulnerable because the resources are not yet there. Project G*O*L*D and efforts like it will only truly succeed when CBL becomes institutionalized in colleges and universities, releasing professors and students into communities with the resources and support necessary for long-term success.

Key words: Community-Based Learning, gang intervention, Los Angeles, institutionalization



**Beginning with Children Charter School
Working to Educate the Whole Child**

11 Bartlett Street, Brooklyn, NY 11206

<http://www.bwccschool.org/alumni/index.html>

This article describes Project G*O*L*D (Goal Oriented Life Decisions), a gang intervention program that was developed collaboratively between the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), City Attorney's Office, Garvanza Elementary School, and Occidental College in 2003. After briefly describing how the program came to be, and its current structure, this article will focus on the ways in which the varying points of view and relationships among and between the various people and institutions involved in Project G*O*L*D have evolved. As might be imagined, the question of why youth might become embroiled in gangs is understood very differently by LAPD gang detail detectives as compared to how it is understood by a college anthropology professor (Chin); the school social worker approached the question of the presence of gangs differently than did the Deputy City Attorney. While these differing perspectives generate tension, the

common goal of all involved is a deeply shared commitment to somehow make a difference in children's lives in a way that might keep them from violence and gang involvement in the future. It was this shared commitment, ultimately, that allowed us to speak with one voice, despite our sometimes widely varying languages. Here, for reasons of space, we will focus primarily on our experiences as members of Occidental College (Elizabeth Chin, professor) and Lorena Núñez, (student), and in relation to our roles on Project G*O*L*D.

Project G*O*L*D: It Takes a Community to Teach the Young

The most consistent part of Project G*O*L*D is a 15-week curriculum taught in a 5th grade classroom at Garvanza Elementary School by Detective Bob Lopez and Deputy City Attorney Jeanne Kim. The focus of the curriculum is to help children make life decisions that help them reach their (positive) goals. The lessons focus on topics related to healthy decision-making, including how to resist peer pressure and why taking drugs is a bad idea. The curriculum culminates with a mock trial that takes place in a real courtroom, presided over by a judge. Ms. Kim has made the mock trial possible by pulling many favors. Drawing upon personal or institutional resources is an important part of why Project G*O*L*D has worked thus far. For her part, Elizabeth Chin has been contributing to the trial portion of the program by scrounging the \$500 needed for bus transportation from funds available at Occidental College. A hallmark of the program, then, is that key players draw upon their resources to make the program work

The curriculum was originally adapted by Jim Anderson, a social worker at Garvanza Elementary, and his interns with subsequent adjustments made as the curriculum was implemented in the fall of 2003.

In the second half of the year (spring), Professor Elizabeth Chin stepped in to provide follow through and expansion. In the three years that the project has been running two models were developed for the second half of the year: the high infusion model (year 1) and the low infusion model (years two and three). The high infusion model involved twice weekly sessions with Project G*O*L*D children through LA's BEST, a city-wide after school program. Here, along with students in

a course on *Children and Childhood* from Occidental College, Garvanza Elementary 5th graders became researchers themselves, learning interview techniques, and eventually conducting interviews on their own. Building on ideas from the fall curriculum, the interviews focused on how people are able to overcome obstacles to reach their goals. Detective Lopez and others from his unit returned to the school to be interviewed by students, as did Jeanne Kim. Students also interviewed the mayor of Los Angeles. The semester's work culminated in a day-long visit to Occidental College where students participated in a three-hour morning of ropes training followed by lunch in the dining facility (the highlight of the day for many!). In the afternoon, Garvanza students, in teams of two or three, each interviewed two different people on the Occidental Campus. Ranging from the college bookstore manager to a professor of biology, these interviews each lasted about an hour. Students proved to be exceptionally poised, engaged, and successful in carrying out these interviews. In the low infusion model, the 5th graders enjoyed a day-long visit to Occidental that included ropes training followed by "a day at college," with students in an introductory anthropology course able to participate in facilitating this event for extra credit. In years two and three, the intensive involvement with the after school program was dropped mostly due to a lack of financial and person-power resources.



**The Community and The Classroom:
Occidental College and Los Angeles**
<http://departments.oxy.edu/ccbl/>

Convergences, Conflicts and Challenges

From the outset, the various players involved in Project G*O*L*D were ambivalent about working with outside groups. Each participant brought with them the agenda of their own institution, its specific mode of functioning, and its idea about collaborative work. As law enforcement entities, the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) and the City Attorney's office serve the city of Los Angeles in ways that Garvanza Elementary and Occidental College do not. Moreover, the LAPD and the City Attorney's office engage with city politics in distinct ways. Likewise, although both Garvanza Elementary School and Occidental College are educational institutions, they are by no means equivalent in either their specific educational goals or in the people they serve. These intergroup differences meant that Project G*O*L*D developed as a decentralized organization. This decentralization simultaneously created barriers to success even as it brought the various institutions together in collaboration, a key factor in the project's success.

The priorities of each institution are sometimes very different, and ongoing negotiation is tied to managing those differences. To some degree, the decentralized nature of Project G*O*L*D ameliorates tensions that come from each participant fearing their institutions may be neglected. From the start, the decentralized organizational structure served as a bridge to build trust which then made it feasible for all participants to work as a team. Emphasis on collaboration has helped to defuse fears about the program being taken over by one or another of the players, though such fears have not disappeared altogether. For instance, more than one participant in Project G*O*L*D feels that the curriculum developed for the program "belongs" to them. Each of the players have valid arguments for their point of view: Jeanne Kim and Bob Lopez feel ownership because they brought in the curricula that served as the foundation of Project G*O*L*D as well as being the driving force behind the program in the first place. Jim Anderson, for his part, transformed the curriculum to be grade-level appropriate, essentially rewriting the curriculum from the ground up.

At the same time, since no one person is "in charge," to some degree Project G*O*L*D is

disorganized, making communication inefficient and even difficult. Decentralization also leads to a lack of collective accountability. Since no one person, or institution, singly delegates work, provides or distributes funding or calls everyone together upon encountering conflicts, no one has felt entitled to make anyone else fully accountable and therefore conflicts remained unresolved. In such a work environment, many feel overburdened and that there is little collective *and* institutional support and a lack of critical resources.

Elizabeth Chin, representing Occidental College, like others, encountered problems resulting from the decentralization of the project. Unlike other players, however, her involvement with G*O*L*D resulted in professional conflicts with colleagues at her home institution whose performance priorities did not include her participation in Project G*O*L*D.

In the second year of Project G*O*L*D's operation, Elizabeth Chin received a performance evaluation from the tenure and promotion committee, which at Occidental College is known as the Advisory Council (AC). According to the AC, Chin demonstrated outstanding performance in research and service, but was lacking in her teaching performance. In Professor Chin's opinion, this negative evaluation in large part resulted from the pedagogical and organizational approach required in order to best participate in a "high infusion," Community-Based Learning (CBL) experience via Project G*O*L*D. Despite encouraging CBL projects, the AC remains skeptical of the non-traditional classroom. In Chin's fifth year review, she was penalized for the different classroom experience she provided for students. The AC discouraged her (and others) from attempting new teaching approaches and from risky forays into CBL that go beyond limited kinds of engagement. The faculty committee lacks an in-depth understanding of the philosophy behind this pedagogical approach, its practical application, and the demands of CBL. Chin, for her part, "mis-underestimated," so to speak, how CBL needed to be presented to the AC in her own portfolio. Prior to it becoming a CBL class, the anthropology course *Children and Childhood* was a traditional lecture-based course. At that time, student and administration evaluations were positive. Once the course became a CBL class, Chin began receiving lower performance evaluations by

administrators. The AC report failed to accept non-traditional methods of learning and working with communities and punished Chin who engaged in this work. Instead of commending a thoroughly collaborative community effort, the AC report discouraged her from repeating the *Children and Childhood* course specifically as a CBL class. Community-based work is not yet institutionalized in academia, leading to poor evaluation reports like that received by Chin, and to few to no resources for CBL work. Throughout the entire semester she taught the *Children and Childhood* CBL class, Chin received no funding support for the effort.

Chin is committed to CBL work as a way to help college students become civically engaged community members and as a way for them to receive a more complete education. Guided by this commitment, Chin applied for and received a non-renewable \$10,000 dollar grant to hire two undergraduate college students for the summer of 2004 and additional resources for revising the G*O*L*D curriculum. However, once the summer ended, there were no resources to hire a permanent administrator - someone who could keep the program and collaboration alive. Despite her best efforts, Chin was unable to permanently incorporate G*O*L*D into her academic responsibilities.

As an alternative, Chin considered incorporating Project G*O*L*D into a year-long undergraduate lab course, using a model similar to those in the hard sciences. In this iteration, the *Children and Childhood* course would run two semesters, with a required lab component for which the instructor, like science faculty, would receive 1/2 course teaching credit. Initial conversations with college personnel indicated that such a model, while interesting, was unlikely to be approved because of its increased use of faculty resources and because the lab teaching model has no established tradition outside of the science departments.

As the student conducting research on Project G*O*L*D and responsible for working with all parties to revise the twelve-week curriculum, Lorena Núñez felt frustrated and encountered problems with project continuity. Núñez recognized the importance of developing a good and reciprocal relationship with the collaborating institutions, especially with Occidental's neighbor Garvanza Elementary School. Keeping those

relationships up became increasingly difficult without institutionalized support.

In the fall of 2004, Project G*O*L*D continued to be taught at Garvanza by Jim Anderson, without it being tied to any course at Occidental College. Fortunately, Núñez was at the time employed by the Center for Community-Based Learning (CCBL) at Occidental College. The CCBL allowed Núñez to incorporate Project G*O*L*D into her other duties at the Center since the project fit with the CCBL mission.

With Chin no longer able to provide guidance, Núñez was able to remain involved with the project throughout the fall semester. Núñez's main goal was to maintain a healthy relationship between Occidental and Garvanza.

The CCBL, supportive as it might be, did not fully understand the pressures and particular dynamics Lorena Núñez confronted in working with the other community partners. This resulted in Núñez having conflicts with her boss as well as with the other community partners. Throughout the semester, Núñez struggled to keep communication open between all the players involved, a difficult role and a fruitless task. The other partners were no longer focused on sharing information or working collaboratively, perhaps burdened themselves by their other work responsibilities. The net effect on Núñez was that she felt abandoned by the key players all the while having to explain the dynamics of a decentralized project to her boss who demanded concrete explanations for the breakdowns in communication.

Núñez's frustrations and feelings of abandonment speak to a greater problem: People are overburdened. Under such conditions, people's best intentions fall by the wayside. Where there is inadequate support, people already overburdened with responsibilities who seek to participate in CBL become even more burdened. This is a major barrier to the institutionalization of CBL. The success of Project G*O*L*D in bringing together several institutions to work collaboratively is unusual and commendable. However, the fact that Project G*O*L*D constituted only a small part of the many responsibilities held by each of the key players, speaks to the vulnerability of such efforts. Project G*O*L*D and efforts like it will only truly succeed when CBL becomes institutionalized in

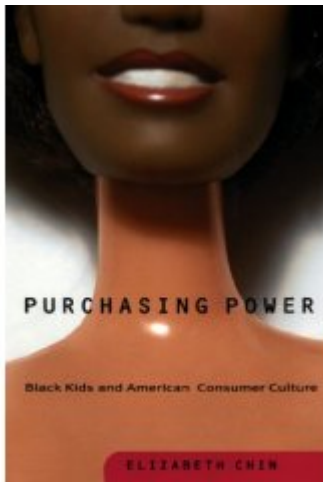
colleges and universities, releasing professors and students into communities with the resources and support necessary for long-term success.

Looking Forward

The good news is that Project G*O*L*D remains vibrant due to the efforts of a dedicated group of people. All four of the main participants remain involved, even as they have come to the painful recognition that their efforts are a drop in the bucket. There is so much more that can be done, and there is so much more they would like to do. For Project G*O*L*D to continue making a difference in children's lives, more resources and support are needed to sustain this important CBL model. We are quite certain that despite the difficulties and frustrations, each person who participated in crafting Project G*O*L*D, has found joy and satisfaction in the effort as well as in the results.

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Purchasing Power:
Black Kids and American Consumer Culture
Elizabeth Chin
University of Minnesota Press (April 2001)

Link to Preliminary Program:
<http://sananet.org/2006conf/conference.html>

Check This Out!

The following is a sampling of panels and roundtables to be presented at the upcoming Spring SANA meeting from April 20-22 in New York City:

Anthropology in an Uncertain Age

The World of Coca-Cola: Human Rights Abuses and Anti-Unionism

Critical Pedagogy: Teaching Power in Violent Times

Public Space, Politics, and Diversity

Challenges, Opportunities, and Desire in Transnational Black Markets

Interrogating the Vulcans: Anthropologists Approach the Agents of Empire

Beyond Passivity and Resistance: Juxtaposing Analyses of Youth in New York and California

Transformative Cities

Confronting Urban Uncertainty: Anthropologists Engaging the Public in American Cities

Anthropology, Uncertainties and Queerness

Uncertainty and Insecurity in the Post Welfare Reform Era

Corporate Strategies and American Education: Resisting the Neoliberal Transformation of Knowledge Production

A City Transformed: Views of Post-Katrina New Orleans

Disruptive Ethnography: Challenges to Mass Incarceration and Neoliberal Illogic

Report from the President

Rethinking North America:

The State of the Section

By Jeff Maskovsky

Some fifteen years ago in a crowded convention room in New Orleans, former AAA president and University of Michigan professor Skip Rappaport chaired a meeting to establish an Association-wide unit devoted to the study of North America. At the time, the reasons for creating such a group within U.S. anthropology were numerous. Despite a noteworthy history of important anthropological work on the region, most anthropology programs did not recognize the United States or Canada as legitimate field sites. Native North America was an exception, of course, but primarily because the same imperial mindset that excluded Canada and the United States in general mandated the inclusion of Native North America in particular. There was limited funding available in support of U.S. and Canadian fieldwork, and the work that was produced was often derided as second rate or too narrowly "applied" to hold major theoretical significance.

One of the anthropologists who attended the meeting on that day was Ida Susser, who would eventually become the founding president of this fledgling group. Here she describes the state of the field in the early 1990s:

At the time, the anthropology of the U.S. and Canada was nowhere on the map. People told you from the moment you entered graduate school that you would not be taken seriously if you did work here. They assumed that if it was the case that you wanted to stay in the U.S. to do your fieldwork then you did so because you were dumb, or because you were a woman whose family obligations kept you here, and you therefore should not be taken seriously. I realized when I became a professor that there were area studies meetings where people get to meet the people in their field, where junior and senior people talk to each other. But there was no area studies organization in anthropology for the U.S. and Canada. There was no place that brought us together to talk to each other (personal communication, January 6, 2006).

This dismal state of affairs was not enough to discourage everyone from studying the United States and Canada, however. The meeting in New Orleans was a sign that the climate was actually improving for North Americanists in the early 1990s. As is well known, the critique of anthropology's colonial mindset combined with the politicization of the discipline around the Vietnam War, civil rights, feminism, and gay liberation to challenge business as usual in mainstream anthropology circles. This broadened the disciplinary space for established scholars and graduate students to conduct research "at home," but it did not mean that people who made this choice had an easy time.

more >>>

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Former SANA president Maria Vesperi also attended the November 1990 meeting. She remembers the widespread sense of alienation and disrespect that brought many anthropologists to the New Orleans convention room:

I got a classical education, and I wanted to apply it to studying problems in my own society. I never wavered from that, and my committee was supportive. But I got my Ph.D. in 1978 when I was 26, and at the time I didn't really think about the consequences of what I was doing. All of a sudden I looked around and realized that I was on the edges of the discipline. So I was thrilled to be at that meeting. And the room was packed. People were so emotional. They were really upset. They told horrible stories of exclusion. It was unanimous that we should form a unit. (personal communication, January 7, 2006)

In practice, establishing a unit was not so easy. The group, which first called itself the Society for the Anthropology of the United States and Canada (SAUSC), elected Susser and Vesperi as provisional officers, in addition to Frank Dubinkas, Paule Cruz-Takash, James McLeod, and Claudia Konker. The new leadership in turn applied immediately for official section status, but the AAA blocked its formation. Claiming that the proliferation of new sections would undermine its organizational integrity, the Association put into place a temporary freeze on the creation of new sections at precisely the moment when SAUSC and several other sections representing historically under-represented groups were forming. It took three years of coordinated effort on the part of these groups before the AAA ended the moratorium. Meanwhile, SAUSC had been rethinking its area focus. The 1993 ratification of NAFTA as a regional free-trade zone encouraged SAUSC to broaden its area to include Mexico. Three years after its first meeting, SANA was finally born.

As incoming president of SANA, I recount this brief history to celebrate those who fought to establish SANA, and to dramatize how far we have come. Today, thanks in large measure to the hard work of the section's founding members and our allies, research "at home" is far less stigmatized; in fact, SANA has established itself as a vibrant section of the AAA, with over 400 members (and

counting). We are known for placing cutting-edge sessions on the AAA program, and we enjoy an Association-wide reputation for organizing high-profile special events and public policy forums. For many years now, our section has published the popular North American Dialogue (NAD), edited first by Maria Vesperi and since 2002 by Alisse Waterston. We have maintained an active column in AN "Section News." We also have supported graduate student travel to the AAA meetings with the St. Clair Drake Student Travel Grant Award and drawn hundreds of scholars together each spring for our annual conferences. No less important has been our effort to acknowledge luminaries in the field with our prize for the critical study of North America, and our close collaboration with other sections to nominate representatives from under-represented groups for prominent leadership positions within the Association. SANA's accomplishments are truly impressive especially considering its relatively short existence as a section.

The rethinking of area studies poses a unique challenge for North American research in anthropology. At the intellectual level, scholars conducting research "at home" will have to contend with the weakening of the area studies rubric that has been so highly influential in organizing anthropological and other social scientific knowledge for much of the last century. The post-colonial critique of area studies' complicity with imperialism has encouraged us to make the U.S. and its imperial strategies central to our understanding of other regions. By the same token, it also encourages us to bring other regions into our frame of knowledge about the United States. We must overcome the long shadow of American exceptionalism and stop treating the U.S. as an island unto itself. Work that achieves this goal is by no means rare in the discipline. One recent example is an article by Ananth Aiyer showing how Latin America has been used as a testing ground for the development of coercive U.S. domestic policies around drug interdiction, mass incarceration, immigration and border control (Aiyer 2001).

Yet this rethinking of area studies poses a unique challenge for North American research in anthropology. Like many other sections with an area studies orientation, our challenge now is to continue to build the field so that scholars and

students are well versed in "classic" ethnographic and historical work on the region without foreclosing the possibility of developing new ways of thinking about the field itself. But North Americanists must also confront the lingering bias against research north of the Rio Grande. As Catherine Fennell tells us in a recent article in Anthropology News, funding for research "at home" is still very limited (Fennell 2006). Of equal, or perhaps more, importance, the pioneering scholarship in our field is still not taught or cited as frequently as it should be. Indeed, it is still possible to read new monographs based on U.S. research that ignore the extensive ethnographic literature in the field. We must not allow the weakening of the area studies rubric to erase the deep understanding of the American scene that has been produced by decades of excellent scholarship.

We must also go beyond the U.S.-centric vision of our field (I admit that this very account is infused with it). We must not shy away from a frank discussion about the intellectual and institutional steps we need to take to give more attention to scholarship by and for Mexican, Native American and Canadian anthropologists. Now more than ever, SANA needs to probe what it means intellectually and politically to treat North America as a unified "area" of research.

At the organizational level, SANA also faces some unique challenges. The crisis around the 2004 annual meetings has encouraged the AAA leadership to rethink its governance structures, and a commission has been set up to accomplish this task. Any change in AAA governance has the potential to enhance or dilute SANA's ability to influence the Association's policies. We must watch these developments carefully to ensure that our voice will continue to be heard.

Another challenge comes from AnthroSource, which the SANA board decided to join two years ago to broaden distribution of NAD. Although nearly everyone sees the benefits of organizing and disseminating scholarly work electronically, the transition to AnthroSource has generated some controversy within the AAA. Whereas many believe that the digital publishing program will help to stabilize production costs and shore up revenues in an era during which journal subscription rates are plummeting, others worry that the costs associated with this particular digital publishing program are too high. Several AAA

sections are so worried, in fact, that, fearing bankruptcy, they are actively discussing the possibility of abandoning the publication of their journals or opting out of AnthroSource. Fortunately, nothing so dire is taking place with respect to SANA, but cost increases have taken their toll. At our 2005 SANA business meeting, the membership unanimously endorsed a board recommendation to eliminate the print version of NAD in order to save money. NAD will now be distributed only in its electronic version. We must continue to monitor the situation closely to see if in the long run AnthroSource will be a cost-effective way for us to disseminate NAD, or, alternatively, if there are better, low-cost option that might possibly also restore the print publication of our newsletter.

Twelve years after its founding, SANA is well poised to face such challenges and to continue its intellectual and organizational advance. We received over 150 paper submissions for our spring conference, "Anthropology in an Uncertain Age," which will take place from April 20 to 22, 2006, at Baruch College, CUNY, in New York City. Homefront author and Brown University professor Catherine Lutz will be our keynote speaker, and we will celebrate the announcement of our new book award winner. The SANA Conference Committee, headed by Julian Brash and the SANA Book Award Committee, headed by Karen Brodtkin, are hard at work, and I am confident that our spring conference will be a great success. I wish to thank the current officers of SANA for working so hard on these and other section activities, and for their support as I assume my new responsibilities as president. I am especially indebted to past-president Lee Baker under whose leadership SANA accomplished so much. I hope I can live up to the standard he set. I welcome members or prospective members to contact me at any time and look forward to the many stimulating sessions and conversations we will enjoy together at our spring conference in New York City in April and the AAA annual meetings in San Jose in November.

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Society for the Anthropology of North America

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APRIL 20-22, 2006

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ANTHROPOLOGY OFF THE SHELF

Protecting Home:

Class, Race and Masculinity in Boys' Baseball

Sherri Grasmuck (Rutgers University Press)

By Susan B. Hyatt

Back in the 1980s, when I was working as a community organizer in racially changing neighborhoods in South Chicago, there were always stories circulating about white ethnic neighborhoods which turned down the opportunity to have new, publicly funded recreational facilities in their communities out of the fear that such amenities would attract the "wrong kind of kids," thereby hastening the immigration of black families. While some of these stories were undoubtedly apocryphal, others just as surely were true. In either case, they spoke to the kind of fortress mentality that shaped the contours of community life in the Irish, Italian, Jewish, Polish and other ethnic neighborhoods that were once integral components of American cities in the 20th century, an account also described in Sherri Grasmuck's Protecting Home (2005: 31). While there is not much to mourn for in the gradual decline of the "us vs. them" siege mentality that often personified such districts, there is a great deal to lament in the transformation of cities from spaces that once included working-class neighborhoods characterized by a range of communal activities, to places that are now largely sites for capital investment, resulting in landscapes that, with their expensive housing and up-scale coffee shops, are increasingly uniform in terms of both their physical and social landscapes. Many of these neighborhoods are now at least nominally racially integrated but despite this advance, they are perhaps even more segregated by class than was the case in earlier decades.

Protecting Home, written by Temple University sociologist Sherri Grasmuck, tells the story of neighborhood changes in two adjacent neighborhoods in Philadelphia, Fairmount and Spring Garden. Fairmount was once just such a "white fortress" community in Philadelphia, whereas neighboring Spring Garden had become largely black and Puerto Rican by the end of the 1950s, reinforcing the sense of social isolation in Fairmount. By the 1970s, waves of gentrification

spread first through Spring Garden and then later into Fairmount, changing the demographics of both neighborhoods. These two communities, that had once seemed implacably hostile to one another, ultimately met and established a kind of tentative rapprochement at Van Colln Memorial Field, home of Fairmount's long-standing local neighborhood baseball league, Fairmount Sports Association (FSA).

Because of the book's title and its status as winner of the 2005 North American Society for the Sociology of Sport Book Award, SANA members might not immediately recognize that this is essentially an ethnography about neighborhood change that is, in fact, a wonderful addition to the corpus of literature on gentrification written by such anthropologists as Brett Williams on Washington DC and Sabiyha Prince on Harlem, as well as by many others.

As recently as the 1960s, the Fairmount neighborhood was a place where blacks and Puerto Ricans feared to tread. In keeping with these demographics, the local community baseball teams were also exclusively white. By the mid-1990s, however, one third of the children involved in the local leagues were children of color, who had been incorporated into these activities relatively peacefully. At the same time, sharp class distinctions among the families involved in the baseball league had also begun to emerge. Grasmuck's book tells the story of how this transformation occurred as seen through the lens of the baseball leagues, and it both reflected and, at the same time, was constitutive of other changes in the community.

Grasmuck notes that the population changes in Fairmount began in the 1970s when the original working-class Fairmounters began to move out and first white, then black, professional families began to move in as property values began to go up in neighboring Spring Garden. The local baseball leagues were originally tied to the three local Catholic schools, and as a more diverse constituency of families began to move into the community, the local networks began to expand correspondingly. Grasmuck names the mechanism through which new children of different ethnic backgrounds were incorporated into the local baseball teams as "race sponsorship." As she writes, "Race sponsorship...occurs when an individual or family enters a formerly exclusive

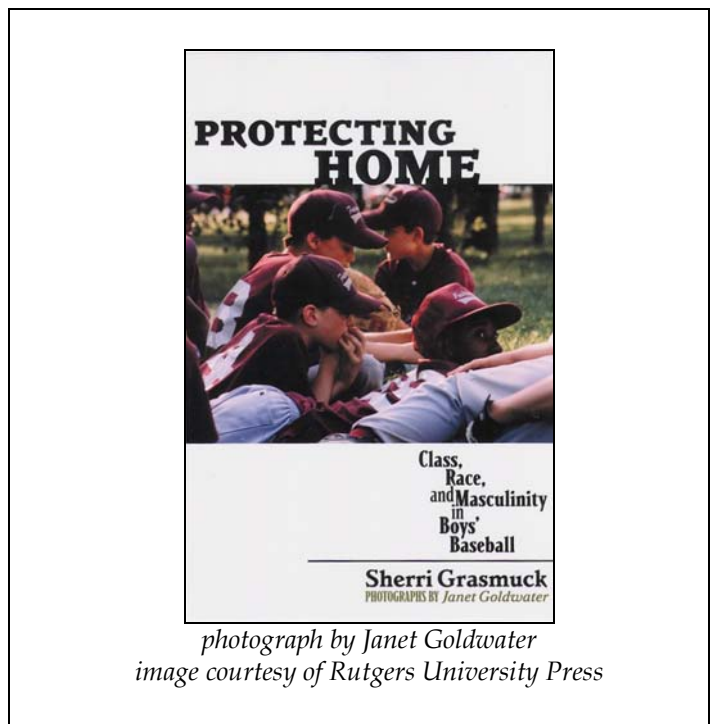
space through alignment with, or sponsorship by, an individual with legitimate sponsorship status" (34). Other neighborhood changes, like the transformation of the empty lot where games had traditionally been played into a field with a clubhouse, concession stand and bathrooms, made the Fairmount Sports Association much more publicly visible so that the informal ties that had sustained it in its earlier incarnation were no longer the only means by which children and families could find out about the ball clubs. Gradually, as the leagues and their activities became more institutionalized, they were also tied to local political structures and were subject to greater oversight and accountability.

Grasmuck is herself a resident of the area and her involvement with the Fairmount Sports Association began in the late 1980s. Her children were participants in the baseball leagues and her husband later served as a coach and briefly as a commissioner. In 1997, after almost 10 years of involvement with the organization as a "baseball mom," Grasmuck began an "ethnographic study of the baseball league, its changes over time, and its relationship to the neighborhood" (6). What is particularly striking about this book is the way in which Grasmuck draws connections between the nature of both the children's and their parents' participation in baseball and the demographic changes that were re-shaping Fairmount/Spring Garden as a community. Contrasting styles of coaching between the long-time Fairmounters and the newcomers, for example, becomes fertile ground for her analysis of broader changes in patterns of neighborhood sociability.

One important distinction she makes is that the Fairmounters (or old-timers) saw their investment in the baseball league as part of their overall commitment to their community. Therefore, they often continued to coach their team even after their own kids had long outgrown neighborhood baseball and they gave extraordinary amounts of volunteer time and energy to all of the activities of the league. Old-timers also attended all the home games regardless of whether or not their own children were playing, seeing these events as community-wide expressions of local pride. In contrast, the newcomers tended to coach only those teams on which their own children played and they generally attended only those games in which they had a personal family interest. Grasmuck describes

this difference as "hierarchical communalism versus child-centered individualism," and she illustrates several instances in which these divergent values caused conflicts.

As Grasmuck shows, these dramas played out in the theatre of masculinity as it was articulated by both old-timers and newcomers and as each group reflected the influence of new and changing gender norms. Both had predictable stereotypes of the coaching styles of the other, with the old-timers represented as harsh disciplinarians in contrast to what was seen as the "fuzzier," more emotionally expressive style of the newcomer coaches. Yet, as Grasmuck demonstrates through documenting her careful observations over time, the actual coaches as individuals rarely conformed to either of these images. "Most coaches, in the mix of their own personal styles, are social hybrids who select elements from all of the available styles around them, both within and across social boundaries" (197).



By linking masculinities to changing neighborhood patterns of sociality and to class and, to a lesser extent, race, Grasmuck provides an excellent illustration of the fact that such "identities," be they based on gender, neighborhood residence, professional status or any other considerations,

Hyatt, continued on page 19

The St. Clair Drake Student Travel Grant Award
The Society for the Anthropology of North America announces
The St. Clair Drake Student Travel Grants Award
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To apply, submit your paper abstract, university affiliation, and contact information to:
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For travel to the AAA Conference, the application deadline is: October 15, 2006

No additional materials are needed. The student travel grant will be awarded on a competitive basis and reviewed by a committee comprised of members from the SANA board.

- ✓ This travel grant is intended for currently enrolled graduate students without a PhD. Only students who are presenting at the conference will be considered for the award. Applicants must be SANA members.
- ✓ Papers should relate to the study of North America and—in keeping with the work of the award’s namesake, St. Clair Drake—preferably consider the politics of everyday life in North America such as those pertaining to “race,” ethnicity, class, gender, and/or sexuality. Priority will be given to those that address Mexico, the United States, and Canada.
- ✓ Preference will go to those students who have previously applied for the SANA travel grant and have not yet received one.
- ✓ The total dollar amount allocated to travel grants is limited; therefore, the number and dollar amount of grants awarded depends on the number of applicants and their travel needs.
- ✓ Travel grants will not be awarded to any individual two years in a row.
- ✓ Drake Fellows may be asked to assist SANA by helping pass out informational flyers at sessions or contributing to its newsletter.
- ✓ SANA is an intentionally inclusive community of anthropologists and encourages every student to apply for the St. Clair Drake award regardless of society’s labels or anthropology’s disciplinary boundaries. However, applicants must be SANA members presenting at the 2006 AAA meetings.

are never free-floating (as some of the earlier literature on identity politics seemed to suggest), but are always rooted in the materiality of particular settings and social relationships that are fluid and negotiable, rather than static and essentialist.

Although racial and class-based changes in the neighborhood and baseball league happened rather peaceably, Grasmuck does not elide the difficulties and unevenness that attended these processes. For one thing, as she notes, although children of color entered the league as players, "there was little integration of the leadership of the organization, even fifteen years after the newcomers had arrived" (p. 195). She tells an important story that, as she points out, serves as a corrective to the dirges like that of Robert Putnam, who in his book Bowling Alone has gained great mileage by bemoaning what he perceives as the loss of civic engagement and "social capital." Grasmuck shows that there is no shortage of civic involvement in neighborhoods like Fairmount/Spring Garden. What imperils such community-mindedness is not any recalcitrance or lack of commitment on the part of neighborhood residents (including the newcomers albeit in a different style) but is, rather, the way in which neoliberal patterns of urban development threaten the very existence of spaces where such accommodations can be made. Fairmount/Spring Garden is now being marketed by the real estate industry as "the Art Museum District," and its proximity to Philadelphia's Ben Franklin Parkway, the central artery on which are located Philadelphia's premier cultural tourist attractions, as well as its easy distance from downtown, mean that it is likely to continue to be subject to economic pressures that threaten to force out the last of the old-timers and that endanger even the existence of the ballpark itself. A few years ago, there was talk of the city taking back Von Colln Memorial Field as site for a new home for the Barnes Foundation (an idiosyncratic institution exhibiting a personal art collection currently located in the suburbs but scheduled to move into the city in 2007.) While this fate may have been averted for the moment, the sky-rocketing monetary value of this real estate located in a prime zone of consumption makes it attractive for all kinds of uses that perforce would exclude or restrict the involvement of most -- if not all -- neighborhood residents.

This book is also a superb illustration of the value of ethnography. While Grasmuck, trained as a sociologist, goes to great length to defend a notion of "objectivity as fairness" and to argue for the value of narrative in a way that anthropologists may no longer feel is necessary, it is precisely because of our tendency to naturalize such practices that renders explicit statements of the value of participant-observation issued by those in other disciplines so useful, especially for teaching. After years of reading research proposals by graduate students in anthropology in which they vaguely explain their plans to "hang out" in one or another setting, with little explicit connection made between the hanging out and the nature of their research questions, it is refreshing to read Grasmuck's spirited defense of the links between her story-telling and her theoretical arguments, something anthropologists accept at face value but often fail to articulate.

Besides, there have been few anthropologists or other social scientists who have ventured to write about settings in which they were as complicatedly entwined as are Grasmuck and her family in Fairmount/Spring Garden. They were in the first wave of professionals to move to Spring Garden and, as mentioned above, Grasmuck's son and daughter, as well as her husband, were all involved in the baseball league at one time or another. While her daughter dropped out of these activities early on, her son and husband continued with the league for many years, including the period of her formal research. The density of her own social ties with the community and the Fairmount Sports Association made this project a dangerous undertaking in which not only her own social networks were implicated but also those of her son and husband. These considerations posed some constraints for her. Because of her son's continuing involvement in the league, for example, Grasmuck focused on boys' baseball rather than on girls' activities. Because of his age, she focused on activities of a cohort of boys younger than he was at the time of the research (ages 7-9 and 10-12). But, there are also sound methodological and theoretical defenses for such choices. For one thing, they provided rich insights into masculinity and into the socialization of boys at a critical time in their development.

This is an outstanding contribution to the ethnographic literature on urban neighborhoods and gentrification. The book is also enhanced by several of Janet Goldwater's beautiful photographs of the boys and the games. I plan to use it in my *Urban Anthropology* course and it illustrates as well as anything else I know the point that in the first decade of the 21st century there are still urban neighborhoods that, however tentatively, retain dense social networks that are both durable and yet flexible enough to incorporate new people. This is not meant to gloss over the fact that some groups remain excluded. For example, Grasmuck clearly points out that in the course of these changes the older Puerto Rican residents in Spring Garden were displaced. It is also not clear that there was much space for the entry of working-class blacks into the present community. Keeping in mind the fact that social spaces like Von Colln Memorial Field, which are both timorous in their embrace of change and rich in possibilities for the formation of new alliances, are now threatened by the predations of rogue actors like the real estate industry, this is a tale that is more cautionary than optimistic: it should encourage us to focus on the emergent calamities created by the prevalence of investment capital, rather than belaboring any shortcomings attributed to a putative decline in social capital. Protecting Home is about "what multiculturalism in urban public space felt like at the beginning of the twenty-first century" (Grasmuck, p. 193), but it is equally about how, for neighborhood residents, a simple baseball diamond can trump a Starbucks every time as meaningful collective space. How larger economic trends and patterns of urban development will shape Fairmount Park in the future is a story that will have much to tell us about how important we, as a society, think social capital really is.

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