Contesting Communities: The Transformation of Workplace Charity. Emily Barman.

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Emily Barman. *Contesting Communities: The Transformation of Workplace Charity*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006. $53.00 hardcover, $20.95 papercover.

What does *community* mean in the United States? In recent decades, the concept of community has received significant attention from social scientists. Some have decried the decline in neighboring and drop in participation in local community organizations among Americans today. Others have analyzed the rise of identity politics, rooted in the civil rights, women's liberation, disability rights, and other social movements, resulting in the emergence of new communities based on gender, ethnicity, and other specific shared identities. Globalization and the widespread use of the internet have created further opportunities and pressures to redefine community in new ways.

In *Contesting Communities: The Transformation of Workplace Charity*, Emily Barman adds to the debate on defining "community" by investigating how conceptions of community manifest themselves in an arena little researched by social scientists, namely: charitable donation campaigns in the workplace. Barman outlines two distinct conceptions of community, the traditional "community of place," determined by geography, and the more recently conceptualized "community of purpose," centered on shared identities or interests without regard to physical proximity. She traced the recent history of workplace charity, and focuses specifically on the shifting roles, power, and approaches of the United Way versus "alternative funds." These are competing confederated charitable fundraisers such as the Black United Fund and EarthShare. She then argues that the concept of "community of place" embodied in the United Way has been increasingly challenged by the "communities of purpose" represented by these Alternative Funds. Through case studies of the contrasting workplace charity environments in Chicago and San Francisco, Barman identifies factors and pathways that influence the relative dominance of these alternative definitions of community in a given locality.

The author offers a detailed and thorough history of the United Way and alternative funds, with rich and insightful case studies of charitable donation environments in

workplaces in Chicago and San Francisco. Furthermore, her core premise is persuasive—the decline of the United Way and rise of alternative funds reflects the increasing importance of new, non-place-based conceptions of community. However, in the drive to support her thesis, Barman glosses over the complexity of some of the issues she raises. For example, the book touches on other factors besides cultural conceptualizations of community that have contributed to the decline of the United Way, such as financial management scandals and donors' demands for individual control over the use of their contributions. Such issues suggest that the landscape of workplace charity has been shaped by multiple complex factors, beyond just changing definitions of community, but Barman does not explore these other factors in depth. Overall, though, the book makes a valuable contribution to the understanding of both the evolving meaning of community and the field of workplace charity in the United States.

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Michael Wessells, *Child Soldiers: From Violence to Protection.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006. $45.00 hardcover.

The UN estimates that 300,000 children around the world are exploited as combatants in armed conflicts. Although the plight of child soldiers remains an under-researched field, children have become increasingly drawn into the violent chaos of war. The development of lightweight weaponry, children's psychological and physical vulnerability, and their innate desire to please adults all conspire against their welfare. International law struggles to address this severe problem, which is linked to other major issues of child labor, ethnic violence, political instability, and poverty. Attempts to free children from armed conflict are frequently undermined by the re-recruitment of children back into their former fighting groups.

Theses issues and more are effectively addressed in Michael Wessells's *Child Soldiers: From Violence to Protection.* Drawing upon over 400 field interviews with child soldiers, Wessells