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Review of *Men on a Mission: Valuing Youth Work in our Communities*. William Mardiglio. Reviewed by Will Rainford.

Will Rainford
Boise State University

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William Mardiglio, *Men on a Mission: Valuing Youth Work in our Communities*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008. \$60.00 hardcover.

In the late 20th century, men in American society were, to some significant extent, marginalized in their role as mentors, teachers, and caregivers. All too often in popular media, as well as academic discourse, men have been collectively depicted as aggressive, violent, and disconnected from family roles. This negative perspective of males in society is to be expected, due largely to widespread media attention to the exploitation of children by male pedophiles (who are frequently in a mentoring role with the child), the rising rate of children who are unsupported financially or emotionally by fathers, and the increase in female providers of traditionally male-leadership roles in the lives of children, especially for children-at-risk.

Men on a Mission serves to provide a starkly different perspective of the very important role that men play in the lives of children. All across the United States, in urban and rural cities and towns, men coach, teach, and guide children, both formally as professional child-workers in various careers, as well as informally as volunteers seeking to give children the love, support, education, and moral guidance they need to become healthy, productive adults. Through the ethnographic study of men who work and volunteer with children, as well as from two decades of research conducted on fatherhood, Mardiglio provides compelling evidence that men are extensively involved in the lives of children, belying the growing myth of the uninvolved, dispassionate male. His work provides rich understanding of the motivations and experiences of men conducting youth work in the community. Mardiglio's also argues that the potential of men who could and should become involved in youth-work is under-realized, leaving a gap in the care giving network in society. If men are expected to be involved in the lives of youth, and if they are re-cast in the role as caregiver and teacher, men will fulfill the role.

This book is a well-written account of the sociological phenomenon of men's youth-work, drawing on strong ethnographic methodology. His work is timely and important, bringing to light the experiences of men in an area of male societal

roles that has received little academic attention. The book is informative and useful to academics and their students engaged in the study and formation of family theory and social policy, as well as for youth agencies seeking to increase support for the children they serve.

Will Rainford, Boise State University

Martín Sánchez-Jankowski, *Cracks in the Pavement: Social Change and Resilience in Poor Neighborhoods*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008. \$24.95 papercover.

Since its early years in the 19th-century, the social work profession has had a strong commitment to addressing the problems of poor, urban communities and it has historically drawn on the insights of sociologists to provide theoretical frameworks to inform and inspire community interventions. The work of the Chicago school of urban sociologists, ethnographic studies of urban ethnic neighborhoods, analyses of community networks and more recently the notion of social capital have all informed community practice. However, as is well-known, much community practice has been based on a deficit model which emphasizes the problems and challenges facing urban communities. This is reflected the historical dominance of a pathology-focused social disorganization approach in urban sociology which has only recently been challenged by a strengths-based model that recognizes the resilience and capabilities of low income communities.

Sanchez-Jankowski's book makes a major contribution towards understanding the strengths of poor communities and particularly ethnic minority communities in the United States. It will be welcomed by social workers and community practitioners who are increasingly persuaded that the deficit approach fails to capture the complexity of community relationships and the potential of poor people to cooperate and work for the benefit of their localities. The book is based on a series of in-depth ethnographic studies of poor communities in Los Angeles and New York over a ten year period. Unlike many other community ethnographic studies, which have usually been based on household interviews, the author