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Dalla, John DeFrain, Julie Johnson, and Douglas A.
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Strengths and Challenges of New Immigrant Families: Implications for Research, Education, Policy, and Service. Edited by Rochelle L. Dalla, John DeFrain, Julie Johnson, and Douglas A. Abbott. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2009. viii + 436 pp. Tables, figures, references, appendices, index. \$95.00 cloth, \$39.95 paper.

Strengths and Challenges of New Immigrant Families is a multidisciplinary compendium of articles and essays about immigrants and refugee families. Most (but not all) of the studies were conducted in the Great Plains states. The authors include academics, providers, and policy advocates. The work is well intentioned, but demonstrates the risks of compiling conference papers into a book; the result is a tome of variable quality. Indeed, in the introduction the editors acknowledge that it was a challenge

“arranging the final manuscripts into a coherent whole.” That said, one value of the book is the inclusion of research on a number of understudied populations, such as Sudanese, Khmer, Somali, and Korean immigrants and refugees. In addition, a few chapters are of notably high quality. One of these, chapter 4 by Blume and de Reus, combines a review of the literature on race and the social construction of difference with reflections on the ways in which practitioners, researchers, and educators need to consider white privilege.

Some studies focus on neglected groups, but fall short of the mark. In chapter 2 Nou analyzes the adaptation of Khmer refugees in Massachusetts. There is little literature on this refugee group, but this study fails to add much to an understanding of Khmer mental health, in spite of extensive and intrusive methods: a “survey package” that took from two to six hours to complete, including self-reports of psychological and somatic symptoms, demographic questionnaire, social readjustment rating scale, hassles scale of daily stressors, PTSD screening, and social support scale. Similarly, in chapter 3 Trask et al. present personal stories of immigration—a good means of illustrating the diversity of experiences of immigrants from different backgrounds—but, in this case, one that lacks a firm conceptual framework. It would have been stronger had the authors chosen four case studies of immigrants of the *same* national origin to contrast their experiences and the variables that influence acculturation, such as the much tighter qualitative study on the influence of American culture on nine East Indian Hindu immigrant couples by Abbott and Gupta (chapter 5).

The Detzner et al. chapter on family strengths is another example of research on understudied populations—Hmong and Somali refugees in Minnesota. However, this small study lacks rich, in-depth data because of the inability of the researchers to tape record the interviews. More importantly, the self-reports fail to get beyond general statements regarding core family strengths to examine the stresses that fray family ties between refugee parents and their children born or raised in the U.S. Using a very different methodology, the Hofstetter et al. chapter on acculturation and family conflict is more successful in exploring this important topic. They conducted telephone interviews with Korean parents and adolescent children to analyze determinants of parent-child conflict, and demonstrated that parental expectations regarding school performance were an important predictor.

Several other studies that address important topics are hampered by methodological limitations. One example is the Potter et al. study of length of residence and reported

quality of life in a rural Midwestern community. Unfortunately the authors failed to gather data on the legal status of their mostly Latino respondents—a variable likely to have a major impact on stress and residential satisfaction.

One hopes that the researchers represented in this volume will continue to study immigrant and refugee families, but with more focused analyses and tighter methodologies. **Katherine Fennelly**, *Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota*.