

VIOLENCE IN THE LIVES OF BLACK WOMEN; Battered Black and Blue

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Journal of Comparative Family Studies; Summer 2004; 35, 3; Research Library

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Journal of Comparative Family Studies

immigrant life.

Baluja also studies the gender role change within the family using the husband-wife dyad. This work seems to fill the gap in the study on the life and changes among International migrants by using, both, the retrospective and current data as well as taking the origin and destination of the immigrant cultural milieu into account. Baluja has done extensive fieldwork, first with the Bangladeshi immigrants in Queens, New York and followed this with out-migration sources in Sylhet, Khulan and Dhaka in Bangladesh. She should be credited for breaking the variables down and using scales to examine her research question but she misses out to consider the part played by religion in the gender role attitude among the Bangladeshis in 'home' and 'abroad', especially with regard to social sanctions and constraints Islam exercises. The ethnography etches the same but the quantitative variables and scales does not follow suit. She acknowledges this fact in the conclusion where she has pointed out, 'confirming some hypothesis and refuting others' that 'Bangladeshi immigrants experience profound change in some aspect of their gender role attitude and moderate to no change in other aspects' (207).

Both the authors are concerned with attempts by the immigrants to assimilate in the American culture and the norms through which their gender role attitude and behavior is measured/considered is American. This is like looking at the life and culture of the immigrant group through the American 'colored glasses. This can be a good example to measure the 'reference group behavior' but not the immigrant life per se. What about immigrant cultural identity and empowerment as 'the new Americans'? Without going into the good and desirable gender norms, values or roles, one can conclude that the importance of these two books lies in the fact that it leaves/brings to limelight further research questions.

WEST, Carolyn M., editor, **VIOLENCE IN THE LIVES OF BLACK WOMEN; Battered Black and Blue**, co-published simultaneously as **WOMEN and THERAPY**. Volume 25, Numbers 3-4, 2002. Binghamton, NY: The Haworth Press, 2002, 211 pp., \$24.95 softcover and \$49.95 hardcover.

Reviewed by: MARCIE PARKER*

This volume fills a great need in the literature from many different points of view. The authors use a feminist perspective, as well as qualitative and quantitative research methods, to investigate all aspects of violence in the lives of Black women, including childhood sexual abuse, partner violence, sexual assault, workplace violence, street violence, battered Black lesbian lovers, racialized sexual harassment of Black women, battered Black women who have experienced brain trauma and Black women who have been murdered by their intimate partners. In addition to providing an overview of the issues and problems, the authors also offer solutions that speak to Black women's strengths and resilience, in addition to extensive citations and references.

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Violence in the lives of Black women is often ignored, shrouded in guilt, shame, secrecy and silence. In many cases, as long as the violence remains Black-on-Black, police may be satisfied not to interfere. This volume is divided into sections: Part I or Overview of Violence provides an overview context by West as well as information on community violence, trauma, grief and coping. Part II or Types of Violence looks at childhood sexual abuse and risk/resilience in a longitudinal study, Black women's coping strategies in psychologically abusive dating relationships, their strategies for disengaging from abusive relationships, the effects of racism and sexism on Black rape victims, and racialized sexual harassment in the lives of Black women. Part III or Marginalized Populations looks at Black lesbians and domestic violence, and head and brain injuries experienced by Black female victims of intimate partner violence. Part IV or Breaking Silence or Activism and Healing looks at research as an act of resistance and healing for Black women who have survived intimate male partner violence, fragmented silhouettes, using a film project to break the silence about sexual violence in the Black community, and searching for better ways to handle violence. The book ends with another overview essay by West and includes extensive suggested supplemental readings and websites that readers may wish to consult.

I was heartened to see the inclusion of lesbian domestic violence in this book. The topic is not PC and is often hush-hushed by feminists who prefer not to deal with it at all. This chapter author, Robinson, points out that between 30-40% of lesbians have been involved in physically abusive relationships. Physical, emotional and sexual abuse often occur together. There are equally high rates of lesbian battering found across all cultures and ethnic groups. Lesbian abuse follows the same pattern as male-on-female abuse [verbal abuse escalates to physical abuse followed by apologies and remorse and promises that it will never happen again; attempts to isolate and cut off the abused partner; repeated cycles of violence; threats to "out" the abused partner to children, family members, property owners and employers and co-workers]. Because gender is not part of this pattern of abuse, police and mental health professionals as well as researchers have often considered lesbian battering to be an "equal fight" or mutual battering, making it almost impossible for the battered partner to seek help. Robinson suggests a number of interventions such as acknowledging the problem, addressing homophobia and heterosexism, providing appropriate support and referrals and providing appropriate treatment options.

In her final overview, West draws out the overall themes presented by all of these authors and researchers. These include intersectionality [the intersection of multiple forms of oppression that complicate how Black women can seek help]; broad range of violence [Black women are vulnerable to a broad range of violence in all areas and stages of their lives]; diversity among Black women [Black women constitute a very diverse group, from low-income women to college educated professional women to Black lesbians to those in partnership with males, to Black women with HIV/AIDS or those in prison or the welfare system to those born in the United States or immigrants from abroad]; Black women's history [Black women have a long history of sexual violence in the United States stemming from rape and forced breeding to demeaning stereotypes such as subordinate Mammy to sexually promiscuous Jezebel]; and resilience and activism [strategies for terminating abusive relationships, participating in the research process and the arts and spirituality as forms of activism].

Among the interventions these authors all recommend is to educate professionals [this book is a good beginning], to conduct a comprehensive assessment, to draw on the survivor's many strengths, to encourage activism, to improve social support networks, to acknowledge oppressive images, to understand the importance of literature, art and music, and to understand the importance of spirituality.

This book should be read by all healthcare providers, including physicians, nurses, clinic staff, social workers, mental health staff, researchers in the family social sciences, program administrators, and probably the police and court personnel as well as community workers and helpers in all settings. The book is important for anyone, including interested laypersons, who want to understand an unacknowledged problem or who want to increase their cultural sensitivity. **This is an important book that belongs in our libraries.**

TOTH, JENNIFER, WHAT HAPPENED TO JOHNNIE JORDAN? The Story of a Child Turning Violent. New York, NY: The Free Press, 2002, 291 pp., \$25.00 hardcover.

Reviewed by: GISELLE GOETZE*

This intense narrative account of the life of Johnnie Jordan draws the reader into the experience of a complex and disturbed child who had all the wrong turns in his path. Being raised partly on the streets with parents involved in drugs and crime was only the beginning of Johnnie's disadvantages. As the story unfolds, the reader is captivated not only by the horrific neglect he experiences but also by the incredible failure of Children's Services which leads to a young adolescent murdering his foster mother. Jennifer Toth utilizes her journalism skills to unpack the question of "What happened to Johnnie Jordan?" She bases her answer to that question on interviews with his foster father and other key informants, and also has multiple interviews with Johnnie himself.

The account of Johnnie's life begins with the day of the murder. A wonderful foster mother with a long history of helping children is dead; her husband is in complete despair. Amid the shock the community is experiencing are memories of warning signs that Johnnie could be a dangerous youth.

Johnnie's history is full of deprivation and abuse experienced in the care of his parents. Perspectives from former foster parents and social workers enrich the story as they address the failures in the systems throughout Johnnie's past and talk about their love for and dedication to the children. In piecing together Johnnie's history, family relationships and opportunities the reader discovers a child who has been shaped by the worst of home lives and who has taken the brunt of the system's failures.

As the trial is recorded, Johnnie's complete detachment from his emotions provides the reader with a glimpse of the intense pain and loss that he survived. Questions repeatedly

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