

women need to occupy the central space and leadership roles in gender justice movements.

As a pro-feminist man, I personally felt affirmed by this book as it provided me with a sense of community and togetherness. Pro-feminist men face many challenges and questions which this book speaks to in an eloquent manner, providing much food for thought. It also provides pro-feminist men's voices the visibility they deserve. It is a very valuable addition to feminist literature generally and men's pro-feminist literature specifically.

M. Flynn and D.C. Brotherton (eds) (2008) *Globalizing the Streets: Cross-cultural Perspectives on Youth, Social Control, and Empowerment*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Reviewed by: Hans van Ewijk, ICSW

Flynn and Brotherton announce the book as 'the stepchild of an academic conference', and a disputed conference as well. Rudolph Giuliani, then Mayor of New York, criticized (through his spokesperson) the John Jay College of Criminal Justice (New York) for hosting the conference, by stating that 'John Jay should be a college for criminal justice, not for criminal practices'. It sets the tone for a highly polarized debate about youth gangs and street youth cultures in the USA. In current politics it is popular to be tough on presumed criminal acts of young people, at the same time enlarging the domain of criminality and mistrusting more supportive interventions. Conversely, the authors of *Globalizing the Streets* are looking for a grounded appreciation of the life worlds of young women and men and aiming to reveal 'the invisible structures of domination and symbolic and indirect violence that oppress, exclude, and humiliate'.

In Part 1 youth experiences of surveillance are presented, suggesting a new youth generation is growing up with a profound mistrust of the state and its agencies. The adult world is felt as 'threat and danger' by the interviewed and observed young people. The authors relate the oppressive approach towards young people in the streets to an overall youth policy mainly based on fear and control. In Part 2 different researched street cultures are presented. Differences are drawn between runaways, nomads, homeless youths and street children in countries such as the USA, Russia or Brazil, but all of them represent a world of youths expelled from family life and mainstream society. The backgrounds of most children are poverty, conflicting families

and quite often abuse. The creation of street gangs is analyzed as providing alternative homes and memberships. In the following part more studies on street gangs are presented, embedded in more theoretical reflections, placing the findings in a socio-historic discourse. 'Social mechanisms' related to globalization, new right politics and more general mechanisms of exclusion and inclusion are debated with a nuanced eye for the meaning of street cultures and street gangs for the youths involved. The researched practices demonstrate resilience and the accommodating qualities of youth groups and sometimes even the development of criminal groups into cultural and economic communes, as is the case with the Los Muchachos in Colombia. Part 4 is about subcultures of whiteness, changing the perspective on white (Caucasian) males lacking an ethnic identity and threatened by developing strong ethnic groups around them. Many of the young white men, in particular in cities and rural areas with a recent influx of new migrants, are struggling with ethnic anomie and looking for traditional rituals in the white culture, mainly found in pre-Christian times. As a special issue 'school shooting as a postmodern phenomenon' focuses on 'disaffected white male students' killing teachers and schoolmates in a longing for recognition and fame. In the final part some integrative interventions are presented, in line with the Los Muchachos, focusing on the positive powers in street cultures and street groups and in fighting against an oppressive individualized approach.

Having read the 300-page book I am struggling with mixed feelings about it. I have a great respect for the researchers, many of whom interviewed and observed gangs and groups for several years and really listened to them and tried to understand what is happening, what the societal mechanisms are and how young people are able to resist and to be resilient. It creates some intriguing insights into the functioning of street youths and gangs. In particular, the role of the groups in creating a kind of home, family, structure and protecting network is interesting and partly convincing. Most of the authors have mixed feelings. They are not identifying themselves fully with the street youths nor are they blind to the negative features. In the research by Nurge and Shively on girls in gangs, this ambivalence is reflected like this: 'Some girls' decisions to join gangs can be characterized as resistance to their victimization experiences. Unfortunately, the venue (gangs) through which they are escaping their abuse concomitantly exposes them to additional violent encounters ...'. I think this is a deep layer in many of the stories; it is much about youths escaping from intolerable contexts and moving into other intolerable contexts, albeit ones felt as a personal choice and sometimes with some powers of recovery and resilience. There is a thin line between getting into hard criminality and a depersonalized life and getting a new chance for friendship and finding new ground. And indeed, the important question to ask is how to

intervene as society and social workers in those contexts of street cultures and street gangs.

What bothers me is that, in particular in the introductory chapter, the knives are sharpened, bringing back the more disciplinary and punitive approaches to new right approaches and a misunderstanding of young people. The richness of the studies presented is disappearing under a thick sauce of left-wing ideology and perceptions of globalization, making it too easy for 'the enemy' to neglect this book. Quotes like 'To put it crudely, market tyrannies and state despotism have deepened inequalities and abrogate freedom both within and among nations', are not very helpful in starting a more open debate on the marginalization of young people in different cultures and countries. I think the studies themselves are very convincing and do not need too obvious links to globalizing evil. The research observations are in contrast with the rather blunt social political analyses. The position of social work, given its empowering tradition with regard to excluded groups (such as many of the youth gangs and cultures in this publication), needs to be a self confident approach, focused on giving insight into and improving practices in the life world contexts of young people.