

activism and the use of popular epidemiological methods and feminist consciousness raising to expose women's experiences of occupational health hazards is particularly engaging. It is brought to the modern day in the final chapter through Murphy's excellent analysis of discourses surrounding multiple chemical sensitivities (MCS) and the fragmented MCS movement occurring in Internet chat rooms, support groups and other "informal cells" where groups work to define and explain what biomedicine has thus far labeled undefinable and imaginary. As someone interested primarily in women's health, I found these to be the most engaging portions of the book. However, this is not to take away from the very thorough and important exploration of the history of other sites which contributed to the uncertain nature of SBS. Murphy's examination of the physical space of the modern office is particularly important since this workplace is where many North American workers spend their days.

This book is written primarily for an academic audience and would be most useful for advanced students of historical studies of labour and science, environmental studies and women's studies. It would also be of interest to those in labour, public health and government who wish to better understand the historical forces and complex confluence of factors contributing to SBS/MCS and their status in both healthcare and the workplace.

Like the problem itself, this book is complex. Murphy handles the complexity well and the book is detailed, rich and unfolds nicely. The engaging prose made me think about lurking bacteria, moulds and insects and had me questioning the bright yellow asbestos warning stickers on the walls of my office. It should be noted that Murphy deftly avoids answering the question "Is it real?" and instead forces the reader to consider how both SBS and MCS are constructed through a collection of contested and uncertain discourses which challenge how much is known about

environmental exposures and human health.

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***The Cell Phone: An Anthropology of Communication.*** Heather A. Horst and Daniel Miller. Oxford: Berg Publisher; ix+211 pages; ISBN 1-84520-401-8; \$29.95US (paper).

The rise of the cell phone has fostered a radical change in Third World communication possibilities by offering a new means of communication to populations historically deprived of land lines and Internet access. *The Cell Phone: An Anthropology of Communication* presents the results of an ethnographic study on the impact of the cell phone on two low-income Jamaican communities over the course of a year. The project was funded by the British Department for International Development as part of a broader initiative to study the potential of the cell phone for participating in development. The study examines the economic assumption that the cell phone alleviates poverty through contributing to Gross Domestic Product and income generation.

Weaving through an analysis of the telecommunications market in Jamaica with interviews and questionnaires, the study shows that the importance of the cell phone does not result from a single economic, technological or social factor, but combines state regulation of the market, technology and people's choice (164). The study highlights the popularity and importance of the cell phone for low-income Jamaican communities through analyses of its presence in areas of crime, health, education, sexual relationships, transnational relationships and in sustaining and extending social networks and solving personal crises. In particular, Horst and Miller describe how the cell phone participates in the maintenance of large social networks through short phone conversations. Such a practice of "link-up"

(81-102) should not be interpreted as a form of minimal sociality or greater individual networking, but also as a way of fostering a potential for deeper relationships, should the occasion arise.

The central finding regarding the relationship between the cell phone and poverty is that contrary to other Third World countries, the cell phone in low-income communities in Jamaica is not a source of income generation. Rather, the cell phone makes it possible for people living in poverty to survive, mainly through asking others for financial help to solve financial crises (165-66). The cell phone participates in a process where money is not saved for capital accumulation, but is filtered back through donations to alleviate crises of poverty. Such a finding highlights the importance of taking into account local situations, practices and values for policy developments, and Horst and Miller show how ethnographic work can address the shortcomings of top-down approaches commonly used by national and international policy-making institutions, and can answer the need to analyze how general conditions of poverty, welfare and technological development are enmeshed with local situations and aspirations. Furthermore, ethnography offers a way to bring more scrutiny to the often unintentional and fortuitous effects of policies (176).

Horst and Miller offer a compelling and detailed account of the complex setting within which the cell phone is embedded in low-income Jamaican communities, highlighting how economic and political factors, social aspirations and cultural values are inseparable from technological development and have profound and specific social and personal impacts. In so doing, the strength of their approach lies in the invitation to think beyond strict categorization and direct causality models.

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***Midlife and Older Women: Family Life, Work and Health in Jamaica.*** Joan Rawlins. Mona, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2006; tables; illustrations; I + 173 pages; ISBN 976-640-183-7; \$20.00US (paper).

Joan Rawlins provides an excellent historical account of family life, health and employment experiences of middle-aged and older working-class and middle-class Jamaican women in the early 1990s in two Jamaican communities: the traditional working-class community of August Town and the established middle-class community of Hope Pastures. She examines how gender, age, socio-economic status, education and region are implicated in these women's experiences accessing health services and paid employment and negotiating relationships with family.

Rawlins argues that the matrifocal character of most Jamaican families is simultaneously oppressive and empowering to Jamaican women. She contends that while many of these women exert a certain amount of power in their homes by taking up many of the financial, emotional and physical care and decision-making responsibilities there, they face a double burden in that depressed economic conditions often require that they also work outside of the home, often until they become seniors.

Given that Jamaica has seen significant changes in its economy, health care and social conditions since the early 1990s when the data was originally collected, the author's decision to use historical data in a book that was published in 2006 is a curious one, particularly since she fails to clearly explain why she made this decision. Moreover, her historical analysis loses much of its impact without a clear articulation of how the economy, health system and social conditions have evolved (and in many instances worsened) in Jamaica over the past fifteen years. For example, since the data was collected over fifteen years ago, AIDS has become one of the most significant (if not the most