

**Abdi, Herve, Dominique Valentin and Betty Edelman.** *Neural Networks*. Newberry Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Neural Networks introduces readers to the basic models of neural networks and compares and contrasts these models with the use of other statistical models. The author adopts statistical models based on an analogy of the brain structure.

**Bowker, Geoffrey C. and Susan Leigh Star.** 1999. *Sorting Things Out: Classification and Its Consequences*. Cambridge MIT Press.

What do a seventeenth-century mortality table (whose causes of death include “fainted in a bath,” “frightened,” and “itch”); the identification of South Africans during apartheid as European, Asian, colored, or black; and the separation of machine-from hand-washables have in common? All are examples of classification-the scaffolding of information infrastructures. In *Sorting Things Out*, Geoffrey C. Bowker and Susan Leigh Star explore the role of categories and standards in shaping the modern world. In a clear and lively style, they investigate a variety of classification systems, including the International Classification of Diseases, the Nursing Interventions Classification, race classification under apartheid in South Africa, and the classification of viruses and of tuberculosis. The authors emphasize the role of *invisibility* in the process by which classification orders human interaction. They examine how categories are made and kept invisible, and how people can change this invisibility when necessary. They also explore systems of classification as part of the built information environment. Much as an urban historian would review highway permits and zoning decisions to tell a city’s story, the authors review archives of classification design to understand how decisions have been made. *Sorting Things Out* has a moral agenda, for each standard and category valorizes some point of view and silences another. Standards and classifications produce advantage or suffering. Jobs are made and lost; some regions benefit at the expense of others. How these choices are made and how we think about the process are at the moral and political core of this work. The book is an important empirical source for understanding the building of information infrastructures. Geoffrey C. Bowker is Associate Professor and Susan Leigh Star is Professor in the Graduate School of Library and Information Science, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

**Cook, Thomas D., Melissa R. Herman, Meredith Phillips, and Richard A. Settersten.** Fall 1999. *How Neighborhoods, Families, Peer Groups, and Schools Jointly Affect Changes in Early Adolescent Development*. Institute for Policy Research, Northwestern University.

The study scales nuclear families, friendship groups, schools and neighborhoods for

their theory-derived capacity to promote healthy development during early adolescence. We then demonstrate that the resulting index for each context is associated with 19-month changes in a multi-dimensional success composite after controls are used for many individual and aggregate-level selection variables. We then ask two questions: First, how tightly are the four contexts clustered in terms of their presumed influence on healthy development? For individual children, the contexts are not highly correlated. That is, if young people attend better schools or live in better families, this has few implications for the quality of the other contexts in their lives. However, the four contexts do cluster much more tightly for the average student in a school or neighborhood. The second question is about the form of the joint influence of all four contexts on developmental change. We find that all four independently influence changes in success, and that they do so additively. There is no evidence of statistical interactions among the contexts or of other forms of non-linearity.

**Coxon, A.P.M.** . 1999. *Sorting Data: Collection and Analysis*. London: Sage Publications.

This 98 page book is number 127 in the *Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences* “Little Green Book” series. Its four chapters are: 1. Introduction (7 pp.); 2. Collecting Free-Sorting Data (22 pp.); 3. Describing and Comparing Sortings (23 pp.); 4. Analyzing Sorting Data (44 pp.). For the author, “sorting” involves identifying a number of objects and grouping them systematically into smaller categories for study. He clearly defines this book's paradigm of sorting as “the 'disjoint free-sorting', where a fixed set of objects are allocated to an unspecified number of categories, but each object is allocated to only one category.” This monograph is well written, very thoroughly referenced and shows a deep knowledge of this field. It is a real shame that it is incomplete because “Endnotes, References, and Applications are located on the following website ...”

**David, Maya.** 6/99. *Malaysia, Kuala-Lumpur, Language Choice in Sindhi Homes in Malaysia*. Committee on Family Research Seminar, International Sociological Association, Berlin.

This research focuses on three generations of Sindhi settlers in Malaysia with a view to determining their language choices in the home domain and with community members. In Malaysia the Sindhis constitute a subethnic group of Indians and consist of only about 600 people. Malaysian Sindhis come from Sind, which, prior to the independence of India in 1946 was part of India. The immigration of the Sindhis to Malaysia was mainly a consequence of the partitioning of India in 1947, which resulted in Sind becoming part of Pakistan. The Sindhi Hindus had to literally flee from Sind leaving property behind and rebuild lives elsewhere. Since the partitioning of India and Pakistan, the migrants Sindhis have had no “home” territory in India and exist as an international trading community. The Sindhi community is dispersed throughout the urban centres of the world but Malaysian Sindhis share a common cultural and religious background with Sindhis throughout the world and have extensive social and business networks both locally and

internationally. A range of methodologies and constructs have been used to disclose information which a domain based questionnaire approach in itself was not able to capture. The phenomena of code-mixing and code-switching not only of two but also of three languages emerged. Language choices varied not only across generations but also across gender within a generation. These findings of inter and intragenerational language choice will be discussed.

**Hagan, John, Ronit Dinovitzer, and Patricia Parker.** 2000. *Choice and Circumstance: Social Capital and Planful Competence in the Attainments of the "one-and-a-half" Generation. Immigration Social-Mobility.*

The study of educational attainment has been characterized by two very different, yet important modes of inquiry; the first tends to focus on structural determinants, while the second is a more individual-level examination of the factors differentiating successful students from their less successful counterparts. While structural determinants such as parental socioeconomic status have proved to be strong determinants of educational attainment, Bourdieu and Passeron ([1964] 1979) have argued that students' educational attainment should not be conceived as "mechanically determined" (p.25). In other words, despite the strong influence of social structure, human agency and the power of choice remain. Clausen's (1991) work on the "planful competence" of adolescents has illuminated the importance of human agency inherent in all decision-making. Much of the research in this area, however, has not integrated these two modes of inquiry, providing a somewhat limited perspective on an adolescent's journey through the educational system. In a recent article suitably titled "History and Agency in Men's Lives," Shanahan, Elder and Miech (1997) have pursued this integrative approach, examining both individual choices and structural factors in assessing educational attainment. This study examines the educational attainment of immigrant youth in a Canadian suburb focusing on the determinants of their educational success; these immigrant children can be referred to as the "one-and-a-half generation" (Zhou 1997; Rumbaut 1991).

**Hagle, Timothy M.** *Basic Math for Social Scientists.* Newberry Park, CA: Sage Publications.

The author discusses limits and continuity, followed by calculus, with an introduction to differential calculus. Multi-variate functions, partial derivatives, and integral calculus are also discussed.

**Kalb, Don, Marco van der Land, Richard Staring, Bart van Steenbergen, and Nico Wilterdink.** 2000. *The Ends of Globalization.* Rowman & Littlefield.

This book brings an empirical social science perspective to a public issue on which observers, economists, and business gurus have freely unleashed their abstract models

and jumbo schemes. Written by internationally acclaimed authors, the chapters engage empirically tractable issues that are basic to any overall understanding of the social origins, structures, and consequences of the current wave of globalization. The book brings together in one volume diverse issues related to globalization that are generally dealt with in separate publications, such as migration, social inequality, flows of capital, Americanization and cultural identities, citizenship and collective action, and global governance. The diversity of topics and up to date discussion makes this book ideal as a text or supplementary reading for courses. As an argument for greater complexity, contingency and contradiction in contemporary debates on globalization, it is essential reading for any scholar or lay reader concerned about contemporary change.

**Lonkila, Markku.** 1999. *Social Networks in Post-Soviet Russia: Continuity and Change in the Everyday Life of St. Petersburg Teachers*. Helsinki Kikimora Publication.

The articles of this collection examine everyday life in post-Soviet Russia through comparative data on personal networks in St. Petersburg and Helsinki in 1993-94 and 1996. This book, based on school teachers' diaries and interviews in both cities, is about the legacy of socialism: the tension between the patterns of thought and behaviour inherited from the past and the requirements of the emerging new social order.

**Meyer, David S. and Sidney Tarrow.** 1997. *The Social Movement Society*. Rowman & Littlefield.

Is there more social protest now than there was prior to the movement politics of the 1960s, and if so, does it result in a distinctly less civil society throughout the world? If everybody protests, what does protest mean in advanced industrial societies? This volume brings together scholars from Europe and the U.S., and from both political science and sociology, to consider the ways in which the social movement has changed as a political form and the ways in which it continues to change the societies in which it is prevalent.

**Nardi, Peter M.** 1999. *Gay Men's Friendships: Invincible Communities*. The University of Chicago Press.

Expertly weaving historical and sociological research on friendship with firsthand information, sociologist Peter Nardi argues that friendship is the central organizing element of gay men's lives. Through friendship, gay identities and communities are created, transformed, maintained, and reproduced. Nardi explores the meaning of friends to some gay men, how friends often become a surrogate family, how sexual behavior and attraction affects these friendships, and how, for many, friends mean more and last longer than romantic relationships. While looking at the psychological joys and sorrows of friendship, he also considers the cultural constraints limiting gay men in contemporary urban America — especially those that deal with dominant images of masculinity and heterosexuality — and how they relate to friendship. By listening to gay men talk about

their interactions, Nardi offers a rare glimpse into the mechanisms of gay life. We learn how gay men meet their friends, what they typically do and talk about, and how these strong relationships contain the roots of larger cultural forces such as social movements and gay identities and neighborhoods. Nardi also points out the political and social consequences when friendships fail to provide support against oppression.

**Risseuw, Carla and Kamala Ganesh.** 1999. *Negotiation and Social Space: A Gendered Analysis of Changing Kin and Security Networks in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa*. Altamir Press.

Deviating significantly from traditional approaches to family and kinship, this volume of original essays [a companion to *Shifting Circles of Support* (see page 301)] articulates an understanding of changing kin relations as related to changing degrees of social (in) security and social exclusion by analyzing both the subtle erosion as well as strengthening of people's positions within the kin and family networks. It highlights the importance of the comparative perspective and the urgency of adopting such an approach for policy initiatives. It will be of considerable interest to those in the fields of cultural anthropology, gender studies, sociology, development studies, and kinship and family studies.

**Shields, Rob.** 1999. *Lefebvre, Love and Struggle*. NY: Roulledge.

*Lefebvre, Love and Struggle* provides the only comprehensive guide to Lefebvre's work. It is an accessible introduction to one of the most significant European thinkers of the twentieth century. Rob Shields draws on the full range of Lefebvre's writings, including many previously untranslated and unpublished works and correspondence. Topics covered include Lefebvre's early relationship with Marxism, his critique of the rise of fascism, his *Critique of Everyday Life* and the significant work on urban space for which he is best known today.

**Simpson, Jeffrey A. and W. Steven Rholes.** 1998. *Attachment Theory and Close Relationships*. NY: Guilford Publications.

In the last decade, few topics in social and personality psychology have attracted more interest than the application of attachment theory to adult relationships. Comprehensive and up-to-date, this book integrates the most important theoretical and empirical advances in this growing area of study and suggests new and promising directions for future investigation. Its balanced coverage of measurement issues, affect regulation, and clinical applications makes this a valuable sourcebook for scholars, students, and clinicians.

**Smith, William L.** 1999. *Communal Families*. Sage.

Author William L. Smith uses a unique perspective in explaining the role of the family in communal life. Although many scholars believe that families often destroy or hinder communal living, communal groups are a type of nontraditional family. The only contemporary exploration of communal families, this book investigates the assumptions that scholars, and others, have made regarding the status of the family within communes and debunks current myths about communes and communal families. While some groups are predisposed to families, other communal groups become replacements or substitutes for the nuclear family. Smith investigates a variety of practices, including monogamy, polygamy, pantagamy, and celibacy as implemented by intentional communities in dealing with family life. Drawing on the history of communes in the United States, the author discusses various communal groups, such as the Shaker, the Mormons, the Oneida Community, the Amana Colonies, as well as contemporary rural and urban communal groups such as Twin Oaks, Jesus People USA, and Hutterites.

**Wegner, Etienne.** 2000. *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge University Press.

*Communities of Practice* presents a theory of learning that starts with this assumption: engagement in social practice is the fundamental process by which we learn and so become who we are. The primary unit of analysis of this process is neither the individual nor social institutions but rather the informal “communities of practice” that people form as they pursue shared enterprises over time. In order to give a social account of learning, the theory explores in a systematic way the intersection of issues of community, social practice, meaning, and identity. The result is a broad conceptual framework for thinking about learning as a process of social participation. This ambitious but thoroughly accessible framework has relevance for the practitioner as well as the theoretician, presented with all breadth, depth, and rigor necessary to address such a complex and yet profoundly human topic.