

in performing research in this population is covered, helping to explain the relative dearth of knowledge in this area.

Similarly, most readers should find specific chapters within the book that will sate their appetite for a richer discussion in their areas of professional interest. Many readers are likely to discover areas of previously unrealized interest. Given the passion the authors exhibit for their respective areas of expertise and research, this book may spark ideas for budding researchers and writers. Examples include the use of profiling, eyewitness identification, and violence risk assessments.

Given its varied but relatively narrow scope, the book is able to delve deeper into the topics that it does cover and provides a much more nuanced view of each topic. The authors of each portion have included numerous citations and references and are clearly focusing on their areas of professional interest. As a result, readers are often treated to a historical perspective and the evolution, current state, and future direction of the subject at hand. Readers who have an interest in any of the included topics are likely to learn something new from the more sophisticated discussions. The drawback of this approach is that the book does not function well as a practical guide to daily practice of forensic psychiatry or psychology. It only examines several select areas of the authors' expertise. In each, the authors place greater focus on history, concepts, and research than on utilitarian advice. In addition, the primer's international flavor does not assist in daily work but creates an interesting backdrop to the understanding of the field overall.

In summary, readers with a pre-existing interest in any of the topics covered in *Psychology and Law* are likely to find it to be an informative read. Even those readers without a prior interest may themselves be drawn to a new subject. However, those readers looking for a handbook on the practical aspects of working in the intersection between the fields of psychology and law should look elsewhere.

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Disclosures of financial or other potential conflicts of interest: None.

Death by Jury: Group Dynamics and Capital Sentencing

By Nadine M. Connell. El Paso, TX: LFB Scholarly Publishing LLC, 2009. 222 pp. \$62.00.

Jury deliberation has long been of interest to the general public, the legal community, and forensic mental health professionals, especially when capital sentencing is involved. Who are the jurors? How did they reach their verdict? Have their personal biases influenced their judgment? How are individual jurors influenced by their cohort of jurors? Although a jury's decision regarding the death sentence is considered advisory,¹ in most states the jury's decision is rarely overturned. Consequently, each juror bears a large responsibility for deliberating the facts and rendering a fair and just decision while being cognizant of its potential finality.

In *Death by Jury: Group Dynamics and Capital Sentencing*, author Nadine M. Connell presents a compelling discussion about jury dynamics in capital cases that includes information of general interest as well as scholarly and timely material on capital sentencing deliberations. The book is part of a series of recent scholarship in criminal justice, and the material draws on perspectives from criminology, police science, sociology, victimology, and the law. Connell frequently cites data collected from the Capital Jury Project, a study developed to quantify the decision-making process of capital jurors.

The author commences with a description of the death penalty in America. She carefully traces the origins of capital punishment, including how it evolved in American law. She describes legal precedents aimed at limiting jury discretion in deliberating death penalty cases and summarizes empirical research about variations in how juries apply capital sentencing guidelines. After examining literature regarding fundamental fairness in jury deliberations, Connell suggests that jurors generally are not purposefully trying to circumvent the law with their decisions.

The remainder of the book examines the role of group dynamics in jury deliberations. In Chapter 2, "The Role of the Jury," the author reviews the

literature that describes the influence of juror- and case-level characteristics, such as the nature of the offense and number of victims, on sentencing outcomes. Forensic psychiatrists may be interested in the studies related to death-qualified jurors, defined as those who are adjudged capable of following the court's instructions about recommending capital punishment versus life without parole in death penalty cases. Connell concludes that as opposed to jurors who do not meet criteria to adjudicate capital cases, death-qualified jurors have significantly different attitudes toward pre-deliberation verdicts and convictions. Death-qualified jurors tend to have more favorable responses to prosecution witness testimony; excludable jurors are less likely to find the prosecutor believable. The author also reviews the influence of the defendant's race on jury group dynamics and verdicts in capital cases. She cites a study that determined that white jurors are four times as likely as black jurors to take a pro-death stand before the sentencing phase of the trial.

In the subsequent chapters, the author describes jury group dynamics and deliberations. She cites research from the Capital Jury Project on the effect of group climate (the quality of juror interactions) on juror experiences and capital sentencing outcomes. Although forensic mental health professionals may be interested in specific study results, the chapters, which read more like an article for a

rigorous sociology journal, may be arduous reading. The author suggests that group climate serves as a mediator between individual juror characteristics, such as race and gender, and capital trial outcomes. Jurors who have positive interactions with their peers during deliberations have the highest probability of returning a death penalty sentence. The author's conclusion should be limited to jury death penalty decisions, as empirical studies that compare other groups and organizations were not reviewed.

Connell's research suggests that future legislatures or courts may find it useful to consider group dynamics data when they craft sentencing guidelines. This book will promote interdisciplinary discussion about jury deliberations and may serve as a springboard for additional research regarding the author's conclusions. Although the book is challenging to read at times, it offers readers a valuable examination of the jury deliberation process and a subtle commentary on societal values and capital punishment.

References

1. Ring v. Arizona, 536 U.S. 584 (2002)

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Disclosures of financial or other potential conflicts of interest: None.