piece). Some sociologists might note that more often than not references come from outside their field. Caforio makes a strong case for sociology as “the most sound and complete scientific approach to the study of the military” but argues that the field is rightfully interdisciplinary, preparing readers for research dominated by approaches from related fields (particularly political science, cultural anthropology, and social psychology). He justifies this tack using a quote from Kümmel’s chapter: “The reason for trans-/interdisciplinarity lies in the simple truth that the military is a highly complex social phenomenon . . . that cuts through various levels, touches several different contexts, and is thus subject to multiple processes of interpretation.” Most sociologists will likely appreciate the interdisciplinary nature of this volume; others should not expect, despite its title, that the majority of the selections are the product of interdisciplinary sociologists sitting in departments of sociology. Many of the authors are affiliated with military institutes (four contributors from the Royal Netherlands Military Academy alone) and disciplinary affiliations are left unclear. Scholars tired of international compilations dominated by U.S. studies will find this volume refreshing, as most contributors are European and tend to use the U.S. as a comparative case. Also, perhaps to counter the “theoretical crisis” suggested by the editor, the selections decidedly favor qualitative over quantitative models.

This volume is a valuable addition, long needed by those interested in the military as a sociocultural phenomenon. It should prove useful to neophytes and seasoned practitioners alike. The selections are of high quality, well represent the primary lines of research within the field, and offer implications that could not be more timely. Consistent with the argument that sociologists should draw widely from numerous fields, we may anticipate that future research will be “meta-disciplinary” as well — that is, will incorporate the systematic observations of war correspondents, journalists, refugees, and others outside academia and established think tanks. Sometimes these observers on the ground offer the freshest hypotheses and insights.

The Contradictions of American Capital Punishment.

Reviewer: Herbert H. Haines, State University of New York at Cortland

Considering its modest length, Franklin Zimring’s *Contradictions of American Capital Punishment* is a complex book. First and foremost, it attempts to explain why the U.S. finds itself increasingly isolated among Western democracies in continuing to embrace the death penalty. But in doing so, the book also explores the cultural roots of the sanction in this country, the large regional differences in execution patterns within the U.S., the intensification of the American
capital punishment debate during the 1990s — by which time the matter had been largely settled elsewhere in the world — and the future of state-imposed death as a political issue. Zimring may have taken on too much here, raising more important questions than he can answer conclusively. But the questions are so significant and his answers so intriguing that the book merits the attention of death penalty scholars in a number of disciplines.

Space limits prevent me from even summarizing all the arguments in Zimring's book, much less discussing them in the detail they deserve. In essence, he suggests that the death penalty in the U.S. must be understood in terms of the interplay between two contradictory cultural traditions. One of these emphasizes due process and the mistrust of centralized government, while the other is based upon vigilante values and direct social control by local communities. In Europe, where vigilante values are weak, the death penalty has been reframed in recent years as a human rights question, and the consensus among European elites is that no nation that continues to execute its citizens can be considered fully civilized. Even though European opinion surveys reveal popular approval of the death penalty comparable to that in the U.S., no serious reinstatement effort has emerged in any Western democracy or is likely to. In the U.S., in contrast, the death penalty continues to be discussed almost entirely as a domestic crime policy matter. The notion that an execution could be compared to torture, political imprisonment, or slavery strikes most Americans as bizarre. Moreover, executions are increasingly justified here as a "service" to victims' families to help them achieve emotional "closure." Execution is rarely criticized as an illegitimate application of state power, thus depriving abolitionists of a potentially fruitful angle of attack.

The Contradictions of American Capital Punishment also brings the due process–vigilantism dichotomy to bear on the marked state and regional variations in the death penalty's application. While both these cultural strands are identifiable throughout the U.S., Zimring shows that states with weaker traditions of vigilante violence are less likely to have reinstated capital punishment after the 1976 Supreme Court ruling in Gregg v. Georgia. If they did reinstate, they are less likely to have actually executed significant portions of those inmates sentenced to die. States with long histories of vigilante justice — most notably in the South — are the states with the highest execution rates. This hypothesis is plausible, of course, and the author supports it with historical data on lynching. The more difficult task is finding direct evidence of the continuing impact of vigilante values in more recent times when the extraordinary divergence in executions between and within states has emerged. To make his case, Zimring relies on scattered survey data, concealed firearms laws, and rates of self-defense killings as proxies, and he acknowledges that such evidence is merely indirect and suggestive. Hopefully survey researchers will follow his lead in crafting new instruments that will allow for more adequate tests of his hypotheses.
The final chapters of *The Contradictions of American Capital Punishment*, in which Zimring turns to the death penalty “end game” in America, are perhaps the only weak parts in an otherwise excellent book. Recent judicial struggles with the appeals process and heightened concerns about miscarriages of justice, he writes, suggest that the abolition process has already begun. The ongoing value conflict, however, ensures that capital punishment will not go away without a protracted and divisive struggle. Much depends upon the way in which abolition campaigns are conducted, and Zimring outlines what he sees as the most effective strategy for anti–death penalty activists to follow. He concludes that capital punishment will end sooner and with greater finality if abolitionists subordinate pragmatic issues such as cost, racial discrimination in capital sentencing, the danger of miscarriages of justice, and the like in favor of a direct attack on the vigilante values that underlie the appeal of execution: “In addition to the pragmatic and incremental campaigns of recent years, morally centered objections to execution and morally committed activism will be needed to create an atmosphere where change can be facilitated. The campaign to abolish the death penalty in the U.S. will not succeed by stealth” (180). Although the words “in addition to” provide wiggle room, Zimring’s vision runs directly counter to this reviewer’s argument (Against Capital Punishment: The Anti-Death Penalty Movement in America, 1972–1994, Oxford University Press, 1996) that a more pragmatic form of abolitionism has the advantage of providing those who fall between the extremes of opinion with a culturally resonant vocabulary for thinking critically about capital punishment. Reasonable observers can disagree on such matters, of course. But Zimring strongly implies that abolitionists have simply failed to consider a frontal assault on capital punishment as an immoral public policy. In fact, anti–death penalty forces relied almost exclusively upon such an approach for nearly two centuries, and without much success. The short-lived victories of the late 1960s and early 1970s were based on the claim that executions were *unconstitutional* rather than immoral, but not until the late 1980s did “pragmatic and incremental” claims begin to gain a foothold in the movement. The pragmatic turn in movement strategy seems to be faring rather well, judging from the generally favorable receptions given to moratorium proposals at the state and local levels, as well as recent evidence of public and judicial misgivings about capital punishment. In any case, the lack of detailed attention in *The Contradictions of American Capital Punishment* to the strategic evolution of the anti–death penalty movement as a whole, and of specific anti–death penalty organizations, is surprising and disappointing. Zimring does refer to Amnesty International from time to time, but the reader does not come away with a very nuanced understanding even of AI’s abolition work over the years, much less that of the other groups that have tried to close the door to the death chamber. Some incorporation of the (admittedly limited) literature on the anti–death penalty
movement would have provided much-needed context for the book’s concluding chapter and perhaps even affected its conclusions.

Demographic Change and the Family in Japan’s Aging Society.

Reviewer: Chikako Usui, University of Missouri–St. Louis

Traphagan and Knight have edited a timely and interesting book about Japan’s aging population and its impact on the family and rural depopulation. It attempts to synthesize demographic and anthropological approaches and documents changes in the ie (Japanese stem family) and small-town struggles for survival. Two chapters by demographers identify trends and variables associated with coresidence and functional limitations of older persons using a 1987 national survey. Eight chapters of field studies conducted in the 1990s complement the statistical analyses and reveal how, where, and why problems arise and how people and towns cope. In chapter 1, Traphagan and Knight review the issues (family, population, and aging) addressed in the book. In chapter 11, Long and Littleton evaluate the accomplishments of the book for three themes (depopulation, caregiving, and family relations).

A key theme is the decline in traditional living arrangements and the weakening of obligatory family caregiving. Chapter 2 by Raymo and Kaneda shows that coresidence (multigenerational living arrangements) is more likely when older persons are widowed/divorced/separated, own businesses, have three or more children, own their own homes, and are nonurban. In contrast, in chapter 10 Traphagan points out that coresidence as a variable does not necessarily mean two (or three) generations living under one roof. Increasingly it represents two households on the same family compound (they are not recognized as coresident in the census). Whether residents perceive their arrangements as coresidence or separate units, and how they interact, is more complex than their numerical representation. For example, he describes resistance by daughters-in-law to traditional coresidence and suggests that this is why eldest sons are handicapped on today’s marriage market.

As the family system changes, traditional obligations and expectations are often reinvented or revived by people, industries, and government policies, albeit with different outcomes. Brown’s study of nisetai jutaku (new prefabricated two-family households under one roof) in chapter 3 shows how reality deviates from the ideal as a result of different expectations by the two generations. Thang, in chapter 4, examines an unsuccessful attempt at reviving contact between older persons and children at an age-integrated facility (a nursing home combined with a nursery). Problems result from the lack of