

ed action among international organisation and national governments structured around what they call 'the three Rs' of redistribution, regulation, and rights.

Globalization and Health recognises the urgency of global health issues and sheds light on the flow of ideas, capital, goods, and people across borders, which all contribute to making health much more than just a national issue. The book provides much evidence and information, some of which may be a bit controversial. It is enormous in scope. The chapters are organised in such a way that they build on each other, making it easy for the reader to follow the logic of evidence provided by the different authors. The book sets a high standard with its critical analysis of highly important topics of global health. The evidence is substantial and almost overwhelming in some chapters, and it is almost as though every chapter is rich enough in information that it could potentially become a book of its own. Importantly, many of the results and conclusions drawn from the analysis go beyond health and make you reflect on other social issues such as poverty, ageing, migration, and trade policies (just to mention a few). There are some minor weaknesses in the book that need to be highlighted. First, the text is often dense, making it sometimes difficult to follow the authors' reasoning. Second, some parts of the analysis are theoretical and lack enough solid examples, while others are overwhelming with evidence. Third, the book is so rich in content that the editors could actually have divided it into two books. These weaknesses are probably unavoidable given the number of authors involved in the writing, combined with the gigantic scope of *Globalization and Health*, and they can definitely be overlooked.

Health is widely recognised as a basic human right, and the urgency of many global health issues today like SARS and HIV/AIDS has made global health policy a particularly important issue. By drawing les-

sons from the experiences of many countries from different regions and spanning over decades, this book will become a valuable reference for many. Moreover, this publication is very timely and provides valuable input into the current discussions on how to tackle the social determinants for health on a global level. All in all, *Globalization and Health*, with its depth and width, is an asset for researchers, policymakers, and educators. It is an important contribution to the field of global health, and for anyone interested in doing research in the area it is a must read.

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Jaroslav Skupnik: *Antropologie příbuzenství – Příbuzenství, manželství a rodina v kulturně antropologické perspektivě* [The Anthropology of Kinship: Kinship, marriage and family in cultural anthropological perspective]

Prague 2010: Sociologické nakladatelství, 402 pp.

This is the first comprehensive introduction to the anthropological study of kinship and marriage written by a Czech scholar for Czech readers. During the socialist era, local social scientists had to propagate Soviet-style evolutionist interpretations indebted to the outdated ideas of L. H. Morgan and F. Engels. Not surprisingly, then, it was during his studies in the United States that Skupnik, a cultural anthropologist at Charles University, had his first confrontation with western ideas about and models of the topics dealt with in this book. The American influence is palpable throughout the work. It is based on the premise of culture as a 'super-organic' order of things postulated by the founders of modern American anthropology (such as Boas and Kroeber) and reinforced more recently by

social constructivism. Ethological interpretations are mentioned in passing but dismissed in the spirit of Marshall Sahlins' influential critique of sociobiology. Skupnik, following in the footsteps of his American mentor Martin Ottenheimer, views kinship as relations grounded in the cultural interpretation of reproduction.

The book seems to have been conceived as a textbook for students, and it follows the standard layout of such works. In eleven logically arranged chapters it covers all the basics of anthropological kinship studies, ranging from standardised notations and designations of various categories of relatives all the way to complex descriptions of descent systems and preferential marriage types. Dozens of carefully drawn diagrams complement and illuminate the often rather complex explanations. While Skupnik offers little new by way of theory-building, the detailed and clear manner in which he presents an overview of the most technical and complex field of socio-cultural anthropology is highly admirable. He draws on some three hundred publications representing all the standard works on kinship and marriage written by American and British anthropologists (in spite of his indebtedness to American models, Skupnik also has a very good knowledge of the contribution made to this field by British anthropologists), and he adds his own insightful comments about contemporary developments in the Czech Republic that add relevance to a subject too often dismissed as dry and otherworldly. Such is especially the case with a number of ethnographic vignettes from his fieldwork with Slovak Roma.

This being the first lengthy treatise of anthropological approaches to kinship and marriage, Skupnik faced not only the difficult task of distilling a huge corpus of foreign scholarship; in many instances he also had to introduce or revise Czech equivalents for technical English terms ranging from 'lineage' (which has no clear Czech

counterpart) to 'first cousins once removed'. In most instances, this is accomplished rather well—though I stumbled over the discussion of cognatic descent groups and kindreds, where the terminology isn't clear at all.

A work of this scope and length is bound to trigger some critical reactions, and I do have a few. Skupnik displays an eagerness to cover in too much detail often pretty obscure customs and institutions in an apparent effort to strengthen the cultural determinist credo of the 'plasticity of man'. Not only does this lend a distinctly encyclopaedic flavour to the entire book, but it also introduces some rather controversial claims (probably intended to shock ethnocentric readers into accepting the basic postulates of cultural relativism) without proper explanation or contextualisation. One such example is the assertion that in some societies it is legitimate for fathers to have sexual relations with their daughters, made without a proper reference to scholarly sources (p. 205). Elsewhere, the same mistake is made when reporting the alleged freedom of a Berber husband to mutilate the genitalia or (at least) to cut off the nose of an unfaithful wife (p. 202). Too many similar tidbits of shocking ethnographic lore, used by Skupnik to demonstrate the scope of cultural inventiveness, are drawn from a single encyclopaedia and are used without the care such a source ought to be treated with. This type of exotification may not have the intended pedagogical effect on ethnocentric young students.

As I mentioned earlier, Skupnik makes effective use of his own field material collected among Slovak Roma. But even here he makes rather consequential remarks without providing adequate explanation. For example, he repeats the widespread postulate that Slovak Roma maintain caste endogamy (an institution allegedly imported from their Indian homeland) without providing any empirical evidence beyond

the flimsy foundation erected by his predecessors (p. 219). When his empirical observations become genuinely interesting—such as in his claim that ‘caste purity’ can be maintained even in mixed marriages as long as the spouses eat from different dishes (p. 170)—the reader is left dangling for more than an offhanded remark.

These critical observations should not, however, detract from the value of this book. Skupnik has written a work of considerable significance which will be widely and deservedly appreciated.

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