

tized, because any attempt to draw a line that demarcates an ethnic region or local tradition should be in and of itself part of theorization. Although only a proposal, its intent is to find a way to travel between history and culture, with a curious eye on the complication of local histories in a particular region. Conventionally, ethnic divisions of the region are merely subjects of a thought subordinated to the official geopolitical reasoning, but the anthropologist wishes to turn it into a theoretical formation for anthropological imagination.

The following four chapters are written on oversea Chinese, with Tan's article dealing with the literature of diaspora, hoping to give the notion of China a cultural definition and shows how it is related to the intersected confluence of several traditions that have come together to shape what means to be on the fringe outskirts of being Chinese. Tan's article tries not only to examine China from a perspective outside its main continent but also hopes to tie the literature of such studies to a general literature on migration and transnationalism in social theory. Productive in its own way but, on the other hand, this topic, i.e., what means to be Chinese, seems a bit away from the guidance we were given by the two introductory chapters. Chang, Chun, and Chuang's articles, chapters 9, 10, and 11, are on Taiwan, with Chang and Chuang dealing with social sciences in Taiwan, particularly with the idea of indigenization (*bentuhua* in Chinese), showing how such an attempt has gained a couple of different senses, for example, after the collapse of the GMT regime since the 1980s. Quite interesting they are two studies of the Taiwanese situation, a good comparison for thinking about mainland China today in terms of the experience of Taiwan. However, Chun seems to disagree, as he reacted to the sentiment that characterizes the intellectual tendency for the argument of *bentuhua*. With Taiwan being his case, Chun argues that there is very little intellectual import in such callings for indigenization which has become somewhat a political game played out by academics, comparable only to lesser politicians who dread people with the ideology of "political correctness" but possess no genuine political imagination. Definitely impatient if not angry in his tone, Chun has launched an attack in several directions, such as his attack on self-pitying nativist attitude. His chief argument, very critical and yet different from all other articles, is that social theory, as a general reflection of human thought on life and reality, does not have to be carried around with a national passport. It seems, as he argues, that all the ideological discussions of so-called indigenization resemble the modern state's practice of immigration and naturalization, which, in Taiwan as in other places, have benefited some and offended others. There is little intellectual import in such debates as this, Chun insists. Theoretical categories may come from a particular tradition, Hegel in Marx or Marx in Ricardo, biographically Western, but they are, when employed for argumentation, tools of thinking, which should constantly be sharpened by the situation into which they are adopted. Dirlík's introductory chapter has already hinted on this: should we count sinicization of Marxism during the early Maoist years as part of the indigenization of social

theory in mainland China? A question hardly any of those who are interested in *bentuhua* could answer adequately.

The last two chapters are written by two sociologists, and both of them come from Tsinghua University. Sun Liping, a famous sociologist whose insight and eloquence are truly impressive on any scale, has discussed his main idea of China's transition from socialism to market economy, not unuseful but definitely unfitting for the volume. It is a rehearsal of an old song for the new audience whose patience is tested, for this is an old article he has repeatedly published for more than a decade by now. From Victor Nee to Kornai, from everyday practice to what he calls "event-procedure analysis," etc., etc., all of these items we have known so well belonging to the sociological genius but our ears are worn out by the repeated beats of the same old drums. Better to have dinner with Prof. Sun when one goes to Beijing if he is not on an airplane traveling for lectures on the same topic, which used to be sensational in the 1990s. Party officials in a distant province may still like to hear this, but one really wonders, when reading this great paper of old days, why there is no expiring dates for such stuff in the supermarket of ideas! Truly innovative is the approach another sociologist, Guo, takes in her treatment of stories of suffering by those who led a life of poverty and pain. It means to shed a different light on development, guided and brightened by the official lamp. This is an attempt to go to the deepest layers of social reality, representing a true sociological spirit that hopes to restore a voice to the silence. Detailed and admirably clear, Guo has shown how this sociological attempt should be connected with the on-going social science studies of suffering and Chinese history. A most adequate use of references Guo makes, it is an indication of the maturity of a sociological mind in today's China, definitely recommendable for students of social sciences. However, it does not survey the disciplinary history, which one might have thought as the goal of the volume, but in and of itself this is an excellent piece which allows the reader to understand the sociological concerns with theory in today's China.

A good volume is good, one may say as conclusion, not simply because of its organization and preparation but also because of the effort a reader exerts in his patient reading that renders a useful lesson. Xin Liu

Dyck, Noel: *Fields of Play. An Ethnography of Children's Sports.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012. 214 pp. ISBN 978-1-4426-0079-9. Price: C\$ 26.95

Every late afternoon after work, boys and young men in the villages of Tonga, Samoa, and Fiji stage informal games of "touch" rugby, casually watched by their female age-mates, a few adults, and whoever else happens to be around. In these games, rules are flexible, as the main point is for the young male players to have fun, as well as to display one's physical prowess, and, particularly for the benefit of the young women watching, to show off one's ability to dodge one's opponents and confuse them in as humorous a fashion as possible. But these games have a serious covert purpose: they are socializing events, in

which older boys show younger ones what it means to be a man – and playing rugby, in that part of the world, is part-and-parcel of the very definition of masculinity. On the global scene, rugby is what gives these half-forgotten parts of the world a crack at world recognition.

The children's "community sports" of middle-class Canada on which Noel Dyck conducted ethnographic work in the last several decades offer both fascinating parallels and jarring contrasts with children's sports as they are practiced in Polynesian villages. Perhaps the most striking difference is the fact that, for middle-class Canadian families, child rearing constitutes a family "project" (55), the focus of sustained, bracketed, and onerous attention, in sharp contrast to Polynesia, where it is a communal endeavor accomplished as a sideline to the more important matters in life. In Canada, this project mobilizes considerable time, attention, and material resources on the part of parents and requires of children an equally sizeable investment of energy. Sports of various kinds (hockey, swimming, baseball, soccer football, etc.) figure centrally in this child-rearing project, bringing other agents (other parents, coaches, clubs, local governments, etc.) in to it, while also transforming Canadian parents into volunteers, organizers, fundraisers, and drivers in charge of ferrying children from one sporting facility to the other.

In the context of the dizzyingly hectic life that these dynamics engender, it is no wonder that children's sports are associated with particular stereotypes in North American societies: for example, "win-at-all-cost coaches, out-of-control parents, and egotistical children and youth athletes" (194). Dyck subjects these stereotypes to sustained analytic scrutiny, demonstrating that, while they may be grounded in some reality (as all stereotypes are), they represent a sensationalized and profoundly limited way of understanding the practice of children's sports. Parents become involved in their children's sporting activities for a variety of reasons, which may include ensuring that the children grow up with the richest possible sociocultural capital, as well as other reasons that have little to do with children, such as the opportunity to meet and interact with other adults. Similarly, coaches, who are primarily volunteers who often end up devoting considerable time to community sports, are drawn to these roles by the satisfaction of the possibility of being recognized as an accomplished leader of children, a possibility that is nevertheless mitigated by the fact that they often become the target of parents' sharp criticisms.

Perhaps the most innovative aspect of this book is the attention that it pays to the child athletes themselves, who all too often are either absent or silent in public debates about community sports. Here, children emerge as agents, able to reflect on their actions and on those of others, albeit in the context of their still limited life experience. Some children recognize their involvement in sports as having had a beneficial effect on their lives, enabling them to prove themselves in the eyes of others and accomplish things they did not think possible. Dyck invokes the beneficial effect of discipline in the practice of sport, although he does not place these dynamics in a critical perspective, eschewing an analysis of discipline as an effect of the

transformation of structural forms into personal projects (cf. Foucault's biopower). Such an analysis may have enabled the author to develop a more nuanced understanding of children's agency.

There are, however, darker aspects to community sports, as Noel Dyck documents. Sporting activities can easily generate jealousy, between children as well as among parents and other adults. Like beauty, athletic ability has a way of undercutting mercilessly other parameters of inequality, easily generating tensions among those concerned. While the book pays attention to these tensions, one wishes to hear a little more about children who cannot keep up or about those poor kids who are shunned by others for being too weak, uncoordinated, or "weird," and for whom sport is equated not with success and self-development, but with oppression, marginality, and bullying.

At the same time, athletic accomplishments can generate hopes of turning them into a career; in the Canadian context, the initial step for such an endeavor is to obtain an athletic scholarship in the United States, since these scholarships are essentially unavailable in Canada. While a career in professional sport is possible, its probability is infinitesimal, and hope often gives way to disillusionment. Studying "south of the border" on an athletic scholarship comes with its own difficulties for middle-class Canadian kids, including homesickness, overwork, and having one's intellectual abilities questioned.

Finally, community sports are deeply marked for social class. In the case of some sports, the equipment is simply out of reach for families other than the well-to-do. Clubs can make demands that have the effect of weeding out families who lack resources and connections. But sports, as we know from Bourdieu's work on France in the 1960s, are class-marked in other, more subtle ways: in the form of "distinction," for example, which can operate as a highly divisive and consequential strategy that keeps social classes (as well as ethnic and racial groups) apart. While Dyck remarks in an endnote (186) that Canada's relatively egalitarian social structure gives community sport a different configuration from Bourdieu's France, he also fails to problematize the middle-classness of the materials, and this is perhaps the weakest aspect of the book. For example, a better development of the role of discipline in children's sporting experience along the lines I have alluded to above would have enabled Dyck to better place the children in the context of their class position. Nevertheless, this is very fine ethnography that makes an important contribution to the ongoing recognition of sports as an important anthropological subject, one that can illuminate a multitude of central issues in the discipline.

Niko Besnier

Endresen, Cecilie: *Is the Albanian's Religion Really "Albanianism"? Religion and Nation According to Muslim and Christian Leaders in Albania.* Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2012. 275 pp. ISBN 978-3-447-06561-0. (Albanische Forschungen, 31) Preis: € 56.00

This book by Cecilie Endresen is an exploration of the relation of nation and religion in the meaning of the Alba-