

periences, the reader is taken on a narrative “walk around the village” (34) without any cartographic guide to key landmarks or locations.

The redeeming heart of the book begins with chapter 3, where Hastrup explores the ambivalence of some tsunami survivors toward their newly-constructed SIFF houses located inland, safely protected from future hurricanes and tsunamis. As she explains, these are fishing caste people who have an axiomatic identification with their hereditary profession and with the beachfront as their natural home. They also cling to their original dwellings as sites of meaningful grieving. Despite academic critiques of culturally insensitive house designs, most of Hastrup’s informants are satisfied with the quality and layout of their sturdy new concrete houses, so that is not the problem. Their efforts are focused instead on the emotional challenge of transforming their dwellings into homes, some even planning architectural additions as an expression of their faith in the future.

Chapter 4 explores the indigenous ethnometeorology of the northeast monsoon season (October to December) when rough seas make ocean fishing difficult and dangerous. After the monsoon storms and rain have abated, the beachfront and the adjacent sea are consolidated into a familiar zone of human security and livelihood, but while the monsoon is still in progress the ocean is defined as alien and uninhabitable. The 2004 tsunami struck just at the end of the monsoon season, and Hastrup finds that fishermen today tend to associate the disaster with what they perceive to be a pattern of climate change indexed by heavier rains and more severe storms. Acute awareness of wind and weather is the ingrained skill-set of Tharangambadi fishermen, and it is the culturally-available domain of practical knowledge to which the unprecedented tsunami event can most easily be assimilated.

In chapter 5 Hastrup describes the roles played by tsunami relief programs and aid agencies. Here, she finds very little grumbling about externally-based NGOs and what has been termed in the Sri Lanka context “competitive humanitarianism,” even though a plethora of foreign agencies responded to the tsunami damage in Tharangambadi. The reason is that virtually all tsunami relief efforts – including government programs – were channeled and implemented through the local fisher caste panchayat, the traditional council of male elders who still exercise authority over most domains of collective fisher caste life. In the Tamil districts of Sri Lanka such strong caste leadership no longer prevails, and there the administration of tsunami relief was more easily hijacked politically, or colonized by foreign NGOs. Hastrup points out that the fisher caste panchayat is often viewed as corrupt and subject to manipulation – not to mention strongly biased against women – yet it remains the institution with the most community-wide legitimacy.

Chapter 6 offers case studies of how the impact of the tsunami has been felt indirectly or unexpectedly even by non-fishing caste families. The lesson Hastrup draws is that disasters are not discrete, self-contained events, and that they are always entwined with ongoing developments through time. The most dramatic illustration is the

case of a college-educated low-caste Dalit woman whose marital life abruptly worsened when her abusive and controlling husband made an unexpected windfall as a post-tsunami TV repairman. Chapter 7 in the book examines local memories and expressions of loss from the tsunami tragedy, a topic that attracts Hastrup’s attention when she observes no one bothering to visit a public stone monument erected to commemorate the 314 souls who died in the tidal wave. Perhaps more surprisingly, she found survivors more likely to enumerate the property and physical possessions they lost in the tsunami than to mention the death of their own children. Hastrup addresses these puzzles by exploring the concept of materiality as a strategy or modality of active Tamil grieving: keeping tangible objects in play – and in mind – rather than consigning them to an event that is finished, closed, sealed off. At the end of her book, she notes that a novel expression, “tsunami time,” has been coined to refer to the post-2004 era, a new age in which children behave differently and fishing practices have been altered.

This book is slender and anecdotal, but the ethnographic case studies are truly fascinating and memorable. It offers fruitful ways to think about the experiential impacts of the 2004 tsunami in a wider Asian context, comparisons that should definitely be pursued on Indian Ocean shores both near and far.

Dennis B. McGilvray

Heady, Patrick, and Martin Kohli (eds.): *Family, Kinship, and State in Contemporary Europe*. Vol. 3: *Perspectives on Theory and Policy*. Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2010. 451 pp. ISBN 978-3-593-38963-9. Price: € 45.00

The book is the third and final volume of a series that presents the results of “an interdisciplinary project with an anthropological agenda” – Kinship and Social Security (KASS). The general aim of this project was to improve our understanding of connections between the workings of kinship and state policy. The third volume, as the editors describe it, develops “further some of the themes of the previous [two] volumes before drawing together the threads of the study to derive conclusions that are addressed to both policy makers and social theorists” (15). The book offers a wide selection of chapters that present empirical analyses, historical insights as well as theoretical perspectives on kinship.

The volume contains contributions from 18 authors, mostly social anthropologists and sociologists, but inputs from social demographers, economists, and political scientists are also present. The first half of the volume (chapters 2–9) presents empirical evidence, while the second half (chapters 10–16) is more theory-oriented. The book closes with a chapter on policy implications, derived from the KASS project.

As far as the empirical chapters are concerned, most of the presented analyses are based on detailed kinship network data, gathered within the project. The Kinship Network Questionnaire (KNQ) was administered to 570 respondents in 19 urban and rural locations in eight Euro-

pean countries: Austria, Croatia, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Russia, and Sweden. The authors use this data extensively to depict a multifaceted image of contemporary kinship relations in Europe.

The larger part of the empirical chapters, with a few exceptions noted below, is authored by Patrick Heady, Siegfried Gruber, and Zhonghui Ou. The authors explore differences in kinship cultures across Europe and discuss the impact of these cultures on how young people shape their adult lives with respect to marriage and social interaction. Additionally, Michael Schnegg looks into how knowledge about kinship is structured and distributed in society. In great detail, Gruber and Heady investigate how relatives (and others) help one another with domestic work and with setting up and maintaining the household (domestic and structural help). They also look at help related to daily routines and practical tasks such as cooking, shopping, cleaning, providing transport, household repairs, and more. On the other hand, they also consider child-care as well as caring for the elderly, sick, or disabled, financial transfers and gifts (including the important topic of providing a dwelling as a gift). Furthermore, Heady and Ou explore how reciprocity and altruism shapes the patterns of help exchange in kinship networks. There are also two chapters that focus on the role of close kin in encouraging or discouraging childbearing (one of the chapters, by Laura Bernardi and Robert G. White, offers a more demographic perspective on the topic). The final chapter of the empirical part is the only one that does not use the KNQ data. Martin Kohli, Marco Albertini, and Harald Künemund use nationally representative survey data from SHARE (Survey of Health, Aging, and Retirement in Europe) to contextualize KASS findings and provide a more general picture of intergenerational family transfers in contemporary Europe.

Most of the empirical analyses presented in the volume are purely descriptive (with the exception of the multivariate analysis conducted by Bernardi and White). Nonetheless, the authors managed to capture a very complex picture of kinship relations with many nuances. They pay close attention to differences between European macroregions (“northwest,” “central,” and “south & east”), as well as between urban and rural settings. Intergenerational transfers are discussed, but the role of age and life-course developments in transfers between relatives is not omitted. All authors provide important insights on how gender and gender roles are important for kinship relations.

Most of the empirical chapters do not include much in the way of theoretical considerations. This lack is made up for in the second half of the book. Chapters 10–16 review all of the key findings of the KASS project, assessing them critically in light of previous findings and existing social theories. Most of the important themes, listed in the previous paragraph, find their continuation there: they are developed further and embedded into historical and theoretical perspectives.

Martine Segalen draws on findings of the project to portray a very composite picture of “the modern reality of kinship” in Europe. With great anthropological sensitiv-

ity, she discusses how this reality is shaped by various social processes (e.g., increasing migration, life extension, changes in women’s labour market involvement as well as increasing individualism or increasing importance of emotional bonds). The topic of different patterns of kinship relations is continued in the next chapter by Pier Paolo Viazzo. He shows how macroregional patterns of kinship culture used to be interpreted, and he discusses how the KASS project contributes to the understanding of contemporary cross-national differences in that respect. Next, patterns of kinship relations in urban and rural areas are discussed in the chapter by Michał Buchowski. The chapter contains valuable insights on diverse family forms in rural and urban areas across different regions of Europe; it also challenges our understanding of the “traditional” and “modern” family. Finally, gender is a central concept in the chapter by Sophie Chevalier. In particular, she adopts a gendered perspective on the market of social care and on the issue of how households externalize various tasks to the state and to the market. It is a pity, however, that this is the only theoretical chapter that focuses on gender. In the empirical chapters, there are several interesting findings and comments on gender roles (e.g., gender-specific bias in how knowledge about kinship is structured and distributed, and gendered pathways of social influence; gender differences in domestic and structural help provided by relatives along with differences in spatial patterns of gender roles and of helping networks). It would have been extremely interesting to read about them in more detail in the theoretical part of the volume.

The next three chapters take an even more general theoretical perspective on the findings of KASS. Georges Augustins discusses claims for help and support within kinships in different types of communities. Günther Schlee and Patrick Heady explore how kinship terminology interacts with kinship practice. The two attempt to explain this interaction in Europe by drawing on theories that explore worldwide variation in kinship culture and practice. Finally, Heidi Colleran and Ruth Mace take an evolutionary approach to the results obtained within the project. They refer to Human Behavioral Ecology to explain contemporary human cooperative and reproductive behaviours.

In the introductory chapter, the editors argue that “in order to address policy questions about the appropriate balance between state and family care, we need to know more about the reasons or motives for people’s actions ... why do people choose to help (or not to help) their relatives?” (18). If we keep this in mind, most chapters in the book provide important insights that are relevant for policymakers. But the findings are linked to policy issues in the last chapter only. This chapter, by Kohli and Heady, does not offer any ready-to-apply solutions. Instead, it draws the attention of policymakers to the idea that they should consider patterns of relationships in kinship networks and not only look at direct practical needs.

This overview shows how rich in topics the volume is. At the same time, the book remains focused and meaningfully develops our knowledge of kinship and mutual assistance between relatives in the studied context. It is

worth noting that the methodological approach taken in the KASS project – combining ethnographies with a detailed kinship questionnaire – is not common in anthropological studies. Therefore, most of the chapters in the first part of the volume, which present survey results, might seem unusual to anthropologists and somewhat simplistic to other social scientists. Yet, it all makes sense in the complete picture, and the conducted analyses allowed the authors to construct a complex but coherent story about European kinship today. I am convinced that this volume – along with the previous two – is a “must read” for any social scientist who is interested in social interactions in contemporary Europe. Monika Mynarska

Hertzog, Esther: *Patrons of Women. Literacy Projects and Gender Development in Rural Nepal.* New York: Berghahn Books, 2011. 259 pp. ISBN 978-1-84545-768-6. Price: \$ 95,00

“... the book does not offer an alternative discourse or policy recommendations for gender development. Doing so would entail the acceptance of this concept, whereas the book’s basic argument is that such projects are all ultimately concerned with power manipulations rather than social change” (xvi).

This statement from the preface to “*Patrons of Women*” succinctly sums up the book’s aims and the author’s strong stance on “development”. Hertzog goes on to say that development and related terminology represent “an obsolete concept, a ‘non-word,’” calling “for the use of inverted commas” (3). Like Hertzog, I share many of these sentiments and have been influenced by postcolonial theory and the seminal work of Escobar, Pigg, and others on development discourses. However, the longer I work in or on development in Nepal, the more cautious I am about making sweeping generalisations from my experience on specific projects. What Hertzog’s book does well is to offer an in-depth insight into the “power manipulations” within a particular development project from her own perspective as one of these actors. However, what is more problematic is the author’s polarised black and white depiction of developer and developed, and her claim that this case study project represents “all” such projects in Nepal, as she frequently suggests: “[i]n this book I shall describe and discuss the inconsistency between the rhetoric and reality of gender development programs in Nepal” (33).

Hertzog went to Nepal in the summer of 1997 to work as a gender consultant for an Israeli irrigation company, Tahal Consulting Engineers. As she explains in the introduction, she started the study “in almost total ignorance of development and women in the country” (36). Written during the thirteen years after she left Nepal, the book records her consequent immersion into literature on postcolonial theory and development anthropology. She traces her growing awareness of how she had been constrained to act in certain ways within the Nepal project: “[o]nce I accepted the position of consultant in the women’s project, I was obliged to play the expert role that was indirectly imposed on and expected of me” (75). Examining

her multiple roles as bureaucrat/consultant, tourist, and researcher enabled Hertzog to question many of her previous assumptions and we are presented with a painfully honest account of her three months stay in Nepal. The account includes micro-level observations of gender, race, and caste hierarchies within everyday working in the project – particularly with regard to her own and her Israeli bosses’ behaviour. For anyone who has worked in Nepal, these incidents will be all too familiar – tussles over who sits in the front seat of the jeep, who serves tea to whom, lectures by Western and high status “experts” to local women and the scheduling of programmes around the needs of consultants rather than the participants.

The subtitle of the book is perhaps misleading for anyone interested in finding out more about literacy and gender in Nepal. Hertzog’s mission had been to set up literacy classes for 27,000 women in thirty villages followed up by vocational training – yet the book is really the story of why that did not happen. The nearest we get is the “seminar” (chap. 5) which is focused on the training programme for literacy teachers. As a literacy researcher and practitioner, I was disappointed that there was no detail of the curriculum (other than the frustrations of being unable to buy the books) or of teaching and learning processes. Hertzog had not actually attended most of the seminar so her account was much more about the logistics and the politics of organising the programme. I was struck instead by her detailed observation of the rituals associated with such training programmes, which gave real insight into how development discourses are constructed in actions as well as words. An example was the “persuasive and touching ... sight” of ten women, aged fifteen to over fifty, sitting around tables (180) and the ways in which students bargained over refreshments at the breaks. These vignettes seemed to convey the meaning of the seminar for these different actors – the women participants and the consultant.

This attention to the ways in which we construct discourses of development is particularly strong in Hertzog’s reflections on her role as a researcher. She talks about the “latent impact of watching people through the camera lenses” (36) and how her photographs “say as much ... about my own cultural assumptions and the latent stereotypical ideas I held about the places I visited and people I met, than they do about Nepali culture and ways of life” (42). The photographs are included in the volume, yet the captions give no details of what is actually happening, saying only “At a meeting with village women.” But “what meeting? which women?” I found myself asking. Conversely, moving to the written text, I felt uneasy about the level of detail provided, particularly the use of real names rather than pseudonyms for several key informants. The comments made about her predecessor, Tovi Fenster (not just by Hertzog, but also those reported by Leon, her boss) raised many questions around the ethics of naming people in this kind of critical account of aid.

Hertzog likens her book to “confessional ethnographies” (40) and there are certainly many times when she expresses guilt about her actions or words. She comments, for instance, “[l]ooking back on that incident it appears to