

Book reviews

Population and Food. Global Trends and Future Prospects. By Tim Dyson. Pp. 231. (Routledge, London, 1996.) ISBN 0-415-11975-8 paperback.

This volume ambitiously attempts to describe relationships between population and food availability past and present, as well as speculating about these relationships in the near future. Fortunately, the author is able to meet this challenge and does reasonable justice to this wide-ranging topic. The book is written at a level which is accessible to non-experts, is logically laid out, and its extensive use of figures and tables makes it appropriate for either final year undergraduates or graduate students seeking an introduction to the topic of food and population studies.

Chapter one gives some historical background to this issue. The author presents both pessimistic and optimistic views of changing population size and food supply but concludes that 'the abstract question of whether demographic growth by itself raises or lowers levels of *per capita* food production is probably unanswerable'. Chapter two, 'Population and food today', considers the size and distribution of contemporary world food supply and its relationship with needs. The author is right to focus on as yet poorly resolved issues of definition and measurement. The size of the 'world food problem' depends on the quality of the data available, definitions of food requirements and hunger, and on how these definitions are applied. Chapter three outlines recent trends in population and food supply. The author concludes that the neo-Malthusian representation of recent world food production is largely mistaken, with food supplies generally outstripping population growth since the 1950s, the greatest increases coming from increased yields of cereal crops per unit of land than from expansion of land under agricultural production. Chapter four explores food demand and supply in the future, and presents a stark view of global cereal demand for the period to 2020, of which the overwhelming majority of increase is projected to be due to population growth and not rising incomes. In chapter five, the author considers various factors which will condition the relative demand and supply of food to the year 2020. These include global warming, soil degradation, water shortage, changing agricultural technology, human capital, institutions and markets, and price. There appear to be no unsurmountable problems in raising food production to meet increasing demand to the year 2020. However, this is likely to come predominantly from increased production in North America, Western Europe, Australia and New Zealand, and less so from the developing world, which will need adequate economic growth to finance growing volumes of food imports from the developed world. Chapter six gives brief vignettes of food demand and supply in the seven world regions: sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, the Far East, Europe and the former Soviet Union, North America and Oceania. This is the weakest chapter, since space is too short to give adequate regional analyses. The final chapter gives a nine-page executive summary of the volume; the tone is one of cautious optimism for the future, to 2020.

In his preface, the author starts by saying 'I must have been a little crazy to write this book'. I'm glad that this reflection came late and not early, and did not put him off the venture. This is an excellent, informative volume which I can commend to anyone with more than passing interest in the recent past and potential future of world food supply.

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Bioarchaeology: Interpreting Behavior from the Human Skeleton. By Clark Spencer Larsen. (Cambridge University Press, 1997.) £55.00. ISBN 0-521-49641-1.

Larsen's book is timely in its approach. On a very basic level, it presents a comprehensive overview of how skeletal remains have been used as an archaeological tool to interpret past *behaviour*. This itself is a useful contribution to the osteological and palaeopathological literature where methodological and descriptive surveys predominate. However, it is through Larsen's extensive synthesis of case studies that the reader is provided with a clear understanding of the value of different types of skeletal evidence and the strength of interpretations that may be gleaned from them. It is consistently demonstrated that strength does come in numbers; patterns of skeletal evidence, within and between archaeological samples, provide a basis for meaningful interpretation. Larsen also emphasizes the need to understand culture when interpreting skeletal conditions at the population level. In addition to this overview, Larsen tackles current theoretical issues in the bioarchaeological field, such as the 'osteological paradox'.

There are eight lengthy chapters relating to the skeletal outcomes of biological stress (growth and development), disease (exposure to infectious pathogens), behaviour (injury and violent death), activity (articular and muscular modifications as well as structural adaptations), biological adaptation (craniofacial adaptation), diet and nutrition (isotopic and elemental signatures) and genetic variation (historical dimensions of skeletal variation). In each of these chapters, a description of the skeletal condition is followed by an overview of relevant archaeological studies from both the Old and New Worlds. By comparing and contrasting data sets, Larsen demonstrates how patterns of skeletal variation occur between groups defined by sex or age, by cultural behaviour (e.g. status) or by subsistence strategy (e.g. foragers versus farmers).

There is also a concluding chapter that briefly discusses the changes and current challenges within the bioarchaeological field. Issues discussed here include sample representation, standardization of data collection and repatriation. Larsen presents an optimistic outlook regarding the resolution of these issues and bioarchaeology's potential as an interpretive tool within an inter-disciplinary framework.

Overall, Larsen's book is well presented with an extensive bibliography. It covers both prevailing (growth and development) and more conventional (infectious disease) topics within bioarchaeology. It is highly recommended to both advanced students and professionals in the field. It is also recommended to archaeologists as convincing testimony that skeletal remains from archaeological contexts have enormous potential.

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At the Crossroads: Mexico and U.S. Immigration Policy. Edited by Frank D. Bean, Rodolfo O. de la Garza, Bryan R. Roberts & Sidney Weintraub. Pp. 322. (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Maryland, 1997.) \$62.50 hb, ISBN 0-8476-8391-5; \$23.95 pb, ISBN 0-8476-8392-3.

This thoughtful comprehensive book treats the issue of Mexican legal and illegal immigration into the United States from the 1800s to the present, focusing mainly on US immigration policies from the last quarter of this century. The ten chapters give thorough historical and contemporary context to Mexico's immigration to the US with respect to worldwide immigration and US foreign policy; how Mexico's social, agricultural and economic policies promote or discourage emigration to the US; the financial impact of Mexican immigration on the US economy and labour market; and some preliminary analysis of the consequences of NAFTA on immigration. One chapter includes survey results that report the American public's perception of the impact Mexican immigration has on the economy compared to immigration from other countries.

Concise, information-packed data tables are used by the authors to demonstrate how ambiguous data can be interpreted to fit the political climate. One chapter critiques the way the same raw data were massaged to view immigrants as a net drain on the US economy of \$42.5 billion while in the hands of another analyst they contributed \$25–30 billion. The authors point out that inconsistent immigration policy across different levels of government is more often than not the norm. The social and financial burden of recent immigrants is disproportionately borne by the local government while advantages to receiving immigrants are reaped at the federal level. That is, what is good for the federal government strains the local government, and as a result local, state and federal economic and immigration policies work at cross-purposes to undo and obscure each other.

As a whole, the book reads smoothly with clear and deliberate analyses of history, policy, data and a smattering of case studies. It suffers only when the same background is revisited in several chapters due to its being a collection from different contributing authors. Throughout, the book's foremost advantage is its even-handedness in presenting facts, serving it well as a handbook for other researchers. However, this same even-handedness means that the book lacks a coherent opinion on the direction policy *should* take with regard to immigration from Mexico. The next printing of this book will benefit from the culling of a few typos and sufficient time passing to examine the impact of NAFTA. In 1996, the last year included in the book, NAFTA was too new to evaluate.

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Friendship in Childhood and Adolescence. By Phil Erwin. Pp. 164. (Routledge, London, 1998.) £8.99, ISBN 0-415-16233-5.

Part of *The Psychology Focus* series published by Routledge, this is a concise text presented by an experienced teacher in psychology. Academic interest in friendships has grown with the realization that they are a major part of children's lives, serving important functions in

their development towards later relationships. Evidence suggests that poor early relationships may have important implications for later patterns of social adjustment.

The first five chapters consider general characteristics of friendships as they change through childhood and adolescence. The sixth chapter examines the influence of the social and environmental settings of relationships. The final two chapters discuss relationship problems and interventions designed to alleviate such difficulties.

Chapter one sets the scene for later, more specific chapters. It reviews possible functions that friendship may serve and the patterns of growth seen in relationships. Chapter two introduces the concept of attachment, its measurement and implications of patterns observed for development of later relationships. The author makes clear the areas of controversy surrounding this subject. In chapter three the social cognitive bases of children's friendships are reviewed: the development of self, empathy, role-taking and theories of mind. Children's ability to establish and manage social interaction, sex differences in styles of relating and sex segregation in relationships are covered in chapter four. Chapter five focuses on peer relationships in adolescence, a time when physical, social and psychological change results in a need for validation and group identity. The development of cross-sex relationships is a striking feature of this stage. Friendships do not occur in isolation and chapter six examines context and its influence. Social grouping, patterns of family life, poverty, social class and physical environment may all affect children's social network. Chapters seven and eight discuss factors associated with relationship problems and interventions designed to help children improve their peer relationships.

Each chapter is preceded by a contents page, has clear subject headings throughout, and concludes with a summary and suggestions for further reading. At the back of the book a glossary of terms used in the main text (bold type on first occurrence) and a complete reference list is provided.

In conclusion this book is a very readable introduction to the subject of friendship in childhood and adolescence. The information is presented with clarity and without loss of scholarship, and the author draws out for readers areas of current debate. The format is extremely useful for revision of specific aspects of the text. It is especially appropriate for readers without previous expertise in the area and provides comprehensive details on how and where to pursue the subject further.

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