

sooner or later. If that was indeed the case, the Soviet rulers may not have been unjustified in thinking that the Czechoslovak example could become the germ of political-ideological contagion throughout the Soviet bloc.

A few critical words are in order about the organisation of the study. Though the evidence is clearly and meticulously presented, the reader is often presented with such a wealth of methodological detail in almost each chapter that one wonders whether it would have been better to leave most of that to the already long appendices. In addition, new theoretical views are introduced in several chapters, with the result of distracting the reader's attention from the main point. The longitudinal comparison of public opinion (1968 and 2008) takes place in Chapters 4 and 7, with the two chapters on elites (5 and 6) thrown in between. Such organisational lapses and the occasional verbosity of style sometimes make reading this worthwhile study challenging and distract from its indisputable social-scientific merits. None of this, however, takes anything away from Lyons' empirical accomplishment, which throws a new light on a defining event of post-war communist history.

Veljko Vujačić

Oberlin College

Veljko.Vujacic@oberlin.edu

Ronald Labonté, Ted Schrecker, Corinne Packer and Vivien Runnels (eds.):

Globalization and Health: Pathways, Evidence and Policy

New York 2009: Routledge/Taylor & Francis, 365 pp.

Health has long been one of the most desired outcomes of development. Recent studies confirm that investments in health and education have been important in explaining why some countries have experienced rapid economic growth, while others

have not. A healthy population is fundamental to a country's development. Moreover, poor health does more than damage the economic and political viability of any one country—it is a threat to the economic and political interests of all countries. Global health is an interesting research field that has been growing immensely during the last few years. It involves research in multiple disciplines as varying as medicine, epidemiology, sociology, demography, political science, psychology, evolutionary biology, and economics. From different disciplinary perspectives, it focuses on the determinants and distribution of health in international contexts. As borders between countries become less important, people and goods are increasingly free to move, which is creating new challenges in terms of global health. These challenges need to be dealt with not by national governments alone but also by international organisations and country agreements. Global health provides a new paradigm for research, education, and information on challenges faced by the world population.

Labonté and his co-editors contribute to bringing the research agenda for global health forward with their book *Globalization and Health: Pathways, Evidence and Policy*. The book stems from the work undertaken by the members of the Globalization Knowledge Network established as part of the WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health. The authors and editors are all experts in their field and together they provide the reader with deep insights about how globalisation influences health. One main purpose of the book is to describe and examine how globalisation affects the social determinants for health. The book, consisting of thirteen monographic chapters, is the first of its kind and hopefully more will follow.

The authors start off by defining globalisation as a process whereby the cross-border exchange of goods, services, capital, technology, and labour serves to inte-

grate the world economy, and as a result 'global conditions' crucially inform the decisions being made in the economy. According to the authors, in the past two decades the thrust of globalisation generally has been 'economic globalisation'. Each chapter is dedicated to a certain area related to globalisation. The introductory chapter focuses on why population health has not improved much during the past decades, despite the fact that during those decades many positive changes took place, for instance decreasing birth rates, medical improvements, market reforms, and widespread democracy. Based on several examples from different regions over the world, the authors measure the trends in the social determinants of health and find a robust association of poor outcomes with globalisation policies introduced in the late 1980s. Already this chapter is very interesting and makes the reader want to know more about the new global health policy dynamics. In Chapter 2, Giovanni Cornia, Stefano Rosignoli, and Luca Tiberti describe how globalisation influences morbidity and mortality. They find that, although 1980–2005 was characterised by favourable political and economic surpluses, a slowdown in health improvements and an increase in health inequality worldwide took place. According to these authors, for developing countries, a selective integration into the world economy linked to a gradual reduction of global asymmetries would likely lead to greater equality in the determinants of health.

Patrick Bond, in Chapter 3, adds to this understanding by tracing the neoliberal economic policies and explaining how the broader global context has affected health and social determinants for health policies. This is followed by a study of one of globalisation's main health-determining pathways: the substantial and dramatic changes that have occurred in global labour markets. Ted Schrecker convincingly argues that among the key objectives of economic

policy should be the creation of an economic environment that generates adequate and secure livelihoods for all. This requires focusing on employment in economic and development policies. Looking at experiences from East Asian countries on the economic crisis, Aniket Bhusan and Chantal Blouin show that it is important to improve general social safety nets prior to or alongside ongoing global market integration. The chapter by Sebastian Taylor and Michael Rowson on global financing for health takes a closer look at aid and debt relief. The authors conclude that aid has been essential for improving health in developing countries. They challenge aid critics by pointing at the results from recent studies consistently reporting positive associations between aid and health outcomes (e.g. increases in length of life). Moreover, they argue that aid transfers are required from those countries that have benefited most from the past three decades of global market integration if we are going to improve health equity on a global scale. It is clear from the evidence given in this chapter that the international community needs to live up to its promise of making aid predictable and sustainable.

In Chapter 8, John Lister and Ronald Labonté focus on national health systems and how health system reforms globally have targeted cost recovery, privatisation, competition, and technical/disease-specific interventions instead of universal, comprehensive public systems. The authors conclude that even relatively limited resources channelled along more productive lines can improve health equity and deliver better results to the whole society. They recommend establishing a global initiative to promote an alternative line of policy that would replace all failed and costly policies with a new approach enabling health systems to deliver more and better treatment on a more equitable basis in the future. Following this, in Chapter 9, Corinne Packer, Ronald Labonté, and Vivien Runnels go in-

to the problems facing national health systems due to health labour migration. This is a serious issue facing many poor countries as their workforce are offered better opportunities, higher salaries, and better working conditions in wealthier countries. The results of this are devastating because not only do poorer countries end up with less skilled labour and shortages of health workers, they also face greater pressure since the need for health care is very high in these countries, which puts an extra strain on their already often weak health services. It may be that in the longer run this migration is a form of 'brain circulation', but in the short run its impact is dramatic. The authors outline a number of strategies, suggesting that countries enter into bilateral agreements suitable to both countries to manage flows of health care migrants.

In Chapter 10, Corinna Hawkes, Micky Chopra, and Sharon Friel explore changing patterns of malnutrition and introduce the concept of 'nutrition transition'. The term refers to the globalisation of poor quality, energy-dense diets leading to obesity and diet-related chronic diseases. The authors explore how globalisation is affecting the development of overnutrition when many countries still are afflicted with undernutrition. They identify three supply-side globalisation processes: the growth of transnational food companies, international food trade, and global food advertising and promotion. Their review of evidence convincingly shows that these processes are affecting the availability, price, accessibility, and desirability of different foods, leading to unequal dietary development between rich and poor. High-income groups in developing countries are often more educated and enjoy easier access to 'healthy market' foods, while low-income groups continue to face inadequate access to healthy nutritious food and are more exposed to the marketing of less healthy options. With the dramatic growth of market-

ing and supply of high-calorie and low-nutrition foods in developing countries (especially in middle-income countries), the problem is likely to remain.

Carlos Correa, in Chapter 11, discusses how the internationalisation of intellectual property rights has caused inequalities in health outcomes. Particularly interesting is that patents fail to encourage research and development for the diseases that prevail in developing countries, while they create barriers to drug access. In the next chapter, by Kelley Lee and others, the discussion of the current system of globalisation's various trade and investment rules is extended to the broader terrain of global governance for health. The rather fast pace of globalisation during the last decades has led to an increased interest in finding the right forms of governance to deal with the emerging challenges facing governments all over the world. This concerns institutional settings and relationships in which health goals are collectively agreed upon by governments and then pursued by both governmental and non-governmental actors. The authors review the existing evidence of how global governance influences and affects the social determinants of health. They conclude that global institutions have some weaknesses when it comes to tackling the social determinants of health: problems of coordination and coherence; inadequate systems of transparency and accountability; limited effort to redistribute power; resources are under the control of major donors; and lack of overall leadership. These final points are quite interesting, and if just a few of them could be addressed by international organisations much would be accomplished in the global arena.

In Chapter 13 much of the other chapters' conclusions and recommendations are nicely summarised by Ronald Labonté and Ted Schrecker. They raise some of the key policy recommendations deriving from the joint efforts of different authors in the book. They describe the new forms of coordinat-

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, policy-makers, 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.

Catharina Hjortsberg

Swedish Institute for Health Economics, Lund
chjortsberg@hotmail.com

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