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**Drinking Careers: A Twenty-Five Year Study of Three Navajo Populations.** By Steven J. Kunitz and Jerrold E. Levy. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1994. 280 pages. \$28.50 cloth.

Jerrold Levy and Steven Kunitz have been the two most prolific and, I believe, insightful academic researchers ever to tackle the topic of Indian drinking. Their works, which began in the middle 1960s, provide us with a thirty-year span of increasing insights and knowledge into the special nature of the relationship between alcohol and Indians. Their research has brought new attention, insight, and rigor to the topic of alcohol problems as they relate to a variety of areas of Indian life, particularly culture, violent death, and mental health. Their specific contributions are many but include new definitions of alcohol-involved problems, particularly cirrhosis of the liver, suicide, and homicide; the variable nature of drinking patterns among a number of Southwestern tribes; and the manner in which tribal drinking patterns and the problems that result are, to a degree, shaped by tribal culture. They have challenged the acceptance of social disorganization theory as the sole explanatory device for alcohol abuse and deviance. *Drinking Careers* continues this tradition.

The first book published by Levy and Kunitz (*Indian Drinking*, Wiley Interscience, 1974) followed a number of journal articles and examined drinking over a three-year period among four samples of Navajo Indians. The four samples were groups from the Kaibito Plateau (a highly traditional pastoral Navajo subgroup), South Tuba City (a wage-work community in the western portion of the reservation), and Flagstaff, Arizona (a border town), and a group who were being treated for alcohol abuse at an inpatient hospital facility on the reservation. What makes this book unique is that it is a twenty-one-year followup of these same individuals—except the Flagstaff sample. Therefore, for the first time we have an in-depth, longitudinal study of American Indians and their drinking patterns across the adult life cycle.

Because there are few faults with this book, let me deal with two criticisms first in order to get them out of the way. Then I will move on to the book's strengths. I believe that Kunitz and Levy overemphasize their case in two different areas. First, chapter 8 deals with the regional context of mortality among the Navajo. The point made is that Navajo people should not be compared to national samples but rather to regional samples. As a general point, this is very true. Regional conditions greatly affect mortal-

ity and, in many cases, have an equalizing effect on both Indians and non-Indians who live in a particular region. Local trends, popular culture, and environmental conditions are particularly influential on behavior of both Indians and non-Indians. The authors go on, however, to show how cirrhosis of the liver, motor vehicle crashes, other unintentional injury deaths, homicide, and suicide among some Indian populations—and particularly the Navajo—do demonstrate a regional pattern and time trends that affect both Indian and non-Indian populations. However, the relative risk ratios and rates vary substantially, and in some cases inconsistently, between the Indians and non-Indians from one time period to the next and throughout the comparisons presented by the authors.

Truly, as they say, environment and regional culture do generally shape both Indians and Anglos in somewhat similar ways; however, this is not a highly consistent pattern, and one would have trouble explaining by regionality alone why the Navajo have a much lower rate of suicide than the Anglos in the surrounding region in many time periods. Similarly, Kunitz and Levy's regional influence thesis cannot explain why motor vehicle accident rates among certain American Indian tribes can be consistently four to five times higher than Anglo rates in the same counties in most comparison periods. If regional culture and conditions were so important, there would be a higher degree of correspondence than the data show. Therefore, the authors' general thesis is a valid one, yet it does not explain as much of the variance as this book would lead one to believe.

A second example of overemphasis in this book concerns the causation role played by alcohol in violent behavior among American Indians. The question is posed as to whether Navajo people become involved in violence because they have been drinking or whether they drink in order to become involved in violence. Generally, the authors tend to examine objectively the role that alcohol plays in these behaviors, and it is quite substantial. But some would say the discussion serves to minimize the very important role of alcohol in deviant behaviors. Most researchers and public health officials working among American Indians would agree that these behaviors very seldom occur in isolation from alcohol. That is, one rarely sees or records occurrences of suicide, homicide, motor vehicle accident death, or other violent behaviors in the absence of alcohol. Therefore, it may be a rather rhetorical question as to whether alcohol is the causative

agent or what the individual motives are. Alcohol is highly associated with these behaviors as a rather exclusive, almost necessary, agent. Therefore, to question the direction of causality too highly may be misleading. Whether it causes, enables, or merely facilitates may not be important, for it may do all of these. Alcohol is intricately involved with most violent behaviors among virtually every tribe, even more so than it is related to these behaviors in non-Indian populations.

Criticism aside, this book makes many fine contributions to the literature. Its most outstanding attributes are the longitudinal tallying of the alcohol-related experience, particularly mortality, among this group of Navajo and a statistical description of the survival patterns of these individuals. Chapter 5 details the mortality: In the overall sample of males, 67.2 percent survived the twenty-one-year period. Seventy-eight percent of the females survived. Of those who died, many did not die from alcohol-related causes. Of the 33 percent of the men who died, the hospital group had the greatest mortality, and their deaths were commonly alcohol-related. Ninety percent of the hospital group who did not survive died from alcohol-related causes as compared to 45 percent of the deaths for the wage-work community and 11 percent of the deaths among the Plateau men. Therefore, there were highly differential rates of alcohol-related death in these samples from similar age cohorts. Among the women drinkers, a much higher risk of death was found. Of the five women in the initial 1960s sample who were classified as alcohol dependent, three had died from alcohol-related causes, and one became an abstainer. Men who were diagnosed as alcohol dependent in the first study fared better. Thirteen of the forty men classified as alcohol dependent (32.5 percent) died of alcohol-related causes, while 47.5 percent were now abstainers, 10 percent were still drinking but were not alcohol dependent, and 10 percent were still drinking and alcohol dependent. Therefore, the survival patterns long pondered by researchers but seldom documented have been well explicated in this book in much more detail than these highlights show.

Chapter 6 defines Navajo drinking careers. Focusing mainly on the men, Levy and Kunitz present the following conclusions: Drinking generally begins in social groups and is not related to depression; heavy binge drinking is the modal pattern documented in all three groups; binge drinking is generally carried out in an active, culturally defined social milieu; and the highest

rate of recovery from heavy drinking is achieved by Navajo men from traditional, rural areas, while the worst prognosis is found among the educated males who live in wage-work communities. Since Levy and Kunitz were the first researchers to document and emphasize the fact that many Indian males mature out of their drinking without the aid of therapy, it is fitting and fulfilling that this book follows up that idea. When the samples are examined, 87 percent of the Plateau males had quit drinking twenty-one years later, while 53 percent of the South Tuba (wage-work community) men had quit drinking, and 33 percent of the hospital group had quit. Furthermore, *Drinking Careers* is one of the first books to document, in quantified form, the reasons for quitting.

Chapter 6 also presents similar data on drinking careers for women. More Navajo women were abstainers at all ages, which is consistent with other studies of Indian females. It was, incidentally, one of the major contributions of these authors in earlier studies to point out the high abstention rate among females. However, this book tells us that 21 percent of the (minority of) women who were drinkers in the mid-1960s (a minority of the female population) are still drinkers today. In contrast to the Navajo males, the less educated women continued to drink.

Chapter 7, entitled "A Family History of Alcohol Use," is a nice contribution written by Tracy Andrews to illustrate a theme for the authors. It offers a case study of four generations of a family in a Navajo wage-work community, clearly describing how alcohol problems vary by generation and how they affect certain individuals but not others. Furthermore, it documents the various solutions employed by different individuals living in a similar milieu to address drinking problems. This chapter was included by the authors to account for the fact that the Kaibito Plateau sample studied for traditional Navajo drinking patterns was characterized by higher traditionality than many Navajo today. Because of this and past patterns of family wealth and traditional culture, the Kaibito sample was at generally lower risk for severe and chronic alcohol problems.

In summary, this book is an extremely valuable contribution to the literature on alcohol abuse among the Navajo. Furthermore, it will set the pace for other works to explore drinking careers, survival patterns, and various individual characteristics of Indian drinkers. Just as their first book was very influential in raising a number of issues about Indian drinking for other researchers, this

one will also be influential. In fact, many researchers are taking a longitudinal perspective today and are emphasizing individual Indian drinking careers. Any researcher interested in the topic of Indian drinking should read this book carefully; it may provide stimulus for meaningful research of various types. Furthermore, this book will make an excellent teaching vehicle for classes that examine the social/ cultural influences on drinking and behavior-related mortality. I recommend it highly.

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**Enduring Traditions: The Native Peoples of New England.** Edited by Laurie Weinstein. Westport, Connecticut: Bergin and Garvey, 1994. 224 pages. \$18.95 paper.

This book is the first in a proposed series by Bergin and Garvey on Native Americans. As such, it sets a pattern for future studies. Laurie Weinstein will continue as general editor.

This study is about the enduring traditions of New England Indians. It is not intended to be a comprehensive work but rather aims to inform readers that the native peoples of this region are not extinct, nor have their traditions vanished—views that many hold because of the relative invisibility of Native Americans in the context of a dense non-Indian population. Even scholars have been led to think that extinction of some groups was the inevitable consequence of the European invasion, which produced rapid depopulation from disease, warfare, and forced removal. For example, until recently some scholarly works reported that the Pequot disappeared within a short time after the ruinous wars of the seventeenth century. Pequot ventures into gambling activities in the late 1980s, however, soon dispelled that idea. Nevertheless, because New England traditional cultures have been drastically altered and because some Indian persons show phenotypic evidence of intermarriage with non-Native Americans, there are those who would deny them their identity and, were it possible, even their legal rights. But although their numbers have been thinned from perhaps as many as 160,000 at contact, they are indeed Native Americans who, as Weinstein notes, “have survived the centuries and they have survived despite land loss, conflict, poverty, discrimination, and all-out war against them” (p. xiii).