BOOK REVIEWS

The Matter of Tobacco Use

Smoking Policy. Law, Politics, and Culture. ROBERT L. RABIN and STEPHEN D. SUGARMAN, Eds. Oxford University Press, New York, 1993. x, 243 pp. $35 or £30.

Perhaps the most important question addressed in this compilation of original papers by lawyers and sociologists is this: What explains the fact that cigarette smoking has declined substantially since the mid-1960s, not only in the United States but in most of the developed world? The answer surely involves the much-publicized advances in scientific knowledge concerning health risks, which have persuaded some people to quit and helped provide the impetus for a series of regulations affecting the marketing of tobacco products and for restrictions on where and when it is acceptable to smoke. But the answer also has much to do with the increasingly negative view of smoking and smokers in everyday communications between friends and associates. Joseph Gusfeld in his contribution to the book notes that whereas smoking was once common and taken for granted among all sorts of people, "By the 1990s, the smoker was not only a foolish victim of his or her habit but also an obnoxious and uncivil source of danger, pollution, and illness to others." For public health advocates this is a success story, but one that provides uncertain guidance for policymakers seeking further reductions in smoking or other unhealthy activities.

For many of us the recent social history of smoking, recounted by several of the authors in this book, is not just of academic interest. I began smoking (in Boy Scouts!) at age 11. By the time I was a college freshman, freed from the restrictions of school and home, my smoking had increased to a pack a day. The seminal Surgeon General's Report *Smoking and Health* was issued that year (1964), but I didn't notice. The warnings that began appearing on cigarette packs a couple of years later were also easy to ignore, since I had grown up knowing that smoking was unhealthy. As a graduate student and young professor I often smoked while leading class discussions, as had some of my favorite teachers. That ended in 1980, when an undergraduate student, no doubt empowered by the anti-smoking movement, asked me to stop because smoke bothered him. A few years later there were hardly any social situations left in which it was acceptable to smoke. Even my home was no longer a refuge, since my children were pestering me to quit. And so I did. Now my status as former smoker puts me in company with fully half of all those who have ever smoked regularly and are alive today. For many of us the deteriorating social environment for smoking made it easier to quit.

In his chapter, Gusfeld provides a historical context for the social transformation of smoking, relating the experience of the last three decades to the crusade against cigarettes in the early days of the century. At that time cigarettes were widely viewed as a source of immorality, crime, and inefficiency. By 1909 17 states had adopted prohibitions on their sale, although that campaign fizzled by the end of the First World War. The post-1964 campaigns, Gusfeld notes, have been framed in the context of health, but "that has not really eliminated the moral quality of the issue nor eradicated the significance of emerging social distinctions." The smoker has become a pariah, excluded from a number of scenes.

Franklin Zimring points out that the change in the public perception of smoking following the Surgeon General's Report was instrumental in persuading legislators to enact more stringent regulations. This sequence of events calls into question the extent to which the regulations themselves have been responsible for the observed reduction in smoking. Given the broad international character of the decline, Zimring believes that the underlying social change, rather than the government regulations instigated by it, is the major explanation.

But is it correct to discount the importance of government action in this arena? In the United States the emphasis of federal policy during the early years was on information: sponsoring and reporting research on smoking and health, requiring warnings on cigarette packs and print advertisements, banning broadcast advertising beginning in 1971. Michael Schudson discusses this approach, asserting that, though the new information from research on smoking risks has been very important indeed, the continuing effort to manage the information reaching the public has had little effect on smoking. In his view advertising has minimal influence on the decision whether and how much to smoke, and the ban on broadcast advertising is of correspondingly little importance. Anti-smoking messages of the sort broadcast routinely during the late 1960s may have some effect, though Schudson doubts that these represent a reliable strategy. I would add in support of this view that the public, including adolescents, is already extraordinarily well informed about the health risks of tobacco smoke, and if anything tends to exaggerate the true probability that smoking will be the cause of their death (see W. Kip Viscusi, *Smoking: Making the Risky Decision*, Oxford University Press, 1992).

Schudson suggests that a more effective strategy for reducing smoking is to raise the cigarette tax. Indeed, there is definitive evidence (not included in this book) that raising the tax on cigarettes discourages youths from developing a smoking habit and causes some adult smokers to desist. To date the federal government has not utilized tax increases as a smoking countermeasure, and in this respect we lag far behind other Western countries. Robert Kagan and David Vogel provide a discussion of the politics of taxation and other countermeasures, noting that Canada recently raised its tax so high that the retail price exceeds Can$6.00 a pack. According to Helen Schauffler, important advocates of more stringent measures in the United States include an alliance of health and life insurers, employers, public health groups, and voluntary agencies. This alliance produces a powerful political counterweight to the Tobacco Institute and helps account for why legislators and regulatory agencies have been willing to act against the interests of the tobacco industry to the extent that they have. Of course, it helps politically that so many of the 50 million Americans who still smoke are ambivalent about their habit—in contrast to, say, gun owners. But nonetheless our federal taxes remain low.

In many areas of product and environmental regulation the courts have played an important role, but not in the case of cigarettes. Two chapters provide somewhat redundant accounts of the history of lawsuits in which the plaintiffs have sought to hold cigarette manufacturers liable for the health consequences of their smoking. The stakes are of course enormous, since, as Gary Schwartz points out, the potential annual liability for the 434,000 estimated smoking-related deaths works out to something like $100 billion. So far, however, the industry has not had to pay a cent in such cases, thanks to their tough, well-financed defense tactics and the reluctance of juries to hold the man-

ufacturer rather than the individual responsible for the decision to smoke.

To summarize, then, the "Zimring thesis"—that most of the decline in smoking must be attributed to social change rather than government action—is plausible as an account of the U.S. experience to date, simply because federal policy has been so limited. That thesis will have to be revised if the Clintons are successful in their effort to impose a 75-cent-a-pack federal tax, or if there is a breakthrough in the tort cases.

One important mechanism by which the public concern about smoking has produced remarkable change is through restrictions on where it is acceptable to smoke. We all remember when smoking was permitted on domestic flights, and some of us remember (with fondness) a time when the flight attendants distributed small packs of cigarettes with the coffee. Increasingly state and local ordinances limit smoking in public places, and it is more common than not for employers to restrict smoking in the workplace. In their chapter Robert Kagan and Jerome Skolnick assert that recent regulations prohibiting smoking in offices and restaurants have been effective. A survey conducted by these authors found a remarkably high degree of compliance with smoking bans, in part because these regulations have provided nonsmokers with greater authority to insist on their right to clean air. In protecting nonsmokers, then, we have made great progress, and are well ahead of other Western countries.

Certainly the interests of smokers have not been ignored in all this. Though it may seem reasonable that smokers would have to pay more for life and health insurance (and less for annuities and insurance to support nursing home care), in fact the insurance companies have been reluctant to get involved in rating on this basis. Some employers have attempted to use smoking status as a basis for screening job applicants, but, as Stephen Sugarman notes, about half the states have passed some form of legislation protecting the rights of smokers in employment. Further, the courts are sure to be concerned about the fact that smoking is highly correlated (negatively) with socioeconomic status, and discriminating on this basis may have disparate impact on protected racial minorities.

With some 30 percent of teenagers smoking, the public health crusade is far from victorious. This book provides a good deal of interesting background but little guidance for policy-makers seeking to evaluate the various policy alternatives now under discussion. As a reformed sinner, I find that the emphasis on cultural and social change is interesting and rings true. As a policy analyst, however, I would have preferred more attention to evaluating the most promising next steps.

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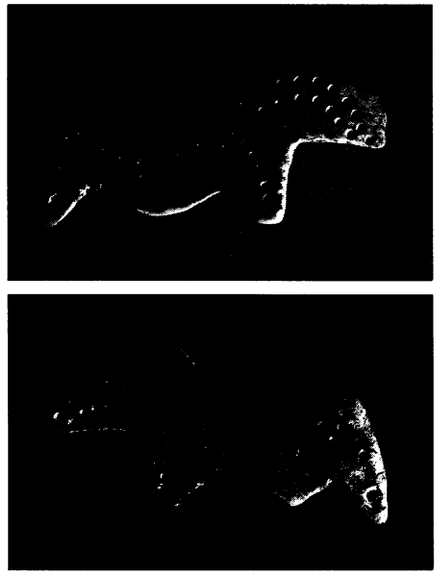
Culture in the Paleolithic

Before Lascaux. The Complex Record of the Early Upper Paleolithic. HEIDI KNECHT, ANNE PIKE-TAY, and RANDALL WHITE, Eds. CRC Press, Boca Raton, FL, 1993. x, 304 pp., illus. $75.

For decades, paleoanthropologists have debated the intensely interesting question of when, where, and how the human lineage reached its fully modern form. There is now general agreement that people broadly understood (hominids) first appeared in equatorial Africa more than 4 million years ago and were confined to Africa until some time between 1.5 million and 1 million years ago. At a still-to-be-fixed time within the latter interval, an archaic form of *Homo* spread from northeast Africa into adjacent southwestern Asia and from there eastward to the Far East and northward and westward to Europe. Archeological finds indicate that archaic humans were firmly established in the Far East 1 million years ago and in Europe no later than 700,000 years ago. With regard to modern human origins, the central issue is the pattern of evolution after Eurasia was first peopled.



The two faces of a drilled animal pendant from Sungir, a large Early Upper Paleolithic living site about 150 kilometers east of Moscow. Associated radiocarbon dates indicate that the pendant is between 30,000 and 25,000 years old. Its surface is heavily stained with red ocher, and the depressions drilled into it contain black pigment. [From R. White's paper in *Before Lascaux*]

Virtually all specialists agree that the modern human form originated relatively recently, probably no more than 150,000 years ago, but there is disagreement on whether it appeared more or less simultaneously in Africa, Europe, and Asia or originated in a relatively restricted locale and then spread from it to replace surviving archaic populations elsewhere. Those who favor widespread, more or less simultaneous evolution toward modern humans stress supposed racial continuities between archaic and modern populations in widely separated regions. In contrast, those who favor a restricted origin emphasize the occurrence of modern or near-modern human populations in Africa and on its immediate southwest Asian periphery between 120,000 and 90,000 years ago. In this interval, the sole inhabitants of Europe were the well-known and decidedly archaic Neanderthals. The east Asian contemporaries of the Neanderthals appear to have been about equally non-modern, on the basis of an admittedly sparse and poorly dated fossil record. The sum supports the now celebrated "out-of-Africa" hypothesis, whereby modern humans evolved first in Africa and spread from there to Eurasia. Until recently, a widely cited analysis of mitochondrial DNA variation in living humans implied that the spread occurred without interbreeding, but this analysis was statistically flawed, and some paleoanthropologists see fossil evidence for gene exchange between dispersing moderns and resident archaics, particularly in southeastern Europe.

For advocates of the out-of-Africa model, a potential complication is that the Neanderthals were apparently replaced only between 50,000 and 40,000 years ago, long after modern or near-modern humans had already appeared in Africa. The reason for the delay is probably that the earliest modern or near-modern Africans were behaviorally as primitive as the Neanderthals, and it was only about 50,000 years ago that they acquired the fully modern ability to adapt to the environment through the agency of culture. Armed with this ability, fully modern humans spread very rapidly, reaching Spain on the far west and Australasia on the far east by at least 40,000 years ago. The issue of how they became behaviorally modern is controversial. Some authorities believe the process was driven by rapid changes in social organization. Others favor a biological (or neurological) cause, perhaps a mutation promoting the fully