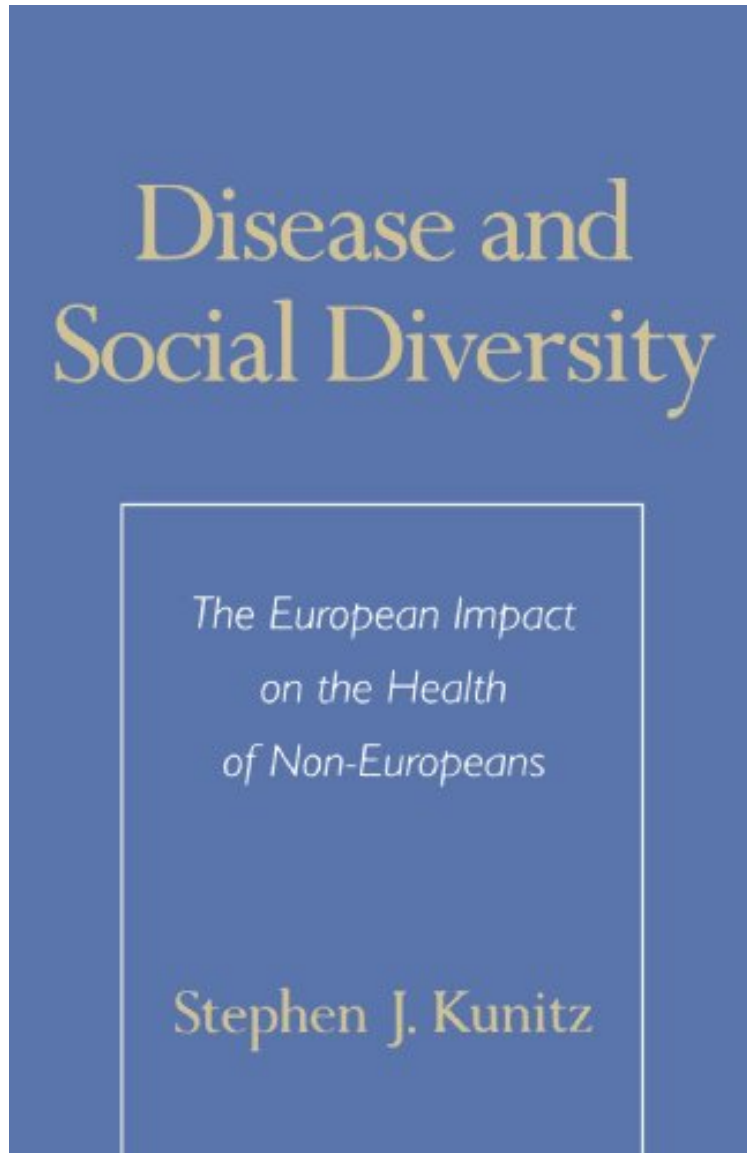


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Disease and Social Diversity: The European Impact on the Health of Non-Europeans

Stephen J. Kunitz

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Stephen J. Kunitz : Disease and Social Diversity: The European Impact on the Health of Non-Europeans before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Disease and Social Diversity:

The European Impact on the Health of Non-Europeans:

This book discusses the various social, political, and cultural forces that shape the distribution of diseases in populations. It is based on a series of comparative studies of the historical and contemporary disease patterns of the indigenous peoples of America north of Mexico, Polynesia, and Australia. The purpose of the comparisons is to control in a quasi-experimental way certain crucial variables in order to examine the impact on health of other variables. The comparisons are made at increasingly more refined levels of analysis. Thus, once disease ecology has been held roughly constant, one can see more clearly the ways in which colonial policy and political institutions have shaped the affairs of indigenous peoples. And once policy has been held constant, one can see more clearly how culture can make a difference. And once culture has been held constant, one can see how gender and status make a difference. Kunitz argues that very few broad generalizations adequately explain the distribution of diseases in populations and that to truly comprehend such patterns one must understand the local social context as well the biological characteristics of diseases. The book is thus an argument for the importance of local knowledge as a complement to the universalizing sort of knowledge that we associate with science.

"Diseases and Social Diversity stands as a well-researched reminder that diseases are manifestations of multiple variables that are often rooted in particular cultures as well as in particular social and ecological settings. Stephen Kunitz should be commended for calling our attention, once again, to this fundamental lesson surrounding the treatment and prevention of diseases."--*Medical Anthropology Quarterly*

Disease and Social Diversity is the harvest of wide experience in medical practice, acute intelligence, and deep research and reading in the social and natural sciences....Kunitz compels us to broaden our vision beyond the natural history of infections to individual (and perhaps collective) patient careers....This important book bristles with arresting observations which serve as persuasive arguments for blending biomedical and 'social' perceptions. It should be required reading for policy-makers, and social scientists will find it disconcerting and liberating." --Donald Denoon, Australian National University, *Health Transition*

"This is an important book because it brings indigenous people into the debate about colonialism, imperialism and historiography. In this regard Kunitz opts for a perspective from which indigenous people are seen as more self-contained than in other models or previous sociological accounts. He attempts to explain, through the examples of health, what happened to indigenous people as Europeans came to dominate their worlds; and he rejects large models which, he argues, fail to account in a standardized way for the differences in culture and geography that safeguarded populations against epidemics and decline....This should provide for lively exchanges between scholars who, in the Kuhnian sense, maintain them as the accepted paradigm (Kuhn 1970). The book has scholarly footnotes, appendices and an index; it would be ideal as a university text for students studying history, anthropology, demography or epidemiology." --Gordon Briscoe, Australian National University, *Health Transition*

"A book we have needed for some time....We desperately need two new elements in this field: one, scholars who are not running for office in some imperialist or anti-imperialist Valhalla; and second, some hard data. Stephen Kunitz is an example of said scholars and he provides pages of data....Kunitz is a bit of a closet humanist, for all his statistics and charts..."--Alfred W. Crosby, University of Texas at Austin, *Population and Development*

As archaeologists, anthropologists, and others increasingly turn away from the idea that contact between Europeans and non-Europeans in the Americas and Oceania uniformly resulted in catastrophic population collapses following the introduction of new European diseases among the latter groups...they would do well to consider the views and persuasive arguments regarding disease and social diversity put forth by Kunitz in this book." --Texas Archeological Society (Book Notes)

"In this scholarly and carefully referenced book Kunitz examines the effects of colonization in North America, Australia, and Polynesia." --*British Medical Journal*

"His book is undoubtedly a valuable contribution to the historiography of medicine and colonization." --*Bulletin of the History of Medicine*

"This is a remarkable and wide-ranging book with important messages for policy makers as well as executors, not to mention historians and epidemiologists. It should also prove an important book for the peoples it studies who might wish to have an informed account of what has happened to them demographically and why."--*Journal of the History of Medicine*

About the Author Stephen J. Kunitz is at University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry.