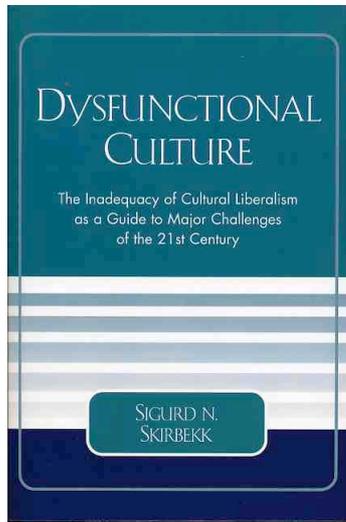


Dysfunctional Culture: The Inadequacy of Cultural Liberalism as a Guide to Major Challenges of the 21st Century

By *Sigurd N. Skirbekk*



University Press of America, Inc. / Rowman & Littlefield
Publishing Group

Lanham, Md • Boulder • New York • Toronto • Oxford.
September 2005

ISBN: Paper 0-7618-3061-8 Cloth 0-7618-3060-X

The Publisher's Presentation:

Dysfunctional Culture is written for both theoretical and practical purposes. The first part of the book is a discussion of how to understand and identify political ideologies as cultural systems, disposing for both functional and dysfunctional ways of adjustment, even apart from the interests and intentions of their spokesmen. The second part deals with examples related to family morality and reproduction. It is argued that contemporary cultural liberalism, despite its advantages over several totalitarian ideologies, is inadequate for understanding the cultural premises for family functions, and even legitimizes dysfunctional processes. The book argues that belief in individual rights as the main basis for morality is not an adequate response to the moral challenges we are sure to face in the years ahead.

Author's Presentation:

The theme for the book is the status of contemporary cultural notions related to liberalism, as the main ideology for modernity. Francis Fukuyama announced in the 1992 that History had come to an end, meaning that Western liberal democracy had finally conquered all its competitors. In spite of 9/11 2001 and other warnings, it is still commonly believed that a modern version of liberalism, as opposed to its ideological predecessors, has the qualifications for being a guide to the major challenges in the years to come.

In the first part of the book I will show that all the previous main political ideologies

have had certain characteristic in common. These characteristics put a limit to what challenges could be intellectually dealt with, without destroying the creditability of the ideology itself. Classical Conservatism, Old Liberalism, National Socialism and Marxist Socialism all failed to see and react adequately when facing unavoidable challenges. This resulted for the present in a victory for a new variant of liberal ideology.

I further argue that the fate of historical relativity also seems to catch up with the new social liberalism. The challenge of moral order/anomie, of biological and cultural reproduction and of a consumption pattern within responsible ecological limits cannot be adequately dealt with by using an ideology built upon individual rights as its prime value. Adequate responses would require a transcending of liberalism as a guide to major challenges of the 21st century.

I present many empirical references related to connections between a liberal ideology, family formations, moral behavior and reproductive results. I also mention comparative studies on the level of comparative civilizations. All together I have 264 references to other studies in my book.

Other Comments:

Dysfunctional Culture explains and identifies various political ideologies as cultural systems, disposing for both functional and dysfunctional ways of adjustment, even apart from the interests and intentions of their spokesmen and explores examples of these issues in relation to family morality and reproduction.

Roberto C. Delgadillo - *Books of the Week* 27.02.06

Professor Sigurd Skirbekk at the University of Oslo questions many of the assumptions underlying Western immigration policies. Skirbekk points out that European countries have earlier rejected the Germans when they used the argument of *lebensraum* as a motivation for their foreign policy. We should do the same thing now when other countries invoke the argument that they lack space for their population. According to him, there is plenty of literature available about the ecological challenges the world will be facing in this century. Running a too liberal immigration policy while refusing to confront such unpleasant moral issues is not a sustainable alternative in the long run. We will then only push difficult dilemmas onto future generations.

Baron Bodessey, GatesofVienna.com

The Failure of Western Universities 29.08.2006

"This book is a work of deep and wide scholarship, original judgment, good style, and significance for our new century. In sum, an excellent work."

Robert Ginsberg, Director, International Center for the Arts, Humanities, and Value Inquiry; Maryland. Editor and Author of several books,

"It is an excellent book – well-written, well-argued, fresh, clear and provocative.. of a deep conceptual thinker."

Mary Pipher, PhD, Author and writer for Time Magazine, Hope, Psychotherapy Networker, The Journal of Family Life.