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by Annette R. Hofmann, Carsten Gade Rolland, Kolbjørn Rafoss and Herbert Zoglowek, Münster, Germany, 2018, Waxmann Verlag GmbH, (paperback), GBP 28.12, ISBN: 978-3830938514

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BOOK REVIEW

Norwegian Friluftsliv: a way of living and learning in nature, by Annette R. Hofmann, Carsten Gade Rolland, Kolbjørn Rafoss and Herbert Zoglowski, Münster, Germany, 2018, Waxmann Verlag GmbH, (paperback), GBP 28.12, ISBN: 978-3830938514

In recent decades, the call for reinvigorating the realisation that human beings are part of nature has grown louder and more urgent. The trigger for this seems to be related to two of the world's most urgent issues: the health and well-being of humans and the state of the natural world (Brymer, Freeman, & Richardson, 2019). This book answers this call through the examination of the Norwegian way of life in relation to nature where human beings are recognised as part of the natural world. The meaning and definition of Friluftsliv are not easily translated from its Norwegian conceptual source into English language (Beery, 2013). Attempts to do have often resulted in superficial explanations (Gelter, 2000). However, the writers of this book have done an excellent job tracing the history of Friluftsliv as well as placing it into the modern context. In particular, this book successfully synthesises the Friluftsliv experience for the non-Norwegian and highlights the practical relevance of the Friluftsliv way to contemporary life. We should all heed the invitations that this book affords.

The easy-to-follow book is organised in sections to help the reader understand the conceptual background and core values that underpin the Friluftsliv experience. The first section (Chapters 2 and 3) provides a well-crafted framing to introduce the essence of the book and connects past research and theoretical approaches to understanding Friluftsliv. The second section (Chapters 4, 5 and 6) provides a deeper understanding of the educational approach and perspectives of Friluftsliv and how Friluftsliv is integrated throughout Norwegian society. Section 3 (Chapters 7, 8 and 9) provides examples of nature-based activities typically undertaken during summer and winter. Throughout the book, we learn that at its core, Friluftsliv is relational and underpinned by an active, ecological framework based on three specific foci: the activity; the environment; and the individual, which in turn depend on multiple psychological, cultural and social dimensions.

Section 1

In this section, Friluftsliv is linked with attitudes to nature, ecological thinking, environmental responsibility and social commitment. We learn that traditionally, men and women might have defined and experienced Friluftsliv differently and that social class and geographical setting might also add complexities, which upholds long-held critical perspectives on the fundamentals of Friluftsliv (Gurholt, 2008). The authors refer to research that indicates, from a task perspective, physical exertion seems to have been more important to male participants than female participants. Men and women also seem to derive meaning from Friluftsliv in different ways. However, despite these traditional differences, the authors highlight more recent evidence showing that Friluftsliv is still evolving and that these differences are becoming less impactful (see p. 44).

Friluftsliv is more than a set of activities that might be experienced differently by social groups, individuals or genders. Friluftsliv is perceived as a way of life, of being with nature that can be practised in multiple different ways at individual, group and community levels. This is exemplified through the authors' discussion on research into tourism implemented the Friluftsliv way, where the notion of product delivery is critiqued and instead the focus is on gaining energy from nature through interacting and sharing. The approach emphasises a multisensory being with nature, suggesting an in-depth person–nature relationship. The individual moves through nature, interacting with nature and the activity facilitates this process. This concept of relationship is emphasised

throughout the book as we learn about how people flourish through relationships with the natural world. Furthermore, it is also clear that this relationship filters through all of Norwegian life at the individual, family and societal levels where education, planning, policy, urban environments and design and health systems are considerably influenced by Friluftsliv relational notions. And we are warned, wisely, against the utilitarian view of nature which sees the natural environment as merely, resource, playing field or cure-all 'pill'.

Perhaps of interest to many of us outside of Norway is the comparative newness, in historical terms, of Friluftsliv. While to an extent this book traces the origins of Friluftsliv to the First Peoples of Norway, it is also clear that in its current form, Friluftsliv was heavily influenced by relatively recent political agendas. We learn, for sake of example, that one of the fundamental aspects of Friluftsliv, the right to roam outdoors, was only realised in 1957 and amended as recently as 1996 and 2011. We also learn that without this fundamental right, Friluftsliv, as described in this book, may not have materialised. This exemplifies the impact of the relational model and the importance of supportive environments. However, Friluftsliv is not without its critiques, particularly with regard to gender, age and specific social groups. The doors seem more open to generic participation across all social groups; however, what Friluftsliv means to each group and therefore what activities are undertaken, has evolved, and is continuing to do so.

Section 2

One of the most intriguing aspects of the investigation into Friluftsliv presented in the book relates to emergent possibilities across education. Formal education in Friluftsliv began in the 1990s with the intention of 'furthering personal development' (p. 46). However, Friluftsliv in an educational context seems more nuanced. Friluftsliv is embedded across all curriculum content as well as in physical education and can be activity, method of teaching or type or 'form of work' (p.46). Friluftsliv in the Norwegian context is described by the authors as (1) a special form of teaching similar to outdoor adventure education and experiential learning and (2) a subject that is analysed and taught. What makes Friluftsliv different perhaps to other similar notions is that it filters through multiple curriculum contexts and underpins educational theory more broadly. Furthermore, because Friluftsliv emphasises the Norwegian way of life, it is held in high esteem across all educational levels.

The idea of Friluftsliv being both a goal of teaching and methodology is intriguing and reinforces the importance of Friluftsliv in Norwegian culture. The authors provide an example of how this works in practice through the notion of learning outside the classroom (pp. 76–77) or more specifically experiential learning that involves sensory awareness in relation with nature. This emphasises the embeddedness of Friluftsliv in the social framework and the place of Friluftsliv in the lifelong development of Norwegian citizens. Friluftsliv is not just an activity, or series of activities, undertaken as an adjunct to everyday life and education of young people, it is a philosophy that filters through Norwegian society at all levels. It provides guidance on how to live life in the Norwegian context. The authors draw on a multitude of perspectives and frameworks to explain the interconnected, relational, functional nature of Friluftsliv. Traditional Anglocentric adventure, experiential learning, humanistic and educational theory, nature guiding and tourism are used to underpin the relationship between theory and practice; however, it is clear from the writing that Friluftsliv is far more than an integration of traditional frameworks. Those not familiar with the Friluftsliv way of life can at least gain insights into the impact and importance of Friluftsliv in the Norwegian context. Those more familiar will find this book a useful reference.

Section 3

This section exemplifies Friluftsliv and discusses how this philosophy of life is practised. The authors provide a step-by-step review of planning and preparing for particular activities in summer and winter seasonal contexts. The section provides considerable detail about why and how Friluftsliv

activities are undertaken. Much of the information provided in this section would be recognisable by those providing and undertaking outdoor activities across a range of disciplines. To this extent, it is pleasing to see that, at least on the surface, Friluftsliv is recognisable beyond the Norwegian context. Of course, like all outdoor and adventure activities, there are specific challenges, and the authors highlight a number of those relevant to Norway, such as the use of Sami words (e.g. instead of the word mountain the word *várri* is used on maps) in northern Norway which the authors suggest requires a working knowledge of Sami language as relevant to map reading. The details in this section provide a fantastic resource for leaders and participants alike. A resource provides the non-Norwegian with not only Norwegian-specific information but also basic principles for outdoor living. However, as a critical point, the activity focus of this section and its similarity to outdoor activities more broadly do miss an opportunity to fully integrate the notions espoused in the rest of the book. The technical focus suggests activities undertaken in the outdoors rather than the 'way of life' that the Friluftsliv notion suggests.

In conclusion, the authors draw the sections together presenting a holistic understanding of Friluftsliv. While recognising the complex nature of Friluftsliv, the book presents an appreciation of Friluftsliv as a way of life that integrates 'attitudes towards nature, ecological approaches, environmental responsibility, educational moments and commitment' (p. 194). Arguably, Friluftsliv and the systems supporting it can, and perhaps should, be adopted globally. Encouraging an effective human–nature relationship that goes beyond the idea of nature as 'resource', 'playing field' or 'pill' is vital in today's context. The authors of this book provide a wonderful resource outlining why this is the case and how it can be done. This book should become an important resource for a diverse readership and included in libraries around the world in order to facilitate the dissemination of its important message.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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