

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Rory McVeigh, *The Rise of the Ku Klux Klan - Right-Wing Movements and National Politics* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2009).**

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The Ku Klux Klan (KKK) often appears to the European reader as a spectacular source of racial violence. The Invisible Empire, the hooded people, and the fiery crosses seem just another eccentricity in the land of the mighty rule of law and civil rights. However, through a sharp analysis of the mobilization of the Klan as social movement, Rory McVeigh conveys a deeper insight into the roots of the KKK's growth and decline. As a professor of Sociology at the University of Notre Dame, he has continuously delved into right-wing mobilization and the echoes of the Ku Klux Klan. His latest book provides an analysis on how social theories can explain this kind of mobilization and thus develop strategies for preventing the harm that right-wing extremism can cause to individuals and to the social fabric of the communities. Moreover, what makes this research more than an explanatory flashback is the existence of yet common situations such as vigilante groups patrolling the border between the United States and Mexico or neo-Nazis boldly marching through European cities.

The main focus of the book is on explaining right-wing mobilization from the viewpoint of a different theory, based on the supply/demand relation, so far most commonly applied in economics. McVeigh brings forward the *power devaluation theory* and examines it in comparison to other social theories such as the mass society theory, the collective behavior theory, the resource mobilization theory and the political opportunity theory. All of the above mentioned theories have only partially succeeded in accounting for how and why the mobilization of the members of the KKK occurred. Power devaluation (economic, political and status-based), generated by structural change, produces shifts in interpretive processes which, in turn, lead to activation of

organizational resources and exploitation of political opportunities (p.39). The model also includes feedback loops that represent movement mobilization as an ongoing process. The incentives for right-wing mobilization came, therefore, from economic, political and status-based power devaluation, from which the Klan drew benefit and articulated its members' grievances by drawing on cultural identities rooted in race, nativity, and religion.

Drawing on sociological qualitative and quantitative analyses, on national and state-level statistics, on picture and document overview, the author deals with the redefinition of markets along cultural lines, the issues of public versus private schooling, the Prohibition, recruitment and activism.

The power devaluation model is detailed both according to a diachronic perspective covering the period from 1915 until 1928 and a synchronic approach on domains of the public life, such as the political power, the economic issues and the status-based privileges. McVeigh argues that political power devaluation results from an increase in the supply of and decrease in the demand for what is offered in the political exchange, while employment and wage are correlated to the proliferation of chain-stores, the ongoing industrialization (together with the increasing reliance on unskilled workers) and the immigration problem (the blacks from the South and the East European immigrants). The status-based privileges are related to the defense of the Prohibition and the advocacy for a better public educational system, which were the gateway towards maintaining or improving the social status.

As far as the arguments go, one can acknowledge the author's point of view. Regarding the mobilization inputs, the motivations for joining the organization were far more complex than the status anxiety argument suggests. This is why the leaders of the Klan constructed call-action frames that resonated strongly with those who were experiencing power devaluation. The author's theory can account for the causes of the movement's rebirth and for their complex articulation, but it must pass the relay on to anthropology and social psychology when it comes to explaining the impact on the cultural interpretation framework. On a larger

scale, the power devaluation theory succeeds in explaining the Klan mobilization and its model is easily understandable and based on real historical input. However, the inside perspective is missing: the way in which the individual actually relates to the Klan is overlooked, in favor of an exterior panorama.

It seems therefore that this theory starts off well but at some point along the way it loses its force against the fluctuant and highly individual talents of the leaders of the moment. As McVeigh puts it, it is up to them to develop the ways in which the movement relates to the diverse grievances and responds to them. Considering the discrepancies and structural diversity of the 48 states to which it applies, the power devaluation theory can only provide a general framework and starting point. Economic and political power devaluation created incentives to join the movement, but they could not support the intrinsic motivation of the individual acts.

Nonetheless, what it can offer the readers is a different perspective on right-wing mobilization and a deeper case-study of the KKK in parallel with the fascist movements in Europe. Of the three stages of the Klan, the 1915-1928 period was contemporaneous with the rise of fascism, which their American homologues praised. While most of the totalitarian right-wing European movements have been secular or atheist, the American one was deeply intertwined with the Protestant creed and church. It is therefore interesting to compare it with, for example, the Romanian case of the Iron Guard, where religion (in this case, Orthodoxy) was a core component of the movement's identity.

The quoted works, the vast literature on the subject and the extensive explanations depict a detailed picture of the Klan's strategies for mobilization. The book covers a broad array of useful concepts, developing into a tool for research, as it gathers a great amount of information. This not just supports the main theory, but also helps to build "the big picture" of the United States at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and before the Great Depression.

The book is aimed at a public that is familiar with specific terms and scientific knowledge but the style of the author facilitates the reading and thus it is at the reach of the average person interested in the Ku Klux Klan.

As the book is well documented, it manages to place its subject at the rightful place in the American society, laying a proper emphasis not only on the basic triggers of its existence, but also on the echoes and sequels it can provoke. Perhaps its greatest quality is, in this reviewer's view, the prediction capacity of the proposed theory and thus its applicability in social sciences. We are witnessing events all around the world that raise awareness on the fact that inherent changes will lead to power devaluation which, at its turn, may have serious consequences that we should be well prepared against.

**Peter Gatrell and Nick Baron (eds.), *Warlands. Population Resettlement and State Reconstruction in the Soviet-East European Borderlands, 1945-50* (City: Publishing House, 2009).**

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More than six decades after the end of the Second World War it is hard to imagine the political, social, and human landscapes of Europe in the aftermath of hostilities. In reconstructing this recent past, we can rely on a large bibliography regarding the events from the Western part of the continent. But for what concerns the territory to the east of the Iron Curtain, the appropriate and single case-study documentation remains problematic and thus, topics such as the political, economic and social effects of the first year of the Cold War reconfigurations are still insufficiently explored. It is, for example, the everyday life of the displaced person or the consequences of displacement on the identity reconfiguration of ethnic minorities.

*Warlands* concerns the "profound political, social and economic upheavals in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, in the

immediate aftermath of the World War II" (p.1). After the choice for democratic institutions, made by most of these countries shortly after the end of the Cold War, some of the documents became available to researchers, but not all and not easily. Many were ideological interpretations of the past at stake which could be challenged by the direct access to such documents. Hence, the protection policies of some former communist states imposed restrictive legislation seriously limiting the access of researchers to source material. Such a situation seriously impeded academic freedom and, in many respects, the quality and quantity of the studies regarding the beginnings of the communist regimes. The explanation of this self-defensive attitude is that the critical analysis of the historical myths might jeopardize the basis of some current national representations.

Following WWII, large masses of people were on the move - refugees, survivors, orphans, deported and displaced persons - as a result of territorial changes. All studies included in this book are organised around the following themes: the exercise of power (including from the point of view of sharing and organising the knowledge), experiences of displacement, the transnational connections and memory and commemoration of displacement. The subjects are broad, but a detailed exploration of these themes is relatively limited by the specialized character of the articles included. Instead of exhaustively covering the topics addressed the studies offer various suggestions and possible lines of further development. This is both the strong point as well as the weak point of the book. By discussing very detailed topics, the specialized researcher might be provided with useful information and possible new perspectives. For those only interested in the issues regarding the first years of the Cold War, however, the volume is a collection of various pieces of a puzzle lacking the joints to fit them together.

The studies are structured around four main parts: Transit (national experiences and internal interventions in postwar displaced persons camps), Return (Soviet postwar resettlement practices and population management), Border Crossings (state practices of displacement and national reconstruction) and The

Politics of Memory (the long-term perspectives on displacement). The ways in which these topics are explained are unbalanced and do not cover extensively either the whole geographical territories of former communist Europe nor the problematic addressed. One of the most serious methodological problems is represented by the limits set by the informational resources: the information is too disparate and strictly limited to some very specialized cases without making obvious the broader picture. Without this panoramic view we are not able to make an evaluation of the period. The details could be misleading, creating an effect similar to visual illusion: a fragment is projected as the frame, obscuring the other unexplored aspects of the research.

Tomas Balkelis outlines the general context of these studies: "At the end of the Second World War refugees were everywhere: on the roads and streets, in cellars, bomb shelters, train stations and army barracks" (p. 25). The issue of the refugees provides the thread of the book. Their fate is followed during the various policies of pressures and propaganda they were exposed to (pp. 48-67) as well as their problematic social reinsertion (pp. 89-117, pp. 117-140).

Another category of refugees – the members of the Armenian and Estonian exile – are scrutinized following the relations with their homelands (pp. 231-255). This topic embodies huge research potential for the whole former communist area, particularly given the post-Cold War relations between different representatives of the countries at various levels of the exile and local communities. Another reality of the period was the problem of territorial changes, population displacement and transfers. The cases of Poland and Ukraine offer a deep understanding of the difficulties of the reconciliation and pacification process, as well as the problems faced by the ideas of regional cooperation (pp. 165--229).

The reader can follow directly the migration trajectories with the aid of maps of Central and Eastern Europe, the Western Republics of the USSR, Poland, Soviet Armenia and the Caucasus included at the beginning of the volume. Tables and Figures provide a very

small part of the data concerning the amplitude of the phenomenon analysed. The sources of the studies are as varying as the register of voices: direct testimonies of survivors, their published memoirs or information included in documents in state archives. The theoretical and qualitative approaches are alternating with testimonies and, where possible, statistical information opening interest for further analysis and comparative studies as well as stressing the need for more openness of the files regarding this period.

What this collection of studies intends to bring as new for those interested in Central and Eastern Europe is not only a highlighting of a different repertoire of topics and geographical and temporal redefinitions, but also new approaches. These are based on historical delineations, geopolitical, economical or legal frameworks (p. 15). The literature in the area is burgeoning and dedicated studies have been published. But, what might be needed now is to try and create, starting from a multiplicity of voices sharing their experiences, a comprehensive framework of another level of understanding the issue. Other possible areas recommended for supplementary attention are, according to Peter Gatrell and Nick Baron (p. 266), "how displaced persons were depicted in newsreel reports, feature films, literature and other media; how and in which genres migrants and exiles themselves articulated their own experiences in the years after the war".

The book is a valuable resource for both communist, refugee and migration issues scholars and offers valuable suggestions for continuing the work of filling the knowledge gap still persisting in many areas regarding the beginning of post-war Europe.

**David Ekbladh, *The Great American Mission: Modernization and the Construction of an American World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011)**

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David Ekbladh's first book, *The Great American Mission*, deals with the role of development policy in American foreign relations during the Cold War. More specifically, it discusses modernization as a developmental approach, tracing its rise and fall over a period of about forty years. In Ekbladh's view, modernization theory fused political, ideological and strategic objectives at a time when the United States waged what was, in essence, a global struggle over ideas.

Yet ideas about modernization did not emerge as a consequence of the Cold War, Ekbladh argues. Rather they were an outgrowth of liberal ideas that germinated in the 1930s in response to the Great Depression and the rise of fascist and communist ideologies. The Depression brought state planning into fashion but the onset of ideologies that rivalled American liberalism saw that, in the United States, an approach to planning devoid of ideology was sought. This came to be called modernization. The approach was undergirded by a belief in technology, reflected a superiority of Western values and could trace its roots back to Reconstruction in the 1860s. In its early days, it was mostly pushed by Christian missionaries and non-governmental groups, one target being the turn-of-the-century Philippines.

Only after the Depression did modernization become embedded in official American government policy. It found concrete shape in the New Deal Programs, most conspicuously that of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). In Ekbladh's words, the TVA was "the grand synecdoche, standing for a wider liberal approach to economic and social development both domestically and internationally." (p. 8) Indeed, it was "so influential globally that it would become nearly synonymous with liberal development

itself". (p. 48) The book's first three chapters are taken up with a detailed discussion of how the TVA came to be the signature project that provided a model for America's subsequent development policy. Further chapters then look in great detail at how this philosophy came to be applied in North-East Asia (China, and more extensively in South Korea) and then more widely in Latin-America, Africa and Asia.

The last three chapters trace the demise of modernization, arguing that the Vietnam debacle was principally to blame for its fall. The chapter on the war itself focuses mainly on the effort to create a "TVA on the Mekong River" in the 1960s. However, says Ekbladh, it got nowhere since "the Tet Offensive in January 1968 smashed assumptions guiding development work." (p. 217) What is more, under pressure from both the left and the right, the consensus around modernization at home also began to dissolve, ushering in the arrival of dependency theory, environmental concerns and approaches focusing on sustainability and targeting poverty reduction. Only in the wake of the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars did some of the discredited notions about modernization begin to re-emerge, the author argues.

While not taking anything away from the book's impressively researched and documented argument, some criticisms can be noted. One is that when probing the roots of modernization, Ekbladh chooses, for unknown reasons, to skip over the intellectual contributions of Talcott Parsons and A.F.K. Organski, who furnished the notion with a full-fledged theoretical framework. Another is that the overwhelming focus on modernization leads to diminishing other approaches to development. Ideas such as "trade not aid", a focus on investment, education or debt relief as ways to development get only little discussion. The last chapter, which deals with "new developments" in development policy from the Cold War to today, discusses subsequent rival approaches in a mere seventeen pages, meandering through sometimes tangential discussions on Fukuyama's *End of History* thesis (claiming that this entailed "a modernization argument", p. 260), globalization and criticisms of World Bank policies.

In a way, this last chapter points to a somewhat more serious problem with the book, namely the interchangeable use of modernization and development. Ekbladh defends this choice by saying that in the post-WW II period, these were used as “nearly synonymous terms.” (p. 12). However, by not distinguishing between modernization -which could be conceived of as large-scale planning for the sake of development – and development in general, Ekbladh runs into some methodological and argumentative problems.

On the first point, the author's argument that Vietnam sounded the death knell for modernization would logically also imply that there also came an end to American development assistance. In this respect, Ekbladh's claim that “the concept of modernization fell out of fashion, because of its close associations with Cold War thinking, ethnocentrism and cultural imperialism” (p. 12) can certainly be defended. And of course, it is eminently plausible that in the wake of the Vietnam War, American development activities came to be viewed with much more suspicion, but this is not the same as suggesting that American development assistance as a whole came to a halt thereafter.

This critique would also lead to the need to revisit the contended causal link between Vietnam and the fall of modernization theory worldwide. Ekbladh's claim is that “[i]n the United States and internationally, the war in Vietnam helped undermine the broad consensus that had supported modernization since the 1940s.” (p. 224). However, this claim is not being backed up with analysis of development policies of countries other than the United States. Furthermore, most development economists would probably maintain that the demise of modernization had more to do with economic logic – that large-scale projects turned out to be ineffective in fostering long-term growth- and that the timing with the Vietnam War was therefore perhaps a coincidence.

Finally, the author sometimes seems to want to fit too much into his argumentative framework, whereby he comes to stretch his argument on various occasions. For example, he claims that

Defense Secretary Robert McNamara's inability to freely walk the campus of Columbia University during a visit in 1970 "provides insight into the connection between the war in Vietnam and shifts in thinking about development that came in the late 1960s and early 1970s." (p. 226) Other examples appear in the final chapter, in which Ekbladh discusses the 2002 National Security Strategy, the Sachs-Easterly debate on development aid and Fukuyama's doubts about the neocon movement, all with relatively little relevance for his thesis, and all summarized rather than discussed on their merits. In the absence of a real conclusion, it leaves the reader somewhat dissatisfied, especially in light of the detailed and interesting discussions in the preceding chapters.

But while the book leaves something to be desired in terms of its argument, as a historical narrative it constitutes a very valuable and thorough contribution to understanding how modernization ideas furnished the foundations of American post-war development policy, whilst also supplying a series of interesting portraits of almost-forgotten figures who were intimately associated with this enterprise, such as David Lilienthal, Eugene Staley and Walt Rostow. As such, the book is a substantial contribution both to the literatures on the Cold War as well as the history of Western development policy, making it a worthwhile book for the specialist and the interested general reader alike.

**Perez Zagorin, *Hobbes and the Law of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).**

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*Hobbes and the Law of Nature* constitutes the final monograph by the late historian Perez Zagorin, who was a specialist in the field of early modern European and English political thought. Zagorin died in April 2009 at the age of 88 and in this last work he presents his assessment of Thomas Hobbes as a political and

moral philosopher. Zagorin's analysis is based on Hobbes' three major political works - *The Elements of Law* (1640), *De cive* (1641), and *Leviathan* (1651) - which were written during the English Civil War that resulted in the temporary defeat of the British monarchy. As is explained in the preface, Zagorin's twofold intention is to analyse Hobbes' concept of natural law within its historical context, and to demonstrate his significance "as a humane moral philosopher and theorist of natural law" (p.x). For this purpose Zagorin repeatedly contradicts scholars who place a one-sided focus on the role of self-preservation, calculation, and unbridled absolutism, while instead he presents an image of 'Hobbes the moral philosopher'.

In the first of four chapters Zagorin discusses Hobbes' unique position within the tradition of natural law and natural right, which concepts compose "the twin foundation on which Hobbes built the entire structure of his moral and political theory" (p.2). In comparing Hobbes' view on natural law to the theories of his predecessors, Zagorin stresses Hobbes' deviation from the age-old association between the natural and the good, and his refutation of a theistic foundation of natural law. On account of this innovative character, Zagorin considers Hobbes to have been little influenced by Grotius, in opposition to such theories as were voiced by R. Tuck and K. Haakonssen.

In chapter two Zagorin clarifies the relation between Hobbes' moral natural law and his harsh opinion of man's nature and condition in the pre-political state. According to Zagorin, "it would be wrong to suppose that the Hobbesian state of nature is completely lacking in moral principles", since even in here "men can be cognisant of the law of nature and God" (p.41). After his illustration of the other-regarding dimension of Hobbesian natural law, Zagorin subsequently reverts to those aspects in which Hobbes deviated from tradition. Firstly, this concerns Hobbes' affiliation between the desire for self-preservation and natural law; secondly, his legal positivism that only considers law as valid under the power of the sovereign; and thirdly, his conflation

between natural and civil law: "that contain each other and are of equal extent".<sup>1</sup> In regard to the second deviation Zagorin argues that it is because of Hobbes' conversion of natural law into a set of moral (i.e. non-legal) principles, "that Hobbes could be at the same time both a legal positivist and part of the natural law tradition" (p.54).

In the third chapter Zagorin elaborates the argument that - regardless of Hobbes' fusion of natural and civil law - the laws of nature still function as an independent standard to which the Hobbesian sovereign is morally obliged (p. 54, 90). Zagorin commences the chapter with a discussion of certain controversially conceived aspects of the Hobbesian Commonwealth, such as the *de facto* relation between obligation and protection. Subsequently he proceeds to refute Q. Skinner's view on Hobbesian liberty as constituting a reaction against the republican affirmation of rebellion (p.77). Alternatively, Zagorin locates a substantial amount of liberty for Hobbes' subjects in the silence of civil law (i.e. negative liberty). Zagorin completes this moral picture of the Hobbesian Commonwealth with the claim that, besides, the sovereign holds genuine duties to these subjects, to which it is obliged by the law of nature and its inherent principle of equity (p.95).

In the last chapter Zagorin finalises his plea for the acknowledgement of genuine moral obligation in Hobbes. Notwithstanding Zagorin's awareness of the importance of self-preservation in Hobbesian politics, he still maintains that "the laws of nature are not maxims of prudence but genuine moral principles that make people who live by them both just and good" (p.109). Zagorin attempts to clear Hobbes from the fallacy (that was initially conceived by Hume) of deducing values from facts, and the blame hereof is shuffled off on the ethical naturalism of Christian rationalists (p.115). In the final paragraph on 'religion and toleration' Zagorin concludes, that despite of the sovereign's extensive power in religious affairs, even in this field Hobbes'

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<sup>1</sup> *Leviathan*, 26.8.

opposition against persecution and tolerance towards diversity "reflect a broad strain of humanity and liberalism" (p.122).

In this book Zagorin, thus, presents a frankly moral picture of Hobbes as virtuous political thinker, secular natural law theorist, and forerunner of liberalism, in each of which respective claims he has been preceded by various other modern-day scholars. However, if Zagorin's complete account is compared to the more common interpretations, it becomes immediately apparent that these attribute greater importance to the impact of self-interest, calculation, absolutism, and the lack of individual liberty. Besides, this standard interpretation is roughly identical to the assessment that Hobbes obtained from his own contemporaries, concerning whose criticisms Zagorin shows to be well-informed. In one of his final attempts to refute these 17<sup>th</sup>- and 18<sup>th</sup>-century critics, Zagorin attributes their persisting misconception of Hobbes to their 'religious and political biases' (p.100). A personal question that repeatedly occurred while reading the book is, whether an unbiased posthumous interpretation does not deserve a more considerate observation of an author's contemporary reception, as it frequently appears that Zagorin's conclusions are unevenly appealing to a present-day, secularist, and liberally oriented audience.

Despite of this question mark concerning Zagorin's personal partialities in the construction of his case, on the positive side it should be mentioned that Zagorin applies a clear style of writing and structure, and additionally his arguments are rhetorically well-phrased. The outcome of Zagorin's demanding attempt to depict Hobbes as a realistic but yet virtuous natural law theorist can, therefore, in part be validated as successful. Zagorin indeed finds adequate support in Hobbes' writings for his demonstration of the other-regarding dimension of natural law, and for his description of the equitable office of the sovereign.<sup>2</sup> Some of the broader claims that Zagorin derives from these depictions are, nevertheless, more difficult to account for. Throughout the work

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2 Cf. *Leviathan* Ch. 14, 15, 30.

Zagorin elaborately addresses Hobbes' view on the relation between God, natural law, and civil law, but in the end it remains unclear how the legal positivism and secularism that Zagorin ascribes to Hobbes would allow the latter to consider natural law as an objective and morally obliging standard for the sovereign and its subjects.

Besides, it seems to me quite impossible to recognise genuine moral obligation in Hobbes on the basis of his concept of natural law, which (apart from its correlation with self-interest) is considered by Hobbes as inherently inconsistent with men's liberty and natural right.<sup>3</sup> In short, Zagorin's book is a helpful introduction into the basics of Hobbesian politics, the prominent secondary debates, and the broader historical context of natural law theory, which will inspire many of its readers with a positive awareness of the potentially moral dimensions in Hobbes' political writings.

**Stephen Coleman and Jay G. Blumler, *The Internet and Democratic Citizenship: Theory, Practice and Policy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009)**

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Most of the previous studies tend to understand the Internet-democracy relationship through theory, observation or prescription. Moving beyond those studies, Stephen Coleman and Jay G. Blumler's book examines the relationship between the Internet and democratic citizenship from three of theoretical, empirical, and policy perspectives. In other words, the authors aim to explore how the contemporary notion of e-democracy could be theorised, investigated, and implemented. In order to explain e-democracy more clearly, Coleman and Blumler, in the first three chapters, discuss three major approaches that give

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Leviathan* 14.3.

public communication; and direct democracy. Supported by empirical findings which demonstrate widespread public disengagement due to the lack of communicative connections of today's liberal democracies, they argue that there is a requirement for "a more deliberative democracy" (p.38) which would be done by utilizing new media technologies to create a more effective and direct form of democratic interaction.

In the next two chapters, the authors apply this premise to the examination of case studies which consist of what they call "e-democracy from above" (i.e. the online parliamentary consultations of the U.K. Parliament and the community campaign creator of the Bristol City Council) and "e-democracy from below" (i.e. the BBC iCan e-democracy project, netmums.com, and the U.K.-based Stop the War Coalition online). Although these case studies indicate some limitations of e-democracy, particularly those regarding the low interactivity between policy makers and citizens, the authors still believe that the Internet possesses vulnerable potential to improve public communication which eventually enhances democracy. To realize the democratic potential of the Internet, Coleman and Blumler suggest not only initiating suitable policies and institutional support but also creating a civic commons in cyberspace.

With a renovated and interesting conceptualization of democratic citizenship and the potential of the internet, the authors succeed in their research goal. They note the ultimate goal of this book is to explain how the Internet can be utilized as an "institutional innovation" to "nurture critical citizenship and radical energy, while at the same time opening up representative governance to new respect for public discourse and deliberation" (p. 3). There are several key concepts the authors apply differently from previous studies that makes this book more theoretically useful than other books in the same field. Coleman and Blumler mention "critical citizenship and radical energy," (p. 3) referring this phrase as the new expectations and meanings of citizenship in which the growing number of people who often expect to be heard and heeded on more occasions and matters than the ballot boxes of the Polling Day are being observed. When talking about

being citizens, they prefer using the term “democratic citizenship,” which they conceptualize as being citizens by “regarding themselves as a collectivity precedes any notion of a bounded political space to which they belong” (p. 6). In addition, democratic citizens, for Coleman and Blumler, are unlike the “state-centered citizens” whose their relationship to the state is already imagined and constituted. Rather, democratic citizens are those who enter to the political spaces toward autonomous civic practices.

However, instead of discussing this term by distinguishing it sharply to the state-centered approach, and therefore ignoring the role of political institutions, Coleman and Blumler argue that for people to engage closer to democracy, democratic institutions and processes must become sensitized to the ways in which citizens express their opinions, desires, and concerns. They ask for new spaces of political citizenship, spaces in which “civic energies” can consolidate comprehensively and productively, and suggest the Internet (or the cyberspace) as such politically vibrant spaces.

According to Coleman and Blumler, the Internet is not just a new technology but “an empty space or institutional void in which tensions between state-centric and democratic citizenship can be played out” (p.7). That is, on one hand, the Internet provides new digital and interactive channels for representatives and represented and governments and governed to communicate between each other. On the other hand, the Internet opens new spaces for citizens who have few other spaces available for them to tell their stories and express their fears and desires in constructive democratic ways. As a result, the Internet has a potential to improve public communications and enrich democracy. However, for Coleman and Blumler, such a potential could be realized only with suitable policies and institutional support.

The policy analysis chapter (chapter 6, *Shaping E-Democracy*) is another part that makes this book noteworthy and innovative. This chapter focuses on a pragmatic question, how should the

role of the Internet be conceived and enacted in contemporary democracy? The authors respond to this question by first employing the discursive construction of e-democracy approach to examine how the U.K. national government has attempted to shape a policy for e-democracy. They find five key principles the British government used in enacting e-democracy project: *inclusion* – a voice for all; *openness* – electronic provision of information; *security and privacy* – a safe place; *responsiveness* – listening and responding to people; and *deliberation* – making the most of people's idea (p. 149). These principles have been applied to four main areas of policy: E-Voting; Local e-Participation; Government Dialogues; and Civic Initiatives (pp. 150-153). This review provides an adequate fundamental picture for the authors (and other scholars) to evaluate how e-democracy policy in the U.K. can stimulate democratic participation, and to what extent the key success of policy implementation could be.

However, when Coleman and Blumler deal with this evaluation, there are some weak points in their methodology. That is, instead of conducting a firsthand empirical analysis to support their arguments, the authors review participatory research, both those that measure individual-level determinants of whether people participate in politics and those that focus their analysis on participation in public policy-formation and decision making. Such a review may provide a clear theoretical idea for the implementation of e-democracy policy to be successful. As the authors suggest, creating "spaces" within which civic practices are placed, ordered and discovered is an important way in which policy can shape democratic citizenship (p. 162). Nevertheless, for the pragmatic question the authors raise in the early part of this chapter, a more systematic and empirical approach is required. In this sense, while knowing what should be done about e-democracy is good, understanding why that is a proper way is better.

The feasibility of the book's recommendations is another weak point. It is true that today, the Internet is widespread, not limited to more advanced and industrialised countries but also the developing countries. Moreover, the Internet, as Coleman and

Blumler indicate, has a great potential in solving problems of contemporary democracy. Thus, the authors' recommendation in establishing an independent government-funded agency along with creating civic commons is remarkable. However, this recommendation may be realized only for well-established democracies where the state and its political institutions are well-functioned and have capacities to deal with demands or problems raised by variety groups of people. In a society where democracy is new, a preparation stage for promoting an effective e-democracy such as by establishing political institutions that are properly designed, trustworthy, and efficacious as well as empowering pluralistic civil society would be required. Overloading active political participation to young democracies does not spontaneously bring advancement and consolidation to societies; indeed, it may even harm young democracies. Apart from these weaknesses, this well-written book is an important contribution to e-democracy, political communication, and policy literature.

**Mark A. R. Kleiman, *When Brute Force Fails. How to have Less Crime and Less Punishment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).**

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With a rate of about 1 percent incarceration per capita (i.e. the highest in the world) and damage from crime reaching 10 percent of GDP, the US allocates large budget resources to tackle this issue and faces serious deadlocks in the crime control domain. Starting from these facts, Mark Kleiman's "*When Brute Force Fails*" raises awareness of the need to alleviate both the damages caused by crime and the burden that its control exercises on taxpayers. The analysis is based on the US experiences with crime and crime control, and that is neither a disadvantage, nor a weakness, but an almost exhaustive presentation of the evolution of crime rate, incarceration and public costs.

Kleiman organizes his paper in eleven chapters, firstly explaining why the present crime control strategy (building more prisons) became inefficient and demonstrating the need for rethinking it. He continues with presenting crime-swerving alternatives, here including probation and parole, or drug and gun control. The policy expert reserves one chapter for reviewing potential drawbacks in the implementation of the alternative strategies and the last one for revising every policy proposed, with supplementary details.

He promotes the idea that the "zero tolerance" credo is obsolete, instead introducing alternative measures whose efficiency is shown with rational arguments and concrete examples. The aftermath of the severe punishment policy does nothing but incapacitate the criminals. However, resources are scarce and crime continues to take place. Given that for offenders the impact of incarceration is not proportionate with the time in prison, Kleiman shows that swiftness and certainty of punishment successfully replace severity, especially in enforced conditions of probation and parole. Also, communicating the punishment to the potential recidivist offender proved to be an effective crime control strategy, as he can acknowledge the risks he is subjected to and can make an informed choice of whether or not to abide the law.

Such components contribute to cheaper security. Moreover, collaboration between institutions plays an essential role: as soon as education, public health and social care move beyond their initial objective and take measures to prevent crime, they could diminish crime rate. The education sector could contribute to curbing juvenile crime by changing schooling hours, as most offenses take place during afterschool hours while pupils are not under their parents' surveillance; or introducing bullying prevention as a performance indicator for school management. Also, public health institutions should be concerned with raising awareness upon the dangers of becoming a member of a gang, using drugs or guns. Furthermore, drug law enforcement can influence the crime rate, both keeping potential offenders' minds

lucid and reducing violence in the drug dealing process. A better gun control law should primarily focus on reducing access to firearms for gun-ineligible persons; moreover, accent should be put on curbing gun trafficking through intensive crime-gun tracing and enforcement against offenders. Environmental focus can contribute to crime control, in such respect, Kleiman is highlighting the influence lead exposure has on criminal behavior.

*"When Brute Force Fails"* is a combination of rational choice and empirical approaches, becoming an enjoyable reading and a sustainable public policy initiative for three interconnected reasons. First, Kleiman explains through rational choice calculations how a person chooses to abide by or break the law. One might object that people rarely use rationality when making choices. However, by simulating offenses and limited-resource actions similar to the crime control reality (in the chapter called "Tipping, Dynamic Concentration, and the Logic of Deterrence"), Kleiman pinpoints the essential details of the broader picture: high offense rates and scarce resources and the need for a mechanism to efficiently curb crime.

Every suggested policy is motivated both by explaining the status quo urging for it and the consequences upon the offenders and society. The book depicts low resource-consuming strategies that brought almost miraculous results, and these strategies could and should be extended at a wider, maybe national level. One successful example is the Hawaii's Opportunity Probation with Enforcement (H.O.P.E.), which combined enforced conditions of probation, close monitoring and certain and swift punishment for noncompliant probationers. The program involved the corroborated work of probation officers, judges, prosecutors and lawyers, ending with an impressive curb in probationers' drug use.

An eloquent chapter is "What Could Go Wrong?", where Kleiman foresees potential hindrances and drawbacks of the policies he proceeds, like misapplications of dynamic concentration, if the problem is not the incapacity to punish, but crime detection, or differences of mission of institutions that should have concerted

work for crime control. He also highlights that some aspects of the policies should be subject to test and evaluation before they are implemented wider: presumably, the HOPE program will not work exactly with crack probationers in Washington just as it did in Hawaii. The book is aimed at sociologists, public policy scholars or crime control analysts, but also civic-active people who are interested in what should be done to ensure a safer environment.

One possible weakness of the book is that Kleiman fails to consider the position of victims. His arguments take into account both safety of tax payers and a better spending of their money. However, the emotional aspect is left uncovered. There are people willing to see their aggressors severely punished and this may be one reason why the US have a 15 percent lower crime rate than in 1974 and an incarceration rate four times as high. The book does not tackle the problem of extremely severe crimes, but, though they are not victims of grave crimes, burglary victims, for example, might not feel comfortable with the idea of their violators' probation, no matter how attentively scrutinized they are during the program.

What makes the book worthy is the fact that Kleiman remains tenaciously realistic. The public policy expert is conscious that crime will not disappear. Therefore, he offers some examples of how consequences of drug dealing, for instance, can be diminished for those who are not involved. Moreover, he acknowledges the fact that some of his policy proposals might be flawed; but even if they did, the mere demarche of analyzing crime from many vantage points (the public costs for incarceration, the private costs of victims, the rational choice perspective of complying or offending the law) and suggesting instruments from different fields to counteract the issue remains innovative and worth considering it for further research.

It would be a pity if Kleiman's remained just an impressive scholarly work. Everywhere resources are scarce and must be allocated efficiently to solve essential issues, like the safety of citizens. A primary responsibility of the state is to ensure the security of its citizen, and thus, crime control is a matter of both

legitimacy and proven efficiency of a state. It might take time to test, implement and evaluate the policy proposals and even more time to recognize the results across the US borders. Apart from time, implementing strategies that presume inter-institutional collaboration necessitate some financial cost. However, these can rather be seen as an investment, and in the long run, these financial costs will prove lower than continuing to build prisons. Better crime control reduces the financial and psychological damages produced by crime. The advantages of crime control policy target both public and private interests and cement the trust of citizens in their state.

**Emilian Kavalski (ed.), *Stable Outside, Fragile Inside? Post-Soviet Statehood in Central Asia* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010).**

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*Stable Outside, Fragile Inside* is one of the newest books in search of the distinctive development, erratic trends and widely perceived failure of Central Asian republics to make a successful transition to democracy after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The volume seeks to explain the region's specific trajectory to independent statehood, focusing on processes of socialization with competing external norms, emanating not only the main protagonists of the Cold War, Russia and US, but also an increasingly influential EU, a myriad of international organizations and European countries, as well as regional powers such as Turkey, China, Iran, and Pakistan. At the same time, the book draws attention to the specific domestic context of awkward statehood of Central Asian polities – a set of authority structures and state society relations as well as unpredictable international behavior – which makes it difficult for the conventional frameworks to capture the current state of affairs. Opting for a flexible and comprehensive analysis of practices of statehood, the analysis claims to go beyond mainstream understanding of

compliance and delve into intricate processes of 'localization', which unfold at the intersection of local conditions and the larger world system (p.8).

The introductory chapter outlines the analytical approach of the book and clarifies the concepts used. The core of the volume is then divided in two parts. The first part reviews the main assumptions and the relevance of dominant analytical approaches used to understand post-soviet state making. The second part investigates the individual experiences of state making in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The empirical analysis although varying in approach and methodology, is seemingly charted around a similar framework of localization. This combination of theoretical reflection and empirical research arguably distinguishes the book from most research, which claims to make an empirical contribution to the study of the region.

While the effort to engage with the model of localization while also reconsidering various approaches to transformation is commendable, the actual analysis is not always up to the objectives of the book to offer a much-needed theoretical reflection and elicit general patterns of state building. One of the main obstacles of the book to engage with theory in a meaningful way is the very fuzzy conceptualization of localization. The introductory chapter, which outlines the broader frame of analysis includes merely a short review on socialization and the more specific term of localization as domestication of international standards. The three page elaboration of the concepts is based on selective sources, which reflect neither a comprehensive understanding nor an adequate map of the broad literature on socialization.

The conceptualization overlooks most research on post-communist countries, which have become a rich laboratory for different schools of socialization research. More problematically, the book fails to operationalize the mechanisms through which localization might work. Although repeating that it subscribes to research, which seeks to uncover domestication of external

norms, the book has a void when it comes to specify the range of domestic factors or contexts which enable transmission of external norms. At times 'local cultural values' are posited as a crucial domestic factor that in the Central Asian context provides for indigenous structures of adaptation, namely the informal system, clan networking and structures of patronage (p. 21). Yet, the book insists that one "should desist the temptation to dismiss such networks as backward and counter productive to the logics of socialization" (p.22) leaving the reader wondering when and under what conditions these domestic values are supportive or counterproductive to emulation of external norms. Indeed, the unnecessary complicated language of the chapter does not help to elucidate what are the domestic conduits of socialization advocated here.

The book's reflections on different approaches to statehood – although an appreciated effort to cross disciplinary boundaries – does not assist to clarify the lacunas of the theoretical framework. Instead, the parallel elaboration of various approaches leaves the reader with as many frames as questions. Moreover, not all the theoretical frames are evenly developed in terms of both the relevance of their assumptions and applicability in Central Asia. The well organized invocation of democratization literature offers sound explanations of region's anomaly, arguing that it lacks most structural preconditions as well as the kind of agency apt to domestic change. The elaboration of the "clan perspective" extends the problematic role of historical factors by explaining the persistence of historically shaped clan formations as peoples' strategies to engage with politics in everyday life. The next chapter elaborates on international political economy to explain states' strategies of integrating in the global system. The last analytical chapter on post-colonialism outlines a new percouse into the study of Central Asia, but it is more of an apology for using related concepts rather than actually using it in the post-Soviet context. Indeed, more often than not the concepts and assumptions outlined by different approaches hardly speak to each other as well as to the main frame of localization, loosening the conceptual thread of the book and it usage as a frame for empirical analysis.

The empirical part, which draws on specific studies of statehood, is the most appealing section to the extent it brings rich insights into the intricate process of post-soviet state building while documenting and developing the common discrepancy between external norms and their localization in particular domestic environments. The case studies bring ample evidence that Central Asian polities are subject to alternative external norms and forms of intervention, which are not always beneficial to democratic state/building. In addition, the case studies bring similar evidence on some sort of selective flirtation with external norms, as relevant domestic actors pick and choose what is deemed beneficial for their short term political interests. The lack of social pressure and civil movements across the region has enabled strong presidents and political majorities of the day to use political clout at the benefit of their narrow own grouping rather than domestic progress at large.

The empirical analysis also discredits most countries' search of 'own models of democracy' and rhetorical adoption to country specific conditions as an apology for different forms of authoritarianism. Altogether evidence from individual countries emphasizes the duality of political life, whereas informality is often more important than formality. Yet, the loose theoretical framework does not suffice to compare and streamline the individual processes, obstacles and recorded progress, thus reducing the possibility to generalize empirical findings from the region. The book offers limited prospects of generalizations also because different cases bring different and not easily comparable forms of evidence ranging from the most general systemic level of regime change to the meso level of institutional transformation and micro level of behavioral adaptation.

Overall, the book offers a summary of the "state of art" on Central Asian developments. Despite the lack of a common conceptual framework and the thin theoretical analysis, the empirical analysis offered in the book will be appealing to scholars working on political transformation in the region. It should be an informative complementary reader for the graduate level student,

but also policy makers interested in the anomalies of Central Asian post-communist statehood.

**William J. Hausman, Peter Hertner and Mira Wilkins, *Global Electrification. Multinational Enterprise and International Finance in the History of Light and Power 1878-2007* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).**

Simone Selva  
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*Global Electrification* pulls together a cohort of leading experts in the fields of industrial and financial history of power and light enterprises to offer a global history of electric utility companies since the early steps in the last quarter of the nineteenth century through the late twentieth century from the vantage point of international business history and transnational financial history. The authors do investigate the early beginnings and evolution of the electric utility industry in the background of both the rise to globalism of multinational corporations and the worldwide spread of international investments to crisscross private-sector activities and government-run initiatives, national and transnational concerns and capital flows. They adopt a two-fold research perspective: foreign portfolio investments and foreign direct investments are brought into focus alongside to pinpoint the changing balance between the level of internationalization and the degree of domestication – to borrow from the book's vocabulary – featuring the history of the electricity industry since the early technological innovations (chapter 1), down into the recent attempts over the last twenty years to revive the role of multinational corporations after half a century trend toward either private-sector or state-owned national control (chapter 7).

According to the authors, this domestication pattern spanned since WWII through the 1970s recession years, following a crucial five-decade period when the light and power industry grew out of rising international flows in capital and industrial investments. The basic argument underlying this broad interpretation of the early decades is that the electric utility industry did require a high

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level of capital intensive investments to turn the early technological discoveries into the electricity generating service sector. In part 1, after reviewing the early technical discoveries (pp. 6 ff.), Hausman, Hertner and Wilkins link this capital intensity driven internationalization to the birth and ascendancy of the modern city. They insist on the role of urbanization and modern system of communications in driving up consumers' demand for electricity. Both foreign direct investments leading to the setting up of foreign owned enterprises, and the world wide diffusion of foreign portfolio investments carried out by financial intermediaries and private-sector multinationals, did support key capital-intensive investments, mostly, but far from only, in the West European industrializing countries. At the turn of the Twentieth century the British economy had already taken a lead in serving either as a creditor or as a direct investor in foreign countries, followed by the American, Swiss, Dutch and German multinationals. By 1914 the West European, Russian and Mexican electricity companies were extensively foreign owned or controlled (chapter 3).

During the 1920s, this internationalization pattern began to fall apart with significant advance of government-run activities in Russia, and the rising role of the Swiss and German holding companies. Notwithstanding this trend, through the 1929 crisis foreign direct investments and portfolio investments continued to play a role. *Global electrification* figures out the 1930s world economic crisis as the key watershed toward the following domestication pattern. Between 1929 and 1931 the European (Swiss and German) holding companies did much business out of the down fall of the American stock markets and purchased stocks and bonds on the cheap, whereas transatlantic German-American partnership were established. Shortly after 1931 a record-setting series of nationalizations and private sector acquisitions in the new authoritarian European regimes and through the Tennessee Valley Authority in the US (chapter 5) drove up this turn toward domestication. During WWII the war industry-related electricity requirements reinforced the 1930s' new background of trade protectionism and autarchy, whereas

the post WWII era marked a step forward in this direction with scores of government-run initiatives (chapter 6).

Wilkins, Hausman and Hertner provide us with a comprehensive account of what they regard as the rise and fall of multinational corporations and international finance in the electric utility industry. Their argument is tidy and the reconstruction well-crafted in details, but far from being too much a technical one. Therefore, the book is worth reading both by specialists as a reference work for further research, and by a broader public with only basic knowledge of the electrical industry history.

In particular, some eye-opening issues raised are worth noting. The internationalization process of the early period are reconstructed with precision and recounts - through case studies such as the Mexican experience - how on the one side international financial and company ownerships merging across different countries, on the other the early efforts to bring this service industry under national control, strove hard to take the lead by the early twentieth century. Even more convincing are the paragraphs devoted to the turning point of the 1930s: the rise of totalitarian regimes swept away the early attempts to set up a continent wide electricity grid, but the degree of internationalization of multinational corporations operating on the European market was so far ahead by that time that the electricity companies could quit the European markets before any Third Reich takeover.

Besides, the following rise of national controls first in the US and later on all over Europe was the key to redress the balance between a steady rising electricity demand on consumer markets and a supply side restrained by the early 1930s' economic downturn.

Though it is worthwhile, the book includes some missing elements and misleading interpretations due to the definition of utility company assumed. The authors maintain that a steady feature of this service sector be its need to raise money abroad to fund basic high added value investments, but that its involvement

in international trade was rather limited. When they state that during the full-blown period of internationalization to 1929 “only a handful of countries imported or exported more than a small fraction of the electricity produced”, whereas “capital flowed across borders a lot more freely than did electricity” (p. 30), they assume that this industry stretch from electrical generation to service distribution.

This prevents them from offering a balanced interpretation of both the WWII years and the post war decades. As other recent scholarly reconstructions stressed<sup>4</sup>, if we consider this service industry as a transformer of the energy of fuels into a flow of light and power, we find the post WWII era as the time period when its internationalization get momentum, with peaking import-export figures. This would help fill a misleading problem arising out of the post war domestication pattern, that to say why did the already globalised electricity sector withdrew from international business through decades featuring currency convertibility, multilateral trade agreements, rising transnational flows in capital goods and raw material. Similarly, the worldwide rise in national requirements for electricity during WWII was coupled with an unprecedented increase in primary energy imports to feed peaking industrial and service demand and consumption of electricity. This will also help figure out to what extent in the long run did foreign investments relate not only to internal capital investments but also to hard currency requirements to finance basic fuel imports essential to expand electricity production.

Authored by a pool of specialists in international business history, *Global Electrification* offers an original, quite comprehensive and readable account of the interweaving between the internationalization of finance and the struggle to keep the

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4 See for example Martin Chick, *Electricity and Energy Policy in Britain, France and the United States since 1945*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, 2007; Roger Fouquet, *Heat, Power and Light. Revolutions in energy Services*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, 2008. Vaclav Smil, *Energy Transitions. History, Requirements, Prospects*, ABC-CLIO, Santa Barbara (CA) 2010.

electricity sector under national control throughout a over a century long history. Notwithstanding some misleading interpretations it is worthwhile for readers and researchers with interests in either international economic history or the economic role of the nation state worldwide.

**Vassilis Nitsiakos, *On the Border. Transborder Mobility, Ethnic Groups and Boundaries along the Albanian-Greek Frontier* (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2010).**

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Vassilis Nitsiakos' book is part of the Balkan Border Crossings' series, a larger research project concerning the evolution of the Greek and Albanian minorities after the fall of Communism in the 1990's and this volume focuses more on the Albanians living next to the border with Greece.

*On the Border* is about the frontier populations sharing one common element: the border itself. The nature and character of the Albanian-Greek border is the topic of this book, with Nitsiakos focusing on the "secret" doors of the Albanian identities around that area. It is a travel diary, kept while visiting some border areas between Albania and Greece, a diary marvelously combining narratives of people, places and facts with a soft analysis of the sociological and anthropological issues that characterize the area.

What is Nitsiakos actually doing? He documents one-sided transborder migration from Albania to Greece in the light of the changes occurring after the brutal fall of Communism in Albania. His case studies are numerous, since every stop along the border holds a particular case and every town provides new data and issues to reveal and analyze. The reasons behind the choice of these cases are not explained – the author relies on the continuity argument, as the present book is part of a larger research in the area, and thus he uses his previous local

connections as case studies. There are few new case studies, and this is only by accident. For instance, the chapter about the wedding in Petran is a new case study – his local connection takes Nitsiakos to the wedding. Such unplanned events in the narrative are important in creating a certain flavor and make it more accurate.

The author operates with several key words: border, migration, transnational, transmigrant and internal migration. These concepts are scrutinized both from an academic perspective but also from a local perspective. Everything is filtered through the case of the border movements from Albania to Greece. There are three dimensions of the border: juridical, natural and socio-cultural. Each of the above concepts fits one of these dimensions, as Nitsiakos focuses especially on the concept and image of the border zone. The region is further framed in the larger historical and geographical context and towards the end of the analysis; Nitsiakos brings into discussion even the impact that globalization as a process has on the migration phenomenon. Migration is an issue inevitably connected with the realities of the nation state. However, Nitsiakos filters these concepts through the lenses of the globalized world, where the nation state relinquishes its dominant role and people are driven more and more towards new forms of collective and individual identification. In this regard, the construction of ethnic identity depends more on the awareness of difference induced by the border.

The purpose of the book is to investigate transborder mobility/migration in the case of Albania and Greece after the fall of communism, when the borderline between the two countries became a formality. There are no impediments in crossing it, and Albanians do it frequently, when they go to work in Greece and eventually settle there. The investigated boundary – the border line has not only a geographical dimension but also a symbolic one. The fall of the material border in the 1990s led to the rise of a symbolic one. People are free to come and go, but it is the way they identify themselves in the course of this movement that is problematic. The cultural and spiritual dimensions are considerable landmarks in Nitsiakos' analysis. When defining a

people it is highly important to see how he views himself and how the others regard it. For instance, Albanian immigrants call themselves Northern Epirotes when they are in Greece, hoping that the identification of the term with Greekness will facilitate their reception and improve their treatment in Greece.

Although the book could be considered a travel diary the target readers for Nitsiakos' book are people with a solid background in the analysis of migration phenomena and anthropology. *On the Border* is structured in 16 chapters preceded by a Prologue and an Introduction. Each chapter has several sub-chapters, many of them with one-word titles referring either to places or people. Except for the Introduction and the Epilogue in which the theoretical aspects are presented and demonstrated, the chapters of the book rarely mention theories or concepts. These chapters are used as the playground to question and evaluate the concepts of border, migration, transnationalism etc. The author is constantly making references to specific concepts and even if the narration seems at times to be similar to a mere story of local customs it is in fact imbued with data and analysis ensues. Bearing in mind the fact that the book is part of a larger series, the target public should definitely be a specialized one: academics and trained personnel. A non-specialized reader would find it difficult to navigate through the sociological and anthropological concepts from the beginning of the book and to follow their implementation in the chapters.

Methodologically, the author uses the ethnographic narrative in order to deliver the intended message. The border line between Albania and Greece is the center stage actor of the book. The author uses lots of pictures to portray the local realities, making it look like an album. He should have also put along a map so that the reader could follow the itinerary accurately. The work is in fact a research diary with data collected in several years of traveling in the area. These data are intertwined with the personal analysis and questioning, which makes the effort a rather innovative and interesting one.

The main advantage of the book resides in the fact that it

contains a lot of useful information collected from primary sources. However, the raw collected data is constantly processed in order to be able to explain some of the concepts that Nitsiakos chose to analyze in this work. Another point in favor of the academic utility is that fact that every aspect is viewed critically, although Nitsiakos manifests personal attachment to the topic and the area of investigation due to the past research they share. However, all pieces of information are presented unembellished, allowing the reader to draw its own conclusions. This effort is also supported by the pictures attached, mostly black and white, depicting the cruel reality of the border area between the two countries. A main drawback of the book is the rather pedantic style of the Introduction and Epilogue, abounding with a specialized vocabulary, which would be inaccessible to most readers. What is more, Nitsiakos' intention of rounding-up the book with the help of the technical Epilogue is not very satisfactory as the reader would have expected a more personal view on the topic, a more private conclusion, since throughout the book the author appears to be highly involved in the conducted research.

Taking everything into consideration, the book is well-written as it balances the theoretical aspects with lots of examples. The ideas are fluent and they derive naturally from the case studies. The choice of mixing the diary retrospective and the anthropological approach was an inspired one, as it helps conveying the aim and message of the book in a powerful and noteworthy manner.

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