

**Benson, Peter. 2011. *Tobacco capitalism: growers, migrant workers, and the changing face of a global industry*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. 336 pp. Pb.: \$27.95. ISBN 9780691149202.**

This very ambitious book on tobacco production in North Carolina is an indication of a paradigm shift in the US anthropological research on commodities from political economic approaches such as those of Sidney Mintz and Eric Wolf to poststructuralist concerns under the influence of Michel Foucault and, more recently, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. In particular, Foucault's analyses of governmentality and biopolitics have become dominant theoretical scaffolding for the understanding of the production, circulation and the consumption of commodities in the current neoliberal age. Tobacco itself represents an ideal commodity for a case study of contemporary biopolitics given that in recent decades smoking has been at the centre of the struggle between governments, politicians, companies, health activists and consumers around issues of human health and wellbeing.

Benson advocates a much-needed analytical move from the current dominant focus on tobacco consumption to the study of the supply-side. This move has political and ethical benefits, as Benson forcefully argues, since it re-socialises health risks and rejects their individualisation – the dominant approach in US and European anti-smoking regulations. One of the strong points of the book is that it combines a politically engaged approach with a detailed historical and ethnographical study of tobacco-growing in North Carolina.

How could one be a grower of such a noxious plant and at the same time be proud of one's work ethic and knowledge in producing it? While being uncompromisingly critical and denunciatory about smoking's disastrous effects on health, the author skilfully weaves a complex narrative around this major paradox in the lives of US tobacco growers. To do so, he deploys a sophisticated theoretical framework, inspired by M. Foucault and the critical medical anthropology school. In the introduction, Benson develops the concept of 'plighted citizenship' in

order to analyse the dominant self-representation of tobacco growers as being dutiful fathers and husbands, model breadwinners and ideal citizens contributing to national prosperity, while at the same time feeling unjustly threatened by anti-smoking public campaigns.

The reverse of the medal of this defensive political view is carefully exposed by Benson in several chapters. He shows how growers' cultural ideology of worth and independence originated in the colonial slave-based society of Appalachia and has perpetuated various forms of racial stereotyping and exclusion up to the present (Chapter 2). In the current neoliberal age, various forms of structural violence affect undocumented Latino migrant workers – the bulk of the workforce in the tobacco fields. In Chapter 5, Benson presents a phenomenological analysis of exclusion and stigmatisation of farm workers based on the ideas of E. Levinas, G. Deleuze, F. Guattari and M. Taussig.

In Benson's account, white tobacco farmers justify the illegal employment of undocumented workers by blaming the 'sorry' or 'not good' fellow Americans, mainly Blacks. 'Sorry' is a loaded term in North Carolina, evoking idleness, failure, worthlessness, a state of being 'not good'. Benson traces back to the protestant work ethics of the early colonists the origins of this encompassing local ideology regarding innate character and moral responsibilities (Chapter 6).

Several chapters discuss how the government, corporations and politicians have shaped the US public policies concerning tobacco in the last three decades. While smoking is the main preventable cause of disease and death in the USA and worldwide, companies and governments have adopted bio-political strategies of 'enhancing "probabilities of life"' (p. 42), targeting the consumers rather than the producers. Benson does not spare harsh words in denouncing corporate strategies aimed at concealing health risks to consumers (by promoting an image of safer tobacco), and at reinforcing the false belief of producers that they are the innocent victims of liberal anti-smoking campaigns. In Chapter 1, he presents a case study of how Philip Morris Inc. counteracted the social and political critique around the health risks of

smoking by promoting an image of corporate social responsibility through the use of health concerns to promote 'safer' products, to build alliances with tobacco growers and politicians, and to reduce legal liabilities.

However shrewd corporations might be in re-fashioning their image, they would not achieve so much without political manoeuvring and governmental complicity. In Chapter 3, Benson weaves a denunciatory report of the collusion between tobacco corporations and politicians in lobbying and influencing policy-making in Washington. Benson does not refrain from labelling as 'political monsters' (p. 131) congressmen like Jesse Helms and Richard Burr who pushed for tobacco corporate-friendly policies during the Reagan administration and after.

Corporations have strategically used tobacco farmers' sense of pride to foster their loyalty and support, while at the same time pushing for the liberalisation of the tobacco market and increasing leaf imports from developing countries. With a decline in the US tobacco economy, talk about agrarian plight was skilfully used by politicians and companies alike in order to influence tobacco policies in Washington. Frightened by economic decline, misled by corporation and media reports, the majority of tobacco growers backed the complete liberalisation of tobacco production that happened with the Tobacco Buyout Bill of 2004. This meant the end of the seven-decade-long governmental control of tobacco production, but made growers become dependent solely on companies for their livelihoods.

The book contains an intriguing blind spot. On the one hand, Benson goes a long way in acknowledging the moral and cultural value of tobacco for tobacco growers, proposing that 'what may seem unethical to many outsiders is completely normal, if not obligatory, on a local level' (p. 266). Tobacco corporations, on the other hand, are portrayed as diabolical for the harm they produce, but nothing is said about the workers, employees and managers who may share the same values and appreciation for tobacco as the growers themselves. Why this analytical shift? This dilemma should be openly acknowledged if one is to pursue an anthropology of corporations of which Benson is also a proponent (Benson and Kirsch 2010). As the research on governmentality has helped in deconstructing reified notions of the 'state', one needs to apply the same methodological labour to the category of the 'corporation'. Criticisms notwithstanding, this book constitutes

a significant contribution to the field of the anthropology of (corporate) capitalism and will definitely appeal to a broader readership in other social sciences, anti-smoking activists and possibly even to corporate employees.

## Reference

Benson, P. and S. Kirsch 2010. 'Capitalism and the politics of resignation', *Current Anthropology* 51: 459–86.

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**Bielo, James. 2011. *Emerging Evangelicals: faith, modernity and the desire for authenticity*. New York: New York University Press. 256 pp. Pb.: \$25.00. ISBN 9780814789551.**

How Christian subjects and communities form and perform in response to already existing Christianities is an important current theme in the anthropology of Christianity. New Christian identities are frequently born into a world of existing and competing Christian traditions, and develop in dynamic interaction with them. James Bielo's complex and insightful ethnographic analysis of the Emerging Evangelical movement in western Ohio, USA, highlights a growing imperative among younger zealots to set themselves apart from the traditions of conservative Protestantism they have grown up within. In particular these younger evangelicals critique the assumptions of late modern consumer capitalism, and the institutional congregational structure that has come to dominate 20th-century American Christianity.

Bielo's consultants have undergone a deconversion which he likens to that described by Bunyan in *Grace abounding to the chief of sinners*, one based on a moral criticism that revitalises the faith they have inherited. They speak earnestly about wanting to have *authentic* lives, faith, community, relationships, experience, worship, tradition and spirituality.

Bielo highlights a 'missional' commitment as a key feature of the Emerging Evangelical consciousness. Influenced by the Anglican missionary Leslie Newbiggin, Emerging Evangelicals define missional as being a missionary to one's own society. Being missional encompasses ways of speaking, everyday acts of embodiment, the design of institutions and desired aesthetics; or, as many of Bielo's consultants describe it, 'a mindset and a way of living'. They believe that successful evangelising necessitates personalised,

trusting and lasting relational commitments, and that the only way to create and sustain such relationships with those they want to 'reach' is to mimic the acculturating foreign missionary: settle into a locale and learn the intricacies of a place and its people. The practice of 'church planting' is a defining missional activity. This process of starting a new congregational ministry is often not located in traditional church buildings, but within private homes. Rather than programmatic church events, it reaches its congregation through more 'organic' and revitalised forms of witness and worship. Among these forms Bielo foregrounds the rise of a New Monasticism. Emerging Evangelicals attracted to monasticism have used the term 'new monastic' since at least the late 1990s. Many emphasise acts of remembering and practising monasticism in their individual and congregational lives. New monastics do not live in the confines of monasteries, but they regularly practice values and traditions derived from monastic Christianities. Echoing Weber's *innerweltliche Askese*, these new monastics seek to attain a level of spiritual commitment while still participating in the institutions of contemporary life. The testimonies of Bielo's consultants abound with references to 'simplicity', 'discipline', 'contentment' and being 'beholden' to monastic values and traditions in their everyday lives. One couple accepts a vow of 'stability', based on the ancient Rule of St. Benedict, to stay in one place and evangelise.

This integrating of monastic elements is seen by Bielo as an extension of a phenomenon that Emerging Evangelicals define as Ancient-Future – reclaiming a lost sense of authenticity in their faith by connecting with church history. Ancient-Future worship is not simply a collection of practices, it is also a means of subject formation. Ancient-Future advocates challenge the singular importance afforded to the word within Protestantism, as reflected in the overarching importance of the sermon as the focus of worship. They insist that part of America's generational shift entails a rethinking of this posture toward language and the kinds of worship it encourages. In this aspect, as in many others, the Emerging Evangelical movement reflects its grounding in the conditions of both modernity and late modernity.

This is an engrossing and powerfully observed ethnography with much richness of detail. Bielo is not blind to the racial and sexual contradictions that this largely white, middle-class movement negotiates; a 'planting' pastor wonders if his pick-up truck is too 'redneck' for the unsuspecting black congregation he wishes to attract; the anxious wife of another pastor who 'do[es]n't

want [his] kids living in a perfect suburban shell ... want [s] them to be realistic about the brokenness in the world' (p. 171) agonises for the safety of her children after their decision to church plant in a dangerous neighbourhood. An unintentionally hilarious vignette describes the hyper-masculinity pervading a seminar where muscular enthusiasts 'bump fists together; execute an intensely firm handshake concluded with a decisive pump of the wrist; a quick hug punctuated by loud, thudding open-handed pats on the back. Deep voices made frequent use of "dude" and "man"' (p. 158). In this ethnography Bielo has caught the essence of an intriguing and important variant of postmodern Christianity as it emerges.

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**Chen, Carolyn and Russell Jeung. 2012. *Sustaining faith traditions. Race, ethnicity, and religion among the Latino and Asian American second generation*. New York: New York University Press. 280 pp. Pb.: \$80.00. ISBN 978-0-8147-1736-3.**

Will Herberg proposed half a century ago that the commitment to national and ethnic heritage will decrease over time in the USA for second-generation migrants, while religion will become 'the differentiating element and the context of self-identification and social location' (Herberg 1955: 23). While taking into account the various ways in which racial, ethnic and religious aspects of migrant identification are coming to the fore, the volume engages with the thesis of Herberg and proposes a typology of cases for the way race, religion and ethnicity become relevant for second-generation Latino and Asian migrants. Conceptualising identification as a process of negotiation between the factors mentioned above, the editors identify religious primacy, racialised religion, ethnoreligious hybridisation and 'familistic traditioning' as main possibilities of balancing.

This fourfold typology also provides for the inner structure of the book. The first part, which discusses most closely Herberg's model, deals with individuals and groups who have a stronger identification with religion than with ethnicity or race. Chapter 2 discusses Latino evangelicals, Chapter 3 compares attitudes towards religion between South Asian Muslim women and Latino Catholic women and Chapter 4 explores intermarriage between Asian Americans and Jews.

Racialised religion is discussed in Chapter 5, which presents a trend towards pan-ethnic religious mobilisation across several Latino congregations while Chapter 6 links inequality, criminality and religious belonging in Chicano faith-based organisations. As institutional racism promotes racial segregation and class divisions prove to be more resilient than expected, many migrants fall back on their religious and racial communities.

Ethnoreligious hybridisation is discussed in Chapter 7 with the example of Korean American Protestant insularity, in Chapter 8, which shows how Filipino Catholicism reinforces Filipino values and customs and in Chapter 9, which points out how different group sensibilities are catered for by Korean American spirituality.

Familistic traditioning, where religion helps create ethnic and racial enclaves rather than assisting assimilation, stands the furthest from Herberg's ideas. The last three chapters discuss the case of Chinese Americans centred on family traditions, Catholic and Buddhist Vietnamese Americans and the connection between Hinduism and Indianness among second-generation Indian Americans.

However, the typologies presented above are not exclusive because most of the groups explored 'display a range of combinations of religious, racial and ethnic identities' (p. 19), as the editors recognise. One might rightly wonder why the authors have chosen to revisit Will Herberg's thesis on religion and ethnicity while they already prove from the outset that all conditions present in the USA 50 years ago have considerable altered since then. Indeed, the editors note three important factors that changed since Herberg's times: the importance of race increased along with the changing racial composition and economic opportunities of migrants in the USA, while the political emphasis on multiculturalism emerged along with a discourse valuing ethnic and racial difference. Finally, changes have taken place in the religious landscape of the USA. All these factors contribute to a much more complex process of identification among second-generation Latino and Asian migrants, as this volume portrays in a detailed manner. A theoretical framework using intersectionality as a starting point would have done more justice to the vivid ethnographic data and the nuanced intertwinings between the categories of inquiry than a typology using Herberg's thesis as a starting point. Nevertheless, the volume presents in rich empirical detail the way religion remains important in many different ways for Latino

and Asian second-generation migrants in the USA. *Sustaining faith traditions* allows us a glimpse into the ways in which the needs of migrant groups change over time and the role religion can play in their life, thus reaffirming its importance. Although the cases discussed remain anchored in the context of the USA, this book will also be an interesting read for scholars looking at the intersection of religion and migration across the globe.

## Reference

Herberg, W. 1955. *Protestant, Catholic, Jew: an essay in American religious sociology*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

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**Christelow, Allan. 2012. *Algerians without borders: the making of a global frontier society*. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida. 256 pp. Hb.: \$74.95. ISBN 978-0-8130-3755-4.**

At the heart of *Algerians without borders* is an effort to place Algeria in the global context, to prevent what Allan Christelow considers the tendency to treat Algeria marginally, as 'not fully part of any distinct area' (p. 4). In order to re-contextualise Algeria's transnational history and potentiality as a partner for diplomacy, the author begins his examination in 1775, when the last battle was won at Algiers against the Spanish – the point when in the author's view Algeria emerged as an important independent player on the world political stage – and the work spans the two centuries between then and the present.

Christelow avoids the dominant method of sifting through state documents and treaties, and investigates his topic through the lives of individuals, examining and analysing their journals, letters of negotiation and dialogues. The author explicitly mentions the influence of Arabic-language biographies (notably Ahmad Tarfiq al-Madani and Ahmad Sharif al-Zahhar), which were clearly the inspiration for this methodology. However, Christelow situates individual biographies within the wider framework of a 'public sphere' (borrowed from Jürgen Habermas) in an attempt to unlock the potential for diplomatic relations at the level of civil society that may not be apparent or recognisable at the state level. Furthermore the author accepts the argument that 'the most fruitful communications might take place at the margins of the great empires, not at their

center' (p. 6). Thus, while *Algerians without borders* is ostensibly a work concerning Algeria's political interconnectedness with the international world via the voices from the public sphere, it is additionally, and more broadly, a commentary on the possibilities that were (and still remain) available for the wider region.

Running in chronological order, the book's five chapters explore different historical attempts at negotiation and diplomacy and seek to explain the subsequent failures. Opening with the Spanish defeat at Algiers in 1775, Chapter 1 focuses on endeavours to establish a new diplomatic language following the entry of new political players in the Algerian scene – notably America, Britain and France.

The following chapter explores Algeria's initial relations with France, in addition to internal debates regarding migration from *kafir* rule to neighbouring Islamic territories and explores the negotiations, intellectual exchanges and appeals made to both the colonial powers and Ottoman actors.

The short period between 1911 and 1920 is covered in Chapter 3 and outlines the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, which consequently put an end to the possibility of migration from non-Islamic rule discussed in the previous chapter. Christelow interestingly establishes links between the impossibility of *hijra* (Islamic migration) to the embryonic emergence of pan-Islamism and national sentiments.

The period prior to Algerian independence restricted Algerian movement and travel to either 'trans-Mediterranean France' or study in France itself. Chapter 4 focuses on French education and its influence on resistance to the separation of religion and state and the rise of Islam in communal activity. Combined, these resulted in an internal dialogue between Christians and Muslims within Algerian society, but also with Muslims elsewhere in the Middle East, especially in the wake of the execution of Sayyid Qutb in Egypt.

Finally, Algeria and the Algerian diaspora are examined in the context of the global age of interdependent trade, economics and communications. Both the positive and negative aspects of this tumultuous period are explored, particularly in light of failed diplomatic attempts during the years of the Algerian crisis, but the work concludes with an optimistic view of the future.

Christelow has set himself ambitious goals in writing this work, and is a deeply knowledgeable narrator. However, to cover two centuries – and scores of ideas and insights – in a mere 250 pages

is a nearly impossible task, and in this regard *Algeria without borders* unfortunately fails to meet its full potential, suffocated by the sheer mass of information and ideas presented on each page. For the regional specialist, the author's insights are not given enough room to breathe and unfold; for the novice, too much prior knowledge is assumed. Most disappointingly – given the author's own intentions – the rush through so many biographies and discussions does not give Algerians their own voice, but rather reduces it to an unsatisfactory hum. All of these things would be better served by a slower, more expansive, better paced and in the end, just larger, work. I look forward to that.

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Fillitz, Thomas and A. Jamie Saris (eds.) 2012. *Debating authenticity. Concepts of modernity in anthropological perspective*. Oxford: Berghahn Books. X + 247 pp. \$84.00/£53.00. ISBN 9780857454966.

The mutual constitution of genuine and fake, authenticity and artifice, and related semantic pairings is the leitmotif that Thomas Fillitz and A. Jamie Saris rely on in their introduction to *Debating authenticity*. The twelve papers were originally presented in a 2006 Socrates-Erasmus Intensive Programme in Vienna that focused on the concept of authenticity, brought to publication here with some delay. In emphasising this 'productive ambiguity' (p. 1) and coupling it with the trajectory of material or factual authenticity on the one hand and experiential authenticity on the other, the co-editors remain within the established parameters of the literatures on authenticity. They consider the role of authenticity quests in anthropology's history, in the reception thereof in fields from psychoanalysis to art (which they rightly point to as poorly researched; Paul van der Grijp's contribution seeks to begin rectifying this situation) and in the realm of material culture. Here, they rely on Arjun Appadurai and especially Jean-Pierre Warnier whose own contribution in the collection, really more devoted to the construction of traditionality than authenticity, argues for a shift from invented traditions association with nationalism in the 19th century to its association with markets in the late 20th century.

The volume's contributions are divided into four sections: Authenticity and Authenticating, Moral Discourses on Authenticity, Authenticity:

Popular and Academic Discourses and Entangled Spaces of Authenticity. These divisions could have been left out, as facets of the four headings surface in most contributions. Some of the twelve anthropologists contributing to the volume are not averse to removing the concept from anthropological discourse entirely. Rajko Muršič groups authenticity among 'notions that are good for absolutely nothing' and presents strong evidence for why the dichotomising gist of the term is anathema to anthropological inquiry. Other contributors skilfully skirt the task of engaging with authenticity by privileging terminologies and associated semantics more likely to be used within the researched groups or concepts more widely used for anthropological analysis. Andre Gingrich looks at wooden pillars and wall paintings crafted in two Saudi Arabian regions and traces how the significance of the respective art works as felt evidence of local cultural continuity also gives evidence of their different tempi and adjustments to national integration. Judith Okeley also avoids probing a concept that for an understanding of Gypsy and Traveller relations with Gadje is fairly unproductive. Rather, she probes how material objects transformed from Gadje waste into 'unique hand-made objects' to be sold back to Gadje re-articulate age-old boundaries and mutual assumptions of 'culture'. Jorge Grau Rebollo is predominantly interested in what discursive negotiations occur in selecting and promoting cultural excerpts such as 'typically Spanish', operating with the terms reality, refraction and representation to understand the coming about of the typical, which he treats as synonymous with the authentic and characteristic (p. 104).

The abundance of interest in the construction and use of the authentic and invariably also its opposite warrant the occasional updating of the social life of authenticity, in and between societies, and in scholarship. Some of the contributors approach the task of engaging, or as the case might be, of battling with the concept with vigour and offer interesting case studies: e.g. on the production and experience of nature (Lawrence Taylor), on ritual and performance (Inger Sjørslev) or on provenience regimes in African art (Thomas Fillitz). Others take up conundrums inherent to scholarly practice, such as in visual anthropology (Marcus Banks), revisit classic scholarly statements on the concept (A. Jamie Saris) or contribute to the history of the discipline in its use of authenticity as a legitimating concept (Roy Dilley). To debate authenticity only from an

anthropological perspective, as the subtitle of this volume suggests, is a difficult undertaking. The editors see in the contributions a common 'focus on people and their activities in the various cultural settings around the globe, who are reflecting and producing a division between authenticity and its opposite' (p. 21). Some contributions as well as the introduction recur to fields such as moral and political philosophy, literary history and especially art history where authenticity has a long-standing and hard to ignore scholarly history. Lionel Trilling, Marshall Berman and Charles Taylor's works – arguably still the keenest treatments of authenticity – figure prominently in the introduction and thus perhaps signal that new angles on authenticity are hard to find. Trilling was a professor of literature and not, as stated here, a philosopher, Berman's first name starts with M. and not D. as indicated in the bibliography, and it is his somewhat later *All that is solid melts into air* (1982) that is arguably more trenchant for an understanding of authenticity's interrelationship with modernity than his *Politics of authenticity* (1970) referenced here. Such editorial oversight should not detract from the interesting leads into as well as out of authenticity that this volume provides.

## References

- Berman, M. 1970. *The politics of authenticity. Radical individualism and the emergence of modern society*. New York: Atheneum.  
 Berman, M. 1982. *All that is solid melts into air: The experience of modernity*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

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**Follis, Karolina. 2012. *Building Fortress Europe: the Polish–Ukrainian frontier*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press. 288 pp. Hb.: \$69.95/£45.50. ISBN 978-0-8122-4428-1.**

In her book *Building Fortress Europe: the Polish–Ukrainian frontier* Karolina Follis, a US-educated anthropologist, analyses what is often forgotten regarding EU integration: the introduction of the Schengen regime on the external border of what has been qualified as the 'better' Europe. Follis asks how borders, as 'both gateways and enclosures or exceptions, fit into the larger process of the expansion and evolution of the European Union as a novel type of a supranational, ostensibly democratic political community' (p. 7). Her approach acknowledges that

'unbounded space is only possible within borders', thus referring to the expansion of the 'area of freedom, security and justice' (p. 11) with no border controls within the territory of the EU, but with significant strengthening of what has become the external border.

The author uses the concept of 'rebordering', a process that 'unfolds faster than, and to a large extent independently from, the political debate about constitutional treaties, the future of Europe, and the role and place of immigrants within it' (p. 16). As she points out, the '[t]echnical progress advances, yet the normative realm has not caught up' (p. 16). This leads to a 'governance by exclusion' managed by national bureaucracies and the EU through a strict regulation of migration and mobility on the external border. Follis also reminds that the powerful twofold process of rebordering is connected with the notion of civilisation. On the one hand the EU – via the agencies of nation-states – is defining the frontier of civilisation (dividing the West from the rest). On the other hand, the border itself is subject of the 'civilising mission' of EU agencies, since it has to be appropriated according to EU standards by both sides, including that of 'third countries' such as Ukraine.

The book is divided into eight chapters including the conclusion. Following the theoretical chapter, the remaining parts cover issues regarding the civilisational narratives of Europe, the precarious situation of ordinary transnational migrants, surveillance and control strategies, the practices and effects of asylum and citizenship, wider issues of EU neighbourhood and how it is being turned into a buffer zone, and the historical contestation of Polish–Ukrainian border, especially from the perspective of nationalist narratives. In spite of a well-designed set of topics and Follis' pertinent analysis, there are three major concerns with regard to the book that should be discussed in more detail.

The first issue concerns the balance of ethnographic material in particular chapters, some being more ethnographically grounded than others. The analysis of the official side of border management and the EU-sponsored 'civilising process' of border control is one of the strongest, but even there more detailed knowledge of the people subjected to the 'civilising' mission and their strategies – the border guards and custom officers from Poland and Ukraine, their families and communities they live in – would significantly improve Follis' use of Hannah Arendt's paradox of human rights versus territorial sovereignty at

the border (see, for example, p. 137). Other ethnographies focused on the Western 'civilising process' in this region provide a more nuanced discussion of the adjustments of post-socialist state institutions like the military to the new regime (e.g. Červinková 2006).

The second issue comes up in the concluding empirical chapter when discussing the border as 'intertext'. The theme of borders is being presented from the perspective of nationalist narratives of borders' past based on the voices of intellectuals and their works. This part of the analysis is quite thin and ignores two levels that are essential in grasping the process of rebordering. From a macro-perspective it would be important to look at the EU mechanisms of 'neighbourhood policies' as a way of substituting the full EU membership of the so-called 'Eastern partners'. And a micro-perspective could grasp people's own experience of rebordering most often distanced from the perspective of the 'civilising mission' – an indicative exception is a rather limited discussion with the Greek Catholic priest in Lublin (p. 189). The popularity of '*evroremont*' with regard to the reconstruction of former socialist blocks in Western Ukraine, for example, indicates that there are significant ways of 'rebordering' in the everyday life of frontier people in addition to or besides the 'intertextuality' of the border.

The third issue concerns the author's disregard of the role of economy in the process of 'rebordering'. A grasp of the political economy of the European Union as well as the everyday economy at and of the border would significantly enhance the otherwise well-designed concept of 'rebordering'. Given the above-mentioned concerns, one might hesitate to consider this book as the ultimate reading on the topic. However, considering the pertinence of the subject for the anthropology of Eastern Europe to date and political scientists' obsession with Europeanisation via treaties and institutions such as the Eastern Partnership, it is certainly worthwhile to discover what 'building fortress Europe' actually means in this book.

## Reference

Červinková, H. 2006. *Playing soldiers in Bohemia. An ethnography of NATO membership*. Prague: Prague Studies in Sociocultural Anthropology.

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Gupta, Akhil. 2012. *Red tape: bureaucracy, structural violence, and poverty in India*.

Durham, NC: Duke University Press. 384 pp. Pb.: \$26.56. ISBN 978-0822351108.

*Red tape* addresses a contradiction: 'why has a state whose proclaimed motive is to foster development failed to help the large number of people who still live in dire poverty?' (p. 3). Rather than accusing the state of pretence – that the claim to foster development is empty – Gupta's argument is more nuanced. 'The paradox of the violence of poverty in India is that the poor are killed despite their inclusion in projects of national sovereignty and ... democratic politics' (p. 6). Gupta attends to this contradiction through ethnography of bureaucratic action, showing that 'no matter how noble the intentions of programs, and no matter how sincere the officials in charge of them, the overt goal of helping the poor is subverted by the very procedures of the bureaucracy' (p. 23). His argument 'is that structural violence is enacted through the everyday practices of bureaucracies, and one therefore needs to look closely at those everyday practices in order to understand why violence coexists with care and why, paradoxically, it is often found in practices of welfare' (p. 33). Through Foucault and Agamben, Gupta also suggests that the mass death of the poor should not be understood as inevitable, but rather 'as a direct and culpable form of killing made possible through state practices' (p. 5).

Post-introduction, *Red tape* proceeds in three parts: Corruption, Inscription and Governmentality. In 'Corruption', Gupta follows citizens into local-state offices as they seek to register land or access building materials, and come up against practices of bribe-taking and cronyism. He also tracks proliferating discourses of corruption in mass media. Through this material he shows not only how corruption is a mundane process through which the poor are marginalised through inclusion, but also drawing on Gramsci how fractures in 'the state', laid bare by corruption, can be exploited for political action. Gupta ends the section with a focus on circulating narratives of corruption that may or may not reflect actual practices, but *do* reflect people's expectations of the state, as well as their experiences of 'malign neglect' and quotidian affliction (p. 137).

Part two, 'Inscription', is concerned with writing as a modality of structural violence. Neither merely archival nor mnemonic, Gupta argues that 'writing is itself a form of action' constitutive of the state (p. 188). Here, the ethnography follows written genres of inspection and complaint as depictions of structural violence:

citizens register complaints about resource diversion; bureaucrats use inspection to indict other bureaucrats. Perhaps the strongest argument of the section is Gupta's refusal of the facile structural correlation in which illiteracy produces inequality and literacy signals its end. Rather, following Freire, he argues that literacy is not an end in itself, but rather that it 'opens up new possibilities of hegemonic incorporation as much as it does novel avenues of subaltern resistance' (p. 218).

Part three, 'Governmentality', argues for *global governmentality*, an approach 'that acknowledges that transnational linkages in the movement of ideas, material resources, technologies, and personnel are critical to the care of populations' (p. 239). The section traces two development programmes – a classic welfare programme and an archetypal neoliberal project. Conventionally understood, these programmes represent radically different moments in the international circulation of development expertise and its desired outcomes, but Gupta shows that both produce bureaucratic indifference and structural violence. 'There are substantial continuities', he writes, 'in biopolitics and violence across the period that divides neoliberal governance from earlier forms of rule' (p. 272).

Viewed simply, *Red tape* is the next work in Gupta's already-formidable intellectual trajectory. But there is an epistemological rupture here as well – a political urgency that is both stimulating and underdeveloped. Throughout the book, Gupta returns to the idea that both the Indian state and transnational agencies and elites have naturalised the 'unspectacular suffering' (p. 138) that kills the poor on a daily basis. And indeed, he insists that this be theorised as a *culpable* form of killing (p. 5). First, it is not at all clear to me that poverty has slipped beneath the radar. Rather, as Gupta himself argues, the issue is that *despite* high-profile apparatuses of poverty alleviation both in India and transnationally (the Millennium Development Goals come to mind), we are still confronted with persistent, violent failure. It is not lack of attention, then, that produces structural violence, but precisely the arbitrary bureaucratic practices traced in this book, as notable anti-poverty programmes take unanticipated shape on the ground. Where does this leave us with *culpability* then, which suggests accusation and redress? That question – What would culpability look like here? – goes unanswered, left as a methodological quandary: how can the ethnographic and theoretical tools that Gupta uses so forcefully in *Red tape*

begin to address questions of culpability, redress and structural justice?

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**Hetherington, Kregg. 2011. *Guerrilla auditors: the politics of transparency in neoliberal Paraguay*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. 312 pp. Pb. \$23.95. ISBN 978-0-8223-5036-1.**

After more than four decades of authoritarian rule by General Alfredo Stroessner, Paraguay's transition to democracy began in 1989. As occurred in many parts of the world in that year, Paraguay post-1989 embraced a new globally-informed style of governance that celebrated 'transparency' as a marker of modernity and democratic openness. *Guerrilla auditors* tells the story of this democratic transition through the lens of Paraguay's *campesino* movement and its struggle with large soybean producers for land.

Hetherington's work is focused on the community of Tekojoja, in which a small group of peasant activists sought to gain legal control over squatters' land, which had become highly valuable to Brazilian farmers in the midst of a boom in soybean production in the mid-2000s. There, in 2005, Hetherington witnessed 'from behind a thin orange tree' the murder of two community activists during a raid by police and Brazilian farmers (p. 22). When initial news reports indicated that the activists had attacked the soy farmers, Hetherington used his own photographs and testimony to prove in the Paraguayan news media that the unarmed *campesinos* had been victims of the attack.

This dramatic event anchors Hetherington's narrative, which, in Chapter 1, employs a Gramscian approach to describe the emergence of two historical blocs – *campesinos* and 'new democrats' – over the past several decades. As a group, *campesinos* are the historical product of sweeping land reform initiated in 1963, which created the Institute for Rural Welfare (IBR) that became 'the defining feature of campesino political life' (p. 28). The IBR distributed plots of rural land to peasants for colonisation, and, in turn created strong clientelist dependency between rural people and Stroessner's Colorado Party. As the transition to democracy took hold, a group of neoliberal leaders that Hetherington calls 'new democrats' emerged to promote

transparency, political openness and the rule of law. Whereas the *campesino* political project was seen as part of a distinct Paraguayan national imaginary, Hetherington argues that the new democrats saw their mission as part of a universalising vision of liberal democracy, epitomised in works like Hernando De Soto's *The mystery of capital*. As a result, the new democrats saw the *campesino* political project as remnant of Paraguay's clientelist past, on the wrong side of transparent democracy.

Chapters 2 and 3 describe how the new demand for transparency opened up space for peasants to use documents to make political claims. Legal rights to property became the *sine qua non* of full citizenship (p. 101) and *campesino* leaders used the labyrinthine archives of the IBR to assert their legal right to land. These chapters ethnographically illustrate the 'guerrilla auditing' of the book's title: peasant leaders see bureaucratic documents as 'not a store of information as a static thing but as a tool for making it as a political effect' (p. 166). The management of bureaucratic information – especially land titles and maps – becomes the principle terrain upon which peasants struggle for rights.

Contested legal rights to land became especially fraught in the midst of the soy boom that began in the 2000s. Large-scale farmers, mainly from neighbouring Brazil, began to buy up swaths of land, offering unprecedented prices to *campesinos* who were willing to sell. In Tekojoja, ten families sold their land rights in 2001 to a Brazilian soy farmer, which precipitated the conflict over rights to 200 hectares of arable land that ultimately resulted in the 2005 shootings mentioned above. Hetherington argues that Paraguayan 'privatisation' needs to be understood in the context of the soy boom. At its core, privatisation was a battle between two competing understandings of property, defined as either 'a purely legal principle' or something that emerges out of a struggle 'as people interact with each other and the things they wish to possess' (p. 99).

While Hetherington's discussion of the legal and political dimensions of the soy boom is fascinating, perhaps more could be said about the political economy of soy in the Southern Cone and the higher-level forces that were driving the Brazilian 'invasion' of Paraguayan land (especially the creation of Mercosur in 1991). The book takes Paraguay as its main unit of analysis, and consequently some of the transnational aspects of the phenomenon are not discussed in depth. This, however, does not

detract from the overall value of this work. Combining shrewd political analysis, compassionate ethnography and a deft command of social theory, *Guerrilla auditors* is a path-breaking portrait of the contested meanings of democracy and transparency under neoliberalism. While grounded in the particularities of Paraguayan history, this book will be of interest far beyond Latin America. It is cutting-edge scholarship that will be required reading for anthropologists of development, bureaucracy and agrarian politics.

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Howell, Signe and Aud Talle (eds.) 2012. *Returns to the field. Multitemporal research and contemporary anthropology*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press. 286 pp. Pb.: \$24.95. ISBN 978-0-253-22348-7.

This is an important book. It marks in explicit terms what I believe is an implicit value in the discipline today. This is the view that, when it comes to fieldwork, more is always better. I have stated the matter crudely here. In *Returns to the field*, the case for repeated visits to one's fieldsite over decades is generally made more elegantly and in more detail, but also more defensively. The introduction states that one purpose of the book is 'to put extended fieldwork back on the anthropological map as not only legitimate, but both essential and desirable' (p. 2). The editors of the volume defend 'multitemporal fieldwork' and have assembled an excellent series of papers from anthropologists explaining their particular returns to the field, often over decades, with the purpose of demonstrating the value and effectiveness of this. Perhaps the most compelling articulation of this position comes in Howell's chapter, where over an important two pages she offers an image, borrowed from Geertz, of the anthropologist as fisherwoman. Howell's development is to invite us to think of the intermittent fieldworker as fisherwoman casting her net again and again, making sense each time of her catch both on its own terms, but also in comparison to her earlier catches and her changing thinking. Howell's fisherwoman is an archetype making her appearance in the middle pages of a book that presents a new myth about ideal post-Malinowskian fieldwork.

I have noted that there is a defensive tone to this book's championing of multitemporal fieldwork. Knauf's afterword contains an attack on the (supposed) recent trend for the 'ever-new'

in anthropology as opposed to (supposedly older style) long-term commitment to a fieldsite (p. 253). My experience of anthropology departments in Australia, the UK and the USA is, to the contrary, that repeated returns and a very long-term commitment to the field are highly valued and more possible now than for earlier generations of anthropologists. Anthropologists who, for one reason or another, are not able to return often report this with regret and even some sheepishness, as if they are aware they are transgressing a disciplinary ideal.

The defensive tone is not only misplaced: it has some unfortunate consequences for the chapters. Many are so focused on singing the praises of multitemporal fieldwork that they neglect to give it a critical, probing treatment. In Holmberg's chapter, for instance, we hear of a series of accidental encounters (what Holmberg calls 'contingency') that led to the happy outcome of his sustained and politically active involvement with the Tamang over 35 years. This account is fascinating and useful in itself. However, it seems so consumed with giving us the good news that it is difficult to assess contingency as a method: is one accident just as happy as another? Are accidents better than plans? We hear little in this book about bungled encounters, wasted time or the other opportunities for learning what the anthropologist forgoes when conducting return fieldtrips. For all the benefits of multitemporal fieldwork (of which I am in no doubt), there must be costs too, and it was a surprise that these were not extensively considered in this volume.

But perhaps I am asking too much: I am asking *Returns to the field* to be a critical, probing, argumentative piece pushing forward our key anthropological methodology. But that would be another volume. What we have in this volume is a series of meditative essays written by senior scholars with decades of field experience as they look back and consider the benefits of what they have done. These are, then, somewhat idealised images of what fieldwork has been and could be. Stand out essays include the incredible story of Terence Turner's years with the Kayapo, Peter Metcalf's modest and elegantly written account of studying Borneo, and Aud Talle's fascinating reconnection with a rebellious Maasi girl when she had grown to womanhood. I enjoyed this book most when I read these essays not as academic arguments, but as articulations of a myth: the image of the anthropologist returning again and again and reaping each time new and growing knowledge. This is an important book because

we need a disciplinary conversation about our myths. I believe this variant has been dominant for many years and is only growing. We need to treat it critically and cautiously: is more always better? Are there limits to the value of returns to the field? What are the costs and who will bear them? *Returns to the field* has done us the valuable service of allowing this conversation to begin.

HOLLY HIGH

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**Johnson, Christopher H., David Warren Sabean, Simon Teuscher and Francesca Trivellato (eds.) 2011. *Transregional and transnational families in Europe and beyond: experiences since the Middle Ages*. Oxford: Berghahn Books. 360 pp. Hb: \$55. ISBN 978-0857451835.**

This edited volume sets out with a broadly stated goal that serves to embed current discourses of nationalism, mobility and frontiers within a broader transhistorical view. Examining the manner in which the mobility experienced in the current age is (dis)similar to that of other times is done by taking into account two distinct historical periods alluded to in the title. The epochs examined are 'The Medieval and Early Modern Experience' and 'Modernity', both of which very methodically go about discussing transregionalism with respect to the former and transnationalism being assigned to the latter. From the outset the reader is given the impression that the stakes of the work are as vast as the time periods to which the contributors attempt to speak, with greater and lesser degrees of success.

The introduction, which encompasses both parts, attempts to draw attention to the manner in which academic scholarship can account for the ways groups are created, become re-formed, as well as the means by which they are maintained and withstand over time. Chapter 1 (Moya) draws a direct line, from the Palaeolithic period to the present and chides theorists who take insufficient account of continuity in their work.

The chapters that immediately follow take single ethnic families or households to represent continuity and/or change over time among the Mamluk and Ottoman regimes (Piterberg), the Gonzaga network (Antenhofer), Sephardic and Armenian families (Trivellato) as well as Moravians (Mettele). Others pursue the dynamics observable within the upper echelons and among the wealthy patrician families as well as among the

ruling classes and princely families (Chapters 4 and 7 by Teuscher and Spangler, respectively).

The dividing line separating medieval times and modernity in this work is thought to be kinship ties, rather than economic or social ones primarily and the latter part has some outstanding sections that speak directly to the interests of anthropologists as well as theorists interested in mobility. Chapter 10 (Johnson) serves as an excellently-reasoned rejection of the claim that the nation can be understood as something separate from the transregional families it consists of. The nation's dependence on family is also scrutinised in the context of the Caribbean (Chamberlain).

This work's strength certainly lies in its broadness, inasmuch as it can be appropriated by a variety of disciplines, even though it lacks a certain disciplinary specificity in its own right. One critique one may raise is that the programmatic statement in the introduction is not fully assumed in the rest of the volume: '[The] importance of transregional and international families in the European historical experience suggests a recourse to kinship analysis, a lively exchange between history and anthropology, and a fundamentally comparative perspective' (p. 2). The first and last of these aims are pursued systematically in this work, but less so the 'lively exchange', as anthropologists are only mentioned twice within the entire book.

Given the difficult task of drawing out the complexities of reconstituting thought by relating it not to stasis (or the nation state) but to movement, some of the contributions do not rise to the challenge when compared with chapters that are less circumspect or insular in their focus. Chapter 13 (Latte Abdalah), for example, focuses more on exile than on families as such. Chapter 11 (Warren Sabean) treats one family – Siemens – as a thought experiment. Chapter 9 (Philliou) attempts to correct an imbalance in the scholarship on the topic of Ottoman elites. This is not to say that any of these chapters are poorly written, inexact or lacking, but rather that the anthropologist will feel more 'at home', and therefore critical, due to their focus on ethnic communities and transnationalism.

This gives rise to a problem, however, most visible in Chapter 14 (by Rutten and Patel), which concerns migrants from Gujarat in India, via East Africa to Britain that ends on the following unsettling note: 'Although in the past few decades social scientists have increasingly paid attention to the processes of "globalisation" and "transnationalism", there is a lack of research

to offer detailed (empirical is what is meant here ed.) insight into these processes' (p. 309). While anthropology is replete with such detailed accounts, it does not even get a look-in here. The opportunity for interdisciplinary collaboration stated in the introduction seems to have been once again lost.

Despite such oversights, the volume remains an accomplished and diligent work, a touchstone to teach us about the limits of anthropological engagement. The 'lively exchange' between history and anthropology will only take place when anthropologists will take seriously the contributions made herein and apply them to the fields of migration studies, transnationalism and mobility.

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**Lemonnier, Pierre. 2012. *Mundane objects. Materiality and non-verbal communication.* Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press. 205 pp. Hb.: \$74. ISBN 978-1-61132-056-5.**

This book develops Pierre Lemonnier's arguments about objects that are central to systems of representations, and patterns of relations, though they may not always, at first sight, appear to be important. These (seemingly) 'mundane objects' are nonetheless central in the lives of the people who make and experience them.

Each of the first five chapters presents a case about these apparently mundane objects that Lemonnier convincingly shows play a key role in the production of society in a series of contexts. Four cases are developed from the author's long fieldwork experience in Papua New Guinea, and the fifth from his observant participation in the world of enthusiasts of old racing cars in the West. But what exactly does Lemonnier mean when he argues that certain objects are central in the production of social worlds? How does it happen and how does it work? The book's argument on these key issues is that the sole invocation of the 'materiality' of social experiences is too vague to be really convincing, that objects and the material components of social life are unequally important in the production of society, and that anthropology must therefore have a closer look at what exactly makes some artefacts and certain material actions so central in the construction of social realities.

An example, developed at length in the first chapter, will help to illustrate this point. Compared with other garden barriers in the Papuan

Highlands, Baruya garden fences are much more robust than their counterparts in neighbouring populations or ethnic groups. In fact, as Lemonnier shows with great clarity, building barriers is for Baruya men a major occasion of sociability, of collective reaffirmation of masculine values and skills (and of the correlative depreciation of women's lack of physical strength and endurance), as well as a key moment in the reciprocation of kinship obligations between in-laws. And it is in the making of the fences itself that the reproduction of social relations and important masculine values take place. In short, material actions are here inseparably entwined with crucial features of Baruya social life, and these barriers are only 'seemingly mundane' artefacts. Therefore, such objects are not primary symbols to be deciphered or identity emblems, but first and foremost supports of nonverbal communication and mediations to essential social relations, and may reveal nodal points in systems of representations and patterns of relations.

Because they condense key aspects of social relations, and important collective values, the collection of apparently mundane objects analysed in this book are 'perissological resonators', Lemonnier suggests: they fully act in the continuous (re)production of social order and of particular experiences of the world, in a unique, original manner. In fact, they reinforce in a material way messages that are also communicated through other channels of communication (myths, public discourses), which they contribute to make evident and taken for granted. Artefacts and material actions thus constitute important vessels of (nonverbal) communication and, as Lemonnier would probably agree, of socialisation.

Other examples of (apparently) 'mundane objects' scrutinised in the book include Ankave eel traps, ritual drums and magical bundles (all artefacts that have for long been objects of Lemonnier's interests and have already made the subject of other publications), as well as old sports cars and their miniature reproductions, which give rise to a vivid fifth chapter full of personal memories, and probably written with as much passion and enthusiasm as the energy that Baruya men put in building their garden fences! In each case, what Lemonnier argues is fundamentally that the social world is not a mere reflect of patterns of thought or structures of social relations, but rather that it is precisely also through their multifarious engagements with artefacts and their material actions that individuals and groups (re)produce collective

representations, subjectivities, habits of thought and of action, etc. and finally experiences of the world.

In brief, some objects thus stand for words and wordlessly evoke fundamental aspects of systems of representations and patterns of relations. These strategic objects 'play a unique role in the particular kind of communication that is crucial to the stability of social systems' (p. 167). And they should certainly not be searched for only among 'sacred' objects, but can also resolutely be seemingly mundane, as in the case of the Baruya garden barriers. Throughout the book, Lemonnier demonstrates a brilliant capacity to formulate general (and important) problems for anthropology, grounded in meticulous fieldwork, which ends up in a very stimulating book for readers from all ethnographic horizons.

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**Muehlebach, Andrea. 2012. *The moral neoliberal. Welfare and citizenship in Italy*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. 288 pp. Pb.: \$27.50. ISBN 9780226545400.**

'Our mission is about helping others while helping ourselves' (p. 161). This citation of a middle aged Italian woman, member of a Milanese volunteering association, captures beautifully the central theme of anthropologist Andrea Muehlebach's passionate book *The moral neoliberal. Welfare and citizenship in Italy*: the emergence of an 'ethical citizenship' in Northern Italy. Ethical citizenship is no longer founded on the old 'welfarist' social contract of the nation-state, but on a neoliberal pact of heartfelt moral solidarity, where citizenship is enacted through individuals' dual care of the self and of the other. Based on 16 months of fieldwork, Muehlebach demonstrates how the Lombardian voluntary labour regime is brought into being through relational work and an economy of affect. A new Italian welfare utopia of gifting is thus shaped in the midst of welfare-privatisation and the erosion of social services. A 'citizenship to be lived with the heart' (p. 11) thus becomes the moral soil on which to recast a national community and an ethic of solidarity.

To make this anthropologically and theoretically intriguing argument, Muehlebach recounts in ethnographic and political detail the different forms of North Italian voluntarism as enacted by such entities as the media, state laws,

nongovernmental associations and individuals. In the first part of her book, the author skilfully makes sense of the state politics of volunteering through the lens of social and economic theory from Adam Smith to Karl Marx and Marcel Mauss. She scrutinises the dual genealogy of neoliberalism, which functions as much through doctrines of the market as through those of morality. Through a clever *mise en scène* of the theoretical classics, Muehlebach thereby demonstrates the interrelated connection between today's flourishing 'opulence of virtue' (p. 23), as she calls it, and the parallel marketisation of social relations in neoliberalism. She argues that neoliberal morality is not subordinated to utilitarian market rationalities, but coexists – and has always coexisted – in a productive tension. She thereby provides a fresh reading of Marcel Mauss' theory of the gift and Adam Smith's distinction between economic and moral conduct, showing that neoliberalism, exploitation and solidarity go hand in hand, being 'wrought out of self-interest and generosity, calculation and obligation' (p. 27), constituted by love, sacrifice and wounding. In this way, Muehlebach makes an important contribution not only to the ethnography of neoliberalism but also to recent theorisations of the political economy of affect.

The dual ontology of neoliberalism finds a particular rich expression in Italy's ethical citizenship, as the vivid ethnographic passages in the third part of the book demonstrate. The state externalises the moral task to care through laws and discourses of 'private virtue as public good' (p. 111); and its citizens take on the 'desire of public service' (p. 115) through unpaid relational labour, especially in regard to its ageing population, thereby literally *becoming* the State. In her colourful fifth chapter on Italy's 'super seniors' (p. 136), central to her argument, Muehlebach shows with humour and ethnographic sensitiveness how the retired – the paradigmatic ethical citizens of today – are morally activated by the state to volunteer. This happens through a dual discourse of 'duty and indebtedness', which incites them to sacrifice their 'excess of time' (p. 138) and wealth through intimate private relations of care. The author thereby poignantly demonstrates that citizenship – especially of 'dependent' populations like the elderly receiving pensions – is no longer 'a given, a priori fact [...] mediated by a [...] system of rights' (p. 159), but 'something that one [...] must constantly attempt to attain and keep' (p. 138). Through enactments of this kind of citizenship, the very meanings of

solidarity, politics, national community and the social are re-configured and re-defined in Italy today.

One of the many strengths of Muehlebach's book lies in this very analytical perspective: a consistent wariness to neither essentialise *a priori* categories of social theory like the social or the political, nor to insist on the absolute newness and redefinition of their content. Rather, the author masterfully shows as much the reminiscences of the past in the present configuration of social politics as their transformations, thereby becoming part of a theoretical effort to flesh out in space what one could call with Koselleck the 'layers of time' (2000) of care and welfare in nation-states. Relevant beyond the Italian case, Muehlebach's book is as much a contribution to the anthropology of neoliberal humanitarian actors and the workings, tensions and ambivalences of their ethical journeys (Redfield 2013) as it is a brilliant example of an anthropology of the state from below, analysing citizens' subjectification and their participation in state-making. Much more is needed of this kind of anthropology in and of Europe, especially at this historical moment when many European states actively produce their absence through politics of austerity. To ethnographically fathom which forms of care are produced in the absence of the state, by whom, through which kinds of social imaginaries and who is left behind are pressing research questions, ones that should take inspiration and guidance from Muehlebach's book.

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**Pardo, Italo and Giuliana Prato (eds.) 2012. *Anthropology in the city: methodology and theory*. Farnham: Ashgate. 231 pp. Hb.: £60. ISBN 9781409408338.**

Given the nature of globalisation and structural transformations going on around the globe, it is inevitable that the classic fields of study of anthropologists can no longer remain small, self-contained and identifiable units (cultures). The primary attempt of this volume is to

investigate and establish the credentials of anthropological methods to the study of complex and dynamic structures represented by cities. According to the editors, this volume establishes the validity of ethnographic research in an urban situation even while Thiessen's chapter points out that the 'urban' exists everywhere, even in the remotest places on this globe. It also discusses the kinds of urban dweller the anthropologist should address and the editors themselves focus on the urban elite, the power holders as opposed to the powerless and marginal – the usual concern of modern anthropologists. While Pardo illustrates the compatibility of traditional fieldwork methods with a complex setting by his work on the political elite of Naples, Prato focuses more on the political philosophies and the normative goals sought rather than exact actions on ground in a comparison on political change in two urban centres in Italy. The abstracted objectives permit comparison at a higher level than may be done by studying actual processes.

Parry's comparison of three urban centres in India problematises the concept of 'what is urban' with extensive and illuminating discourse on the theoretical construction of the concept; raising valid questions about classic division of orthogenetic and heterogenetic cities, of age-old cities and modern, planned cities recently established. The works included in this volume explore sites that include archives, institutions, planners, policymaking elites, dissenters and multicultural locations. Rather than focusing on 'people', some authors concentrate on public 'symbols' of urban life like Mollica's association of collective identity with 'public' dying in Ireland.

Other issues relate to the unit of study, whether the city is to be studied as an overall entity in terms of its spatial and geographical characters, including architecture and planning or in terms of its various fragments. Some authors believe that a city may be characterised by its distinctive aspect, like Seligman's focus on street vendors in Peru or Monge's description of the distinctive architecture and markets of Boston. Donner raises the issue of the 'gendered city' and its interaction with the gendered anthropologist in her study of Calcutta and demonstrates how the city not only genders but organises its public spaces around a given class structure. Following the classic debate of public and private in relation to gender, there are discussions on the role of gender in practices within the city (Donner), the integration of informal market relationships in a modern

market-oriented economy (Seligman) and the struggle for space within the city, between men and women, between the formal and the informal economy.

In line with Louis Wirth's conceptualisation of the urban, questions are raised about the values that may constitute urban life given the broad variation in ethnographic urban contexts: the non hetero-normative sexual preferences in urban China studied by Engebretsen and the recognised and celebrated ethnic diversity in Penang studied by Giordano as a symbol of multicultural Malaysia, or even the 'beautiful urban body', the slim and the well-dressed in Macedonia described by Thiessen. However, the authors have also tried to reassure that classic anthropological concerns need not be sacrificed even if the 'field' that one is pursuing is different. In fact, Prato emphasises a 'continuous interaction between material, moral and spiritual resources' (p. 85), which means in other words that anthropologists need to retain a holistic perspective integrating the material with the nonmaterial or the pragmatic with the ideal.

Most of the papers rely on more open and processual theorisation of concepts such as culture, identity and politics; for example, there is greater concern with reality as 'constructed', 'imagined', 'negotiated and contested than with the 'given' and the 'bounded'. But the effort is always towards a reassurance that what is being done is 'anthropology' and therefore as anthropologists we can continue to rely on narratives and time-tested ethnographic methods even if they have to be supplemented by those used by geographers, sociologists, historians and others.

A plus point of this volume is that the urban ethnographies cover a wide range of locations across the globe, ranging from a modern city like Boston in America to the religious centre of Benaras in India. Thus the reader has the advantage of a panorama of various types of urban cultures and situations. The focus likewise varies from studying markets to politics to sexuality, although as expected the play of power is a key concern in almost all contributions.

This volume provides useful theoretical insights for research linking micro with macro perspectives and a local to a more global world. It provides guidelines on how to locate concepts like individual and community into the nation and the global market and to integrate intensive research techniques to an extensive universe.

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**Paugh, L. Amy. 2012. *Playing with languages. Children and change in a Caribbean village*. New York: Berghahn Books. 252 pp. Hb.: £53.20. ISBN 978-0-85745-760-8.**

The empirical core on which the present study is based consists of video-audio recordings of everyday activities of six children, aged between two and four years, living in different households in a rural village on Dominica. The main goal was to gather data on the language development of these children in connection with adult caregivers, but much valuable information on language use also came from the observation of peer groups in which they participated, more specifically on the way in which they organised their activities among themselves and played imaginary roles. What happened in these peer groups proved to be highly relevant for the analysis of the role of the two languages that are spoken on this small Caribbean island of about 60,000 inhabitants, a British colony before independence in 1978.

English was the language of the ruling urban mulatto elite that came to power after the abolition of slavery, while the former slaves spoke a French creole language called Patwa (French *patois*) that had come into existence when the French colonised the island in the 17th and 18th centuries. Its speakers had become small farmers in a rugged but fertile countryside, where they lived in relatively isolated communities until the middle of the last century, when better roads were built and formal education was introduced. English has remained the official language and although Patwa is valued as part of 'traditional' Dominican culture, together with creole folklore, food and dress, it is not taught in school. Rural parents, believing that proficiency in English is of crucial importance for the future of their children, try to prevent the use of Patwa, to interfere in its acquisition. It is thus understandable that a language revitalisation organisation founded by cultural activists concerned that Patwa was not known by urban youth has had little impact in rural areas.

However, adults still use Patwa among themselves when they are gossiping, joking or teasing, and they highly value it for expressing their feelings. Although they normally address children in some variety of English, they change to Patwa when they want to impress on them that their disciplinary remarks have

to be taken seriously. Children who hear adults talking Patwa start using it themselves when they are on their own, for instance when they negotiate the terms for playing together and especially when they engage in adult role playing. Once children seem to have acquired sufficient knowledge of English, adult caregivers sometimes even approve of their occasional use of Patwa as a way for children to learn to assert themselves effectively, a character trait that is highly valued in this creole culture.

*Playing with languages* has been written from children's point of view and shows how much can be gained by a systematic approach to their life world, a perspective in need of further development and innovation – witness the author's remark that interaction with her daughters, born after her fieldwork, helped her develop new perspectives on the research material. Rather than providing a holistic ethnographic sketch, the description of the socio-cultural environment remains focused on the six children, with a view to better understand their behaviour and how it could affect the future of Dominican bilingualism. To cover its complexity, Paugh uses the verb 'play' in the title 'because of its polyvalent and agentive nuances, including active manipulation of a situation so as to achieve a desired result' (p. 3), but this trope is not meant to imply equality among the various social actors who have 'played' with Dominican languages over time – 'colonial officials, policy makers, language activists, education officers, teachers, caregivers, and, significantly children' – as 'social stratification and inequality loom large across these groups' (p. 3).

The relevance of this study for a better understanding of multilingualism in societies where this phenomenon is (rightly or wrongly) considered to be problematic seems unquestionable. One may hope that other anthropologists, especially those interested in the language use of migrant children, will feel inspired by this application of linguistic anthropology that (unfortunately) appears to be so much better established in the USA than in Europe. In this respect the book can also serve as a very useful introduction to many recent developments in this field because it explains and illustrates quite nicely such theoretical concepts as linguistic ideology, indexicality and register variation, to mention only a few important ones.

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**Pype, Katrien. 2012. *The making of the Pentecostal melodrama. Religion, media, and gender in Kinshasa*. Oxford: Berghahn Books. 348 pp. Hb.: \$95. ISBN 978-0-85745-494-2.**

On reading the first pages of *The making of the Pentecostal melodrama* – an ethnography of religion, media and gender in Kinshasa through the production of Christian television dramas – one of the most persistent memories of my own fieldwork in Angola came to mind: in October 2008, I was sitting with an anthropologist colleague in the departure lounge of Mbanza Kongo airport in northern Angola (not very far from where the ethnography of this book takes place). The airplane that would take us back to Luanda would arrive at some point, but the hours passed, and a flatscreen TV on the wall was our only entertainment. As I tried to avoid dozing off, I started watching the TV only to realise that it was showing a Congolese Christian serial, precisely the same kind that Pype describes in her book. There was no sound available, but in the stories of corruption and redemption that unfolded I could recognise the 'Pentecostal melodrama', the 'apocalyptic imagination', the special effects, the technological mediation and the moral movements exposed and debated in this book.

Mine is but one example that supports Katrien Pype's thesis on the ubiquity and social pervasiveness of such programmes in this region of Africa, populating and intersecting public and private spaces, engaging with quotidian practices and circulations. Following ethnographic fieldwork developed between 2003 and 2006 in Kinshasa, this book is the outcome of a multi-layered ethnography that included several months of following (and participating in) rehearsals, recordings and viewings of TV productions on behalf of groups of Kinóis who are simultaneously actors, artists and Pentecostal believers. This multiple profession is at once complex and intellectually stimulating, as we are constantly invited to think about the anthropological object through several and diverse angles.

The book is structured around a cinematic argument (complemented by an online resource hosted at the Berghahn Books website) that intends to reproduce, in a visual, tactile manner, the different movements and territorialisations that occur between the members of such cinema

groups and in their relationship with the Congolese capital. Pype moves from an initial exploration of the social worlds of the media and drama groups she works with, to the moral/ideological dimensions and their narrativisations. She thus begins with a portrait of Kinshasa as a moral territory, relating mobility, circulation and 'apocalyptic thinking', spaces where good and evil appear as mediators in the ceaseless processes of transformation and disruption that unfold in the city (Chapter 2). The second step places the evangelising drama groups within that territory, identifying the 'fictive kinships' that reconfigure the domestic, familial, gender and generation logics in which the cinema troupe members dwell and evolve (Chapter 3). The following two chapters (4, 5) explore the different (aesthetic, spiritual, bodily) dynamics that confer authority in such groups, as mechanisms for the emergence of 'divine afflatus' (Chapter 4). This becomes the ground upon which the Pentecostalisising narratives and aesthetic productions comment and act upon, imposing both a code of conduct and representation (acting) that affects gender and sexual relationships (Chapters 8, 9).

From this perspective, the book bridges classic works on performance and popular arts in Africa, as debated for instance by Johannes Fabian (1990) and Karin Barber (2000), and recent, ground-breaking work developed by Birgit Meyer and others (2009) on Pentecostal media and aesthetics in this continent and elsewhere. Pype proposes a very innovative understanding of the continuum between artistic and moral dimensions of media production/consumption. For this, she uses the problem of gender as a critical guideline to understand the continuities and disruptions provoked by the 'Pentecostal melodrama'. From this perspective, this book – published in Berghahn's *Anthropology of Media* series – moves beyond the mere analysis of Pentecostalism as a phenomenon in itself, placing it within a wider, more fruitful scope of reflection.

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**Sullivan, Patrick. 2011. *Belonging together. Dealing with the politics of disenchantment in Australian indigenous policy*. Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press. 192 pp. Pb.: Aus\$39.95. ISBN 978-0855757809.**

This book contains two important contributions. It intervenes in Australian indigenous policy, proposing an anthropologically and ethically sophisticated approach to Australian indigenous governance to replace current assimilationist policies. And it offers an ethnographic approach to studying bureaucracy, showing that ethnographic knowledge of administrative culture is necessary to understand why policies fail, and how they can be improved.

Before the 1967 Constitution, indigenous Australians had the status of wards of the state, and were subject to an aggressively assimilationist policy. Subsequently, a policy of self-determination introduced commonwealth involvement in Aboriginal affairs and established a number of institutions aimed at collaborative development between community and federal agencies. This policy finally ended in 2005, when the Australian government abolished the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC), and began a policy of 'mainstreaming' and 'whole of government' service provision to indigenous communities. Sullivan argues that this change in policy was the result of a widespread disenchantment in the Australian public with the visible failure of the self-determination policy to improve the conditions of Aboriginal people. The change marked a return to an assimilationist policy, as indigenous services were put into a contractual framework where development grants were conditioned on the indigenous communities' willingness to change their behaviour to reflect mainstream norms. Sullivan argues that this policy has also failed, both practically and ethically. Sullivan's main objective is to formulate a new 'consolidated approach' to indigenous/state/society relations that moves beyond the separatist/assimilationist dichotomy. He defines such an approach as one that requires 'recognising what is shared, as well as what is distinctive' (p. 17). This motivates a need-based service provision that recognises that all groups and communities have culturally and locally specific needs. This means that indigenous and non-indigenous Australians need to recognise that they 'belong together', in the sense that both groups are deeply dependent

and interrelated with the other, sharing an intercultural field in which both groups interact and exchange services.

Chapter 2 takes up a critique of the 'reductionist sociology of culture', which favours an ethno-nationalist model of multicultural governance. Sullivan points out the many problems with this reductive model of cultural politics well known to most contemporary anthropologists. He points out the many ways in which Aboriginal Australians fulfill important roles in Australian society, such as maintaining territorial security by inhabiting and managing many of the remotest areas of the country. Chapters 3 and 4 describe case studies of how the diversity of aboriginal communities pose challenges to simplistic models of culture, and how the policies of mainstreaming are hampered by the contract-based model of governance, which is unable to address the diverse needs of indigenous communities. He shows how the heavy bureaucratic machinery has made 'mainstreaming' practically unworkable in several instances. As a viable alternative, Sullivan points to the indigenous community sector. This is a set of indigenous organisations originally developed during the era of self-determination, but now the medium through which indigenous groups enter into relations with the state and commonwealth bureaucracy, and through which community-specific needs are attended. This sector, according to Sullivan who has extensive ethnographic knowledge of how they work, is a fertile intercultural field where Aboriginal people and settlers engage in mutually beneficial forms of collaboration. Sullivan sees this sector as a key part of the movement towards a consolidated approach.

Through an insightful mini-ethnography of the bureaucratic apparatus in the book's last chapters, Sullivan makes his point that the culture of bureaucracy itself is part of the reason why the current policy is failing. Too inflexible, too inward-looking and too far removed from the reality that it governs, it is unable to respond to the complexities on the ground. The solution, according to Sullivan, is a flatter hierarchy and closer interaction between administration and the indigenous community sector.

The book is of interest to anthropologists who want a brief and clearly written account of the current status of Australian indigenous policy. Or a good example of how to write anthropologically about cultures of bureaucracy and administration and their relations to disadvantaged groups in society. But most of

all, one hopes that the book finds a readership among Australian policymakers, who can use its insights to develop a new approach to governance of indigenous Australians, building on a more solid conceptualisation of cultural difference and its implications.

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Unnithan-Kumar, Maya and Soraya Tremayne (eds.) 2011. *Fatness and the maternal body: women's experiences of corporeality and the shaping of social policy*. New York: Berghahn Books. 224 pp. Hb.: \$109. ISBN 9780857451224.

This edited volume weaves together interdisciplinary narratives on the implications of an increasingly overweight populace in disparate geographical and historical contexts, focusing specifically on the ways that fatness is linked to female reproduction and state policy interventions. In the introduction, Maya Unnithan-Kumar situates the volume at the intersection of two discourses: the global obesity epidemic and the increasing biomedicalisation of maternity. She questions how increased scrutiny of the obese body may impact women's experience of maternity, and how the increased biomedicalisation of reproduction might construe pregnancy and motherhood in terms of obesity. The volume asks: how does the increasingly pathologised fat body affect experiences of maternity among women in different social contexts?

In the various chapters, the volume describes how medical professionals, scientists, academics, policy officials and the general public have consistently portrayed the overweight body as a health risk for which the overweight individual is singularly responsible. The volume attempts to connect understandings of fatness to perceptions of maternal corporeality – both of which vary significantly cross-culturally. The chapters are not grouped thematically and each differs substantially in its area of intervention. Yet four recurring themes can be identified.

The first is the need to question the biology/culture distinction. The body cannot be understood outside of the culture within which it is conceptualised. Warin, Moore and Davies (Chapter 2) elucidate the cultural underpinnings of biomedical conceptualisations of obesity. Mabila (Chapter 5) focuses on societies in which food shortage and malnourishment are common and demonstrates the distinctions people make between 'good' and 'bad' thinness.

In such societies 'bad' thinness does not only index lack of access to food, but also lack of access to social relationships that would ensure access to food. While the labels appear to describe physical body size, they in fact function as markers of people's placement within society. In fact, designations of 'bad thinness' could be transmitted from women to their children. Therefore, women's ability to navigate social relations can have a direct effect on their body type, and having a certain body type can affect their and their children's ability to forge future social relationships.

The second theme is gender and sexual inequalities as manifested through the overweight body. Both Randall (Chapter 3) and Walentowitz (Chapter 4) illuminate gendered perceptions of the fat female body. Walentowitz argues that in Tuareg society the fat female body indexes fecundity, and that its significance as an object of sexual desire demonstrates the value given to women's role in reproduction. It is through their fatness that Tuareg women gain access to economic and reproductive autonomy and maintain a kinship system that emphasises sibling ties.

The third theme is food and nutrition, focusing on different cultural rules regarding appropriate eating. De-Graft Aikins (Chapter 7) examines how the everyday logic pertaining to what pregnant women should and should not eat in Ghana contradicts the biomedical logic of proper consumption habits. Clarke (Chapter 8) analyses a community-based nutrition project in Ireland and why it provoked resistance among women who felt it devalued their own knowledge concerning proper food habits.

The final theme addresses the so-called global 'nutritional transition' – the coexistence of both under-nutrition and over-nutrition within the same environment as a result of changing geopolitical and sociocultural conditions. Guntupalli (Chapter 10) and Sridhar (Chapter 9) provide rich descriptions of the ways a 'nutritional transition' manifests itself through modifications in the bodies and beliefs of individuals and communities in India. Heslehurst (Chapter 6) and Aphramor and Gingras (Chapter 11) critique the misguided understandings of obesity that shape public health initiatives. Heslehurst argues that, in contrast to the assumptions of public policy initiatives, the choices made by the 'overweight subject' are not the only determinants of obesity. Similarly, Aphramor and Gingras reveal the lack of analytical rigour behind the 'anti-fat' and energy balance approaches that are used to

formulate dietic policies and the implications of these policies for obesity research.

This prescient and accessible volume challenges increasingly homogenised notions of the overweight body as a biomedically determined health risk. It illuminates the role of the media, economic liberalisation and urbanisation, misguided scientific research and public health policies in pathologising the overweight body. The strength of an edited volume like this is to broaden the ethnographic record on fatness and maternity, so that we can begin to better understand the variables that shape people's conceptions of wellbeing. While Unnithan-Kumar raised important questions about how maternity and obesity may be linked, these are not always followed through in the subsequent chapters. Rather than studying the interconnections of maternity and obesity, the chapters for the most part explored these two fields independently, with only tenuous connections drawn. Despite its introductory promises, the volume does not adequately explain why the nutritional transition might be significant to understanding maternity or even maternal obesity. Nevertheless, the volume still has much to offer, especially for scholars of the body and those working on public policy initiatives related to nutrition and health.

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**Waldren Jacqueline and Ignacy-Marek Kaminski (eds.) 2012. *Learning from the children: childhood, culture and identity in a changing world*. New York: Berghahn Books (Collection: *New Directions in Anthropology*). 204 pp. Hb.: \$60. ISBN 978-085745325.**

*Learning from the children* compiles a collection of papers presented at the seminar series 'What Have We Done to the Children?' organised by the editors of the volume at the International Gender Studies Centre of Oxford University. While their initial aim was to understand the experiences of children growing up in transnational circumstances, the scope of the project broadened to gain cross-cultural and interdisciplinary perspectives on nothing less than 'identity, childhood, youth, education, poverty and disability'. In the introduction the editors highlight two factors common to all chapters; a methodological one concerning the contributors' direct involvement with children, that is, they primarily established relations with

children for purposes – either familial or professional – other than research. The second one is epistemological and reflects the fact that all chapters are committed to the voices of children and young people as social actors, thus locating themselves within the contemporary paradigm of childhood studies (James 2007).

Following the introduction, the book is organised in three sections. The first part ‘Changing norms’ is composed of an ethnographic study of runaway young women in Pakistan (Sha), and an interview-based case study of Bedouin girls dropping out of the public school system in Israel (Abu-Rabia-Queder). The second part, ‘Listening and learning’, comprises four chapters all reporting research conducted with young people in Britain. Russel and Darian carried out research for the Young Women’s Christian Association to understand the views of disadvantaged women on poverty. Laerk reports an evaluation of the uses of Children’s Fund services in Milton Keynes (England). Dawson, whose daughter was born with Angelman Syndrome, offers a reflexive essay on parenting children with special needs. Seymour and McNamee argue that in policy-oriented research, the focus on the child as agent has too often amounted to decontextualising children’s voices from parenting practices and from children’s role within their families.

The last part of the volume ‘Cross-cultural mobility’ includes four papers looking at children living in foreign contexts and examining the role they play in altering their parents’ life choices. Chapters 7 and 8 report the dialectic of inclusion and exclusion that marks the experience of expatriate British families in Spain. O’Reilly shows the difficulties and ambivalences that British children, whose parents have decided to permanently move to Costa del Sol, experience in their attempt to integrate with the local community. Waldren, by contrast, documents children’s advantageous position in navigating home and local cultures, and their role in fostering the adaptation of their families to new environments in Mallorca. Kaminski reflects on the inconsistencies of cross-cultural bureaucracy and the vulnerability of transnational families whose children are born stateless by documenting his own life-experience. In the last chapter, Goodman, a specialist of Japan’s educational and child welfare system, discusses the insights he gained after enrolling his sons in Japanese institutions and considering the school system through the eyes

of a parent.

Though grouped into sections, chapters do not cross-reference each other and present the reader with independent case studies. The purpose of the volume is not to offer any theoretical advance or even to augment an existing line of enquiry. Rather, as the editors underline in the introduction, *Learning from the children* aims to answer the ‘need for a broader cross-cultural understanding of childhood’ (p. 4). In fact, the strength of the book lies in making available contemporary case studies of young people in different cultural contexts. However, given the cross-cultural agenda of the book, it comes as a surprise that seven out of ten chapters concern the experiences of British children. This can either be interpreted as a manifest shortcoming of the volume or, more generously, as an implicit provocation to prompt the reader to go beyond nation-based or ethnic-based conceptions of culture.

*Learning from the children* adopts a contextualised approach to the study of children, whereby childhood and children are not concepts defined a priori but relatively and subjectively in each case study. The reader is thus encouraged to consider each case as reporting the unique experience of children caught in the dynamic process of having to define and redefine their sense of identity, community affiliation and social position in a changing world. More than 20 years after the emergence of the ‘new paradigm’ in the social study of childhood (James and Prout 1990), readers already convinced that there is a lot to learn from the children will regret that the editors’ emphasis on cultural relativism and children’s agency seems to have superseded the opportunity to supply new theoretical insights.

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