

Book reviews

International Relations theory

Special responsibilities: global problems and American power. By Mlada Bukovansky, Ian Clark, Robyn Eckersley, Richard Price, Christian Reus-Smit and Nicholas J. Wheeler. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2012. 302pp. Index. Pb.: £18.99. ISBN 978 1 10769 169 8.

This fine book, in effect, creates a new area of study. It is the first explicit engagement with the idea that there are special responsibilities in world politics. International Relations (IR) scholars might already assume this in their work, but often do not scrutinize their assumptions, which are usually limited by narrow conceptions of agency and international order. Traditional understandings of sovereign equality and differences in material power fail to address adequately issues of cooperation and coexistence. The six authors position themselves by offering a middle way, which recognizes that hierarchy affects the tackling of global problems, but suggests that material power alone cannot explain differentiation in responsibilities. Special responsibilities are seen as a *via media* between balance-of-power understandings on the one hand, and sovereign-equality understandings on the other (p. 9). Investigating the idea of regimes of responsibilities is a means to get at something these approaches fail to examine, the way that authority is constructed and conferred.

This of course locates the authors within the constructivist camp. Following Alexander Wendt, they argue that special responsibilities are not just a reflection of capabilities but positions that are collectively constituted and socially legitimate (p. 45). This intersubjective understanding of responsibility produces broad modes of social behaviour and, like other cultural factors, responsibilities confront actors as objective social facts that both enable and constrain action (p. 62). To summarize the position taken: 'special responsibilities are a differentiated set of obligations, the allocation of which is collectively agreed, and they provide a principle of social differentiation for managing collective problems in a world characterised by both formal equality and inequality of material capability' (p. 16).

The book looks at three areas where special responsibilities apply: nuclear weapons, climate change and global finance. These areas are already structured by embedded conceptions of responsibilities and are sites of contestation for how they should be allocated. In the first case, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty legitimated inequality in relation to possession of weapons, but with the expectation that the United States had special responsibilities due to its size and power. This, however, has been contested, with the US itself making efforts to deny its special responsibilities for arms control. This was particularly so under the Bush administration, whereas Obama has tried to build a new consensus around the acceptance that the United States does have responsibilities.

In the area of climate change the US has sought to reinterpret special responsibilities in a way that requires more robust commitments from developing countries, emphasizing a

more informal and pragmatic interpretation of responsibilities. While it has not succeeded in reshaping the formal meaning of these responsibilities, it has tried to lower expectations about whether these will be discharged. The authors see climate change as a good example of the constructivist view that power does not always translate into legitimacy, since the United States has not been able to persuade others that its special responsibilities should be lessened (p. 159).

The area of global finance is used to show that while social roles might be negotiated, the capacity to perform these roles can change over time. Preponderance does not necessarily entail the ability to perform, as evidenced by the US failure to manage the Bretton Woods system. However, the book contradictorily argues that there has been a vertical diffusion of responsibility away from states and towards markets, while also suggesting that the US has been a central player in this shift to networks of national regulators, private market players, international regulatory bodies and multilateral institutions (pp. 187, 195).

In my view, the argument that power is moving away from states is, ironically, the result of too much attention to the rules of the international system. In particular, it comes from focusing on the role and actions of the United States, rather than starting with a more general view of states as economic regulators. If we see the failure of the US to manage the Bretton Woods system as an international symptom of the failure of a particular state model of economic regulation, then the US has been remarkably successful both in switching to a neo-liberal alternative and in promoting this globally. If the United States is seen as shedding responsibility and redirecting the locus of authority away from itself (p. 208), then this is indicative of a general shift in the way states regulate and not just of the US' international position.

At times the book gets at what is behind this. It argues that the liberalization of financial flows is not simply a matter of deregulation, but a form of 'regulatory neo-liberalism' that draws on the standards and practices of the private finance sector. In my view, this is not a move away from US global hegemony, but a new form of hegemony that governs from a distance through, as the book says, bodies that pressure national regulators towards best practices (p. 191). States are consciously pursuing this form of 'deregulation' and the US, as the most influential of these states, is pushing for the international institutionalization of these norms.

I would suggest that the constructivist stance of the book, while opening many doors, also obstructs this sort of analysis, because it remains at the level of international rules and norms and sees the social as intersubjective agreement and contestation, rather than as something deeper from which intersubjective practices emerge. The problems of international order are seen as problems of governance, but the problems of governance are not seen in terms of deeper, perhaps incurable contradictions within the economic system or between the economy and the system of states.

I could go on to develop a range of other criticisms. The arguments of neo-classical Realists and hegemonic stability theorists are, in my view, unfairly treated or, at least, criticized from a standpoint that underestimates the strength of US hegemony. The ethical arguments need more elaboration to be convincing to those who continue to believe in the importance of Realist power politics. I found it possible to agree with large sections of the argument for the significance of special responsibilities, while thinking that an appeal to those with capabilities to help those with vulnerabilities is a separate and perhaps naive point of view.

But while I clearly have some strong disagreements with the constructivist underpinnings of the argument and the ethical appeals to a more cosmopolitan practice, I can still appreciate the tremendous importance of the argument about special responsibilities.

If we take the central argument of the book to be that the distribution of power is bound up with the distribution of responsibilities and that these are constructed and contested, then it is difficult to overestimate the significance of this work in setting out an area for further investigation.

Jonathan Joseph, University of Sheffield, UK

The Routledge handbook of cosmopolitanism studies. Edited by Gerard Delanty. Abingdon: Routledge. 2012. 588pp. Index. £140.00. ISBN 978 0 41560 081 1. Available as e-book.

This essay collection is an invaluable contribution to scholarship on cosmopolitanism. It comprises 45 chapters divided in four sections: cosmopolitan theory and approaches, cosmopolitan cultures, cosmopolitics, and world varieties of cosmopolitanism. The book reflects the broad reception of cosmopolitan thought and presents the multi-disciplinary thinking of this emerging field. There is an impressive range of normative political theory and cultural approaches. Although not inexpensive, with such scope and depth it remains a bargain.

Editor Gerard Delanty introduces the book with a review of the cosmopolitanism studies field. At this point, the field lacks cohesiveness and is multi- rather than interdisciplinary. Cosmopolitanism can mean different things and have different applications depending on the discipline. There is general agreement that cosmopolitanism is not the same as globalization. Cosmopolitanism, in its broadest sense, can be defined as the extension of the moral and political horizons of peoples, societies and organizations. This is absent from the tightening and thickening of telecommunications, markets and other ties associated with globalization.

Delanty says that the interest in cosmopolitanism is being driven by disquiet over globalization, and the awareness that the peoples of the world need solutions to global problems (e.g. climate change) that take into account others beyond their own immediate context (pp. 2-4). This is neglected in studies of globalization and nationally bonded and biased perspectives on justice, security, equality, democracy and much else. In his chapter on cosmopolitanism's global civilizing role, Andrew Linklater shows how traditions and customs that privilege national citizens over people from other countries have become dangerous and dysfunctional. He argues that transnational accountability mechanisms that mirror present realities of social and economic interdependence are the cosmopolitan linchpin of the global civilizing process (pp. 60, 65).

The section on culture shows that globalization and cosmopolitanism have not expanded together, despite reasonable expectations to the contrary. Religion is a case in point. Bryan S. Turner argues in his chapter that personal piety, religion as an ethnic marker, and 'urban enclavement' have impeded the development of cosmopolitanism. These social and political forces in states reduce engagement with the 'Other', from which universalism and cosmopolitan consciousness can emerge (pp. 191-3). According to Delanty, the concept of a cosmopolitan order allows scholars to address the social context of cosmopolitanism in terms of cultural mixtures. In the book, cosmopolitanism is envisaged not as a cultural hybrid, but as a creative interaction of cultures and exploration of shared social and political worlds that suggests heightened reflexivity (pp. 5-6).

The book also looks at criticism of cosmopolitanism—such as its elitism and disdain for the local. This is plain in the third section on 'cosmopolitics'. Ulrich Beck's chapter on global equality and human rights and Raffaele Marchetti's essay on global democratization depict cosmopolitanism as balancing global enmeshment and the protection of locally

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rooted diversity (pp. 311–13, 357–9). Section four addresses another criticism of cosmopolitanism: that it is a product of western thought. This used to be true of cosmopolitanism study, but this book makes a break from that past. The essays on Asia, Africa and the Caribbean, to name but a few, relate cosmopolitanism to the historical experiences of other world cultures.

In short, the *Routledge handbook of cosmopolitanism studies* is an impressive collection of research on a demanding and multifaceted topic of major relevance to global politics. Readers will be able to come to grips with the emerging cosmopolitanism studies field and engage with the latest thinking from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. As the field develops, this collection is sure to remain a standard reference for new and established scholars.

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Democracy prevention: the politics of the U.S.–Egyptian alliance. By Jason Brownlee. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2012. 290pp. Index. Pb.: £18.99. ISBN 978 1 10767 786 9.

Promoting authoritarianism abroad. By Rachel Vanderhill. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner. 2012. 217pp. Index. £41.95. ISBN 978 1 58826 849 5.

According to Freedom House, democracy has declined around the world for the last seven years (*Freedom in the world 2013* survey)—at least as measured by that institution, which does not go uncriticized. Not surprisingly, therefore, the endurance or resurgence of authoritarian, illiberal or hybrid regimes is a growing concern and subject of study, which is in marked contrast with the optimism about the spread of democratization in the hardly distant past. Research into the international dimension of autocracy is catching up with that of democracy, as the two titles reviewed here show from different but complementary perspectives.

In *Democracy prevention: the politics of the U.S.–Egyptian alliance*, Jason Brownlee posits authoritarianism as an international phenomenon co-constituted by local and foreign actors—in this case a democratic foreign actor. Looking at the American–Egyptian relationship over more than three decades, he builds a convincing case in support of the argument that the military alliance between the two countries, the preservation of the Camp David Accords, the projection of US force in the Persian Gulf, and intelligence and counterterrorism cooperation did not just cause Washington to overlook the absence of democracy in Egypt, they also required it to ensure the survival of the autocrats in Cairo; the reason being that any democratically elected alternative—and not only an Islamist one, Brownlee stresses—would likely take Egyptian foreign and security policy in an unwanted new direction, reflecting the wishes of the country's people rather than those of Washington. He sets out four ways in which the United States enabled the continuation of the regimes of Anwar Sadat and Hosni Mubarak: by ensuring the country's defence, 'proofing' their rule against coups, providing macroeconomic stability and effectively endorsing domestic repression. This made the United States 'less like an external force and more like a local participant in the ruling coalition' (p. 10).

Brownlee offers a useful corrective to simplistic—critical or approving—discourses on US democracy promotion. He shows that genuine democracy concerns, while rare, were not totally absent from policy towards Egypt over the years. Crucially, however, as well as being subordinated to geopolitical and security interests, they were often used to ensure the desired Egyptian policy, rather than political reform, at times when Sadat and Mubarak

appeared to stray. As the author puts it, 'Whereas democracy promotion advocates have spoken of using the US–Egyptian security relationship to influence the Egyptian government's domestic policies, the pattern has been the opposite: US officials have selectively invoked the need for political reforms inside Egypt as a leverage over the foreign policy and security efforts of their Egyptian peers' (p. 14). And even when Washington did attempt to encourage reforms in Egypt, the closeness of the alliance and the extent of the patron–client relationship proved to be of little use in encouraging the opening of the political system. This undermines the general claim that close engagement with autocrats allows America to prod them into liberalization.

Democracy prevention tells an important story with remarkable concision and clarity, and at the same time a wealth of details. It is especially timely as Washington navigates the waters of post-Mubarak Egypt. It ends with an overview of the initial months of this new era and, while the timing of publication imposes limits on the author's analysis of it, Brownlee's exposition of what came before goes a long way to explaining American policy in the last two years when, as he writes, 'Whether Arab autocracies were unsustainable or not, the United States looked ready to prop them up as long as possible' (p. 166).

Brownlee provides an important perspective on the contradictions of US policy with regard to democracy abroad, and more generally on how governments talk of helping democratization and may even attempt to do so while simultaneously contributing to the endurance of autocracy. By contrast, in *Promoting authoritarianism abroad* Rachel Vanderhill attempts to answer the newer (or, perhaps more accurately, the newly rediscovered) question of how authoritarians promote and protect their ilk, studying the interplay between democracy promotion, autocracy promotion and domestic conditions. Mapping the actions of Russia in Ukraine and Belarus, of Venezuela in Nicaragua and Peru, and of Iran in Lebanon, she shows that they promote authoritarianism by changing the strategies and capabilities of local elites in ways that mirror the panoply of democracy promotion. This includes the diffusion of tactics and ideas, public statements of support, assistance to parties and civil society, economic aid and support for repression. She also notes the important distinction that this is less constrained by norms than democracy promotion is.

While there is only so much detailed attention that can be devoted to five bilateral relationships in one book, compared to the single US–Egyptian focus of Brownlee's work, Vanderhill does well in backing her core arguments, namely that authoritarian elites learn from foreign actors' strategies for gaining or keeping power (both through indirect demonstration and direct collaboration), and that the eventual political outcomes in the countries concerned reflect the balance of power between their liberal and illiberal elites as well as the nature of linkages with foreign democrats and authoritarians. Such findings need confirmation from a wider comparative approach but *Promoting authoritarianism abroad* marks a needed step forward in this research agenda.

As Vanderhill argues, rulers in Moscow, Caracas and Tehran viewing regime type as closely connected to the balance of global and regional alliances lies at the heart of the promotion of authoritarianism, with any democratic neighbours seen as pro-American and thus an actual or potential threat. In this, they do not differ fundamentally from democracy-promoting states. However, her decision not to concentrate more on the foreign policy motives and interests of promoter states, no doubt for valid practical reasons, introduces an obvious limitation to her analysis. This would have added an important dimension to the book since, given the economic strength of many less-than-democratic states (and she shows that Russia, Iran and Venezuela have used their resource wealth to aid friends abroad), Vanderhill argues that their promotion of authoritarianism is likely to continue. It may

even grow. The lessons for established democracies that wish to keep on trying to promote democratization, with which she concludes, are therefore valuable, if of a general nature. Their strategies and assessments must indeed face up to the existence of autocracy promotion and to the fact that it can be effective and counter the impact of democracy promotion. That regime outcomes and the effectiveness of foreign actors in influencing them depend on the interaction of *both* democracy and autocracy promotion with domestic conditions is an important lesson that those with a research or policy interest in the relative fortunes of different regime types around the world will need to bear in mind in coming years.

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Dignity: its history and meaning. By Michael Rosen. Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press. 2012. 160pp. Index. £16.95. ISBN 978 0 67406 443 0. Available as e-book.

Dignity is a highly contested idea in political theory. While the idea of human dignity is fundamental to many modern elaborations of human rights, and is particularly salient in legislation around torture, degrading treatment and abortion, there is nevertheless a long line of philosophers from Schopenhauer to Ruth Macklin who deem it a vacuous and imprecise notion, more rhetorical than practical. Dignity is an unfortunately feudal term with which democratic human rights theory tries to assert the value and proper conditions of a person.

Michael Rosen is to be commended for taking on the subject. In his short book, ambitiously aimed at both political theorists and general readers, Rosen attempts to understand what we really mean by dignity in political theory, and to see if we can effectively legislate for it in a democracy. His approach is witty and accessible, and he develops a crisp new exegesis of Kant that uncovers the transcendent core of Kant's philosophy of human value. But his book is very narrow in its sources and is fundamentally a Kantian exploration of the subject that fails to deliver on the more comprehensive study suggested in his subtitle.

Rosen starts with a highly selective western intellectual history of dignity from Cicero through to modern Kantians like Christine Korsgaard and Onora O'Neill. He gives small walk-on parts to Aquinas, Pico della Mirandola, Bacon, Schopenhauer and the Jewish notion of *B'tselem*, but discussion centres on Kant, Schiller, Nietzsche and various papal encyclicals from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

This limited and superficial intellectual history delivers four main notions of dignity in philosophy: an essentialist view of humanity's intrinsic kernel of value; a hierarchical view of differentiated status (a bit like Rawls's difference principle); a Stoic behaviouralist idea of the cultivation of dignity as moral conduct; and Rosen's own idea of an attitudinal approach of respectfulness formed in a moral gaze that always respects the worth of the other.

Despite his limited sources, Rosen's four types succeed in capturing the main paradigms of dignity albeit in mainly feudal or Enlightenment models of political theory. But the limited reach is a problem. No post-modernist thought is represented in the book. Only Descartes and the revolution speak for France. Levinas, Ricœur, Foucault and Derrida play no part. Nor do British moral philosophers like Anscombe and Foot. There is no examination of eastern thought.

An interesting chapter considers democracy's current challenge in legislating dignity in liberal societies that value political freedom and personal autonomy. Rosen examines French legislative dilemmas around dwarf-throwing in a situation when a dwarf wanted to be thrown but several courts ruled it as degrading to human dignity. This is followed by

discussion of the German constitution that prizes dignity so highly. Rosen looks at German legal contests around undignified cartoons of public figures, the Daschner trial and the high court's rejection of a law permitting the shooting down of hijacked aircraft because this would treat passengers and crew as means not ends, so failing to protect their dignity.

These practical cases illustrate the deeply Kantian political and social meaning of dignity in the German state, and Rosen shows clearly that our negotiation of dignity in democracies will have to be worked out by finding overlapping consensus around hard questions about the unborn, the dying, the non-human and our Dionysian desire to be undignified sometimes.

Comedy is celebrated as a legitimate place in which dignity can be attacked in a democracy. Rosen makes the case that certain powerful people should be mocked and even degraded in public by comedy of various kinds. But his argument here is misconceived. Comedy does not intend to degrade people's basic human dignity. It is not essentially humiliating, threatening or murderous. Instead, its concern is to attack *faux* dignity as pomposity, pride, hypocrisy or foolishness. Satire and comedy are not real attacks on human dignity in democracies, but they can be in racist and genocidal societies.

The interesting issue of comedy illustrates a real problem of language in using dignity as a core concept in political theory. In ordinary parlance, dignity has more in common with social poise and self-respect than with deep human value. This association of ideas risks trivializing the idea of dignity in political theory, and makes 'humanity' a much more powerful and democratic ethical term. Revealingly, it is the idea of humanity rather than dignity with which Rosen ends the book.

Rosen's last chapter is the most philosophically innovative. He tries to find a way of explaining why dignity is always important in itself and not just for what we and other humans gain by it. He does this by asking why we want to treat corpses with dignity when they are dead and cannot benefit from it, why we would want to be dignified even if we were the last person alive on the planet, and why we want to treat non-human things like plants and animals with dignity.

Rosen succeeds by leaning heavily on Kant and elucidating Kant's secular mysticism in a novel way to reveal it as an essential experience of human dignity. The book's conclusion plumps for the intrinsic view of dignity and argues for a transcendent sense of dignity in our very nature as moral creatures. Rosen affirms an enduring and existential duty to be dignified and to respect dignity in the things around us. This duty—even when we are the last person alive—is symbolic of our moral consciousness. As a manifestation of this self-knowledge, our dignified and dignifying acts are the means of living out the essential dignity we know and feel in being human, and that we want to share with everything other. This makes good sense but its reasoning is not easily popularized.

Rosen's book is a slice through the philosophy of dignity. Its value is in its modern restatement of the Kantian principle that we are valuable because we are moral, and that because we are moral we must value others. But this is still a complicated and unnecessarily metaphysical way of arguing why every human life is precious.

Most people recognize other people's dignity (or humanity) in more simple terms, because they are 'like us' or because we can imagine their pain. But there is nothing in this book about the emotional aspects of political theory or the equality we find in imagination, empathy, solidarity, care and love for one another. Yet, this kind of emotional value resonates much more strongly in political practice than high-minded Enlightenment anthropologies.

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Russia and the West from Alexander to Putin: honor in International Relations. By Andrei P. Tsygankov. New York: Cambridge University Press. 2012. 325pp. Index. £60.00. ISBN 978 1 10702 552 3. Available as e-book.

Andrei Tsygankov argues in favour of honour as the primary lens through which one can understand Russia's relations with the West since the time of Alexander I. He 'seeks to demonstrate change and continuity in Russia's foreign policy as shaped by considerations of state honor' (p. 8). It is an interesting and ambitious work in both theoretical aims and empirical scope. Its success, however, is rather modest.

Tsygankov bases his argument on the observation that one can discern three distinct patterns in Russian foreign policy through the ages. The first is cooperation with the West, dating back to Prince Vladimir's decision to convert to Christianity in the late tenth century. The second pattern is a defensive reaction when Russian attempts to cooperate with the West are not recognized or supported. Lastly, Russia follows an assertive foreign policy against the West when it perceives it is acting from a position of strength. Tsygankov argues that all three patterns can be explained by the Russian leaders' understanding of Russia's honour. Such honour, he argues, has two distinct dimensions. First is the European dimension, in which Russia's leaders 'historically sought to be like the West and win its recognition by joining Western alliances or by trying to beat the Western nations at their own power game' (p. 5). The second dimension is local, in which Russia's distinctiveness is seen as something that deserves respect from the West and is protected by Russia's leaders. As Tsygankov puts it, '[i]f cooperation with Western nations has reflected Russia's sense of honour as loyalty to the West, then defensiveness and assertiveness have frequently been products of the nation's commitments to its historic allies and domestic subjects' (p. 6). Tsygankov then goes on to examine ten episodes in Russian history to support his arguments. The cases range from the formation of the Holy Alliance in 1815 to the Russia–Georgia War of 2008.

Three problems undermine the book's value. The first is the limited discussion of the concept of honour and its place in International Relations (IR) literature. Apart from citing a few classical works, Tsygankov fails to engage with IR literature on honour, especially the recent works of Richard Ned Lebow (*A cultural theory of international relations*, CUP, 2008, reviewed in *International Affairs* 85: 3, and *Why nations fight*, CUP, 2010, reviewed in *IA* 87: 3), which are among the most rigorous theoretical and empirical works in IR taking 'honour' as their central focus. His rather cursory overview of the role honour plays in international relations (pp. 13–24) fails to distinguish between various aspects of the concept, such as reputation, self-esteem, prestige and standing. One would expect a more in-depth analysis of this concept in a work that uses honour as its main lens to analyse international politics.

Second, his treatment of Realism(s) as alternative explanations to his argument is rather simple and often borders on being a straw man. The lumping together of offensive Realism and neoclassical Realism is only one example (pp. 53–5). Third, regarding the empirical chapters, two problems seem to stand out, namely their relative brevity and the lack of primary/archival documents to support the author's claims. Given the scope of the book, perhaps it is expected that the case-studies will be relatively brief. However, this comprehensiveness comes at the expense of rich and convincing analyses of the cases under discussion. Particularly, Tsygankov's arguments about Stalin's policies during the 1930s (chapter seven) and Russian policy regarding the 'war on terror' after the September 2011 attacks (chapter eight) as examples of a Russian desire to cooperate with the West due to some affinity with it are not convincing. There are simpler and more convincing arguments for both cases, such as Realist considerations of power in the case of Stalin's policies and

opportunistic behaviour in the case of Putin after 9/11 (see, *inter alia*, Jeffrey W. Taliaferro et al., *The challenge of grand strategy*, CUP, 2012, especially chapters ten and eleven). A relative dearth of primary sources and overwhelming reliance on second-hand material compound this problem. Other chapters fare better but fail to add new insights to our understanding of Russian policy in those episodes. It would have been better if Tsygankov had concentrated on three cases rather than ten, and would thus have been able to provide a more thorough analysis of each.

As a minor concern, there are a few typographical errors in the book, for instance 'back-passing' instead of 'buck-passing' to characterize a foreign policy strategy (e.g. pp. 90 and 149). Despite the concerns mentioned above, Tsygankov's book is still a valuable source for understanding the role of identity and honour in foreign policy and as an overview of major episodes in Russian foreign policy in the last 200 years, especially for the non-specialist and the interested public. Policy-makers might also find some of the chapters of interest. However, it is of limited use for students of grand strategy and foreign policy.

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Transformative political leadership: making the difference in the developing world.

By Robert I. Rotberg. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. 2012. 217pp. Pb.: £16.00. ISBN 978 0 22672 899 5. Available as e-book.

Social scientists believe that the search for causality is their most important task and that the best method for doing that is the testing of relevant theories. This is of course difficult since social scientists are not in a position to set up experiments in order to test these theories. One way around the problem is to work comparatively: if the theory fits different case-studies, then it will be assumed to have general application. So it is that there are now comparativists in all social science disciplines. Comparative politics is a recognized, and respected, strand in political science. But the question is what can be compared and how best to do so. There are two broad approaches. The first is to compare countries that are ostensibly similar—such as western democracies, for example. The second is to focus more narrowly on particular factors—for instance, political leadership—deemed important to the workings of politics everywhere.

Rotberg belongs to the 1970s 'golden' generation of comparative political scientists who specialized in the study of 'developing' countries and in particular post-colonial societies. There was a brave new world of political theory, which proposed a method to explain how 'developing' countries had hitherto evolved and how they were likely to change in the future. The assumption was that these countries would go through the various 'stages' of development experienced by those, mostly western, countries that were now considered 'matured'. However, things did not go quite according to plan, especially in Africa. Political 'development' did not result in the expected democratic transition but veered in the direction of one-party authoritarianism. Comparative politics lost some of its lustre.

The author, who is a specialist in conflict resolution, peacemaking and state failure, has now focused his attention on the role of leadership in 'developing' countries. The basic argument is that political leadership is of particular significance in societies that have suffered disorder or are attempting to move away from the state of 'underdevelopment' in which they seem permanently mired. Following a presentation of the argument that leadership matters for good 'governance', Rotberg proposes a number of criteria by which to identify what he calls compelling political leadership—leadership that is, in his words, 'transformative'. These range from 'emotional intelligence' to charisma, with at its core

a number of key ‘competencies’—being legitimate, tapping into authentic needs, having the capacity to mobilize—which are perhaps best summarized in what he calls ‘the vision thing’. The ‘vision thing’ implies the ability to use leadership for the good of the country and not for personal gain.

Although the theory would presumably apply to political leadership in general, the author concentrates on how critical it is in countries where nation-building and development are the main concerns. The book analyses in detail the role of four historical figures: Nelson Mandela, Seretse Khama, Lee Kuan Yew and Kemal Ataturk. He concludes with a discussion of why such compelling leadership is rare and why this matters for the development of societies that are trying to modernize their institutions and achieve economic growth. Where leadership is ‘transactional’, rather than transformative, leaders seek immediate personal benefits and thus block the process of change that is necessary for the development of their countries. So the causality is clear: ‘good’ leadership is perhaps the single most significant factor in the political modernization of developing societies.

While there is no denying the importance of the four leaders, Rotberg’s argument seems either anachronistic or plain common sense. Anachronistic because the view that leadership matters is obviously not new. In fact, there is a whole historical school, now often seen as obsolete, that argued in favour of the importance of the ‘great man’. And it was often the political scientists who most strenuously objected to this ‘simplistic’ interpretation of historical change. Commonsensical because most people outside academia would naturally subscribe to the view that leadership does matter. It is thus instructive to discover that a political scientist has now come to the same conclusion, even if that conclusion is clad in theoretical garb.

The book’s originality, such as it is, lies in the attempt to develop a comparative framework with which to assess these four, and presumably other, leaders. The chapters devoted to Mandela, Khama, Lee and Ataturk are interesting and well informed. Each one of the four mattered for the development of their country, but each operated within a specific historical context that defies simple comparison. It is precisely the ability to understand and act upon the world in which they found themselves that marked these leaders as special. Who is to know what they would have achieved in different circumstances? Their leadership was validated at a specific moment of history. Moreover, the author fails to consider that other leaders, while undoubtedly not ‘good’, may also have managed decisively to act upon the world in which they lived. Who could deny that Stalin and Mao radically ‘modernized’ their society and economy in a very short time? So the book is an interesting discussion of these four cases but it does not amount to a ‘theory’ of political leadership.

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International organization, law and ethics

International law and the classification of conflicts. Edited by Elizabeth Wilmshurst. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2012. 531pp. Index. £85.00. ISBN 978 0 19965 775 9. Available as e-book.

Elizabeth Wilmshurst has convened a stellar array of experts to shed valuable light on the legal controversies surrounding the classification of conflicts in international law. Based on case-studies of a broad selection of conflicts, and paying particular attention to the conduct of hostilities and detention issues, the authors demonstrate the challenge of applying traditional distinctions to modern conflicts.

Are, for example, transnational conflicts between a foreign state and a non-state group where the foreign state intervenes without territorial state consent international in nature, as Dapo Akande asserts? Alternatively, is the failure to seek consent the major factor as Felicity Szenat and Annie Bird's evaluation of the Colombian experience suggests? Or is Noam Lubell right that intervention without territorial state consent is an *ad bellum* issue, while conflict characterization should concentrate on the nature of the parties involved, and in the case of Al-Qaeda on whether it really amounts to a single 'group' and thus a party to an armed conflict?

Steven Haines and Dapo Akande set the scene, discussing respectively the application to modern conflicts of military doctrinal thought, ranging from Clausewitz to Lund, and the implications of the jurisprudence of the International Court of Justice, International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and International Criminal Court for the classification of modern conflicts. Jelena Pejic addresses complex *lex specialis/lex generalis* issues that arise in relation to internment and the conduct of hostilities in non-international armed conflicts (NIACs), particularly the grounds for internment and review processes, and proposes practical approaches to the implementation of human rights law and international humanitarian law obligations.

In the first of the case-studies in the second part, Northern Ireland from 1967 to 1998, Steven Haines concludes that a Common Article 3 (CA3) conflict occurred for a limited period in the early part of the 'troubles'. Louise Arimatsu then delves into the tangled web of conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo since 1993, applies 'intensity' and 'organization' criteria to the various conflicts to assess their status as NIACs, assesses whether the degree of state control of armed group activities renders the armed conflicts international and adds a valuable discussion of whether MONUC (United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo) was involved as a party.

Felicity Szenat and Annie Bird carefully relate the interlocking recent conflicts in Colombia, propose an agency test for attributing to Colombia the actions of armed groups and consider whether criminally motivated activity that otherwise meets the armed conflict threshold can be so classified. Françoise Hampson illustrates the continuing validity of notions of a 'three block war' by reference to Afghanistan. She attempts to answer the interesting question of the extent to which customary NIAC rules apply to CA3 conflicts and points to the relevance of interoperability issues, caused by differences in approach among coalition partners, to the human rights of detainees. She notes the lack of, or uncertainty as to, NIAC customary rules, the uncertainty as to the scope of human rights requirements in extraterritorial emergencies and the continuing lack of clarity as to the interrelationship of human rights law and international humanitarian law.

Iain Scobbie examines what constitutes an end of occupation, concluding that Israel remains in occupation of Gaza, and that the Israel-Gaza conflict is international in character, a view supported by the declaration of the Gaza blockade. He notes the lack of recognition of Hamas as belligerents in a NIAC, which raises the interesting spin-off issue of the entitlement of Hamas fighting members to prisoner of war (PoW) status.

Perhaps it is Philip Leach's account of the South Ossetia conflict in 2008 that demonstrates most clearly the potential artificiality of the IAC/NIAC divide, particularly when the relevant conflicts are collocated in time and space, an artificiality rendered most poignant by its relevance for instance to combatant and thus PoW status. Having carefully considered the attributability to Lebanon of Hezbollah's activities before and during the 2006 Lebanon War, Ian Scobbie concludes that international and non-international armed conflicts occurred in parallel, with important implications for the status of Hezbollah personnel on capture.

The desirability that the fact and duration of occupation be clear emerges both from the South Ossetia conflict and from Mike Schmitt's discussion of the Iraq War in which, as he notes, the UN Security Council 'played a pivotal role in determining the status of the conflict during its various phases', not always in accordance with established legal norms.

Mike Schmitt takes us into the realm, and imponderables, of future warfare, showing how cyber hostilities, the unresolved status of conflicts addressing transnational terrorism, complex future battle spaces, the increasing influence of human rights law in the field of conflict and the tackling of high-intensity international criminality are all likely to challenge conflict classifications rooted in twentieth-century experience.

Elizabeth Wilmshurst draws together the results of this remarkable, highly authoritative research. The reader is left with the impression that the established distinctions between international and non-international armed conflicts will persist but that much is to be gained by increasing the clarity and granularity in the rules applying to the latter. While the distinctions between CA₃ and APII conflicts seem likely to diminish, resolving the relationship between human rights and humanitarian law emerges as a priority. Accomplishing that seems likely to depend on achieving more detail in the rules that govern NIACs, a goal that may presuppose the sort of initiative suggested by Sir Daniel Bethlehem in the foreword.

This book achieves the highest standards of scholarship and represents a real step forward in international understanding of these most complex issues. Its impressive authority will ensure that it is widely consulted and cited, and will do much to drive forward the debate in the years ahead. I recommend the book heartily and congratulate all involved in its preparation.

William Boothby

The law of non-international armed conflict. By Sandesh Sivakumaran. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2012. 696pp. Index. £95.00. ISBN 978 0 19923 979 5.

This work of nearly 700 pages illustrates the increasing importance of the subject-matter as non-international armed conflicts (NIACs) become the most frequent form of conflict in today's world. The book is structured in three parts: part one—the approaches taken by international law to the regulation of NIACs; part two—the substantive law of NIACs; part three—the way forward. Almost every chapter ends with a helpful conclusion and the text is accompanied by an extensive bibliography and tables of cases and instruments. The structure creates some difficulties in that some of the discussions in part one, such as whether it is desirable for the law relating to NIACs to be based on that of international armed conflicts (IACs), are difficult to appreciate until the substantive law has been considered.

In part one, on the sources of law, perhaps too much reliance is placed on unilateral declarations made by armed groups. While the author admits the uncertainty as to the general normative value of such declarations, he is more positive about their effect *inter partes*. Sandesh Sivakumaran accepts that in the case of internal rules issued by non-state actors, it is difficult to distinguish between 'group policy' and legal obligation, particularly as some of the rules seem to be contrary to those contained in international humanitarian law.

Part two examines the respective lower and higher thresholds of NIACs and scope of application. When considering the reluctance of states to accept a situation of armed conflict, Sivakumaran rightly points to difficulties caused by fears of recognition, not totally assuaged by specific treaty denials. He departs from the traditional geographical scope of applications, the entire territory of the state involved, preferring a nexus-based approach, though he acknowledges that this introduces uncertainty and a lack of bright line rules.

On substantive law, the problem is that much of the detailed law identified is context-dependent and therefore in effect becomes best practice. In relation to the conduct of hostilities, the rule of distinction is highlighted, but the author fails to point out that the term 'civilian' is not defined in NIACs and the difficulties that this causes. Weaponry is less controversial as many of the weaponry treaties have now been extended to cover NIACs. However, in relation to expanding bullets, the author may be optimistic in his assumption that, because the prohibition of use in non-international armed conflict has been included in the Rome Statute, 'the matter can now be considered settled' (p. 402).

When Sivakumaran moves to implementation and enforcement, the work inevitably becomes more aspirational. He looks for good practice among a myriad of examples. On judicial enforcement, the author discusses the disparate approaches of human rights courts to international humanitarian law. The cases of *Al-Skeini and Al-Jedda vs. UK* in the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) are particularly relevant to this debate and their exclusion here is surprising.

The book concludes with a look into the future. The author considers issues such as combatant immunity and prisoner of war status. However, his sensible argument that, regardless of status, captured fighters should receive similar treatment to prisoners of war may run into human rights difficulties, certainly so far as European states are concerned, in the light of *Al-Jedda vs. UK*, where the ECtHR seems to indicate that law enforcement principles should apply and thus captured personnel should be subject to criminal procedures. The author leaves to last the most contentious issue, namely whether the practice of armed groups should have any role in the development of international law. In a state-centric system, there seems little way in which such practice can be accepted as contributing to the development of customary international law and yet, without such an acceptance, the law will be open to rejection by armed groups who feel themselves deliberately left outside the structure. The proposed solution of a new binding agreement open to signature by states and armed groups alike is innovative but likely to prove impracticable. There is already tension in NIACs between human rights law and international humanitarian law and to introduce a new 'law of non-international armed conflict' into the equation could muddy the waters still further.

Overall, the book provides a wealth of source material in relation to NIACs. This is a fast-developing area and the book is to be welcomed as an important contribution to scholarship in the field. However, the speed of change means that it will soon be overtaken by new developments and the author needs to start preparing for a second edition now.

Charles Garraway

The golden fleece: manipulation and independence in humanitarian action. Edited by Antonio Donini. Sterling, VA: Kumarian. 2012. 318pp. Pb.: £25.50. ISBN 978 1 56549 488 6. Available as e-book.

In a journal paper reflecting on International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) negotiations in Afghanistan, Fiona Terry describes one anti-government leader drawing a clear line around acceptable and unacceptable humanitarian aid: 'Know when so-called humanitarian action becomes a sword, or a poison—and stop there' (*International Review of the Red Cross*, 93: 881, pp. 173–88). In its ideal form, humanitarian action is governed by humanitarian principles and required to be impartial, neutral and independent—focused on individual need, not politics. Like the Afghan leader, Article 23 of the Fourth Geneva Convention sets clear conditions to humanitarian action. Aid can be withheld if 'a definite advantage [from

aid] may accrue to the military efforts or economy of the enemy'. This is the difficult and always contested line that humanitarian agencies are required to tread.

This excellent edited volume examines a range of current and historical humanitarian operations to see how aid has been politically and militarily manipulated in armed conflict and natural disaster. All contributors are experienced humanitarians and the book's thesis is a sound one: that there has never been a golden age of humanitarian aid when it was given and delivered in a thoroughly principled context, and there probably never will be. The main term used to explore manipulation and the lack of independence from political interest is 'instrumentalization'—clunky but clear.

Humanitarian awareness of aid manipulation is not new. The value of this book is not in revelation but in discussion. Its analysis brings more empirical evidence to bear than usual and makes a significant contribution in four important areas. The book recognizes that all parties—including humanitarian agencies—engage in the instrumentalization of aid. Excellent chapters on Afghanistan, Somalia, Haiti, Pakistan, Darfur and the Palestinian conflict show how international government aid donors, warring governments, armed groups and humanitarian NGOs all use aid to try and further their political ends. Historical chapters by Ian Smillie and Larry Minear show similar things happening in US aid to Biafra, Vietnam, Korea and Central America. All warring parties use aid to win. Most humanitarian agencies are either actively or passively coopted (or trapped) on one side or another, or compromise by using 'food for access' and well-funded projects to ensure their organizational survival. After the earthquake in Haiti, the United States and Venezuela vied to be the biggest humanitarian donor to secure Haiti's place in their sphere of influence.

Analysis shows that international donor instrumentalization in some armed conflicts has become intense because the major western donors are explicit parties to wars in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Somalia. Counter-insurgency doctrines determined to take space, win hearts and minds, beat terror, integrate UN missions and build liberal states make belligerent donors a particularly problematic humanitarian partner. Like all warring parties, these donors become determined to bend all resources towards victory, including aid. The 2011 famine deaths in Somalia ask hard questions of deliberate aid restrictions by western governments and Al-Shabaab.

The book shows how most armed conflicts are extremely protracted, lasting for decades. This complicates humanitarian aid that is not easily compartmentalized into a short 'emergency phase' but forced to accompany vulnerable civilian communities for 20 to 30 years in places like Somalia, Afghanistan, the Palestinian Territories and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This inevitably requires humanitarian aid to expand beyond simple relief items to become a deeper strategy of permanent relief that supports livelihoods, protection, sustainable health care and education, and alleviates poverty and the impact of repeated displacements. Mark Schuller's expert chapter on Haiti evidences a similar dynamic in play around natural disaster and shows how years of aid strategy that avoided government capacity and built up NGOs instead helped create the chronic governance emergency in Haiti.

Importantly, the ICRC and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) are routinely praised across the book and exempted from charges of instrumentalization and cooption. Both these organizations are more resistant to political influence and more singular in their humanitarian mission. MSF simply refuses to take funds from any warring party. Both agencies work constantly to agree an impartial role and MSF took six months to negotiate a single hospital in Pakistan. The ICRC takes lots of money from government donors but its international mandate and determined neutrality mean that none of this is 'tied'. The West's

belligerent governments deserve credit for consistently bankrolling the ICRC even in their own wars.

The strict neutrality model of these agencies counts for a lot and means they tend to get access and terms that many NGOs do not. This raises an important question about whether other agencies should follow suit, or whether a surge towards an ICRC model would mean obstruction and cooption for everyone.

What is the principled answer for other humanitarian agencies—UN agencies that must always bow to governments, international NGOs which can walk away and local NGOs which can only ever stay? In her subtle analysis of agencies working ‘hand in hand’ with the Pakistani military in earthquake, flood and counter-insurgency, Marion Pechayre concludes wisely and realistically that: ‘as long as they do not let instrumentalization happen to them passively, aid actors should be able to determine when an instrumentalization is an unavoidable trade-off that allows them to implement their own strategy’. Here is where the ethical rubber has always hit the road for NGOs working behind the lines in an insurgency or counter-insurgency.

This book is a result of many years of careful and empirical study of humanitarian programming by Tufts University’s Feinstein International Center—a team that has made a very significant impact on humanitarian learning. Antonio Donini and his colleagues have done great service by analysing the dynamics of aid manipulation and this book is obligatory reading for all in security and humanitarian studies. But, having read it, please do not put it down and think that aid does more harm than good. The book does not set out to make this calculation, and it should never be assumed. Humanitarian action is a precious and growing part of globalization that needs to be respected and improved, and manipulated as little as possible. The work of neutral, contested and coopted agencies alike saves lives in the real world. A more principled approach can make this saving fairer.

Hugo Slim, University of Oxford, UK

The moral target: aiming at right conduct in war and other conflicts. By F. M. Kamm. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2012. 256pp. Index. £22.50. ISBN 978 0 19989 752 0.

What should be the role and status of consequences in ethical reasoning? This is a central question in contemporary analytical moral and political philosophy. On the one hand, consequentialists contend that the consequences, or outcomes, of an action determine its rightness or wrongness. Non-consequentialists, on the other hand, reject this claim. According to non-consequentialism, the way in which an agent produces an outcome matters morally. Sometimes two acts may have the same outcome, but their permissibility, non-consequentialists argue, depends on how this outcome is achieved. For instance, it matters, some non-consequentialists opine, whether an outcome is intended or foreseen by an agent. It also matters, they would add, whether an outcome is the result of an omission or an action.

These considerations are the starting point for Frances Kamm’s latest collection of essays (ten in total), *The moral target*. In these essays, which have all been published in specialist journals, Kamm, who is a leading non-consequentialist theorist as well as professor of philosophy at Harvard University, applies her interpretation of non-consequentialism to the problem of armed conflict. In doing so, she takes central themes from her main works on ethical theory, *Intricate ethics* (OUP, 2007) and *Morality, mortality* (two volumes, OUP, 1996/1998), into a more practical direction. In particular, one *leitmotiv* running through her work is the question of under what circumstances it is permissible to harm (innocent)

individuals. The standard criticism of consequentialism is that it may permit sacrificing an innocent individual in the name of a greater good, such as saving a large number of (innocent) individuals from death. While prominent critics, such as John Rawls and Bernard Williams, reject consequentialism for precisely this reason, Kamm contends that, under certain circumstances, non-consequentialist considerations can also permit harming innocent individuals during conflict. Over the course of the present volume, Kamm develops this argument with great sophistication.

For instance, four essays treat the issue of non-combatant immunity, as well as the related problem of terrorism. Contrary to consequentialism, just war theorists, such as Elizabeth Anscombe and Michael Walzer, argue that non-combatants may be harmed only non-intentionally during armed conflict. That is, it is permissible to harm non-combatants if, and only if, any harm inflicted on them is the side-effect of a military act rather than a means to a beneficial outcome. For traditional just war theory, this also explains the moral difference between legitimate military acts and terrorism. Terrorists kill innocent individuals intentionally to further their aims. Kamm, though committed to non-consequentialism, is critical of this argument and proposes an alternative approach. Her critique of just war theory may be right, but there is a worry that her own approach potentially allows for too many trade-offs between consequentialist considerations and the rights of non-combatants. While putting in place some non-consequentialist restrictions on harming non-combatants, she removes others. One wonders whether Kamm is slightly 'off her target' here. In an area as sensitive as non-combatant immunity it might be better to err on the side of caution and remain as restrictive as possible.

In what is arguably the most impressive essay in this collection, Kamm considers whether the so-called *Judenräte*, members of the Jewish community charged with selecting Jews to be sent to labour and concentration camps during the Third Reich, were morally permitted to collaborate with the Nazis. In order to settle this question, consequentialists would balance the number of Jews saved via collaboration with the Nazis against the number of Jews killed if the *Judenräte* refused to collaborate. Surprisingly, Kamm argues that, from a non-consequentialist perspective, collaboration with the Nazis might have also been permissible. Contrary to consequentialism, though, this does not mean that it is always permissible to sacrifice some individuals in order to save others. Rather, the permission to collaborate with the Nazis arose from the specific structure of the situation. However, if Kamm is correct, it is difficult to draw a rigid distinction between consequentialism and non-consequentialism. Essentially, the two camps disagree over the number of cases in which harming some to save others is permissible. Consequentialism is slightly more permissive than non-consequentialism, but this may merely be a difference of degree.

These brief reflections do not do justice to the philosophical richness of Kamm's writings. The remaining essays discuss the demands of postwar justice, the permissibility of initiating war, the ethics of nuclear deterrence, and self-defence against oppressors. Kamm has interesting, thought-provoking and original things to say about each of these topics. In general, her work reflects a trend among philosophers to challenge widely held assumptions about armed conflict. Acquaintance with contemporary moral and political philosophy is certainly helpful to navigate Kamm's argumentation. Advanced postgraduates and researchers in the humanities and social sciences will find this excellent volume useful. It raises important issues and will assist researchers in sharpening their own arguments.

Alex Leveringhaus, University of Oxford, UK

Conflict, security and defence

Mullahs without mercy: human rights and nuclear weapons. By Geoffrey Robertson.

London: Biteback. 2012. 389pp. Index. £20.00. ISBN 978 1 84954 406 1.

The connection between nuclear weapons and human rights has been discussed among those devoted to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament for some time now. The idea is straightforward. In order to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and achieve their abolition, they should be declared as incompatible with fundamental human rights. This is a powerful argument, for who could argue with the claims that nuclear weapons are indiscriminate and have long-lasting effects on the environment? And yet the argument has, surprisingly, never gained quite the importance it might deserve.

Geoffrey Robertson, a prominent human rights lawyer, sets out in his new book to change this situation. The book is an ‘attempt to show that only when the bomb is recognized as a human rights issue—the ultimate threat to the right to life—can we move towards its eradication’ (p. 2). Robertson observes with some puzzlement that the leading human rights organizations have never campaigned against nuclear weapons. Similarly, when commenting on the 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) regarding the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons, Robertson proclaims it ‘astonishing to record that nuclear weapons went for fifty years without legal challenge’ (p. 275). These are no doubt interesting observations worth examining, though I am less convinced that they need to be presented, as they are all too frequently, in a manner which can only be described as haughty and contemptuous. Is the argument really going to be helped by claims that ‘most of the judges on the ICJ in 1996 ... would not have known a human right if they fell over it’ (p. 276)?

The book offers to its readers more than simply a general consideration of the link between nuclear weapons and human rights. As the title suggests, Robertson has decided to ponder this subject in the specific context of the ongoing development of the Iranian nuclear programme which might give the country the capacity to possess the bomb. In Robertson’s view, the lack of any progress towards a satisfactory solution in the standoff between the international community and Iran calls for a fresh approach provided by the human rights perspective.

Anyone even remotely aware of the human rights situation in Iran will not be shocked that the book is rightfully harsh to the ruling regime, or mullahs without mercy, as Robertson calls them. Part one, which comprises nearly half the book, is a detailed account of the countless abuses suffered by the people of Iran since the revolution. While it might initially seem surprising that the prison massacres of 1988 receive a disproportionate amount of attention when compared to the most recent events such as the suppression of the Green Movement in 2009, the reader will find good reasons for this disparity.

Robertson returns to the subject of nuclear weapons in part two. Fairly standard accounts of the history of the bomb and attempts to prevent its proliferation eventually give way to a chapter on Iran’s nuclear ambitions. The author is certain about Iran’s intention to acquire nuclear weapons, its rationale (to balance against Israel), and the impossibility of diplomacy to stop Iran from reaching its goal. The conviction about Iran’s motivation perhaps explains the inclusion of the next chapter, ‘The problem with Israel’. Or perhaps it is an attempt at even-handed criticism. Be it as it may, the chapter makes little sense within the overall scheme of the book. The same is, unfortunately, the case with chapter 15, probing whether Israel could lawfully attack Iran.

Finally, part three is dedicated to the relationship between nuclear weapons and international humanitarian law. The crucial concluding chapter 'World without nukes, Amen' is frustratingly brief. Working once again with the ICJ 1996 ruling, it argues that 'international law has now changed ... to the position in 2012 that acquisition of new nuclear weapons, by any state, is unlawful' (p. 327). This is a tantalizing proposition. It would be unfair to question the book's merit by asking the obvious questions about enforcement. Nevertheless, the argument would have been stronger had the following two issues been examined. First, why should responsible nuclear behaviour depend on whether a particular regime honours the human rights of its subjects? At the time when they came to possess nuclear weapons, both the Soviet Union and China were far worse in terms of their human rights records than anything Iran has ever done. Second, if nuclear weapons are now unlawful, why is it so only with regard to their new acquisition, rather than possession? The book's claim that law cannot be applied retroactively is no doubt correct but unsatisfactory. Even the recognized nuclear-armed states have to build new weapons. One suspects that the unacknowledged reason is that Iran represents an easier target than the UK or US governments with their massive programmes of nuclear weapons renewals.

Jan Ruzicka, Aberystwyth University, UK

A nuclear weapons-free world: Britain, Trident and the challenges ahead. By Nick Ritchie. Basingstoke: Palgrave. 2012. 200pp. Index. £57.50. ISBN 978 0 23029 102 7. Available as e-book.

In 2007, a parliamentary vote approved the 'like-for-like' replacement of the Vanguard fleet of ballistic missile submarines which currently carry the UK's nuclear warheads on Trident missiles. In principle, the transition to coalition government has not changed this position; Trident replacement is going ahead, although the main gate decision—the point at which detailed replacement plans will be finalized—has been postponed by the Strategic Defence and Security Review until 'around 2016'. It is in this context that Nick Ritchie presents his new book on Trident. However, the book's ambitions do not stop here. The author also attempts to use Trident as a vehicle to 'expand thinking about nuclear disarmament beyond a strategic security framework' (p. 4), certainly an ambitious goal.

Ritchie is well placed to contribute such a volume, having engaged in the policy debate through a number of reports, articles and papers on Trident. He invites readers to view the broader issues surrounding Trident retention through what he describes as a loose 'sociological lens' (p. 190). Such an approach, the author claims, allows us to move beyond consideration of British nuclear weapons as mere objects of national security and deterrence to contextualize them as social objects associated with different 'relationships, interests and identities' (p. 190).

The book begins by providing background on the evolution of British nuclear weapons since the early 1990s. Ritchie then goes on to frame the emergence and development of a nascent disarmament agenda following the Reykjavik summit and outlines the ongoing Trident replacement process. This overview is both comprehensive and necessary, and eases the reader into the main focus of the author's analysis, namely considering 'enablers' and 'resistances' to the replacement of Trident.

Four 'enablers' are discussed in turn: deterrence, identity, the UK–US special relationship and the UK's submarine-building industry. While Ritchie's claim that Trident and 'the construction' of deterrence 'provides little solution' (p. 72) to potential future threats is certainly debatable, his argument that belief in deterrence is a 'powerful enabler' of Trident

replacement is less so. Identity is dissected with reference to Britain's interventionist role, the special relationship, masculinity and the French. The UK-US special relationship is framed in terms of the technological rather than the political exchange, as 'nuclear patronage' (p. 92), and the brief overview of the submarine-building industry presents it as an enabler of Trident replacement, albeit one whose existence is dependent upon it (p. 116). Consideration of these enablers is juxtaposed with obstacles or 'resistances' on the road to Trident replacement. Disarmament progress and, obviously, cost are discussed in depth. However, the rationale for the inclusion of potential alternative 'options' for Trident replacement as a form of resistance in its own right seems somewhat questionable. The mere fact of having other options does not necessarily undermine or challenge the argument for like-for-like replacement.

Ritchie should be commended for the use of a large number of the type of sources which are often difficult to find. Discussion of the UK-US relationship, costs and future options is notable in this respect, drawing illuminating facts and figures from a number of more obscure government and parliamentary reports and congressional testimony from both sides of the Atlantic. One wonders, however, whether a more comprehensive engagement with interviews and archival sources might have produced additional, valuable insights.

The concluding analysis considers conceptions of identity, culture and what it is to be a nuclear weapons state. Ritchie argues, among other things, that for nuclear weapons to be relinquished, the meanings assigned to them need to undergo transformation. In these final pages, the author draws together many strands of thinking, some of which have only been touched upon, and, at times, the reader is left wishing that Ritchie had devoted more space to explanation and elaboration.

All in all, Ritchie's analysis provides a comprehensive overview of the opportunities and challenges posed by Trident replacement and, on a larger scale, the road towards a world free of nuclear weapons. The arguments presented are thought-provoking, while the way in which questions are framed is both engaging and timely. However, while the author does engage with the complexities surrounding Trident replacement and the idea of relinquishing nuclear weapons, the broader goal of expanding the debate on disarmament does not seem to be fully achieved. In some regards, the reader cannot help but feel that the book's ambitious objectives overshadow its means of fulfilling them.

Daniel Salisbury, King's College London, UK

Governance, civil society and cultural politics

Encounters with Islam: on religion, politics and modernity. By Malise Ruthven. London: I. B. Tauris. 2012. 256pp. Index. Pb.: £14.99. ISBN 978 1 78076 024 7.

A celebrated French expert on contemporary Islam and the Middle East, Professor XY, invited recently to give a lecture at a British university, enquired of his hosts, 'Why is there no British XY?' Without disrespect to the excellence of French scholarship in this field, Britain does have an equal to Professor XY: in Malise Ruthven. Indeed, for breadth of knowledge, judiciousness and intellectual openness he is probably unequalled. His *Islam in the world*, first published in 1984 (OUP) and several times reissued, was a brilliant synthesis which must have alerted many readers to the importance of Islam as a global rather than a merely regional movement.

Only rarely does a collection of book reviews make a satisfying book. This is an exception, because Ruthven takes each book under review as a stimulus for wider reflection.

Lightly edited for the occasion since their original appearance (mainly quite recently), these essays bring *Islam in the world* up to date in a coherent and readable form. Ruthven's training as a BBC World Service radio journalist obviously gave him practice in digesting complex material; and his Cambridge degree in English (before a doctorate in social and political science, and an Arabic language course) no doubt helps to explain his sensitivity to nuances of language. For instance, he highlights (following Martin Riesebrodt) the similarity between the American Christian fundamentalism of the 1920s ('The most sinister and menacing figure of our modern life is the cigarette-smoking, cocktail-drinking, pug-dog-nursing, half-dressed, painted woman ...') and the anti-Americanism of the Shi'i militants of the 1980s (pp. 151–2). In an admirably balanced obituary of Edward Said, Ruthven explores the contradictions in the life of this accomplished literary critic, amateur classical pianist and cultivated New York resident, whose upbringing as a wealthy Palestinian expatriate impelled him in mid-career to adopt the Palestinian cause—to the extent of becoming a sharp critic of Yasser Arafat and the Oslo Accords; until, faced by terminal illness, he decided to channel his energies into music with the West–Eastern Divan Orchestra that he co-founded with Daniel Barenboim.

One of Ruthven's most influential mentors was the late Ernest Gellner, who was inspired by the great fourteenth-century Tunisian scholar–statesman Ibn Khaldun. For Ibn Khaldun, political supremacy depended on '*asabiyya* or social solidarity. Whenever desert tribes decided to unite, their superior cohesion held decadent city-dwellers at their mercy. After conquering the towns, they became rulers themselves, until in due course they were corrupted by soft living, and were cyclically replaced by a new nomadic dynasty. Khaldunian kin-patronage politics has often persisted, whether behind a cloak of democratic rhetoric, for instance in Saddam Hussein's Iraq, or more nakedly and purely in Saudi Arabia. Ruthven's masterly review of Gellner's *Muslim society*, published in 1981 (CUP), testifies to Gellner's originality as a political philosopher steeped in ethnographic detail, and to his predictive insight that Islam was taking over from Marxism as an agent for political mobilization—with revolutionary brotherhoods taking over from tribal factions. But Ruthven also notes Gellner's tendency towards over-generalization, and contributes his own study of Arab history dating back to the pre-Islamic *jahiliyya* ('time of ignorance'), whose characteristic negotiations between literate townsmen and illiterate tribesmen have arguably had analogues, for instance in Sufi orders, that have survived into our own time.

In a review published in June 2011, Ruthven applies the Khaldunian cyclical model to the 'rise and possible fall' of the Assad dynasty in Syria (p. 116). The '*asabiyya* of the Alawi minority (formerly known as Nusayris) was made use of by the French when they took over Greater Syria after the First World War. After Syrian independence in 1946, the military prowess of the Alawites, thanks to French training, enabled them to take over leadership of the Ba'ath Party, until after a series of coups Hafez al-Assad took power as president in 1970, cementing the Alawi rule that has had such cruel consequences. Ruthven does not discuss Jordan; but it is likely that the late King Hussein was a disciple of Ibn Khaldun, owing much of the success of his rule to the priority that he always gave to the interests of his bedouin troops, thus staving off the next stage in the cycle.

If fault can be found with *Encounters with Islam*, it is that a book about Islam should say something about the 200 million Muslims in Indonesia, which, being less dominated by geopolitics than the Middle East, seems to offer prospects of openness to religious change that should not be neglected by those, like Ruthven, who are committed to opposing the reification of Islam popularized by Samuel Huntington.

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The significance of borders: why representative government and the rule of law require nation states. By **Thierry Baudet**. Leiden and Boston, MA: Brill. 2012. 271pp. Index. €115.00. ISBN 978 9 00422 808 5.

Commonplace assumptions about the negative features of nationalism mean that the value of borders is overlooked. Thierry Baudet believes that their significance lies in 'their ability to define jurisdictions and to separate one political community from another. In doing so, borders enable the formation and protection of a national loyalty as well as the exercise of sovereignty ... The gradual displacement of borders, brought about by supranationalism from above, and by multiculturalism from below, dilutes sovereignty and weakens nationality, and so hollows out representative government and the rule of law' (p. 239).

This perspective runs counter to the dominant view in much of modern political and legal theory that supranationalism needs to be embraced in order to provide a workable framework for enhanced political cooperation and economic activity between global entities big and small.

Part one of the book examines the rise of borders, analysing the factors responsible for the emergence of the nation-state. Baudet explains its primacy as arising from the shared loyalty of its population, stemming often from a sense of social cohesion, and the capacity for centralized decision-making, in short: 'nationality and sovereignty' (p. xix). He contends that the benefits of globalization can only be secured through 'sovereign cosmopolitanism', that the collective 'we' providing the basis for the incorporation of newcomers can only be provided in the national context and not through badly designed and usually unworkable post-national alternatives. He defends open nationalism, or what he describes as 'multicultural nationalism' against multiculturalism on the one hand and xenophobic nationalism on the other.

The book's second part is devoted to the rise of supranationalism which he distinguishes from internationalism and which is depicted as 'an inversion of classical international law ... at odds with the very foundation of cooperation between states, which is sovereignty' (p. 83). Baudet examines six supranational organizations in order to make his case that Europe is witnessing the 'replacement of the entire concept of statehood by something that in fact resembles more the medieval organization of power' (p. 84).

It is a pity that there is no analysis of the world-view, current influence and operating procedures of the bureaucrats, intellectuals, lawyers and post-national politicians who toil to bring about this borderless Europe managed by selective power centres, something perhaps not seen since the age of absolutist empires. Instead, a profile of supranational bodies is provided, along with the ways in which they take over elements of the self-government of states attached to them. Three courts are among them, the International Criminal Court, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), and the International Court of Justice. Baudet finds evidence to show that it is hard to prevent personal and political agendas, setting aside the impartiality which the ICC is supposed to uphold. Turning to the ECtHR, he is far from alone in claiming that it has lost sight of the role to safeguard fundamental rights. Its absorption with everyday niche issues along with important national questions such as political asylum and the combating of terrorism has produced mounting anger (not just in Britain) about the transnational power wielded by court members, many of whom are political appointees instead of judges.

The purpose of those shaping the expanding competencies of the European Union, according to Baudet, is to apply sovereignty over a vast conglomerate of nations managed and sustained by functionaries, politicians and supportive interest groups. The book appears already to have been written before the financial emergency exposing deep institutional

shortcomings in the EU erupted. Little space is devoted to it. Instead, a crisis of legitimacy is seen as almost unavoidable because supranational elites, often chosen by undemocratic means, override national decision-makers or law makers, having no integrated political structure such as a world or European state to invoke for the exercise of their authority.

The post-national offensive also involves promoting communitarianism within nation-states where the equal value of separate communities within them is affirmed. Multiculturalism, Baudet argues, instead of bringing people together, is likely to result in the rise of parallel communities. Multicultural citizenship, in which groups acquire extensive autonomy enshrined in law and guaranteed by European bodies, is unlikely to provide the cohesion enabling the new post-national order to endure, and he warns of the danger of uncontrollable tensions akin to those that tore apart Yugoslavia in the 1990s. A law lecturer at the Leiden Law School, he dwells on tensions in the Netherlands arising from the maladroit way in which state authorities have attempted to set aside national symbols in favour of ones with an international or ahistorical focus, and the sharp intercultural clashes which have sometimes resulted.

For Baudet, a complicated system of overlapping loyalties arising from the abolition of borders is a flawed substitute that is likely to prove provisional. Multinational sovereignty orchestrated from a European political centre is a dead-end arising from the decision to dissolve relatively harmonious social communities, placing them under the control of brittle transnational structures. The chronic difficulties arising from the unification of East and West Germany, two territories whose citizens had identical history, language and culture, shows the illogicality of attempting something similar on a European scale. This is an erudite, sometimes dense but often thoughtful and original exploration of what may already be the new European 'cold war' between adherents of rival national and international forms of governance.

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An inquiry into the culture, practices and ethics of the press: executive summary. By the Right Honourable Lord Justice Leveson. London: The Stationery Office. 2012. 46pp. Pb.: £16.00. ISBN 978 0 10298 110 0. Available online.

Investigative journalism has for many decades been a growth industry: in 1974 it played a key role in the downfall of Richard Nixon. Yet the press itself has never until now been exposed to any thorough investigation. However, in July 2011 there was an abrupt and totally unexpected change—when David Cameron set up the above inquiry, headed by Sir Brian Leveson, an appeal judge. His report, published at the end of November 2012, had involved nine months of hearings during which he heard 337 witnesses and took nearly 300 written submissions. It revealed, to put it mildly, a very disagreeable state of affairs, which few people seek to defend. Its long-term consequences could be far-reaching.

The problem—which centres on the behaviour of the tabloid press—is far from new. Tabloid—popular or populist—journalism began over a century ago. It is often associated with the names of Lord Northcliffe in Britain and William Randolph Hearst in America, and it dates from the rise of mass literacy. Criticism of its behaviour has been voiced many times. Since 1947, as Leveson notes, there have been no less than seven officially sponsored inquiries relating to the press. In addition, there has been a Press Complaints Commission established on a voluntary basis to deal with grievances. None of these things, however, has led to any basic improvement. What brought matters unexpectedly to a head was the power in Britain of Rupert Murdoch—a phenomenally successful media proprietor with a global

empire stretching from Australia to India and China as well as the United States where he now owns the *Wall Street Journal*, the Dow Jones Index and Fox News, a right-wing television channel. In Britain, however, he has acquired a uniquely advantageous position having by degrees become a quasi-monopolist media proprietor. In 1969, he acquired two British tabloids—the *News of the World* and the *Sun*—a failing left-of-centre newspaper, formerly known as the *Daily Herald* and partly owned by the Trade Union Congress. He rapidly revived the paper's circulation thanks, in part, to the daily publication of photographs of topless girls. In 1981, he went on to acquire the London *Times*. Then in 1989, he set up a satellite television channel. Finally in 2010, he put in a bid for majority control of the terrestrial television channel BSkyB. The government seemed on the point of sanctioning the deal—which could have given the Murdoch empire a revenue larger than that of the BBC or other television channels. There was practically no organized opposition to this move, which seemed a foregone conclusion.

It was an almost fortuitous event which suddenly turned the tables. The *Guardian* in London, together with the *New York Times*, had for many years claimed that the Murdoch tabloids had been guilty of hacking—illegally eavesdropping on—mobile phones. The Murdoch spokesmen had always maintained that hacking if or when it occurred was an isolated case due to the work of one rogue reporter. Then, in July 2011 it transpired that a Murdoch tabloid had in 2002 hacked the mobile phone of a teenage girl, Milly Dowler, who had gone missing and was later found to have been murdered. The phone-hacking was an event which, apart from causing distress to the girl's family, hampered the police search for the body by creating false leads. The result was a wave of outrage: the public, even if it was prepared to buy the tabloids, felt a wave of revulsion. This in turn revived the long dormant police inquiry into hacking. There was a flood of complaints, both from celebrities and ordinary members of the public, who claimed that their privacy had been breached: according to the police there had been at least 829 likely victims. That is to say, hacking far from being an isolated case had become systemic. The immediate result was that Murdoch closed down the *News of the World* and suspended his bid for BSkyB; and the Prime Minister within a matter of days set up the Leveson inquiry. Parliamentary hearings also ensued during which Rupert Murdoch, under questioning, denied all knowledge of phone-hacking.

The police inquiry and possible prosecution of offenders is likely to take years and is in any case outside the Leveson mandate—which is concerned not with crime but specifically with press ethics. It was here that skeletons began to roll out of the cupboard. To take just a few examples: there was the case of someone quite wrongly accused in the press of murder; the real culprit was later identified. Then there was the ordeal of the McCann family, whose young daughter vanished without explanation in Portugal in 2007. The *News of the World* was somehow or other able to get access to the mother's diary, which it published. Another tabloid even suggested that the McCanns were themselves suspects in their child's disappearance. A further widely publicized example was that of Max Mosley, well-known for his association with Formula One motor racing. The *News of the World* printed a true account of his private sexual orgies, while falsely suggesting that they were part of a Nazi orgy. Mosley successfully sued for breach of privacy; but the publicity devastated his marriage and may have contributed to the suicide of his son. The judge also noted what he called a reckless disregard by some editors for factual accuracy. The *Sun*, for example, printed a fabricated story about a Muslim plot to kill Jews. In 1989, it reported that a disaster which caused loss of life at a football match was due to the drunkenness of the fans. In fact, it was due to the incompetence of the police. The paper took 23 years to correct the story. Needless to say,

such stories sell newspapers, but the public benefit is nil. Leveson was scathing in his verdict. Apart from finding a disregard for factual accuracy, he was unable to believe that editors knew nothing about phone-hacking: many editors even joked about it.

Quite apart from the destruction of private lives, Leveson discovered an even more serious problem: the influence of the tabloids and the press in high places and the way they seemed able to further their commercial interests by intimidating politicians. The Murdoch empire, in particular, became so powerful that the government was afraid to deny it anything it wanted. As the former Labour Minister, Lord Mandelson, frankly stated in July 2011: 'We were cowed'. This sometimes verged on blackmail. Politicians not unnaturally came to believe that it was impossible to win elections without press support—and close friendships, unknown to the general public, developed between editors and prime ministers and leaders of all political parties, a process possibly going back more than 30 years. Some of Murdoch's employees have now been indicted for perjury and conspiracy to pervert the course of justice (offences much more serious than phone-hacking). Their guilt or innocence has yet to be ascertained. But if eventually convicted, their cases could prove embarrassing for prime ministers, both past and present.

With their predictable diet of sex, celebrity and scandal, the tabloids have increasingly invaded the privacy of footballers, writers and pop stars who do not wield political power (unlike politicians who have to expect harsh or even unfair criticism as well as a certain loss of privacy). The practice of 'door-stepping' by journalists of celebrities and their families sometimes amounted to harassment. The tentacles of this empire went even further. It made systematic threats against any individual who challenged it. In one case a newspaper hired a private detective to find compromising material on an individual who had criticized it. In another case threats were made against a Member of Parliament. No less serious was an improper involvement with the police, some of whose members were paid to provide confidential information.

Leveson takes care to preserve balance in his findings. He admires journalism and is, as he says, concerned with a subculture rather than a culture. He makes it clear that neither the Murdoch press nor even the tabloids were the only offenders. He finds that government ministers acted quite properly when handling the bid for BSkyB. He says he uncovered no evidence of widespread police corruption in relation to the press—although he proposes a ban on policemen taking jobs with newspapers for a year after leaving the service. He also warns against 'lavish hospitality' between police and journalists, but suggests that Chief Constables should offer guidance as to what is proper in this respect.

Although the details of his 89 proposals are complex, their general thrust is clear. He strongly opposes press censorship and proposes that the freedom of the press should be guaranteed by Act of Parliament. He wants a system of press self-regulation aimed at promoting journalistic standards and protecting the rights of individuals. It should be supervised by a Board, aimed, among other things, at monitoring the compliance of the press with its own professional code. He insists that the people appointed must exclude Members of Parliament or government and should include only one serving editor.

His other proposals comprise: the setting up of a system of arbitration as a cheap way of avoiding litigation—with the result that if either the plaintiff or the defendant insist on going to court they could be heavily penalized in costs, even if successful. (This suggestion has lost parliamentary support, since it was argued that such penalties could amount to a curb on editorial freedom.) Another proposal is for the creation of a purely voluntary provision of guidance for editors on what constitutes the public interest. He wants a 'whistle-stop' service to which journalists can turn if they feel under pressure to act unethically; and

also recommends more vigorous government action to preserve media plurality, particularly in relation to publications dealing with news and current affairs.

A constant theme of this report is its emphasis on the need for much greater transparency—in the appointment of the regulator, the monitoring of compliance with the press code, and the taking of decisions over cross-media mergers. The report also suggests that information about contacts, whether direct or indirect, between politicians and representatives of the media should be regularly published. The one recommendation which has polarized opinion and provoked sometimes violent opposition is his proposal for a reform underpinned by statute. His essential point is that the press, given its recent record, cannot be trusted to put its own house in order without external monitoring. While recognizing that a voluntary system would be the ideal solution, he points out that some newspapers might refuse to participate and so wreck the reform as a whole.

It is this which has led to fierce disagreement. Few commentators have been neutral; and this reviewer finds it difficult to believe that self-regulation can work without at least the threat of legal sanctions. The pro-Leveson camp includes the Labour and Liberal Democratic parties as well as a group of celebrities headed by the actor Hugh Grant. By contrast, editors (even those who dislike Murdoch) are either ferociously critical or have reservations. The *Daily Mail* has gone so far as to publish an advertisement implicitly bracketing Leveson with President Assad of Syria and Vladimir Putin. Elsewhere the proposal for legislation has been described as a ‘poisonous measure’. The Foreign Secretary William Hague has been quoted as arguing that a Leveson law would curb Britain’s ability to address other countries—particularly Russia—on the importance of free speech. (The BBC Russian Service, however, recently ceased to broadcast as the result of a decision backed by the Foreign Office. It survives only on the Internet and seems to devote far less attention to human rights than in the past.)

One argument frequently put forward against legislation is that since any regulator would necessarily be appointed by the government or Parliament, then he or she could not by definition be independent. This is less than convincing. Judges are appointed by the Ministry of Justice but no one questions their independence since once appointed they become, at least in practice, irremovable. Acts of Parliament, so it has been argued, can always be amended in a more repressive direction and therefore represent a ‘slippery slope’. The British Parliament is, of course, constitutionally entitled to do whatever it wants. But it has never passed a law imposing censorship—apart from voting for government-sponsored security legislation relating to official secrets or counter-terrorism.

The gap between the supporters and opponents of Leveson has been narrowed but not closed. David Cameron, with the acquiescence of most newspapers, is now ready to support regulation under a Royal Charter, similar to the one regulating the BBC. This Charter is renewed by the government every few years, usually subject to amendments. Charters are regulated by the Privy Council, an institution dating from medieval times, whose members are made up of advisers to the monarch. Its functions are usually formal and consist, in particular, of approving government-sponsored subsidiary legislation. Its membership is large; but three people are sufficient for a quorum. This compromise now seems likely to be adopted in some form, but is not fully acceptable to the Leveson camp. For one thing, it is dominated by members of the government who may themselves be vulnerable to newspaper pressure. Even more important is the fact that Parliament is marginalized.

It must in fairness be recognized that some critics have genuinely libertarian concerns about regulating the press. Immediately after the report appeared, the *New York Times*, which had helped to expose Murdoch, printed a leading article under the heading ‘Press

freedom at risk' arguing that the British press already operate in a severe legal environment, with libel laws far more restrictive than those in America, and that the criminal and civil law should be sufficient. It described the Leveson proposals as 'a big step in the wrong direction'. On this point, however, Leveson disagrees. Many victims of the press, he says, do not have the heart to go to court against a powerful adversary—for financial reasons or simply out of fear of the distress which the publicity could cause for their families.

Regulation of the press can of course carry risks. Leveson himself is not entirely specific about who he thinks should ultimately appoint the press regulators. But this difficulty should not be insuperable. Given a consensus in favour of protecting both journalists and the rights of individual members of the public, the difficulty seems quite soluble. Of course, editors are understandably uneasy about official 'guidance' concerning the public interest. And legal safeguards cannot always be taken at face value: freedom of speech and of the press were expressly guaranteed in Russia under the Stalin Constitution of 1936. But press freedom has to be balanced against other rights such as that of privacy. There is a fairly obvious difference between something which promotes the public benefit and something which merely satisfies public curiosity (as where *The Sun* printed nude pictures of the Queen's grandson Prince Harry). There may be difficult borderline cases, but the difficulties should not be exaggerated.

It should also be remembered that British solutions are not necessarily interchangeable with those of other countries. In the United States a press law would be unconstitutional, being expressly prohibited under the First Amendment. In Germany, unlike Britain, it is illegal to deny the fact of the Holocaust. Yet no one would claim that Germany for this reason lacks a free press. It must added, however, that law reform alone will not solve the problems of the press. Its difficulties have always been at least partly to do with economics. Quality newspapers are highly expensive and do not always pay their way: both the *Times* and the *Guardian* currently incur huge losses. Today, as Leveson points out, in the age of the internet, social media and foreign television, newspapers face fiercer competition than ever. And this has made them more sharply competitive and sometimes, as a result, less scrupulous. The immediate need for some papers is to find a buyer.

It remains to ask what the final outcome of this debate will be. The tabloids are certain to continue; in the past they have sometimes promoted good causes and exposed wrongdoing (other than their own) and they continue to do so. At the moment of writing, cross-party talks are taking place and seem to be moving towards the idea of a Royal Charter. Stalemate is still a possibility. No law can be enacted without the backing of the Prime Minister; but he himself is under considerable pressure since his party does not have a parliamentary majority. The majority in both Houses of Parliament seem firmly in favour of a reform with teeth. And opinion polls strongly suggest that the public—including members of all political parties—also support the Leveson proposals. Even if the principle of regulation is accepted, the debate about its exact terms is likely to be prolonged and complicated, with the near certainty of tough bargaining.

One problem in particular relates to sanctions against uncooperative newspapers. But perhaps the most powerful sanction is that of adverse publicity. 'Naming and shaming' of such newspapers may, in such cases, be the most effective penalty of all. They have already lost much of their power to intimidate their critics and that in itself is a major achievement of the Leveson inquiry.

It may be argued finally that the inquiry could itself have an international dimension. British solutions cannot, for reasons already noted, be automatically transposed to other countries. But tabloid newspapers now flourish in many parts of the world (including

post-communist Russia). Such newspapers, with their large circulations, have long been used in many countries as a tool for misleading and manipulating public opinion, often for unworthy causes. And this British inquiry should at least promote a global awareness of what this problem is. For all these reasons, the Leveson report deserves study not only in this country but in other parts of the world.

David Wedgwood Benn

Political economy, economics and development

East Asian capitalism: diversity, continuity, and change. Edited by **Andrew Walter and Xiaoke Zhang.** Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2012. 331pp. Index. £60.00. ISBN 978 0 19964 309 7.

The advent of the East Asian ‘miracle’ was arguably the most influential economic development of the second half of the twentieth century, and the region’s economic maturation in the last 20 years is one of the most noteworthy stories so far in this century. The miracle was tarnished by a brush with disaster in the Asian financial crisis, and this triggered a rethinking of Asia’s experience of both capitalism and its developmentalist states. Andrew Walter and Xiaoke Zhang provide an eminently useful update to the bountiful literature on East Asia’s political economy. Their introductory chapter lays out the current state of scholarly debate, concentrating on the ‘varieties of capitalism’ and Asian institutional approaches. They posit a ‘considerable degree of consensus’ among scholars that business systems, financial structures and labour market regimes are the key components of contemporary Asian capitalist economies (p. 9). Business systems concern the ways ‘intra-firm and inter-firm relations are coordinated’ for production and exchange (p. 10), while financial structure concerns both ways that corporations raise capital and modes of corporate governance. Labour regimes deal primarily with a ‘mix of employment relations, union organization and welfare provision’ (p. 12).

Three strong chapters on government–business relations are almost worth the price of the book by themselves. Shaun Breslin attempts to synthesize views suggesting a Chinese ‘retreat of the state’ or insisting on a continued robustness to Chinese economic governance (p. 29). To be sure, the state has retreated from direct economic plan management and providing health, education and welfare, but it maintains a leading role in the reformed large state-owned enterprises and provides various kinds of assistance to ‘national champions’, whether SOE or private (p. 38). Karl Fields shows that the three great North-East Asian capitalist states, Japan, Taiwan and South Korea, have evolved new economic regimes that allow continued guidance of their political economies. Japan has ‘remodelled’ its industrial policy and corporate governance, but a ‘networked’ capitalist economy with a relatively interventionist state remains (p. 48). Taiwan has been transformed from a state-led system focused on a few large ‘upstream’ firms to a ‘co-governed mode of capitalism’ centred on collaborative business–government ties (p. 48). Korea has undergone the greatest change, as the state has retreated and corporations have become more powerful. Edmund Gomez sketches the development of Malaysian enterprises under the new economic policy (NEP). While a number of large firms arose, the NEP was not very successful in creating a class of *bumiputra* entrepreneurs; the most productive and technologically oriented firms are not controlled by ethnic Malays.

The financial market structure section includes four fine overviews, but the strongest chapters concern the changed nature of labour relations in East Asia since the 1980s. Frederic

Book reviews

Deyo uses four cases of divergent new worker regimes. The Chinese state dominates management–labour relations, and has sided with capital to create a more flexible system involving greater use of temporary employees, along with a steep decline in the number of workers in salaried employment. Government still controls the number of rural workers migrating to urban areas through a revamped *hukou* identity card system. Despite Korea's heavy industrial concentration, its strong unions have given workers heftier legal protection, along with some of Asia's most effective social insurance programmes. Philippine and Thai labourers have extensive formal rights, yet in practice usually are at the mercy of employers. Ching Kwan Lee complements Deyo with a focused China–Korea comparison. He suggests that commoditization (turning workers into mere replaceable units) and casualization (extensive use of temporary workmen) are common in both countries, but that Korea has managed to allow more organization and give fuller real protections to labourers.

The collection should be commended for its stress on the problems of ordinary workers in a post-developmental age, but could have dealt much more with other downsides of the Asian model, such as growing inequality, continued lack of respect for human rights and worsening environmental degradation. Environmental conditions have dramatically improved in the richest Asian countries, but remain abysmal in China, India and much of South-East Asia. Chinese and Indian leaders acknowledge that they have serious problems, but so far their efforts to cope with mounting environmental externalities have been woefully inadequate, at best.

Sweeping changes in management, finance and labour relations may make Asia more like the rest of the capitalist world, but Walter and Zhang suggest there is no true convergence. More distressing, at least for Asians, is that Asia's successful model, a blend of strong states and well-controlled capitalist institutions, neo-mercantilism and export-oriented strategies, corporatism and politically docile populations, may be a thing of the past. Pundits are fond of saying that this is the Asian century. If the Asian developmental state is truly obsolete, can Asian economies continue to dazzle the world as they have over the past half century? Can a networked Japan, co-governed Taiwan or *chaebol*/strong union Korea provide the kind of long-lasting examples that their erstwhile capitalist developmental states once did? Stefan Halper has suggested a 'Beijing consensus' that makes the Chinese authoritarian hybrid model more attractive to emerging economies. The contributors ought to confront these issues more directly.

As with many edited volumes, there is some unevenness across chapters. South-East Asia could use more coverage generally. Gomez's chapter on state–business relations does not discuss the entire South-East Asian region, and concentrates almost exclusively on Malaysia. The labour market section focuses heavily on the North-East Asian economies. The excellent pieces on Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand need more rigorous comparison. Even so, the book can be a valuable stimulus to further research, and a key text for upper-level undergraduate and postgraduate Asian political economy courses.

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Values in translation: human rights and the culture of the World Bank. By Galit A. Sarfaty. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. 2012. 216pp. Index. Pb.: £21.50. ISBN 978 0 80476 352 3. Available as e-book.

In recent years, a large number of private financial corporations, bilateral development agencies and multilateral development institutions, such as Equator Principles banks, the

British Department for International Development and the United Nations Development Programme, have embraced human rights in their official policies (pp. 24–30). Against this trend, and notwithstanding strong pressure from civil society organizations (pp. 30–6), the World Bank still lacks a staff policy to mitigate the human rights impacts of its projects and does not apply human rights conditionalities to its lending activities. Why has the World Bank been so slow to take on human rights? The book by Galit Sarfaty attempts to solve this puzzle.

So far, the academic literature has offered two different explanations. Political scientists have highlighted opposition by member countries represented in the Bank's board of executive directors; lawyers have pointed at the Bank's articles of agreement, which expressly forbid the institution to take political issues into consideration. Sarfaty argues these obstacles do not fully explain the marginality of human rights within the Bank. On the one hand, opposition by member countries is mitigated by institutional constraints that favour staff autonomy, such as consensual decision-making processes, the short time horizon of the executive directors' mandate and a multiple principals-agent relationship between member states and bureaucratic staff (pp. 52–6). On the other hand, traditional legal arguments are increasingly challenged, both within and outside the institution. For instance, scholars have suggested that under current international customary law the Bank is actually obliged to respect human rights (pp. 59–72).

According to Sarfaty, the underemphasized factor that helps explain human rights inertia by the Bank is its organizational culture. In particular, extensive ethnographic research (which brought to surface the institution's informal practices, power dynamics among the staff, incentive systems and unspoken assumptions) allowed the author to discover a dominant subculture of economists, normatively and practically reluctant to integrate a moral and/or legal conception of human rights into the Bank's operations.

The argument is straightforward. Large organizations often do not have homogeneous cultures, but multiple subcultures. As the Bank's employees have undergone specialized formal education, the institution's subcultures are mainly based on professional backgrounds (p. 92). Among different subcultures—which are in conflict with each other, as professional groups speak distinct languages and exhibit competing visions for what development means and how it can be achieved—economists dominate: they are the most numerous group, they occupy the majority of senior management positions and their expertise is considered the most valuable to the mission of promoting poverty reduction (pp. 96–100). In comparison with economists, the status of lawyers is less prestigious: members of the legal department do not typically become intellectual leaders among the staff or key players in policy-making and agenda setting (pp. 100–104).

As a consequence, a moral and/or legal interpretation of human rights could not, and cannot, succeed in the World Bank: it simply does not correspond to economic ways of thinking. Suffice it to mention that while economists are used to think in terms of trade-offs, human rights are non-negotiable principles; while economists may accommodate a human rights instrumental frame (under which human rights are means to the end of economic growth), human rights lawyers and activists think that rights are intrinsic values (ends in themselves). Sarfaty thus concludes that 'the clash between an intrinsic interpretive frame and an instrumental one is an underemphasized factor that has hindered the development of a human rights consciousness among staff' (p. 107).

The most recent attempts to integrate human rights into the Bank's practices (whose success or failure cannot be fully assessed yet) have acknowledged this hiatus. Human rights have been 'economized' in order to be heard: internal advocates framed human rights as

quantifiable and offered empirical analysis demonstrating that they are instrumentally valuable to achieving economic development goals (p. 125–8).

Values in translation is extremely worthwhile reading for those who are interested in understanding and fostering change in large organizations and/or advancing human rights in the development sector. Now that a new review of the Bank's environmental and social policies, known as the 'safeguard policies', began in November 2012, the dilemma which needs to be solved by practitioners is the following: Sarfaty's book shows that a key condition for the internalization of human rights norms in development and financial institutions is finding an interpretative fit with their economic subculture. Yet this may bring the risk of depoliticizing human rights. As Sally Engle Merry observed, if human rights 'are translated so fully that they blend into existing power relationships completely, they lose their potential for social change' (p. 131). Where to strike the right balance?

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What money can't buy: the moral limits of markets. By Michael Sandel. London: Allen Lane. 2012. 256pp. Index. £20.00. ISBN 978 1 84614 471 4. Available as e-book.

Is anything up for sale, or are there 'items' to which market dynamics should not apply? This is the question Michael Sandel asks in *What money can't buy*. In the subtitle—*The moral limits of markets*—he reveals his answer and tells the reader that no, not everything is up for sale. Friendship, love and awards cannot be bought; we should not buy apologies or wedding toasts; and should avoid giving cash instead of gifts. Paying somebody to apologize on our behalf depletes the gesture from its intrinsic meaning; buying a wedding speech on the internet is lazy and tacky; as for cash gifts, well, it all depends. Does the underlying relationship become 'commodified' as a result of this choice? I do not think so provided that it is appropriate within that relationship to give and accept cash gifts—for example between grandparents and teenaged grandchildren. It would be different for gifts to lovers, in which case giving cash would be a very bad idea. Whether it is morally wrong, however, is open to discussion.

But is it acceptable to use markets to allocate babies put up for adoption? And should there be a market for organs for transplantation? Intuitively, the majority of us think that this is deeply and morally wrong because babies or kidneys are not commodities that can be transacted in the market—no matter how transparent and well regulated this market may be. Sandel articulates our intuitive rejection using the fairness argument and the corruption argument. Offering a kidney for sale or renting out one's forehead for advertising (p. 184) is not an act of free will. Selling body parts is regarded as a degrading and even dangerous act that no one in their right mind would freely and happily be willing to perform if they were not forced by severe circumstances (the fairness argument). Moreover, putting organs—or blood, or babies—up for sale would corrupt and degrade actions like donating blood and organs and adopting children (the corruption argument). These actions spring out of values, like civic duty, solidarity and love, which by definition cannot be bought.

In the last three decades, Sandel argues, there has been a commodification of human relations as a result of what he calls 'market triumphalism'. Everything can be sold provided that there is a market for it, and everything has a price that results from the interaction of supply and demand. Sandel guides the reader through a catalogue of 'items' that are up for sale and questions the morality of these sales. This makes for interesting and even entertaining reading, but I am not sure it provides robust evidence in support of Sandel's argument. Back to the examples above: buying a ready-made speech for your

best friend's wedding is not the same as buying a baby (no matter how good the intentions of the buyer are and how much better the baby's life is likely to be). Similarly, it is not the same to offer children cash incentives for good grades as it is to pay a person to give up her ability to procreate—i.e. cash for sterilization. Even if the intentions are good, the implications of these deeds are wrong, but in profoundly different ways. The worst outcome of cash for grades is that children would do their homework only for a cash reward. On the other hand, the case of cash for sterilization could open the door to situations where rich individuals or organizations (including the state) buy the right to procreation of poor and vulnerable individuals. Are these two outcomes comparable?

What money can't buy addresses the anti-market sentiment that has emerged in the post-financial crisis years, but fails to show persuasively what is wrong with the market. Sandel seems to oppose the use of market mechanisms—i.e. price—to allocate scarce resources. Time is a scarce resource for some but an abundant one for others. So why should it be morally wrong to pay somebody to queue for us for tickets to a free civic event if we do not have the time to stand in the queue ourselves? And why should the welfare of the person who queues for herself be diminished by the fact that somebody else is queuing on our behalf? As long as this does not affect the ticket allocation or the price (which in this case should be zero), then everybody should be happy—those who are prepared to queue for free tickets, those who are prepared to pay for somebody else to stand in the queue and those who get a reward for their time spent queuing. Sandel does not analyse the trade-off between money and time, and therefore his argument about the morality of queuing vs. the immorality of paying somebody else for queuing fails to persuade. Of course, everybody hates queuing, and those who can pay in order to avoid it are better off. This is unfair, and indeed markets are unfair in the way they allocate resources, but is this enough to say that they are immoral? And would a mechanism that allocates free theatre tickets to all of a city's residents with, for example, dark hair and blue eyes be fairer? The book raises more questions than it answers. The argument against commoditization of human relations and unregulated markets remains a valid one, but deserves a stronger analysis to be more than just a well-written grudge against markets.

Paola Subacchi, International Economics, Chatham House

Energy, environment and global health

Handbook of oil politics. Edited by **Robert E. Looney.** London and New York: Routledge. 2012. 445pp. Index. £142.50. ISBN 978 1 85743 583 2. Available as e-book.

The words 'oil' and 'politics' are often used in the same breath, although the relationship between the two concepts is far from straightforward. The *Handbook of oil politics* sets out with the ambitious goal to lay bare this interaction between oil and politics 'in all dimensions at both the national and international levels' (p. 3). The result is a comprehensive compilation of relatively short and crisp chapters about key issues related to oil politics, mostly focusing on the supply side of the oil value chain.

The volume, edited by Robert E. Looney, brings together 28 substantive chapters written by experts in the field, each taking a different angle to look at oil politics. The first and largest section of the book deals with the availability of petroleum at reasonable prices. Issues such as peak oil, the oil curse, the role of national oil companies (NOCs) and the functioning of global oil markets are all touched upon in subsequent chapters. Along the

road a few popular myths are debunked, such as that oil supplies are quickly running out and that NOCs are completely different from the major private oil corporations.

Then, in a second part, the book looks at political responses to some of the oil-related challenges. This part only features three chapters: one on energy security (or, more precisely, *oil* security); one on the impact of climate change on the Middle East; and one on the question of whether it is worthwhile for governments to wage wars to secure access to oil fields. While it is certainly interesting to read these chapters on their own, the red thread running through them is not easily discernible. Here, as in other places, the structure of the book comes across as a bit odd.

The next two parts again take up the main focus of the book: the political conditions and consequences of oil extraction and production. A first set of chapters looks at regional dynamics, another set adopts a country perspective. The country chapters concentrate on some important petroleum producers (Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Russia and Brazil) but, curiously, include a discussion of Egypt while leaving out more important hydrocarbon exporters such as Venezuela or Nigeria.

The final part of the book is dubbed 'Key issues for the future', which is somewhat misleading, as it features issues that have already left a huge imprint on the global politics of oil in the past couple of years (e.g. China's impact on oil markets, and oil's role in a carbon-constrained world). Nevertheless, this part contains some of the most interesting chapters, including those on global oil governance, sovereign wealth funds and the role of the dollar in oil trade. Strangely, this section features another chapter on the oil curse, which is also treated in the first section.

The book can be criticized on two grounds. First, by focusing overwhelmingly on the supply side, it overlooks issues on the demand side (such as energy efficiency and conservation). Though alternative energy sources are touched upon in different chapters, the only chapter dedicated to this issue is limited to the United States (chapter 17). Second, even though the book comprises a set of outstanding chapters, little effort has been done to put it all together. There is no concluding chapter tying some of the bigger pieces together, nor do the different chapters speak to each other directly. A comprehensive analytical framework for understanding current developments in global oil politics thus remains elusive.

This criticism notwithstanding, the *Handbook of oil politics* is an interesting read, exposing the vast complexity and diversity of the interplay between oil and politics. Those unfamiliar with the workings of the petroleum industry will find the book very instructive. Given the broad scope and comprehensive treatment, even the most seasoned energy expert will learn from reading some of the specialized chapters in this volume.

Thijs Van de Graaf, Ghent University, Belgium

The health of nations: towards a new political economy. By Gavin Mooney. London and New York: Zed. 2012. 212pp. Index. Pb.: £16.99. ISBN 978 1 78032 059 5.

The central thesis of Gavin Mooney's book is summarized in the subtitle of his introduction: 'neoliberalism kills'. Mooney, initially an actuary and then later a health economist, has been questioning some of the fundamental premises for setting priorities in the health systems of the world for some time. In this book, he traces the origins of the problems of applying the discipline of economics to health issues to the dominance of the medical profession and the associated pharmaceutical industry, as well as to the dominance of corporate power in society. To support this diagnosis, the book begins with four chapters designed to buttress his argument with a series of technical attacks (the use of quality-adjusted life

years, QALYs, and associated league tables for priority setting) and much broader criticisms based on a critique of the intrusion of capitalism into healthcare provision. None of the major international organizations escape criticism, including the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Trade Organization, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. All of these organizations, he argues, operate on behalf of the West and impose inappropriate neo-liberal policies on middle- and low-income countries.

These attacks may be justified but they are largely unsupported with evidence and so miss some of the equally powerful targets, such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and the Gates-funded Health Metrics and Evaluation Institute at the University of Washington, both now taking on roles formerly deemed a WHO preserve.

The third part of the book deals with case-studies beginning with the United States and the United Kingdom, and extending to South Africa and Australia. Here, the beginnings of the proposed solution start to emerge. Using the example of what happened in Western Australia, Mooney describes the 'capture' of Curtin University (where he was once employed) by the conglomerate Alcoa. The conclusion is that the battle between the interests of local communities and such conglomerates is very unbalanced, usually resulting in local communities losing out.

In the fourth and fifth parts of the book, the author turns to possible solutions, beginning with a theoretical section on the importance of communitarian claims. This is a difficult section to read, since it deals only briefly with complicated ideas such as Amartya Sen's capability approach as well as preference theory and communitarian claims. It is unclear in the theoretical section whether the author is proposing a totally communal system of health care, omitting all aspects of the private sector and private corporations from healthcare provision. Part of the solution seems to lie in what Mooney refers to as 'deliberative democracy' in order to return to these rather unclear communitarian values. There is more along these lines until we arrive at the last set of case-studies which are supposed to bear out the value and importance of the so-called communitarian approach. The usual suspects are held up as models—Kerala, Cuba and Venezuela—but the analyses are descriptive rather than analytic and present little data to bear out the claims for the effectiveness and efficiency of these very different health systems. Life expectancy figures are an unsatisfactory measure of the overall impact of the health system on health since, on the one hand, they capture more what goes on in infancy and early childhood, and on the other, are affected by a whole range of non-health sector determinants of survival.

The conclusion ends up with praise for the three case-studies, in that in Kerala, Cuba and Venezuela, encouraging health outcomes have emerged through using a different political economy of health from the rest of the world. To move the rest of the world towards these shining examples, Mooney recommends a gradual process of power transfer from the current structures to the people. This plan comes with little political analysis but the essential building block appears to be the creation of 'citizens' juries', which Mooney insists have worked well in Australia in redistributing responsibility for health. The ending seems rather shrill in that there is a renewed call for reform among the major financial and development organizations of the world that deal with health affairs. The author offers little in the way of advice on the processes and mechanisms for how the 'global citizenry' can be more fully represented on these bodies. Overall, the book, like Mooney's other books, represents a powerful blast from the left against most of the health systems of the world. Its main flaw is that it remains rather naive at the level of political analysis, both theoretical and empirical. The book might have had more impact had Mooney teamed up with a political scientist rather than relying on his own frustrations with the functioning of the existing systems.

The sad footnote to this book is that Gavin Mooney and his wife were bludgeoned to death in their home in Tasmania in early January 2013. The torrent of tributes and praise for his life and work testify to the consistency and importance of his interest in social justice and inequalities in health around the world. Many have appreciated this alternative voice in the discussion of healthcare systems. Sadly, this book represents the last in the line of influential testimonies that Gavin Mooney produced on these themes throughout his productive life.

Allan G. Hill, Harvard University, USA

International history

The Spanish Holocaust: inquisition and extermination in twentieth-century Spain. By Paul Preston. London: HarperCollins. 2012. 700pp. Index. Pb.: £10.99. ISBN 978 0 00638 695 7. Available as e-book.

The war and its shadow: Spain's civil war in Europe's long twentieth century. By Helen Graham. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press. 2012. 212pp. Pb.: £22.50. ISBN 978 1 84519 511 3.

These books, by Britain's leading historians of the Spanish Civil War, one (Helen Graham) a student of the other (Paul Preston), reach similar conclusions but are different types of product which will complement each other. Between them they illuminate a tragic conflict, and its long aftermath in Francoism and Spain's tortuous path to democracy, as well as representing a decisive step in placing the Spanish Civil War within the 'long' twentieth century, referenced in Graham's title, with its grim record of extreme nationalisms.

Paul Preston concerns himself, within the multiple excesses perpetrated during and after the Civil War, with the issue of extra-judicial killings by both sides in the conflict, that of the 'rebels', the army whose uprising triggered the war, and the sections of the population which followed it, the 'Nationalists' as they termed themselves, and that of the Republicans, those sections of the population which though divided among themselves supported the Republic: 'Fascists' and 'Reds' as, in the course of the bitter conflict, they came to call each other. His purpose 'is to show as far as possible what happened to civilians and why'. This he achieves by means of the most thorough documentation, in the order in which events occurred, of the killings perpetrated on both sides, providing a narrative of violence whose course serves to answer the question why.

The conclusions of his 700 pages of text are distilled within a short prologue. The extermination had its source in the military uprising of 17–18 July 1936. This, to have any chance of success, in a country split down the middle, as Spain was in 1936, had involved extreme violence, delivered initially within the army itself, with all officers who refused to support the uprising being shot. This done, where the uprising had been successful, the violence was extended to all those who, in the words of General Mola who master-minded the plot, 'do not think as we do'. In areas which remained loyal to the Republic, there was a reciprocating terror perpetrated by different elements, but never sanctioned by the Republic's political leaders—it arose from a breakdown in law and order—which was initially spontaneous and defensive and then intensified, as news of the rebels' bloody purging spread, their troops advanced and dangers from a 'fifth column', whose participation in the revolt had been called upon by Mola, emerged. An early peak in the violence then occurred as Franco's 'column of death' approached Madrid, with the occurrence of the only very large-scale massacre perpetrated behind Republican lines, that of 'Paracuellos', in which some

2,500 rebel army officers, imprisoned in Madrid, were killed at the moment of chaos when Franco's troops entered Madrid and a transfer of authority was in process from the Republican government, which had withdrawn to Valencia, to a Junta de Defensa. In a scrupulous, forensic reconstruction—as far as the sources permit—of this episode, Preston shows that a young Santiago Carrillo, appointed Counsellor of Public Order in the Junta, Comintern personnel present in Madrid and anarchist militias were at least aware of the massacring. Anarchists, he states in his prologue, provide the only exceptions to the predominating 'hot blooded and reactive' characteristic of violence on the Republican side, influenced by their rhetoric of a 'need for "purification" of a corrupt society'. As, with Madrid's resistance, the conflict graduated into a long-term war of attrition, the Franco side fought a 'slow war of annihilation', 'an investment in violence' as much directed towards providing a basis for the future authoritarian regime which he was shaping as towards targeting any military threat. In contrast, the violence on the Republic's side was checked, what remained being deployed to tackle a political sectarianism which was undermining the war effort. The extent of Nationalist extra-judicial killings—some 150,000 of the *c.* 200,000—their persistence, their concerted basis and justification on the basis of a warped anti-Semitism, within which the Republic was cast as the outcome of a Jewish-Bolshevik-Masonic plot, are Preston's principal grounds for his choice of title.

Helen Graham's book, though published last year with Preston's, in fact followed his, Spanish editions of which appeared in 2011, and thus incorporates his findings. It differs in its focus. While Preston's provocative title is designed merely to 'suggest' that the Civil War 'be examined in a broadly comparative context', her book is devoted fully to achieving this aim. One of its provenances, it emerges from her acknowledgements, is the teaching of a collective MA course on 'European civil wars'. It differs too in its form, effectively seven interlocking essays, which incorporate major Spanish historical themes—adjustment to an industrialization-driven crisis of values and hierarchies, which she traces back to the 1890s; the directing of violence towards civilians, which eventually became a response to this; Francoism and its longevity—within the European contexts of which they form part and a series of scintillating vignettes—on a persecuted family, the International Brigaders and the Francoist penal system—advertising 'a mode of history writing' embedded in 'human lives', and illuminating the working out at the micro level of the macro narratives with which she is concerned. Included is poignant, unusual photographic evidence—a further medium—and 50 pages of notes containing much original material, suggesting that there is a larger book on the blocks.

The broader focus makes Graham's book in some ways the more depressing of the two. Spain, it shows, was not a one-off but rather a distinctive victim of a relatively isolated southern European variant of extreme nationalism, one whose development was assisted by the fascist Axis powers and facilitated by the democracies' policy of 'non-intervention'. On the other hand, her brilliant demonstration of the European context relativizes and aids comprehension and her compassionate focus on individuals, particularly her chapter on the Brigaders (her inaugural lecture at Royal Holloway), serves to incite engagement and sympathy.

Preston's 'chronicle of inhumanity' is relieved by glimpses of contingency (it could have been averted) thrown up by his lucid, thorough, convincing and imaginative narrative—only a lifetime dedicated to Spanish historical research makes such history possible—and also by the professional nature, and collective characteristics, of the research which he has completed and the massive contribution which it makes to the 'historical truth' needed if closure is ever to be achieved about the Civil War. The Spanish editions acknowledge 128

collaborators in his enterprise, stretching the length and breadth of Spain, with outcrops elsewhere: their 'readiness to share with me ideas and material', he writes, 'was one of the most heartening and memorable features of a difficult task'.

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Britain and America after World War II: bilateral relations and the beginnings of the Cold War. By Richard Wevill. London: I. B. Tauris. 2012. 287pp. Index. £59.50. ISBN 978 1 84885 980 7.

This book has a misleading title. It suggests a study of Cold War origins from the point of view of Anglo-American relations, but it is nothing of the sort. Although it deals with the period 1945–8, which is widely accepted as the period during which the Cold War emerged, it concerns itself with the role of the British embassy in Washington in four key issues in Anglo-American relations which, with the exception of the fourth (the Marshall Plan), are only tangentially related to the Cold War. It is, in fact, more a contribution to the history of the so-called 'special relationship' or to what John Young describes on the back cover as 'the literature of diplomatic practice' than to the history of the origins of the Cold War itself.

That said, the book is well worth reading. The author has scoured public and private archives on both sides of the Atlantic in order to tell his story. Indeed, the only gap to which the reviewer would draw attention—and a strange one in view of the author's own background in banking and interest in economic and financial issues—is the absence of any reference to the Bank of England's voluminous archive.

The book's opening chapter sets the stage with a detailed study of the British embassy in Washington and its staff and how it worked, together with an analysis of the US political environment in which it operated. As previously indicated this is followed by four case-studies on the American loan, nuclear cooperation, Palestine and the Marshall Plan. In each chapter Wevill examines the role of the embassy in terms of the accuracy of its interpretation of American policy and its role in influencing both the US and British governments. Its record, for the most part, was good and, in addition to the familiar ambassadorial figures of Lord Halifax and Lord Inverchapel, some hitherto unsung heroes emerge in the shape of Robert Brand, Alan Judson and Gordon Munro, although Roger Makins—whose biography Wevill is writing—'was completely outmanoeuvred by General Groves during the 1945–6 atomic energy discussions' (p. 229). There are also a number of references to the black sheep of the embassy family, Donald Maclean, and while the author deliberately refrains from discussing his espionage activities (p. 235), he cites on page 165 a devastating example of the kind of sensitive material which passed through his hands, the contents of which he presumably passed on to his masters in Moscow.

Despite the efforts of the embassy and its staff, the author's case-studies show that the US administration repeatedly ignored and overrode British interests. It is generally known that Britain originally wanted a financial gift from the United States and ended up with a loan on unfavourable terms; that the Americans forced the British to abandon the Quebec Agreement on atomic cooperation; and that the Truman administration, influenced by a powerful Zionist lobby, completely undermined British policy in Palestine. However, these episodes come across all the more powerfully in Wevill's detailed and measured prose.

There are a few cases in which more information would have been helpful. Harold Laski is mentioned on pages 77 and 119, but his position in the Labour Party and hence the suspicion of him in the United States is not explained. Similarly, George Kennan's name pops up on page 187, but the role of his 'long telegram' in the evolution of American policy towards the Soviet Union at the end of 1945 and the beginning of 1946 (described on pp. 177–8)

is not mentioned. Finally, one would have welcomed a discussion by Wevill, the former investment banker, of the late Edmund Dell's argument that Britain should have held out for better terms in the American loan negotiations. Nevertheless, this is a book which all students of Anglo-American relations will ignore at their peril.

Geoffrey Warner

Moscow, 1937. By **Karl Schlögel.** Cambridge: Polity. 2012. 652pp. Index. £25.00. ISBN 978 0 74565 076 0.

A landmark book, a monumental volume both in size and significance, Karl Schlögel's total history of Moscow during the fateful year 1937 ranks among the best of Sovietology, from Robert Conquest, Richard Pipes, Leonard Schapiro, Robert C. Tucker and Adam Ulam to Sheila Fitzpatrick, Yuri Slezkine and Stephen Kotkin. Neither a supporter of the traditional totalitarian paradigm nor a firebrand revisionist, the author is a genuine historian interested in facts, emotions, sociological, psychological and political details.

The book captures the interplay between utopian aspirations and murderous practices in the building of Stalin's universe of total domination. The original German title, *Terror und Traum* (dream), is telling; it is no exaggeration to say that in 1937 Bolshevism, in its Stalinist incarnation, truly ran amok. What made the situation insanely puzzling was the mixture of normalcy and aberration in everyday experiences: on the one hand people continued their lives as if nothing extraordinary was happening; on the other they knew that life would never be the same in the aftermath of the catastrophe. Schlögel succeeds admirably in denormalizing the appearance of normalcy and in highlighting the various survival strategies under unspeakable conditions of generalized fear and pathological suspicion. His analysis of the suicide of Sergo Ordzhonkidze, one of Stalin's most trusted lieutenants and a prominent member of the dictator's inner circle, reveals the expansion of paranoid delusions at the highest level of the bureaucracy. It did not matter any more if one had known Koba (Stalin's youth nickname) for decades. As a matter of fact, history needed to be rewritten to accommodate the new distribution of power relations at the top.

What historian Robert C. Tucker once identified as the key component of the Soviet political mind, the obsession with the universal transformation of nature, society and man, reached its climax in the vindictive pageants staged throughout that year. Being the capital of Stalin's utopian empire, Moscow's life concentrated and exacerbated the tyrant's fixation with enemies and his compulsive need to purify society of any real and—especially—imagined enemies. The propaganda machine presented the purges as the will of the people and organized a mass dramaturgy of hatred, endless rituals of exposure and vilification meant to generate a universal sense of panic and unconditional surrender of any critical faculties. Under these circumstances, no one, not even 'the bloody dwarf' Nikolai Yezhov, head of the dreaded NKVD, Stalin's secret police, could feel safe.

Schlögel documents impressively the complicity of western fellow travellers who refused to take the measure of the abysmal atrocities. Among them, the German exiled writer Lion Feuchtwanger, who notoriously trusted Stalin's version of the witch-hunts, published an infamous book with the title *Moscow 1937*, an apologia for the official Soviet line regarding the need to eliminate all those who challenged or might have challenged the leader's omniscience. Whether he believed it or not, Feuchtwanger supported the mendacious indictment of Old Bolsheviks accused of surreal charges and described Stalin as a wise statesman dedicated to the defence of his country. He was not alone: *New York Times* correspondent Walter Duranty contributed to the dissemination of the Stalinist legends;

US Ambassador Joseph Davies, a champion of gullibility, was convinced that the Old Bolsheviks had indeed conspired to murder Stalin, Molotov, Kaganovich, Voroshilov, etc.

The author seems to know everything about that fateful year, in Moscow, in the USSR and in the world. He has a great passion for kaleidoscopic perspective, which sometimes translates into overwhelming onomastic cascades, endless transcripts of speeches and documents. Unearthing these sources is obviously useful and welcome, but the lay reader will not make much sense of them. In other words, Schlögel's book is addressed fundamentally to academics, including graduate students, and journalists interested in this bloodiest moment of the Soviet tragedy.

One of the most amazing, truly paradoxical facts that Schlögel examines thoroughly was that even under those circumstances some people continued to keep diaries. It was one thing for the American ambassador to keep notes of his impressions; and another for the wife of writer Mikhail Bulgakov, the author of the great novel of those times, *The Master and Margarita* (a 'drawer' masterpiece, published only decades later). One of the most important diaries discussed by Schlögel was kept by Georgi Dimitrov, a Bulgarian communist and anti-Fascist hero, head of the Communist International (the Comintern). Dimitrov was one of the participants in a reception held on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the October Revolution. We owe to him the transcript of Stalin's toast on that occasion, one of the most cynical and outspoken confessions of the dictator's view of the need to liquidate the 'enemies of the people' not only for crimes they had presumably committed, but also for crimes they might have planned to commit, or for what they might have thought.

On that occasion Stalin insisted that the purges should aim not only at the designated enemies, but also at their kin, to the end of time. This was the logic of Hitler's exterminism: transformism wedded to genocide. In February 1937, at the Plenum of the Central Committee when Lenin's favourite Nikolai Bukharin was horribly humiliated, Stalin elaborated his theory of the sharpening of class struggle as the country advanced towards socialism—the ultimate dialectical nonsense. Members of the Bolshevik Olympus listened to the *vozhd* (leader) without ever expressing their revulsion or anguish. They enthusiastically approved of the infamy. This was an adjustment to absurdity rooted in the hope that somehow they would be spared the inclement fate of those denounced as traitors. Historian Adam Ulam once called this abject abdication 'the price of sanity'. In fact, 1937 was the year of absolute insanity and Moscow became the capital city of diabolical delirium.

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Russia and Eurasia

Svidetel'stvo iz-za kulis rossiiskoi politiki. Soviet and post-Soviet politics and society, vol. III. By **Andrei A. Kovalev**, with a foreword by **Peter Reddaway**. Stuttgart: ibidem. 2012. 446pp. Pb.: €34.90. ISBN 978 3 83820 302 7. [Testimony from the wings of Russian politics.]

Some of those who have had prolonged dealings with the most sordid and disreputable Soviet/Russian institutions—for instance, the KGB/FSB, the CPSU/United Russia Party and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA)—insist, and rightly so, that even there one could find at least a few decent and honourable officials who, while not, as a rule, blowing any whistles, were doing what they could to fulfil their duties as conscientiously, professionally and honestly as possible, hoping to improve the image, reputation and future of their country. One such person is the author of this account, a man who, like his father, Anatoly

Kovalev, seized the opportunities offered in the second half of the 1980s to end—if, as it turned out, only temporarily—the abuse of psychiatry, the practice of arresting people for political reasons, the discrimination against and persecution of religious believers, and the worst excesses of the Cold War. How he and a few colleagues in the MFA helped the three leading figures promoting glasnost and perestroika—Gorbachev, Aleksandr Yakovlev and the new Foreign Minister, Shevardnadze—is related in the first of these two volumes, which jointly form volume III of the *Soviet and post-Soviet politics and society* series.

At first sight it might seem strange that the key role in the liberalization of Soviet domestic policies was played by the foreign ministry, but Yakovlev had spent many years as ambassador in Canada and Gorbachev (Kovalev does not mention this) was apparently strongly influenced by Czechoslovak friends who had tried hard to give communism a human(e) face in their country. What is clear is that the view that a ‘progressive’ faction in the KGB, some of whose officers were as well acquainted with the West as some employees of the MFA, also supported the allegedly Andropov-influenced Gorbachev (Andropov had been the Soviet ambassador in Hungary in 1956) does not hold much water. From very early on in the Gorbachev period, the KGB was doing all it could to derail his strategy, even, according to Kovalev, deliberately causing shortages of consumer goods in the shops (vol. I, pp. 98, 105–106) in an attempt to convince the public that their growing economic problems were entirely the fault of perestroika.

The author is very sparing in his use of the word ‘revolution’, especially in relation to the coup and counter-coup in 1991. To oversimplify, he suggests (vol. I, p. 120) that there were three groups in the top leadership of the USSR: the Gorbachev faction was overthrown by the brashly incompetent Kryuchkov-led clique, which was quickly replaced by the rashly incompetent Yeltsin-led clan which, during the following decade, became ‘the family’, with all its *mafiosi* connotations and consequences. Readers can decide for themselves whether this analysis is convincing, but it certainly seems to explain why there was practically no lustration, why the leaders of the coup got off so lightly, why the ‘trial’ of the CPSU and the KGB petered out, and why there was no serious attempt to establish a constitutional assembly. If Russia, after 1917, needs another revolution, that revolution—one hopes it will be of the velvet variety—still lies ahead.

What is particularly interesting in volume two is the suggestion that the undermining of the counter-coup authorities by the original coup authorities (*avtoritet* as well as *vlasti*) began very shortly after Yeltsin’s assumption of power. Whether there was a long-term strategy is unclear, but the gradual handover of more and more power to Putin from 1996 onwards seems to form a pattern whereby one rather incompetent and ruthless gang was partly replaced by a no less incompetent but even more ruthless gang at the turn of the millennium. If one accepts this interpretation, it explains both the similarities and the differences between the regime headed by Yeltsin and the system headed by Putin.

It should be added that Kovalev, a professional historian who, *inter alia*, worked in the Soviet and Russian MFAs, in the Institute for the Study of the USA and Canada, as an adviser to President Gorbachev, in the United Nations in Geneva, in the Russian Security Council and in the Russian representative office in Brussels, writes as a professional diplomat and may not entirely agree with the above crude summaries of some of the key points he makes in a less clear-cut way. What he does spell out, completing the book in April 2011, is that he does not expect any changes for the better in his country’s current political system any time soon. One could add that there are few signs of sincere, widespread, active ‘repentance’ for the ‘Soviet’ period of Russia’s history a quarter of a century after Shevardnadze enabled a fellow Georgian to complete and distribute his amazing film about the long-term impact

of Stalin (and therefore of Lenin) on the future of Russia (Tengiz Abuladze's *Repentance*). If Kovalev could turn these 'sketches' into a more personal memoir and perhaps be a little more undiplomatic in his remarks about ominous characters such as Prikhod'ko (vol. I, pp. 135–6), Shoigu (vol. I, pp. 158–9, vol. II, pp. 47, 120–1), S. Ivanov (vol. I, p. 144), Fradkov (vol. I, pp. 161–2), Adamov (vol. I, pp. 137–41) and others (his attitude to Putin is quite clear enough already), it would be well worth translating the result into English. Those who are interested in contemporary Russia's prospects but don't know Russian should read Peter Reddaway's foreword, which clarifies some of Kovalev's key points.

Martin Dewhurst, University of Glasgow, UK

Middle East and North Africa*

After the sheikhs: the coming collapse of the Gulf monarchies. By Christopher M. Davidson. London: Hurst. 2012. 300pp. Index. £29.99. ISBN 978 1 84904 189 8.

This ambitious new book from Christopher Davidson pulls no punches: the author predicts that most of the six Gulf monarchies will be unable to survive in their present form beyond the next two to five years. For this reason, the book is mysteriously unavailable in several Gulf countries, but is all the more hotly debated by Gulf nationals, including some in official circles. There are only a few writers from the Gulf who would dare to make such strong statements in public—which could lead them to fall foul of laws against insulting rulers or advocating changes to the system of government—but the future prospects of monarchy itself are discussed at least in private across the Gulf.

While there are few analysts prepared to go as far as Davidson in setting such a timeline, it is natural that the Arab uprisings, and the collapse of several Arab regimes that were both presumed to be extremely resilient and closely allied to the West, would lead to questions about the durability of the West's strategically important allies in the Gulf. Yet many policy-makers seem to be all but ignoring this question, perhaps because it is so inconvenient. It has become conventional wisdom in many quarters to suggest that, where there was once presumed to be an Arab exception, there is now a monarchical exception.

Apart from Bahrain, little international attention has been paid to the protests that have been taking place in four out of the six Gulf countries (the exceptions being Qatar and the United Arab Emirates). There are still plenty of analysts asking 'whether' the Arab Spring will reach the Gulf. If the Arab Spring is understood in its broad sense—including a new wave of ideas and fresh thinking; challenges to political structures; the articulation of youth demands for greater participation and redistribution of both economic opportunities and political power—rather than being narrowly defined as successful regime change, then it is clear that it is a region-wide phenomenon. It has put Gulf governments on the defensive, and has generated a wide-ranging debate about future political and social development, among both the older generation of established Gulf intellectuals, and a younger generation increasingly addicted to political debate on Twitter. Even in Qatar, the world's wealthiest country in per capita terms, a group of writers has just published a new Arabic book, *The people want reform ... in Qatar, too* (Muntada Al Ma'aref), based on regular political discussion meetings hosted by Ali Al-Kuwari. While most protesters in the Gulf have, like these writers, called for reform, not revolution, there have been calls for a republic in Bahrain and direct criticisms of the rulers by a minority in most of the countries.

* See also Malise Ruthven, *Encounters with Islam: on religion, politics and modernity*, pp. 515–6; Oz Hassan, *Constructing America's freedom agenda for the Middle East: democracy or domination*, pp. 553–4.

Any book arguing that the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) monarchies cannot last needs first to answer the question of why previous predictions of their demise—such as Fred Halliday's *Arabia without sultans* (Penguin, 1974)—have not come true. Davidson therefore begins the book by reviewing the existing literature, which shifted from predictions of democratization, particularly common before the 1970s' oil boom, to a more recent focus on the resilience of monarchy. (It would be an interesting exercise to plot the proportion of articles published each year that arguing for and against the durability of the Gulf monarchies against the oil price; periods of low oil prices typically see more expressions of dissent.)

The first half of the book examines the political strategies that different Gulf rulers use to legitimize the monarchy at home and abroad and to strike implicit 'social contracts' or 'ruling bargains' with their populations. Usefully, he draws on both the socio-economic explanations (such as rentier state theory, concentrating on the state's ability to build patronage networks by distributing the windfall income from oil resources, and examinations of the fragmented labour market and lack of either an indigenous working class or an independently wealthy middle class) and the less tangible aspects of legitimizing monarchies through identity politics (top-down nation-building strategies, the teaching of carefully constructed official versions of history in schools and state media, the construction of national identity and the development of 'personality cults' around at least some of the rulers)—the latter helping to explain the huge sums invested in art galleries, football teams, hosting the World Cup and Formula One, and so on. Both aspects of the analysis are needed; for instance, rentier theory alone fails to explain why wealthy Kuwait has seen so many protests. Davidson goes on to examine Gulf governments' efforts to prioritize building influence in the western countries that are their key guarantors of security against external threats; their growing efforts to gain influence with rising eastern powers, a less well-covered area; and their use of aid and peacekeeping in the broader global south.

The second half of the book goes on to argue why Davidson thinks these strategies will no longer prove adequate to ensure the continued survival of the monarchies in their current form. Here, the author identifies a range of underlying problems and pressures. Perhaps the most convincing argument that something has to give is the unsustainability of the current model of growth, which has been predicated on more than a decade of fiscal expansion and on most of the productive labour being carried out by expatriates. The fiscal model is not sustainable in the longer term, especially if the GCC countries continue eating into their most valuable export resource by consuming more and more heavily subsidized energy at home. Yet for this reader, the book does not go far enough in explaining the mechanics of how the problems and contradictions that are identified—including economic inequality, sectarian and ethnic discrimination, tensions with Iran and increasingly close relations with western countries and (unofficially) Israel—would necessarily destabilize the power structures of these countries. Some of these factors could even benefit the powerful (a forthcoming book by Toby Matthiesen, *Sectarian Gulf* (Stanford University Press), will argue both Saudi Arabia and Bahrain used sectarian divide-and-rule strategies to contain the protests they faced).

Many observers are more optimistic than Davidson about the chances for these countries to find a reformist path, moving beyond the status quo but not entering into revolutions. A significant portion of the population in the Gulf holds, at best, mixed views of the Arab Spring and fears that change could only bring chaos or empower new autocrats. Discussions often revolve around false dichotomies, as if the only options were sticking with the status quo or changing the regime wholesale. Yet there are many possible options for sharing—and circumscribing—political power. There ought to be an option to give people more of

a say in politics in return for economic provisions being gradually scaled back. But much will depend on the mentality and decision-making of ruling families, who face internal divisions over reform.

It is a bad time to be complacent about the survival of monarchies; they will need to adapt if they are to be resilient. Yet western policy-makers often seem certain that collapse will not occur—and seem not to have a plan B. Bruce Riedel from the Brookings Institution recently highlighted the need to analyse how Saudi Arabia might fragment if there was a serious threat to the regime. Unlikely as this may seem today, the number of surprises seen in the Middle East since the Arab uprisings began in—of all places—Tunisia should be a reminder of the need to at least think about the unexpected.

But as Davidson points out in one of the most interesting sections on the Gulf's use of soft power, extensive Gulf government and royal funding for Middle Eastern and Islamic studies at western universities—which provides welcome financial support at a time of budget cuts in the UK and Europe—also provides disincentives for academics loudly to raise these questions if they want to ensure they have reasonable job prospects in the future. Self-censorship about the Gulf exists well beyond the borders of the Gulf states themselves.

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Syria: the fall of the House of Assad. By David W. Lesch. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. 2012. 256pp. Index. £18.99. ISBN 978 0 30018 651 2. Available as e-book.

Revolt in Syria: eye-witness to the uprising. By Stephen Starr. London: Hurst. 2012. 232pp. Index. Pb.: £14.99. ISBN 978 1 84904 197 3.

While books on Syria used to be few and far between, the eruption of the uprising against President Bashar al-Assad in 2011 and the subsequent descent into a bloody civil war has prompted an inevitable flurry of publications. With the conflict still in full flow, these quickly-put-together works may lack some of the academic rigour that will come with more time and reflection, but provide valuable insights to a newly interested public and policy-making community. David Lesch and Stephen Starr offer two such contrasting, yet complementary, perspectives.

Lesch, as a former biographer of Assad who interviewed the President regularly between 2004 and 2010, is uniquely placed to explain the Syrian leader and the violent repression he has overseen. In *Syria: the fall of the House of Assad* Lesch delivers a lucid and engaging narrative of the revolt: its causes, the regime's violent reaction and the international response. Throughout, he deploys his personal experiences of the Syrian President to try to understand how a leader heralded by many (optimistically, perhaps) as a reforming modernizer fell back on the murderous approach of his father and predecessor, Hafez al-Assad, when faced with dissent. Lesch insists that Assad is not the bloodthirsty killer, akin to Saddam Hussein or Muammar Gaddafi, presented in aspects of the media and opposition propaganda, but rather a rational actor with a plan. The problem, he posits, is that this rationale is 'the product of an authoritarian system', geared not towards meeting people's demands, but towards maintaining the status quo and regime survival (p. 211). Assad thus believes he can gradually wear down the opposition 'by a thousand cuts', carefully avoiding the kind of large-scale single massacre that might prompt external intervention and, like his father before him, is willing to contemplate years of isolation until a shift in regional climate might permit Syria's international reintegration. A combination of force and patience, rather than any considerations of compromise or negotiated exit, thus dominates Assad's strategy.

These insights into Assad's thinking are the book's major strength and are particularly valuable to the policy-makers who appear to be its principal audience. Lesch thankfully avoids proscribing policy, instead outlining three useful but equally grim scenarios for Syria's future (p. 215). He places particular emphasis on Washington's response to the crisis, which, while interesting, risks overstating the role of the United States compared to other regional powers. In an otherwise excellent analysis of the different international players in the conflict in chapter seven, for example, US actions are given more consideration than those of Iran, Saudi Arabia and Qatar combined—actors currently exercising far greater influence over Syria's miserable fate.

A scholar who has intimate knowledge of one of the world's most opaque regimes is a rarity, yet at times Lesch could afford more detailed analysis of Syria's inner workings. He remarks, for example, with regard to the security forces, that Assad was 'reluctant to control them (or incapable of doing so)' (p. 67). Yet the two options on either side of these parentheses point to a question that has baffled Syria observers since 2000: is Bashar al-Assad actually in control? While Lesch notes that Assad is not 'all-powerful' (p. 210), he doesn't convey how much actual power he possesses and whom he must share it with besides the vague 'competing interests' and 'powerful voices' he refers to. While it may not be possible accurately to answer these questions now, hopefully once the dust has settled and the Assad regime's obituary has been written, Lesch can once again deploy his considerable expertise and knowledge to shed further light.

Stephen Starr's *Revolt in Syria* approaches the conflict from a different angle. While Lesch concentrates on the top-down machinations of Syria's leader and international forces, Starr, a journalist who worked in Damascus for five years, offers a bottom-up account of the first year of the uprising. Seemingly aimed more at the public than policy-makers, Starr's journalistic prose paints a colourful and detailed picture of how ordinary Syrians have dealt with the descent into civil war. He introduces dozens of complex characters: the wealthy Sunni female student frustrated at her classmates' blind pro-regime sympathies yet unwilling to join the opposition beyond the safe confines of Facebook (p. 153); the Shi'i Ismaili woman protesting the regime every Friday in defiance of her family, before eventually joining the tens of thousands who have been detained (p. 120). Added to these valuable stories are Starr's own unique experiences of being a western journalist in Damascus for five years: from his early encounters with Syrian official inefficiency and incompetence as a writer for the now-defunct *Syria Times* (p. 84), to the tricks he used to avoid detection as one of the few foreign correspondents left living in Damascus after 2011 (p. 161).

These first-hand insights have been lacking in most works on the Syrian uprising, setting Starr apart somewhat. Moreover, he provides much needed detail on some of the forgotten elements of the conflict. In a war often crudely portrayed as Sunni versus Alawites—Assad's sect—he emphasizes the important role of class in driving unrest, detailing the grim life of the rural and urban poor who have led the opposition, while noting the luxury enjoyed in central Damascus by an elite, both Alawi and Sunni, which continues to back the regime. Similarly, he focuses repeatedly on Syria's often forgotten Christian community, explaining their support for Assad and their fears of the Islamist-dominated opposition. While the book would have benefited from a similar exploration of the dynamics of Syria's other large minority communities, the Alawites and Kurds—supportive and ambivalent towards Assad respectively—Starr admits that he was unable to travel to the regions where those groups dominate, remaining restricted to Damascus and its environs.

Starr structures his book around the key themes of the Syrian uprising: sectarianism, youth, class and the role of the state. While this allows for detailed analysis, the reader

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unfamiliar with Syria and its complex history may prefer to read it in conjunction with a more straightforward chronological narrative such as Lesch's to gain a full picture. That said, this remains a valuable and unique contribution to the growing literature on Syria's tragic recent trajectory.

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After the spring: economic transitions in the Arab world. By Magdi Amin et al. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2012. 173pp. Index. £22.50. ISBN 978 0 19992 492 9. Available as e-book.

After the spring offers a relatively short yet policy-rich guide to the unfolding transitions across the Middle East and North Africa. Co-written in one voice by 15 scholars, specialists and former officials, the volume grew out of a workshop organized by the Brookings Institution in Washington DC, in June 2011. At that time, only four months into the 'Arab Spring', expectations were high that the upheaval would pave the way for meaningful structural changes to an authoritarian political and decaying economic order, encapsulated by the statement that 'The first 18 months after President Hosni Mubarak's resignation are critical for Egypt. Expectations of immediate dividends from the revolution are high at a time when growth has decelerated and unemployment is on the rise' (p. 85).

The resulting volume was published towards the end of that 18-month timeframe, at a time of mounting uncertainty about the direction of travel both among states that experienced regime change and those that did not. As a result, while the book captures the sense of anticipation that the Arab Spring offered an opportunity to make transformative changes to Middle Eastern economies, its prescriptive policy recommendations take on the feeling of a 'road not travelled', to paraphrase the title of a 2007 World Bank development report on the region. As the authors themselves note, 'Regime change and the rejection of the old, autocratic political order do not automatically guarantee major improvements in the quality of government in the near future; hard work and major reforms will be needed' (p. 167).

In their chapter on the origins of the Arab Spring, the authors identify an important paradox of 'unhappy growth' in the region immediately prior to the upheaval (p. 51). This arose because most people felt themselves worse off even while macroeconomic indicators of welfare were rising. Thus, despite steady growth in GDP per capita between 2007 and 2010, the number of people describing themselves as 'thriving' in public opinion surveys fell sharply, from 24 per cent to 10 per cent in Tunisia, and from 25 per cent to 12 per cent in Egypt, and satisfaction with the state of public services collapsed from 2009 to 2010. This econometric analysis provides important contextual information to the speed with which political and socio-economic dissent converged so rapidly in North Africa in early 2011.

A sense of lost opportunity two years on is heightened by the meticulous detail with which the volume presents the landscape of policy reforms deemed necessary to overcome the structural and demographic challenges facing the region. Underpinning the authors' argument is the suggestion that political transition alone is insufficient and must be accompanied by significant economic reforms, and that the transitions must achieve intergenerational equity in order to accommodate the bulging youthful population whereby 55 per cent of the population in the Arab world is under the age of 24. To achieve sustainable levels of growth in employment and productivity, the authors suggest that four main economic transitions are required (pp. 6–9): more opportunities for young people need to be created; Arab economies need to modernize their public sectors; a business environment conducive

to private sector development has to be created; and the role of the international community will be integral to connecting regional economies with the global economy.

These wide-ranging prescriptions of 2011 stand in contrast to the economic policies witnessed across the region by the end of 2012. The Arab Gulf states pioneered massive increases in welfare and public spending that are fiscally unsustainable and which already have led the International Monetary Fund to warn Kuwait that it risked exhausting annual oil revenues as early as 2017. Attempts in Jordan to cut subsidies on gasoline sparked widespread political protests that spread rapidly across the country, demonstrating the acute sensitivity of such policy reforms for risk-averse rulers. Meanwhile, Egypt and Tunisia, along with Jordan and Bahrain, have become reliant on multi-billion dollar packages of loans and grants from Gulf countries, notably Qatar, to stave off the danger of imminent economic collapse.

Nor are examples from transitions elsewhere—from southern Europe in the 1970s to Latin America in the 1980s and eastern Europe in the 1990s—uniformly optimistic. The authors document 103 cases of transition ‘toward democracy’ since 1960 (pp. 13–14) and argue that politicians only have a small window of opportunity in which to succeed or fail. They label this a period of ‘extraordinary politics’ when major reforms can be pushed through with ‘an ease that will later vanish’. Thus, ‘the reformers’ objective is to reform before opponents are able to mobilise in order to increase the likelihood of winning reform battles, but also to ensure that reforms are irreversible’. Failure to do so, as in Russia in the 1990s or after Ukraine’s ‘Orange Revolution’ of 2005, ‘risks a reversion on the political front, as old vested interests regain control over the political process’ and capture the momentum for change to produce a messy and incomplete outcome. The authors also find that in 40 per cent of the 103 cases listed above, the country in transition experienced an economic contraction lasting at least five years. The challenge for the Arab world is that policy-makers cannot afford to get the economic transition wrong, yet the outcome looks far more uncertain in 2013 than when *After the spring* was written in 2011.

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Politics and power in the Maghreb: Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco from independence to the Arab Spring. By Michael J. Willis. London: Hurst. 2012. 410pp. £29.99. ISBN 978 1 84904 200 0.

In the introduction, the author rightly deplores the relative lack of attention, academic or otherwise, to the Maghreb and sets out to provide a much needed introductory text for the region. With a largely chronological, narrative approach, he succeeds brilliantly in this task, providing an accurate, comprehensive and readable study of the modern history and politics of Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco. In so doing, he excludes Libya and Mauritania from formal consideration, although they are referenced at certain points in the book, on the defensible grounds of the substantially different nature of their recent political histories and systems. Intended to provide a broad, comparative text, there is no attempt in the book to engage the theoretical literature on the Maghreb, a decision with which this reviewer has no problems.

Chapter one surveys the region’s history prior to the attainment of independence from European colonial rule, emphasizing how the colonial experience differed widely across the region, consolidating the distinct emerging identities of the three countries under discussion. In so doing, the author explores the broad features and themes that characterized Maghrebi politics prior to independence, setting the stage for developments in

the post-independence period. The second chapter examines the political regimes established in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia following the departure of the French and Spanish, detailing how they were constituted and which individuals and groups assumed political power. Despite their distinct identities, all three states had settled into fairly similar political patterns by the early 1970s, characterized by centralized political systems largely focused on the personality of a single individual.

Chapters three to five analyse the roles played by three key actors in the region—the military, political parties and Islamist movements—in shaping the way in which politics developed after independence. The role of the military varied significantly from state to state; however, as the author notes, political regimes in all three of them considered support from the military to be essential to their survival. As for political parties, the Arab Spring that unfolded in the opening months of 2011 exposed their failure across the region to act as agents for the mobilization of the public. In that regard, ‘the near complete absence of established political parties from mass demonstrations in Tunisia and Morocco and the unrest in Algeria during that period was striking’ (p. 151), highlighting the failure of political parties to fill the gap between the state and the population. In turn, the varying experiences of Islamism in the Maghreb have revealed a number of things about the region as a whole as well as about the distinctive features of individual states.

Chapter six looks at the question of Berber identity, an issue that has had a substantial impact on regional politics in recent decades, including in neighbouring Libya where the Berber minority has called for official recognition of Tamazight alongside Arabic in the new national constitution. By linking the pro-democracy movements sweeping the region in 2011 to their demands for a greater space for Berber identity, Berber activists have raised the profile of the identity issue and advanced the goals of their movement. Chapter seven examines the economies of the Maghreb states, concentrating on the interaction of economics and politics.

Chapter eight moves beyond the domestic politics of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia to look at regional relations which have oscillated widely between conflict and cooperation in the post-independence period. Chapter nine explores the interaction of the states of the Maghreb with the outside world, notably Europe, the Middle East and the United States. Members of the wider Maghreb, Libya and Mauritania, enter the discussion here given their role in regional and international events affecting Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia.

Michael J. Willis is well equipped to provide an introductory text for the Maghreb, defined here as Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. Currently the King Mohamed VI Fellow in Moroccan and Mediterranean Studies at St Antony’s College, Oxford, he has had a long association with the region, including a seven-year teaching stint at Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, Morocco. One measure of his knowledge of the region as well as the widespread respect for his scholarship is his recent appointment as an associate editor of *The Journal of North African Studies*, the premier English-language journal for the region. *Politics and power in the Maghreb* is a good book which is accessible in style to a broad readership, including undergraduates, graduate students and the general public. A welcome addition to the literature, it does much to expand our knowledge of the Maghreb and its importance to the wider world.

Ronald Bruce St John

Sub-Saharan Africa

China and Africa: a century of engagement. By David H. Shinn and Joshua Eisenman. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press. 2012. 544pp. £45.50. ISBN 978 0 81224 419 9. Available as e-book.

Fascination with China's role in Africa continues to be strong. Over a dozen general books on this topic have been published just since 2006. This volume stands out for the breadth of its coverage, as signalled by the subtitle: 'a century of engagement', and by its sheer heft. It is the closest we have to an encyclopaedia on China and Africa, with a wealth of detail and examples.

Some of the value of the book comes from the second section, a series of regional chapters that provide brief overviews of China's relations with each country in Africa. However, the book's main contribution is the six chapters that summarize, in a balanced and generally careful way, key aspects of Chinese engagement in Africa: history, politics, trade, investment and aid, military and security ties, and media and communication relations. Among these, several include new material. The chapter on politics highlights relations between the Communist Party of China (CPC) and African governments, spanning 50 years of history and the CPC's current outreach activities. A chapter on military ties and peacekeeping missions offers an update to a topic first analysed in Ian Taylor's *China's new role in Africa* (Lynne Rienner, 2008, reviewed in *International Affairs* 86: 1). The authors document the sharp rise in Chinese arms exports, while noting that as an exporter of weapons, China's role is 'still less than many accounts would lead one to believe' (p. 173). Chapter seven provides insight into the active role of Xinhua, the official Chinese news agency (or 'the Communist Party of China's most loyal mouthpiece' in the authors' words). It also includes a review of the expansion of Chinese media relations on the continent as well as a brief overview of migration (Chinese to Africa, and Africans to China) and the tensions this has provoked. These are helpful reminders that China's accelerated global engagement is not simply economic, but political and cultural.

The book contains a great deal of valuable information, and is being marketed as a comprehensive reference volume. Yet this is where the ambitions of the authors clash with the frustrating realities of doing research on this topic. Chinese opacity, combined with fervid media interest on this issue, makes it particularly challenging to separate fiction and fact. The authors did a brief round of African fieldwork in 2007 visiting nine countries, and supplemented this with trips to China. Yet most of their research—and to their credit, they have done a great deal—relies on newspaper articles, reports by NGOs and think-tanks, and other published research. The varied quality of this source material leads to errors—fewer than might be expected, but more than might be hoped.

Some myths and errors have circulated for years and are repeated in the book. For example, the authors state as fact a discredited rumour that 'Baoding villages' full of Chinese farmers exist in Nigeria, Kenya, Zambia, Uganda, Senegal and Sudan (p. 138). China is said to be building the controversial Gibe 3 dam in Ethiopia (p. 153)—in fact, an Italian company, Salini, began building the dam in 2006 and has completed more than a third of it. The country case-studies are peppered with brief references to 'agreements' trumpeted in the media (rarely by the Chinese). Yet all too often, there is no hint that these headline 'deals' have not gone forward, including China Sonangol's alleged \$8 billion diamond deal in Zimbabwe (p. 333); a \$7 billion investment agreement between China International Fund and Guinea (p. 286); Chinese finance of \$2.3 billion for Mozambique's Mpanda Nkua dam (p. 337); a \$10.4 billion China Eximbank loan in Ghana (p. 290); Chinese telecoms firm

ZTE's '3 million hectares' (more accurately, 100,000 ha) for oil palm in the DRC (p. 294); or a \$686 million railway project in Mauritania (p. 243). This leaves the mistaken impression that the Chinese success rate is far higher than it actually is.

In other cases, the book fails to include important information. Take the case of Zambia, where relations with China became a political issue. The authors relate the story of how during the 2006 presidential election, opposition leader Michael Sata whipped up support for his campaign by repeated (and justified) criticism of Chinese mining investors and traders for not following Zambian laws. China's ambassador to Zambia, Li Baodong, threatened that China might break relations with Zambia if Sata won. This is all accurate, but leaves out a critical fact: Sata also openly advocated giving diplomatic recognition to Taiwan. *This* is what provoked Li's warning. Had Sata followed through, Beijing's 'one China' policy would require China to break ties with Zambia. The authors characterize Li's intervention as 'a political misstep', suggesting that Li was transferred out of Zambia early as a punishment. In fact, Li Baodong was rewarded: he is now China's permanent representative to the United Nations.

The book works best as a broad introduction to many current issues in the China–Africa relationship. Its historical sections are often superb. Readers need to be careful when relying on it for specific facts, or even interpretations of some of the more complicated current episodes in China–Africa relations.

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Getting Somalia wrong?: faith, war and hope in a shattered state. By Mary Harper. London: Zed. 2012. 217pp. Index. Pb.: £12.99. ISBN 978 1 84277 933 0.

Mary Harper is a BBC journalist working on Africa and this book represents the very best of journalistic work on Somalia. She has covered the country since 1991 and has made numerous visits that have enabled her to interview many Somalis both there and in the diaspora, and also to make effective use of Somali voices throughout the book. At the same time she has read the academic literature on the country and is able to relate her narrative to the various debates in a readily accessible manner.

The book is divided into predictable chapters and covers all the main themes. It begins with the tricky subject of clan and country in Somalia, and relates both the complexity and uncertainty of clan with the flexible dynamics of identity that have made it so difficult to pin down. At times clan has been denied and even suppressed, at other times clan is depicted as the basis of much mobilization and conflict. Harper, rightly, makes no attempt to be definitive on such a fluid subject. The next chapter is a historical background that brings out the paradoxes of Somali life. While everyone recognizes the common traits of just about all Somalis, history left them during the independence era around 1960 divided between five different states, yet retaining everywhere their Somali identity. It was to be another recipe for conflict with significant international dimensions.

Harper's chapter on Islamism breaks more new ground. That Somalis are overwhelmingly Muslim has never been in doubt, but what Islam means in that context has been less well covered, especially with regard to the relatively recent rise of Islamism and especially the radical and violent Al-Shabaab movement. Through her own reporting and interviews she is able to give a picture of what it means on the ground and how, in spite of the violence associated with it, there is an appeal especially to rootless young men and simultaneously to people seeking security at almost any price in such a troubled land. Her subsequent discussion of whether to regard Somalia as a 'failed state' brings out both the violent context in

which Al-Shabaab erupted in the mid-2000s and the extent to which Somaliland, and to a lesser extent Puntland, have been able to develop state-like entities in the northern parts of the country.

The next topic is piracy and here too Harper has interesting material from pirates themselves, including their self-identity as 'coast guards' who began by seeking to protect their fishing waters from the intrusion of foreign fleets. As she points out, any long-term solution lies on shore rather than the high seas, and both Somaliland and the short-lived Islamic Courts Union (ICU) had success in reducing the incidence of attacks. This leads into her final chapter on the international community and Somalia, concentrating on the joint Ethiopia and US intervention in 2006 to overthrow the ICU in the name of repressing the rise of Islamist power, but in the process freeing up the ICU's former militia, Al-Shabaab. Invasion apart, the main response internationally has been the convening of successive conferences seeking to build governments from above, with thus far little discernible success. There is no blueprint for a political settlement in Somalia, yet as Harper writes, many Somalis continue to be resourceful and dynamic as they pursue responses to their various challenging situations.

Peter Woodward

Party politics and economic reform in Africa's democracies. By M. Anne Pitcher. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2012. 305pp. Index. Pb.: £18.99. ISBN 978 0 52173 826 2.

One of the key debates on the prospect for development in Africa is the extent to which the near universal advent of multiparty elections is conducive to economic reform. Much attention has been paid to the benefits of privatization, which is seen as the best path to the type of sustained and more diversified economic growth the continent needs. The theory is that if the state divests itself from the all-too-familiar use of state enterprises as vehicles for patrimonialism and follows through on a serious commitment to market reform, the economy will profit and development will ensue. The argument is that the experience of going for privatization creates an institutional virtuous momentum as private actors and a reformed civil service become the norm rather than the exception.

The way the debates have been conducted raises at least three questions. Is the focus on privatization the right one? Is the correlation between party politics and economic reform meaningful? How should democracy (or, rather, multiparty competition) and economic reform be defined? Although a lot of work has been done on these topics, there is still no consensus. The early enthusiasm for the economic potential of multiparty systems has dissipated in the face of the obdurate reality that there is no good correlation between the two. A more balanced approach has concentrated on the extent to which 'good' governance could help achieve development. And yet the obvious fact that some of the countries with the best record of economic progress are far from 'democratic' has complicated a picture that was too simplistic in the first place.

Pitcher's analysis of the putative correlation between party politics and economic reform is more sophisticated. She takes seriously the fact that multiparty politics in contemporary Africa comes in many different forms, even when the template appears to conform to the western model. Her choice of three case-studies—Mozambique, Zambia and South Africa—provides as good a range of the type of 'democratic' polities as can be found today in Africa. Furthermore, the systematic examination of the experience of a large number of other countries, buttressed by quantitative analysis, adds weight to the discussion. However,

the definition of economic reform remains largely confined to the process of privatization that is supposed to be the mainstay of development. The assumption is that it is only the dynamism and independence of the private sector that paves the way for sustained growth. But the characterization of the 'private' sector is narrow and the notion that the state can 'drive' the private sector is not seriously entertained.

Party politics and economic reform in Africa's democracies focuses most attention on institutional developments in contemporary Africa. The theory on which this interpretation rests posits that it is the nature of the dynamics of political and economic reform that is the most significant variable. This is demonstrated in some considerable detail and will certainly carry the conviction of many, if not most, political scientists, especially in the United States. However, the discussion of the three case-studies raises questions about the impact of such 'institutionalization' upon the development of the economy by means of privatization. Indeed, the three chapters—well informed as they are—go some way to complicate a picture that institutional theory has tended to oversimplify. The explanation given of the three different paths is most convincing when it shows why they differ from the theory and why the explanation of the possible correlations between politics and economic reform requires the analysis of factors that are not best accounted for by institutional theory.

Furthermore, the book also shows that the question of privatization may not be the most crucial aspect of reform. The three case-studies illustrate the fact that the extent to which privatization brings about more long-lasting prospects for development hinges on other factors, of which two important ones stand out: how patrimonialism is managed and whether economic reform is set for the long term. In other words, it is not so much privatization that matters but rather the way in which the political leadership commits to the use of rent for the purpose of investing in the type of economic activities that make long-term development viable. Since, in most instances, privatization has served the interests of the political elites, the main difference between countries is not how 'corrupt' they are, but how seriously the government manages to plan and build an economy that will sustain growth.

Party politics and economic reform in Africa's democracies provides a wealth of data on the nature of economic reform in Africa today, which will serve to understand better the dynamics of the continent's political economy. Whether it also provides a convincing account of the impact of recent economic reform is less certain. A comparison with those Asian countries that have made the transition to dynamic growth would suggest that it is less privatization than the state-driven commitment to long-term investment for growth that matters most. What is crucial is not so much the advent of electoral democracy or even privatization but, first, the determination of the government to plan long term; second, the centralized command of rents; and third, the emergence of a civil service that is both relatively efficient and free from corruption.

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South Asia

Chinese and Indian strategic behavior: growing power and alarm. By George J. Gilboy and Eric Heginbotham. New York: Cambridge University Press. 2012. 346pp. Pb.: £21.99. ISBN 978 1 10766 169 1. Available as e-book.

Chinese and Indian strategic behavior is a prescriptive piece of scholarship that urges the United States to view the rise of China and India through a Realist lens. It contends that the hold

of the democratic peace theory over US policy-makers has led the US to overplay the threat that China poses to it while underplaying the threat that India could pose to it. By viewing the emerging balance of power through the prism of values, the United States is disregarding the possibility that as India's capabilities grow, it could pose a clear threat to US interests. By undertaking a comparative study of Indian and Chinese strategic behaviour from the late 1940s to the present, George J. Gilboy and Eric Heginbotham demonstrate that differences in regime type notwithstanding, the two states have demonstrated similarities in their military modernization, their use of force and their conduct in international trade. Thus, if China's behaviour qualifies it as a threat to US interests, there is no reason why India should uncritically be identified as an ally.

To substantiate their claim, the authors employ history as a guide to speculate on India's and China's future disposition. This leads them to undertake an empirical study of the two countries' strategic behaviour. They posit that, notwithstanding the popular depiction of China as an ambitious power that obfuscates its capabilities, India escapes critical scrutiny on this count. They argue that poor measurement methods by scholars lead to inaccurate assessments of Chinese defence spending and its trade relations with the United States, thus unfairly casting it as an unscrupulous actor. While China is roundly criticized for engaging with 'rogue' regimes, India—a democracy—is let off the hook when it engages with them.

As regards security matters, after studying their classical treatises on statecraft, the authors note: 'A reading of the Chinese texts on strategy does not suggest that China will be a stronger advocate of conquest or offensive realism than will India' (p. 36). They point to India's Cold Start doctrine to emphasize its offensive military orientation. They also suggest that in certain domains like naval power, India's power projection capabilities are impressive as compared to China's. India's large-scale acquisition of military hardware is also seen as evidence of its desire to enhance its power projection capabilities. India's fast-developing capabilities along with its suspicion of US presence in its neighbourhood entails that India could pose a clear threat to the United States. Thus, when one employs an interest-based analysis of US-India relations, clear divergences between the two emerge. With the growth of Indian capabilities, this could lead to tensions with the United States.

A salient aspect of the book is that it forces readers to view India in a different light; a Realist framework allows the authors to argue that there is no inevitability that India and the US, being democracies, will be allies. As India's capabilities grow, it might well threaten US interests. However, this assertion stands on a weaker footing when one acknowledges that as compared to its military and defence relations with China, the US has been able to establish a foothold in the Indian security architecture. By emerging as an important supplier of military hardware and undertaking military exercises with India, the United States has managed to engage India significantly. While it is true that this engagement needs to be broad-based (as the authors point out), there is no denying the fact that establishing a security relationship with India is something that may well serve US interests in the future.

The book also argues that the US and China have significant differences over Taiwan. In contrast, the US does not have such marked disputes with India. Until the Taiwan issue is resolved, and given that on relative terms, China is more powerful than India, the possibility of China threatening US interests is greater. Also, while the authors point out that many in India are opposed to US influence in the region, it is pertinent to note that India is a strong advocate of US troop presence in Afghanistan. One thus needs to pay closer attention to India's actual actions devoid of rhetoric. And as long as China maintains its lead over India in the economic and military domains, and territorial dispute between the two festers, it will be imprudent for India significantly to threaten US interests.

The above observations notwithstanding, in situating a rich body of empirical work within a clear theoretical framework, *Chinese and Indian strategic behavior* is an important addition to the literature on rising powers. It is also significant as it undertakes a well-structured, comparative analysis of India and China. While one does see such studies on economic issues, one does not encounter them with regard to strategic issues. To that end, the book furthers the debate on rising powers in the international system.

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East Asia and Pacific*

Going private in China: the politics of corporate restructuring and system reform.

Edited by Jean C. Oi. Stanford, CA: Walter H. Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center. 2011. 295pp. Index. £19.99. ISBN 978 1 93136 822 3.

The economic reforms in China, which began more than 30 years ago under Deng Xiaoping, have long been considered one of the most complex examples of large-scale restructuring to date, and their effects on the country are still being studied today. One of the most difficult aspects of the Dengist reforms was the daunting task of modernizing Chinese state-owned enterprises (SOEs), which were increasingly seen as impractical relics of the Maoist centrally planned economy. In addition to the financial risks presented by such reforms, there was considerable political opposition to restructuring or privatizing SOEs. Fears that such actions would further endanger China's already fragile economy by spreading unemployment and worker dissent, to say nothing of threatening the very ideological fabric of the Chinese Communist Party, constantly dogged the reform process in the late 1980s and 1990s. Nevertheless, these reforms succeeded to the point where China was in a position to begin internationalizing its economy after Deng faded from political view in the early 1990s. The stories behind that achievement, as well as an explanation of just how risky the opening stages of the reforms were, are the core of *Going private in China*, with political, economic and ideological aspects of the SOE liberalization process explored from a variety of angles. Those interested in the political economy of China during this period, as well as readers seeking to understand how the platform for China's later economic take-off was tenuously and laboriously constructed, will find much to appreciate in this compilation.

The book begins by describing the problems laid out for the Chinese government in looking at SOEs at the beginning of the reform era. Although Beijing initiated the restructuring processes via the somewhat grandiose campaign of *zhuada fangxiao*, or 'grasp the big and let go of the small', meaning that smaller state firms would no longer be under governmental supervision or protection, the reality is described as considerably more complicated. The decision as to whether to rescue, reform or abandon a given SOE was often influenced by various forms of opposition among managers, workers and local municipalities. 'Economic restructuring inevitably invites resistance when it sacrifices the interests of those subject to reform' (p. 71), one chapter offers. Therefore, much of the work describes the various forms of SOE privatization as sporadic and sometimes patchwork processes beset by pressures from many directions. In addition to domestic demands to rebalance the Chinese economy, another chapter notes, there was also the requirement to demonstrate China's preparedness to join the World Trade Organization by convincing the global financial system that the Chinese economy was sufficiently liberalized.

* See also David H. Shinn and Joshua Eisenman, *China and Africa: a century of engagement*, pp. 543–4.

At the same time, Beijing was seeking foreign direct investment (FDI) in order to maintain the integrity of its finances and continue the momentum of the reform process. The positive relationship between the SOE restructuring process and FDI inflows is examined in the book. Other areas of the Chinese economy, including the ongoing race to develop a coherent social security system and construct workable stock markets, are also described as they relate to the transformation of the SOE system. The progression of developing governmental organizations to manage the reforms, including the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission (SASAC), is described as part of a greater reform process characterized more by experimentation and setbacks than by a methodical, centralized blueprint. Although the book correctly notes that the reforms remain a work in progress, the policy successes described here raise many questions about both the optimal role, and degree of participation, of the state in economic modernization, as well as whether a true 'China model' of reform exists and can act as an example for other countries.

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Handbook of China's governance and domestic politics. Edited by Chris Ogden. Abingdon: Routledge. 2012. 342pp. £150.00. ISBN 978 1 85743 636 5. Available as e-book.

The *Handbook of China's governance and domestic politics*, edited by Chris Ogden, is a laudable and ambitious effort to provide what the book's preface terms an 'in-depth overview' of the institutions, processes and issues that define China's government and politics.

The volume comprises 23 brief chapters on as many topics, divided into four sections: the first section deals with the organizational principles of the Chinese state, including a chapter on the one-party state governed by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and one on China's governance structures. The second concerns the development and current status of important policy areas, such as economics, justice, education, defence and foreign policy. The third section describes political processes, including political representation and relations between central and local government, while the book's fourth and longest section consists of chapters on critical contemporary issues, such as social change and inequality, corruption, the environment, resources shortages and the influence of globalization on individualism.

Concise, clearly written, and assuming no specialist knowledge, this book offers an eminently accessible introduction to a range of important institutions and issues. It manages to describe complex Chinese governance structures and the relationship between party and government briefly, without losing sight of their complexity and flexibility. The book's topics are well chosen and together provide a good overall picture not only of the political issues facing China, but also of many of the underlying dynamics that define these in the country's specific historical and cultural context. The chapters are short, and do not generally go into much detail, but the book includes a comprehensive bibliography that will be useful for further study on specific topics.

One of the overarching themes of the book is the extraordinary transformation that Chinese society has experienced since the beginning of the period of opening up and reform. The paradoxical fact that the transition to a market economy was directed by the Communist Party itself begs a reassessment in non-western terms of what a political party is and does. As is eloquently expressed in this volume, the guiding principles of the CCP are statist nationalism and economic modernization. While the party has sought to become more institutionalized and to broaden its base, it maintains its claim to be the sole representative of the Chinese people, arguing that economic development requires political stability, precluding political reform.

The need to facilitate and drive marketization has realigned institutions throughout the Chinese governance system. Since the late 1970s, government departments have been restructured to increase efficiency, powers have been devolved to local governments to incentivize local marketization and growth, and legislation has replaced policy as the main instrument of governance, creating greater stability and predictability. All this, however, has taken place within the confines of the party state, with the CCP maintaining control at each level of government, and the book characterizes the Chinese system as rule by, rather than of, law.

The pace and scale of China's economic development, along with its increasing openness to the rest of the world, has brought its own problems. Deregulation and the drive towards commercialization and industrialization have created new tensions due to vast social and regional inequalities, abuses by officials, and the rampant exploitation of the country's environment and natural resources. At the same time, economic, social and technological change has created an increasingly diverse and vocal public. Attempts have been made by the Chinese government to rein in the worst excesses of the free market economy, curb corruption within the system and cultivate a 'harmonious society'. However, maintaining stability and unity in a rapidly changing society will be a major challenge for China's government and political system in years to come, particularly as economic development at all costs ceases to be sufficient reason for avoiding political reform.

The *Handbook of China's governance and domestic politics* provides an excellent introduction to the main institutions, processes and issues that define contemporary Chinese governance and politics. In particular, it does a good job of navigating the superficial resemblance of the contemporary Chinese state to western systems of government lent by the trappings of modernity, and gives a nuanced picture of the unofficial political, economic and cultural dynamics that characterize the subject. While not perhaps definitive on any given subject, it can be heartily recommended as an introduction to a range of important topics, and as an excellent overview of the relevant issues and institutions.

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North America

Limited achievements: Obama's foreign policy. By Zaki Laïdi. New York: Palgrave. 2012. 237pp. Index. £55.00. ISBN 978 1 13702 085 7. Available as e-book.

US decline and Obama policy-making are hot topics that have generated a large literature. This volume by Zaki Laïdi, an International Relations specialist at Sciences Po, is a thoughtful addition that deserves serious attention. It is based on his *Le monde selon Obama*, published in 2010 (Flammarion) but to judge from internal evidence revised into early 2012. It offers a shrewd assessment of Barack Obama's stewardship of US global interests. In eight crisp chapters (totalling 174 pages of text), Laïdi systematically surveys the geopolitical landscape with an eye to locating the United States within the current distribution of international power. The presentation is a nice mix of general argument and supporting material, all easily digested thanks in part to Carolyn Avery's smooth translation.

Laïdi's title telegraphs his thesis. Obama can claim only limited foreign policy achievements during his first administration. The President lacked policy experience, a deficiency only partially offset by his multicultural sensitivity and his innate caution. He was further hamstrung by the complexity of a global system dominated by seven powers with strikingly diverse goals, assets and vulnerabilities. An array of domestic constraints constituted

yet a third set of limits. The Obama administration was hobbled by the lingering effects of the 2008 financial crisis and by deep cultural and political divisions at home.

Obama responded by immediately rejecting his predecessor's sweeping 'war on terror' rhetoric and adopting a distinctly risk-averse policy described here as ad hoc Realism. Its pole star was preserving US standing as the pre-eminent power. The favoured strategy was à la carte partnerships tailored to particular problems. Where others sought to solve problems without involving the United States and deferring to US preferences, Washington resorted to obstruction.

Laïdi's appraisal of Obama seems ultimately marked by ambiguity. In the conclusion he notes that Obama's 'only doctrine is pragmatism' (p. 152). But is this observation meant as praise for intelligent flexibility or condemnation of aimless improvisation? At times Laïdi conveys impatience with Obama's failure to follow Realist strictures more faithfully—to confront international problems with greater directness and clarity and to transcend the distorting effects of domestic politics. But Laïdi is also scrupulous in laying out the intractable problems confronting the Obama administration from the Middle East to East Asia. He in effect makes the case for impressive tough-minded adaptation to constrained circumstances that would have tied the hands of even the most accomplished of geopoliticians. By suggesting both sides of the argument, *Limited achievements* gives readers a serious interpretative problem to wrestle with.

Limited achievements concludes with a surprisingly upbeat assessment of US prospects as the leading power in the international system. While Washington is no longer master of the universe, Americans still have the demographic dynamism and economic edge to maintain unequalled power and influence. The book's last lines, which eerily anticipate Obama's second inaugural address, have a distinctly optimistic ring: 'American power is more than ever demonstrating its ability to reinvent itself while trying to remain true to its values, interests, and orientations' (p. 174).

This more sanguine perspective collides with the views of sceptics such as David S. Mason in *The end of the American century* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2009) who take a longer-term perspective and who make a strong case for debilitating domestic strains going back to the 1970s. The United States is in the opinion of the more historically attuned observers beset by economic problems, distracted by profound domestic divisions, fixated on military might yet puzzled by its failure to translate this into real-world achievements, and annoyed by the refusal of the global order to embody US preferences and norms. Laïdi's hard-edged Realism with its stress on interstate relations minimizes these doleful trends and dodges a tough question. Is preserving US dominance beyond the capacity of policy-makers, no matter whether they follow a cautious, ad hoc course or take up some bold, grand strategy?

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American force: dangers, delusions, and dilemmas in national security. By Richard K. Betts. New York: Columbia University Press. 2012. 367pp. Index. £20.50. ISBN 978 0 23115 122 1. Available as e-book.

Many have questioned the wisdom of the application of American force in Iraq and Afghanistan, especially the former 'dumb' war; over 26 books and numerous articles have compared and contrasted the wars in Iraq and Vietnam. If one of the pieces of conventional wisdom to flow from these has been how the accumulated lessons of Vietnam could be so easily discarded in Iraq in 2003, Richard Betts has provided another perspective. The book is not an easy read and certainly those who do read it will require a familiarity with

US interventions and the applications of force over recent decades, but also a keen historical perspective on these events and the individuals who precipitated them, because most were American wars of choice. Moreover, Betts provides the perspective of long reflection and experience and his analysis does not follow either the liberal or the neo-conservative critique on the appropriate use of force. He returns to a more palaeo-conservative and Realist tradition, but something very distinct from the 'eccentric' Realist represented by Henry Kissinger. Betts is a self-avowed Cold War hawk who advocated a strong assertion of power during that period; he is also a post-Cold War 'crusty' dove, who recognized the 'epochal importance of that ending' but considers that US thinkers did not read 'its strategic implications' well. Here we have a book that looks at US intervention in the post-Cold War period, duped by the success of the Gulf War. The attractions of intervention and the application of US force, according to Betts, have rarely served US interests, and he suggests that Washington would do well to limit their use to highly particular circumstances.

Instead, in the era of relative security after the Cold War the United States continued to build up its military force and defence budgets and became 'the most militarily active state in the world'. In part this has taken place in the pursuit of leadership, in part the United States reacted not to threats but to opportunities in what has evolved into a pattern of near 'permanent war'. While much of the literature focuses on the follies of the Bush administration, Betts extends his scope. He argues that while Bush seized on the apparent victory in Afghanistan to extend the war to Iraq and confused counterterrorism with war, 'this venture gravely damaged American interests, worsening threats rather than relieving them' (p. 5). And even if the final result produced some stability, 'the cost will have far exceeded the benefit' (p. 5). Force was frequently resorted to, according to Betts, because an unusual consensus between 'conservative nationalists', 'cosmopolitan liberals' and 'neoconservative zealots' aimed to extend American power and primacy. But for Betts, this was not just a phenomenon of the post-9/11 years, 'the impulse to overreach preceded these ventures' (p. 6). Betts enumerates a range of 'delusions' that frequently grip US strategists and elite thinkers and he dissects the rationale for intervention over a range of cases. The book moves so quickly through the examples and from one era to the next, or from one geographical area to the next, that the reader must have familiarity with the issues and events. For Betts, many of the interventions under the Clinton administration and the form they took were also highly problematic. The allure of the Gulf War made the subsequent decisions in the 1990s that much more difficult in Bosnia, Somalia, Haiti, Rwanda and Kosovo. This leads Betts to argue for more restraint on the part of the United States. It should use its force but sparingly and then decisively. In many ways the book is a type of long reassertion of the Powell Doctrine that was discarded over recent decades. That choice, in and of itself, will create many dilemmas for the United States.

Betts provides a sobering and bluntly honest critique of US force. He does so through clear writing and argument. He weaves history and personal reflection through chapters on the Cold War consensus that shaped so much thinking, the illusions of primacy and the threats of mass destruction. His views on terrorism and the attacks of 9/11 could be controversial, in that, while tragic, he suggests that they did not present that much of a threat to the United States. He begins his chapter on terrorism by openly questioning the extent to which it should be considered a national security issue. The follies of pre-emptive war, and the cases of Iraq and Afghanistan, stand as distractions to the real potential challenges to US power, albeit not necessarily military, from China and from a Russian resurgence. Instead, Washington squandered its credibility by engaging and withdrawing or bringing

on tenuous and inconclusive outcomes as in Bosnia or Kosovo; hesitancy fed adversaries' misapprehension, especially after Somalia in 1993, or earlier Lebanon in 1983 and Vietnam in 1975. 'After the Cold War the United States used force frequently but not intensely' (p. 297). Betts would have the pattern reversed.

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Constructing America's freedom agenda for the Middle East: democracy or domination. By Oz Hassan. Abingdon: Routledge. 2012. 248pp. £80.00. ISBN 978 0 41560 310 2. Available as e-book.

With the popular uprisings across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region that began in late 2010, and which resulted in the removal of authoritarian regimes from power in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya and Yemen, as well as significant change in many others, the logic of the 'freedom agenda' for the Middle East espoused and pursued by the Bush administration in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks may appear vindicated. Indeed, such transformation towards democracy, freedom, human rights and a new era for many nations across the MENA region may certainly have some link with the way in which the United States reformulated its policy towards that complex region over the last decade. However, as Oz Hassan points out in this timely and innovative study, the link between US policy and transformation in the region is actually more complicated than this overly instrumentalist reading. Through the development and application of a constructivist institutionalist methodological framework, and by drawing upon a wide range of interviews and primary documentation, Hassan paints a rather different picture of how and why the Bush administration developed and institutionalized its so-called freedom agenda for the Middle East, and sheds important light on the legacy of a generation spent trying to reshape the region.

The terrorist attacks of September 2001 had a widespread transformatory impact on US foreign policy, not least on how to approach a region that had complicated policy for several generations—the Greater Middle East. One particular result was a new approach to the region that would prioritize freedom and democracy—essentially the notion that the American national interest lay in exporting and relying upon American values as the basis for foreign policy. The result was the freedom agenda—a commitment by the Bush administration to remake the Middle East so as to benefit not just America but humanity more generally. Thus was put in train the process that would lead to Afghanistan and Iraq and a decade of complicated political and military experience in the region. In this way, Hassan suggests that the Bush administration may have recognized symptoms but diagnosed the wrong policy response.

The book suggests that this central logic has remained largely unchanged under the stewardship of Barack Obama, and that America continues to pursue an agenda for the region that is pulled apart by the perceived requirements of cultural beliefs and strategic interests. According to Hassan, the 'premature triumphalism' resulting from the Arab Spring has become mired in political and ideological rhetoric rather than analysed at a deeper level. Instead, in the words of Hassan, what is needed is an approach that 'embraces dialogue, empowerment and respect, rather than seeking to socially engineer the peoples of the Middle East towards some externally inspired utopian end state' (p. 10).

While the United States is currently in the process of transitioning or pivoting towards 'the East', the future prospects of freedom and democracy in the MENA region will remain central to US policy for some time to come. It is still far from clear what the legacy of the Arab Spring will be, and whether the momentous events of the last two years will lead to

a new era of stability, peace and prosperity across the region. Equally, it is far from clear how the US will strike the complex balance between 'democracy and domination' that has been at the heart of policy towards the Middle East since 1945. In this way, Hassan's book provides both an important and a novel examination of the undergirding of post-9/11 policy towards the Greater Middle East and a broader addition to our understanding of how American foreign policy is conceptualized and reproduced.

Andrew Futter, University of Leicester, UK

Latin America and Caribbean

Fifty years of revolution: perspectives on Cuba, the United States, and the world. Edited by Soraya M. Castro Mariño and Ronald W. Pruessen. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida. 2012. 423pp. Index. £38.50. ISBN 978 0 81304 023 3.

At first glance, we have here yet another volume that seeks to chart the vicissitudes of the US–Cuban antagonism and to explain its remarkable longevity: is there really anything that can be said about the subject that has not been stated before in many a fine academic study—short of the release of a treasure trove of official documents from either party—and from a truly new perspective?

Many of the distinguished contributors to this collaborative project have in fact already produced their own monographs on this subject. Lars Schoultz, for instance, has written the most detailed (and by far the most lengthy) history of the bilateral relationship since 1959, *That infernal little Cuban republic: the United States and the Cuban revolution* (University of North Carolina Press, 2009, reviewed in *International Affairs* 85: 5), and his chapter amounts to little more than a synopsis of the brilliant and wittily expressed insights of his *magnum opus*. Similarly, the contribution by historian Louis A. Pérez Jr elegantly and succinctly restates the thesis he has cogently advanced in *Cuba in the American imagination: metaphor and imperial ethos* (University of North Carolina Press, 2008, reviewed in *IA* 85: 5) about the obsessive quality of the US stance towards Cuba, with Fidel Castro in particular being viewed 'as a source of humiliation' (p. 148). Readers will probably also be familiar by now with the argument made at every turn by Peter McKenna and John Kirk about the 'hallowed Canadian commitment to engagement and dialogue with Cuba' (p. 95) despite considerable pressure from Washington (*Canada–Cuba relations: the other good neighbor policy*, University Press of Florida, 1997, reviewed in *IA* 75: 1), as well as with Joaquín Roy's analysis of the failure of the European Union's own policy of 'constructive engagement' to achieve its declared goal of facilitating a democratic transition in Cuba (*The Cuban revolution (1959–2009): relations with Spain, the European Union and the United States*, Palgrave, 2009, reviewed in *IA* 86: 4).

The primary feature that sets this volume apart is the conscious effort that was made to secure broad Cuban input. Indeed, one-third of the contributions are either solely or jointly made by Cuban academics from the University of Havana. It is given to Francisca López Civeira to explain the origins of the dispute in the early years of the revolution, a task that has normally been viewed solely from a US standpoint in the English-language literature. Two juxtaposed chapters by Rosa López-Oceguera and Robert Pastor (a National Security Council official at the time) present a Cuban and a US perspective on the failure of direct negotiations under Henry Kissinger (1974–5) and during the presidency of Jimmy Carter (1977–81), respectively, to break the bilateral impasse. And Ramón Sánchez-Parodi, head of the Cuban Interests Section in the US from 1977 to 1989, reflects, understandably somewhat

bitterly, on the sharp deterioration in relations at the outset of the Reagan administration. A second distinctive feature of the book is the attempt to locate the bilateral conflict within a broader international context: by placing the chapters on Cuba's relationship with the wider world ahead of those on the strictly bilateral US–Cuban relationship, the editors highlight the latter's peculiar character and how out of step the United States has been with the rest of the world. Finally, Damián Fernández's chapter on the Cuban American dimension to the dispute offers a more nuanced—and hopeful—analysis of a community in transition, in contrast to the more monolithic view often put forward in analyses that focus on the more outspoken members, especially the hardline Cuban American representatives in Congress.

The chapters are for the most part well written and of a generally high quality, though they vary in the tightness of the argument and in the amount of detail they impart. López Civeira's chapter unfortunately speeds through the rising crescendo of tit-for-tat measures that dramatically ratcheted up the bilateral confrontation in the second half of 1960 prior to the US rupture of relations in two short paragraphs. Jorge Domínguez, whose chapter on the Bush–Clinton years is an adaptation of an analytical piece he wrote in the late 1990s, omits the Elián González affair in 2000 entirely, though it is mentioned briefly by others elsewhere; this may well have cost Al Gore the presidency with that crucial deciding vote in Florida but also marked a sea-change in the attitude of the US public towards the Cuban American hardliners and facilitated the changes to the sanctions regime that very year. Inevitably, there are some lacunae in a work of this nature. It would certainly have benefited from a chapter on Latin America's evolving stance towards Cuba over the past half-century, especially the distinctive position of Mexico, which refused to break relations with Havana in 1964 and about which there has been some research published in the last few years; as it is, this aspect of Cuba's external relations is treated only tangentially and in passing. Nor is there anything on the war against Cuba waged by Washington in a raft of international organizations during the first two decades of the confrontation in particular, or much about the attempt to extend the reach of US domestic law, a cause of profound concern to Washington's allies.

The volume, it seems to me, points to two profitable directions for future research on this well-worn topic. First, it reinforces the value of probing further the fundamental, mostly unspoken assumptions at the root of the US stance towards Cuba: the perceived effrontery of Cuba's rejection of much cherished US core values and the persistent Cuban demand to be treated as the equal of a Great Power in the light of the long history of US infringement of the island's sovereignty are, I would suggest, areas that need to be explored in greater depth. Second, the book underscores the need to tell more thoroughly the Cuban side of the story.

Philip Chrimes

Sun, sex, and socialism: Cuba in the German imaginary. By Jennifer Ruth Hosek. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 2012. 266pp. Index. £39.00. ISBN 978 1 44264 138 9. Available as e-book.

Caviar with rum: Cuba–USSR and the post-Soviet experience. Edited by Jacqueline Loss and José Manuel Prieto. New York: Palgrave. 2012. 262pp. Index. Pb.: £20.00. ISBN 978 1 13703 134 1.

The books under review are a salutary reminder that Cuba since the 1959 revolution has had an intangible influence far beyond its borders outside the domain of power politics, and

has itself in turn been profoundly changed on a domestic level as a result of Havana's close alignment with one of the major protagonists of the Cold War.

Jennifer Hosek's *Sun, sex, and socialism*, far less salacious than its catchy title at first suggests, contends that Cuba as 'a projection and idealized partner' (p. 4) has helped shape German self-understanding—in both states prior to reunification in 1990 and thereafter—and that conceptions of Cuba have changed according to the varying concerns of Germans over time. She attempts to show through a detailed dissection of films, novels, plays, poems and other texts that have Cuba as an apparent theme how the Caribbean island, uniquely for a country from the global South, has affected modern German identity, whether that influence took the 'form of utopia, dystopia, beacon [or] imagined ally' (p. 18). There is a strong focus in the book in particular on the cultural production of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) apropos its fraternal ally in the western hemisphere because Cuba often acted as 'a refraction point through which GDR domestic conflicts were articulated' (p. 157). In short, this is a book that tells us more about Germans and their domestic preoccupations than about the result of their interaction with actual Cubans, the factor, along with geographical propinquity, that historically shaped the more consequential place of Cuba in the American imagination.

Apart from Wim Wenders's internationally acclaimed and widely distributed film *Buena Vista Social Club* (1999), few readers of this journal who have not been immersed in the field of modern German cultural studies will be overly familiar with any of the films or works of literature that are subject to the rigours of the author's scenic or textual analysis. It is not made clear whether she is dealing with the sum total of German filmic and literary output that pertains to Cuba or just a representative sample thereof and how, by comparison, other external influences in fact relate to the formation of German national identity. There are several other problem areas. First, the author has a disconcerting tendency to over-analyse her cultural 'artefacts': GDR films, such as *Preludio 11* (1963), for example, are scrutinized from the perspective of the critical intellectual rather than that of the 'real-existing' cinema-goer, who found little favour with this particular cinematic offering at the time; the Cuba of the German imaginary comes across, then, as an elite construct. Second, Hosek's rather pretentious writing style, which opts for words like 'diegesis' rather than 'narrative' or 'plot' and sports various neologisms, often serves to obfuscate rather than to illuminate. Third, the book would have been better contextualized had she presented more basic data about the concrete political and economic relationship between the two Germanys and Cuba and how this had an impact on relations with the United States and USSR.

Cuba plays a far more central role in *Caviar with rum*. It is, in the main, an anthology of reflections by Cubans both on and off the island on the degree to which the 30-year alliance between Cuba and the Soviet Union transformed Cuban society and left a legacy that is still very much in evidence two decades after the USSR's demise. The book is an eclectic mix of intensely personal accounts rendered in highly literary fashion and more academic approaches to topics such as the Soviet–Cuban cinematic co-production *Soy Cuba* (1964), the implications of the Heberto Padilla affair (in a powerful essay by José Manuel Prieto) and the status of the not inconsiderable offspring of Cuban–Russian intermarriage. In recognition of the rather diffuse nature of the contributions, the editors have helpfully allowed for the inclusion of a useful up-to-date chronology of highpoints in the relationship between Cuba and the USSR/Russia and two conventional essays by former Soviet foreign service officer Yuri Pavlov and British academic Mervyn Bain, whose chapter replicates in part the one he contributed to *Fifty years of revolution*, reviewed above. The more formally structured essays I found to be the most revealing about the degree to which the

island became ‘Sovietized’, even in its modes of thinking, as Ariana Hernández Reguant makes clear in her fascinating study of how the Soviet discourse on incentives established an enduring hold. Of all the essays on personal reflections, the one by ‘Yoss’ most fully succeeds in (rather wittily) relating just how pervasive was the Soviet imprint on a quotidian level; he also draws our attention to the fact that it was not just the USSR but Cuba’s Comecon allies who left their mark (just as Cuba will have resonated elsewhere in Eastern Europe and not just in the GDR).

Philip Chrimes

The rise of post-hegemonic regionalism: the case of Latin America. Edited by Pía Riggirozzi and Diana Tussie. London: Springer. 2012. 194pp. Index. £90.00. ISBN 978 9 40072 693 2. Available as e-book.

A complex alphabet soup of regional groupings has emerged in the Americas in part to fill a gap created by a post-2001 US regional neglect, but also to reflect the changing national power capabilities and ambitions of the region’s larger economies. This book tackles these changes and sets itself two goals. First is a successful effort to understand the current analytical approaches to regional policies. Second is an important effort to examine how regional projects in the Americas are adapting, emerging and evolving independent of the hegemonic influence of the United States.

Pía Riggirozzi and Diana Tussie offer several correctives to debates on developmental strategies and trajectories in the region, dispelling the notion that the phrase ‘post-neoliberalism’ necessarily means something radically different from the past. Instead, they point to the return of the state as central actor in regional political economy and thus a major driver of the new regionalist projects. This provides the basis for the studies in the other chapters, each of which looks at an aspect of how regional projects have been advanced without pressure from Washington.

The book starts in a theoretical vein. In the first chapter Riggirozzi and Tussie explain what they mean by post-hegemonic regionalism and how this relates to existing and historical approaches to region-building. Riggirozzi builds on this theme in the second chapter by taking up the question of how regionalism and development are linked. This is a crucial question in the Latin America context of decades of regionalism, most recently in the form of Mercosur, Unasur, ALBA (Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas) and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

The resilience and persistence of regional projects in the Americas, despite their seemingly consistent failures to deliver, has long been a puzzle for many observers. Olivier Dabène taps into ideas of presidential diplomacy to point to the centrality of state-directed action in the launch and pursuit of Latin American regionalism, a theme several of the other authors also develop in their contributions. This is particularly the case in Ricardo Carciofi’s chapter on the regional infrastructure integration programme IIRSA. Not enough attention has been given to this ostensibly technical enterprise of building the physical linkages needed to actually have a functional region in South America. Carciofi’s contribution stands as an excellent introduction to this important topic.

A similar shortage of attention is generally given to defence cooperation, examined by Jorge Battaglino, and monetary cooperation, covered by Pablo Trucco. The subjects of both of these chapters lack the high profile and exciting ‘deliverables’ that catch the public eye. Yet it is in these areas that we find the substance of region-building. Battaglino’s account makes it clear how the South American Defense Council (SADC) is filling

a regional security need that the US either cannot, does not want to, or is not allowed to fill. Success for the SADC is arguably measured in the very boredom and apparent lack of action that makes some question its validity. Trucco's subject is even dryer, focusing on the arcane of monetary exchange and non-US dollar-denominated trade. This gets to the heart of Riggiozzi and Tussie's penetrating observation that core precepts of neo-liberalism have not been rejected, but rather deeply internalized and re-expressed. After all, even in the context of the Hugo Chávez ALBA bloc, trade remains a key activity.

The last three chapters address challenges to regional integration in South America. Marcelo Saguier asks penetrating questions about what voice the people actually have in the most advanced aspects of regional integration, namely resource extraction activities and the articulation of regional energy networks. His answer is a disheartening 'very little'. This important piece of research directly feeds into Andrés Serbin's look at civil society and its role in bridging the democratic gap in regional processes. Again, Serbin finds that the hoopla surrounding civil society engagement is not matched by actual substantive inputs beyond perfunctory round tables and forums that run parallel to summit meetings, not within them. The impression left by the chapters to this point is that some strong leadership is needed to push regional projects beyond a sort of soft existence into something more solid. Any hopes that we might find this in the form of Brazil are dashed by Andrés Malamud, who critically examines Brazil's role as a regional leader and finds the country wanting not only in terms of the resources it is willing to commit to the project, but also with respect to the willingness of other major regional actors to accept its lead.

For scholars of inter-American affairs and regionalism this book serves as an important touchstone summarizing the current state of affairs in Latin America. Its chief strength is that it cogently and clearly identifies where regional initiatives are working, why they are proving functional, and what caused them to arise in the first place. For the non-specialist and busy policy-maker, that makes this book doubly valuable because it provides a clear, concise and sophisticated survey of the major regional processes and challenges that matter. Indeed, this is precisely the sort of book that should be read by generalists turning their attention to the Americas. One can only hope that the steep price being charged by the publisher does not prevent a wide distribution of this excellent book.

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