



## REVIEWS

### **A Force More Powerful: A century of nonviolent conflict**

Peter Ackerman and Jack DuVall

Palgrave, 2000

Hbk ISBN 0312228643 \$29.95

pp. 544 (including: index, notes)

Is peaceful protest more powerful than armed resistance? Ackerman and DuVall would have us believe that civic disobedience constitutes a superior force to military might. Their bulky volume, a by-product of a documentary television series, is a global survey of a whole range of non-violent sanctions deployed against oppressive regimes. However, the reader may be justified in feeling sceptical about the success of the unarmed protests as presented in this volume.

What did peaceful sanctions achieve in tsarist Russia? How much does a chapter on the Palestinian intifada fit into the theme of peaceful resistance? Why and to what extent were the Danes more successful in 'withstanding German occupation without undergoing many of the rigors experienced by other Europeans held down by the Nazis' (p. 231)? In spite of many such questions, *A Force More Powerful* is a thought-provoking and challenging read. The authors are methodical and convincing in their attempt to explode the myth of violence. Unfortunately, however, they replace the old myth with a fanciful new one of 'victory without violence'. Despite the long narrative and the extended analysis, this book is essentially a journalistic advocacy of the ultimate strength of people power. Thus, professional historians are likely to balk at most of the premises of this work. Was the twentieth century really a turning point in the history of political protest? Is it appropriate to discuss the Ruhrkampf of 1923 in the same breath as anti-Nazi resistance in wartime Europe? Can we really trace a 'century-long progression of ideas about nonviolent power and practice' (p. 5) starting in January 1905 in Russia?

It is acknowledged by the authors that peaceful methods 'have not always worked' (p. 8). Yet probably the most troubling aspect of this work is the repetitive and dubious claim that peaceful political 'techniques' – such as strikes, economic sanctions, and street demonstrations – are more effective in overthrowing dictatorial regimes than brute force. Although it is plain to see that violence hinders democratic developments, it is just as obvious that sporadic violence has tainted the achievements of nearly all civic resistance movements around the globe. More importantly, the softening of dictatorships and the eventual collapse of authoritarian regimes from Poland to South Africa were surely more the result of external factors than of popular dissent. Take the case of Solidarity in Poland, which is discussed in great detail in the book. The strikers of Gdansk, unlike the anti-communist demonstrators of Budapest in 1956 or Prague in 1968, achieved eventual victory because of the economic and political weaknesses of the Polish government and the deteriorating international position of the Soviet Union. Arguably, Solidarity's triumph had less to do with 'pragmatic choices', non-cooperation, or ingenuous techniques of resistance than external factors.

As the authors freely admit, this ambitious book is not a comprehensive history of all twentieth-century clashes in which peaceful sanctions played a part. Nevertheless, more than a dozen case studies sufficiently demonstrate the chronological and geographical span of twentieth-century political movements

that achieved some success in challenging authoritarian regimes without overtly resorting to armed struggle. Some chapters, notably those on tsarist Russia, the American South, and Gandhi's India, consist of long narratives, while others, such as those on anti-Nazi resistance and post-communist Mongolia, contain only cursory discussions. In all the case studies, the authors seek to illustrate the familiar thesis that 'military sanctions are not enough to stamp out a popular movement' (p. 231). In a number of case studies, they also conclude that democracy cannot be built on violence. The examples of Romania and the Philippines are chosen simply to reinforce the point that 'with no popular movements to lend direction to events new authoritarians step into the breach' (p. 438).

The storytelling style of the book makes it a popular and eloquent exposition of the 'power of the powerless'. However, the reader may feel that the differences in the political aims and methods of the various movements described are far more striking than the similarities. Furthermore, one could argue that the most striking common factor in the 'success stories' recounted is not the effectiveness of civil disobedience but the waning resolve of oppressive regimes to use violence against unarmed protestors. After all, the demonstrations in Tiananmen Square turned into a bloodbath because of the strength and determination of the communist regime and not, as the authors allege, because of the provocative style of the campaigners. Setting aside the historical debate on Hitler as 'a weak dictator', the resistance against Nazi Germany is the only case study in this volume that shows the success, however modest, of peaceful sanctions against an oppressive regime at its zenith. The other regimes discussed here were either economically bankrupt (communist Poland), militarily defeated and demoralised (tsarist Russia after the war against Japan), politically isolated (South Africa and Chile), or highly vulnerable to public opinion (interwar France, imperial Britain, and the US). For all that, *A Force More Powerful* makes an interesting read. It will certainly appeal to those who want to learn more about the power of civil protest and disobedience.

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**The Lega Nord and the Northern Question in Italian Politics**

Anna Cento Bull and Mark Gilbert

Palgrave, 2001

HBK: ISBN 0333750683 £45.00

pp. x + 204 (including: 5 tables, references, index)

Of Italy's political parties, the one that has almost certainly had the biggest impact on the course of the country's political development over the last fifteen years is the Northern League. Achieving its first real success in 1987 with the election of two members of Parliament, by 1992 it had taken almost 20% of the vote in the areas where it contested seats, and sent fifty-five representatives to the Chamber of Deputies. This achievement was then one of the most significant precipitating causes of the collapse of Italy's traditional parties of government and of the transformation of its party system.

The 1992 election outcome revealed the extent of public anger towards, and the consequent electoral vulnerability of, the Rome-based 'partyocracy'. It thus made clear to judicial investigators, whose exposure of the traditional parties'



corruption would ultimately lead to their disintegration, that established politicians no longer had the reserves of authority they had once been able to rely on to curb the activities of 'excessively' zealous magistrates. In the period since then, the League's calls for 'federalism', variously understood, have become common currency across the political spectrum; and now, even though it is not *numerically* decisive, the party occupies a position of considerable power within the Berlusconi coalition from where it is engaged in pushing forward the – so far, largely ad hoc and piecemeal – process of decentralising reform of the state begun in the previous legislature. In terms of the combination of electoral durability and political impact, it is difficult to think of any other party created *ex novo* in post-war Europe that has managed a performance more striking.

It is not very surprising then, that the party has attracted considerable attention from scholars. Yet, while there has been a large volume of literature published in Italian, *The Lega Nord* is, to my knowledge, only the second book-length investigation published in English. This excellent study is therefore very much to be welcomed for the significant contribution it will surely make to enhancing understanding of the League phenomenon outside Italy. And this contribution will certainly be the greater for the approach the authors adopt. That is, rather than insisting, as so many others have done, that the League can *only* be understood as an instance of this or that type of political movement, the authors accept that the competing categorisations hitherto advanced all have something to offer, and instead concentrate their efforts on the more straightforward task of attempting to understand the emergence and subsequent development of the party in the specific politico-economic context of the northern Italy of the 1980s and 1990s. The result is an account that is far more enlightening than those based on single categories – which inevitably provide insight into some aspects of the phenomenon while failing to do so in relation to others.

The authors' underlying epistemology is based on structure and agency and the dynamic interplay between them. There are, they say, therefore 'three aspects that need to be taken into consideration when studying the Lega Nord: structural factors, the party's programme and its evolving world-view, and the nature of its electorate. Each of these aspects affects the others and is affected by them' (p.65).

In terms of structural factors, the authors' argument is that crucial to the League's emergence was the development from the 1960s of tens of thousands of highly specialised small firms in the North East and elsewhere. In the former area where Christian Democracy, like the communist subculture in the central regions, had played an important role in the emergence of small-scale enterprise, the Catholic party gradually lost its ability to represent the interests of small businesses effectively. Its pragmatism gradually degenerated into clientelism and corruption with significant costs for small entrepreneurs at a time of economic uncertainty. Its unwillingness to delegate to the regions at a time when the latter needed strengthening in terms of their capacity to help local businesses confront the uncertainty, added to the sense of frustration. This created an opening for a party like the League, whose local leaders were drawn directly from the small-business sector, and which also mobilised support by appealing to the exclusionary aspects of the cultural values that had played such an important role in small-business development in the area in the first place. This explains why the League found it particularly difficult to expand its support by appealing to a *national* constituency of small businesses and the self-employed and why characterisation of it as a poujadist party is wide of the mark.

Later – the authors continue – for reasons connected to its strategic location within the national-level party system, the League’s ideological trajectory began to diverge from the trajectory taken by the local economic interests whose concerns it had originally sought to articulate – with the result that it began to lose resonance in the milieu from which it had sprung. The ‘Padania’ project – with no historical legacy to draw upon and which was a shift from an attack on the institutions of the Italian *state* to an attack on the idea of Italy as a *nation* – simply failed to find an echo among northern industrial districts where autonomy was supported because ‘it is useful, not to create nations or peoples in opposition to the nation state’ (p.101), and whose economic fortunes had in the meantime moved on. Having seen its substantive federalist policies stolen by the mainstream parties and obliged to acknowledge the failure of ‘Padania’, the League has been forced to defend its political distinctiveness by accentuating the anti-immigrant and other far-right themes in its rhetoric – with the problem that many such themes, especially anti-immigration, now clash with the desperate labour shortages being faced by northern businesses. The book’s final chapter places the League’s political project within the broader context of the processes of globalisation and economic change, and of institutional and other reforms being pursued in response to these processes.

What we have here then, is an analysis which, in drawing on an impressive quantity of research material, offers an understanding of the League that is based on the impressive combination of an array of analytic perspectives. The result is a well-balanced account, one that provides real insight into where this remarkable party is now and how it has come to be there. Above all, through its detailed analysis of the political and economic reality from which the League arose and in which it currently operates, the book shows the compatibility of the seemingly disparate and contradictory features of the League phenomenon. It thereby makes possible an understanding of voters’ *own* perspectives and thus of why their support for the party was possible. The book is therefore essential reading, not only for Italian politics specialists, but also for comparativists wanting to study the League in search of defensible generalisations.

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**Culture and Rights: Anthropological Perspectives**

Cowan, Jane K, Marie-Bénédicte Dembour and Richard A. Wilson  
 Cambridge University Press, 2001  
 Hbk ISBN 0521793394 £45.00  
 PbK ISBN 0521797357 £15.95  
 pp. 258 (including: index, references)

This book makes a valuable contribution to the study of rights, moving the debate far beyond the conventional terms of universalism versus relativism that have dominated much of the mainstream discussion. In recent years it has increasingly been recognized that the alternative to the universalism of liberalism is not relativism and somewhere between these extremes the resolution of conflicts about rights must be found. The main argument of this book is that any discussion about rights must recognise the cultural nature of the discourse about rights. Rights – and more generally equality and difference – do not exist outside culture but are always negotiated – and even constructed – in particular contexts.



The recognition of this is not detrimental to rights because culture is not a closed system but is highly flexible. Moreover, cultures are not incommensurable but related. Empirical case studies, such as those presented in this book, by anthropologists and sociologists demonstrate that universalistic ideas about rights are always appropriated by local contexts.

The relationship between rights and culture is a complex one. The excellent Introduction by the editors distinguished between the idea of a right to culture and rights as culture. The former pertains largely to group rights, that is the rights of a culturally defined people to defend their cultural identity and way of life. This may take the form of special or differential rights (special representation rights, for instance) or exceptions from certain obligations. In this sense cultural rights establishes a groups right to difference. The second refer to the tendency by which rights may in fact constitute a kind of culture in that the rights discourse, in essence law, is becoming the basis of many cultures viability given the world wide consciousness of human rights. Legal reasoning is one way many groups, for instance indigenous groups, make sense of their situation. However, there are two issues here in this idea of rights as culture and which need to be more differentiated than they are in the volume, namely the idea of rights as a kind of global legal culture and, secondly, the social construction of groups by such universalistic legal cultures.

The contributions demonstrate what I take to be the two main arguments about the relation between rights and culture. The first argument concerning rights to culture is reflected in the five chapters that constitute the first part of the book where the stark dichotomy of universalism/particularism or equality/difference is rejected as an account of what actually happens in concrete situations. These chapters address the challenge of cultural rights as requiring discursive and pragmatic solutions. Sally Engle Merry demonstrates the debate is often grounded in processes of colonization and taking Hawaii as an example she shows how women activists use universalistic ideas to affirm indigenous rights. M.-B. Dembour show in an entirely different context how French excision trials do not always affirm universalistic notions of rights and that in practice legal reasoning is flexible. In a case study of Thai child prostitutes, Heather Montgomery shows that the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child may in fact be detrimental to the interests of children. Like many contributors, Anne Griffiths argues for a non-essentializing pluralism, in this case with respect to Botswanan peasant women for whom formal equality and monogamy as stated in the 1979 UN Convention on the elimination of discrimination against women frequently have to be compromised. Thomas Hylland Eriksen offers an insightful analysis of the 1995 UNESCO document, *Our Creative Diversity* showing how it embodies both a commitment to universal right and to cultural rights. In these chapters, perhaps with the exception of the last mentioned one, the assumption in general is that rights to culture are made on the basis of an *existing* culturally defined group. The second part of the book explores scenarios in which this is not the case.

In Part 2 four chapters explore the ways in which activists claim cultural rights and thus how cultures are constructed on the basis of rights. The central argument here is that rights are claimed by various groups who appropriate universal ideas to advance a local, ethnic cause. In this case what is at issue is the idea of rights as culture. Jane Cowan uses the interesting concept of 'minoritization' with respect to Macedonian minority claims in Greece. Her chapter suggests that in fact the confluence of rights and culture can led to an essentialization of culture. David Gellner in a study on Nepal shows how the

official declarations of identity do not correspond with the real identities that people have. In a study on Guatemala Rachel Sieder and Jessica Witchell warn against the dangers of imagining there is such a thing as a harmonious and traditional indigenous people. Colin Samson argues how the Innu have been forced into unequal relations in official state discourses in Canada and as a result are forced to claim rights that in fact are detrimental to their interests.

It is difficult to fault this excellent collection, which is very well edited and rich in detail and theoretical analysis. On the whole the first part is the more coherent in terms of rationale. The individual chapters in part 2 are equally excellent but what is not as clearly worked is how nascent discourses of cultural rights can undermine the very capacity of culture to be flexible and negotiable as demonstrated in the chapters in Part 1. Perhaps the key contribution of the volume is that it shows the value in seeing culture as an analytical category for discussing rights discourse. But what should not be neglected is power, for every cultural discourse is also one of power relations.

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**British Government Policy in Northern Ireland, 1968-2000**

Michael Cunningham

Manchester University Press (UK), Palgrave (USA), 2001

Hbk: ISBN: 0719057663 £45.00 \$69.95

Pbk: ISBN: 0719057671 £13.99 \$19.95

pp. vii + 184 (including: index, bibliography, appendix)

Michael Cunningham's (1991) invaluable *British Government Policy in Northern Ireland, 1969-1989* has been out of print since the mid-1990s. On a number of occasions in the late 1990s I suggested to both Dr Cunningham and Manchester University Press that they should produce a revised and updated version. I was delighted, then, to receive a review copy of *British Government Policy in Northern Ireland, 1968-2000*. My delight turned to disappointment, however, when I realised that the new book is not really a second (revised and updated) edition. The 250 pages of the earlier book have been condensed into 80 pages, and much has been lost in the process. For example, the 17 pages outlining the relationship (constitutional and party political) between London and Belfast has been condensed into five pages, in the process of editing a nuanced understanding of the 1920 settlement, which partitioned Ireland, is lost. Gone too are the useful appendices, cut down from five (Principle legislation, Westminster party positions on security legislation and constitutional initiatives, Northern Ireland Office [NIO] Ministers, Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental meetings) to one (NIO Ministers).

The new book has the advantage over the previous book that approximately half of it covers the 1990s, the decade in which the peace process developed. This is a considerable advantage given that the 1990s have witnessed the most comprehensive and thoroughgoing changes to British government policy on Ireland since partition in 1921. Given these differences between the two books it is perhaps unfair to measure Cunningham's latest book against the one published in 1991. Especially given that the book under review is useful and informative in its own right.



*British Government Policy in Northern Ireland, 1968-2000*, in Cunningham's own words, 'provides a comprehensive account of the legislative and institutional initiatives of the British government over the period of direct rule [i.e., from 1972]' (p. vi). These initiatives are examined in four policy areas: constitutional, security, economic and social. The rationale for examining policy through these four categories is that 'successive governments have argued that a multidimensional approach is necessary to the resolution of the 'question' (p. vi). Cunningham himself is not rigid in demarcating these categories. He notes, for example, that during the peace process 'the decommissioning issue *de facto* merged security and constitutional questions' (p. 102). In the final chapter, a more theoretical consideration of policy formulation and execution, he questions whether the government actually employed a multidimensional approach in practice. He points to the 'methodological problems in demonstrating causal links and whether there was a reciprocal relationship' between different policy areas (p. 161), and to the claim by NIO Minister Richard Needham that there was no machinery for co-ordinating a multidimensional strategy.

The book provides a chronological outline of British government policy under direct rule. This is topped and tailed by brief chapters providing the background to British re-intervention (chapter one) and theoretical issues relevant to analysing British government policy in Northern Ireland (chapter seven). The rest of the chapters are largely defined by the party in power, (chapter three covers Margaret Thatcher's administrations, chapters four and five John Major's and chapter six government policy under Tony Blair's Labour government), the one exception is chapter two which covers both Conservative and Labour administrations in the 1970s. This division by political complexion of the government of the day belies a core theme of the book, bipartisanship.

Cunningham argues that even before the imposition of direct rule 'the differences between the front benches were more a question of detail than of substance' (p. 9). He emphasises that 'bipartisanship does not imply exact coincidence of outlook or of policy prescription' (pp. 158-9). The bipartisan nature of the Westminster parliament, for example, 'makes unreserved support for the opposing party tactically injudicious' (p. 159), but at a strategic level there is general agreement between the British parliamentary parties on the principles of their constitutional approach to Northern Ireland. The wealth of material in the book supports Cunningham's assessment that there is an ongoing, persistent, and in recent years even more firmly entrenched, bipartisanship in British policy towards Northern Ireland.

The main strengths of the book are its summaries of government policy documents, official reviews and reports and parliamentary debates and the key commentaries on these. The book is an excellent resource for students, or the general reader, interested in a broad outline of the main government policies in Northern Ireland aimed at dealing with the conflict. For those who are interested in more detailed discussion of particular policies the book provides useful references (in footnotes) for most of the key secondary literature that discusses aspects of British policy.

The focus on the public discourse found in policy documents, parliamentary debates and official reports is also one of the main weaknesses of the book. One consequence is that the interplay between government and non-government actors, (such as the Unionist parties, Sinn Fein, peace groups and the paramilitaries), appears only as an occasional consideration. Perhaps a more surprising consequence is that often the reader is left with the impression that

policy formulation and implementation is simply a technical administrative task. It is only in the final chapter that Cunningham notes the different elements within the British administration, for example the NIO and the Home Office sometimes have conflicting interests.

The final chapter indicates that Cunningham is aware of many of the methodological difficulties involved in analysing British government policy. To someone, like this reviewer, who is familiar with British policy in Northern Ireland and the secondary literature discussing British policy it was too little too late. The emphasis on description rather than interpretation meant that the book felt routine rather than thought provoking. For those who are unfamiliar with British policy in Northern Ireland, however, this is the most comprehensive overview available.

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**Carrots, Sticks, and Ethnic Conflict: Rethinking Development Assistance**

Milton J. Esman and Ronald J. Herring (editors)

University of Michigan Press, 2001

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pp. 264 (including: index, bibliography)

This book addresses the impact – both actual and potential – of development policy on ethnicity. It includes reviews of the experience of two key development institutions – the World Bank's approach to displaced populations and the United States Agency for International Development's orientation to ethnic conflict. It then presents country case studies from Kenya, Sri Lanka, Russia and Ecuador. It frames these studies within a discussion of how most effectively to modify future development policy by better taking into account the intricacies of ethnicity in order to achieve desirable developmental outcomes.

Overwhelmingly, these studies suggest, development policy has had the detrimental impact of creating or exacerbating ethnic conflict. Within USAID, Heather S. McHugh points out, there is 'considerable awareness' that externally-encouraged democratisation reforms play an important role in 'opening the door to ethnic strife' (p. 58). Similarly, reforms imposed through the conditionality associated with structural adjustment are implicated in exacerbating ethnic tensions in Kenya, Russia, Sri Lanka and Ecuador. In fact, as Ronald J. Herring points out, even where market reforms have had a positive impact on economic growth, for example in Sri Lanka, the outcome is negative in terms of resulting ethnic conflict – 'new material consumption possibilities fed new relative deprivation and anger' (p. 158).

The perceived pernicious impact of past development policy is attributed to 'the culture and institutions of development assistance' (p. 238). The contributors to this edited collection are suggesting that the political assumptions underlying development policy resulted in an approach to conditionality which inevitably complicated ethnic relations. In particular, formal deference to state sovereignty and a commitment to technocratic and economic methods and objectives are isolated as problematic. Deference to state sovereignty is perceived to be problematic because it resulted in a blind eye being turned towards development policy being manipulated by ethnic-based elites to shore up their own power and



wealth in society. A focus on a technocratic and economistic approach is regarded as problematic because its elevation was blind to consequences such as the erosion of societal institutions important for the preservation of stability and harmony.

More fundamentally, the whole approach to development practised by dominant institutions like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund is called into question. From Russia to Ecuador the promotion of economic growth through market deregulation is regarded as a causal factor in the exacerbation of ethnic problems. In Russia's case deregulation is attributed to have resulted in the destruction of institutions essential for societal stability. In Ecuador's case deregulation is perceived to have resulted in the destruction of cultural distinctiveness and indigenous values of harmony with nature, and by contrast resulting in a homogenising impact of creating a desire to wear jeans and watch violent American videos.

The authors draw heart from the emergence of a new culture within development policy, no longer premised on narrowly economic objectives, and no longer constrained by the straitjacket of sovereignty. 'The culture of foreign aid has begun to make room for political values' (p. 238), notes Milton J. Esman in the book's concluding chapter. He notes the new potential for more ambitious and penetrating interventions which reach 'beyond technical rationality, beyond macroeconomic variables, to the actual structures, values, and political dynamics of the societies in which they intervene' (p. 235).

In this sense these arguments mirror the general reorientation of development policy and conditionality led, ironically perhaps, by the World Bank itself. Today development policy typically elevates ambitious political interventions and downplays, even denigrates, the significance of economic growth and material transformation (see: Pender 2001).

In line with this new trend these authors are highly critical of past development interventions, they freely acknowledge that the understanding required to correct past errors does not yet exist, and they then propose highly political and all encompassing development policy interventions. In this instance 'ethnic impact assessments' and 'ethnic conditionality' are proposed, non-compliance with which Esman suggests, should result in the creation of 'pariah states, ineligible for development assistance' (p. 252).

Most perplexingly the authors do not even seem to perceive the avoidance of ethnic conflict as a pressing principle. Rather their own favoured political objectives seem to encompass the promotion of harmony with nature, societal stability and the avoidance of change, associated as it is with problematic outcomes.

To this end ethnic conflict can even be regarded as a means to an end. As Alison Brysk suggests, if economic change produces ethnic conflict, then 'some level of competition, mobilisation and even hostility may be necessary to achieve the self-determination of historically marginalized groups' (p. 226). The role here for development policy she suggests could be to encourage the 'organisational capacity for protest and resistance' (p. 223).

This book is a useful presentation of the type of studies and arguments informing the emergence of a new mainstream approach to development policy. It serves as an interesting if partial critique of past development policy interventions. Its

focus on ethnic conflict reminds us of the potentially grave consequences of misguided interventions. Its authors' lack of hesitation in proposing a new breed of more all-encompassing interventions, however, should give its readers more pause for thought.

### **Reference**

Pender, J., 2001, 'From "Structural Adjustment" to "Comprehensive Development Framework": Conditionality Transformed?', *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 22, no. 3, 397-411.

**John Pender**, Independent Researcher, London, UK

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### ***Islam, Kurds and the Turkish Nation State***

Christopher Houston

Berg Publishers, 2001

Hbk: ISBN: 1859734723                      £42.99                      \$68.00

Pbk: ISBN: 1859734774                      £14.99                      \$23.00

pp. 215 (including: index, bibliography)

Five years ago Deniz Kandiyoti noted that ethnographies 'that deal with the full complexity of the contemporary cultural landscape [of Istanbul] are long overdue' (1997, p. 113). Zeynep Çelik (1993), Ayşegül Baykan (1994), Alev Çinar (2001) and Çağlar Keyder (1999) have worked to fill that gap. Now comes Christopher Houston with a splendid guide through the warren of Turkish political and popular culture. Mapping everyday life in Istanbul, Houston lays bare the failures of Turkey as a modern nation based on civic identity. Kemalist nationalism, Houston argues, has masked ethnic chauvinism and spurred the colonization of religion by the state.

Much of the intellectual and social history treating Istanbul in the Republican period adopts a 'paradise lost' trope, underscoring how an ethnically, religiously, and linguistically diverse imperial seat has been homogenized into the commercial capital of a modern nation-state. Moreover, recent mass migration from Anatolia has rendered the city increasingly rural and Islamic. Once thriving cosmopolitan Greek and Jewish quarters of Balat and Fener, for example, are now shabby zones for new arrivals and strongholds of the Islamic right to boot. Houston is not immune to the charms of the city's golden age. His own adopted neighborhood, Kuzguncuk, a religiously-mixed enclave on the Asian side of the Bosphorous, is known as Istanbul's 'last heaven' (*son cennet*).

Nostalgia notwithstanding, Houston uncovers a new kind of diversity rising from the wreckage of modernity, as laicists, republicans, Islamists, Kurds, and their many hybrids vie for power and recognition. Houston shows how crudely misleading is the French Revolution idea of a laic Turkish Republic. Even the theme of a 'secular republic, underground Islam' adopted in some of the resistance literature misses the mark. The secular model, if ever accurate, has been in decline since the late 1960s. Rather, a variety of Islams co-exist uneasily, from the Taliban-like dictates of M. Düzdağ's *Müslüman Aile (The Muslim Family)* which aims, Houston notes wryly, 'to replace Atatürk's *eriat* with Allah's', (p. 86) to Fetullah Gülen's flourishing Nurcu movement, a New Age syncretism of Islam



and science which enjoys the support of some of the country's staunchest Republicans and modernizers.

What Houston calls 'bureaucratized Islam' has attempted to sever religious life from civil society and nationalize it. The Turkish Directorate of Religious Affairs does far more than surveil religious practitioners. With some 90,000 employees, the Directorate is one of Turkey's largest and fastest growing state agencies. Officially, every imam in Turkey is a civil servant, and is supplied by Ankara with model sermons freighted with civic messages. During the politically tumultuous 1970s and early 1980s, the government expanded the number of state-sanctioned religious secondary schools, the *Iman-Hatip* lycées, on the theory that it was better to be a Muslim than to be a communist. With state support, brisk construction of religious schools and mosques has continued ever since. Following the coup in 1980, the 'pashas', as the military leadership is known, instituted compulsory religious instruction in schools. The military has also played the Islamic card against the 'infidel' PKK and other leftist opponents of the regime. Koranic terms such as *°ehit* (religious martyr) or *gazi* (warrior for Islam) have been republicanized and absorbed into the rhetoric of the secular state.

The Turkish Enlightenment has marginalized Kurds far more than Islamists. Turkey's national anthem lauds the 'heroic race', part of the grandiose vision of Turkishness constructed in the 1920s, and alive and well among supporters of the formerly-fascist MHP, or Nationalist Action Party, the lynchpin partner in Turkey's current coalition government. The state has used physical as well as cultural violence to Turkify Eastern Anatolia. Numerous uprisings – one of Houston's sources puts the number at 38 – have been forcefully quelled, while the government has refused to register 'Kurdish' names on birth certificates and has given thousands of villages in the region new, 'Turkish', names. All but the most folkloric of Kurdish cultural and historical representations were discouraged. The taboo surrounding all things Kurdish has lifted in recent years, and there is lively debate about Kurdish cultural rights. Houston suggests that the terms of that discussion are still framed by the contrast between the world-history of Turks and the tribal backwardness of Kurds. (Many Turks consider Kurds a drag on the country's sprint for European Union membership.) Houston describes in fascinating detail how some Turkish social scientists continue to police ethnicity, though in this case seeking to prove that Kurds descended from an obscure pocket of tribal Turkmens and thus really are Turks.

Often shoe-horned into political analyses, popular culture slips easily into Houston's ethnography. Turkish Radio and Television (TRT), the soporific state-run media, has been eclipsed by a constellation of private television channels offering everything from soft porn and Koran readings (both only late at night) to advertisements for 'honourable' Islamist resorts on the Mediterranean, and simulacra of English country living on the outskirts of Istanbul. At football matches, Kurdish fans shout veiled political messages. Censors, discerning subversive lyrics, have banned scores of specific Kurdish pop songs. Radio as well as television are drenched in Turkish-language 'Arabesk' music, a way of rendering Kurdishness politically palatable by cloaking – and commodifying – it in a kind of Orientalising popular culture.

Houston's evident fondness for Turkey does not blur his critical gaze: the wealth tax (*varlyk vergesi*) levied against non-Muslims in 1942, hobbling Armenians with the most punitive rates, the anti-Greek pogrom in 1955 that vacated prime real estate in the city, and the Vietnam-style 'hamletting' of Kurds in the Southeast

are presented squarely. With an even hand, Houston highlights the synthetic nature of Turkishness, but shows how Kurdish identity is also actively constructed, noting how Med TV, the Kurdish-language satellite broadcast, mirrors TRT in the 'production of nationality'.

How does a state that has so relentlessly embraced modernity deal with the new postmodern reality? Houston explores the possibility that Islam may be the cement to hold together a multi-ethnic Turkey. A more likely scenario is that Turkish accession to the European Union may help to crack this dilemma. Turkey may even look to its own past. After all, the divided loyalty that a federalist Europe represents is more reminiscent of the *millet*, or 'nations' system of the Ottoman Empire than it is of the modern Turkish state. Turkish democracy will remain stunted as long as the government tries to enforce the fiction of a unitary nation. Under the European umbrella Ankara may be more tolerant of diversity in its midst.

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### Race in Cyberspace

Beth E Kolko, Lisa Nakamura, Gilbert B Rodman (eds.)

Routledge, 2000

Hbk: ISBN: 0415921627 £55.00

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pp. 248 (including: acknowledgements, bibliographies, index)

The Internet is a gift to cultural theorists, whose stock in trade is representations of society. Offline, impressionistic accounts of social phenomena can be countered with empirical data. But when the object under study is the Internet, the cultural theorist can discover whatever truths about society they wish to. Online, one's perspective on society is distorted. When there are so few obstacles to setting up a website, or posting on a message board – anybody with a computer and a connection can do it – all voices appear equal. The Internet is a document of society where minority and extreme opinion are indistinguishable from the mainstream. Methodological rigour is needed, if any useful insights into society are to be drawn from what one finds online. Such rigour is conspicuously absent in *Race in Cyberspace*, a collection of essays about the constitution of racial identity in the digital age.



The impressionism of the book's contributors is best captured by Jeffrey A Ow, who, in his chapter on computer games, hilariously claims that a game character – described as an 'amalgam of middle-class white man and digital ninja' – uses 'postcoloniality to reinscribe master narratives based on racism and colonialism' (p. 54). Such is the loss of perspective, when one uses computer games as a barometer of race relations. There is a similar problem in Tara McPherson's chapter on deep-South redneck websites, 'the many outposts of Dixie in cyberspace' (p. 117). As McPherson regales us with the ravings of neo-Confederate eccentrics, one could be forgiven for believing that 'The South Will Rise Again', as the flags and bumper stickers put it. But then one realises that by that token, society must also be under siege from paedophiles, Satanists, and every other crackpot to whom the Internet provides a free platform. 'How could we narrate other versions of Southern history and place that are not bleached to a blinding whiteness?' (p. 128), asks McPherson, as though digital Dixie were a major social problem. But the Internet will always privilege the expression of marginal views. The mere fact that an idea is represented online, does not give that idea any great social consequence.

The features of the Internet that make it a methodological nightmare for the researcher, its anonymity, ease of accessibility and discontinuity from material reality, make it an exciting space where people can explore, communicate and experiment with ideas. The book's contributors all celebrate the freedom that the Internet gives users not to be tied down by racial assumptions. Just as the contributors to *Race in Cyberspace* fear that the Internet empowers racists, so they believe that the free play of identities online is empowering to minorities. This freedom, however, is very narrowly conceived.

Jennifer González, in her chapter, looks at an art project that enables users to 'build bodies' online, and describes the resultant 'community of bodies with symbolic meaning intimately tied to surface structure' (p. 38). This is a diminished version of community. All that this community's members have in common is a pseudonymous mouthpiece on the internet. Relationships of trust and common endeavour, the bedrock of any strong community, cannot flourish in an environment where people are anonymous, unaccountable, and go in elaborate disguises of their own design. González argues for the existence of an 'appended subject' on the internet, a subject 'whose limbs and flesh are accessorised, linked to personality traits, and used as values of exchange' (p. 40). Just as she diminishes the concept of community, so she diminishes the concept of the free subject. Subjectivity implies agency, where the subject's actions have real consequences. The casual selection of identities by the 'appended subject', through pixels and text, is an activity of no consequence at all.

The conviction that the online representation of racial identities is a force for good is shared by most of the contributors to *Race in Cyberspace*. They hold to this view so fervently, that they disapprove when Internet users do not wish to discuss race. This is most clearly articulated in David Silver's chapter where he berates the builders of an online discussion forum, for the residents of Blacksburg, Virginia, on the grounds that the forum fails to reflect the differences between its users. 'It is disconcerting', says Silver, 'to note that none of the... newsgroups and lists revolve around issues of race, gender and sexuality'. Apparently, this oversight 'signals a missed opportunity to foster a more diverse community network' (p. 145). Silver's arrogant (and rather sinister) conclusion is that 'community networks... must set aside the popular myth that race, gender, and sexuality are magically nonexistent online' (p. 148). But who is this writer, to

say that community networks 'must' do anything? Heaven forbid that the good people of Blacksburg might want to set aside their racial differences, and chat to one another as neighbours. Silver's argument represents multiculturalism at its most divisive and reactionary – rejecting any community that does not have as its basis racial division.

While the book's contributors celebrate the freedom that the internet gives users not to be tied down by racial assumptions they will not permit internet users to abandon racial identity altogether. The most degenerate thing about online anonymity – the irresponsibility of speech that cannot be accounted for – these authors promote. The most progressive thing about online anonymity – the fact that it allows us to communicate, not as members of a particular race or gender, but as human beings – these authors reject.

In the book's concluding chapter, Beth E. Kolko bemoans the absence of race tags for users in the virtual environments known as MUDs (Multi-User Dungeons – a text-based interactive discussion/games-playing environment). 'Bringing race to the forefront in a text-based virtual world will provide information that can be useful in graphical worlds and other computer-mediated communication systems', she says (p. 230). But 'useful' for what? How is it useful to know the race of the people you communicate with, unless you subscribe to the racist assumption that one's race is essential to one's character?

The Internet is, potentially, a universal communications medium which transcends race. But the authors of *Race in Cyberspace* would prefer the Internet to consist of an infinitude of divided racial categories. Despite their radical credentials, theirs is a deeply conservative project.

**Sandy Starr**, *spiked* ([www.spiked-online.com](http://www.spiked-online.com))

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### **Citizenship, Identity, and Immigration in the European Union: Between Past and Future**

Theodora Kostakopoulou

Manchester University Press, 2001

HBK: ISBN 0719059984 £40.00

pp. 214 (including: bibliography, index)

*Citizenship, Identity, and Immigration* offers an introduction, an overview and proposals for reform on citizenship and immigration policy in the context of European integration. Beyond that, it aims to develop an approach to 'constructive citizenship' with the twofold goal of applying normative critical thought towards developing proposals for institutional reform. This two-tiered perspective is labelled a 'constructivist' approach (p. 2). While taking a critical stance that aims at rigorous scrutiny of current theory and practice of citizenship, the book maintains an optimistic tone. Expectations for change in the area of citizenship are based on the particularity of the emerging Europolity as one that stems from a process of institution building which is *in flux*. In a nutshell, and following a number of other works on citizenship published in the 1990s, Kostakopoulou takes the unfinished Europolity's key features of process and pluralism as the cornerstones for her work. The novelty of this book is the ambition to develop a normative new 'political theory of European integration' (p. 5) that is not limited to a politico-theoretical debate on democracy and legitimacy



but that strives to make concise proposals for institutional reform as well. Taking process as the key issue for both theory and practice, the book finds 'that there are good reasons for thinking about things differently and for considering alternative institutional designs which are both normatively justified and feasible' (p. 65). More specifically, Kostakopoulou seeks to elaborate and justify a normative political theory of European integration based on changed concepts and practices of citizenship and immigration. Her concern is with prevailing unequal power relations generated by structural conditions of inequality brought about by race and gender relations. If there is no institutional change which specifically attempts to undermine these conditions of inequality, she contends, they will stabilise, hence her plea to grasp the chance and 'engage in normative theorising on the emergent institutional designs of European citizenship and immigration' now (p. 1). As a project, this approach means identifying the key features of constructive citizenship. It is addressed in seven chapters. Similar to the actual development of citizenship policy in the European Union (and previously in the European Community), the book begins with discussions of European identity and democracy, its importance in general, its emergence in the process of European integration, as well as the difficulty of making sense of the concept in a non-state realm. Here both theoretical and institutional perspectives (Chs. 1, 2) are offered at first, followed by selected references to the debate over citizenship that is not bound to the nation-state. In particular, she examines the legal case material on citizenship in the EU (Chs. 3, 4). The second half of the book entails at times more rigorously elaborated theoretical perspectives including 'propositions for constructive citizenship in the European Union' (Ch. 5), an 'alternative framework for a European migration policy' (Ch. 6) and 'Heideggerian insights' on 'dwelling, boundaries and belonging' (Ch. 7).

Despite the impressive display of theoretical knowledge and imagination as well as the application of a detailed expertise in European case law, this book, while provocative in its core argument, is likely to generate more questions than answers, given the somewhat idiosyncratic approach to existing debates and the resulting incoherence in theoretical and methodological clarity, explanation and detail. Particularly, those who have been following the respective debates in the manifold academic fields touched by the ambitious argument, including political theory, historical sociology, comparative politics and European integration studies and law will feel that methodological and theoretical terminology is used in a way which stretches beyond the challenge of interdisciplinarity towards an eclecticism that unnecessarily undermines the otherwise strong philosophical and empirical knowledge conveyed in this book. Yet, it is perhaps the author's readiness to engage with the challenge of interdisciplinarity that any academic studying the European Union is faced with (and few dare to take on) that contributes to the at times puzzling, if always interesting and provocative, reading. The overwhelming breadth of theory, ranging from scratching the surface of debates over European integration theory and European citizenship, to engaging more deeply with general theories of citizenship and proposals for migration policy – the strongest chapters of the book – to the final and unexpected turn towards Heidegger's notion of 'dwelling' as a basis for capturing the European Union's complex notion of belonging amongst and despite diversity (p. 160-164), leaves the reader uncertain as to the major theoretical thrust of the book. While the reference to Heidegger is not necessarily misplaced, after all, the Heideggerian turn sustains the book's core argument that 'belonging in the Union is not only multiple and flexible, but is also critical and transformative' (p. 163), it still comes as a surprise and is then left relatively unexplored.

The fact that some of the chapters are relatively dated, including, for example the, albeit revised, re-publication of several previously published articles in the book as well as reference to material generated by a doctoral dissertation submitted in 1995 may have prevented a focus and in-depth exploration of some of these questions. Still, a more structured approach to presenting the important and innovative argument at the book's core, laying out the author's normative approach to constructive citizenship based on process and pluralism and an inherent *Herrschaftskritik* would have done both author and readers great service. However, there is no doubt that this book is likely to take the debate further and make an interesting additional reading for postgraduates and scholars.

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**Globalization and Nationalism, the Changing Balance in India's Economic Policy 1950-2000**

Baldev Raj Nayar

Sage Publications [New Delhi], 2001

HBK: ISBN: 0761995366 £29.99

pp. 287 (including: index, bibliography)

We live in an age of globalization. Although it may not constitute an entirely new phenomenon, globalization in its current phase can be described as an intensification of political, economic and cultural interconnection across national boundaries. However, not everybody experiences globalization in the same way, nor is every society convinced of the efficacy and benefits of global markets. There are then many stories to be told about current global trends and distinct national dispositions. Baldev Raj Nayar unfolds for us one such important story: about the changing roles of markets and the state in India. This book is especially important for those who want to know how ethnically divided countries like India incorporate and carry forward the new neo-liberal dispensation. Nayar carefully delineates the passage of new economy through the maze of India's coalition politics and federal polity. Set against the background of a declining Congress that had ruled as a majority party for more than four decades, the beginning of governments by coalitions – which has been an alliance of several ethnically based regional parties – marked a decisive turning point in Indian politics. That it should coincide with the dismantling of the state- led development and beginning of market-based reforms, have raised at least three questions about the changes in the past decade: Why did India abandon the commitment to state led growth? What role did the regionally based ethnic parties play in this transition? How would the new coalition politics determine the pace and success of the new economy? Nayar's book seeks to answer these questions. It outlines how ethnically divided societies deal with globalization and market reforms.

Although Nayar outlines the halting but enduring pace of economic reforms through the periods of crises and re-engagement in India, this study goes well beyond the purely economic explanations. It does what the bulk of the economic literature has largely ignored: incorporate in its analysis compulsions emanating from India's ethnic diversity, institutional structures, electoral rhythms. Nayar argues that for the Indian leaders, political independence and national security – each essential for domestic legitimacy – could not be separated from the quest for economic development. India rejected the 'Shock therapy' so enthusiastically



advocated by the Harvard economists in the early 1990s because that would have meant dismantling the edifice of ethnic and regional collaboration so carefully constructed to support Indian democracy. India settled instead for a strategy of incremental reforms. Its slowness allowed India to build a pro-reform domestic consensus. Although the halting pace provoked criticism, in Nayar's view, the critics had ignored what was really critical to economic transition, namely, a new balance between domestic and global demands and between economic sovereignty and greater openness to world markets.

Nayar's analysis underscores the importance of a political economy perspective to studying the new economy. Indian leaders, he says, were aware that India would lose status and power if they failed to break the trap of slow growth and stagnation that had marked the previous four decades of development. The success of the reforms however depended on the extent to which state governments cooperated in implementing the proposed changes. It also depended on the extent to which Indian industry was willing to risk competition from global firms. Nayar shows us how this was accomplished and how India's federal politics made the process different from that in other economies that are praised for their speedy transition to a liberalized market oriented economy.

Nayar's *Globalization and Nationalism* is a cogently argued study of interaction between domestic politics – one defined by ethnic pluralism – and international economy. The first chapter lays down the theoretical framework. Nayar argues that the advocacy of liberalization must take into account the legitimacy requirement of the state. Capital may be internationally mobile but legitimacy, he points out, is rooted in territorial states constrained by domestic politics. Globalization therefore does not replace nationalism but spurs it to new forms of expression. In the Cold war period, it coalesced around policies of nonalignment and economic self-reliance in India. The new forms of nationalism are yet to evolve but their likely direction is already visible in the emergence of Hindu nationalism and its exclusion of religious minorities. Whether ethnic identity will act as an antidote or aggravate religious polarization created by Hindu nationalism, remains unclear. The eventual outcome will depend on the extent to which ethnic pluralism enhances or retards the cause of growth and reforms.

Nayar's second chapter explores the relationship forged between economy and politics during the first two decades after independence. He argues that in the context of the Cold War, the Nehruvian formula of insulating India's unconsolidated democracy from the pressures of international politics made good sense, even though there was a price to be paid in runaway inflation and economic scarcity. The next three chapters examine the changing role of the private and public spheres through the years from late 1960s to 1996. Chapter five examines the business and corporate sector response to reforms, their initial reluctance to forego the protection of the state and the subsequent slow reaching out to international markets. The next two chapters are a virtual tour de force in delineating the reform strategies in the post 1996 years and its passage through the maze of India's federal politics. Baldev Raj Nayar concludes that contrary to popular impression, the Indian reforms were not initiated because of external pressures. They were home grown. They were also gradual because they had to accommodate to India's federal democracy. But their slow pace was a blessing in disguise. It permitted wider public debate on the merits of reforms and allowed time for social learning and self-correction.

Each chapter in this study analyzes how this happened and how it made the new balance between politics and economy possible and reforms irreversibly. In investigating this, Nayar has made an important contribution to the debate on democratic development and neoliberal economic reform. The interplay of nationalism and globalization in this study beautifully conflates political calculations, security compulsions, economic policies and democratic rhythms and forges them into a single frame of analysis. This is the strength of this study. For practitioners and specialists interested in the interconnection between the new economy and ethnic pluralism, Nayar study will prove highly rewarding.

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**Serbia: The History Behind the Name**

Stevan Pavlowitch

Hurst & Company, 2002.

HBK: ISBN: 0814767087 £45.00

pp. 252 (including: bibliography, index)

In this book, Pavlowitch sets out to provide an account of the various 'Serbias' that have come and gone in the last millennium. Following a modernist approach, Pavlowitch sees 'Serbia' as a shifting referent to the ideas that have moulded territory and people into conceptual unities – national, cultural, historical. Consistently, it is the theme of the 'name' that gets foregrounded throughout.

To follow more pedantic lines, this is an accessible overview of Serbian history, starting from 12<sup>th</sup> century A.D. and ending with the 2000 presidential elections. As could be expected, the emphasis is on the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which is divided into three main periods covering the two world wars, the Tito years, and Milosevic's rise and fall. Within an ever-expanding literature on the Balkans, this is a much-needed account of an area still which is still under-published in English in relation to the wider topic of Yugoslavia.

The first chapter introduces a rather mainstream regional theme in describing the pre-modern Serbia as etched between Rome and Byzantium, the Hapsburgs and the Ottomans. The account does not focus exclusively on wars however, but extends to depictions of more fluctuating alliances, such as those with Byzantium (pp. 7-8). The battle of Kosovo is critically presented, alongside the legends and re-interpretations of it. The second chapter takes up the same theme, focusing on negotiations with the Ottomans for autonomy and on the relations with the Hapsburg Empire and Russia. Attention is paid to invented traditions like Peter II's interpretation 'of the Kosovo cult' (p. 40).

As the emergence of nationalism is traced in the third chapter, the theme of the name is emphasised (pp. 47, 55, 56) within an illuminating discussion of concepts (e.g., Illyrianism) and events that eventually led to the Treaty of Berlin (1878). Their effects however, are at times less rigorously presented. For example, the departure of the Ottomans is, rather benignly, one would suggest, attributed to their strong 'loyalty to the defence of the empire' (p. 43). Chapter four presents a story of population and territorial integration and intense nation-building. The data presented covers demographic change, the evolution of nationalist rhetoric and the development of political proposals. Archduke Ferdinand's assassination is



presented in an exciting way that once again underscores the importance of symbolism.

In chapter five the problematic foundations of Yugoslav unification are discussed, the significance of names once again being highlighted (p. 103). The author seems to locate the basic problems in a poorly developed ideology of 'Yugoslavism' and diverse political expectations and 'political thinking' (p. 110) between the Croats and the Serbs. Put alongside the author's continuous plea against reading history backwards, this explanation seems to lack further elaboration precisely because of its straight-forwardness. Chapter six contextualises Tito's rise to power within an environment of political conflict between royalists and communists and constant negotiation between Serbs and Croats for power. Chapter seven is a very readable treatment of the intricacies of Second World War conflicts – the coalitions, losses, and re-interpretations. The attention to names and invention shifts to an insightful etymology of the word 'Chetniks' (p. 146) and an analysis of the development of Communist mythologies (pp.154-5). The following chapter examines the Tito years from a critical perspective and locates Tito's key mistake in his failure to address sectarian differences between Serb Communists and Croat Ustashas (members of the Croat regime that had collaborated with the Axis powers during WW2). Yugoslav identity appears here to swing between support and opposition to Tito and 'feelings of sectional nationalism' are described as having become 'reduced to something basic and emotional' (pp. 160-1).

The questions posed by these perspectives are partly answered in chapter nine, which presents the Albanian students' demonstration in Pristina in 1981 as Yugoslavism's 'rude awakening' (p. 187), an explosion of nationalist feelings that had been brushed under the carpet during the Tito years. Milosevic's turn to nationalist rhetoric is also located in Kosovo and the centrality of this area to the future of Yugoslavia further underscored by the description of the 600<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of the battle of Kosovo as the next historical turning point. The final chapter provides a valuable overview of Milosevic's rise to power, and accounts for his fall as due primarily to the erosion of meaningful political debate, the rise of para-state institutions, and economic collapse.

Overall, Pavlowitch's consistent argument is that the coalition between Serbia and Croatia failed because each of them had different political experiences and different ideas about the role of the state and that Yugoslavia failed because it demanded more imagination to make it work than its proponents were capable of. Although this argument is well served by the analysis, the author seems, at points, to be underplaying more grassroots-level approaches, which might for example provide a more nuanced account of electoral behaviour in 1991 than the statement that the lower classes and 'least educated... simply cast a vote but did not exercise a conscious choice' (p. 205). The religious tone with which the book concludes might sound a bit unsettling, but the condemnation of nationalism, which is voiced throughout, provides ample hope for the future.

This is a commendable piece of historical work, accessible to students of history and the area alike – it provides an excellent introduction to the Balkans and Serbia, and presents an array of factors, symbolic meanings being the most strongly emphasised, that many historical works tend to overlook.

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**Hizbu'llah: Politics and Religion**

Amal Saad-Ghorayeb

Pluto, 2001

Hbk: ISBN: 0745317936 £45.00 \$69.95

Pbk: ISBN: 0745317928 £14.99 \$22.50

pp. 264 (including: index, bibliography, appendices)

The prevailing perception of Hizbu'llah is that of a fundamentalist, armed organisation prone to violence and terror. While the first years of its inception were turbulent indeed, Hizbu'llah has since transformed into the largest and most prominent political party in Lebanon. In this timely and informative book, Amal Saad-Ghorayeb explores the extent to which the political transformation of the party clashed with its ideological pillars and how the party rationalised the apparent contradiction between the two.

Saad's core thesis is that when confronted with reality, Hizbu'llah has been able to reformulate its ideology by developing a dual strategy of 'confining the quintessentially Islamic and unattainable to the intellectual realm and the secular and attainable to the political realm' (p. 190). She argues that this strategy enabled Hizbu'llah to adapt without compromising its principles or losing its intellectual consistency.

One example is the party's endorsement of democracy in light of its Islamic Republic ideal (Chapter 2). The creation of an Islamic state in Lebanon remains the bedrock of Hizbu'llah's ideology. However, because of the religiously diverse nature of the Lebanese society and Hizbu'llah's reference to the Quranic injunction that Islam cannot be enforced upon followers of other faiths, this goal has been relinquished and its implementation postponed to an indefinite future. As a result, Hizbu'llah's political participation in the system was a radical departure from its earlier anathemisation of the Lebanese regime. How did the party deal with this contradiction? By striking a delicate balance, argues Saad, between the ideal and the real (p. 187). In other words, intellectually, the Islamic Republic remains the ideal system in Hizbu'llah's eyes, but when it is unattainable politically, democracy comes as the next best system to Islam (p. 55).

This dichotomy between the intellectual and the political levels has also enabled Hizbu'llah to reconcile its pan-Islamic leanings with its Arab and Lebanese identity (Chapters 3 and 4) by claiming that its supranational commitment to Khumayni and the Islamic Republic of Iran is only an intellectual affiliation (p. 87), while its political bond is reserved to the Lebanese nation state.

The struggle with the West (Chapter 5) has equally been revisited. Hizbu'llah believes it to be a 'civilisational struggle' against Western political and cultural hegemony over the Middle East dating back to the early days of Islam and the Crusades. However, in view of the party's rapprochement with France and its approval of Iranian President Khatami's desire for 'dialogue with the West', Hizbu'llah favoured characterising the struggle 'ikhtilaf' (dispute) rather than 'khilaf' (clash) of civilisations, as chosen by S. Huntington. The latter implies irreconcilability whereas the former connotes coexistence.

Even with those intellectual pillars deemed less amenable to temporisation such as the party's inveterate antipathy towards Israel (Chapter 6), Zionist ideology (Chapter 7) and Jewish religion (Chapter 8) Saad writes that it is not possible to



'overlook the room for ideological manoeuvre which the party has left itself with' (p. 153).

Drawing on speeches, statements and interviews of the party officials published or broadcast between 1984 and 2000 and relying on extensive interviews with Hizbu'llah leaders, Saad's analysis offers unique insights inside the political mind of one of the paradoxically most renowned and least understood Islamist movements. I found more information on Hizbu'llah in this study than in any other book so far published on the subject. And some of her analyses do stand out as daring rejections of widespread perceptions.

For example, her argument on Hizbu'llah's participation in the system is at the centre of a controversial and heated debate on the compatibility of Islam and democracy. The prevalent view is that Islamists do not *believe* in democracy but use it as a procedure to attain power. Saad claims on the contrary that Hizbu'llah is genuinely committed to democracy. Not because of an artificial synthesis between democratic and Islamic foundations resulting in an 'Islamic democracy' as many prominent scholars argue. But because Hizbu'llah makes no pretence at embracing democracy as an ideal and endorses it only as a realistically feasible system of government, there is no reason to question the genuineness of its endorsement (p. 56).

Hizbu'llah's rejection of political violence against secular and non-Islamic states (Chapter 1) is equally challenging. Unlike other Islamist movements who view their local regimes as 'infidels' and 'apostates' punishable by death, Hizbu'llah opposes political violence on the ground that the Shari'a (Islamic Law) deems 'an oppressive government preferable to chaos' and rebellion and civil disobedience 'unacceptable' (p. 22). In light of this principle, the party feels bound to preserve public order and civil peace.

However, although Saad's book succeeded in showing that the party's reversal of strategy is neither a proof of its ideological shallowness nor an indication a Janus-faced nature of the movement, its overall 'consistency paradigm' is more questionable.

First, Saad considers the scattered and ad-hoc statements and speeches produced by the party over a period of 20 years as forming one single coherent intellectual body whereas intellectual ruptures, dichotomies and contradictions might characterise more appropriately Hizbu'llah's history. For instance, don't the contradictory stances of the party reflect two different tendencies, a radical and a moderate one, as illustrated by Hizbu'llah's former secretary-general Sobhi Tufayli's resignation and the party's major split in 1992 because of ideological disagreements?

Second, she oscillates between demonstrating the party's consistency and relying on her assumption of consistency to prove other points. For example, claiming that the party disapproves today the use of violence against civilians, she infers that the accusation of its involvement in earlier terrorist attacks is not credible because 'it would be ideologically inconsistent for Hizbu'llah to denounce the killing of western tourists... if only a few years earlier it had engaged in lengthy terrorist campaigns' (p. 102). This is mere tautology.

Despite my reservations on the core thesis, I would recommend this book as outstandingly informative and, so far, the best published study of Hizbu'llah's ideology. It is commendable for at least one more reason: Saad lived up to her

initial desire to shift the focus away from the party's alleged involvement in terror, an even more commendable task in light of the recent US war on terror.

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### **Myths and Memories of the Nation**

Anthony D. Smith

Oxford University Press, 1999

PBK: ISBN: 0198296843 £15.99

288 pages (including: index)

It was the title of Smith's latest publication that first attracted me, as I thought that the eminent thinker of national rhetoric would make connections between his work on nationalism and the highly engaging bodies of scholarship on myth and memory. *Myths and Memories of the Nation* is a different book than the one I had in mind. While Smith offers his readers a complex yet lucid framework for understanding issues concerning nations and nationalism, he does not actively engage the fields of memory and myth studies, but mostly employs notions such as 'ancestral memories' and 'descent' or 'origin myths' to contextualize national genealogical claims. Moreover, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* is a compilation of nine journal articles published since 1992 and one short piece the author wrote in 1984 clarifying his ethno-symbolic approach to understanding issues of nations and nationalism. As such, Smith's new book is less about the development of a new conceptual framework and more about the application of his already existing theory to different case studies and historical periods.

The underlying premise of *Myths and Memories of the Nation* is the same that was found in Smith's classic text *The Ethnic Origin of Nations* – that in order to better understand the behavior of modern nations and make sense of their discourse, we must ground them in a history of older cultural units called 'ethnies'. Analyses of the correspondences between nations and ethnies are found in almost every article of Smith's latest book, including the introduction, where the author summarizes and clarifies his ethno-symbolic approach to issues of nations and nationalism. Smith's ethno-symbolism synthesizes the two most dominant theories of nationalism, as the author himself suggests, those of perennialism and modernism – both of which are also defined and delineated in the introduction. Where the former theory claims nations and national identities to have been in existence for as long as there has been human history, the latter theory claims that nation-formation and nationalism are phenomena integrally related to the process of modernization traced since the French revolution. Smith suggests that the shortcoming of the two theories is their respective reductionism – perennialism being unwilling to acknowledge the unique character of national development that ensued since the eighteenth century, while modernism sees nations as phenomena uniquely created to respond to the new world order of historical modernity. Smith's ethno-symbolic definition of the nation closely resembles the modernist one – 'as a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members' – yet grounds most characteristics of the nation in older, ethnic units – 'ethnic origin myths, beliefs in ethnic election, the development of ethnoscaapes, the territorialization of memory, and the vernacular mobilization of communities' (p. 11). In this respect Smith situates the nationalist movements in the aspirations of



previous ethnic groups, and suggests that to fully comprehend the power and durability of different nationalisms, we must take account of the histories that inspire them. The rest of the Smith's book demonstrates this idea.

Beyond the introductory chapter, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* is split into two parts, the former part, according to Smith, being theoretical and historical in focus, while the later is empirical and contemporary. This distinction is not an obvious one for the reader; every article appears to be grounded in a theoretical setting and offers both a historical perspective and examples for elaborating on its points. What is apparent in this collection is that each article elaborates on Smith's ethno-symbolic perspective by considering and analyzing either a specific issue that pertains to the ethno-symbolism, or a particular ethnic/national unit and its rhetoric, or a combination of the two. There are survey-type articles which offer exceptionally organized summaries of thinkers and theories pertaining to distinct aspects of nations and nationalism: territorial concerns, impulse toward homogeneity, historical memories, myths of descent. There are case-study articles which elaborate on the tensions and discords involved in specific ideological movements, such as Zionism and the unification of Europe; and there are articles that concern the resurgence of violent nationalisms and their aftermath in the post-1989 world order.

The one technical shortcoming of the book is the poor editing work that went into it, as certain concepts repeat themselves – an identical set of definitions for 'nation', 'nationalism' and 'ethnie' appears in almost every essay, while several other terms get defined in more than two articles – and Smith's ethno-symbolic approach seems to be contextualized anew in every one of the articles. This repetition tires the reader and tends to subdue her interest to the point, I'm afraid, that she may skip entire passages that, beyond recurrent explanations, may hold the interesting insights and pithy articulations which are definitely to be found in the book. And there are some gems to be found in every article, either in the form of compelling observations, or poignant assertions, or systematized patterns of ethnic and national histories and developments, for example, Smith's question regarding the 'memoryless nature of any cosmopolitan culture created today' and the difficulty of a 'new Europe' arising without 'myth' and 'memory' (in the essay: 'National Identity and European Unity'), his notion of 'history as martyrology' (in 'Nation and Ethnoscape' and 'Zionism and Diaspora Nationalism') and his definition of four patterns of ethnic survival, the 'imperial-dynastic', 'communal-demotic', 'emigrant-colonist' and 'diaspora-restoration' ones (in 'Chosen Peoples: Why Ethnic Groups Survive').

Overall, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* is a great collection of articles that concern nations and nationalism, and it raises many compelling questions while provoking further thought and debate. Finally this is a book that can be especially valuable for those who will use it as an introduction to Smith's work, for those who are interested in a broad overview of issues concerning national identities, and for those who enjoy Smith's work but have been unable to trace it in the different journals where it appeared in the last decade.

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**Maya Identities and the Violence of Place**

Charles D. Thompson, Jr,  
Ashgate, 2001

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pp. 206 (including: references)

This is a book which asks us to question and rethink the processes of intellectual enclosure in which we place the subjects of our research. It does so through a beautifully written account of Mayan (descendants of the sophisticated indigenous culture that flourished in Middle America more than 20 centuries before the Conquest of the region by the Spanish in the 16<sup>th</sup> century) identities and cultures in transition as people move across territory, to and from, Huehuetenango in Guatemala, Chiapas in Southern Mexico and North Carolina, USA. While three international borders figure in the story, many other borders feature which are not just territorial but also cultural, social and subjective, and constructed over colonial and post-colonial time. They are also rapidly moving borders under the impact of contemporary global dynamics.

The movement and change that takes place through crossing borders is and has always been a vital part of Mayan identity construction. The Maya have crossed and re-crossed borders over historical time and even before the Spanish Conquest and through choice as well as through violence. Shared identities amongst indigenous groups have nevertheless survived, but cultures have not remained the same. The book sets out to open the eyes of outside observers who see the Maya only as victimised and constrained by their attachment to place and land. The Maya that Thompson meets and travels with, keep moving in order to survive, their attachments are to identity and dignity rather than locality and even culture as something time-honoured and fixed: 'Each individual and moving place I have represented in the preceding chapters' writes the author in his conclusion, 'tell a story not of the demise of cultural identities, but of their need for constant change in order to be' (p. 181).

I did not read this book as an anthropologist, but as a political scientist and peace researcher working within interdisciplinary or even transdisciplinary frameworks. I found myself in great sympathy with its theme, and 'borderlands' an enormously powerful and useful metaphor. Over the last few years I have been trying to understand the changing social and political contours of Huehuetenango, Guatemala where Thompson did most of his field work, in the wake of the 1996 Peace Accords. The Accords ended 36 years of civil war, which were experienced most violently in Huehuetenango in 1982, the year that the army carried out 88 massacres of mostly indigenous people in this impoverished department of highland Guatemala. Nor did I come to this research as an ethnographer like Thompson, but space and identity have played a key role in my efforts to understand the region and its people. Huehuetenango has 31 municipalities of which Jacaltenango where Thompson lived and studied is one. It has eight distinct ethno-linguistic groups, including the dominant Spanish speaking *ladino* (mixed white/Indian), and seven indigenous groups (distinct ethno-linguistic groups who are also descendants of the Maya). The relationship of identity to locality is enormously complex in the region, and Thompson's portrayal of the indigenous people 'not as placed, physically stable, and innocent, but as movers, as refugees, as travellers and innovators' (p. vii) is very helpful and appropriate.

My own research question 'how will the people of Huehuetenango learn to live together in the wake of prolonged violence and conflict?' is directly concerned



with how identity and attachment are constructed. As Thompson persuasively argues, this cannot be answered through assumptions of fixed and bounded choices and experiences. In my own research, the background context in Huehuetenango is itself generating rapid changes to the lives and livelihood possibilities of the people of the region. These changes include falling coffee prices, government road building projects creating differential market access, external donor agencies' post-war reconstruction projects, the rising cost of paying the *coyote* (intermediary) to organise a passage through Mexico to the US and a volatile democratisation process, to mention just a few factors. In addition, the value of attachment to ethno-linguistic group is mediated by attachment to village rather than municipal capital and vice versa; to religion (*costumbres*, the Maya indigenous form of spirituality, Protestantism or Catholicism); by experiences during the war as combatant, refugee, enthusiastic or coerced member of the civil defense patrols and/or activism in a socio/political organisation, and by the different gender roles associated with each of these. The Mam, a Mayan ethno-linguistic group of the south of Huehuetenango who were very active in the peasant support base of the guerrillas complain that the Q'anjob'al sat out the war and carried on making money. The Q'anjob'al of San Pedro Soloma are trading their way to cross long closed social borders and one Q'anjob'al family now owns a major hotel in Huehuetenango, stronghold of *ladino* wealth and power. However, the Q'anjob'al of Santa Eulalia, twenty minutes from San Pedro Soloma, do not trade and emphasise their cultural and educational achievements, eyeing the material advance of their neighbours with some disdain and resentment. Multiple attachments compete within a context of growing poverty and insecurity. It is interesting that Thompson's fieldwork leads him and his Jacal friends to look toward the North, to Mexico and the US. My own fieldwork can confirm that those with any means to travel look in that direction rather than inward to Huehuetenango or any other part of Guatemala. I took the departmental space rather than one municipality as the 'borders' of my research, but everyday life is in great flux beneath the administrative and political divisions of the Guatemalan state. However, there are growing numbers of people too poor even to pay the *coyote*. In that sense, Jacaltenango is a special place, regarded in the Department as the municipality that produced its teachers, where education levels are relatively higher than elsewhere.

My only caution on reading this book is that Thompson does not differentiate between social and geographic mobility. In my own research in Huehuetenango, mobility is becoming increasingly contingent on resources. It gives some the capacity to survive and change, especially when it means access to the US labour market. Those who can only manage to migrate internally to the lower paid and more exploitative agro-exporting estates of the Guatemalan coast do not fare so well. Increasing social differentiation amongst the Mayan as well as between them and the *ladino* is an outcome of the differential kinds of mobility.

Global economics unfold in particular ways in this region on the periphery of the periphery. They combine with a legacy of violent conflict that touched the lives of the indigenous population in multiple often invisible ways (very powerfully described by Thompson) dividing them against each other, particularly in municipalities with less prior cohesion than Jacaltenango. While some pan Mayan activists are trying to build a unifying indigenous identity, there are many dynamics working in the opposite direction.

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### **Asia's Emerging Regional Order: Reconciling Traditional and Human Security**

William T. Tow, Ramesh Thakur and In-Taek Hyun (eds.)

United Nations University Press, 2000

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pp 342 (including: index)

The end of the Cold War prompted academics and politicians to re-conceptualise security and the role of the nation-state. Discussions of human security came to the fore as new (or rather re-newed) threats emerged not to nations *per se*, but to the communities and individuals living within their borders. Areas such as economic, environmental and maritime security, concerns about hunger and poverty, disease, displacement, human rights and so on fall under the category of human security, and it is often the case that it is the state, or groups within the state, that threaten, rather than protect, individual interests. These 'borderless' threats, it is suggested, can not be met through traditional, state-centric approaches but require a broad-based, cooperative effort on the part of governments, non-governmental organisations and interest groups, epistemic communities and the like.

This book explores the widening debate about, and application of, human security in the 1990s, using the Asia Pacific as a case study. Based on a workshop organised by Australian universities in 1998, the book consists of four parts dealing with definitions and the evolving conceptualisation of human security, the 'Asianization' of human security, key issue areas of human security in Asia, and human security at an institutional level. The underlying theme of the book is to illustrate that rather than acting as a threat to traditional security approaches, human security can and should be viewed as complementary. This is easier said than done, as the introduction highlights, given that the tension between the two schools of thought are born from the notion that 'sovereignty and human security are basically incompatible ideas, as the security referent shifts from the state to the individual' (p. 5). The barriers created by 'mutual intellectual disdain' (p. 14) as described by Tow and Trood are, however, not insurmountable, and potential linkages between traditional and human security are possible due to the overlap in agendas such as conflict prevention, reducing states' vulnerability and reconciling rival civilizations (pp. 22-3). The problem, however, as explained by Kim and Hyun in Chapter 2 is how to carry out human security strategies and policies 'in such a way that they do not hamper the pursuit of national and international security' (p. 41).

Another key theme is the potential role of middle powers in building up the networks and forging the consensus need to put human security policies on the agenda of regional and global organisations. The Asia Pacific has its fair share of middle powers and the region is therefore seen as playing a potentially crucial role in the development of the concept in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Australia and Canada are covered in Carl Ungerer's chapter on the disarmament policies of these two countries. Japan, though not normally considered a middle power, could also be added to the list of regional advocates of human security given its lack of 'normalcy' in the sphere of traditional security, and its favourable policy stance as enunciated by former Prime Minister Obuchi Keizo. Surprisingly, the book contains relatively little on this subject, whereas a chapter on Indonesia's recent record on human security appears to sit a little uncomfortably in Part 2.



The Asia Pacific presents a good case study of the need for human security due to a number of crises – economic, political and social – of recent years. Various chapters in Parts 2 and 3 of the book consider some of the effects of these crises, considering for example the impact of the Asian financial crisis on people's security (loss of jobs, political instability), the environmental degradation brought about by industrialisation and so on and explores what is being done in the Asia Pacific to address some of these issues. The increase in the number and activity of NGOs dealing with human security-related issues provides some hope, but as Sucharithanarugse points out, problems are posed by a continued adherence amongst the region's states to non-interventionism. Human rights, discussed within the context of the Asian values debate, are considered in Chapters 7 and 8, while Chapter 9 discusses 'grey area phenomena' (GAP) – threats posed by non-state actors and non-governmental organisations to sovereign states. Southeast Asia faces particular GAP-related problems, as Chalk points out, not least because 'national and international preparedness against GAP remains inadequate' (p. 138).

Nations' lack of ability, or will, to cope with the growing array of non-traditional security threats appears to be a recurring theme in the book and is highlighted in Chapters 9, 10 and 11 which deal with refugees, environmental security, and maritime security respectively. The message throughout the book is clear, and is summarised neatly by Elliott who argues that 'human security requires more than a rethinking of threats. It requires a rethinking of what security means, who it is for, and how it is to be achieved' (p. 172). While the book leaves one with an overwhelming sense that government leaders, politicians, epistemic communities, non-governmental organisations and the whole gamut of grass-roots activists have some distance to travel to find the answers to these questions, some hope is provided in the form of what has already been put in place at a regional institutional level as highlighted in the chapters in Part 4.

This is an important book which sets out some clear agendas for current and future debates on an expanding definition of security, and offers some suggestions for ways in which traditional and non-traditional approaches could converge. In the wake of September 11<sup>th</sup> these agendas have become even more relevant and pressing.

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