

Book reviews

International Relations theory

Power, order and change in world politics. Edited by G. John Ikenberry. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2014. 296pp. Index. £45.00. ISBN 978 1 10707 274 9.

Some years ago I had reason to offer a well-deserved encomium honouring the scholarly achievements of Professor Anthony Smith, the doyen of Nationalism Studies in Britain. Unlike many of us who would be fortunate to have our writings quoted in a footnote 50 years hence, Professor Smith's work has proved to be far more enduring. This observation applies no less to Robert Gilpin whose definitive study *War and change in world politics* (Cambridge University Press, 1981) has proved to be a source of superb scholarly argument ever since. The latest manifestation of this abiding interest is the book currently under review. The editor, G. John Ikenberry, has assembled an impressive team of scholars to reflect on the book's 'grand themes of power and change in world politics ... that [have] inspired and provoked us' (p. ix). In his introductory chapter Ikenberry outlines Gilpin's central thesis: 'a powerful state rises up in the system and creates order, doing so to protect and advance its interests. Over time, however, the distribution of power and wealth changes, driven by the diffusion of technology and production. Eventually, the state or states that are growing more powerful and wealthy will seek to change this order to reflect their interests. At great historical junctures, this change is brought on by hegemonic wars in which a rising state violently takes command of the global system and overturns the old order. The resulting order reflects a new equilibrium between power and interests' (p. 5). This interpretation of world politics, what one scholar, William C. Wohlforth, describes as Gilpinian realism, contrasts sharply with that other realist vision of order 'defined in terms of anarchy and sustained by the balance of power' as articulated in Kenneth Waltz's work. Indeed, the fact that both theories have produced so impressive a body of scholarly commentary demonstrates that realism—however defined—has survived, indeed flourished, despite an avalanche of criticism from post-modern detractors. (On this point, Jonathan Kirshner's chapter is especially perceptive.)

The nine chapters of this book discuss Gilpin's theory and its relevance for understanding the search for order in contemporary international relations. Thus Charles Kupchan argues that relying on essentially material commands—as Gilpin does—is insufficient; rather he claims that any one hegemonic order expresses 'cultural values and political ideals' unique to that hegemon's historical experience. This proposition is well supported by a detailed examination of four hegemonic powers: 'the Ottomans, Imperial China, Great Britain and the United States' (p. 8). David Lake claims convincingly that 'authority' is the 'key feature of hierarchy orders; hence liberal hierarchical orders were the most successful over the last 200 years' (p. 8). This point is developed at greater length in Ikenberry's contribution where the case for the essential success of the 'American liberal hegemonic order' is very well

argued. Briefly, the succeeding chapters consider, for example, the notion of hegemonic decline and how this, as William Wohlforth argues, can be slowed and its effects mitigated (p. 10). Michael Mastanduno explores the 'grand bargains ... that are part of the underside of hegemonic orders' and has some perceptive observations to make comparing and contrasting the post-1945 'bargains' made by the United States with Germany and Japan as 'junior partners' and notes that any such 'bargain' with China would be 'problematic and unstable Germany and Japan were security allies and the American provision of alliance security facilitated the wider set of "bargains" over rules, institutions and the governance of the world economy'; by contrast 'China is a growing rival and American-led hegemonic "grand bargains" will be difficult to sustain' (p. 11). In chapter seven, Daniel Deudney examines the impact of the nuclear revolution on 'liberal' hegemony. He argues convincingly that 'nuclear weapons ... have radically reduced the likelihood of great power war' and have, in effect, undermined Gilpin's view 'that cycles of hegemonic war ... are integral to the rise and fall of international order' (p. 11).

In sharp contrast to his fellow contributors, Barry Buzan takes a characteristically iconoclastic view of the Gilpin enterprise. His chapter, 'Brilliant but now wrong: a sociological and historical sociological assessment', takes profound issue with Gilpin's traditional realist interpretation of order and change. Buzan's challenge—while acknowledging the value and importance of Gilpin's analysis—claims that Gilpin 'fails to fully appreciate the impact of industrial capitalism and the evolving character of international society on global order and change' (p. 12). Buzan's argument is generally pioneering and offers a detailed sociological interpretation of the ways in which the 'long 19th century has transformed world politics' (p. 12). Thus for him, 'the unfolding global system is unlike anything seen before' and is a far cry from Gilpin's 'cyclical dynamic'. The book ends with a fascinating analysis by John A. Hall of the role of nationalism as a 'powerful shaping influence on war and order building' (p. 14).

This bald summary of the book's contents does scant justice to the sophistication of the arguments advanced by a group of scholars, chosen with care and discrimination by an editor who kept his authors on a tight intellectual rein. Throughout, the contributors have demonstrated a mastery of their chosen topic, supported by a formidable grasp of the scholarly literature—both past and present. The enterprise took four years to complete and there are hints that individual chapters were circulated for comment and criticism by the team as a whole. What has emerged is a study which, unlike some such collections, is thoroughly integrated, with the editor providing helpful commentary when appropriate. What, I wonder, would Robert Gilpin make of it all? Perhaps a seminar or two inviting his response to this scholarly but always fair-minded critique of his work might result from this particular collection. What one can say with firm conviction is that this book will be an immensely valuable teaching tool inducting those students and their teachers into a subject of great theoretical and practical importance. This is international theory at its best, always relevant to 'real world concerns' and deeply versed in historical understanding.

Finally, one of the major strengths of the study is the attention devoted by several contributors to China's role in international relations. Some, notably Wohlforth, Hall and Mastanduno, speculate knowledgeably about whether China can and will maintain a 'grand bargain' with the United States or engage in a Gilpin-type struggle. In this particular context, Wohlforth is especially interesting and is worth quoting at length; like many scholars he is sceptical about the possibility of hegemonic war and its impact on order as Gilpin defined it. He concludes that 'a Chinese century or Pax Sinica seems fanciful' (p. 130). Thus, what Ikenberry and his scholars have done is to ask two crucially important questions: 'What does it mean when we say that leading states "run" or "rule" an international order? If the

United States has pursued a “liberal strategy” of order building and governance, what sort of strategy of governance might China pursue?’ A variety of answers are possible as this book amply demonstrates. Both these questions prompt a third: what difference, if any, does the well-nigh universal preoccupation with so-called new security threats (transnational terrorism; nuclear proliferation; international crime; collapsing states; climate change; the spread of disease) make to the possibility of global cooperation based on liberal principle rather than hard-nosed short-term realist calculation? One last reflection: what would be interesting to discuss is how far the so-called BRICS are capable—perhaps under Chinese leadership—of creating and contributing to a radically different new international order. This book might well provide an intellectual template for analysis, however speculative.

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The search for lasting peace: critical perspectives on gender-responsive human security. Edited by **Rosalind Boyd**. Farnham, Surrey, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate. 2014. 216pp. £60.00. ISBN 978 1 47242 096 1. Available as e-book.

One of the chapters in this book includes a graphic description of the way in which women and children were deliberately targeted in the genocide of Muslims in Gujarat in 2002. After the burning of a train in which 58 Hindu pilgrims were killed, a deliberate attack on Muslims resulted in 2000 deaths and widespread displacement. Women were beaten, gang-raped, mutilated and then killed, often through burning alive. Among the methods used were ‘flooding of homes and then electrocuting whole families [and] gas cylinders used as improvised explosive devices’ (p. 76). The genocide was meticulously planned using voter registration lists to identify Muslim households and mobile phones to direct murders. Despite reports that condemned the genocide and indicted the government of Gujarat, the perpetrators remain free and indeed the man then in charge of the Gujarat government, Narendra Modi, is now the prime minister of India. At the time, he claimed that international criticism was merely the result of jealousy of India’s economic success.

The story illustrates not only the gendered nature of contemporary violence but also the inadequacy of global efforts to tackle widespread insecurity in large parts of the world. This book is a welcome effort to interrogate the idea of human security from a feminist perspective, especially in the Canadian context. The first part of the book introduces the notion of human security and provides useful background on human security initiatives both by the Canadian government and by the various international instruments aimed at addressing women’s experience of violence and the role of women in conflict resolution. The conceptual chapter echoes much of the feminist critique of human security. Human security after all is about the security of the individual rather than the state, yet who is the individual? Is it the ‘West European enlightenment’s concept of “Rational Man”’ (p. 23) rather than women and families? Is it ‘mere life’ rather than the ‘good life’? And is there a contradiction between Canada’s human security programmes and its role in air strikes or in neo-liberal economic policies? Is human security nothing more than a safety net for the global market, a way of mitigating the worst aspects of global inequality? The second part of the book includes some case-studies of women’s experience of insecurity—they do not actually answer the questions posed above but are no less worthwhile for that. The case-studies include the Gujarat example; a fascinating study of the Shan Women’s Action Network—it describes a project undertaken by Shan women on the border between Burma and Thailand to document sexual violence by the Burmese military and the consequent challenges they faced in both Burma and Thailand; an account of the increasingly harsh

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treatment of women asylum seekers in Canada; and a study of the way in which Palestinian women's activism has been transformed—not necessarily for the better—from grassroots organizing to professionalized NGOs. The final part of the book deals with the weakness of a range of international efforts to deal with women's insecurity including the difficulty of prosecuting gender-based crimes in East Timor; compensation for women within the framework of the truth and reconciliation commissions in Guatemala and Peru; the inadequacies of the G8 Africa Action Plan; and the vulnerability of women to firearms especially in places like the United States and Canada.

The book is significant in the way it draws attention to the importance of gender in understanding contemporary conflicts. It covers the insecurity of women in both advanced countries and developing countries—something that is unusual in a book of this kind. A very interesting aspect of the book is the way it reveals the global nature of women's activism; in every example, women join up with international NGOs, raise international awareness and/or make use of the various international instruments that are, in turn, the result of lobbying by women's groups.

Despite the emphasis on gender, the book focuses on women's experience of insecurity. Although there are references to the way in which masculinity is constructed in war, the emphasis is on what one author describes as the 'disproportionate' suffering of women in war. Yet is it disproportionate? It is largely men who are killed and who are forcibly conscripted. One of the striking statistics in the firearms chapter is that only 17 per cent of the victims of homicide worldwide are women. Of course women suffer horrendously but so do men. The point is that men and women experience war and violence differently and this is why war tends to lead to such sharp gender polarization. To grasp the centrality of gender in conflict, there is a need for much more research on men and boys and the construction of masculinity; on the differing ways in which men and women experience economic insecurity; and also on why the ideologies associated with contemporary conflicts (ethnic and religious fundamentalism) are so infused with misogyny. This is not to belittle the very valuable material in this book—rather it is to make the case for further research.

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International organization, law and ethics

Child migration and human rights in a global age. By **Jacqueline Bhabha**. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 2014. 392pp. £19.00. ISBN 978 0 69114 360 6. Available as e-book.

This wonderful book is the most significant study I know of that explores the implications for children's lives both of different forms of migration and of the ways in which these migrations are framed and responded to by state authorities. Legal scholar and rights activist Jacqueline Bhabha brings together an incredible wealth of material to portray a world in which ambivalences regarding child migrants, and clashing perceptions of their vulnerability and otherness, prevent the proper implementation of procedures that would guarantee their rights. She makes a strong argument for the importance of building a practical, context-relevant concern with optimum child welfare into the institutional implementation of policies that often fail to recognize child migrants' agency and aspirations.

Bhabha notes that the realities of increasing child migration disrupt any approach to migration that sees it primarily as a voluntary movement by adults. A key strength of her book is the manner in which it brings together a range of forms of migration that

have often been analysed separately. Thus, the book considers children divided from their parents by adult migrations and the Kafkaesque sagas involved in pursuing family reunification; citizen children whose futures are limited by the deportation of undocumented parents; intercountry adoptions on an unequal global playing field; child trafficking; the forcible moving of children in war contexts; refugee children who face enormous conceptual and logistical difficulties in claiming asylum; and adolescent migrants who move to find work but may encounter a protectionist regime that emphasizes education. Analysing these examples together enables Bhabha to make some subtle and revealing arguments about, for example, the resemblances between intercountry adoptions and family-driven child migration or the connections between refugee camps and other forms of migration such as trafficking or the recruitment of child soldiers. A central concept employed in this elegantly argued work is the notion of ambivalence. Bhabha notes that, as vulnerable 'others', child migrants are the focus for a set of inconsistent, clashing perceptions. They are the focus for both sympathetic and hostile emotions. We feel horror at the notion of child trafficking, but are ambivalent about whether to protect or deport undocumented former gang children. Moreover, as Bhabha consistently shows, such ambivalences underlie public policy, explaining its extreme inconsistencies, as when the child's 'right' to 'family unity' becomes the motivation for sending children back to the very people who trafficked them; or when the citizenship of children turns out not to be equivalent to the citizenship of adults, disallowing citizen children from petitioning to keep undocumented family members together with them in the United States. The latter contradiction is, for Bhabha, a result of an ambivalent approach that, on the one hand, sees children as rights holders and, on the other, sees children as belonging to adults who make decisions for them.

Bhabha not only analyses and compares multiple forms of child migration, and the multiple ambivalences of state responses, she also makes recommendations for change. These recommendations are ambitious and will require fundamental rethinking of spending priorities. For example, in her discussion of child trafficking, Bhabha notes that top-down law reforms also need to be complemented by a greater focus on root causes, and the creation of projects—such as Bhabha's own Alba Collective—that prioritize investment in poor communities, thereby removing children's vulnerability to trafficking. In addition, Bhabha notes that child rights can only be properly implemented in practice if various agents are vigorous in enforcing them, and if children themselves are given access to critical resources, whether legal representation, independent guardians or basic public services.

With the exception of the chapter considering the treatment of ex-child combatants in Sierra Leone and the moving accounts of Central American children deported back to the terrors of gang-related violence, the book mostly concerns itself with migration to Europe and North America. Such a focus is understandable, considering the relative dearth of information on child migration between countries in the global South. However, given that South–South migrations are an increasingly significant percentage of global movements, there is an important need to open a conversation about the understanding and implementation of child rights-based policies not only within but also beyond Europe and North America. Yet the need to begin these conversations should be taken not as a criticism of Bhabha's book but as a demonstration of the power of its approach, in which haunting individual stories are analysed alongside the often appalling inconsistencies of state attempts to promote children's human rights.

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Glimpses of a global life. By **Shridath Ramphal**. London: Hansib Publications. 2014. 624pp. Index. £18.00. ISBN 978 1 90619 092 7.

In the opening sentence of this book, Shridath ('Sonny') Ramphal reports that 'for at least twenty years relatives and friends, among them, scholars, have been asking me, then insistently urging, about "memoirs"' (p. 13). I was one of the scholars doing the asking and urging, and it is easy to explain why. For the best part of the last fifty years Ramphal has, quite simply, been the most important person from the English-speaking Caribbean—the 'Statesman of the West Indies', as I once described him—to have been playing a role in global affairs. From the moment he returned in 1953 to British Guiana, as it then was, following the end of his legal training in London, 'Sonny' just rose and rose—legal draftsman, then assistant attorney-general in the West Indies Federation; solicitor-general, attorney-general and then minister of foreign affairs and justice in (now independent) Guyana; Commonwealth secretary general for no less than fifteen years from 1975 to 1990; member of all of the great Global Commissions of the 1980s; chair of the West Indian Commission; head of the Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery and facilitator for Belize in talks with Guatemala. This constitutes a truly extraordinary political career by any standards, but is the more remarkable because, as Ramphal tells us in a deeply moving early chapter of this book, it all began with his great grandmother's passage from Calcutta to Georgetown in 1880–81 to work as an indentured labourer on a sugar plantation in British Guiana.

His memoir does not disappoint: it captures brilliantly the man behind the statesman—as charming, persuasive and clever as he was also determined and persistent—and, in so doing, reveals the key qualities that explain how and why Ramphal was able to achieve so much in his many varied roles. The book's cover is similarly revealing: it is a photograph of Ramphal's official portrait as Commonwealth secretary general, painted when he was in his late forties at the peak of his powers, showing him as both dapper and poised, casual and yet focused. These attributes emerge again and again as his long story unfolds, taking in as it does all of the key moments in Caribbean and Commonwealth history, and many of the key moments too in global history, of the last half-century. Ramphal's account of his global life is also notably generous. There are very few cutting comments about the people he has encountered and sometimes had to fight. Indeed, one might have wished for more! But he has been careful in what he has said about Forbes Burnham, the Guyanese leader who gave him his opening, and is strikingly warm-hearted about Mrs Thatcher. He is sharper in recounting his dealings with Lord Carrington on South Africa. One presumes too that there is more that he could have said about which Permanent Member of the United Nations Security Council opposed and eventually vetoed his candidacy for the position of secretary general of the UN in December 1981. He reports that it might have been Russia, or France, but on his 'best information' (p. 568) was actually America.

This tells us something of significance for the present day. Again and again as I devoured Ramphal's utterly fascinating book, I had the feeling that today he could not have the career that he has had. Ramphal is, by inclination, temperament and ideology, a global social democrat. He strode that path with style, dignity and great effectiveness, especially during the turbulent 1970s and early 1980s, but he also needed what we might call the structural opportunity to do so. As neo-liberalism inexorably took hold of global affairs thereafter, his moment—and more importantly perhaps for the rest of us, the moment for leaders who think like Ramphal—began to pass. The Caribbean is now struggling to find a path to satisfactory regional development; the Commonwealth is weaker than it has been for years; there is a lack of ambition about the prospect of better global governance. The

sad truth is that we need much more than another ‘Sonny’ Ramphal to emerge on to the global scene; we also need somehow to recapture the sense of optimism—of what might be possible with effort and political skill—that was so evident, to take just one example from his memoir, when the foreign ministers of the young Non-Aligned Movement met on the lawns of the prime minister’s residence in Guyana in August 1972 and excitedly discussed under Ramphal’s leadership how to build a fairer, more equal world order.

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Between justice and stability: the politics of war crimes prosecutions in post-Milosevic Serbia. By Mladen Ostojic. Farnham, Surrey, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate. 2014. 264pp. Index. £65.00. ISBN 978 1 40946 742 7.

There is much to be admired in *Between justice and stability* by Mladen Ostojic, not least as it fills a major gap in the literature on the democratic transition of the ex-Yugoslav space. By focusing on transitional justice and its relationship to democratic transition in Serbia and the attitudes of ruling elites, the author demonstrates how complex and challenging this relationship really was. Ostojic bases his argument on a variety of primary sources, including interviews with leading politicians, official documents, reports and speeches, producing a rather thought-provoking and informative read.

Ostojic reveals one peculiarity of the Serbian transition, which is ‘that, in the Serbian case, externalized justice and democratization were two separate processes running in parallel’ (p. 218). Serbian democratic transition, at least in the eyes of the international community, was strongly linked to ‘coming to terms with the past’ and addressing war crimes committed under the Milosevic regime, issues which Ostojic identifies as having stalled and at times jeopardized Serbian transition. In addition, what makes this book very special is the fact that the author clearly emphasizes how the ideas, values and attitudes of the Milosevic era remained very much ‘alive’ even after 2000, strongly flavouring the transition period. The Serbian political elite, in response to international pressure to cooperate with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), faced the serious challenge of balancing between satisfying justice—in relation to addressing the Serbian crimes that followed the dissolution of socialist Yugoslavia—and continuing with democratic reforms. The author is certain that it was due to these ‘uncivic values’, as Sabrina Ramet would say (*Civic and uncivic values in Macedonia*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), and nationalist political ideas and platforms embraced by the elite that the Serbian transition remained so problematic. Ostojic also underlines considerable ambiguities and obscurities in the policies of the international community and the ICTY. The international response to democratization of Serbia underestimated and underappreciated local political and social contexts, and this had a negative effect on transitional justice. Thus, Ostojic succinctly concludes, the legacy of transitional justice, in particular Serbia’s relationship with the ICTY as a whole, has remained ambiguous and has meant that the international effort to ‘establish an authoritative account of the Yugoslav conflicts and raise awareness about Serbian responsibility for war crimes’ (p. 221) fundamentally failed.

To conclude, this work is very well written and presents plausible arguments. However, it is important to mention that readers do need to be well informed on the topic at hand, which may diminish the number of those interested in the book. Nevertheless, I most warmly recommend it as both a useful and an engaging read.

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Conflict, security and defence

Talking to terrorists: how to end armed conflicts. By Jonathan Powell. London: The Bodley Head, 2014. 408pp. Index. £20.00. ISBN 978 1 84792 229 8. Available as e-book.

Jonathan Powell, as Downing Street Chief of Staff, was Tony Blair's chief negotiator in Northern Ireland. In that capacity he played a key role in negotiating and then delivering the Good Friday Agreement: the subject of a separate book, *Great hatred, little room* (The Bodley Head, 2008). In *Talking to terrorists* he draws on his wider experiences of conflict resolution to argue that terrorism nearly always ends in negotiation and that we waste much blood and treasure in failing to recognize the need to talk to terrorists at a much earlier stage. He illustrates his arguments with an array of examples from southern Africa, Latin America and the Middle East and with particularly fascinating insights into recent negotiations between ETA and the Spanish government, the Algerian settlement of 1962, and a chapter on Lloyd George's discussions with Irish Republicans in the early 1920s. Powell writes with an effortless economy of style which makes this work easily and quickly digestible. He makes his points with a clarity which renders repetition unnecessary and inserts examples without breaking step. In so doing he has achieved an extraordinary thing; he has written a pleasurable book about an unpleasant subject.

Although describing himself as a practitioner rather than an academic, he demonstrates complete familiarity with a wide range of academic texts. The book embraces not only terrorist groups but also non-state insurgents who use terror against civilians. And—unlike the Rand Corporation's *How terrorist groups end* (2008) and Audrey Cronin's *How terrorism ends* (Princeton University Press, 2011)—he ignores small groups (like Baader-Meinhof and the Red Brigades) which never enjoyed significant levels of popular support. His study concludes that terrorism is almost never defeated by military and police action alone but requires a period of negotiation.

This book has already caused diplomatic waves. For some foreign governments it reinforces the notion that Britain has gone soft on terrorism. They consider that London was too quick to do deals in Musa Qala in 2006 and Basra in 2007 and suspect that the UK maintains too cosy a relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamists in what the French once dubbed 'Londonistan'. But this would be unfair to Jonathan Powell. He states clearly that 'the problem is not talking to terrorists, it is giving in to them'. He acknowledges that there is a time to negotiate and that time is often when a state of 'mutually hurting stalemate' has been achieved. Yet, he contends, rightly in my view, that we waste much time in regarding terrorists as irreconcilable and beyond the pale before we belatedly decide to talk. He implies that talking is never wrong. As a fellow practitioner, here is the one area where I would differ. Powell was one beneficiary of the remarkable back channel which MI6 developed in 1972 with the Provisional IRA leadership. Even in retrospect the sheer gall of this channel defies belief. Nobody at the time would have credited Margaret Thatcher with maintaining such a link during her period of office, which included the assassination attempt at Brighton in 1984. Yet that channel produced the—still disputed—message from Martin McGuinness to John Major in 1993 which led to the eventual resolution of the conflict. Powell also draws on the experiences of the talented negotiator Martin Griffiths and the creative work he undertook with the Geneva-based Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue in places as far afield as Aceh, Turkey, Nepal and Spain. But not all channels are so positive in intention. There were cynical 'protection money' deals in the recent past between nation-states and the Abu Nidal Organization to prevent

attacks on home soil and there still exist multiple channels used for the payment of the kidnap ransoms which keep groups like Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb well financed. Then there was the profusion of contacts which so confused the Taliban (and Pakistanis) about what the West was really willing to offer in Afghanistan. Nowadays many a political science department or think-tank aspires to have a 'track two' dialogue with a militant group. The dangers here are considerable. If, for example, Islamic State (IS) is receiving messages from such groups, through intermediaries, requesting contact, it risks giving the impression that they are in the box seat and have got the civilized world on the run. They will doubtless suspect that some or all such contacts have government support or sanction. Now is not the time to talk to IS. First their ambitions and expectations have to be substantially reduced by a comprehensive counterterrorist and counter-insurgency effort.

But once the negotiating phase with a terrorist or insurgent group does begin, all parties should have read this book. It is not structured as a manual for negotiators but it is full of important insights. The need for secrecy and deniability is a constant theme. The Oslo Agreement could never have been reached if the participants had been subject to domestic political scrutiny. He points out that the use of third parties is resisted by nations but often turns out to be beneficial. He warns of the 'snare of preconditions' which must be avoided at all costs. He debates whether to solve the easy or difficult problems first and whether issues should be resolved individually or as a 'package deal'. He stresses the importance of structure and building 'a process' which, like a bicycle, can be allowed to wobble but must never stop. And he reckons no delegation should be larger than five members. He cautions against splitting groups which will then be less able to negotiate as a coherent entity and deliver on their undertakings. This book is not just recommended; it is essential reading for anybody interested in the subject.

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Crowded orbits: conflict and cooperation in space. By James Clay Moltz. New York: Columbia University Press. 2014. 224pp. £19.00. ISBN 978 0 23115 912 8. Available as e-book.

Crowded orbits by James Clay Moltz is a well-written and clear account of the current capabilities, issues and technologies involving the use of outer space. It is more than a 'space for dummies' book but also less than a comprehensive guide to the physics, applications, and technical details of all of the complex space activities and socio-economic and political actions, discussions and results.

The title of the book, however, is misleading. The book is less about the much hyped risks of accidents and disasters that may result from space being crowded with active satellites, old satellites and debris, than it is about the potential future growth of using space and the many different ways of using space responsibly for the benefit of all peoples. The well-documented collisions and near collisions in space that have produced unwanted and potentially dangerous debris, along with the popularization of movies such as *Gravity*, have overstated the current dangers. To the author's credit, these are dealt with in factual terms in the book—it is the title, aimed at attracting readers, that gives the impression that the book is more about space debris than it really is. The author's historical account of how space developed is comprehensive but short. The description of the legal framework is appropriate, but in some instances not precisely accurate because of its brevity. The short chapter on commercial space is overly optimistic and does not adequately take into consideration some of the technical and legal problems that will face private-sector interests in future space initiatives.

Some of the minor points that are in error in the book include: the Agreement on the Rescue and Return of Astronauts does not require the return of spacecraft. It only mandates the return of the astronauts to the launching nation. If the launching authority requests the return of spacecraft or parts, it must also pay for the costs of recovery and return. The SpaceX Falcon 1 discussion in the book is not up to date—the Falcon 1 has not been flown since 2009 and no more flights are planned for that vehicle. Its price was low, but the exact price and cost of production varied for each launch. In general, the projection of cheap access to space as a stimulus for significant economic development of space has not materialized, nor is it likely to unless there is a major technological breakthrough using new types of propulsion that are safer and cheaper.

The section on the military aspects of space is extremely well done. It clearly outlines key issues such as the nature of the United States' hegemony and dominance in both technology and investment in space systems, and the emphasis on the very important balance between space security and the cost and benefits of using active space systems vs using more traditional terrestrial methods for the defence of a nation. In essence, in today's world, the book re-emphasizes that it is not cost-effective to wage war in or from space. The author does emphasize that this may not be the case in the future. The final two chapters begin to muse about the future of space activities and the human use of space. Moltz is perhaps overly optimistic about near-term human space travel when he predicts thousands of people will go to space by 2030. He is also optimistic about the use of space resources such as solar power for earth-based systems and the use of helium-3 from the moon as a terrestrial power source. Neither technology has yet proved to be either cost-effective and/or technologically mature enough to be a serious competitor to more traditional sources of terrestrial energy. Moltz does an excellent job of outlining the various future political scenarios that may influence the governance of space—i.e. how humans will address multinational issues of cooperation in space to avoid conflict and allow development. His suggestion that the formal agreement for the International Space Station (ISS) is a very good example of such a future system may be unrealistic. He ignores the fact that had it not been for one nation—the United States in this case—which initiated the process, developed and operated the core power and infrastructure for the ISS and provided the transport system—the now retired space shuttle—for most of the construction, the ISS would never have been built. Furthermore, this partnership may not be the format of future agreements, as many nations develop their own independent capabilities and projects in space and move progressively towards desiring equal seats at the negotiating table.

But it is important to note that the ISS Agreement illustrates that a lasting international partnership for science and technology development in space can be created and maintained. This alone is a substantial and important accomplishment in international relations.

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Historical experience: burden or bonus in today's wars? By Eric Sangar. Berlin: Rombach Verlag. 2014. 260pp. £25.00. ISBN 978 379309 748 8.

The invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan have led to the rejuvenation of counter-insurgency (COIN) theory. These 'conventional' attacks soon turned into insurgencies, which the US forces initially countered through conventional tactics. The British government was, reportedly, critical of the brutal conduct of the US military in Iraq. A senior British army officer criticized US soldiers for viewing Iraqis as 'untermenschen' and the US Army's 'rules of engagement' for allowing the use of excessive violence. Enthusiasts for counter-insurgency

(COINdinistas) in the US military seem to have welcomed this attack as a way to shift the US military from a conventional to a counter-insurgency approach to the war in Iraq (pp. 126–8).

The British Army, drawing on experiences gained through the retreat from empire and Northern Ireland, believed they had the correct ‘hearts and minds’ approach to defeating insurgency. In an act of military diplomacy, the British supported General David Petraeus and the COINdinistas to convert the US military to a counter-insurgency approach (p. 116). The *US counter-insurgency manual* was published in 2006 and became a bestseller. The Iraqi ‘surge’ in 2007 appeared to demonstrate the effectiveness of the new counter-insurgency doctrine. Petraeus was praised to the skies and was even touted as a possible Republican candidate for the US presidency. Since then, there has developed a critical reaction to the dominance of COIN. The champions of ‘conventional warfare’ didn’t see why US troops had to be taught COIN at all. For some, COIN doctrine was ‘armed social work’ and represented a threat to the ‘hyper-masculinized’ US military ethos. Meanwhile, enthusiasts for military intervention, on both the left and the right, saw in COIN doctrine a kinder and gentler form of ‘hearts and minds’ warfare that could be used to justify military intervention to western public opinion.

Eric Sangar’s timely, rich and intriguing contribution to the debate identifies three perspectives on COIN doctrine and the importance, or otherwise, of interpretations of the history of COIN for today’s wars. First, the position of Colonel Gentile, a ‘conservative’ who sees counter-insurgency as a ‘dangerous departure’ for western armed forces from their core competency of fighting short and decisive battles. Second, M. L. R. Smith and David Martin Jones, who argue that neo-COIN thinking clearly avoids the political dimension of conflict and its implications for developing counter-strategies. Third, Douglas Porch, who, in his coruscating and highly entertaining book *Counterinsurgency* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), sees counter-insurgency as ‘a doctrine of escapism’, ‘an escape . . . into an anachronistic, romanticized, Orientalist version that projects quintessentially Western values onto non-Western societies’. The tendency to idealize the British approach to counter-insurgency is built on a flawed historical interpretation. In response, in the remaining chapters of *Historical experience*, Eric Sangar argues that while counter-insurgency doctrine is flawed, it still has its uses.

In this beautifully produced book, complete with maps and photographs, Sangar compares the use (and abuse) of historical experience by the British Army and the Bundeswehr. The ‘focus of this work lies in the conscious institutional efforts that a military makes to derive strategic guidance from the past’ (p. 12). The British Army was presumed to be ‘the example of an army which actively analyses and exploits lessons gleaned from past experience’ (p. 14). The German army ceased to exist in 1945 as it was ‘considered a root cause of German expansionism’ (p. 169). The Bundeswehr was set up in 1955 with the intention of creating something ‘fundamentally new’ without borrowing from the Wehrmacht. This meant that the institutionalized memory of the force was less likely to survive. The German military, without any concise doctrinal manual, tended to see counter-insurgency as high-intensity combat (p. 235).

Sangar sees the pursuit of the ‘real’ lessons of the past as problematic since these will always be shaped by current perceptions and requirements. He reviews an interesting range of sources including the ‘Army Rumour Service’ (ARRSE), an informal online exchange, Defence Research Papers and the pamphlets of the British Army’s Land Warfare Centre. He concludes that the advantage of drawing lessons is in ‘providing a common operational narrative for contemporary stabilization missions that are characterized by only vague political mandates’ (p. 238). This operational narrative may, however, be still subject to highly divergent interpretations and practices in the field. The US, it is argued, success-

fully learnt from British and French counter-insurgency experiences and was able to transform its operational approach. In Afghanistan, General Petraeus and the COINdinitas abandoned 'neo-classical COIN' for a counterterrorism approach that also proved unable to achieve victory over the Taliban. The German army's lack of transmitted historical experience meant that the peace missions of the 1990s in Yugoslavia 'created a formative experience which was allowed to shape doctrine, training and the operational mind-set for future stabilization operations almost entirely on its own' (p. 239).

Sangar concludes by arguing for the usefulness of historical experience in contemporary operations: 'Classical counterinsurgency doctrine may be a crude, teleological misreading of the harsh reality of colonial warfare, but it still may represent the most viable military narrative in a war plagued by friction caused by opaque local dynamics, contradicting political objectives, and uncertain public support' (p. 240). A problem may be, however, that this doctrine encourages its advocates to fight wars that they cannot win.

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Governance, civil society and cultural politics

Peaceland: conflict resolution and the everyday politics of international intervention. By **Séverine Autesserre**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2014. 329pp. Index. £55.00. ISBN 978 1 10763 204 2. Available as e-book.

Studies about the practices of international humanitarian aid often echo each other across several decades, replaying similar challenges and criticisms. It is not simply because interventions do not get any easier with time; failures reassert themselves even when international agencies develop pedigree and established presences in the field. Aid workers face significant structural barriers in underdeveloped countries, or attempt to navigate complex conflicts that impede development and resist peacemaking efforts through their very regenerative nature. Chronic uncertainty over end-game success and about how to 'do no harm' generates fierce debates about the best way to understand the relationships between relief aid, development, conflict resolution, peacekeeping; and about how to prioritize action in the face of pressing need. Differing donor priorities, the numerous specializations and funding categories that divide humanitarian aid reflect not only the divisions of labour required by the complexity of the issues and regions involved, but also significant differences of opinion about what works best. In terms of attempting to achieve peace or development, the very motivations of international interventions come into question. Doubts reflect concurrent geopolitical realities—Iraq, Afghanistan, Gaza, for example, where even NGOs find themselves caught between humanitarian and multi-state-funded anti-terrorism agendas—and historical anxieties (colonialism) or the disillusionment that comes when cases of agencies abusing their trust come to light. Are international humanitarian agencies actually about doing good? Whose good? Are they competent? If the answer leaves something to be desired, then can they change?

In *Peaceland* Séverine Autesserre firmly believes in the good intentions of peacebuilding colleagues entering the field; she seeks to illuminate the contradictions that beset their careers by interrogating their everyday practices, to see from the outside as an insider. Using an ethnographic approach, compiling case-studies from multiple African, Middle Eastern and Asian fields of operation, she finds that in spite of the multiplicity of agendas and specialisms in the field, international aid workers nonetheless share an identifiable culture of their own. This communal identity emerges at the confluence of top-down policies

and bottom-up everyday on-the-ground challenges, transcending differences in gender and cultural and national background, and shifting locales of intervention. Difficult as ever to pin down definitively, identity is nonetheless useful for focusing on dominant modes of behaviour and exclusions within a community and thinking about how that community is viewed from the outside. Community image is important as host population perceptions impact intervention effectiveness in non-trivial ways, at times thwarting individual agency attempts to differentiate themselves. In this, Autesserre is on the side of those who believe that the very presence of interveners itself has political significance, contributing to local dynamics, and requiring management in innovative ways, even though she is not in favour of agencies purposefully taking sides in conflicts.

While paying tribute to the fact that work and life culture within the intervener community has emerged as best practice under demanding circumstances, Autesserre also argues that hiring processes, training procedures, daily work patterns, security measures, visibility and accountability measures and social rituals serve to perpetuate problematic behaviours that impede effective engagement with local populations. Interveners' career paths and training procedures reflect a knowledge hierarchy which privileges technical knowledge and international experience of working with multiple conflict zones above in-depth local knowledge. On the ground, reporting procedures and 'bunkerization' security measures create strong barriers, crowding out time and space for local engagement and trust-building. At the same time, career survival depends more on 'fitting the mould' socially within the intervener community than on creative daring; on developing relationships with other expats than with host populations. A minority of interveners do follow their own strategies successfully but do not effect significant institutional change, which only occurs after catalytic failures or events such as the Rwandan genocide in 1994. Institutional memory loss at agency headquarters occurs in spite of intensive reporting procedures from the ground up; this highlights the power of the incentives at play: the selective power of the knowledge hierarchy and the pressure to deliver to distant donors a preordained result.

Autesserre does not expect any quick fixes; the policy changes she suggests involve systematic overhaul of the way peacebuilding programmes are designed and implemented, and major shifts in donor expectations as to time frames and results, which will take time and a lot of political will. However, by focusing on aspects of the banal everyday, she has also shifted the discourse in favour of bottom-up innovation.

Shu Cao

Political insults: how offenses escalate conflict. By **Karina V. Korostelina**. New York: Oxford University Press. 2014. 224pp. Pb.: £42.00. ISBN 978 0 19937 281 2. Available as e-book.

Insults have long been an integral part of political rhetoric. From the time of Plato, who deftly insulted those in power through his persuasive political speeches, such invective has surfaced consistently in political dialogue. While insults allow the marginalized to demonstrate grievances, the powerful too employ insults to maintain or control their dominant position in society. *Political insults* builds on this knowledge to demonstrate that these can have far-reaching political and military consequences.

Understanding insults and their influence on social identity patterns allows us, Karina V. Korostelina maintains, to comprehend the underlying causes of conflict and attunes third parties to better mediate such political crises. Korostelina theorizes a causality between different types or forms of insult and the instigation or continuation of the crisis itself. She

argues that insults are social phenomena that are an inherent part of the ongoing interactions between in-group and out-group, helping to construct and reconstruct the boundaries of power and identity between them. Korostelina investigates the effects of political insult in three stages. First, in chapter one, 'Deconstructing intergroup insult', she identifies six forms of intergroup insult that can exist in political communication. Identity, projection, divergence, relative, power and legitimacy insults can stand alone or overlap with one another and vary according to different insult factors and types. Korostelina concludes that intergroup insult, whether deliberate or unintended, is a powerful factor in social relationships as it has the capacity to change how actors relate to each other: it can be used to both strengthen and undermine a group's sense of self. In the second stage Korostelina uses her initial theoretical observations to analyse five diverse case-studies, ranging from the performance of Pussy Riot's 'punk prayer' in the Moscow Cathedral of Christ the Saviour (chapter two), insults surrounding Ukraine's 'Victory Day' (chapter three), the political fallout from the pardoning of an Azeri army lieutenant for murdering an Armenian soldier (chapter four), the Japan–China and Japan–Korea island disputes (chapter five), to insults surrounding North Korea's threats of nuclear war (chapter six). Herein lies a key strength of this book: all chapters in this stage are richly detailed, illustrating in-group/out-group dynamics through excerpts from public policy statements, newspaper articles and online media posts. However, I was left wondering about the role of gender relations in political insult. While the case-study of Pussy Riot notes that feminism was a factor in the group's decision to insult both the Russian Orthodox Church and President Vladimir Putin, throughout the book there are instances of gender relations that go unexamined. A particularly relevant example can be found in chapter three, 'Victory Day violence in Ukraine'. One of the core insults was the attempt by two women to fry eggs and sausages on the eternal flame of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, leading the prosecutor to state that 'we will not allow them to defame the memory of our predecessors—soldiers who died defending our motherland' (p. 68). Critical engagement with gender dynamics would have provided deeper insight into the emotional reactions of those insulted. The third stage, chapter seven, 'Dealing with insult', builds on this case-study to illustrate the links between particular forms of insult and greater possibilities for conflict resolution. Korostelina aptly demonstrates that addressing the underlying causes of particular forms of insult, rather than dismissing such statements as unfounded aggression, is an effective measure for improving intergroup relations and mitigating potential conflicts. While this suggestion is not necessarily original—particularly when placed in the context of the wider conflict resolution literature—it is certainly the logical conclusion to draw.

Korostelina uncovers connections between identity projection, insult and behavioural responses in specific political crises. Yet one weakness of her work is the universal application of the insult typology, which overlooks historical contingency and differing cultural characteristics that influence how a conflict evolves. Focusing on a number of idiosyncratic crises that vary from specific interpersonal affronts to nuclear threats certainly illuminates the breadth of political insults. Whether these can then be reduced to a general typology irrespective of varying temporal and cultural factors is a question that requires further theoretical and methodological consideration.

In this book, Korostelina addresses issues that are difficult and complex and have longlasting consequences for peace and stability. The book provides insight into the particular forms of insult that are evident within specific political crises, and this will certainly facilitate how we think about conflict mediation strategies in future.

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Political economy, economics and development

Working with the grain: integrating governance and growth in development strategies. By **Brian Levy**. New York: Oxford University Press. 2014. 266pp. Index. £23.00. ISBN 978 0 19936 381 0. Available as e-book.

This book makes an important contribution to donor efforts to overcome institutional constraints on the economic development of poor countries through governance reforms. It advances five major hypotheses. First, institutional reform is situationally specific and path-dependent. Thus the promotion of uniform ‘international best practices’, whether of the Washington Consensus or some other variety, is doomed to failure. Instead, reformers must ‘work with the grain’ of varied local realities. Second, although economic growth may begin under a wide variety of conditions, improved governance institutions will be necessary to sustain it and in turn will be accelerated in interaction with it. Third, in the early stages of institutional reform, authoritarian (‘dominant’) regimes may progress more rapidly on bureaucratic effectiveness than democratic (‘competitive’) ones do as long as their leaders are strongly ‘developmental’. Meanwhile ‘competitive’ regimes are more open to improvements in the rule of law and accountability. Fourth, inclusive growth will promote the emergence of a reforming middle class, without which ‘dominant developmental’ regimes are likely to lose their institutional advantage by becoming ‘predatory’, and ‘competitive’ regimes will do little better. Last, when the prospects for general improvements in a country’s governance are difficult, most often it is possible instead to promote ‘islands of effectiveness’ in corners of the system and these incremental changes can lead over time to general improvements in institutions. The book provides very useful analytic distinctions and makes a good case for all five hypotheses. To do so, Levy makes excellent use of the other work that is being done in this field and combines it effectively with his years of research and practical experience in the World Bank. The book will be of great interest to practitioners and scholars who are trying to diagnose and prescribe what to do in difficult development situations.

For the fifth hypothesis Levy explores a number of useful ways to create ‘islands of effectiveness’, particularly through the promotion of accountability at the local level. For further ideas on how ‘islands’ can be created in parastatals and government departments readers might also wish to consult two books that have been released since Levy’s manuscript went to press—*Institutions taking root* edited by Naazneen Barma, Elisabeth Huybens and Lorena Viñuela (World Bank Publications, 2014) and *The politics of public sector performance* edited by Michael Roll (Routledge, 2014).

Chapter seven attempts to see if the hypothesized prospects for improvements in governance in countries that are experiencing economic growth play out in practice. Levy is clear that he is only ‘describing’ what he sees occurring, not ‘testing’ his hypotheses. Nonetheless it is important to note two hazards in Levy’s ‘descriptive’ use of the World Bank’s Governance Indicators. First, the scores a country receives on the five separate Governance Indicators are relative, not absolute numbers. Each year the evaluations from a variety of general and expert surveys are merged and each country receives a score based on the number of standard deviations between its evaluation and that year’s mean of all countries. This creates a very strong basis for comparing countries within any one year. But both the surveys used and the performance of the other countries will fluctuate from year to year, so that it is possible for a governance indicator for a country to vary from year to year without any change at all in its underlying situation. For example, between 2000 and 2010 the scores of all four Scandinavian countries dropped on ‘control of corruption’ and

improved on the 'rule of law' even though it is implausible that the governance realities for *all* of them changed in this period. Even if it were valid to use the simple comparisons across time periods that Levy makes, one would need to respect the standard errors for the scores, so that any difference would have to be 0.32 to 0.44 (depending on the indicator) to be statistically significant. In practice Levy makes observations about smaller movements in the indicators. The only consistent improvements in 'government effectiveness' or 'rule of law' are actually in some former communist countries, Ethiopia and Rwanda. Improvements in 'control of corruption' are somewhat differently distributed but are less frequent. The distinction Levy had hypothesized between 'dominant' and 'competitive' countries, particularly for 'government effectiveness', is not evident in any of the indicators. This doesn't mean that Levy's hypotheses are wrong—the measures he employs are imperfect, the ten-year time-frame he uses is unreasonably short for significant institutional change, and he expected superior improvement in 'dominant' regimes only if their leaders were developmental rather than predatory, and this is hard to judge independently of institutional improvement. Rigorous econometric work on Levy's ideas remains to be done.

The above qualifications notwithstanding, this book is a must-read for governance professionals.

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Thinking small: the United States and the lure of community development. By **Daniel Immerwahr**. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. 2015. 272pp. £26.00. ISBN 978 0 67428 994 9. Available as e-book.

Historian Daniel Immerwahr's fine first book examines the American experience of community development from the 1930s to the 1960s. It is a monograph poised at the intersection of international relations and the history of economic development. Taking aim at the recent boom in scholarship on mid-twentieth century modernization ideology and practice, Immerwahr argues that the 'quest for community', in Robert Nisbet's phrase (*The quest for community*, OUP, 1969), was in constant conversation with, and indeed a rival inclination to, the urge to modernize (pp. 4 and 71). Communitarian social scientists confronting poverty in the United States and abroad viewed community as a vehicle for people to solve their own problems. Immerwahr asserts that community development was a way of seeing the world, one that privileged small-scale social solidarities, grassroots democratic deliberation and cooperative action to improve material and non-material conditions of life at a local level (pp. 4 and 115). If 'development without modernization' was a minority trend in efforts to integrate peoples into an American-led liberal and capitalist global hegemony, Immerwahr takes seriously those who identified scale as a key issue. In so doing, he turns a critical historical eye on the postwar practice of community development.

The protagonists of *Thinking small* are 'community developers'—the American thinkers and policy-makers, and their allies abroad, who spread bottom-up tactics for addressing poverty across the globe. The first two chapters of the book explore the emergence of communitarian applied social science in the United States in the 1930s and 1940s. Three more follow 1940s to 1960s American-funded community development to India, where it ended up bolstering the rural status quo as much as decentralizing national democracy; the Philippines and South Vietnam, where it was used as a tool of counter-insurgency; and back to the United States, where it was a key element of the 'War on Poverty'. Immerwahr's main historiographical intervention is to offer a corrective to the narrative he titles 'modernization comes to town'—the story of local, flexible, pluralistic and small-scale

institutions being displaced by high modernism, bureaucratization and commodification (p. 5). Paralleling his argument that communitarianism was an important counter-tendency in mid-twentieth-century American social thought and practice, Immerwahr positions *Thinking small* as a counter-history of development by seeking to rescue the community development tradition from the emphasis historians have placed on modernization theory. Notably, the book offers up another sort of narrative arc to explain the evolution of community development, one we might call 'here, there and back again'. As a whole, his story is persuasive. Immerwahr deploys this analytical framework to neatly argue that New Deal communitarianism did not disappear nor did the 'War on Poverty' come from nowhere (p. 137). The book demonstrates that interwar American communitarians were recruited after the Second World War to apply their localist approach to development abroad (pp. 52–5). As interest in poverty in the United States grew in the early 1960s, American experts repatriated their knowledge (pp. 138–48). One of the book's clear strengths is probing specific interconnections between social scientists and their ideas over time and in changing contexts. Therefore, the analytical narrative explains the career trajectory of many communitarians between the 1930s and 1960s.

The limitations of the interpretative framework are largely evident in the book's own nuances. First, not all of those Americans committed to the concept of community had experience abroad or took to the same vision of community development. Second, though the book is very attentive to how American communitarian ideas interacted with divergent influences such as Gandhian philosophy, Filipino elitism and Catholic personalism, the genealogy of community development it offers remains too Americanized. As a consequence of the book's geographic scope, French and British colonial uses of community-based solutions to poverty in interwar Africa through *animation sociale* and community development—a term in fact coined by British colonial welfare officials in 1948—are relegated to a single footnote (p. 210 fn27). In the process, an opportunity is lost to explore how American communitarianism became a tool of postwar American international power by building, at least in part, on already existing imperial experience with self-help welfare schemes. Third, the 'here, there and back again' narrative may not capture the full complexity of the circulation of community-centred ideas. Rural rehabilitation in the 1930s, postwar community reconstruction in the 1940s and community development in the 1950s and 1960s were broadly transnational movements. There remain many avenues for further research tracing different sorts of international connections between small-scale development ideas and initiatives. In an epilogue tracing the post-1960s trajectory of community development, Immerwahr advances a critique of localist approaches to development. He argues that community-based anti-poverty projects take an uncritical view of community, neglect relations of power, focus merely on the poor to the exclusion of the rich, ignore the structural causes of poverty in the international system and divert attention away from political alternatives (pp. 177–80).

Immerwahr suggests that there is much to learn from mid-twentieth-century community development and, in so doing, makes a convincing case that *Thinking small* is a book not just for historians but for development scholars, practitioners and observers as well.

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Energy, environment and global health

Climate justice: vulnerability and protection. By Henry Shue. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2014. 368pp. £22.50. ISBN 978 0 19871 370 8.

This book collects 17 articles written by Henry Shue on the moral implications of climate change. The first article was published in 1992, the last in 2013. An excellent introduction links the articles together and describes how Shue's thinking has evolved over the years.

Shue argues that countries should reduce carbon emissions and will soon need to eliminate them altogether. The reason for this is simple: carbon emissions harm the climate, and will make human life progressively more difficult. Every country's obligation to reduce and then eliminate emissions follows from the basic principle that people should not cause harm to others. Shue also argues that efforts to reduce emissions must be fair. That means that a climate treaty must put most of the burden on the rich, industrialized countries. Imagine, for example, that a climate treaty created—as most economists advocate—a tax on carbon, perhaps a tax that increases over time as alternative energy technologies are developed. If the tax is a simple fee on a unit of carbon that is emitted, it will harm poor people in developing countries more than people in rich countries. Moreover, the expense of climate mitigation efforts will be harder for the poor to bear than for the rich; and it turns out that most poor people have the bad luck of living in areas of the world where the effects of climate change will be the harshest. Since, in addition, the problem of climate change is due to industrialization that took place mainly in the richest countries, it would be unfair if most of the burdens of climate change—the cost of higher energy and of adaptation to changed climatic conditions—fell on the shoulders of the poor.

There is much to like about this book. Many of Shue's essays have been influential and all of them are full of insight. He takes great pains to explain the science; the complicated alternative ways that a treaty might be designed; the distributive effects of different treaty regimes and other complex details that philosophers sometimes prefer to overlook. He also recognizes that good philosophy on climate change must attend to 'practical possibility' as well as conceptual clarity. But the book has its share of problems. The early essays obviously do not take account of developments in the field; some of them are based on outdated science. The essays are also repetitive; the details about the empirics of climate change are restated over and over again, as are many of the arguments. So many readers will find this book hard-going. Another problem is that while Shue sees the book as one of applied ethics—hence all the details about the empirical effects of climate change—the philosophical method he applies is fairly generic. By the end of the book, Shue conceptualizes the problem of climate change—rightly, I think—as simply one of allocating a 'carbon budget' (the amount of carbon that can safely be emitted) to people around the world. The budget should be distributed fairly, he argues, taking into account the needs of future generations, the pace of technological development and economic growth, the burdens on the poor and their right to a decent standard of living and so on. Perhaps this is a testament to the influence of Shue's earlier papers, but by now these seem like routine observations about the moral implications of climate change.

Routine—and never to be realized. Countries have never contributed generously to the poor of other countries, and they show no inclination to start. Shue says he cares about the political and psychological limits of climate justice, but he never confronts these limits. Recent negotiations suggest that it is increasingly likely that a treaty will be reached in the coming years, but rich countries remain as intransigent as ever about helping the poor, and

so the treaty is unlikely to be fair by Shue's lights. If so, this will falsify his prediction that the 'US negotiating strategy ... is almost certain to continue to block a widely accepted agreement' (p. 4) and is 'incoherent' (p. 5). To the contrary, the US negotiating strategy seems likely to lead to a treaty that serves its own narrow economic interests. And so an urgent question arises that Shue needs to answer. Should we oppose such a treaty because it fails the test of justice, or should we support it because it will finally reduce greenhouse gas emissions?

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The Arctic contested. Edited by Keith Battarbee and John Erik Fossum. Brussels: PIE-Peter Lang, 2014. 318pp. £37.00. ISBN 978 2 87574 206 3. Available as e-book.

'The Arctic is hot', Keith Battarbee and John Erik Fossum reiterate in the introduction to this book. The melting of the northern ice cap is opening up new sea routes, while the promise of hitherto untapped mineral and hydrocarbon reserves makes issues of sovereignty and territorial rights all the more important. Stakeholders include states; state-owned enterprises; multinational corporations; shipping companies; indigenous peoples and other Arctic inhabitants; and an array of aboriginal institutions and semi-autonomous authorities. Governments of most countries bordering the Arctic Ocean (Russia, Norway, Denmark and Greenland, and Canada) have submitted, or are currently preparing, continental shelf claims to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf. Rights to offshore hydrocarbon reserves are at the core of these claims. Interestingly, non-ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) has so far prevented the United States from presenting its claims to the Commission. While some analysts predict an imminent scramble for resources or scuffles over rights of passage in Arctic 'commons', others render disagreements less significant and disputes unlikely. As expected, this book offers a range of thought-provoking views on these questions, especially in part one, 'Territory and politics in the Arctic'.

The Arctic Council has become the key forum for dialogue and collaboration on circumpolar affairs, particularly on resource management, passage through the Northern Sea Route and environmental protection. In addition to eight Arctic states (Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the United States), the Council includes NGOs representing the Arctic's indigenous peoples as permanent participants. Several of these are transnational organizations, such as the Saami Council, an umbrella organization for Sami people in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia (the Kola Peninsula), and the Inuit Circumpolar Council, representing the Inuit of Alaska, Canada, Greenland and Russia (Chukotka). The Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North is also a permanent participant in the Council. Their status as permanent participants gives these organizations full consultation rights in connection with Council negotiations and decision-making. The Arctic Council is thus an innovative mechanism for cooperation among states and indigenous peoples, and a forum of increasing relevance for the future of Arctic governance. In light of this, there has been an escalation of interest in observer membership in the Council. Permanent observer states now include China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, South Korea, the Netherlands, Poland, Singapore, Spain and the United Kingdom. The European Union also applied, but was blocked. A chapter on the role, structure and agendas of the Arctic Council would have been a welcome addition to this book. On the contrary, the Council is written off as a weak or inadequate institution by several of the contributors. There may be valid grounds for such a view, but this certainly needs a thorough explanation.

Part two of this book is entitled 'Indigenous perspectives in the Arctic'. One wonders whether indigenous perspectives are not about territory and politics, the topic of part one? Arguably, identity politics, territorial claims and rights to resources remain key issues in negotiations over indigenous self-government, in the Arctic as elsewhere in the world. Interestingly, new self-government frameworks are now being developed in Arctic Canada and the Nordic countries, offering potential blueprints for sovereignty-sharing between states and indigenous organizations. The Sami Parliament in Norway and the Self-Government Authorities of Greenland are important examples. Unfortunately, *The Arctic contested* overlooks the case of Greenland and limits its coverage of Sami self-government to an otherwise outstanding analysis of consultations between Sami institutions and the state of Norway. As regards Canada, this part of the book includes a chapter on legal battles over parcels and boundaries and two excellent contributions on the Inuit, but none of these chapters focus on the development of aboriginal self-government mechanisms.

Another weakness of this book is the highly uneven attention it gives to different Arctic countries, with a focus primarily on Canada and Norway, and far less on the United States and Alaska, Greenland, and above all Russia. Part three, 'Representations and experiences of the Arctic', is devoted entirely to the Canadian north. While this may be a fine contribution to Canadian studies, it fails to provide a comprehensive account of Arctic contestations.

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International history

The secret war between the wars: MI5 in the 1920s and 1930s. By Kevin Quinlan. Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press. 2014. 266pp. £25.00. ISBN 978 1 84383 938 5. Available as e-book.

There is an old adage, 'never judge a book by its cover'. I did and it proved to be a terrible mistake. Upon receiving this book, with its dull green cover and unremarkable title, I was immediately convinced that this was yet another book with similarities to Christopher Andrew's authorized history of MI5 (*The defence of the realm*, Penguin, 2010, reviewed in *International Affairs* 86: 2). After all, Quinlan was one of Andrew's PhD students and this book is effectively his thesis. But on starting to read it I was suddenly and spectacularly proved wrong—this book is a gem.

It is, unquestionably, a thesis in book form. The appendices confirm this, even if it is more readable than your average doctoral dissertation. In spite of the lacklustre title, this is an intriguing and riveting book. It is all about tradecraft. Despite a fairly well-trodden introduction, from chapter one to the end it is a great read. Each chapter is essentially a case-study in intelligence tradecraft, ranging from the use of official (diplomatic) cover for espionage purposes; counter-subversion; recruitment and handling; penetration agents; and, finally, defection and debriefing. A particular strength of the book is the presence of personality throughout. Each chapter is heavily focused on the individuals concerned, be it the Soviet intelligence officers or their British counter-intelligence counterparts. My favourite episode in the book—and there are lots to choose from—is a quote from Sir Claude Dansey, one time deputy chief in the Secret Intelligence Service, who wrote that 'I would never willingly employ a university man ... I have less fear of Bolshies and Fascists than I have of some pedantic but vocal University Professor' (p. 83). While the title would suggest that the book's focus is on MI5, there are actually some crucial bits of information about Soviet intelligence at this time. So, for instance, there is tantalizing detail on the

Europe

shift in Soviet practice in the late 1920s towards the use of legal and illegal residents, who were often only connected by one individual (p. 82). This system would become invaluable in the following decade with the running of the Cambridge Five, surely one of the most successful espionage coups ever.

The book is not without its faults though. Although each episode is explored in detail, there is little in the way of a conclusion, either to each chapter or to the book as a whole. This is unfortunate given that the chapters are effectively arranged thematically. Similarly, the focus on detail misses the 'so what' question—what was the impact and importance of the various case-studies examined?

In short, *The secret war between the wars* is a great book. While its focus is arguably too narrowly on the details of tradecraft, this detail is, nonetheless, extremely refreshing. Just a shame that the lure of the book was offset by such a dreary cover and title.

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Europe

The paradox of German power. By Hans Kundnani. London: Hurst. 2014. 147pp. £17.90. ISBN 978 1 84904 415 8.

Hans Kundnani is one of the younger generation of scholars on Germany. His new book is an intelligent survey of recent German foreign policy and makes a number of contributions. The strength of *The paradox of German power* lies in Kundnani's emphasis on the economic dimension of German foreign policy. An emphasis on the internal economic drivers of foreign policy in the imperial era had been pioneered by Eckart Kehr in his seminal Berlin Dissertation of 1927. In the postwar era, a divided and semi-sovereign Germany was the object, rather than the subject, of international policy and attention centred on how Germany fitted into Atlantic and European multilateral structures. As international structures loosened and Germany emerged as a 'shaper' of *Ostpolitik*, the importance of domestic economic drivers in foreign policy was rediscovered. Such an emphasis was first employed by Angela Stent to analyse the origins of *Ostpolitik* in her path-breaking *From embargo to Ostpolitik* (CUP, 1982). Subsequent studies of German foreign policy often referred to Germany as a 'trading state', but unlike Stent, they failed to undertake any empirical research to back up this description and the concept remained an empty box. In an influential article, Kundnani characterized Germany as a 'geo-economic power' ('Germany as a geo-economic power', *Washington Quarterly* 34: 3). Traditionally, Germany had been characterized as an economic giant and political dwarf. In a post-Cold War world, where Germany is much less constrained by security imperatives, it can use its increased economic power to impose its national preferences on others. Kundnani now speaks of a 'Geo-economic semi hegemony' (conclusion). This is an important and compelling depiction of where German power is now exercised. Kundnani makes much less of a contribution in explaining how these domestic economic forces translate into foreign policy imperatives. Unlike in Britain, few large firms possessed specialized government relations departments and trade associations played a key role in interfacing with government in what was a more corporatist system. Kehr and Stent analysed the policies of the relevant associations in their works. Globalization and the international expansion of German firms have weakened the role of associations and large firms are now much more important as political actors on their own account. The black box of associations can be opened up through an examination of minutes of association meetings. Firms lack the same points of entry for researchers. They are much more unified

and, unlike associations, do not always operate in the public sphere. In drawing attention to the commercialization of German foreign policy Kundnani has pointed to a huge research gap, but one that will be difficult to fill.

The commercialization of foreign policy opens up interesting comparative perspectives. There has been a conscious attempt by the current government to commercialize UK foreign policy, but the weakness of the United Kingdom's export industry has resulted in this initiative failing at the level of both economics and power. In Germany, by contrast, it is a policy pushed from below by the export-led firms, rather than an executive-led process. In contrast to the United Kingdom, the strength of the export-led firms ensures success in both economic and power terms.

While Germany is now fully sovereign externally, it remains internally 'semisovereign' (Peter Katzenstein, *Tamed power*, Cornell University Press, 1997). In the German system power is decentralized internally and the federal government has to share power with the *Länder* and what Peter Katzenstein calls para-public bodies, notably the Bundesbank and the Federal Constitutional Court. In the evolution of policy on the eurozone crisis the Bundesbank and the Federal Constitutional Court have played a very prominent role. Indeed, the frequency with which the Federal Constitutional Court has been called on to rule on the constitutionality of measures in this area has transformed it from 'veto player' to co-shaper. The participation of these players carries with it the danger of gridlock and unpredictability. In the Bonn Republic there was a perfect match between what other member states expected of Germany in European policy and what its European policy-making machinery, including the Franco-German relationship, was able to deliver. It is not at all clear that this system is appropriate to Germany's increased role and the much higher expectations of its partners.

Every book on contemporary politics is likely to experience some accident of timing. The ongoing Ukraine crisis and the discussion about the recalibration of German foreign policy in 'Review 2014', an exercise in which Kundnani is involved, inevitably mean that the security section looks dated. In the conclusion, which is more polemical than the rest of the book, Kundnani suggests that we might be seeing a revival of the 'German question' in a different guise. In the original encirclement thesis the rise of Germany provoked a counteralliance of military powers. In the new version, Germany's dominant position in the eurozone has led to a fight back by the creditor nations in which France, Italy and Spain 'are the new Eurozone core' (p. 112) and threaten a takeover of the European Central Bank. This view appears overstrained in two ways. Kundnani's 'new core' argument is based on an interpretation of the single example of the rather untypical June 2012 summit and ignores the normal EU decision rule that outvoting the Germans should be avoided since everyone is potentially dependent on German firepower. It also exaggerates the feelings of 'victimhood' in Germany.

This is a lively and well-written introduction to recent German foreign policy and Hans Kundnani's emphasis on Germany as a geo-economic power will be influential.

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Challenges for Europe in the world, 2030. Edited by John Eatwell, Terry McKinley and Pascal Petit. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate. 2014. 386pp. £70.00. ISBN 978 1 47241 925 5. Available as e-book.

Despite its cover, which depicts in beautiful colours *Nébuleuse de l'âme* IC148, this book is not meant to be an exercise in futurology. Its proclaimed aim is much more down to

earth, promising 'a strong focus on policy implications' (p. xxii). Yet predicting Europe's challenges in 2030 in such turbulent times as the continent has been going through over the last five years is either exceedingly courageous or foolish. Then again, if you can convince a major funding body that the results of your research will be 'indispensable ... for anybody concerned with Europe's economic future', as Anthony Giddens puts it in his endorsement on the cover, you might have proved yourself both courageous and clever. In the academic environment, which values third-party research funding as much as the actual research results, convincing the European Commission that you can make meaningful predictions about the key challenges for the next 15 years is more than half of success.

The present study is the major outcome of the AUGUR project funded by the European Union's 7th Framework Programme to the tune of €2.58 million. The project lined up an impressive number of institutions and prominent scholars. Its main product, though, is in my view less impressive. One of the key weaknesses is buried on p. 3, footnote 4: 'the implications of military conflicts have not been considered in this study'. Why not? Are they not relevant to 'Global and European governance in a 2030 perspective?' (chapter two), 'Development, demography and migrations' (chapter seven) or 'Well-being in Europe and in the world to 2030'? Not surprisingly then, Ukraine is never mentioned and Russia appears only twice, in passing, as a part of the BRICS group, which 'despite some slowdown, will retain much higher growth rates and could be led to co-ordinate their intervention to moderate the downwards trend of the world economy' (p. 33). Just as the EU political elite was not prepared for the challenge of a more aggressive Russia with imperial ambitions towards its neighbours, the mainstream EU scholarship too was taken by surprise. They both appear to have accepted the assumption of liberal internationalist ideology, which, with its focus on the 'enhanced interconnectedness and complexity of the world economy today' (p. 2), tends to underestimate the potential for violent conflicts. Even if the focus of this study is on economics, it is hard to see just how economic developments can be divorced from the consequences of possible violent conflicts.

Paradoxically, the most insightful aspect of the book deals with the topic that the authors feared would dominate their thinking: the impact of the eurozone crisis. Four different scenarios are considered. First, 'struggling on'; second, 'EU break-up'; third, 'multi-speed Europe', in which the currency union would no longer survive in its current form; and fourth, 'towards federal Europe'. This is the focus of chapter nine, 'The political economy of change at a time of structural crisis', which appears to have dated less than the rest of the book. Is this because the eurozone's future in early 2015 looks very much as it did in early 2012? The authors are not overly pessimistic, emphasizing that in times of crisis 'significant political transformations become possible' (p. 329). Yet both more promising scenarios, 'multi-speed Europe' and 'federal Europe', face so many obstacles that the reader has few reasons for optimism. Besides, some prescriptions border on utopian. Once a Europe-wide consensus has been reached in favour of 'stronger macro-economic and financial supervision', it is suggested, 'national politics would focus on ideological issues with economic policy outsourced to the European level' (p. 20). This leaves 'muddling through', where as in the past 'time and again the response to a potentially mortal crisis has been the application of sticking plaster at the last moment' (p. 7), or breakup, which is 'still unlikely' (p. 343). Why? Because that scenario, we are told, implies that 'European countries' responses to the recession and sovereign debt crisis are predominantly shaped by political and social forces which seek to move nation states *away from* the influence of the European institutions' (p. 312). This assumption ignores the power of unintended consequences. In 2015 Greek dissatisfaction with the EU-imposed politics of austerity has crystallized into a political

rebellion that has a real potential to destroy European unity. The irony is, though, that the Greek governing party, Syriza, is very pro-European in both rhetoric and conviction. What it appears to be arguing for is in fact not all that removed from some of the prescriptions of the current study: a move away from austerity and in favour of more Keynesian-style government spending. Yet, despite its pro-European stance, the government of Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras may well end up presiding over Greece's exit from the eurozone, leading to a political earthquake that will affect the European project for decades to come.

The augur was a priest in ancient Rome who gauged the will of the gods by observing the movements of birds. This reviewer doubts whether the mathematical models and starting assumptions underpinning the current study are all that much more reliable as a guide to Europe's future. To sum up, this book says more about Europe's preoccupations in 2012 than Europe's challenges in 2030.

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Russia and Eurasia

Punishment as a crime? Perspectives on prison experience in Russian culture. Edited by **Julie Hansen and Andrei Rogachevskii**. Uppsala: Uppsala University Press. 2014. 193pp. SEK 262.00. ISBN 978 9 15549 064 5. Available as e-book at www.ub.uu.se.

For obvious reasons, the tragedy of the Soviet Gulag—one of the few Russian words generally understood throughout the world—has attracted much less academic and public attention than has the Holocaust. Yet the catastrophic long-term impact of the huge numbers of arrests, deaths and ruined lives in the USSR, especially under Lenin and Stalin, is undeniable. Russia was changed for the worse, and for ever. But how much has changed in the post-Soviet penal system? How does the 'deprivation of liberty' in Russia differ from imprisonment in other countries? Because there are still only a handful of jails—exclusively for men—in the Russian Federation, what in many other countries would be called the 'prison service' is known in today's Russia as the Federal Service for the Implementation of Punishments, implying that it is a penal, rather than penitential, institution. And yet most inmates, after being sentenced, serve their time in 'correctional colonies' (not 'camps'), suggesting that rehabilitation might be a major aim of the Service. To what extent the rate of reoffending in Russia is higher or lower than in other countries is unclear. The plan to convert many of the colonies into prisons on the western model was, for one reason or another, dropped shortly after this book went to press. Whether most of today's approximately 560,000 convicts and 100,000 people in pre-trial investigation isolation facilities would prefer to serve their sentences in a jail or in a correctional colony is unclear, but for the foreseeable future they won't have any choice.

How much, if at all, do the conditions and experiences of 'deprivation of liberty' in post-Soviet Russia differ from those in earlier periods of Russian history and in other parts of the world? The great value of the book under review is that it compares and contrasts incarceration in Russia, past and present, with the situation in various other countries, notably the United Kingdom and the United States—but not, unfortunately, in Sweden, where the recidivism rate is much lower than in most other countries. The book's title, *Punishment as a crime?*, is deliberately provocative, with the first and last chapters raising the question of whether, in many cases and not only in Russia, the length and severity of the punishment may be greater than the crime that many, but far from all, of the inmates have committed. In the excellent opening chapter, based on his recent personal ten-year

experience of punishment in Putin's Russia, Igor Sutyagin asserts that the 'existing Russian legal practice of sentencing people to excessively long terms and sending them to serve these terms a great distance away from their relatives can thus have a negative social effect and might in itself be considered a crime' (p. 33). Moreover, since the dictatorship of law is more in evidence than the independent rule of law, if 'the authorities do not observe the spirit and the letter of the law, why should the inmates?' (p. 36). Because so many of the political leaders of the country are also widely thought to have engaged in unlawful activities, there is still something in common between them and the professional criminals, but cooperation by the latter with the penal authorities is often regarded as collaboration, one reason for tensions among the convicts themselves. In the concluding chapter, Andrei Rogatchevski [*sic*] contrasts and compares the treatment meted out recently to the Russian writer Eduard Limonov and, at the same time, to the British writer Lord Archer, quoting an American penologist as thinking that by and large 'the prison as an institutional form has fostered more criminogenesis than moral regeneration, more debasement than redemption, more scandal than success. Were the prison ... judged by the same standard as its inhabitants, it would surely be classified as a repeat offender, perhaps a candidate for the death penalty' (p. 181). All too often, in all too many countries, the punishment simply doesn't fit the crime.

The five chapters in the middle of the book provide additional material on the interrelationship between crime and punishment. Martin Kragh finds that under Stalin there was not all that much difference between forced labour and nominally free labour. It's a pity that he doesn't, however critically, use the 1965 path-breaking monograph by Stanislaw Swianiewicz (*Forced labour and economic development*, Oxford University Press) to shed further light on this subject. Sarah J. Young offers readers some fascinating insights into works by Dostoevsky, Shalamov, Sinyavsky—none of whom deserved the punishment inflicted on them—and a committed observer of the tsarist penal system, Vlas Doroshevich. Andrea Gullotta writes on 'Gulag humour' against the background of the traditional Russian 'laughter through tears', and few readers are likely even to smile as they go through his essay. Scurrilous jokes and verses attacking any one Soviet and 'post-Soviet' leader can easily be recomposed, so that the words Lenin, Stalin, Brezhnev and Putin seem to be interchangeable (pp. 104–105). Helena Goscilo contributes a very well-researched chapter on a Russian rock group much favoured by Putin which contributed to a 1994 musical film called *Zona Lyube*, in which the band performs in various real correctional colonies, bringing the inmates some temporary relief and escape from their daily grind. The most moving essay in the edited collection is Inessa Medzhibovskaya's 'Punishment and the human condition: Hannah Arendt, Leo Tolstoy, and lessons from life, philosophy, and literature' (pp. 137–61), which alone is worth the price of this book. Medzhibovskaya, who has been able to read Stalin's extraordinary comments, in or after 1935, on his copy of Tolstoy's novel *Resurrection*, explains, with the help of, among others, Arendt's book on Eichmann, how Soviet—and now post-Soviet—officials, like many other people, including some of the inmates referred to by Sutyagin, can commit crimes, knowing that they are crimes, but genuinely without any feeling of personal guilt. Rogatchevski, referring to Archer and Limonov, writes that both of them 'face the same choice: either to admit that they have done something wrong, or to remain in denial about it. Both opt for denial' (p. 173). This may help us to understand why, say, President Putin might sincerely, if mistakenly, feel that he hasn't done anything particularly illegal or immoral, as all his actions were committed for the good of his Great Cause. Could one say the same of, for instance, George W. Bush and Tony Blair?

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Putin's wars: the rise of Russia's new imperialism. By Marcel H. Van Herpen. Plymouth: Rowman and Littlefield. 2014. 277pp. Index. £47.00. ISBN 978 1 44223 137 5.

It is hard to imagine how this book could have been better timed. The war in Ukraine has led to renewed western interest in Russia and considerable concern in the EU and NATO about President Putin's intentions, Russian neo-imperialist expansion and the possible military threat that Russia might pose to European security. And Marcel van Herpen, director of the Cicero Foundation, a pro-EU, pro-Atlantic think-tank based in Maastricht, has written a book that purports to examine Putin's 'internal' and 'external' wars and his neo-imperial project. The book's thesis is that Russia is 'both a post- and a pre-imperial state', and the central idea is that throughout Russian history there has 'always existed a negative relationship between empire building and territorial expansion on one hand and internal democratization on the other' (p. 5). In other words, reform periods come in the wake of lost wars, and periods of imperial expansion tend to have a negative impact on internal reform and democratization. The tone of the book is thus clear from the outset: Russia missed the opportunity to join the 'democratic mainstream' after the Cold War, and, 'like a mythical monster', Russian despotism has risen to power again in the form of Putin's policy of a 'reimperialization' of the former Soviet space. Russian despotism is intimately, even 'inseparably', linked with its imperial drive (pp. 5, 15, 17).

Putin's wars consists of 16 chapters divided into three parts. The first, 'Russia and the curse of Empire', consists of five chapters. The first two explore empire building and despotism, and offer comparisons of legitimation theories used for empire building in the West and in Russia. The third, fourth and fifth chapters frame the idea of 'empire fatigue' and whether Russia could have become a 'normal state'; and then Putin's attempt to create a 'new ideological triad' of Orthodox Faith, Sovereign Democracy and the Power Vertical at home, and a 'Grand Design' to create forms of international union, particularly the Eurasian Union, abroad. Part two reflects on what Van Herpen calls the 'internal war', the attempt to establish political supremacy. This part consists of four chapters that describe Russia as a 'pluralist' one-party state, the transformation of United Russia into a nationalist party and Kremlin initiatives to form the 'Nashi' youth group and rehabilitate the Cossacks to support the leadership and attack its opponents. Part three, consisting of six chapters, seeks to frame Russia's two wars in Chechnya and Georgia, and contrasts the defeats in three pre-Putin wars (the Cold War, Afghanistan and the first Chechen War) in chapter ten, with Putin's two victorious wars (the second Chechen War and the Russo-Georgia war) in chapters eleven to fifteen.

Van Herpen attempts to cover a lot of ground in what is a comparatively short book. He makes some important points about the Russian leadership's attempts to forge political, economic and military unions with other states in the region and introduces some of the thinkers behind Eurasianism, such as Alexander Dugin. He also revisits the familiar questions of Nashi's harassment of diplomats, the cyber attacks on Estonia and the brutality of the Chechen wars.

But several problems permeate the book, the first of which is Van Herpen's historical framework, which provides a convenient but simplistic rule of historical thumb that overlooks inconvenient evidence: Catherine the Great was expansionist but also reformist, for example. The historical lens is further muddled by the range of historical analogies he draws: a mix of Nazi and Mussolini-era fascism, Stalinist and other Soviet-era examples are used, often to illustrate the same point. The despotism angle also provides a simplistic rule of thumb for understanding contemporary politics, and if there is much discussion of the democratic failings of United Russia and the creation of fake opposition

parties, these are over-simplified, such as the analysis of Mikhail Prokhorov's brief leadership of the *Pravoe Delo* (Right Cause) party in 2011 (p. 97), and there is little substantial discussion of the decision-making that may lie behind Putin's wars.

Second, there are important absences. For a book that explores Putin's wars and long-term strategies, there is almost no examination of the relevant official documents, such as the National Security Strategy or the Military Doctrine. Indeed, barring brief discussions of contract soldiers and the use of bombardment and human rights abuses in Chechnya, the Russian military, its capacity and combat operations, reform and re-equipment hardly feature—nor do its opponents in the wars, the Chechens and Georgian military—nor are the wars placed in an adequate discussion of the wider international context. Finally, a sense of conspiracy pervades the book, the most prominent example of which is Van Herpen's retread of the apartment bombings in 1999. With a mix of insinuation, assertion and selective evidence, the author suggests a cover-up by the Russian security services. These problems mean that although the book is timely, it does not offer a sophisticated (or original) explanation of Putin's wars that would help the reader understand today's Russia.

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Moscow in movement: power and opposition in Putin's Russia. By Samuel A. Greene. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. 2014. 296pp. £65.00. ISBN 978 0 80479 078 9.

Russian society is often seen as passive, inert and mutely suffering in the face of a repressive state. The conservative Russian historian Karamzin's famous remark, *narod bezmolstvuyet* ('the people are silent'), has become emblematic of this view. This weakness of self-organization is usually attributed to inherent cultural tendencies and low levels of social trust. The sudden mobilization of street opposition to the Putin regime in major cities in 2011–12 thus came as a surprise to many, prompting questions about its implications for the future stability of the regime. Inevitably, the reality is more variegated. Serious scholars have always known that Russians can mobilize. They did so with remarkable speed when given the opportunity by *glasnost* in the late 1980s. Organizations like Memorial—which chronicled the human rights abuses of the Soviet era—and the Soldiers' Mothers' Committee—which campaigned for protection of servicemen through two Chechen wars—worked effectively throughout the 1990s. But the Putin era saw a decline in such activism even as the state grew in size and corruption. What is wrong with this picture?

Samuel Greene clarifies this picture for us in his welcome study of social movements under Putin. He explores the 'organizational ecology' of Russian civil society through three case-studies of civic activism and their varying success: Public Verdict, which supports victims of abuse by law enforcement bodies; the housing rights movements, which seeks to protect those facing evictions due to official land seizure; and, most successful, Freedom to Choose, a movement campaigning against policies and bureaucratic impunity that threatened car drivers' interests. Greene tells these human and political stories well. His 'thick description' brings to life the key personalities, the language, framing and strategies they develop, and the dynamics of their engagement with the state organs against whose behaviour they have mobilized. This rare and detailed perspective alone is significant for understanding contemporary Russia. But this work's ambition reaches further: it seeks to offer a fresh understanding of the very concept of 'civil society', and to use this to explain the pattern of success and failure of the movements it charts. Here there are intellectual pleasures but ambiguities too.

Greene advances a distinctive concept of civil society as the ‘means by which individuals collectively seek sovereignty vis-a-vis the state’. The role of the state is key: patterns of civic activism can be explained in terms of the opportunities created by the state with which it engages. Greene even describes it as a ‘joint endeavour’ of state and society. In the case of Russia, he argues that the state is ‘disaggregated’ and seeks to minimize its contacts with the population, thus limiting opportunities for civil society to mobilize. The striking exception, the mobilization of 2011–12, was triggered by Putin’s announcement that he and then-president Dmitry Medvedev had decided to switch positions. It had this effect, Greene argues, because it ‘crystallized’ the state, ‘presenting citizens with a view of the future ... that could easily be predicted to look very much like the recent past’. This reconceptualization of civil society is imaginative and intriguing. But the cogs of the argument do not always mesh cleanly. Is the Russian state disengaged, or is it in fact predatory? Is it more disengaged than in countries with a more vibrant civil society? If the state is really disengaged, why should it matter to large numbers of people that Putin and Medvedev had agreed to swap jobs?

Three wider questions can be raised. First, Greene explicitly argues that state repression, whose existence he acknowledges, has not played a role in inhibiting civic activism. Many Russians may disagree. The state’s coercive capacity is surely one of the most potent ways of creating incentives against activism. The work’s own case-studies testify to the heavy costs borne by some activists, and there can be little doubt that intimidation is one goal of coercion. Second, the role of economic factors in influencing propensity to mobilize is underplayed. The first two terms of Putin’s presidency brought an average growth rate of 7 per cent a year. If, as the Chartists used to say, politics is for most people a ‘knife and fork question’, this alone may explain the relative passivity of the fat years, especially in combination with coercion of activists. If material life is improving, it may be better to avoid the trouble that organizing against grievances would bring. Such a tacit bargain resembles the social contract of the Brezhnev era. Finally, Greene seeks to explain variation in the success of social movements. This requires an understanding not only of why they mobilize, but of ‘how the elite chooses when to give in and when to keep fighting’. A theory of state policy-making is therefore needed too—one that will show how pressures from civil society themselves shape elite responses. None of these questions should detract from Greene’s achievement. They are invitations to him and others to extend this path-breaking work on a difficult and important subject. He has compellingly shown that Russians can organize themselves, sometimes effectively, and surmount any barriers of cultural apathy and low trust.

What are the implications for Russia’s further development? What has the *bolotnya* of 2011–12 changed? With Putin now riding a wave of nationalist popularity and the courageous Memorial facing possible dissolution after many years of bearing witness to Stalinist crimes, civil society appears more beleaguered than ever. Or will this itself prove a brief interruption in the long rise of civil society? Over the coming year Russia’s GDP will fall—posing the ‘knife and fork question’—even as society continues to be mobilized from above for statist goals. These two trends will pull in opposite directions on mass loyalties. It will be fascinating to follow.

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Middle East and North Africa

Nuclear Iran. By **Jeremy Bernstein.** Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press. 2014. 209pp. Index. £15.00. ISBN 978 0 67441 708 3. Available as e-book.

With international negotiations on Iran's nuclear programme reaching *dénouement*, the number of voices discussing Tehran's nuclear ambitions is seemingly at a near-high. In this context, it is a worthy idea indeed to produce an accessible, short guide to Iran's nuclear programme and the science that underlies it. This is exactly the task that Jeremy Bernstein sets himself in *Nuclear Iran*. Bernstein, a physicist and science essayist who briefly worked in the US nuclear weapons complex at Los Alamos, is particularly well placed to dissect the issue.

Nuclear Iran begins promisingly. Iran's nuclear programme and the knowledge behind it cannot be bombed away, Bernstein argues, and not just because Tehran has a deeply entrenched and relatively sophisticated nuclear industry. It is also because there is 'no one secret' to making nuclear weapons—indeed, as Bernstein shows, one 'need look only as far as the Internet' to uncover the great breakthroughs in weapon-essential physics and engineering that were made at places like Cambridge and Los Alamos. Readers might be surprised to learn that once tightly held secrets like the ratio of gallium required to stabilize plutonium metal for use in a nuclear warhead are now public knowledge. Problematically, though, Los Alamos features much more heavily in Bernstein's book than Tehran does. Despite its title, *Nuclear Iran* is less a study of Iran's nuclear programme than it is a short primer on the history and physics of the plutonium-producing nuclear reactor and the uranium-enriching gas centrifuge. As such, a good two-thirds of the book takes place outside Iran, in the places where these technologies were first developed, primarily Los Alamos—home of the Manhattan Project, birthplace of the plutonium bomb and Bernstein's alma mater; and the Soviet Union, where Austrian-born engineer Gernot Zippe built the first uranium isotope-separating gas centrifuge.

As a result, it is not the single-volume guide to Iran's nuclear programme that readers might be seeking. There are few monographs which adroitly cover the history of Iran's nuclear endeavours, and *Nuclear Iran* does not fill this gap (although admittedly, that is clearly not the author's goal). Bernstein does recount the country's early nuclear development under the Shah, the quick nuclear advances that Iran made in the 1990s on enrichment and plutonium-related capabilities with the assistance of China, Russia and the A. Q. Khan network and the stubborn nuclear advancements of the last decade. Little, if any, of this information is new.

Bernstein has a fixed view of the intent behind Iran's nuclear programme, which is clearly based on his own experiences in and around Los Alamos. Citing a declaration made by a former Iranian nuclear official that young technicians at the Natanz centrifuge facility were 'working day and night', Bernstein thinks of 'Los Alamos during the war' (p. 91). It is a comparison he repeatedly draws. 'The Iranian programme has all the urgency and secrecy of the Manhattan Project', he later writes (p. 180); 'to me there is only one way to read all this, and that is that the Iranians are trying to make nuclear weapons' (p. 182). Bernstein might be guilty here of what intelligence analysts call 'mirroring'—over-relying on one's own experience to judge an adversary. But more problematically, throughout the book the author succumbs to a common error found in much punditry on Iran's nuclear programme: the idea that the Iranian state is a unitary actor. Iran's nuclear programme undoubtedly has a strategic dimension. But Iran's government and bureaucracy have a number of centres of

power with diverse and very often competing interests. The breadth of expectation across these power centres as to how Tehran's nuclear programme will progress in the years ahead is presumably very wide. Those who have examined Iran and its nuclear programme in any detail will be frustrated by *Nuclear Iran's* occasional mischaracterizations and errors of fact. Few would describe, as Bernstein does, Iran's centrist regime heavyweight, Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, as 'the *éminence grise* of the Iranian reform movement' (p. 174). China did not sell Iran 'two tons of uranium ore' as part of their short-lived state-to-state nuclear supply relationship, but two tons of refined forms of uranium—hexafluoride, tetrafluoride and dioxide (p. 77). Neither the International Atomic Energy Agency nor any other convincing authority has ever stated that North Korea has supplied Iran with uranium mining assistance, as the author asserts (p. 77). The front company responsible for Iran's heavy water production plant at Arak is the Mesbah Energy Company, not 'the Messiah Energy Company' (p. 159)—although the latter would clearly be the more sensational brand-name. Alongside these substantive problems, other issues suggest a rush to publication. The book's elegant cover features a photograph which is not of 'reactor cooling towers' as the image credit states, but a conventional gas combined-cycle power plant. (For this the error apparently lies with Getty Images.) And a map of Iran sourced from Wikimedia inexplicably uses a mix of Spanish and French labels.

Bernstein's well-told anecdotes about key figures in the history of centrifuge and nuclear reactor development mean that this book is ultimately enjoyable. But those hoping for a pithy, insightful analysis of Iran's nuclear programme and its history will be left unsatisfied.

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Military responses to the Arab uprisings and the future of civil–military relations in the Middle East. By **William C. Taylor**. New York: Palgrave. 2014. 268pp. Index. £26.00. ISBN 978 1 13741 004 7. Available as e-book.

In his book *Military responses to the Arab uprisings and the future of civil–military relations in the Middle East*, William C. Taylor searches for the dynamic causes of the Arab uprising. He especially focuses on the military responses of the Arab armies to the public demonstrations and presents a comparative analysis of the Egypt, Tunisia, Libya and Syria revolutions.

In chapter one, Taylor outlines his study and emphasizes the effect of people's demands rather than the influence of external powers in the Arab awakening. He introduces a new lens through which to analyse civil–military relations in the Middle East, arguing that the 'restraints and interests' analysis is the best way to comprehend military actions. He defines *restraints* 'as any mechanism that limits the military's power, freedom of movement, or decision-making ability' and *interests* 'as any motive that might cause the military to lend its support to the popular uprising rather than the regime' (p. 46). According to this typology *high restraints* reinforced by *low interests* spur military support for the regime, while *low restraints* reinforced by *high interests* lead to militaries backing protesters (p. 49). In the event of *high restraints* balanced by *high interests*, the military supports the status quo. When *low restraints* are balanced by low interests 'the military is hesitant to intervene too quickly in the process, lest doing so can irreparably harm its interests' (p. 51).

Following on from this theoretical framework set out in chapters two and three, Taylor moves on to case-studies analysing military responses and reactions to regime change in Tunisia, Syria and Egypt. In chapter four he argues that the Tunisian Armed Forces were strictly controlled by the regime (*low political restraints*). In order to change the status quo they did not benefit from (*high corporate interests*), the army supported the protesters during

Sub-Saharan Africa

the 'Jasmine Revolution'. In the Syrian case (chapter five), the author argues that the Syrian Army supported the regime fervently because the army was compatible with the regime (*high restraints*). The toppling of al-Assad would have led to low gains and high losses for the army (*low interests*). The Egyptian case (chapter six) is more ambiguous. When the protests began, the Egyptian Army hesitated before deciding which side to support. Its initial indecision stemmed from uncertainty over whether its advantageous (*low restraints*) position would be maintained under the regime. Once Mubarak's regime became weakened by the protests, the army abandoned its neutrality and supported the protesters (*low interest*). In the second phase, when the army experienced a decline in its concessions and privileges under Muhammad Morsi's rule (*low interests*), the army ambitiously instigated a *coup d'état* and ousted Morsi (*high interest*), with a military commander replacing him as president. The Libyan case, as Taylor explains in chapter seven, demonstrates Gaddafi's full control over the army elite (*high restraints*) which fully backed the regime (*low interests*). On the other hand, the Libyan regular army's resolve to change the status quo (*high interests*) pushed it to join the protests. Taylor also examines the effect of US foreign military sales and the US International Military Education and Training programme on the Arab uprisings in chapter eight. Contrary to popular opinion, he argues that there is no correlation between the military education of Arab officers in the US, foreign military aid and the decision-making of Arab militaries during the upheavals. He concludes that the armies reacted and responded to the protests based on domestic *restraints* and *interests* rather than external factors (p. 192). In the last (ninth) chapter, the author puts forward five different scenarios—best to worst—on the future of the countries discussed in the post-revolutionary era.

Taylor thus proposes a new framework for conceptualizing civil–military relations during the Arab uprisings. Due partly to his military background, the author is able to provide an in-depth analysis of military capabilities. However, his framework gives too much emphasis to the domestic dynamics of the upheavals and somehow ignores external factors. This is especially true in the Syrian case where the current situation cannot be explained by and goes well beyond civil–military relations. A list of acronyms would also have been helpful for the reader. All in all, the book is easy to read and can be recommended to researchers, scholars and students interested in civil–military relations the Middle East.

Ramazan Erdag, *Eskisehir Osmangazi University, Turkey*

Sub-Saharan Africa

Africa in the world: capitalism, empire, nation-state. By Frederick Cooper. Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press. 2014. 144pp. £24.00. ISBN 978 0 67428 139 4.

In this slim book by the celebrated historian Frederick Cooper we get a sense of a changing of the guard, a senior statesman passing on the baton. Much as his seminal *Africa since 1940: the past of the present* (Cambridge University Press, 2002) has become a staple of Africanist reading lists, this allied synthesis, weighing in at just over 100 pages, will soon occupy its own place on the shelves of those interested in historicizing the development of diverse African states and their global genesis. It is a learned intervention, informed by *longue durée* perspectives and conceptual dexterity. The book emerges from a series of 2012 lectures at the W. E. B. Du Bois Institute at Harvard University and fittingly, like Du Bois himself, Cooper aims to render Africans more central to world history and underlines the salience of past trajectory for imagining African futures. Cooper is concerned with taking African agency seriously

within global conditions of possibility—to analyse the effects of power asymmetries within historical world systems and to disrupt our categorizations of ‘neatly bounded’ Africa and Europe through examination of how ‘Africa’s economic present is a co-creation, emerging out of long-term interactions among nonequivalent political and economic structures’. He successfully presents a sharp and accessible thesis that draws on his own copious back catalogue, and an eclectic bibliography of canonical works and newer secondary literature.

The book is divided into three overlapping chapters: ‘Africa and capitalism’, ‘Africa and empire’ and ‘Africa and the nation-state’, each of which takes a series of historically textured and continentally diverse thematic journeys through the period of empire, decolonization, independence, and long before in the case of chapter two on empire. The arresting central message of the book is his powerful insistence on the importance of contingency in the analysis of decolonization and the present in Africa. Alternative pathways from the colonial past risk obscurity if ‘we do our history backwards’ from the viewpoint of African statehood hence. This has profound significance for understanding the specific challenges faced by Africans within the more recent post-colonial order. Cooper has suggested previously and does again here that, much as African intellectuals were able to appropriate the universalism of modernizing colonial discourses of developmentalism to bolster the legitimacy and pace of nationalist independence movements from the 1940s, so too did they immediately recognize their precarious domestic and global economic positions. The breadth of solutions presented for such challenges varied greatly and it is this contemporaneous range of future options, local and international in creation, that one must assess to truly understand the nature of African statehood then and now. Cooper suggests that the creation of one particular path out of empire—sovereign, independent, territorial nation-states—may seem inevitable, yet in the tumultuous years from 1940 to 1960 such a future was far from set in specific African contexts. In 1950s French West Africa, Cooper argues, for instance, that more associative notions of ‘empire citizenship’ were genuinely debated, at least briefly. These were rooted not in putative linguistic or ethnic imperatives—as would later seem to be the case—‘but on the basis of historical connection—indeed a history that included conquest, exploitation and discrimination’. ‘Layered’ sovereignties within larger federal units, that acknowledged colonial foundation but were also able to move beyond this foundational discursive subordination, had their moment of appeal before the dislocations and ethnic factionalism of the 1960s and 1970s.

Cooper insists we venture beyond the ‘we versus they’ version of history, powerfully articulated in later debates over neo-colonialism and autochthony, in evaluating the muddy intricacies of decolonization and the world to come. In viewing subsequent changes in sovereignty regimes as ‘a recent and contingent’ process Cooper propels us towards more ‘supple’ views of African polity, development and statehood. Such nimble searches for usable pasts—including those that did not roll out—are key to understanding African histories and, crucially, the particularities of African presents. This book, then, cogently and concisely recapitulates much of his stellar scholarship. It is an attractive summary point of his career-long goal to comprehend ‘the relationship of possibility and constraint in the study of African history’, rooted in his impressive comprehension of ebullient recent scholarship. Perhaps most importantly *Africa in the world* is a provocation to explore African history on its own terms, to assess the path dependencies, but also possibilities, of that contested and contingent past from Africa out. The baton will be received with great respect by new generations of historians of Africa and the world order ‘in all its messy complexity’.

Gerard McCann, University of York, UK

Power Politics in Zimbabwe. By Michael Bratton. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner. 2014. 315pp. £50.00. ISBN 978 1 62637 076 0.

Zimbabwe's power-sharing government of 'national unity', 2008–2013, was a brief interlude of relative peace and economic recovery in the country's sad decline. The two protagonists, Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe African Nation Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and Morgan Tsvangirai's Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), were forced into an uneven coalition by regional neighbours and international horror after the violence of a run-off presidential election from which Tsvangirai withdrew. The deal was not between two equals with strong internal umpiring and nationwide buy-in: it was imposed from outside and was not effectively enforced.

The meat of Michael Bratton's useful book lies in a dissection of this power-sharing, and comparisons with South Africa after the 1994 elections, Sierra Leone after the Lomé peace accord of 1999, and Kenya in 2008. He points out that, in Zimbabwe, ZANU-PF's control of the institutions of coercion and Mugabe's unwillingness to abide by many of the terms of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) left the MDC as a poor second, in charge of social ministries but not fully in control of the national budget even though the able Tendai Biti was minister of finance.

His overall message is that power-sharing in Africa, with its traditions of 'winner-takes-all', the power of incumbency and election rigging, is difficult to practise fairly. In the United Kingdom, with its Conservative–Liberal Democrat coalition, analysts are realizing that there are many problems, even though the two parties' agreement was published in advance. In Zimbabwe, Mugabe simply ignored the GPA's stipulation that the president should consult the prime minister in key areas and permitted army chiefs to commit public treason in stating that they would never recognize an MDC election victory.

Bratton is right to emphasize the long continuities in Rhodesian/Zimbabwe history, whether in comparing Cecil Rhodes's land grab with Mugabe's 'fast track' land takeover, or the legal instruments covering law and order and censorship, or the Joint Operations Command which reported to Ian Smith during the civil war, and now to Mugabe in using army, police and militias to orchestrate intimidation, especially around elections. Violence, overt or covert, has been endemic.

However, there are areas on which it would have been valuable to read more. Power politics in Zimbabwe since 1980 have centred on the politburo and security services. There is a comparison to be made here with other semi-Marxist, post-revolutionary regimes—Cuba, Vietnam, China and North Korea—to see how ideas of democratic centralism coexist with supreme leaders and how armed forces and security services are subordinated to political control. It is generally agreed that in 2008 the securocrats were crucial in ensuring that Mugabe did not accept defeat in the first presidential election, and they remain significant in the succession battles now raging under the nonagenarian leader. Penetrating what goes on inside the inner cabal is hard for any outsider, and the maverick career of Jonathan Moyo, ZANU-PF's civilian enforcer in the media, illustrates that the generals are not the only power brokers. There are also comparisons to be made with other states where military dictatorship has evolved into more open electoral politics. In Nigeria, for instance, the post-dictatorship era since 1999 has been dominated by former general Obasanjo, and former general Buhari has run in the last four presidential elections; both of these had been military rulers at one time. Bratton writes: 'In Zimbabwe, ruling elites have purposely blurred the boundaries among political, economic and military institutions' (p. 191); something similar could be argued for Nigeria, where reputations and predatory fortunes built during nearly

two decades of military rule now weigh down civilian politics. The aftermath of civil wars is longlasting.

Bratton is also insufficiently critical of Tsvangirai and his MDC. The brave union leader of the 1990s has been shown to be an increasingly incompetent politician, and it is not surprising that his party has split twice and that his faction is demonstrating some of the faults, including leader worship and petty corruption, of ZANU-PF. He was feeble and erratic as prime minister, and has been feeble and erratic as an opposition politician; even in old age it has not been hard for Mugabe to run rings around him, painting him not only as a pawn of the West, but as inadequate. The one aspect where Tsvangirai deserves more sympathy than he gets here is in the 2013 election result, recognized by the Southern African Development Community and the African Union as a massive vote of confidence in ZANU-PF. There is good evidence to show that this election was stolen from the moment a defective register of voters was put together by Israeli consultants, and thuggish militias were mobilized once more to intimidate rural electors. In Africa it is not difficult to steal an election and in only a handful of countries, such as Ghana and Zambia, has an incumbent government been turned out at the polls.

Like other commentators, this author moves too easily from what is wrong, for instance with the security sector, to what needs to be done to put it right, and the risk is that optimism clouds analysis. He writes that 'most neighbouring governments don't seem eager to accept peace and stability in lieu of democracy and good governance'. Seeing this, just after the death of King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, it is impossible not to remark that this is precisely the position of all the presidents and prime ministers who flew there to offer their condolences.

Richard Bourne, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London, UK

Critical perspectives on African politics. Edited by Clive Gabay and Carl Death. Oxford and New York: Routledge. 2014. 185pp. £81.00. ISBN 978 0 41581 824 7.

Often, assessments of liberal interventionism focus on the impact of external actors on local political processes, where the effects of such engagement are juxtaposed negatively with the potential of positive local practices. This is not one of those assessments, in the sense that Clive Gabay and Carl Death, and indeed the contributors to this edited book, have committed to and been successful in highlighting African agency in these stories of how liberalism is used by African state and non-state actors. It is this emphasis on African agency that makes this collection essential reading for a better understanding of the complexities of African politics and lives.

In the introduction, Gabay and Death set out to apply a *critical* lens to understanding the practices of 'western' initiatives, characterized by liberal interventionism and the constitution of civil societies for democratic participation. The editors' aim is to highlight the interplay of 'power [relations], inequalities, coercion and violences' that often characterize what we know about international interventions in Africa (p. 1). For an edited collection, the narrative is coherent and a testament to its editors who do fulfil their promise of ensuring that each chapter contributes critically to the narrative of 'Africa rising', and consequently alternatives to prevailing understandings of liberal state-building practices and their interaction with civil society. This methodological commitment to criticality is an essential contribution to understanding contemporary African politics, in that it acknowledges the dynamics of power that come into play in the manner through which knowledge about Africa is constructed. Importantly, by acknowledging that criticality can mean 'messiness' and inconsistencies in how Africa is understood, and indeed how Africans interact with the

state, this collection actively confronts the inherent and possible contradictions in what we know from previous studies on Africa.

In his reading of how the state interacts with non-state actors with the aim of creating civil society, for example, Alex Wafer in chapter seven problematizes the notion of 'civil society', especially when attempts to regulate informal traders and implicate them in a relationship with the state and governance of public spaces are met with resistance. Similarly, Iñiguez de Heredia in chapter nine shows the ways in which 'civil society' in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) eludes recognition when it does not fit dominant narratives that prefer support for state-building. In this analysis, Iñiguez de Heredia's fieldwork challenges the orthodoxy of the liberal narrative that sees the promotion of civil society as the way to legitimize state interventions. This perspective is echoed in Morten Bøås's interrogation on responding to conflict dynamics in Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and the DRC in chapter eight. The methodological choice to emphasize criticality to underscore African agency while producing a coherent narrative from a diversity of topics is perhaps helped by the use of Michel Foucault's concept of governmentality. The concept is used by Kudzai Matereke in chapter three to explore the Zimbabwean state's governance of development which implicates non-governmental civil society actors in the consolidation of the state's own powers, even as it exercises power over rural populations. For Death, the environment is the site of governmentality where technical programmes are used to legitimize Tanzania's National Strategies for Sustainable Development. Far from being neutral, these processes create 'complex and opaque structures of authority' (p. 79) which nevertheless have enhanced the capacity to govern the environment if we are to accept the indicators proffered. In the DRC, corporate social responsibility (CSR), often framed as progressive and emancipatory, actually resembles colonial patterns of indirect rule. Jana Hönke's case-study in chapter five is interesting in that it situates multinational corporations (MNCs) within the broad definition of civil society. Consequently, CSR is rationalized—and legitimized—by its emphasis on local community engagement; but also viewed as problematic as its practice expands MNC governance roles and limits the local population's agency. These chapters, by explicitly drawing on governmentality as part of the logic of liberal interventionism, show that unequal power relations help construct particular ideas about what is legitimate, using a variety of governance mechanisms. These rationalities 'transcend supposed boundaries between profit and not-for-profit' (p. 103) while also silencing the alternative narratives of other social actors (p. 83).

In its adherence to criticality, this collection aims to draw attention to 'social, economic, political, gendered, racial and epistemological violences and power relations' (p. 3) to seek transformation or at the very least upset the status quo. However, there is no broader consideration for the gendered nature of power relations, even when Karen Treasure in chapter six addresses the role of gender equality organizations in restricting national democratic participation. Consequently, while governmentality provides coherence and is able to unmask African agency in practice, it does not completely upend the various locations of power within the status quo. Similarly, while there is an undercurrent of the implications of racial power dynamics in knowledge construction, this is silenced in favour of prioritizing the Foucauldian approach.

But no book can do everything; what Gabay and Death do with this collection is provide a space to start 'speaking' and thinking about Africa differently, in a way that considers the lived experiences of Africans—in all their messiness. This book is a must-read for anyone interested in Africa.

Toni Hastrup, University of Kent, UK

South Asia

The Pashtun question: the unresolved key to the future of Pakistan and Afghanistan. By **Abubakar Siddique**. London: Hurst. 2014. 256pp. Index. £30.00. ISBN 978 1 84904 292 5.

The story of the Pashtuns has received considerable media attention and mostly negative historical writing, largely because of the intense conflicts the lands they inhabit have witnessed since antiquity and especially during the past four decades. Even before this phase, the Pashtuns had acquired considerable historical interest as the graveyard of empires. The vilification of the Pashtuns as a violent culture happened, to some extent, because they stood up against the empires and imperial powers who usually get their way in world affairs. It was in their lands that much of South Asia's conquest and attempts at subordination first took place. It was these brave tribes that defeated the British only to accept their limited hegemony after three wars. But the most pernicious British legacy was the partitioning of the Pashtun territories between Afghanistan and Pakistan, the impact of which still lingers on.

A prominent journalist of the region, Abubakar Siddique has written a readable yet in-depth study on the chequered history of the Pashtuns, their relationship with Pakistan and Afghanistan and their conflict with the big powers of the world. More importantly, he offers valuable insights into the reasons why the Taliban and Al-Qaeda took hold of these territories following the retreat of the Soviet occupation army. This is one of the rare books that attempt to locate the chief reason for the Pashtun struggle today in the inability of Pakistan and Afghanistan to integrate them properly or offer them meaningful autonomy, since the creation of an independent state appears unlikely. The book is divided into eleven chapters. These chapters deal with the historical continuity from the past; how the peaceful borderlands became incubators of extremism; the rise of the Taliban; the role of Pakistan in making the Pashtuns the way they are, especially in Waziristan, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan; the role of Pashtuns in Afghanistan and finally some suggestions for crafting a peaceful Pashtun future. The book also offers insightful discussions on the Soviet and American policies in Afghanistan since the 1980s and their continuing effects.

The most interesting part of the book deals with Pakistan's machinations in dividing and controlling the Pashtuns, especially through the instrument of the Taliban. The Pakistani Inter-Service Intelligence and the military have engaged in intense manipulative behaviour to keep them divided so that they will never demand a state of Pashtunistan which has been a longstanding dream of many Pashtun nationalists. Ostensibly this is done in the name of keeping Afghanistan as a vassal state where the Pakistani Army can find a strategic depth in case the Indians push them conventionally. In the era when Pakistan holds more nuclear weapons than India does, this idea of India pushing them further sounds ludicrous, but strategic culture and the ideas they create have a life of their own. Much of South Asia's bane is that leaders and militaries hold on to such archaic strategic myths, some developed during the British era, and believe them to be true! The book should have devoted a bit more attention to this dimension as Pashtuns suffer the most from the bygone era's ideas that the elite in neighbouring countries hold dear. Not allowing Afghanistan to emerge as a unified and secure nation is a story of manipulative behaviour by Islamabad, and the blowback effect on Pakistan itself is worth analysing even further. The book also offers valuable discussion of some colourful personalities in Pashtun history and the specific cultural beliefs and attributes the different tribes hold. It would have been useful to see why the nation-state concept is difficult for the Pashtuns to fully accept and what it would take

to create a sense of belonging to the two states they inhabit. Although some suggestions are made, more specific proposals for regional peacebuilding and improving state capacity would have been helpful.

The Pashtun question stands well on its own and it will remain a key work for years to come for anyone interested in understanding the complexities of the Pashtun world and the surrounding region.

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Forged in crisis: India and the United States since 1947. By Rudra Chaudhuri. London: Hurst. 2014. 368pp. £24.00. ISBN 978 1 84904 304 5. Available as e-book.

Unfortunately for scholars and policy-makers, *Estranged democracies* (Sage Publications, 1994), the title of Dennis Kux's masterly history of US–Indian relations, has come to characterize the public perception of how Washington and New Delhi have interacted with one another throughout the postwar era: the United States and India at perpetual odds, first, during the Cold War, when Indian 'non-alignment' came to define the nature of the bilateral frictions, and later in the post-Cold War period, when the successor notion of 'strategic autonomy' played much the same role as non-alignment did in the previous era.

Rudra Chaudhuri's book, *Forged in crisis*, constitutes a welcome antidote to this prevailing perspective. It does not deny the frictions that existed between the two states, but rather contextualizes them against a backdrop of what was in reality substantial engagement between the two countries. As Chaudhuri reminds his readers: 'India's relationship with the US has been the most comprehensive association the country has had since independence' (p. 254). This thesis is elaborated in the book through a careful study of several pivotal moments in US–Indian relations, such as negotiating economic and military aid during the Truman years, bilateral diplomacy during the Korean War, India's plea for assistance during the 1962 Sino-Indian war, the bilateral discussions over possible Indian troop contributions to Iraq in 2003 and the landmark US–India civil nuclear cooperation agreement among others. Through these episodes, Chaudhuri seeks to establish that India's material interests and its sense of self always interacted in ways that advanced New Delhi's strategic aims while at the same time preserving what was most distinctive about its ethos. In so doing, Chaudhuri hopes to overcome the traditional binary in Indian foreign policy studies—the perennial debate about whether Indian actions are motivated more by its interests or by its ideals. This is undoubtedly an ambitious undertaking. And this book obviously will not be the last word on the subject; but it represents a remarkably creative beginning. By interrogating the historical record closely to assess Indian aims in various international negotiations, Chaudhuri succeeds in telling a story about how India protected its interests despite its power-political weaknesses, while at the same time demonstrating that those very interests were conceived and shaped by some enduring ideals. Parenthetically, it must be noted, although Chaudhuri does not dwell on it too much, that his narrative also illustrates the often remarkable generosity of the United States towards India, a largesse that is rooted as much in its own interests as in its disproportionate advantages in relative power *vis-à-vis* India.

The older episodes analysed in the book illustrate these complex dynamics most clearly, but success is less obvious where the recent examples—those occurring after 1998—are concerned. In part, this is because the events relating to India and the US war in Iraq and the civil nuclear cooperation agreement are all too recent, the documentary record is still very sparse and all the protagonists involved in these events have not been heard in detail.

Nonetheless, Chaudhuri's effort is commendable and even if the historical record eventually proves different in many particulars, his broader effort to illuminate the dialectic between interests and ideas in the making of Indian policy will still have been worthwhile.

Chaudhuri's short conclusion to the book merits careful consideration. He argues that India will remain perpetually 'non-aligned': 'the idea of nonalignment is necessarily entrenched in the vocabulary of India's past, present and future' (p. 253); that US policy-makers can do more harm than good by attempting ill-considered peacemaking within South Asia; and that a US–Indian 'alliance of sorts would do little good for international politics' (p. 262). These ideas ought to be reflected upon, even if they appear provocative at first sight. Despite the conceptual problems that afflict Chaudhuri's reading of the contemporary Indian practice of 'non-alignment', or his understating of the advantages accruing to India from a deeper bilateral partnership with the United States in the face of rising Chinese power, *Forged in crisis* remains a remarkable retelling of the story, even if only in fragments, of why successful engagement between the world's oldest and largest democracy is vital for the success of the liberal project globally.

Ashley J. Tellis, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington DC

East Asia and Pacific

The Oxford handbook of the international relations of Asia. Edited by Saadia M. Pekkanen, John Ravenhill and Rosemary Foot. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2014. 810pp. Index. £97.00. ISBN 978 0 19991 624 5. Available as e-book.

'This *Handbook* is about the theory and practice of the *international relations of Asia*' (p. 1). So begins this work that aims to contribute to theorizing about Asia's international relations, to serve as a resource for readers interested in particular themes, and to generalize about the international relations of the whole of Asia—as the editors lay out in the first paragraph of the introductory chapter. To the credit of the editors, this 39-chapter collection is remarkably consistent and, for the most part, it achieves its three goals.

The handbook is neatly divided into six different parts—introduction, theoretical approaches, international political economy, international security, transnational human security and old and new prospects. Even though some overlap is unavoidable, the editors should be commended for their careful work in ensuring that this is kept to a minimum. Thus, readers who would prefer to read the whole book rather than the specific chapters they are interested in should not find it repetitive by any means. The theorization of Asian international relations has progressed substantially over the past ten to fifteen years, particularly with reference to specific subregions. Thus, part two—which more directly addresses the first aim of the collection—can be seen as an attempt not only to bring together existing scholarship, but also to analyse the international relations of the whole of Asia from different theoretical perspectives. This makes for an interesting collection of six chapters which powerfully make the case that theorizing the international relations of the whole of Asia is possible.

Arguably, those best served by the handbook will be readers interested in particular themes. There are no less than 19 chapters on a wide array of security themes, plus twelve chapters on economic issues. In both cases, there is a mixture of chapters focusing on the international dimension of the domestic policies of particular countries, for example China, India or South Korea; dynamics at the subregional level in South-East Asia and Central Asia; and pan-regional themes including trade, investment, nuclear politics, health

or US alliances, among others. Contributors writing these chapters are well-known experts in their areas, making this an excellent reference point for those who want to learn about a specific issue. Indeed, one should confess that reading the whole book allowed this reviewer to learn about—and enjoy—topics that he had not thought about in detail previously. As such, my recommendation would be for readers to pore over chapters on themes they might not have read much about in the past.

One should be wary of generalizing about the international relations of the whole of Asia, the third aim of this edited collection. Arguably, the book does fulfil this goal insofar as generalization entails drawing general conclusions by inferring from specific cases. Contributors present this type of conclusions, especially those writing on specific themes or subregions. The introductory chapter is also very helpful in this respect, with the editors summarizing the key characteristics of the Asian region, along with the reasons behind them. At the very least, these generalizations serve as a reminder of themes that scholars researching the region should carefully consider—such as the enduring importance of the state, the economic preponderance of North-East Asia or the ongoing military modernization across large parts of Asia.

It is difficult to find fault in such a high-quality and carefully curated work. If anything, it could be said that readers interested in South Asian international relations would probably have welcomed specific chapters on this subregion. Meanwhile, those interested in economic integration might argue that this phenomenon is taking place not necessarily at the pan-Asian level, but mostly in and around East Asia, a point that contributors focusing on this theme explicitly or implicitly acknowledge. Nevertheless, these are minor issues that do not detract from the overall quality of the book.

In my view, the handbook will become staple reading for scholars and students with an interest in the international relations of Asia. It can serve readers as much to refresh their minds about their areas of expertise as to introduce them to topics they might have paid less attention to. Above all, it is a pleasure to read a collection in which the editors have taken the time and care to ensure that top-level contributions are well structured around common themes.

Ramon Pacheco Pardo, King's College London, UK

Securing the safety of navigation in East Asia: legal and political dimensions. Edited by **Shicun Wu and Keyuan Zou**. Oxford, Cambridge, Philadelphia and New Delhi: Chandos Publishing. 2013. 291pp. Index. £85.00. ISBN 978 0 85709 489 6. Available as e-book.

Solving disputes for regional cooperation and development in the South China Sea: a Chinese perspective. By **Shicun Wu**. Oxford, Cambridge, Philadelphia and New Delhi: Chandos Publishing. 2013. 211pp. Index. £85.00. ISBN 978 1 84334 685 2. Available as e-book.

The amount of attention paid to the South China and East China Seas has grown substantially over the last five years, usually focused on the role and activities of the People's Republic of China (China). This is often filtered through lenses such as 'China's maritime disputes with its neighbours', viewed either as an inevitable structural consequence of China's rise or the consequence of policy decisions by its leadership to take a more assertive approach in its near seas. Two recent books offer careful research which addresses these concerns and demonstrates the diversity and complexity of related maritime issues beyond

disputes over 'sovereignty'. The first, a substantial collection of papers edited by Shicun Wu and Keyuan Zou, comes at these maritime issues through the concept of 'safety of navigation', a concept which refers to issues such as traffic management and environmental protection, as well as the more political 'freedom of navigation'.

The scope of the book is broad. One contributor, Alberto Encomienda, argues that the lack of an imminent solution to the political sovereignty disputes means that cooperation on non-traditional security issues has been delayed. These issues, however, are too important to be held hostage to sovereignty disputes, and states should find ways of separating the two. Separately, Fang Xu and Pingping Chen argue that cross-strait (mainland China–Taiwan) cooperation on search and rescue might provide a good model for the South China Sea. Other contributors highlight the importance of environmental safety in the South China Sea, one of the world's most biodiverse marine environments, where a major oil spill would have disastrous environmental consequences. Robert Beckman and Leonardo Bernard suggest a joint proposal to designate part of the South China Sea a Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA), better to prevent, reduce and control pollution from shipping activities. These issues, however, have become marginalized by the geopolitical discourse of the last five years and inevitably this is a key theme of the book as well, both in early chapters on international legal frameworks and in a useful series of views from—in turn—South Korea, Japan, China, Malaysia and Singapore. From all of this material a number of themes emerge, of which two particularly struck this reviewer.

First, we are reminded that the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the backbone of the international legal framework, is subject to differing interpretations and implementation. These differences are not simply between China on one side and the neighbours on the other. The chapter on Malaysian views, for example, sets out Malaysia's position that no foreign states should conduct military activities in its exclusive economic zone, though the chapter would have benefited from more context. This position is basically shared by China—though unlike China, Malaysia has not had the capacity to challenge others' activities on the waters. Second, UNCLOS reflects a compromise between the interests of coastal states, user states and maritime powers. This is an uneasy compromise which is made all the more difficult in the South China Sea by the numerous sovereignty disputes over islands, compounded by lack of agreement on which features are islands in the first place. One result of this compromise is that 'freedom of navigation', considered an unqualified right on the 'high seas' until the middle of the twentieth century, has now been qualified by the maritime rights given to coastal states under UNCLOS. Again, though, there is disagreement over how these rights are to be interpreted and implemented.

All of this highlights the complexity of these issues. It should also challenge any interpretations of tensions in the South China Sea since 2009 which attribute these to China in a reductionist way. Wu and Zou's contributors have a range of views: Carlyle Thayer's chapter points the finger predominantly at China, while others trace the rise in tensions to Vietnamese and Malaysian submissions in 2009 to the UN Convention on the Limits of the Continental Shelf or decisions by the United States to take a more active approach to these disputes following its 2009 'pivot' to Asia. There is also an argument that UNCLOS itself has led to increased sovereignty disputes because under the convention islands can be used to claim maritime zones which bring the rights to resources.

Some of these themes are replayed in Shicun Wu's single-authored book on the South China Sea. The subtitle is important: this is a 'Chinese perspective', and the conclusions Wu reaches support Chinese positions on the key sovereignty questions. Whether Wu offers *the* official Chinese position is less clear, and Wu helpfully highlights where there

are different views among Chinese scholars, for example on the meaning of the somewhat ambiguous, but now infamous, 'nine-dash line' drawn on Chinese maps which encompasses most of the South China Sea. The book provides a valuable reference for those interested in the details of these disputes. It offers detailed coverage of the positions of China and of the states with which China has maritime disputes: Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei (though Wu doesn't really comment on Taipei's claims, basically the same as those of the People's Republic). This material is well sourced and clearly set out. Not all will agree with Wu's conclusions, but this book makes a good case for China's positions to be taken seriously.

Tim Summers, Chatham House, Hong Kong

Japan: the paradox of harmony. By Keiko Hirata and Mark Warschauer. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. 2014. 295pp. Index. £20.00. ISBN 978 0 30018 607 9. Available as e-book.

Despite all the bad things that have happened to it in the past two and a half decades, Japan still fascinates the West. Consumers still crave Japanese high-tech products or cars, the young still treasure *anime* and *manga*, and movie buffs still love samurai films. But how much of the real Japan do westerners know? As a long-time western resident in Japan, I'm always amazed by the general misinformation or ignorance on Japan held by people back home. This marvellous book by Keiko Hirata and Mark Warschauer could do much to correct that problem. An excellent summary of Japan's current social and institutional issues, its focus on the obscure but vital details of ordinary life gives the reader a fascinating glimpse of various problems confronting Japan at the proverbial crossroads.

The subtitle catches the essence of the book: harmony, the very thing that has given Japan its vaunted strength for centuries, is also weakening the nation as it faces a very challenging post-industrial future. Japanese harmony (*wa*) is based on values including honour (borrowing small amounts of money from a police box and returning it the next day), self-reliance and help to others (young children learning to clean their school), rigid orderliness (removal and placement of shoes at residences), equal application of rules (everyone must wear a cap in the pool), extreme loyalty to the workplace and clear boundaries between in and out-groups. This sense of *wa* has seen Japan through its toughest times, most recently when the people of the Tohoku region worked selflessly to cope with the terrible earthquake and tsunami of 2011. The downside is equally clear, as 'Japan is having difficulty adjusting' to its economic slowdown and demographic meltdown (p. 5): the elderly are put out to pasture, women are kept within rigid sex roles and young people are expected to wait their turn in service to their seniors.

Whistleblower Masaharu Hamada, who revealed a major corporate scandal at the camera and medical equipment maker Olympus, expected his honesty to be respected by his company. Instead, the value of company loyalty was deemed more important, Hamada was pressured to visit a doctor who would certify that he was mentally unstable and he was forced to quit. He had to resort to a lengthy court fight before he was vindicated. Japan's postwar industrial juggernaut was built on the loyalty of white-collar employees ('salary men'), who had to work extremely long hours with virtually no holidays. The bursting of the bubble economy and nearly two decades of slow economic growth meant that lifetime employment could no longer be universally offered, and the largest segment of workers became temporary or short-term contract labour, while the numbers of *freeters* (workers going from one part-time position to another) mushroomed. The remaining traditional

office employees had to work harder than ever just to keep their jobs. Japan may appear homogeneous, but under the surface there is growing diversity.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the evolving sex roles in Japanese society. The emergence of ‘herbivores’ (feminized or metrosexual men) has attracted much attention within Japan. Noted for their passivity and rejection of the salary-man lifestyle and focus on fashion and entertainment, herbivores are actually more attractive to many young women who value the solicitousness of ‘girly men’ (p. 61). For their part, women are caught between expectations to marry and become housewives and desire for freedom and meaningful careers. With traditional arranged marriages no longer an option for most women, many now resort to *konkatsu* (marriage parties, dating agencies and speed dating). Japan is one of the world’s most rapidly ageing countries, and the working population (15–64 years of age) is set to halve in the next fifty years. The elderly are both more politically powerful than ever and worse off than at any other time. Low fertility rates derive from slowed economic growth, a rising divorce rate, a lack of physical intimacy between spouses (partly due to overwork), the high cost of raising kids and the desire to provide a quality upbringing for lower numbers of children. Government efforts to boost the birth rate have been piecemeal and half-hearted. Japan could replace its lost workers with increased immigration, but there is too much resistance within government, business and society at large. The few embryonic programmes that have been tried—bringing in Japanese Brazilians to work in industry, training unskilled workers from developing countries, allowing more foreign students to work, recruiting nurses from the Philippines and Indonesia—have been hobbled from the start by limited scope and multifarious restrictions.

While Japan is falling apart internally, relations with neighbouring countries have markedly deteriorated. During the Cold War, Japan followed an essentially centrist foreign policy that was intended to give the country space to redevelop its economy. The end of the Cold War brought simmering debates between pacifists and nationalists to the surface, while the nationalists came to prominence within the ruling Liberal Democratic Party. Shinzo Abe has been the most assertively nationalist postwar prime minister, and seeks to re-evaluate Japan’s historical legacy and revise conciliatory statements of previous governments on issues surrounding the Second World War. Meanwhile, slow-burning territorial issues inflame relations with both South Korea and China.

One of the better recent overviews of the state of current Japan, the book could have been helped by a more thorough examination of the political and economic sclerosis that has afflicted the Land of the Rising Sun. Also, the very brief concluding chapter, which includes sketchy discussion of the implications of Abe’s economic policies—often called Abenomics—and the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, could have been greatly expanded. This book probably best serves those who want to gain a better understanding of Japan but are not Japan specialists.

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L’émergence des ONG en Chine: le changement du rôle de l’état-parti. By Paolo Urio and Yuan Ying. Berne: Peter Lang SA. 2014. 289pp. £59.00. ISBN 978 3 03431 583 8.

What could have, and should have, been an especially informative book on an extraordinarily topical subject—the emergence of NGOs in China and the changing role of the party state—suffers from the fatal flaw to which serious scholarship is prone, especially in the French-speaking tradition: it is *scolaire*, meaning that it is pedantic, didactic, theoretical, formal, unimaginative, scholastic. Consequently, *L’émergence des ONG en Chine* never really gets round to telling us who’s who and what’s what.

The first co-author, Paolo Uriò, is a retired academic and Asia specialist from the University of Geneva. The second, Yuan Ying, is his research assistant. The book opens with a narrative of their association, beginning with a collaboration in 2003–2004 when she was his student in Geneva, where she had been living since 1997. Coming across the concept of non-governmental organizations—more probably, in English, we would be inclined to say ‘civil society’ organizations, since virtually all in the scope of this book are domestic in nature—while doing her graduate thesis on a different subject, Yuan Ying decided to pursue her interest in NGOs by undertaking research, including in China, between 2004 and 2008. The book covers the period 1949 to 2009 and hence stands at least five years behind contemporary conditions on its subject-matter. The authors start by explaining that the emergence of NGOs in China begins with the 1978 reforms by Deng Xiaoping following the death of Mao Zedong two years earlier (p. 15). From there we are led on a point-less journey through the global development of NGOs since the Second World War, with throwbacks to Hobbes and Rousseau, and three ‘grand approaches’ to analysing NGOs, before rejoining Deng in 1978 44 pages later (p. 59). Whereupon we again go backwards to the beginnings of communist China in 1949, through the Cultural Revolution and a look at the tax system and funding for NGOs. At this point the reader is clamouring for specifics about the state of civil society organizations in China. Chapter four (pp. 111–62) covers the official statistics that display the growing number of Chinese NGOs from around 4,500 in 1988 to 387,000 in 2007. Tables and text provide the breakdown of these associations, private non-profits and foundations, including provincial statistics for the four municipalities of Beijing, Shanghai, Guangdong and Yunnan. Description follows description with estimates of Chinese researchers, different legal forms of Chinese NGOs and their varied ‘areas of activity’ as processed through the official statistics. Thirteen categories include everything from sport to culture to legal services. But we have yet to learn the names of the organizations, understand their purposes or know who their audiences are, much less gauge their impact.

Chapters five and six (pp. 163–200) cover the financing of these NGOs first by the Chinese government, then by international funding sources. Here, for virtually the first time, we begin to get names, facts and figures—non-Chinese ones—with the Ford Foundation, the World Bank, the Canadian International Development Agency and Oxfam Hong Kong receiving attention. We soon return to background, however, with a discussion of the motivations of foreign funders and their relationship with Chinese NGOs and the Chinese government, again more narrative than factual. Chapter seven provides more information than most of the rest of the book combined, by telling the story of the founders of various NGOs, by name. Even here, however, their tale is broken down into characteristics, from which the examples follow, rather than providing the examples and, from them, drawing conclusions about their characteristics.

The conclusion (pp. 235–61) basks in theory: ‘Contrary to the dominant opinion in the West, according to which the market economy and capitalism cover practically the same reality, and therefore can be used in discourse as synonyms, we think, as did Fernand Braudel, that it is appropriate to consider that capitalism is quite often the opposite of the market economy’ (p. 236). This sentence gives rise to footnote 438, which covers more than half of page 236. The conclusion begins to touch on issues which could nicely have been covered in the book: ‘In order to understand the attitude of China towards foreign NGOs in this context, one must examine the strategy of these NGOs at a worldwide level’ (p. 245). But again, detour, with, for example, an off-topic diatribe on p. 255 against Enrico Letta, Barack Obama and the proposed Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership treaty.

The book contains a useful bibliography, a couple of short factual annexes, and a two-page lexicon of organizations, focused mainly on Chinese Communist Party entities, but with a short list of eight organizations ‘instituted by the Party’ (p. 288), and a map. The book concludes: ‘We should be confident that the genius of China will find institutional solutions worthy of its history and its values’ (p. 261). And so we should, surely, even though we do not know much more than we did when we began reading.

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North America

What good is grand strategy? Power and purpose in American statecraft from Harry S. Truman to George W. Bush. By Hal Brands. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. 2014. Index. 273pp. £18.90. ISBN 978 0 80145 246 8. Available as e-book.

Hal Brands’s central question contained in the title is both apposite and timely. Barack Obama’s foreign policy was supposed to provide a corrective to the posture of ‘being grand’ that George W. Bush (p. 43) pursued to the detriment of US power and interests. Yet, despite Obama’s vision, many of his objectives have been confounded by internal bickering, inter-branch gridlock and a myriad of endlessly shifting conditions and conflicts throughout the wider Middle East. Obama is not a subject of this book, but the recent run of foreign policy illustrates the central dilemmas that Brands explores and, with a clarity of purpose, explains through the study of four administrations: Truman, Nixon, Reagan and Bush. ‘Reduced to its essence, grand strategy is the intellectual architecture that lends structure to foreign policy; it is the logic that helps states navigate a complex and dangerous world’, Brands writes (p. 43). Despite the confusions and ‘lost meanings’ of the word strategy, many authors frequently invoke presidential doctrines or national security strategies which are characterized by a more limited agenda associated with the identity of a particular administration or president; now a mandatory requirement of all presidents since 1986. Grand strategy, Brands suggests, requires a more distant yet clear understanding of the international environment; the country’s goals and interests within that eco-system; the threats it faces and the resources at its disposal to interact to protect and enhance those interests. Yet the environment, the external ‘kickback’, and the internal bureaucratic malaise frequently compromise presidential ‘grand strategy’. In 1971 Henry Kissinger infamously chastised the Democrats, his predecessors in the Vietnam War, for emphasizing too much the structure of their thoughts, and argued that it was better that they deal with the world on a more realistic basis. Brands’s work is dominated by the study of mostly Republican administrations: Nixon, Reagan and Bush. Yet the variety between their strategic vision and the departure from what is considered the bedrock in contemporary US foreign policy, the Truman strategy of ‘preponderance’ as Melvyn Leffler famously identified it (*A preponderance of power*, Stanford University Press, 1992), adds to the perplexing elements of trying to construct grand strategy.

Brands provides an exceptional and succinct introductory chapter through which he explores the meaning of grand strategy and the challenges that presidents face. The more focused chapters centring on the four administrations extend far beyond the discourse on national security strategies or presidential doctrines to engage with the strategic vision, or the ‘intellectual architecture’—the implementation and the outcomes. Above all, the story is one of both complexity and perplexity—that is the complexity of construction: the formation of the vision through a myriad of bureaucratic interests, compromises and

idiosyncrasies and the perplexity of what happens when the threads hit the ground. In that sense it is worth noting the different environment within which President Truman operated compared to the context of recovery in which both Nixon and Reagan worked. They made their strategies, to adapt the famous observation that people make their history, but not within circumstances of their choosing.

So the chapter on Truman explores the creation of the architecture of contemporary US foreign policy and that of the Cold War. Though the narrative is generally one of a farsighted administration that left the United States in a situation in which it could enjoy its various strengths, there were decisions too that brought some of that into question through the Korean War. In that sense, if Brands could have elaborated slightly more on the adjustments implemented by Eisenhower the book would have also benefited from the reading of transitions and the wont of presidents to make adjustments for various reasons of politics, personality, identity and interests. Nixon and Kissinger, of course, had the misfortune to preside over a period of significant adjustment as the meaning of the Cold War was lost. For Brands, Kissinger translated intellectually the instincts of Nixon, yet for all the strategic vision the external environment had changed significantly, the preponderance of power had moved on, the US was mired in war, its fiscal policies were about to irreparably rupture a hitherto taken-for-granted stability, the challenges from the Third World would multiply, and the strategic openings with China and the Soviet Union would deeply question the purpose and identity of the US strategic architecture. Despite the vision, which many, including Reagan, found difficult to accept, the environment outpaced the protagonists.

Brands is generous to Reagan. He acknowledges the 'intense dispute' within the historiography, but ultimately concludes that there was a 'Reagan grand strategy—a comprehensive, long-term vision for U.S. policy toward Moscow' (p. 103). Though the dispute centres on the question of US agency and intention in bringing the Cold War to an end, and despite the extended consideration of the Reagan strategy, there remains some doubt as to whether the Reagan administration sought to transcend the Soviet Union or to find accommodation with it, albeit on US terms. Moreover, the agency of Gorbachev and a myriad of other forces also need further integration. Brands does suggest that 'in retrospect Gorbachev deserves enormous credit' (p. 127), yet my reading of the historiography would suggest that initially Gorbachev was accredited with the initiatives until the Reagan and Cold War 'triumphalists' injected the turn in the 1990s and beyond. If Reagan had two central strategies of, first, an intensified military race and, second, the Third World competition, Brands perhaps ascribes too much to the Soviets and 'Kremlin clients' as part of this competition. Treating the insurgency in El Salvador and the revolution in Nicaragua within this frame might only be appropriate so long as the vision of these conflicts is focused on through a Cold War prism. Despite the successes in Afghanistan, Brands does engage well with the unintended consequences. The importance of the intellectual architecture is incredibly apposite in Brands's treatment of Bush the younger. Brands's focus on the importance of Reagan's legacy for Bush provides for an engaging study on how the vision and its self-assurance strategically miscalculated and misperceived both the external environment and the efficacy of implementation as the US was soon mired in both Afghanistan and Iraq. Simply put, 'the president and his advisers overestimated how much American power could achieve, and they underestimated the costs, risks, and uncertainties that inhered in their endeavors' (p. 145). Their strategy, for Brands, was simply too grand. More on the human and economic costs of these wars might have further demonstrated the folly of the strategic vision.

For policy-makers the book concludes with ten considerations for making grand strategy. They rest on a well-constructed set of historical cases and a fluent and lucid reading of the presidencies.

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Maximalist: America in the world from Truman to Obama. By Stephen Sestanovich. New York: Knopf. 2014. 416pp. Index. Pb.: £12.00. ISBN 978 0 30726 817 4.

Stephen Sestanovich kicks off his impressive survey of American foreign policy since the end of the Second World War by stating that it 'is the history of what presidents and their advisers do once they conclude that others, at home and abroad, are not likely to help them very much' (p. 5). Sestanovich proceeds to make his case by guiding the reader through the twists and turns of how the twelve presidents of the last seven decades have sought to address fundamental security threats through the pursuit of the biggest, usually unilateral, solutions—or else how they had to scale back these policies when things did not turn out as planned.

The central premise of the book is that the opposing strategies of maximalism and retrenchment have taken turns in shaping US actions in the world, a cycle that has played out three times so far. First, the 'present at the creation' activism of the early Cold War eventually had to be followed by Dwight Eisenhower's attempt to walk America back from some of its global commitments. A second phase of high-octane ambition started by John F. Kennedy died in Vietnam and gave way to Nixonian detente in the 1970s. Ronald Reagan's zeal to win the Cold War then opened a third maximalist phase that lasted until Barack Obama. Time and again, Sestanovich argues, maximalists came to the conclusion that major crises could only be solved—and worse ones avoided—through the all-out application of American power, unencumbered by deference to either allies or clients abroad. They did so spurred by what they saw as the failure of their predecessors' half-hearted policies. And in similar fashion, as the wheel turned, retrenchers came to the fore on the promise of fixing the failures and cutting the costs of maximalist overcommitment. The author provides a brisk and highly readable account of how this dynamic played out across—and, just as importantly, within—successive administrations. While sticking to his central theme, he also avoids falling into the trap of simplistic labelling of presidencies, and perhaps the most interesting sections of *Maximalist* concern those administrations and presidents that were particularly torn over the choice between the two strategies. In that regard, the treatment of Lyndon Johnson is particularly captivating.

Sestanovich's dichotomy obviously challenges those who see broad continuity in US strategy over the long term. As he writes: 'the history of American foreign policy ... is not one of dogged continuity but of regular, repeated, and successful efforts to change course' (p. 5). For him, furthermore, the discontinuity embodied in the cyclical movement between maximalism and retrenchment has in fact led to some of America's great foreign policy successes. To whatever extent one agrees with this, though, it is also possible to conceive of the two approaches as mutually corrective sides of a continuous strategy that can be described as hegemonic, and as evidence of the difficulty for the US in knowing how best to pursue this—although of course, here much depends on the contentious question of what is strategy. For the US, the challenge seems to be above all to strike the right balance between the two positions. As the author concludes, the recurring dilemma is how to enjoy the rewards of maximalism without going too far (p. 335).

Perhaps fittingly for a former senior diplomat, Sestanovich emphasizes policy-makers and their choices, and he certainly makes a convincing case for their importance. Yet, in a

book concerned with American power, there could also have been more consideration of how these choices and their consequences were shaped by the international power factors in different situations. And if maximalism requires the pre-eminence of US power—and may even result from it—so in future this option might be less available to American leaders. From this perspective, the impact of the changing international environment can perhaps already be seen in the limited success of either Bush's maximalism or Obama's retrenchment in solving comprehensively the security threats they meant to address. A related consideration is that other countries may be increasingly unwilling to follow or, more accurately perhaps, able to resist American recipes for international order. As Sestanovich makes very clear, since the beginning of the Cold War 'that others needed help in solving—or even understanding—their own problems was virtually the founding insight of American globalism' (pp. 333–4). Leaving aside the debates over the indispensability of American power for solving international problems, the question of what others might consider a desirable order is going to be of growing importance for the United States in any future maximalist phase—something that the author does not rule out.

Even a brief discussion of how Sestanovich's strategic dichotomy fits, if it does, in the longer history of US foreign policy would have been a welcome addition to the book. It may be that the maximalism–retrenchment cycle is entirely the product of the United States emerging from the Second World War as a global superpower, but even so it is reasonable to assume that its leaders had to draw on historical legacies and intellectual traditions in order to design strategies for this unprecedented situation. This does not detract, though, from the merits of the book. In a work of this scope, no doubt readers could always find particular points on individual presidents about which to disagree. But the usefulness of a framing device such as the one offered here is not necessarily in enabling definitive judgements on each presidency; it is rather in giving seasoned observer and novice alike a different and thought-provoking way of looking at a familiar story. In this *Maximalist* succeeds admirably.

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Latin America and Caribbean

Rivalry and alliance politics in Cold War Latin America. By Christopher Darnton. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press. 2014. 304pp. Index. Pb.: £29.00. ISBN 978 1 42141 361 7. Available as e-book.

Beyond the eagle's shadow: new histories of Latin America's Cold War. Edited by Virginia Garrard-Burnett, Mark Atwood Lawrence and Julio E. Moreno. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press. 2013. 352pp. Index. £34.00. ISBN 978 0 82635 368 9.

The two books under review reflect the extent to which the study of Latin America's role in the Cold War has moved away from an earlier paradigm that viewed regional developments and outcomes as predominantly a function of US policy preferences and initiatives in a clearly defined East–West struggle which supposedly enmeshed the region at almost every level.

Political scientist Christopher Darnton's self-assured, vigorously argued, thought-provoking, intellectually demanding, hypothesis-driven work is easily the more ambitious of the two volumes: it attempts to make a novel theoretical, empirically supported

contribution to the study of the persistence, and occasional termination, of historical interstate rivalries that ultimately seeks to expand its thesis beyond the chronological and geographical confines of Cold War Latin America. He finds the explanatory power of the theories currently propounded in the International Relations literature under the realist, liberal and constructivist umbrella to be inadequate in accounting for the achievement of bilateral *rapprochement* between erstwhile foes at specific junctures. He develops a 'parochial interest' theory to explain why state agencies—mainly the armed forces, but also foreign ministries—in certain circumstances block *rapprochement* initiatives pursued by national executives in an environment of common external threat—international communism or, later, Islamist terrorism—that is usually considered to be the anvil on which alliances are forged; as well as how these vested interests are overcome in situations of resource constraint and when the said state agencies are simultaneously presented with an alternative mission to 'rivalry maintenance'. This parochial interest theory, he argues, best explains the success of the 1980 presidential summit between Argentina and Brazil after three conspicuous failures in 1947, 1961 and 1972; the purported end to Honduran–Nicaraguan 'rivalry' in 1961 following acceptance by one side of an arbitral award; and Argentine–Chilean *rapprochement* in 1984 just a few years after being on the brink of war. The failure to achieve *rapprochement* in the cited instances—between Bolivia and Chile, El Salvador and Honduras, Algeria and Morocco—is attributed to the absence of the requisite constellation of factors that are present at the right moment in the primary case-studies. In this dynamic, the role of the United States is found to be much more peripheral than is commonly presumed.

Space constraints permit only a couple of general observations about Darnton's somewhat Procrustean thesis. First, by labelling them as 'rivalries', he treats interstate disputes as being more or less on a par. There is a huge difference between, say, the Argentine–Chilean rivalry that has historically played out in the realm of balance of power politics and the narrow territorial dispute between Bolivia and Chile or the fractious relationships among the mini-states of Central America with their interwoven politics. The prospects for *rapprochement* in each case are dependent surely on a more diverse mix of variables than the ones he proposes. In this regard, it is telling that the author has chosen not to analyse the momentous 1998 settlement between Ecuador and Peru, in which external actors played such an important role. Second, the consolidation and deepening of *rapprochement*—from 1986 onwards in the case of Argentina and Brazil and in the 1990s between Argentina and Chile, in which the democratic peace argument is more pertinent, as recent works by Gian Luca Gardini and Kristina Mani have shown—are equally important ingredients that are not adequately addressed. It takes more than one successful summit meeting to secure a lasting *rapprochement*.

The Garrard-Burnett et al. book, an outstanding collection of well-researched, lucidly written essays by doctoral students and a leavening of more established scholars, is illustrative of the diversity of topics that are now being advanced under the rubric of Cold War studies. The intent is to gauge the relative balance of US and Latin American agency in shaping the hemispheric Cold War, to ascertain how non-governmental actors experienced this period and to assess the meaningfulness of the simple left–right dichotomy found in the traditional historiography. Only two of the contributors actually break entirely new ground: Renata Keller on the little-known Latin American Peace Conference in Mexico City in 1961 and Jennifer Hoyt on a contested urban renewal project in Buenos Aires during the 1976–83 dictatorship (not really a Cold War story at all, as Alan McPherson points out in his luminous afterword). Most of the contributions, employing sources only made available in recent years, amplify and modify existing work on their given subjects: for example,

Julio Moreno complements Deborah Levenson-Estrada's 1994 book-length study of the struggle for trade union rights at Coca-Cola's bottling plant in Guatemala (*Trade unionists against terror*, University of North Carolina Press), by using company records in Atlanta to show that the franchisor was limited in its ability to intervene, contrary to standard perceptions of the activities of US corporations in Latin America, though the company's decentralized business model hardly makes it representative; Jonathan Brown builds on Don Bohning's 2005 book on US covert operations against Cuba in the early 1960s (*The Castro obsession*, Potomac Books) by highlighting the proactive role of Cuban exiles; James Jenkins illuminates the part played by North American Indian activists in the already well-studied Miskitu struggle for autonomy within revolutionary Nicaragua in the 1980s; and Cheasty Anderson adds an important Nicaraguan dimension to the burgeoning literature on Cuban medical internationalism that offers a more realistic and objective view than that provided by some other writers. The geographical scope of the contributions is weighted in favour of the circum-Caribbean, with four chapters dealing, in part or as a whole, with Cuba, three with Guatemala and two with Nicaragua; as in all such collective offerings, the end-product is the sum of individual research interests.

Philip Chrimes

Política externa brasileira durante o regime militar 1964–1985. Edited by André L. Reis da Silva and Eduardo Svartman. Curitiba: Juruá. 2014. 210pp. Pb.: R\$64.70. ISBN 978 8 53624 878 3.

In 2014, Brazil commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of 31 March 1964, the day General Mourão's troops marched over Rio de Janeiro and ousted President João Goulart. The academic literature on the military period which followed is extensive, covering both domestic and foreign policy-making under the regime. Why should scholars, then, pay attention to another work on the military regime's foreign policy? André L. Reis da Silva and Eduardo Svartman's edited collection is the first book to take a long-range view of the five military governments that ruled Brazil from 1964 to 1985, providing a unique perspective on their attempts to position Brazil on the world stage.

Exactly 50 years ago, the rise of authoritarian government in Brazil represented significant economic, political and cultural change in a country that had no experience of real democracy. Merely eleven years had passed between the end of Getúlio Vargas's *Estado Novo* regime and the military coup of 1964—not enough time to consolidate democratic institutions. Confidential files and archives from the period have now been opened to the public and a growing body of research on topics such as political repression, dual political systems and democratization in the 1980s is providing more insight into previously understudied aspects of Brazilian international affairs, complemented by the reports of the National Truth Commission and more. Silva and Svartman's originality lies in the way they focus on both continuity and change in the foreign policies of the five governments studied. The authors use a variety of research methods to study these policies, primarily descriptive historical analysis but also political economy methods and process tracing, relying both on primary sources and official documents. The five chapters cover the period from 1964 to 1985 in chronological order, with one chapter dedicated to the Castello Branco, Costa e Silva, Médici, Geisel and the Figueiredo governments respectively. They each try to answer the same question: 'how did the military government in office attempt to improve Brazil's position in the world, taking into account systemic constraints?'; this helps to provide a unifying framework for the book.

Book reviews

In chapter one, André Silva looks at foreign policy-making under the Castello Branco government, identifying three key themes: the internalization of Cold War discourse to strengthen the legitimacy of the new regime; the reinforcement of the hemispherical collective security ideas against the communist threat and the use of developmentalism as the economic path to promote autonomy. Chapter two, by Rodrigo Martins, focuses on the shortest, but most brutal, years of Brazil's authoritarian experience under Costa e Silva. Martins argues that Brazilian foreign policy began to be governed by the *política externa independente* [independent foreign policy] strategy, giving it depth and promoting effective multilateralism, despite the ideological barriers at play. Cintia Vieira Souto looks at Médici's foreign policy, one of the less-studied periods. The main topic of chapter three is the *diplomacy of national interest* which, as the author argues, was the solution to promoting the politico-economic interests of a conservative but modernizing government. It is at this time that the government launched its 'Great Power Project', leading to accusations of Brazilian subimperialism in Latin America. Chapter four covers foreign policy-making under Geisel, and as Tomaz Espósito Neto points out, this is a topic which has already been studied in detail by both Brazilian and international scholars. The *pragmatismo responsável* [responsible pragmatism] of this period was the most powerful innovation in Brazilian foreign-policy thinking in years, representing a pivot towards the US, East Germany and, at the same time, communist liberation movements in Africa. Brazil carved out an independent path in international affairs, although there is no doubt that developments on the world stage, such as the oil shocks of 1973 and the politics of Cold War deterrence, favoured this shift.

Internal and external developments at the end of the 1970s weakened the military and allowed for a 'slow, gradual and safe' return to democracy. Svartman ends the book by looking at the Figueiredo government, which paved the way for eventual democratic transition in 1985, and its policies of *universalism* in foreign affairs. As Svartman concludes, the foreign policy legacy of the military regime is complex and hard to evaluate; on the one hand Brazil, in the course of forty years, became industrialized, more urban and broadened its engagement with foreign states, on the other, its relationship with the United States deteriorated significantly. Nonetheless, the contributors to this edited collection should be congratulated for their valuable addition to the study of the history of Brazilian foreign policy.

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