

## **BOOK REVIEWS**



# In the search for theoretical approaches to studying attitudes toward antipoverty policy in Passarinho

Ansell, Aaron. 2014. *Zero Hunger: Political Culture and Antipoverty Policy in Northeast Brazil*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press. xiii + 239 pp. Pb.: \$32.95. ISBN: 9781469613970.

## Abstract

This review article concentrates on theoretical and methodological assumptions of Aaron Ansell's book on antipoverty policy in Passarinho. The main goals are to reveal significant values and vices of his analysis and to suggest how to improve such research. Therefore, the use of meaningful categories in the study is discussed on two planes. The first consists of an evaluation of their application correctness extent. Importantly, these premises must be examined because the quality of research results is determined by them. It would allow judging how high the degree of the results reliability is. The second focuses on considering how to use the Marxist perspective to eliminate the research flaws while simultaneously enhancing its scientific value. The need for the second plane is a result of the theoretical poverty of the study. The critical remarks formulated may be useful at projecting future research on political culture in Brazil.

**KEYWORDS:** food security, poverty, government policy, economic assistance, Brazil, domestic politics, social conditions

The subject of Aaron Ansell's book is adoption of the first flagship social policy in municipality Passarinho (in Piauí State in Northeast Brazil), the Zero Hunger Programme (*Programa Fome Zero*) by Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of Brazil's Workers' Party (*Partido dos Trabalhadores* (PT)) after his inauguration as the president on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2003. The programme was meaningful for this society because it encompassed cash grants, dietary policies, and development projects that activated governmental and non-governmental political subjects in acting against extreme local poverty. At first, the initiative was received enthusiastically on both the domestic and international levels. Nonetheless, the failure of the programme was revealed quickly, and it became a cause of the policy rebranding into the Family Stipend Programme (*Bolsa Família*). Simultaneously, the political subjects worked to confound the showed hierarchical exchange relationships (pp. 3–4). The problems indicate were both the political context of the study and its subject of interviewed people stances.

The author lived for two years in Passarinho and, in this time, he gathered data, i.e. records of talks with natives on the issues mentioned. Although this material interpreted by Ansell provides a reader with a detailed qualitative study, the interpretation and manner of its construction are worth discussing; some reservations can be formulated.

Importantly, theoretical and methodological assumptions, which constitute the base of every well-conducted analysis, are the main flaw of the book. Admittedly, the author claims that he conducted an ethnographic study of the encounters between politicians and subsistence cultivators (p. 3). He also states that the book offers a study of the Brazilian state's effort to eradicate the hierarchical exchanges in order to provide citizens with social justice and democracy (p. 3). Indeed, Ansell fails to formulate and to apply to his study fundamental methodological premises which have to precede every analysis. At a minimum, the following should be presented: research field and its well-justified temporal, territorial, and subject boundaries; the criteria of the sources selection; a research sample; research problems and hypotheses; methods, techniques, and analytical tools. Otherwise, the volume is the description of the author's stay in Brazil, focused on talks with natives about social and political issues. The value and reliability of the results achieved in this way are low because they are unrepeatable and unverifiable rather than intersubjective.

It is worth noting that Ansell abandons the formulation of methodological reservations in his research, i.e. he fails to indicate the potential impact of, for instance, the interviewer error, interview bias, observer error on the analysis results. The very argumentation is often characterised by an anecdotal approach, which reduces its value (Bryman 1988: 77). This mistake consists of presenting quotations from interviews as evidence for general statements (pp. 144–45). It must be noted that individual opinions may be extreme and unrepresentative for the population analysed (e.g. p. 74). Moreover, they merely show one respondent's properties rather than explore dominant ways of thinking in Passarinho (e.g. p. 192). Therefore, it is incorrect to claim without methodologically proper justification that one opinion is typical for the whole population. Furthermore, the author's narrative comprises a large amount of colloquialisms, e.g., 'booze' (p. 62), and idioms which sometimes may carry more than one meaning, e.g., 'some administrative reshuffling' (p. 3). It is confusing for a reader because it makes semantic fields of categories undetermined. This negligence has various forms. For instance, the author refers to 'psychology conceptual grid' and uses terms such as 'fixation' (p. 17), but these references are often unjustified because they are not linked with theories from which they derive. However, regardless of the type of negligence form, they leave too much interpretative freedom to a reader and, hence, it may be a source of the misinterpretation of research results.

Theoretical also assumptions demand reconsideration. First and foremost, it would be useful to consider the data gathered in the light of a paradigm appropriate to the explanation of the results (Bendassolli 2014: 164). Arguably Marxism offers a categorial grid and explanatory framework that may be applied to improve the analysis by offering tools for the explication and comprehension of the captured changes (Gorman 1981: 404; Gouldner 1974: 17). Substantially, the configuration of basic categories, from the classical Marxist perspective, such as class struggle, class relations, a societal conflict or emancipatory political subject, with analytical categories appropriate to the study, is discussed in the article while considering consecutive chapters. Yet, noticeably, these theoretical proposals are not the only ones, which means that various interpretations of Marxism may provide a potential researcher with an explanatory framework abounding with sophisticated categories.

It is noteworthy that the book consists of seven chapters, and each of them sheds light on different facets of political reality that were the author's concern. The individual chapters demand separate elaborations because they relate to disparate theoretical categories. *Chapter One* locates Lula's election and the Zero Hunger Programme within Brazil's history of democracy, the particular history and social structure of Passarinho, as well as the author's reflection on his own role among the municipality inhabitants. Historical data are described properly on a factual level. However, unfortunately, their interpretation passes over any explanation of how structures facilitate and hinder existence, which may be filled in by the Marxist explanatory framework. It would be useful to use, for example, an anti-reductionist Analytical Marxism approach to study structural constraints (Veneziani 2012: 649). Indeed, structures cease to be acknowledged as determinants but potential change factors.

Nonetheless, the last of the above-listed perspective, concerning the author's self-identification, does not increase the explanatory power of the research because of its incorrect use. Sometimes, it occurs as a justification of an incomplete description of issues. For instance, the author gives a fragmentary account of events that happened on the morning of October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2002, after the announcements of the election results, and then states: 'I'm not exactly sure how it all looked. I couldn't be with them [people on the streets of Rio de Janeiro – J. R.] that morning because my mother had called two nights before to summon me home to my father's bedside in Los Angeles' (p. 19). Moreover, digressions, e.g. relating the author's father's death, his studies or graduation (p. 46), occur in the disquisition, which is distracting for a reader and blur the research subject.

Ansell presents the programme as an experiment in 'left-wing neoliberalism', a manifestation of the PT's attempts to win an election, and as a policy of national food security. Nevertheless, it would be desirable to extend the adopted categorial grid to improve the cognitive value of the study. The author observes scientific struggles with hunger typologisation, and he aptly criticises these as constructed on the basis of a caloric minimum below which life and activity may be jeopardised (p. 45). Instead, he proposes a distinction between chronic and acute food deprivation. Suffering from acute deprivation consists of insufficient ingestion of calories to function actively throughout the day. Whereas, suffering from chronic deprivation consists of eating enough food to function for days, but the diet lacks basic nutrients to provide a person with sound health and development (p. 45). Indeed, one more category would be useful there if the goal of the chapter would be to gather data significant to political culture measurement, i.e. attitudes toward food security (Sage 2014: 195). Ansell mentions 'food insecurity' (p. 45) but passes over ways of measuring the attitudes (Quandt et al. 2001: 356–376).

These issues are significant as the subject of stances, but their depiction is not a study of political culture. In fact, poverty and hunger are merely variables that may be used in political culture analysis (Wiarda 1989: 148). Despite placing the notion of political culture in the book title, the author abandoned proposing or adopting its definition and then operationalisation. Acknowledgment of this notion as an 'umbrella concept' (Formisano 2001: 394) or 'catch-all term' (Dittmer 1977: 552) causes unscientific and methodologically incorrect comprehension as the subject of research and the research

fields are undetermined (Jackman & Miller 1996: 697). Furthermore, he avoids relating to classical works on political culture, such as that by Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba (1963), who have initiated research on pure types of political culture, and the most important works to his study, such as that by Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel (2003).

One more point of neglect is worth stressing, i.e. the lack of depiction of the literature on political culture in Brazil (e.g. da Silva Lopes 2014; López 2013; de Albuquerque 2005; Baiocchi 2006; de Castro & Valladão De Carvalho 2003; McDonough, Shin & Moisés 1998; Moisés 1993). It would be valuable to discuss current studies on this issue to capture the societal change, noticed but unexplored by Ansell, in attitudes toward components of political reality (Sheafer & Shenhav 2013: 234; Baker, Ames & Renno 2006: 383). He also fails to present this phenomenon from such obvious Marxist perspective. Nevertheless, the critical examination of works, written on various theoretical backgrounds on this problem, would allow the author to avoid at least the most frequently made mistakes, such as attitudes toward intuitive descriptions of political values (Jin 2015: 29). Furthermore, the systematic comparison of political culture would allow determining the essence of social change in Karl Marx's meaning (Zimmerman 1995: 631). These arguments indicate that the book fails to contribute importantly to studies on political culture, but it may be inspirational for researchers who want to concentrate their future analyses on political culture in Brazil.

In fact, political culture theory concentrates on political attitudes, beliefs, values, and emotions, which may be measured to explain political, structural, and behavioural phenomena such as national cohesion, strategies of dealing with political conflicts, the degree and character of participation in politics, types of political cleavages, relations between representatives and the represented (Almond 1983: 127). Its mediating role between state, market, and society (Somers 1995: 116), discerned by Ansell, is revealed in the disquisition but any examination is omitted.

*Chapters Two and Three* centre on the relationships between impoverished Passarinho's villagers as well as vertical connections between village families and their municipal patrons. In *Chapter Two*, Ansell plausibly presents horizontal relationships among cultivator households, and he takes his primary interest in their hunger, envy, shared labour as well as egalitarianism. Importantly, he states that the dominant classes of villagers are concerned, while they establish egalitarian labour relations within their population because it relates to their notions about the body and its forces that are perceived as uncontrollable. In fact, these exchanges may be perched; however, they are not indicators of class solidarity (p. 55). The chapter sheds light on interhouse sociality and reveals the ways in which sociability in Passarinho is maintained by rural people via the practices of 'respectful distance', which have a ritual role of managing the permanently hungry neighbours' evil spiritual power. Although the author characterises habits relating to food practices, such as food sharing or food giving (p. 62), and their impact on shaping social relations, he neglects to explore a trajectory of symbolic struggles. These may be examined from a Marxist perspective as domination indicators (Brenkman 1983: 22). Admittedly, the accounts presented provide a reader with a view on

the visibility of hunger in Passarinho but they do not explain its co-relation with political culture. Application of additional theoretical assumptions would enable eliminating this shortage. In fact, the accounts show villagers concentration on attempts to meet their basic vegetative needs. Then, they reveal the core of significant types of political attitudes characteristic of parochial political culture in Almond and Verba's meaning (1963: 19). However, a comprehensive analysis would determine its extent among the municipality inhabitants as well as a type of its configuration with other types of political culture.

*Chapter Three* shows vertical exchanges. It offers well-interpreted empirical data (p. 78) but passes over a critical discussion of rich specialist, in particular anthropological, literature on the exchange. Indeed, Ansell is aware of this shortage as he excuses himself in the endnote: 'Here I omit discussion of the issue of the interval between gift and countergift and the practice of strategic delay that has been of great concern of anthropologists [...]. These issues are less critical to local distinctions between moral and immoral exchanges for reasons I cannot discuss here' (p. 206). The argumentation is unfinished and does not justify such an omission. These categories applied as analytical tools would enable locating this specific type of exchange in the array of social exchanges (Nugent 2007: 421); therefore, it would be important to determine its distinctive features. In fact, those features are crucial to formulating diagnoses and prognoses concerning their role in political reality. Nonetheless, Ansell puts forward and applies to the analysis a significant dualistic typology of temporal dimensions of gift-giving acts. On the one hand, he perfectly distinguishes the duration of the social relationship that a specific gift presupposes. On the other, he aptly indicates the duration of the activity that a gift sponsors (p. 79). This clear distinction is useful for the analysis of exchange relationships because it allows identifying intersubjectively their distinctive features.

Furthermore, the author sheds light on egalitarian relations between village families, which enable poor people to establish long-term intimate hierarchical connections with political élites. They are collated with short-term exchanges, e.g. vote-buying (p. 69), which abandoned villagers are resigned to having with politicians. In general, the disquisition precisely reveals the structural inequality that determines political exchange and creates convenient conditions of the political arrangements that originate from these inequalities. It would be useful to explain the cores of stability of this structural inequality and shed light on exchange sources, i.e. class struggle specific to the context type (Ollman 1968: 573) and class consciousness (Glberman 1996: 233). Deep-rooted class relations within a society produce particular forms of class consciousness, and this is worth exploring in this case. In fact, the mode of cooperation in Karl Marx's meaning, as the theoretical category, would enable the determination of distinctive features of the organisation of both people necessities reproduction and their social relations (Barker 2013: 44).

Nonetheless, it is significant that the author properly and convincingly determines both types of hungry people (p. 61) and the extents of political subjectivity as well as aptly sets the requirements of entering intimate relationships with politicians, which have to be met with villagers. Indeed, it would also be a valuable improvement of this chapter to extend it by determining emancipatory attempts by political subjects, which are a

central concept in Marxism (File & Ram 2014: 295–313). Employment of this theoretical category may be useful for identifying existing types of dependence and perspectives on liberation from them. Substantially, the author plausibly states that only those people who direct their strength (*força*) to work for their patron's interests have means to maintain honourable decorum, appropriately self-contained, self-directed, not drunks, not tricksters, able to hide their envy or hunger (p. 77). Although the extents of theoretically captured political subjectivity allow distinguishing various types of such subjectivity on a specific empirical plane, they do not explain possibilities of their alternation (Panayotakis 2004: 123), the relationships of domination and servitude (Ashcraft 1984: 640) which may be explored and explained from a Marxist perspective in an inspiring way. Moreover, the author neglects to show relations between various types of interests, for instance, the relationship between common interest in Karl Marx's meaning, which always is associated with class interest, and patron's as well as villagers' interests (Sabia, Jr. 1988: 52; Wallerstein 1986: 1298).

Ansell thoroughly presents the officials' attitudes toward the Lula government which engage them, toward the programme's rural beneficiaries, and toward their own participation in urban social movements. He claims that liberation theology and secular urban movements developed their predilection to perceive the rural world to be a place of patronage-based social domination. Then, the following three chapters show the techniques that officials used to redirect the beneficiaries' sentimental and practical affections to patronage relations. The first one presents a technique called 'induced nostalgia', which concerns practices used by state officials to link romantic notions of collective labour to idealized visions of the rural past when depicting vertical intimacies as a fall from a golden age. The realisation of the technique is meticulously portrayed in the context of a community-driven development project which was co-related with the management of livestock and romantic models of traditional labour promoted by officials. Accordingly, it reveals a high extent of diversification between villagers' vision of their past and the state officials' narrative.

In addition, the author claims that he strives to complement a scholarly inclination to explore how development aspirations are regimented by an orderly plane of statements, namely, knowledge categories, forms of expertise, modes of diagnosis which population internalise, by underlying the state officials' narratives of nostalgia, redemption, and personal renewal (p. 93). Formulating this goal is worth approval, but it must be preceded with a reflection on a solid typology of narratives. These three types fail to fulfil all types of state officials' narratives possible-to-logic demarcation. For instance, there is a shortage in the proposed typology of the antinomic ideal types in Max Weber's meaning. In this way, they fail to share among them the theoretical category of the state officials' narrative of the whole semantic field, which means that some meaningful expressions of political attitudes may remain outside the research field. Moreover, it may bring about a loss of potentially significant data. Employing typologies to the analyses as an analytical tool should be made with due care, which is lacking in this case, and perfect knowledge of the research subject, which Ansell has. Therefore, this inspiring and potentially useful typology is worth improving rather than rejecting.



*Chapter Six* scrupulously describes an Afro-Brazilian development project, which is a part of the Zero Hunger Programme. The main goal of this project is to organise and facilitate people who are acknowledged as the descendants of runaway slaves (*quilombolas*), i.e. dark-skinned villagers, on the basis of their shared racial subordination (p. 144). Ansell characterises a subsequent technique while claiming that state officials changed training-session outings into “pragmatic pilgrimages”. In his opinion, they strived to re-socialise community leaders toward a black (*negro*) identity and inspire them to manifest outrage at figures of authority. As he states, the strategic usage of pilgrimage as a social engineering technique was based on the state officials’ experiences of solidarity-enhancing travel from the capital city to the backcountries. They were accompanied by Catholic folk practices throughout the area in which people historically involved in pilgrimage and other kinds of millenarian movements while they believed their patrons had become bankrupt on the moral or spiritual plane (p. 139). This depiction is appropriate on a factual level but merely to a low extent explains the specificity of these social relations. It lacks an explanatory framework which may be adopted from Marxism. Significantly, Marxism assumes that the social world is a permanent making and unmaking of social structures of human needs and capacities (Nilsen & Cox 2013: 64). The structures are formed through the conflictual struggle between social movements from below and social movements from above (Nilsen & Cox 2013: 64–65), and they are subject to change in this way (Young 1999: 268).

On account of the social movements’ significance discerned in explanation of the political subjects’ activities, it would be useful to extend an explanatory framework of the study by their theory (Reiter 2011: 153). In the scope of the proposed paradigm, i.e. Marxism, studies of specific movements exist, but it lacks a comprehensive theory of movements that would explain the emergence, character, and development of social movements (Barker *et al.* 2013: 1–2). Its formulation is a demanding challenge for scholars, and arguably such a theory would increase the value of the study (Khasnabish & Haiven 2012: 409). It would also be interesting to formulate some research questions that arise from a Marxist perspective. For instance, what potentials are there for various types of movements from below to learn and achieve strength from each other? (Barker *et al.* 2013: 3); how can the movements from above strive to expand the social power of ruling élites? (Barker *et al.* 2013: 3); how do ruling élites create and maintain power relations? In fact, the author does not put forward the research questions; therefore, questions proposed reveal variables which must be set, and then they would provide a future researcher with the array of theoretical tools which may be intersubjectively applied. For example, it would be valuable to extend theoretical assumptions on the category of revitalisation movements, which constitutes an analytical tool, because it encompasses not only various types of millenarian movements (p. 139) but food security movements (pp. 28–31; 35; 168) and *quilombo* movements (p. 145) as well. The typology of revitalisation movements constructed on the basis of well-selected criteria is a functional tool for analysing political attitudes toward diversified phenomena (p. 187) (Rak 2015: 122) and for obtaining answers to the research questions in a scientific way.

The last chapter explores municipal political tensions concerning Zero Hunger’s cash grant policy, Food Card (*Cartão Alimentação*), and its modification into the Family

Stipend Programme. Ansell aptly discusses the final technique for dismantling patronage (p. 163), and he maintains that state officials, in conceiving the grant's beneficiary selection process, passed over the mayor's office and humiliated his person by way of public spectacles. Indeed, it would be desirable to explain these tensions using the category of class dominance extents (Nielsen 1993: 1). Substantially, humiliation consisted in treating him as a symbol of patronage exploitation (pp. 163–64). He considers the consequences of the mayor's depreciation for local participation in the Zero Hunger Management Committee (*Comitê Gestor*) established to select the programme beneficiaries. In contrast, he discusses its impact on Passarinho municipal elections in which PT participated. Ansell accurately assesses that these three techniques 'induced nostalgia', 'programmatic pilgrimage', and 'marginalising the mayor' manifested the tensions between the beneficiaries' ideas of political participation and those of the progressive state officials (p. 8).

It is worth noting that state officials' attitudes should to be measured rather than merely depicted (p. 186). The author assumes that attitudes toward, e.g. intimate hierarchy, have different vectors and intensity, while he notices that they occurred in the extreme form of sacralisation (p. 187). It would be worthwhile to employ an analytical tool to study the data gathered. For instance, there may be applied the typology which is made up of two antinomic ideal types, in Max Weber's meaning, of demonisation and sacralisation. Every identified exemplification may be placed between these extremes, in specific distances to each other depending on the extent of a subject of attitude devaluation or revaluation. It would allow determining and comparing dominant types of attitudes in the examined population.

To conclude, the volume may be acknowledged as an important contribution to Latin American political studies as it shows characteristics of the political consciousness of Passarinho inhabitants. In fact, it offers the solid presentation of Zero Hunger's failures and successes in the change of local exchange practices. Importantly, the work sheds light on social change and accurately reveals villagers' attitudes toward political reality. It contains well-interpreted nuances of the empirical data gathered, even if they avoid being comprehensive; and this is the greatest value of the analysis. Nevertheless, the drawbacks depicted and discussed mean that the book must be read particularly critically and charily. However, eventually, Ansell points out issues concerning the political culture in Brazil which are still unexplored, and, therefore, must be studied by using various paradigms, methods, techniques, and devices. Furthermore, the tools proposed may be successfully modified according to the needs of future analyses. Significantly, this is an inspirational quality of the study.

Indeed, this review article provides a researcher with hints relating to that theoretical and methodological assumptions of such studies, and it suggests Marxist theoretical perspective to capture, explore, and explain the most meaningful facets of the empirical reality examined. It is important to remember that the proposed premises are not only possible. Hence, it would be valuable as well to seek new theoretical approaches which can improve the research results.

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**Callison, Candis. 2014. *How Climate Change Comes to Matter: The Communal Life of Facts (Experimental Futures Series)*. Durham, London: Duke University Press. xi + 316 pp. Pb.: \$24.95. ISBN: 9780822357872.**

Climate change is a topic that evokes everything but indifference. Its global and immediate implications have implanted it into a critical discursive arena. The author of this book examines it as a “form of life” in a sense drawn from Wittgenstein’s theory that meaning does not emanate from “facts” but is constituted through collective action, use, and manipulation. Because climate change is collectively conceptualised, understood and used, it comes to mean different things to different locational identities. Using the method of multisited ethnography, the author has qualitatively researched various groups (treating both journalists and science experts as social groups, p. 9) to establish their “vernacular”; the way climate change is translated within their particular domain. In other words, the linguistic and definitional attributes they give to climate change. Thus, each group according to its goals, interests, and situation, links climate change to different values, ethics and, methods.

The Inuit, of the Arctic, reject the scientific concept to foreground their experiential life-worlds in which climate changes are threatening their existence. They link it to human rights and their position as receivers of environmental damage from dominant groups which are causative of it. The religious organisations, such as Creation Care, recognising the implications of ignoring climate change altogether because of its association with scientists who are seen as “enemies” of the Church, are manipulating it towards charity, inequality, and the Christian virtues of care. The journalists are facing the difficult task of negotiating the thin line of professional ethics that requires them to present both sides of any discourse. Fair representation should give equal weight to the sceptics and the advocates, but reality leans towards treating climate change as a real threat. The work of the journalists is heavily burdened by their increasing role as knowledge providers and legitimising agents than being just information mediators. Thus, journalistic objectivity is increasingly being seen as located in their “methods” rather than in what they are saying.

Scientists working on climate change are also adapting the position of what the author labels as “near advocacy” in view of the concern generated by the gravity of the situation that their research is telling them. It is not possible to remain aloof from the social consequences of their research and, following Kuhn, one agrees that science was never divorced from social reality at any time. However, here again, their responsibility for the careful dissemination of knowledge is making them walk a tightrope between knowledge production and involvement in public policy.

The corporate world cannot be totally oblivious to climate change either as the fiscal costs of hurricanes such as Katrina and the global losses due to earthquakes, storms and climate-related disasters are becoming too enormous to ignore. The corporate institution Ceres has been relatively successful in translating climate change into the language of measurable quantities (primarily in economic terms), treating their efforts to bring about linguistic and vernacular changes regarding climate change as “products”. Thus, while

actually doing advocacy, they operate as a corporate institution with managerial functions modelled on a corporate firm. They have tried to deconstruct the perceived opposition between profit making and environmental concerns, providing measurable evidence to the contrary. By projecting climate change as “climate risk”, they have penetrated the vocabulary of capitalism, in which risk represents both change and probable danger. They have also brought stakeholders, such as voters, consumers, and workers to the negotiating table, focusing attention on the social and ethical dimension of doing business.

This book is rich in its detailed exposition of the various documents created, the action taken, the policy interventions and political manipulations that have accompanied the creation of climate change as a “life form”. The author has developed adequate theoretical tools to integrate a diverse range of “voices” to represent a variety of social/interest groups. The ultimate message being projected is that climate change needs to be “cared for”, no matter upon which “vernacular” and method each party decides. While the volume is a repository of data, what is missing is a glossary of the numerous acronyms used in this work. A book to be recommended for lay persons as well as specialists, as a document worthy of attention in the context of the situation of the “clear and present danger” that is climate change.

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**Hours, Bernard and Pepita Ould Ahmed (eds.). 2015. *An Anthropological Economy of Debt*. New York: Routledge. viii + 210 pp. Hb.: \$145.00. ISBN: 9781138888838.**

Indisputably, the keyword of financialised capitalism is debt. Today, more than ever, the reproduction of capitalism depends on its capacity to colonise the future of countries, households, and individuals by manufacturing them as debt-burdened actors condemned to capitalism as the only game in town. *An Anthropological Economy of Debt*, edited by Bernard Hours and Pepita Ould Ahmed, thus focuses on a major aspect of the current set of social relations we inhabit.

Addressing the issue of debt, Hours and Ahmed promise to avoid reducing ‘discussion of debt ... to that of economic debt’ (p. 1). They argue in the *Introduction* that studying debt anthropologically involves the investigation of debt as a Janus-faced phenomenon, with one face being positive and ‘conditions and feeds into the social and economic dynamics’ (p. 3), and the other negative and ‘leads to crises, generates social and gender inequalities, relationships of domination and dependency ...’ (p. 3).

The volume is composed of ten articles. The first, by Ahmed, *Paying What One Owes ....or Carrying Out One’s Obligations*, seeks an answer to a basic question on debt: ‘why do economic agents have to honour their commitments and keep their promises?’ (p. 6) Following the historical evolution of the economic responsibility of entrepreneurs as a social group, Ahmed shows that ‘the moral obligation to pay is not timeless; it has not always existed; it has a history.’ (p. 6).

The second and third articles direct their focus on the clash between market and society. In *Debt: The Price of What, Exactly?*, Hours underlines the paradoxical nature of debt in financial capitalism: debt is both the primary means through which the domination of people by the market occurs and also something that periodically interrupts society and cycle of exchanges in a way requiring annulment of debts for proper functioning of the market. In *Incompatibility and Complementarity of the Chicago Plan and Alternative Monetary and Financial Mechanisms*, Jean-Michel Servet and Tom Moerenhout review the alternatives against the risks caused by uncontrolled money creation by banks in the post-Keynesian period. Referring to the Chicago Plan proposed to prevent money creation by banks and to alternative financial practices, such as complementary currencies and rotating credit and savings associations, the authors emphasise the possibility and necessity to ‘return to a collective understanding of money that favors a circular economy over private wealth accumulation’ (p. 50).

The fourth and tenth articles in the book provide us with two ethnographies on microcredit. In *Why Are Poor People Reluctant to Borrow?*, Jean-Yves Moissoner and Ahmed problematise why participation in microcredit has remained low in Morocco. The authors argue that the issue largely pertains to a lack of mediation between the community-based ‘traditional’ value system of the villagers and the law/state-based ‘modern’ value system of microcredit institutions. In *Perceptions of Debt and Microcredit in Senegal* written by Eveline Baumann and Mouhamedoune Abdoulaye Fall, meanwhile, the authors emphasise the dependency of Senegalese people to interpersonal lending based on personal relations of trust. Given that small-scale businesses are subject to unpredictable

cycles and that it is the repayment to friends and relatives and thus avoidance from over-indebtedness and shame that is the priority of debtors, the authors argue, Senegalese tend to avoid the risk of borrowing from institutional lenders.

The fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters of this volume focus on social conceptions and political uses of debt. First, in *Debtors and Creditors*, Francoise Bourdarias reveals how a lineage model based on the indebtedness of juniors to seniors informs all domains of life in Mali and also operates to delegitimise power relationships prevailing in state-citizen relations and in other domains of life. Then, in *The Indebted State in Algeria*, Laurent Bazin draws our attention to the character of the Algerian citizen's relationship with the Algerian State. With reference to housing problems, Bazin shows that this relationship is based on two firmly established perceptions, namely, the indebtedness of the Algerian state to Algerians due to the semi-mythic oil-rent and the lives sacrificed during the Independence struggle, and the Algerian state's inability to pay its debt back to its citizens. In *The Imaginary Debt of Communism*, Antoine Heemeryck takes us to the political uses of debt in post-communist Romania. Heemeryck shows that the imaginary debt of communism in Romania has not yet been settled; it rather serves as a strong instrument of politics used to delegitimise rivals and make claims to sources. Romanian society, he argues, is one 'that both fuels and poisons itself with the debt of communism' (p. 147).

The gendered aspect of debt comes to the fore, especially in the eighth and ninth articles. In *Indebtedness and Women's Material, Monetary, and Imaginary Debts in the Era of Globalized Gender*, Isabelle Guérin, Magalie Saussey, and Monique Selim focus on the effects of capitalist modernisation and development policies on women in India, China, and Burkina Faso. They show that the capitalist modernisation and transformation of women's living, working, consumption, and maternity practices increase their indebtedness rather than lead to their emancipation. Then, in *Debt, or How to Get One's Neck Out of the Noose*, Tassadit Yacine demonstrates the gendered character of debt with reference to female academics in French universities. Given that academic positions are far more available to men than to women, Yacine explains, women who are given the opportunity to pursue academic careers feel indebted to the male professors who bestow them with this opportunity and so overwork and even sacrifice their non-academic personal lives, thereby reproducing a gendered unevenness in academic circles.

Mostly a French work, as per the academic affiliations of its contributors and the fields on which it focuses, *An Anthropological Economy of Debt* may, we would propose, be read in two ways; on the one hand, it emphasises the positive, constructive role of debt as a building block of interdependencies, society, and solidarity, while on the other, it serves as a warning against the abuse of debt by privileged actors in the gendered, capitalist, and pragmatist relations of today's financial capitalism.

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**Dilley, Roy and Thomas G. Kirsch (eds.). 2015. *Regimes of Ignorance. Anthropological Perspectives on the Production and Reproduction of Non-knowledge*. Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books. 215 pp. Hb.: 95.00/£60.00. ISBN: 9781782388388.**

As a meditation on Foucault's power-knowledge concept, Dilley and Kirsch present an edited volume on the 'problem of ignorance' (p. 1) to argue that 'every "regime of knowledge" simultaneously is a "regime of ignorance"' (p. 23). They theorise ignorance not simply as a 'residual category of knowledge' (p. 4), but rather as 'a constellation of discursive practices and power relations' that gives rise to generative 'epistemological gaps and forms of un-knowing' (p. 2). The book includes eight single-authored chapters that along with the introduction investigate the 'mutually constitutive' (p. 15) properties of ignorance and knowledge. Instead of an 'epistemophilic other' (p. 188) who is assumed to 'naturally' desire knowledge, *Regimes of Ignorance* introduces the wilfully ignorant individuals (Marchand, High, Borneman, Kirsch), as well as the state (Dilley, Coleman) and scientific (Caduff, Lynteris) regimes that prefer to remain unknowing if it suits their purpose.

The ethnographic method that, Dilley and Kirsch argue, is crucial for excavating these idiosyncrasies, also brings to the foreground the general paradox of studying ignorance, namely, the more one examines it, the more the conception is undermined (p. 7) be it the case of the strategic use of ignorance in the training of fine woodworking (Marchand) or the therapeutic process of 'not knowing' by the registered sex offenders in Germany (Borneman). The authors insist that the native categories of ignorance be taken seriously as in the case of the Waorani claims to embodied non-knowledge of shamanistic practices in Ecuadorian Amazon. High demonstrates that the embodied refusal to know these dangerous practices can be interpreted as a strategic defence against unwanted attention in a place, where people are more concerned with moral implications than whether or not something is true (p. 101).

Kirsch too challenges the often taken for granted 'natural epistemophilic impulse' (p. 192) to determine the truth about secrets and argues instead that people often do not feel concerned by what others may be concealing from them (p. 192). By examining the secretive storage of magical potions by the Pentecostal church healers in southern Zambia, Kirsch traces the ambiguous boundary between privacy and secrecy to bring 'insights into the secret as a cultural category and a discursive operation on non-knowledge' (p. 189). In his ethnographic example, by keeping the herbal medicine at the rear of the house, the church healer turns privacy into secrecy that is only possible if 'epistemophilic others' who desire to find out the secret, are imagined (p. 202). Secrecy, Kirsch argues, thus entails an absence, a zone of 'not knowing', that is constructed as a target to be overcome by the alleged others (p. 204).

Furthermore, the book shows that even supposedly neutral scientific knowledge can be characterised by the productive force of ignorance (p. 45) with quantitative evidence being shaped by cultural expectations. Caduff, for example, investigates a group of American microbiologists working on emerging infectious diseases to show how numeric evidence, such as the fatality rate in the case of the H5N1 virus, is constructed based on selectively chosen ignorance, which is rooted in the individual scientists' perceptions of

the constantly changing nature of the viruses. The complexities of evidence production are further ignored by those utilising the numbers (p. 45), leaving the actual scope of epidemics unknown and even overrepresented by the international health organisations (p. 44). Similarly, Lynteris demonstrates that the individual scientists', exemplified by the Cambridge educated doctor Wu Liande, understanding of the native culture coloured their interpretation of the pneumonic plague epidemic in northeast China in 1911. By examining the archive, Lynteris insists that the 'native knowledge hypothesis' (p. 51), which assumed that the native Mongol and Buryat population was familiar with the plague in the marmots that they hunted, was inspired by what he calls 'medical materialism' (p. 53) that still informs the way the plague in Inner Asia is understood (p. 53). Lynteris argues, however, that the natives were actually ignorant of the plague, but this ignorance did not constitute simply a lack of knowledge but a 'capacity for not-knowing' (p. 59), a purposeful act.

Dilley and Coleman in turn seek to theorise the role of ritualised ignorance in the context of colonialism. Through archival research and psychoanalytic theory, Coleman revisits the participation of King George V in a local coronation event in Delhi to show how imperial bureaucracies were characterised by 'routine ignorance' (p. 164), which took on a context-specific ritualised form. The fetishistic image of the Crown replaced, according to Coleman, the regime's false knowledge of the native subjects of India in an intimate and affectively ritualised manner that ensured that the representational, cultural and political power was kept intact (p. 171, p. 174). Dilley also consults the archive to explore how 'non-knowledge' was created though contradictory pressures within the French colonial regime in 20<sup>th</sup> century West Africa. He argues that the French state could maintain its imagined 'moral high ground' only while remaining ignorant of the true conditions of its colonial subjects (p. 156) and invested much labour in creating 'zones of ignorance' (p. 156) around such issues as the children born of the relationships between the white French officers and their African common-law wives (p. 139), and the practice of slavery that was in contradiction with the Third Republic's ideals. Dilley shows that mixed-race children were removed from their mothers and brought up to be French with few genealogical facts entered in colonial records, leaving the state, if not the children themselves, in ignorance about their heritage (p. 143). Moreover, Dilley argues, the regimes of ignorance were sustained and developed by often liberal-minded philanthropists who sought to improve the condition of the disadvantaged mixed-raced children (p. 144).

In the end, the book offers an ethnographically-informed thought exercise that brings home the idea that ignorance and knowledge are interconnected. Even though the editors insist that ignorance is not to be theorised only as the absence of knowledge, the use of the term 'non-knowledge' in the title and by the contributors makes this provocation somewhat redundant. Nevertheless, the *Regimes of Ignorance* succeeds in an effective portrayal of the subjects and regimes, which, far from being the eager epistemophilics that modern thought envisions, choose purposeful ignorance instead.

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**Henne, Adam. 2015. *Environmentalism, Ethical Trade, and Commodification. Technologies of Value and the Forest Stewardship Council in Chile*. New York, London: Routledge. xi + 155 pp. Hb.: \$145.00. ISBN: 9780415730419.**

*Environmentalism, Ethical Trade, and Commodification* by Adam Henne, Assistant Professor of International Studies and Anthropology at the University of Wyoming, provides a critical analysis of integrating market-based mechanisms into forestry. Henne's ethnographic case study deals with the certification practices employed by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) in Chile. FSC International is an NGO that aims to support sustainably produced timber by providing the FSC label and promoting market incentives. It is a multi-stakeholder organisation that defines criteria for sustainable forest management at the global level and accredits individuals and organisations as auditors who award certification to forest managers at the regional scale. However, how do the involved actors like companies, consumers, indigenous groups and worker associations negotiate what constitutes "good" forestry? Whose knowledge and values are privileged or silenced when *good* is defined? These are the key issues the study focuses on in order to examine the cultural politics of forest certification in situations of difference and competition.

The author's theoretical approach draws from political ecology and science studies. According to Foucault's concept of "governmentality", he considers forest certification to be a technology of government that locates political agency and influences subject positions. Since certification practices cover the production of economic value as well as the enforcement of the ethical values of consumers, Henne introduces the concept of 'technologies of value' to describe 'a lever for shifting the locus of political power from one set of actors to another' (p. 6). In order to meet the study objectives, his discussion of certification is driven by three analytic principles: a) tracking the strategic use of discursive tools as an act of boundary work, b) understanding how significant objects, such as "knowledge" and "nature" are constructed and become meaningful through their circulation and interpretation, and (c) re-contextualising how knowledge is articulated in the fields of power relations and institutional constraints (pp. ix-x).

The book is divided into six clearly structured chapters including introduction and conclusion. In the first chapter, the author explains how FSC International works and recounts the history of the timber industry and the FSC in Chile. He then introduces key concepts and theoretical perspectives and reflects on concerns about methodology, representation, and authorship.

In Chapter Two, *Making Wood and Making Persons*, Henne documents the set of motivations of the parties involved in implementing the FSC certification scheme. He traces their subject positions by defining their roles as "the consumer", the environmentalist", "timber producers", and "the Mapuche" and discusses their interaction and often ambivalent position in relation to each other.

Chapter Three, *Putting Knowledge to Work*, deals with the cultural politics of knowledge in standard-making and shows how a set of authoritative knowledges is privileged whereas the knowledge of forest workers and indigenous groups remains marginalised.

The fourth chapter, *Green Lungs*, is a kind of intermission. It consists of a narrative of Henne's ethnographic encounter with consuming firewood in order to disclose the author's presence and social position in "the field". Moreover, the chapter deals with a small-scale program for certifying firewood for local consumption to document the local impacts of environmental regulations and contains a comparison of this endeavour with FSC-Chile.

In *Chapter Five, Certification and the Politics of Scale*, the author demonstrates the ambivalent relation of FSC certification to the state and discusses how scalar issues impact the standard-making process. By taking up the issue of 'generified' standards (p. 108), he shows how the adaptation of international FSC standards into local ones resulted in broadening criteria instead of reducing them to local realities.

Finally, the sixth and concluding chapter summarises core findings and ties them to theoretical considerations on, for example, the boundary-policing of elite forms of knowledge (p. 129). Furthermore, the author reflects on the role of ethical trade initiatives in creating sustainable and survivable global futures. He argues for tempering any normative judgments about market-based instruments for environmental governance and finishes the book by calling on the reader to do her own ethical labour '... rather than delegating either to technologies beyond ourselves' (p. 132).

The volume results from Henne's fieldwork commenced in 2004 in and around Valdivia and Santiago as part of his doctoral research. To trace knowledge production, he employed a toolkit of qualitative ethnographic methods, such as semi-structured and in-depth interviews that were complemented by documentary research and participant observation in 'zones of awkward engagement' (p. 17). However, what I found absent from the author's documentation of his methodological approach (see Chapter One) is a systematic overview of the collected qualitative data and the procedures employed for analysis. I missed basic information on the total number of interviews conducted, the period of data collection and information on the interviewees' social characteristics like institutional affiliation in order to clarify whose perspective influences or even dominates the results of the study.

The case study highlights the disparity between the simplicity and abstraction of the FSC label and the complexity and tensions in the course of implementing certification practices "on the ground". It demonstrates that the values represented at the negotiating table are neither pre-determined by the international FSC certification scheme nor transparent. In fact, FSC standards in Chile are '... a dependent outcome, shaped by power relations and institutional constraints' (p. 123). Finally, the author concludes that FSC-Chile emerges as neither a form of neoliberal environmental governance and green capitalism as he presumed before doing fieldwork, nor is it the powerful strategy to transform capital from the outside as promoted by FSC-Chile (see Chapter One and Six). Due to the complex scalar issues at stake and because of the rapid changes taking place in the political ecology of Chile, the certification scheme remains an unpredictable force (p. 132).

Despite the methodological shortcomings, the volume provides detailed insights into the political dynamics of implementing certification schemes "on the ground".

Hence, it is a valuable contribution to the heated debate in the current academic literature about the social and ethical implications of introducing market-based instruments for environmental governance. I would recommend this volume to readers interested in the application of political ecology and techno-science to case study research. Furthermore, in spite the underlying theoretical perspectives, the study might also be a valuable read for policy makers and practitioners in the field of environmental governance who seek an independent evaluation of regulation schemes such as certification.

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**Miller, Daniel and Jolynna Sinanan. 2014. *Webcam*. Cambridge: Polity Press. 220 pp. Pb.: £15.99/\$19.40. ISBN: 9780745671475.**

The first time I used Skype to talk to others was about a decade ago, when I was working on an international project. The experience of the “quadrilateral” exchange was anything but pleasant. Computer speakers kept crackling and beeping, and we could not see each other because the internet connection was so slow. We could only listen to each other as we tried to coordinate our work. The on-line discussion lasted for about an hour, although 15 minutes would have sufficed had it not been for the interruptions. The technology has greatly advanced since then: internet connections are much faster now, and voice communication has been upgraded with video. Skype, which is used regularly by more than 300 million people across the globe, has become an important means of communication, not only for project meetings with dispersed team members but also for private purposes. With the help of a webcam, we can, for example, have a chat with our parents while we are abroad, show friends how our children have grown since the last time we met in person, and wish our partners a good night.

In *Webcam*, anthropologists Daniel Miller and Jolynna Sinanan, both from University College London, focus mainly on everyday communication. They take a sociological approach to “webcamming”, which is a term they use to denote conversations via Skype or any other internet solution for the transfer of sound and video across distances. Although the treatise centres on people and interpersonal relationships, the authors also touch on the technological aspects of communicating in this manner. ‘[P]eople have relationships with people’, they point out in the introductory chapter, ‘and they have relationships with technology, and mostly, we can’t really disentangle the two’ (p. 3). Using letters or short text messages to communicate is, as they say, an entirely different experience than talking over the phone or chatting on Facebook, and webcamming has a particular set of features all its own, which includes both advantages and shortcomings. That is why, according to the authors, the following famous words coined in the 1960s by the philosopher and master of communication theory Marshall McLuhan still ring true: “The medium is the message”.

Miller and Sinanan approach webcamming from different angles, expressed through descriptions and statements provided by people living in the Caribbean, in Trinidad. It is somewhat surprising that the first subject the authors delve into does not deal with interpersonal relationships but with self-consciousness – they explore how we perceive ourselves while Skyping. When people begin using this technology to make video calls, they focus less on the person they are speaking with than on their own image, which is visible to them in a smaller window. The authors explain that the presence of this smaller image is a pivotal and fascinating moment in the history of humanity, because it allows us, for the first time ever, to observe ourselves “live” during an ordinary conversation, and lets us see how others see us at that very moment. Because of this somewhat narcissistic initial experience and a not uncommon self-absorbed fascination with our own image, Skype users often prepare themselves for the call, physically more so than mentally. They put on nicer clothes, fix their hair, and apply makeup. They can avoid any potential

embarrassment by unplugging the camera and using voice communication only, but then the person on the other side of the call might suspect that something is wrong and that the caller that is not visible is hiding something important. Being visually unavailable and present in voice only is, in line with McLuhan's words, a message in itself.

The eye of a webcam also represents encroachment upon privacy. That can be unsettling, but it helps maintain intimacy and a sense of closeness, which is most evident in cases where people who live in different parts of the world leave their cameras switched on all day, which can sometimes make them feel as if they live together. The authors add that some take this always-on intimacy further and use Skype to convey expressions of love or as a tool for cybersex (e.g. using a live video connection for simultaneous masturbation). Despite including both picture and sound, however, such activity is still (for now) not as intense or satisfying as a physical relationship can be. Geographical distance can make the desire and need for actual contact even stronger. 'The downside ... is that the more you talk to them, the more you just want to be next to them or to be in their arms,' says an interviewee from Trinidad, thus summarising the essence of intimacy without physical presence.

Webcamming also has an important impact on the sense of place, especially on the concept of home. Physical space is not necessarily what connects two people, which is particularly apparent when we look at couples going through a divorce. Even if spouses live together, their lives can bypass each other. At the same time, the computer has become the "space" in which partners who live apart from each other can meet, touch base and see if their relationship is still intact. The more jealous types can use the camera to check whether or not their partner really is alone in the apartment or if they are where they said they would be during the online date. People also use computer cameras to show others how they decorated their apartments and to show off their luxurious hotel rooms, and some take their laptops outside, to the garden, to ask for horticultural advice. In short, physically remote spaces are beginning to intertwine and spill into each other because of Skype and other similar technologies. That supports the thesis that space is no longer the main determinant of social relationships and that, in various ways, space has been upgraded and replaced by online networks.

As the authors set out in one of the chapters, people use Skype to maintain not only romantic relationships but also family ties. Parents can use a camera to check up on their children, who are studying abroad and make sure they have not lost too much weight. Grandparents often see their grandchildren for the first time on a computer screen. They turn to the screen again to fawn over their grandchildren's first steps and, later, chat with the youngsters on a regular basis. Webcamming makes it possible for an entire family to meet up for important events such as birthdays and holidays, have breakfast together, and exchange good wishes. Miller and Sinanan predict that such long-distance group celebrations could, for example, replace Christmas cards, which have already lost much of their value because of mobile phones and email. The minimal unit of sociability that sustains family ties and the bonds of friendship could thus become a festive get-together on Skype, which would fundamentally transform the tradition of giving greeting cards and well-wishing, although not necessarily for the worse.

Many readers will find the final chapter of the book the most interesting, because it focuses on visibility and its socio-cultural consequences. Visibility is the one part of webcamming that provides the sense of an actual presence, which is not something offered by other media. During a phone call, a caller is free to pick his nose or type chat messages to a third person via Facebook, whereas webcamming does not let us do such things, since the person on the other side can see our every move. There is another aspect to visibility, however: it allows users to distort reality, as in the case of “amateur” pornographic videos, where it is often unclear if the pleasure is genuine or faked. ‘Compared to the photograph or the phone,’ explain the authors, ‘a webcam seems both more truthful, pushing the possibilities of evidence, and at the same time more false, extending the potential for faking, which makes the tension between truth and its opposite that more exquisite’ (p. 166).

*Webcam* makes for essential reading, for it presents modern communication technology from a human, everyday perspective and describes its transformative social impact. The subject-matter of the book is firmly embedded in the local context of Trinidad and the authors have thus provided a solid epistemological and methodological starting point for any researcher intent on researching webcamming in other locations. The only weak point of the book is its structure. The authors experimentally open with the concluding chapter, in which they present a somewhat underdeveloped theory of attainment. They use the theory to explain how technologies become an integral part of society and how they define us as people. Although Miller and Sinanan start by clearly laying out these concepts, they then intertwine them with ethnographical examples in a way that is not entirely clear. The classic structure would be more appropriate, with conclusions drawn on the basis of ethnographical findings and new knowledge presented at the end of the treatise. Despite this shortcoming, the book is so well-written and cogent that it is sure to become part of the “iron repertoire” of all anthropologists dealing with media and communication technologies. Professionals and students in the field of communication and media studies will also find themselves reaching for *Webcam*, because of its breadth and the topical issues that it addresses. The book is also relevant for researchers in the field of computer sciences and informatics, who are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of the “humanisation” of information and communications technologies, and of the fact that these technologies have a profound impact on our lives.

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**Ange, Olivia and David Berliner (ed.) 2015. *Anthropology and Nostalgia*. New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books. 235 pp. Hb.: \$120.00/£75.00. ISBN: 9781782384533.**

What are we talking about when we write about nostalgia from an anthropological perspective? According to David Berliner (one of the editors of this volume), one of the possibilities could be to treat nostalgia as ‘a set of publicly displayed discourses, practises, and emotions, where the ancient is somehow glorified and considered lost forever, without necessarily implying the experience of first-hand memories’ (p. 21). In this volume, the editors, Olivia Ange and David Berliner, and other contributors ‘explore the fabric of nostalgia, by addressing its place, interactions, agents, institutions, objects, rituals, politics, codes, critical moments, gestures, banal temporalities, and media. They investigate nostalgic feelings, discourses and practices in the fields of heritage and tourism, exile and diasporas, economic exchange and consumerism, politics, and nationalism’ (p. 2).

Nostalgia could be the next anthropological “looking glass” that helps us to interpret all sorts of practices, discourses, feelings, and ideas. I myself have recently used nostalgia as an analytic framework in my research of military pilgrimage in Bosnia. Although the editors urge us not to make nostalgia the next “catchy phrase”, the fact is that nostalgia is very useful and interesting, while simultaneously remaining under-researched and insufficiently discussed and problematised.

The volume consists of nine chapters, an introduction, and an afterword. Much has been written about different aspects of, and from various perspectives on nostalgia: Gediminas Lankauskas writes about an experiential immersive theme park located in a former KGB bunker in the vicinity of Vilnius, the Lithuanian capital, where visitors participate in “surviving” KGB interrogations, torture sessions, medical examinations, etc. Maya Nadkarni and Olga Shevchenko, drawing on examples from Hungary and Russia, examine the different logic that undergirds the nostalgic cultural practices in these two post-socialist countries. Chris Hann continues this story by focusing on Hungary on two levels: the macro-contours of Hungarian history and the micro-level with the village of Tazlar. Jonathan Bach contributes to the investigation of *Ostalgie*, one more form of nostalgia that could be further discussed. He focuses on the material dimension of nostalgia for the vanished republics of Central and Eastern Europe with emphasis on the GDR and objects from everyday life that became interesting for collectors, private museums, and on the market. Joseph Levy and Inaki Olazabal explore the symbolic reference to the key of the house of the Sephardi heritage as a metaphor for the lost country of Spanish Jews. Olivia Ange, co-editor of the volume, explores narrative performativity in the ethnographic context of barter fairs in Argentinean Andes, where the local agents lament the current erosion of the ideal complementarity that tied highland and lowland peasants. In the last chapter, Petra Rethmann is interested in particular Marxist-oriented understandings that produce left-wing nostalgia.

Some of the chapters described above deserve a special mention: already mentioned chapter by co-editor David Berliner that proposes an interesting approach to nostalgia is distinguishing two postures: “endonostalgia”, nostalgia for the past one has lived personally, and “exo-nostalgia”, discourses about loss detached from direct experience (p. 21).

Another very interesting chapter is a chapter by Rebecca Bryant. Writing about the Turkish Cypriot past, she focuses on forgetting in relation to nostalgia, rather than memory that other chapters discuss. She argues that nostalgia's basic function is to essentialise, portray to us some imagined essence that has been lost, and it represents a longing for a simplified representation of ourselves (p. 156). Moreover, according to Bryant, nostalgia results from those historical circumstances in which loss of identity is incorporated into the identity itself. That is why for her nostalgia has a closer relationship to forgetfulness than to memory (p. 172).

The last text is the afterword by William Cunningham Bissell, who warns us again that we are talking here about 'plural practice with a multiplicity of meanings that have to be carefully explored and analysed in specific sociocultural contexts' (p. 218). Moreover, nostalgia as a term is polysemantic and possibly lacks clear analytic purchase (p. 219). I have highlighted these few chapters because they clearly show the complexity of this topic.

If one draws out some of the main points from these chapters as well as others of this volume, one can see that nostalgia is obviously multi-layered, multi-vocal, multi-local, and thus it is hard to know what it means and how to define it. Could it be a concept that covers all the practices and discourses that we find in this volume (and beyond), or do we need to have more focused forms of nostalgia such as *Post-socialist nostalgia* (Todorova & Gille 2010) and *Titostalgia* (Velikonja 2008)? Could we even call these and similar "things" nostalgia? In his monograph *Yearnings in the Meantime* (2015), Stef Jansen does not even use the term nostalgia to define feelings and ideas similar to nostalgia: he calls them "yearnings". Do we even need nostalgia, and is nostalgia what our informants actually feel, and/or think they feel?

After reading and re-reading all these chapters, I have many more questions than answers. What this volume clearly shows is that if we want to use nostalgia as an analytical concept, we need to discuss it further. Perhaps the opening of all these questions (I am sure others would find different ones) are the main value of this volume. Every other and any similar work about nostalgia or work that will try to use nostalgia as an analytic concept will have to take this volume as a starting point. Moreover, even those who do not research practices and discourses that could be framed as nostalgic should also read the volume, I am sure that it will give them plenty to think about and maybe inspire some fresh ideas.

What I particularly like about this volume is the diversity of approaches to this concept in the making and how they managed to show us the complexity of it. The volume opens a whole spectrum of possible applications of the concept in different contexts such as memory, heritage, and tourism, just to mention a few contemporary hot topics that could benefit from this.

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**Salazar, Noel B. and Nelson H. H. Graburn (eds.). 2014. *Tourism Imaginaries. Anthropological Approaches*. New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books. 292 pp. Hb: \$120.00/£75.00 ISBN: 9781782383673.**

The book *Tourism Imaginaries* embraces the colourful range of different imaginative phenomena from an anthropological perspective and is, in its endeavour, both specific and general, and thus interesting for scholars of various fields such as sociology, geography, and anthropology. Even though all contributions are set in the context of tourism authors address processes and products that are relevant beyond the tourist encounter and tourism itself. The book also offers various formulations of imaginaries involving different imaginative phenomena, taking advantage of the specific moment in which, as stressed by Leite in the afterword, the imaginaries lack a conceptual unity and no single definition has yet become the norm.

The edited volume is divided into two sections of five chapters rounded by the introduction by Noel B. Salazar and Nelson H. H. Graburn and the afterword by Naomi Leite. The first section, *Imaginaries of people*, brings to the light tourism encounters and their related imaginaries. Rupert Stasch's opening contribution seeks to advance the study of the imaginaries by arguing for symmetric attention to perspectives of tourists and visited people (in his case Korowai in Papua). Through an ethnographic approach, he stresses that such symmetry brings out more sharply what tourism imaginaries are, and what they do. He proposes a rather obvious empiric value of studying "all participants' perspectives' that is, despite its obviousness, still emerging in tourism studies.

The second contribution by Dimitrios Theodossopoulos brings to the light a different case study (the Emberá of Panama) but similar imaginaries. Theodossopoulos discusses the parallel layers of exoticisation: a positive idealisation and negative stereotyping of Embera people and similarly, as Stasch recognises, a touristic desire for cultural distance that finds expression in temporal displacement.

Alexis Celeste Bunten discusses indigenous people in Australia involved in the business of ethnic tourism. On the basis of her case, study Bunten argues that indigenous hosts respond to the tourist gaze through crafted commoditised persona that manipulate these stereotypes to subvert asymmetrical power relations. The idea of imaginaries as processes is accentuated in her contribution, proposing that tourism be the context from which the construction of new discourses of alterity is possible.

Margaret Byrne Swain presents a dialectic circulation of personal imaginings and institutional imaginaries. She uses the term "imaginariums" to name indigenous mythic tourism destinations and addresses the question of how indigeneity and cosmopolitanism became co-imagined identities for the Sani Yi and Axi Yi people of south-west China. Her case study particularly brings to the light a play of universal and culturally specific relations as she explains how the Sani Yi position themselves as a historical civilisation with their own intellectuals by contrasting their identity to "primitivist" imaginary attached to the neighbouring group of Axi Yi.

The first section concludes with the contribution of João Afonso Baptista reflecting on a powerful imaginative construction, again important in tourism and beyond, the "community". He investigates tourism in Mozambique showing how community is a positive feature of the Western imaginary (an ideal of a pure and pristine social bond) developed in response to the disappointment with modernity. With convincing, ethnographically anchored arguments, he presents tourists' expectations about this

ideal but also a creative agency and performative engagement by the populations in the destination areas to meet such an ideal.

The second section of the book, entitled *Imaginaries of Places*, deals with local settings in relation with global iconography. The section opens with a contribution by Michael A. Di Giovine examining material and immaterial changes in an Italian village famous for a Catholic Saint Padre Pio being born there. A notion of process again plays a significant role in Di Giovine's contribution. His study of Pietrelcina is an example of how imaginaries are constructed, deconstructed and contracted anew in a process he coins "imaginaire dialectic" 'a complex process of presenting, imagining, re-presenting, and re-imagining site materiality within the field of touristic production at a site' (p. 150). He examines a complex competition for recognition in which people of the saint's birthplace (Pietrelcina) compete with those of his shrine (San Giovanni Rotondo) showing how imaginaries are formed in a process involving not just local inhabitants but numerous specialists such as architects, tourism operators, municipalities, TV producers, etc.

Federica Ferraris presents the exploration of the notion of tourist imaginaries revolving around a specific host-guest relationship between Italian tourists and Cambodia as a tourist destination. Particularly she presents the ancient and recent history of Cambodia as objects of tourist imaginaries: how these are presented in tourism discourse and what ideas they generate within a selected group of Italian tourists.

Paula Mota Santos presents a miniature theme park in Coimbra – Portugal dos Pequenitos, that was originally constructed in a fascist period. The chapter is focused not so much on the park's past as it is on its present, opening her contribution with a core question: how does a colonial place still entice visitors in a postcolonial era?

Kenneth Little's contribution works like a stimulus, as he starts his contribution poetically by reencountering a beer coaster, picked up at a beach party in Belize and stuck between two blank pages of his fieldwork diary. By introducing feelings evoked by a material souvenir, Little presents imaginary as a trace of something that is being felt as much as imagined. In his rich descriptions of selected moments from a tropical paradise he discusses imaginaries as uncertain, not (yet) representational assemblages. His ideas of an emergent imaginary are linked much more with affective forces of intensity and potentiality than with imaginaries in their representational form.

The second section concludes with a contribution by Anke Tonnaer discussing the development of Dutch Serengeti, an alternative name for a large nature reserve. She presents the tension between Dutch rewilding development projects and cultural landscape approaches, showing how different understandings produce different answers to the question: what is the tourist's place in a "wild" place?

The afterword by Naomi Leite rounds up the discussion nicely by reflecting on the ethnographic approach to the study of imaginaries, suggesting some possible future developments (such as the theoretical understanding of imaginary-imagination relationship) but also opening up the book to the broader audience by stressing rightly that 'tourism imaginaries are those imaginaries ... that are not necessarily particular to tourism, but in one way or another became culturally salient in tourism settings' (p. 264, orig. it.).

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