

## **BOOK REVIEWS**



**Virtanen, Pirjo Kristiina. 2012. *Indigenous Youth in Brazilian Amazonia: Changing Lived Worlds*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 272 pp. Hb.: £55.00. ISBN: 9781137265340.**

This engaging and thoughtfully written monograph follows the lives of young members of the Manchineri of Brazilian Amazonia, a people located in the state of Acre (Western Brazil), numbering approximately 1,000, who lived in isolation until the 1990s (p. 135). Virtanen outlines in the Introduction her intention to give voice to youth Manchineri, since despite being the subject of studies on sociality, kinship and rites of passage, they have only been discussed as passive agents, and hardly given a voice. She proposes to introduce the youth's points of view, recasting them as active participants rather than inert characters, in their various ways of engaging with otherness.

When discussing the Manchineri, the author situates herself in their context, explaining how her non-Indian (payri) status did not change despite being eventually allowed to share meals: a fundamental way of constructing and maintaining social relations in Amazonia. This contributes to a clearer vision of how her presence elicited reactions and discourses on otherness. Virtanen also uses the methodological device of asking the youth to illustrate their experiences through drawing pictures, several of which are included in the book, or geographical maps, thus eliciting alternative, visual information perhaps more explicit than oral testimony.

The first part of the book depicts the young Manchineri's geographical and social landscape as it unravels in the forest, the gendered tasks expected of each individual, and ways in which correct performance of these duties shapes and develops social relations. In parallel, readers encounter those Manchineri youths (a minority) who for various reasons live in urban areas, learning how their habits and social life differ from those living in the reserve. A comparison between the two lifestyles is drawn; the city's social sphere is one 'in which everyone is parallel to everyone else, rather than complementary to them' (p. 33) by contrast with the reserve, where everyone is known by name and personal qualities.

Various facets of Manchineri life are seen from the perspective of younger members of the community: Virtanen describes local practices, values and beliefs as she learnt of them through conversations with young people. The ethnography explores a range of subjects concerning everyday life, cosmology and ritual, education, political engagement and inter-generational and inter-ethnic relations.

Through the detailed ethnographic description coupled with historical and theoretical contextualization, we access the discourses of today's Manchineri youth as well as those of their parents and grandparents. This frame of reference, combining current shifting realities with traditions of the recent past, provides compelling material for analysing how historical-global changes affect indigenous communities, and how some of these respond to these changes and relative challenges. The communities are not pictured as victims or passive actors in a process beyond their control; on the contrary, the author stresses their capacity to creatively seize opportunities for growth of knowledge – of themselves, of their ethnic-cultural traits, of the white urban society and the Brazilian welfare provision, and to expand their relationship networks.

Importantly, the book captures the tension between life in the reserve and life in the city, and the way young Manchineri relate to urban life and the opportunity it holds. Ambivalence toward the city – viewed as attractive, but also dangerous and impossibly expensive – is effectively portrayed. If on one hand young Manchineri appreciate urban areas for their transformative potential (knowledge and skill acquisition, negotiation with the state, abundant commodities), it is apparent on the other hand that the metropolis accommodates only those individuals whose families have already settled there. Due to high costs and difficult transportation, long and often wearing trips to the city are painful obligations required to draw a state pension. The impersonal relations characterising urban communication contrast starkly with the conviviality of the reserve. The racism and marginalisation suffered by indigenous people in urban areas is discussed, highlighting how prejudice may threaten cordial inter-ethnic relations.

The book also demonstrates how indigenous politics have shifted from personalised relations and negotiation between indigenous and non-indigenous, human and non-human entities in the forest environment, towards the dynamic involvement of Manchineri youth with local government and indigenous organisations and associations. Schooling, literacy and learning skills related to urban life are seen as instrumental to gain autonomy and symbolic capital useful when confronting both the state and Brazilians, as well as the Manchineri community. The wish for schooling illustrates the aspiration to acquire the appropriate knowledge to engage with white people, mastering the Portuguese language and the social skills needed in urban contexts. Once secured, this new knowledge earns young Manchineri social prestige and special status within their village.

Although the reader gathers the general impression of balanced harmony amongst the Manchineri, Virtanen does introduce some data on conflictive areas, mainly associated with positions of prestige and leadership, whenever those in charge fail to fulfil the community's general expectations. Sensitive subjects also include the frustrating experiences that schooling often offers, and the gradual loss of traditional knowledge. If young Manchineri wish to learn intellectual skills for the empowering knowledge they yield, multicultural education is still problematic in the reserve. Books are scarce and often addressed to the general student body, offering pedagogical and practical methods that hardly fit Manchineri views on learning. Young Manchineri are also caught in the paradox of having to learn 'how to be a good Indian' from urban Manchineri teachers who have long forgotten the language. The young are also depicted facing cultural dilemmas, such as realising their limited knowledge of their oral history and traditional practices and songs; this awareness is ironically often prompted by non-native teachers during training courses on documenting and transmitting indigenous traditional knowledge.

In sum, this book is a brilliant ethnographic record of a neglected portion of the native population, followed in their pursuit to find, maintain and accommodate their identity as natives while simultaneously adapting to the shifting realities of life in Brazil, dynamically and strategically incorporating into their everyday lives new practical and intellectual resources.

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**Kligman, Gail and Katherine Verdery (eds.). 2011. Peasants under Siege: The Collectivization of Romanian Agriculture, 1949-1962. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press. xix + 508 pp. Pb.: \$39.50 / £27.95. ISBN: 9780691149738.**

There are books that, as soon as they are published, become classic studies, so to speak, must-reads for everyone interested in that particular field of studies. Already well-known for their excellent and highly inspiring work, Gail Kligman and Katherine Verdery have written a book that belongs to that category and represents one of the finest achievements in the field of studies on peasants' life in central and south-eastern Europe. The truth of such a statement finds a clear proof when one is confronted with the prizes and recognition this book has already received in the USA, and most importantly in Romania. As the title indicates, the book focuses primarily on the 1949–1962 period, when collectivization was implemented in Romania. However, Kligman and Verdery also refer to pre-WWII realities and provide insight on the ways the collectivization process was treated after 1962 in communist Romania and on how these events are remembered today. Reading this book brings to mind the works of Moshe Levin, Jozo Tomasevich, Kenneth Jowitt, Lynne Viola and Sheila Fitzpatrick, to whom the authors refer and pay tribute. However, as Kligman and Verdery state in the introduction they 'treat the collectivization process as instrumental in establishing the nature of the new Party-state itself and of its subjects' (p. 6) and, in doing so, they offer a new and highly inspirational methodological shift in the research on communist regimes in Europe. Moreover, by combining well-documented historical research with in-depth ethnography and the study of mnemonic practices, Kligman and Verdery's achievement opens new paths in studying and understanding not only the communist past, but also the post-communist present.

The book is divided into three parts, followed by the conclusion and three annexes containing information about the research project and the researchers, methodology of research, and a list of interviewees and respondents. The first part is entitled Laying the groundwork and contains three chapters. In the first one (The Soviet Blueprint) Kligman and Verdery elaborate on the influence of Soviet models and ideas on the collectivization process not only in Romania, but in a broader context comprising almost all countries that belonged to the then-communist bloc. The second chapter (The Village Community and the Politics of Collectivization 1948–1962) offers a contrast of socio-cultural mechanisms and models that defined the social life of Romanian village before collectivization with events that took place during the implementation of this process. It leads thus to the third chapter (Creating Party Cadres), which explains how the violence that often accompanied collectivization efforts was not only a result of the incompatibility of dominating Soviet models with the ways of life of Romanian peasantry alongside, but also a "school" for new Romanian communist cadres.

The second part entitled Pedagogies of Power: Technologies of Rural Transformation offers an inquiry on strategies and mechanisms used by Party leaders in order to implement, or better, impose collectivization on Romanian peasants, and on the responses the former received from the latter. These issues are analysed in three consecutive chapters. Chapter Four (Pedagogies of Knowledge Production and Contestation) analyses the ways

and methods Party cadres sought to gain social supports for their collectivization project. In practical terms, this production of knowledge was associated with a series of persuasion strategies, which are the object of analysis in the next chapter (Pedagogies of Persuasion). Finally, the sixth chapter (Fomenting Class War) scrutinizes the ways the Party imposed its will on those who contested the collectivization process, trying simultaneously to legitimize not only these measures, but in fact also its own power.

The third part – Outcomes – analyses the aftermath of collectivization. The seventh chapter (The Collectives are Formed) brings into focus, as authors states, the variability rather than a general pattern of collectivization in Romania. Still, this chapter contains a valuable analysis that shows that neither in Romania, nor elsewhere in former communist countries, was the Soviet blueprint entirely fulfilled. The final chapter of the book (The Restratification and Bureaucratization of Rural Life) leads to even more significant conclusions. Contrary to the general assumption that in Romania people did not show similar sign of resistance as in Poland or Hungary, Kligman and Verdery argue that the history of Romanian collectivization proves the opposite.

In addition to the information included in the preface and acknowledgments, the authors present a full view of, so to speak, ‘behind the scenes’ of their research project. In particular, the part on methodology is extremely valuable not only for students, but also for more experienced scholars. This book is the result not only of the cooperation between Kligman and Verdery, but indeed the effect of the work of a group of researchers, who conducted interviews and fieldwork. Finally, as much as on group efforts, the success of this project depended on the respondents, on those who went through collectivization. It is to them that above all this book pays a great tribute.

Scholars from a wide range of research areas and disciplines will cherish from this book, but obviously those, who focus on Romania, the Balkans and communism will find it at most valuable. Undoubtedly through the abundance of material gathered and analysed in the book, the interdisciplinary approach and the innovative methodology applied by Gail Kligman and Katherine Verdery make this work not only a powerful intellectual achievement, but indeed a landmark in the field of studies on communist regimes in Europe.

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**Miller, Daniel. 2012. *Consumption and Its Consequences*. Cambridge and Malden: Polity Press. x + 205. Pb.: £15.99 / €18.30. ISBN: 9780745661087**

Studying consumption has been neglected in humanistic studies mainly because of the belief that it is simply not worthy of being taken seriously since it is a part of everyday life, mainly connected with women's work, and also because of the fact that consumption has always been considered immoral in comparison with production. This book represents a significant contribution to the anthropological analysis while turning away from the aforementioned biases and raises the basic questions: what is consumption and why do we consume? The book reveals the clear fact that the answer to this question is considerably complex, ambiguous and offers a profound way of challenging what we know about consumption. This is of fundamental importance, since consumption currently potentially represents one of the main causes for the annihilation of our planet. The author shows that consumption has a poor direct relation with the planetary environment but is strongly connected with the production and distribution of the global economic system.

Miller's theoretical point of view is that consumption is 'not just buying things', but is strongly connected with 'the way we subsequently transformed the goods that we had purchased – a much more active process' (p. 64) while noting a key finding that if you truly want to understand shopping, you need to engage with people while they shop, and you also have to get to know them in their domestic environment. Importantly, Miller examines everyday household provisioning and tries to understand how shopping is used as a technology for expression and the establishment of love within households to which he applies his main argument that goods become our expression of core relationships with people closest to us, such as relatives and friends. 'Shopping as a sacrifice is not experienced as a religious rite, but it is saturated with the devotion we associate with love' (p. 85) for those around us whom we care the most for, and it is not merely an act of duty.

Motivated by the argument that 'social relations are the primary cause of consumption' (p. 184), this book strives to resist complying with an overly simplistic understanding of the left-wing critics who believe that 'consumption is largely fostered by advertising and demand is created by commerce' while goods 'contribute to practices of status emulation, which in turn can be related back to capitalism's other consequence in fostering of class and social inequality' (p. 182). The author is mainly focused on providing us with insight into how people actually struggle to become ordinary, which is successfully portrayed in the chapter about the common wearing of blue jeans.

Miller tends to explore the question of how the cosmological ideas are manifested through the order of things, such as the celebration of Christmas, where he examines the local symbol systems based on the divisions of ethnicity, class and gender. He questions the common belief that Christmas has entirely lost its religious origins while being devoted to consumption needs and provides evidence based on his fieldwork in Britain and Trinidad that Christmas has actually been re-connected with the transcendent through the deep association with materialism 'not because it is an expression of materialism, but rather because it has been recast as a festival for the suppression of the antisocial aspects of modern materialism' (p. 61). Miller adopts a view that opposes the dominant arguments, which dismiss consumption as a loss of authentic culture from the early times.

While performing fieldwork in Trinidad, Miller discovers that Coca-Cola had to adapt to the specific concept of what it means to be a contemporary Trinidadian and questions the general opinion that US cultural imperialism causes losing cultural specificity. 'The more consumer culture grew in Trinidad, the more values and the logic of cosmology were objectified in material things rather thorough categories of people' and 'objects took over something of this burden as the idiom of objectification' (p. 51).

What genuinely attracts readers is Miller's style of providing arguments through a dialogue between three fictional characters that are constantly in dispute with each other in the first and the last chapters of the book. In this way, the author manages to include some of the most notable findings from the field of consumption studies into the text in a sophisticated and more accessible way. While he deserves praise for his tendency to write in an accessible manner, it has to be acknowledged that he does not succeed completely, as only well-educated readers will be able to follow his writing.

Mike is an environmentalist and a supporter of the green economy who would like to see consumption downsized; Chris is a sociologist, deeply concerned about welfare; and Grace is a Filipino anthropologist who strongly feels that consumption should increase because she comprehends consumption in the context of basic services, such as health and educational systems, and thinks that extra-consumption is not going be derived from the provision of these basic services, which the world today regards as basic human rights, justice and equality. Grace also disagrees with the opinion that reduction of consumption is beneficial for people but she does feel that it is beneficial for the planet since almost everything people should give up can directly benefit the human welfare and is imperative for the reduction of poverty and inequality.

With the help of these characters, the author conveys disagreement with the premise of 'the greens' that consumption is connected to materialism and thus gives them a moral ground for condemning consumption with the intention of saving the planet. Miller agrees that by purchasing eco-products, one cannot buy in a rational and economical manner that would save money, since ethical shopping is more expensive than purchasing regular goods. The reason consumers do not buy ethically is not because they are 'hedonistic, individualistic and materialistic, but precisely the opposite', 'because they are thrifty and moral' (p. 89). More importantly, this argument questions the popular representations of consumption as wasteful, immoral and hedonistic.

Miller's book is undoubtedly a tremendously valuable contribution to establishing the understanding of consumption as one of the central interests of contemporary anthropological studies, which deserves a more comprehensive exposure. Since the majority of the chapters are a summary of Miller's previously published works in which he explains basic theoretical ideas about consumption, this engaging book will not represent any radical new findings for his regular readers; however, it is a suitable start for readers who are just getting to know him. They can find all the basic findings from his opus of published works summarized here. Furthermore, this book proposes an intriguing framework for a starting point for our engagement in understanding the most significant current problems connected with climate changes, pollution and consumption.

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**Hall, Alexandra. 2012. *Border Watch. Cultures of Immigration, Detention and Control (Anthropology, Culture and Society Series)*. London: Pluto Press. vii + 199 pp. Pb.: £17.50. ISBN: 9780745327242.**

The so-called Locksdon, is an immigration removal centre (IRC) that always smells the same way: disinfectant, bleach, institution; the book *Border Watch: Cultures of Immigration, Detention and Control* is the result of one year of ethnographic studies conducted inside of it, started by Alexandra Hall in 2002.

Through an acute and well-structured examination of everyday life and daily practices of the immigration detention system and mostly through a dispassionate and attentive observation of those who act professionally inside of it, dealing with detainees, i.e. the Locksdon's officers, the author cleverly shows us how detention is a governmental and symbolic place or non-place where undesirability is managed and controlled.

In Hall's words: 'detention crystallises the problematic relationship between certain kinds of movement and projects of security. I am concerned with security as a social and cultural category, expressed and experienced within daily life in the IRC' (p.5). The officers' self-presentation and re-presentation in everyday life, with its speeches, tones, inner workings and clichés, makes hierarchies and divisions clearer. Using words through their banal decisions, taken within discretionary judgements, they suspend the normal regime in favour of punitive and retaliatory action. It is in the banal encounters between officers and detainees that the national boundary between inclusion and exclusion emerges. The language then, as a first practice of power reproduction.

Alexandra Hall argues that the legal and arbitrary system that governs and organizes (read as to lock in and to confine) mobility is an "experimental machine" and detention is one of the ways through which the security State "writes itself", defending territorial borders and saving national identity. In fact, on the basis of liberal principles, States act in an authoritarian way.

The book consists of six chapters. Each stands independently but is linked to the others with great explanatory pragmatism and with constant references to interdisciplinary literature on detention, control, defiance from across the social sciences. The biopolitical frame on the background of the whole book is undeniable (let us say indispensable).

In the second chapter, *Visual Practice and Secure Regime*, Alexandra Hall introduces the phenomenon of "bodywatching", as a special way in which each detainee becomes only a body, a bare life. Each detainee's singularity turns into the unidentified throng. Detainees become indistinguishable: one "body" among many others. They are dragged under the panoptical gaze of observation and control. For example, the incitement to use the prison's uniform (Chapter 4), which is not an obligation, means to make men equivalent, a stigmatic action upon the body which is crucial to visual serialisation and training. And suspicion is often the dominant attitude of the regime's staff.

In a male officer's words: 'These people [detainees] could be anyone. We have no idea who they are and what they are doing here .... Once they're here they just give a name, and we have no way of knowing who they are. Immigration don't know' (p. 28). So, the practice of "bodywatching", as a set of embodied visual habits, put into practice

by the “layers of the body”, which constantly “read” the detainee’s body as a site ‘where intent and proclivity could be discerned ahead of time, and where control could be inscribed’ (p. 29).

The fourth chapter is even more fascinating, ‘Compliance and Defence: Contesting the regime’ in which Hall analyses the body as a space of resistance, rebellion, struggle. Both time and space are the places where discipline is eluded by detainees through those clever tactics of refusing the demands made to them by the Locksdon regime. In this sense, for example, refusing food is a significant method to protest against the secure but humane detention regime.

The act of “taking subjectivity” done by the detainees, subverting the idea of “victimlike refugee” (p. 111), is the enactment of political equality and a concrete act of citizenship. Unlike a rhetoric that often labels them as undisciplined criminals, illegal outsiders or guests with obligations and moral indebtedness, through their bodies, the detainees can become political subjects, demanding to be heard, refusing to be ignored, repudiating the norms of afternoon regime, seizing the initiatives, claiming their rights (the right to protest, firstly), seeking to be recognised as ‘something other than bodies to be administered’ (p. 110).

In the last chapter “Ethics and Encounters”, Locksdon opens, however, some little and fragile spaces of humanity, in the sense of ‘unmediated recognition and generous actions without calculation’ (p. 151). The episodes described, such as the one involving a receptionist who decided to break protocol by allowing a man to call his girlfriend, or another one in which Tom tried to save a detainee from committing suicide, are qualitatively different kind of engagements. Using Hall’s words ‘the shared witnessing of the man’s death produced in detainee and officer alike a disturbed sense of being in the detention centre, once were previous certainties and entrenched judgements one another fell away’ (p. 155). In this last moment of pure violence, they share a deep sense of common humanity through the deletion of role barriers.

The value of Border Watch is the highlight that all those Western and liberal practices, splurged by democratic States, create a “wasted lives” control system. Under the law (the 1971 Immigration Act), detention is a crucial and necessary part of a robust national border.

So Locksdon is a border zone and Border Watch discusses the life of this ‘thickened space’, offering critical sparks and deep reflections. If freedom of movement is a real European value, and if we want to understand why people who have not committed a crime, nor have been sentenced in court, are detained, then this book is a starting point and a useful tool to attempt an answer.

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**Wright, Katie. 2012. *International Migration, Development and Human Wellbeing (Rethinking International Development Series)*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave MacMillan. xi + 155 pp. Hb.: £55.00. ISBN: 9780230248281.**

The main focus of this book is human wellbeing during migration. A conceptual shift from coping strategies to “living well” is a promising approach, and Katie Wright does present her research very convincingly. The book starts with a foreword by Willis, and I cannot agree more that this nuanced research is a significant contribution to both development and migration studies. Moreover, it is rich in theory background and data, thought-provoking and yet easy to read.

In six chapters, Wright proves step-by-step that a wellbeing approach provides concepts and tools to shift away from the limited focus of what people lack to the much broader view of what they need and how they individually and collectively construct what it means to “live well”. Let us take a closer look how this approach in combining with migration and development literature unfolds in a study of migrants from Peru in two European cities, London and Spain.

In the Chapter 1 (Introduction), the author outlines the main functional and psychosocial dimensions of wellbeing and argues for a need to focus on the interplay of these dimensions. A small drawback is that in parts of the introduction and the theory chapter the authors overemphasise the need to move away from focus on survival and coping strategies among poorly paid migrants and repeats herself several times.

The theory chapter (Migrating For a Better Life?) provides a constructive critique to limits of the capabilities approach and demonstrates how the focus on wellbeing diverges from it. Wright skilfully synthesises how various disciplines – psychology, gender and cultural studies, to name among others – contribute to wellbeing approach. The author underlines that researching what people need is also less stigmatising; the wellbeing approach see migration as an active choice to improve life. She lays out strong theoretical points to analyse more deeply how gender and age as nonmaterial aspects of inequality shape whether people can achieve their own goals or believe they can enhance better life for their children. In order to demonstrate how wellbeing is constructed dynamically, Wright theorises how subjective constructions of wellbeing travel and transform themselves over time and across boundaries. Altogether, she provides strong analysis for joining wellbeing with development and migration.

In Chapter 3, the author describes the history of migration regimes in London and Madrid and introduces the research sample. Data comprised of 99 semi-structured interviews in both European cities and 10 in-depth in Peru with relatives and friends. In Chapter 4, the functional and psychosocial needs of migrants are analysed in dynamic interaction. She distinguishes what these dimensions are in specific places and then demonstrates how some of them, e.g. legal documents, are universal needs for migrants, while language skills are seen as a functional need in London but not in Spanish-speaking Madrid. Employment and regular income, not only economic needs but also needs to realise one’s potential, should be understood in the interplay between functional and psychosocial needs. This chapter provides a novel focus of time and money management as a functional need in both locations. It is importantly related to a need for developing competence and managing ones’ own lives to achieve wider goals. Among important psychosocial needs,

“relatedness” and “understanding social norms” are highlighted as of special importance. Both of them transform over the life-course and migration stages. The latter also transform attitudes and values of Peruvian migrants who see the need to become more “orderly” and “methodological” in the new socio-cultural environment and also when returning to Peru.

Although Wright draws attention to frictions between multicultural models and reality in which a migrant should “fit in” a new environment, my reservations are that the author may be slightly uncritical about the internalised management language used by informants themselves. Resistance and challenging of these needs are partly revealed in shared narratives. Stronger contextualisation of individualism and capitalism relations may have helped deepen more critical analysis about instrumental necessity to fit into a society in particular ways, for example, according to roles ascribed to low income migrants of a particular ethnic or regional origin. This could be taken further in future research, for example, how these needs are recognised as stemming from particular migrant status and whether they are challenged and transformed by middle class, highly skilled migrants or the second generation.

Chapter 5 provides a valuable analysis of global interconnectedness of human wellbeing and how constructions of a better life travel between London, Madrid and Peru. Her data from three locations provides a solid basis to unpack discourses of “good” and “bad” migrants, and how Peruvian migrants actively challenge perceptions of relatives and friends about life abroad. Wright convincingly proves that Peruvians back home are not just passive recipients of “patchy” information, but they choose to believe certain versions of how a migrant can achieve wellbeing goals abroad. She demonstrates that values of individualism, respect to neighbours, practices of food-making and recycling travel relatively easy. However, a need for personal privacy might get misinterpreted as coldness and cause resentment. Thus, bridging understanding about migration reality and some of the acquired psychosocial needs do not always travel well.

The last chapter contains conclusions and implications for policy. Although the contribution to policy making was promised in the beginning, suggestions are outlined in just the two last pages. The author draws attention that policies that aim to promote development and return usually fail because they are not grounded in understanding of how wellbeing is constructed by migrants themselves. She urges moving the policy focus away from governance to assessing intersubjective impacts of migration. These suggestions for policy makers are well justified in her data. However, I was struggling with the two other suggestions: Wright underlines that states should encourage circular migration and to support grass-roots migrant associations ‘that play a vital role in offering material and psychosocial support to enhance migrant wellbeing’ (p 135). Even if this may sound logical, these suggestions are not derived from her analysis presented in this book and need more empirical justification.

Having said this, including some criticism I spelled out, I reiterate that this is a tremendously valuable book, which hopefully will encourage researchers from various disciplines to take the wellbeing approach further in research of culturally and socially mediated understandings of the good life and greater good for migrants themselves as well as their relations and friends.

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**Rademacher, Anne M. 2011. *Reigning the River. Urban Ecologies and Political Transformation in Kathmandu*. Durham: Duke University Press. xviii + 245 pp. Pb.: \$22.95. ISBN: 9780822350804.**

Rademacher's comprehensive book thoroughly examines a conflict over the environmental restoration of the Bagmati and Bishnumati rivers, which flow in the Kathmandu Valley, Nepal. This monograph is put in the context of study of global South cities facing dangerous environmental problems. Because of an unprecedented "urban explosions", Kathmandu has experienced difficulties: the extreme poverty of inland migrants, a rapid growth of city's slums, and the degradation of nature. The last facet is an obvious embodiment of crisis in Kathmandu at the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The main subject of the book is urban ecology as a social practice made by three relevant groups involved in the efforts of the rivers restoration: 1) state experts and development experts who elaborated plans to improve rivers' environmental conditions, 2) cultural heritage activists anxious to restore river-centred religious practice, and 3) housing advocates defending the rights and interests of poor migrants. Tracing the contest between these actors, Rademacher describes how they reassert and proclaim their own understanding of urban ecology in Kathmandu.

In an extensive introduction, the author develops theoretical frameworks and an approach to urban ecology. Besides the historiography of global South cities, Rademacher keeps her research within the purview of global urbanisation and urban ecosystem studies. The issue of the environmental crisis of cities is understood by the author in terms of struggles over power, knowledge, and governance. Rademacher departs from an influential tradition of scholarship that has regarded Himalayan moral and social order via sacred landscape studies. Instead of that, she follows developmentalist logics of morality that emphasises collision of varieties of views of actors who re-examine the meaning of the rivers' environmental restoration.

The first chapter depicts the formation of a national state in the Kathmandu Valley. According to Rademacher, mandala is the core of local polity. The concernment of mandala is made through spatial practices and performances of citizenship that determine attitudes to urban ecology. Mandala assisted to fix a political power and made a social order in Kathmandu. The latter was the subject matter of reflection and struggle in the era of political transformation in the 1990s, which was the time the environmental concern became the tool of the groups that upheld their views of the past, present and future of Nepal.

In the second chapter, Rademacher explores three narratives of the pollution of Kathmandu rivers from the perspective of river-focused actors. The first narrative represents an official view on the rivers' degradation. This frame is proved by scientific data and policy plans, linking the main reason of deteriorating of water quality as a result of human encroachment into the rivers system. It contradicts the second narrative, which foregrounds negative outcomes of the river management plans for thousands of landless poor (sukumbasi). Housing advocates pointed out the use of cultivation of the rivers system by migrants. The third narrative represents a specific view on the rivers degradation as a cultural and historical problem. An indefatigable spokesman of cultural restoration

of the urban ecology, Huta Ram Baidya, rejects these two narratives, since he is for the restoration of the entirety of the rivers through a return to the roots of the Bagmati civilisation. This approach condemns the modern development of Nepal as the main threat of the riverscape's cultural integrity.

The third chapter analyses the impact of the significant political events on the efforts in renewal of the Bagmati and Bishnumati rivers in 2001. The fusillade of the royal family by Crown Prince Dipendra on 1 June 2001 with the subsequent accession of a new King Gyanendra to the throne abrogated both the democratic transition and the uncertainty of the building of the diversion tunnel that partly cleared the Bagmati. A new period of unsettled emergency solved the problem of sukumbasi settlements. The sudden expulsion of poor migrants from the riverbanks was unanimously treated as a necessary measure to save the river. In comparison with the loss of moral authority of the royal family, a more dire threat to Kathmandu citizens was the rebellion army of Maoists that had a strong support in Nepali countryside. In such a complicated political situation, new clean facilities of the Bagmati River constructed without foreign assistance reinforced hope for restoration of royal power and the Nepali nation state.

The fourth chapter dissects the environmental development in Kathmandu under King Gyanendra. Disbelief in democracy induced actors to appreciate overnight beautification campaigns on the eve of the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation summit in Kathmandu. Rademacher points out that in post-andolan democracy era, emergency ecology reserved and muted controversies among the main actors for the sake of the authoritarian efficacy of environmental management.

In the fifth chapter, the author traces alterations in state and public representations of Kathmandu's sukumbasi population after their forced resettlement in the winter of 2001. In the condition of the city's crisis, the landless poor were responsible for the river degradation. Rademacher argues that coherence of political, ecological, and economic moralities of the emergency period and the uncertain status of sukumbasi were the reasons for their resettlement to the outskirts of Kathmandu. The developmentalist view on restoration of the Bagmati and Bishnumati rivers represented by the state and development officials legitimised the decision concerning the relocation of landless migrants whose presence on the riverbanks hampered the beautification campaign.

In the sixth chapter, Rademacher elucidates 'the ways that river-focused identity and global connections were strategically invoked or rejected' (p.155). The actors formulate their vision of symbolic significance of the river stewardship through a range of their attitudes to the meanings of urban ecology. The narrative that connects the contemporary Nepali national identity with the international community is opposed to a view on global development as the main threat to the cultural legacy of the Bagmati and Bishnumati rivers. Both approaches failed to find a common ground for joint efforts in spite of shared ultimate goals. As a result, the Nepali state plays a key role in fulfilling topical ecological aims.

In conclusion, the scholar contemplates the importance of urban ecology for the Kathmandu case. Environmental expectations of different actors concurred with political transformation of Nepal when urban ecology was emancipatory and anticipatory. Above all, the transformation of environment urban ecology in Kathmandu revealed the weight

of moral order, while actors tried to ‘(re)make the state, re(map) urban space, and re(order) urban social life itself’ (p.178).

Has this laconic, well-defined book by Rademacher convincingly answered the delivered question of what urban ecology means? Focusing on the processes of urban development and political transformation, the author embeds urban ecology in a developmentalist environmentalism discourse. This lets the reader understand the process of rivers restoration in dynamics as well as see political alterations that have influenced the environmental transformations in Kathmandu. This book could be regarded as a notable contribution to South Asia and Himalayan studies, while the approach itself might be valuable to explore other areas in which the process of environmental renewal is consonant with unpredictable political changes.

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**Okely, Judith. 2012. *Anthropological Practice. Fieldwork and the Ethnographic Method*. London, New York: Berg / Bloomsbury Publishing. xii + 200 pp. Pb.: £16.19. ISBN: 9781845206031.**

The book *Anthropological Practice. Fieldwork and Ethnographic Method* is dedicated to Edmund Leach, who introduced its author to Social Anthropology. Research and methodology have always been a quest in itself for any subjects and anthropology is not an exception. As stated by the author, the book concentrates on aspects of the unique field practice of anthropology.

The book is divided into seven chapters apart from the Preface and Acknowledgement, Questions for the Anthropologist in an appendix, as well as notes, references and Index. It begins with the preface and acknowledgement in which the author states that it is an outcome of years of research, lecturing, thinking and writing, and exposures to the different lectures and conferences the author had presented, including the University of Edinburgh as a visiting professor.

The first chapter, Theoretical and Historical Overview, begins with the line ‘Anthropological fieldwork is the subject in practice’ (p. 1). It describes the development of anthropology from armchair to the veranda. Okely argue that when a verb “to conduct” is used in relation to fieldwork, which implies that fieldwork is managed and pre-directed. According to the author, the more satisfactory verb is “to experience”. She continues that author has aimed to explore the total context whereby the anthropologist acquires knowledge through experience. The chapter focuses on discusses about the methodological silence, demand for methods, hypothesis, definition of ethnography, etc. It is an analysis of the total concept and holism of anthropology as a subject citing different scholars, including Malinowski, who spent hours reading novels in the field and later mentioned this in his publication.

The second chapter deals with the choice of the location of fieldwork and the concept of isolation of the people under study; the author presents an account of working among Roma and the choice of location, which (according to the author) includes both deliberate and unconscious factors.

The third chapter, Choice or Change of Topic, discusses topic and its change later in the field or in between the research, by quoting different scholars and their fieldwork such as Morris’s shift in his focus from classification, Howell’s initial knowledge about the people under study through library, Parry’s responses to the interests and concerns of the people whom he encountered, McLeod’s choice of Ghanna through mishearing and many other scholars. This chapter confronts the preconceived notion for people to be studied and the subsequent change in the topic after being in the field.

Participant Observation: Theoretical Overview examines the merits behind the claims of anthropologists regarding participant observation as a method. In the history section, the author clearly denotes the definition as given by Chicago sociologists in the interwar period, though Malinowski had been using the method without being aware of the term. The author also mentioned sociologists considering participant observation as a continuum with observation.



The following chapter on the Participant Observation cites examples from different scholars, such as Wright, McLeod and Herzfeld, who revealed in different contexts the value of going with the flow of local culture.

The sixth chapter, *Fieldwork Embodied* with sub-themes such as body with mind, the body and embodied knowledge, arrivals as sexed and racialised others, etc. The chapter describes the experience of being a part of the people under study. The last chapter focuses on ethnic differences, gender sexuality, and intellectual exchange. The book concludes by describing the anthropologist's adaptability to change in time instead of following some formulaic agenda.

*Anthropological Practice. Fieldwork and Ethnographic Method* is a book that can be used as a reference. The essence and richness of the book lies in the fact that the author has cited a vast amount of the work of anthropological scholars. The 'Reference and Further Reading' section runs from page 167 to 188. One can easily conclude that indeed the author has done admirable research on anthropological fieldwork methods and the contribution of different scholars. However, there is no chapter on conclusions, leaving readers to wonder "What then should be the correct methodology?". Okely has worked among the Roma and had mentioned and cited about the Roma, without offering any conclusion about her work. The book is therefore lacking in the area of conclusion.

The book is a rich anthropological work and it is worth praising for citing so many anthropological works with such an immense exposure to the great many scholars of anthropology. Name any renowned anthropologist and his/her work will be cited here. If any young anthropologist or someone new to the field is looking for books on research methodology, this work may disappoint, but for someone aware of the richness and beauty of anthropology and looking for critiques to the works of anthropology, this is the right book. On the whole, this reviewer recommends the book to scholars and researchers who are at higher levels of understanding anthropological research.

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