

Lloum, Tristan, Simone Abram and Nathalie Ortar. 2021. (Eds.). *Ethnographies of Power: A Political Anthropology of Energy*. EASA Series 42. New York, N.Y.: Berghahn Books. 212 pp. Hb: \$135.00/£99.00. ISBN: 9781789209792.

Pordie, Laurent and Stephan Kloos. 2022. (Eds.). *Healing at the Periphery: Ethnographies of Tibetan Medicine in India*. Durham: Duke University Press. 211 pp. Pb: \$26.95. ISBN: 9781478014454.

Book reviews by

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The books under review have come at a time when the entire world is severely affected by the global pandemic, and both of these books have genuinely and rightfully focused on one of the essential features of anthropology, specifically ethnography. Of late, all the social sciences and humanities disciplines are conducting their works and research using ethnography, anthropology, and anthropologist's works using ethnographic methods have a significant impact and contribution to the discipline of anthropology.

The first book, under review, edited by Lloum et al., *Ethnographies of Power*, vividly focuses on the contemporary imbroglio of energy and political power. It compiles topical case studies from different geographical ranges, although a significant focus is on Europe. The cases presented in the volume unravel the arrangements of technological infrastructures, institutions, and discourses. The volume aims to map out the varieties of politics engaged through energy and the conglomeration of energy shaped by power over and through energy.

The following chapters present a more comprehensive range of sites for energy anthropology. The book consists of six chapters with a detailed introduction to the political anthropology of energy and an afterword by Coleman. The *first*, by Raminder Kaur, focus-

es on the nexus around nuclear power plants in the south Indian peninsula. She attempts to revisit Dominic Boyer's concept of "energy power" in a postcolonial context. Her analysis shows how the politics of electricity generation apply differently to varied constituencies marked by local, national, and transnational power relations, provisions, and sites followed by views from the margins rather than metropolitan or state actors. Further, she evocatively portrays how fishing, farming communities, and allied activists around the power plant had become the bare life for metropolitan and industrial interests for more electricity (p. 29). Thus, violence and destruction are not archaic aspects of contemporary governance but exist alongside and in the interests of modern biopolitical and energy projects.

The *second chapter*, by Chris Hebdon, vividly explores the political ecologies of energy statecraft in Latin America, identifying periods of extractive practices, from dashed hopes of gold to agrarian colonialism, corporate oil drilling, and hydropower megaprojects. Hebdon further argues that thinking of energy as a source of money was a central and limiting dogma. He also asserts that anthropologists should carefully examine how multiple concepts of energy are involved in energy politics in any social context (p. 54).

The *third chapter* of the volume, by Austin Lord and Matthaus Rest, explores the narratives of anticipated hydropower development in Nepal. They pay particular attention to the nationalist assertions, widespread speculation, and resource effects produced by what is marked as "Nepal's Water, the People's Investment," an ambitious state program aiming to "securitize" hydropower through dam construction and citizen shareholding. Lord and Rest argue that the discursive ascendance refrain speaks to a double securitization process and a concerted financial attempt to securitize those volumes by translating them into publicly traded securities in which Nepal's citizens can invest (p. 84). Moreover, their chapter emphasizes the ways in which energy political regimes depend on both elite politics and the hopes and aspirations of the less powerful to produce energy resources and infrastructures.

In the *fourth chapter*, Aleksandra Lis offers a broad reflection on the politics of carbon dioxide reduction infrastructure in post-EU accession Poland. The chapter engages with the concept of energopolitics (p. 110). Lis highlights how energy transitions have become part of broader political projects and visions of state building.

The *fifth chapter*, by Elisabet Moolenaar, introduces the energy controversies of marginalized regions and the claim that they are treated as "resource colonies" by political and economic elites in her case study. Moolenaar chapter further treats the Groningen gas field as a locus of power and describes policy proposals and political programs, devices,

and instruments, the role of knowledge in shaping how individuals understand and act on themselves in the context of the gas extraction (p. 134).

In *chapter six*, Nathalie Ortar's ethnographic account of energy consumption habits demonstrates a modest resistance to state co-option of energy practices. The chapter is based on diachronic analysis, as mentioned by Ortar, of daily consumption practices of various energy resources, which may be understood by analyzing local journeys and describing daily practices observed in her study region (p. 157). The study responds to major questions within energy studies and policy circles. Ortar also posits that wood heating has developed into a parallel economy of self-supply, involving specific social networks and particular forms of knowledge construction in the study region.

Leo Coleman's *afterword* offers a brilliant synthesis of current anthropological debates around energy and power, invoking the many reasons why energy has become increasingly relevant to contemporary political anthropologists and anthropologists. Thus, overall, without any hesitation, the volume of case studies demonstrated that energy production and consumption are critically entangled with localized politics, cultural values, and specific forms of knowledge.

The second book under review, edited by Laurent Pordie and Stephen Kloos, *Healing at the Periphery*, emphatically provides valuable insights from the far reaches of the Himalayan plateau, shedding light on how people in the region strive to attain and maintain their health and well-being. The book presents a significant collection of essays consolidating research on Sowa Rigpa, popular as Tibetan Medicine, in north India. The volume's overall aim, as explained by the editors, is to explore the reconfiguration of the therapeutic space and the sociopolitical reconstruction of Sowa Rigpa, which took place during the critical moment of the early 2000s. The book consists of seven chapters, along with a detailed introduction to "The Indian version of 'Sowa Rigpa'" and an afterword by Sienna R. Craig. The chapters are divided into two parts. The first focuses on the amchi, rural practitioners of Sowa Rigpa, who are key figures and agents of Tibetan medicine's and Himalayan societies' transformations. The second explores Sowa Rigpa as an apparatus of power that becomes particularly visible in liminal social situations (p.11).

The *first chapter*, by Fernanda Pirie, provides an excellent introduction to rural Ladakhi society, the social position of the machine within it, and the moral values that guide both. The chapter also illustrates some countervailing ideas and practices that have limited the effects of status and wealth and promote patterns of equality and inclusion within a village (p.23). Pirie makes a strong case for using Tibetan medicine as a productive lens for social analyses of power, capitalism, and transformation at the village level.

The *second chapter*, by Stephen Kloos, is based on an ethnographic account of amchi Tashi Bulu, who disregards societal and ethical norms to improve the well-being of his family and medical practice, upsetting the delicate balance within the community. The chapter offers a local perspective on the multiple forces shaping the practice of Tibetan medicine in the remote and ethically unique village of Hanu Gongma (p. 42).

The *third chapter*, by Calum Blaikie, vividly deals with the negative impacts of socioeconomic change and migration on Sowa Rigpa on the remote Changthang plateau in northeastern Ladakh. Ethnographic data is used to examine the interactions among Tibetan medicine, social change, and rural-urban migration. Blaikie focuses on therapy's changing social and economic relations while addressing the relationship between traditional healers and migration processes (p.65-66).

In the *fourth chapter*, Florian Besch and Isabelle Guerin present a case in which the crisis of Tibetan medicine was successfully addressed through a development intervention by the international NGO Nomad RSI. The project eventually aimed to create a new health-care system with a community fund to support the village amchi (p.95). The authors emphasize that amchi and community support each other while maintaining the ethical code of Sowa Rigpa practices.

The *fifth chapter*, by Laurent Pordie and Pascal Hncart Petitet, takes childbirth as a prism to read the transformations of Ladakhi society. The authors examine how birth occurred and was managed in a very isolated area at the turn of the millennium and contrast this with material from the urban milieu. The comparison allows authors to explore amchi's position on the margins in both territorial/political and medical terms (p.120).

In the *sixth chapter*, Kim Gutschow uses the example of "wind disorder" to analyze a patient's treatment trajectory in medical pluralism. Gutschow argues that the idiom of wind in amchi medicine refracts individual disease or disorder by identifying its probable causes, seeking to disarm the causal factors with medical or ritual means, and restoring individuals and their communities to health or harmony (p. 143).

In the last *chapter*, Barbara Gerke vividly explores the effects of Sowa Rigpa's institutionalization in the Indian Himalayas, using the example of Men-Tsee-Khang branch clinics in the Northeast Indian Darjeeling Hills and Sikkim. The chapter explores the contemporary situation in Tibetan amchi. It demonstrates how their status in society is shaped by the rotational work scheme implemented by the centralized institution of Tibetan medicine in Dharamsala. Gerke argued that the increasing centralization of Ti-

betan medical practice has changed the role of amchi and their identity in communities at the periphery (p. 171).

I enjoyed reading the chapters of the volume, and all the book's chapters capture Sowa Rigpa in a transition state. However, this volume constitutes the first collective effort to study the liminal moment of social crisis and transformation at the root of these processes.

The books under review are definitely a valuable addition to the existing body of knowledge and beneficial to researchers, policymakers, academicians, and practitioners of anthropology, sociology, public policy, development professionals, civil society agencies, and other social and humanistic sciences.