Rebecca Bryant’s book *The Past in Pieces* deals directly with Cyprus’s wounded past; namely the Turkish invasion and the partition of the island in 1974. This collective drama was harshly experienced on both sides and turned significant numbers of the population into refugees. Since 1974 Greek and Turkish Cypriots have drifted further apart in terms of economics, politics and social relations. Both sides have developed complex ways of framing time within diverse versions of past, present and future.

In April 2003 the checkpoints along the border that divides Turkish Northern and Greek Southern Cyprus were opened. At both governmental and local levels, hopes for reunification rested on the opening of the checkpoints. Yet this event did not bring forth the desired outcomes.

Bryant has colorfully captured this politically significant moment in Cypriot history. Her book explores the central questions raised by this notable change and how it has affected quotidian life on both sides. She further investigates the political implications of the opening of the checkpoints and the reasons why Greeks and Turks have not been brought closer together.

Dealing with fundamental questions regarding displaced populations, Bryant consults a wealth of literature, the references for which have been confined to the final section entitled ‘Further Reading’ so as not to interrupt the flow of the lyrical writing. She addresses how displaced populations tend to reconstruct their lost cosmos through memory, imagination, story telling and material culture, among other semantic webs. Loss is framed within a duality of ‘united past/divided present’, a theme that regularly emerges from studies of displaced populations. An example of this may also be observed among the Orthodox and Muslim populations that were exchanged between Greece and Turkey as a mandate of the 1923 Lausanne Treaty.

As Bryant demonstrates, imagination has been partially shaped from perceptions of an idealized past where Greeks and Turks resided in harmony and partially from the rhetoric cultivated and disseminated from nationalist agendas, especially relating to each side’s missing and dead persons (cf. Sant Cassia 2005). Another actor shaping the intercommunal past are governmental institutions. An example of this is presented in accounts of Greek governmental institutions that
deny the existence of Turkish mayors north of the divide. This is another aspect that hinders potential reconciliation.

In an admirable undertaking, Bryant examines how both sides are confronted not only by ‘the Other’ but also by their own past. Essentially this book is concerned with battles of geography and material culture as well as of imagination. Bryant builds upon her previous work in order to argue that there is a humanistic link between people and land, suggesting that people belong to land as much as land belongs to people. Apart from emptying pre-existing nationalistic rhetorics, the opening of the checkpoints revealed a much more pragmatic problem; the issue of property ownership claims from both sides. Bryant directly confronts political rhetoric with individual materialistic claims. This confrontation is harsh and the author approaches these burning questions with remarkable sensitivity, thus revealing tensions inherent not only between the communities but also giving an insight into the conditions of research.

Through a compelling and sensitive ethnography the reader is left with a variety of vivid pictures of loss, pain and fragmentation. The strategy of referring back and forth between narratives and protagonists leads the reader on a path of discovery, following the author through a web of entangled personal stories.

Many of these accounts are of ‘attempts to belonging’. As Bryant argues:

> To belong in a place, to feel its “homeliness”, then, is not only to “feel at home” there, but to have a history there, to be recognized by others as belonging. It is to be included, to become part of the intimacy and secrets of the home. To “be at home”, then, is not only to know the familiarity of a welcome, but to assume that welcome as one’s right. [p. 53]

What happens then when one’s right to belong is denied? Or what happens when one encounters a present which explicitly contradicts the past that one has shaped for years? The element of strangeness conveys more fundamental anxieties. Someone is strange not only because s/he encounters the Other but primarily because s/he encounters the Self. The Self is captured in an allochronic context – as Johannes Fabian (1983) has argued for the context where the Other is imagined. In both the North and the South, over the course of thirty years the Self has carved a context where both the Self and the Other occupy unaltered structural relations. As Bryant narrates, after the re-opening of the checkpoints the status of the Self breaks into pieces. Both communities bitterly realize that what they have imagined are in reality a series of ‘non-spaces’ in the sense that neither the Self nor the Other recognize themselves.

Strategies of alienation are cultivated as mechanisms to make sense of fragmented geographies and scattered material possessions, in order to ultimately make a rightful claim. Bryant employs the metaphor of mud in order to argue that not only the past is murky but also the present; what belongs to whom? Nationalistic rhetoric aside, this is the nagging question that has tantalized the lives of both Greek and Turkish Cypriots since the opening of the checkpoints. If we consider the increasing number of individual cases taken to the European Court of Human Rights regarding property claims it is not surprising that both North and South Cypriots believe that solving the ‘property problem’ would ultimately solve the ‘Cypriot problem’. Bryant argues that the problem of property is further about ‘rights’ and ‘recognitions’ and the unfinished past; “Property then, is
at the intersection of the personal and the national, at the point where “human rights” are realized” (p. 178).

_The Past in Pieces_ is a sensitive, jargon-free and very rich ethnography which should be accessible to a multitude of publics. The book addresses fundamental issues in anthropology such as alterity, belonging and politics. Bryant’s approachable style means that this work will appeal to scholars and students of anthropology and social sciences, as well anyone interested in the politics of Cyprus and the Mediterranean. Bryant has provided a very colorful contribution to Mediterranean studies and political anthropology.

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**Heide Castañeda**  
*University of South Florida*

_Cosmopolitan Anxieties: Turkish Challenges to Citizenship and Belonging in Germany_  

Ruth Mandel’s _Cosmopolitan Anxieties: Turkish Challenges to Citizenship and Belonging in Germany_ remains remarkably timely as heated debates continue regarding the integration of foreigners, especially Turkish _Mitbürger_ (“co-citizens”). Indeed, a renewed round of national discussion began in August 2010 with the publication of a controversial book, _Germany Does Away with Itself (Deutschland schafft sich ab)_[2010]), by Thilo Sarrazin, executive with Germany’s central bank and a former Berlin finance minister. In it, Sarrazin laments the growing number of Muslim immigrants, contending that they are “dumbing down” society based on bogus and discomforting sociobiological assumptions. The book gained unusually wide publicity, perhaps because these were not the musings of an extremist but a member of the center-left Social Democrat Party (SPD).

Sarrazin’s book was but a catalyst in debates that have long simmered about what has been widely viewed as a failed immigration policy and growing social distance between Germans and the nearly 20% of the population with an immigrant background. In a _New York Times_ opinion piece last October, Jürgen Habermas discussed the recent political turmoil over integration,
multiculturalism and the role of Leitkultur (guiding national culture) in Germany. He concludes that beyond the quiet but growing hostility to immigrants, the real cause for concern is that “cool-headed politicians are discovering that they can divert the social anxieties of their voters into ethnic aggression against still weaker social groups” (2010:A31).

Precisely these social anxieties are the focus of Mandel’s book, in which she examines Germany’s seeming lack of cosmopolitanism despite its central geographic and political role in contemporary Europe. Foreigners – particularly those who strive for naturalization – challenge a dominant narrative about Germanness that has existed since the mid-1800s and appears threatened by visions of a pluralistic, multicultural society. Ultimately, understanding what it means to be an immigrant in this nation requires first defining what is German. Notably, the book focuses much of its efforts on the critical Wende period and transformations after reunification, framing the Ausländerproblematik (“foreigner problem”) beginning in the 1990s as a reflection of socio-national dissonance associated with the merging of East and West Germany.

The book’s strength is that it spans more than two decades of fieldwork in multiple, interrelated sites. The author’s broad yet richly intimate understanding of immigrants’ position in Germany – and especially in Berlin – is clearly evident, and as such is a superb example of how long-term research permits ethnographers to fully digest and contextualize the impact of historical events on local communities. The scope of Cosmopolitan Anxieties is broader than the title implies, going beyond the Turkish experience, especially in the first half, and situating them through discussions of policy and attitudes toward foreigners more generally. A truly remarkable contribution is Mandel’s discussion of what she terms the “Turkish-Jewish-German nexus”; her chapter on the place of Jews (or lack thereof) in contemporary Germany draws parallels to the situation of other foreigners, including Turks.

Although most topics – for instance, the exceptional nature of German citizenship or experiences of Turkish diaspora in Berlin – are not entirely novel contributions, Mandel’s discussion of them greatly complements other scholarly work. For instance, she analyzes the place of Turks and other foreigners in contrast to Aussiedler (ethnic German resettlers), who have special rights yet often appear uninterested in becoming “German.” As she succinctly states, “some Ausländer are more ausländisch than others” (56). In this scaling of immigrant identities, Turks and Muslims remain permanent outsiders, despite recent modifications in the citizenship law (which stopped short of allowing dual citizenship, which reeks of divided loyalty in this vision of essentialized belonging). Mandel’s discussion of terminology is powerful, illustrating for example how the term türkische Mitbürger, often used by pro-multiculturalism progressives, has an ironically exclusivist connotation since authentic citizens would be Bürger “without the need of prepositional modifiers” (p. 160). Her analysis of other terms underscore the complete avoidance of term “immigrant,” such as “Turks with a German passport”, or Deutschturken (German-Turks). The macropolitical denial of immigration translates symbolically and economically into policies of selective investment.

Another powerful contribution is her discussion of creative differentiation among Turks in Germany as old identities are reinforced and new identities constructed (e.g., the reappropriation of ethnic insults through projects like Kanak Sprak). Mandel illustrates this through stories about code-switching identities, such as Zaza-speaking Alevi who contrast themselves to Sunni Kurds and who further distance themselves from simply being “Turkish” (p. 274). The last three
chapters are the most ethnographically rich and explore issues of ethnicity, religion, and identity in Berlin’s Turkish community and in the home villages.

To enhance the theoretical discussion and to bring it into further dialogue with other work, it might have been useful to draw upon some comparative literature (e.g., that on second- and third-generation Mexican migrants in the US). The book pays careful attention to details of everyday life, a strength that also plays out as a weakness in other places. For example, linguistic play is in some cases over-interpreted in its implied connotative meanings with words like Arbeit, Heim(at), or Ausländer. Close attention to linguistics is further belied by the many misspellings (sometimes phonetically accurate but indicating some unfamiliarity with the language: e.g., “schwartze” instead of “schwarze”; “Beampter” instead of “Beamter”) and numerous grammatical mistakes in German (noncapitalization, missing umlauts) – editing issues that should have been caught during review.

Overall, this is a wonderfully engaging book that will demonstrate its significance for many years to come. Tolerance of minorities reflects positively on postwar, democratic Germany and is part of the nation’s heightened self-consciousness and “efforts to be seen as a ‘normal nation among nations’” (p. 13). Cosmopolitan Anxieties helps the reader understand the past, current, and presumably future debates on integration in Germany. Especially its last section on Islam foreshadows the growing anti-Muslim sentiment, evident in Sarrazin’s book, for example. As Mandel notes, “many Germans still fail the test spectacularly” (p. 6) when it comes to tolerance towards those foreigners living among them.

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**Michael E. Harkin**
*University of Wyoming*

*Arrested Histories: Tibet, the CIA, and Memories of a Forgotten War*

This close historical ethnography of the Tibetan military resistance to Chinese occupation in the 1950s through 1974 is an exemplary case study of the intersection of politics, memory, and history, as well as the often uneasy coexistence of personal and collective views of the past. The “arrested history” of the title refers to the process by which individual and minority perspectives on the past, anchored to specific events, are suppressed by the larger group. However, this suppression is neither complete nor permanent. Rather, these meanings are deferred to some future time when they may be appropriate for the sociopolitical climate of the time, when they
might harmonize with the larger community, such harmony being highly valued in Tibetan Buddhist culture.

In the post-Revolutionary era, Chinese nationals began to move into Tibet. At first their intentions seemed benign. However, their goal of “liberating” Tibet, from its traditional social order based on monastic Buddhism and an aristocratic political order, soon became clear. Beginning in 1956, with aerial bombardment of monasteries, the conflict escalated. Tens of thousands of Tibetans engaged in armed resistance to the Chinese. Although outgunned and ultimately outmanned, these resistance forces achieved some victories. The Chushi Gangdrug, the army of national resistance, was dominated by ethnic Khampas, from the eastern frontier of Tibet, and thus on the frontline of the invasion. Khampas are compared to Texans: brash, action-oriented, and somewhat alienated from the traditional Tibetan elite. After the Dalai Lama’s exile in 1959, tensions between the Chushi Gangdrug and the elites living in India and Nepal became more pronounced. However, aided by the CIA, the Chushi Gangdrug continued military operations in Tibet for another fifteen years. This was at odds with the Dalai Lama’s insistence that the struggle was nonviolent and diplomatic in nature. While the Chushi Gandrug remained loyal to the Dalai Lama—indeed this was the ultimate motivating factor behind the resistance—increasingly their memories of the “secret war” were inconvenient in the context of the Tibetan government in exile.

The Tibetan resistance worked closely with the CIA. Some were brought to Camp Hale, Colorado (the training grounds of the Tenth Mountain Division during the Second World War) to be trained in high altitude guerilla warfare. Although it would be easy to view this as another cynical action of the Cold War, the voice McGranahan records tell a more complex tale. Her interviews with both veterans of the Chushi Gandrug and former CIA agents underscored the admiration and respect each side held for the other. One American officer remarks that the Tibetans could have taught their trainers a thing or two about high altitude skills. The guerillas enjoyed some operational successes, including obtaining a valuable bag of Chinese cables. However, by the 1970s, even the CIA had tired of this clandestine war. The winding down of the Vietnam War and Nixon’s playing of the “China card,” as well as, undoubtedly, the American public’s weariness with the Cold War, had changed the playing field. At around the same time, support waned in the host nations of Nepal and India, forcing an end to operations inside Tibet in 1974. The veterans of the Chushi Gandrug became, in the memorable phrase of one of McGranahan’s informants, “orphans of the Cold War.”

The problems of life in exile—of maintaining not only political autonomy but collective identity—multiply the difficulties that veterans faced. Thus, war stories are told primarily in closed contexts, such as among small groups of veterans or in McGranahan’s ethnographic interviews. These stories, which depart sometimes only subtly from official versions of the past, constitute, as McGranahan argues, a Foucauldian critique of hegemonic discourse. Such stories told and retold, passed down to a younger generation, occasionally inscribed in documentary form, make up what Derrida meant by an archive. In the context of Tibetan exiles, multiple such archives exist. McGranahan mentions, for instance, the recollections of women who participated in armed struggle. These “minority reports” exist in a twilight state, outshone by the official version. Nevertheless, they do persist, awaiting a moment in a universe characterized by flux, when they might attain the status of legitimate history.
The struggle of Tibetans—known to Americans primarily through bumper sticker discourse—is presented here in fine-grained detail. Its complexities, contradictions, and ironies are fully explored. How, for instance, is such a violent history compatible with the idea that Buddhism is peaceful, and indeed that the Dalai Lama, whom the Chushi Gandrug believed themselves to be defending, is seen widely in the Western world as the epitome of nonviolence? Although she does not explore this topic (and is perhaps saving it for another book), the influence of a certain idea of Tibet on the American counterculture, especially in Boulder, where McGranahan lives, beginning with the Beat Poets and continuing to this day, is both rich and ironic. Do drivers sporting “Free Tibet” stickers have any notion that the CIA worked assiduously for this goal during the Cold War? This book would be valuable if it did nothing other than complicate our understanding of Tibet. However, its fruitful use of the ample literature on social memory combined with high-quality ethnography make it a valuable addition to the libraries of those with broader interests in the politics of memory.

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Jason Hopper
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Counter Democracy: Politics in an Age of Distrust

Based on a series of lectures given at Cambridge in 2006, Rosanvallon argues that scholars who point to the “diminished” or declining state of democracy have overlooked the centrality of distrust and tension. He calls on theorists to re-think the distrust-democracy relationship, and he makes distrust central to his understanding of the functions and dysfunctions of democracy.

Counter Democracy ties Rosanvallon’s previous scholarship on welfare states and French democracy to a broader literature on deliberative democracy. His earlier work focused on the problem of social solidarity—a concern that remains on display in this work in his definition of democracy as “Electoral-representative government, counter-democracy, and political reflection and deliberation” (p. 313). By political deliberation Rosanvallon means activity aimed at creating a shared world (p. 291). His definition of politics is solidaristic; it emphasizes shared ideas, values, and practices for shaping society.

Building on his solidaristic starting point, Rosanvallon distances himself from a strictly proceduralist definition, which he sees as too modest. Under such minimalist definitions, “the very idea of ‘democratic progress’ ceases to have meaning” (p. 317). Democracy for Rosanvallon is more than elections—an observation with which anthropologists surely will agree.

So what does Rosanvallon’s work provide anthropologists who wish to study democracy? Much of it lies in a structural-functional approach to democracy. The author explicitly frames his study in terms of a functional perspective (p. 271) that looks at the problems democracies must resolve (p. 26). Although their resolutions are historically and socially specific, these problems are universal, structural problems. It is not the varieties of democratic experience that concerns Rosanvallon but the problems democracy as a system creates.
The central dilemma for democracy that Rosanvallon deals with is popular sovereignty. Democratic politics, as Rosanvallon defines it, relies on creating a “shared vision” of the world as well as representing “the people”. However, a gap always exists between the unity emphasized in the political principle of rule by “the people” and the sociological non-existence of “the people” (p. 292). Democracy on some level relies on the idea of government for, by, and of the people, but “the people” is always a fiction, not an observable sociological entity. Counter-democracy is part of this process in that it arose as a way of resolving this disjuncture in democracy.

Rosanvallon defines counter-democracy as “a durable democracy of distrust, which complements the episodic democracy of the usual electoral-representative system” (p. 8). As a form of democratic distrust, counter-democracy seeks to hold democracy to its stated ideals and bring the state into alignment with the interests of the people. Trust has been a central concern for many scholars of democracy, and Rosanvallon’s central insight is to turn conventional wisdom about trust on its head by placing distrust at the center of his definition. Distrust does not herald the withering of democracy under Rosanvallon’s theory, but rather is and has been central to democratic practice for a long time.

The problem of creating legitimacy and holding rulers accountable is not a new one, and from Rosanvallon’s perspective democracy has deep historical links to earlier forms of rule. From tribunes (pp. 133-137) to Chinese bureaucratic mechanisms of evaluation (p. 53), each society has found ways to resolve this problem. Many of these solutions continue into the modern era: “Institutions that might once have been thought to be ‘pre-modern’ turn out to have survived and retained their efficacy” (p. 250).

Likewise, Rosanvallon’s focus on distrust calls into question how anthropologists might see power in democratic systems. Inverting the notion of governmentality, Rosanvallon describes one element of counter-democracy, oversight, as “the surveillance of power by society [italics in original]” (p. 32). By placing limits on power and monitoring elected officials, counter-democracy elucidates the point that how people see the state is as essential to understanding power as how the state sees them.

Despite being an essential part of democracy, Rosanvallon argues, counter-democracy can also threaten it. He labels the dysfunction or pathology of counter-democracy the “unpolitical” (l’impolitique). The term “unpolitical” should not be confused with how anthropologists use “anti-politics,” although Rosanvallon occasionally uses them interchangeably. “Unpolitics” refers to “a failure to develop a comprehensive understanding of problems associated with the organization of a shared world” (p. 22). In place of an arena for competing versions of the good society, politics becomes reduced to only its reactive or negative elements. Politics loses its power to actively shape society. Like other scholars who have focused on western democracies, Rosanvallon argues that democracy faces political atrophy and disillusionment. He differs in understanding its cause—an excess or apotheosis of distrust not its mere presence.

Notwithstanding its many insights, Rosanvallon’s work has shortcomings. He pushes his idea of politics as a shared project too far, claiming, “politics does not exist unless a range of actions can be incorporated into a single narrative and represented in a single public arena” (p. 23). The emphasis on shared visions overlooks the seeming impossibility of ever achieving such a
singular unity. Furthermore, his diagnosis of the pathology of counter-democracy depends on the assumption that such a unity existed in the first place.

Perhaps the most controversial (and problematic) element of the book is its discussion of populism. Categorizing populism as a type of “unpolitics,” Rosanvallon laments that populism provides no shared vision, no language to the “silent masses”—that it is bereft of ideas (p. 271). Populist groups appear as unruly, mindless mobs in his characterization. His portrayal overlooks seeing in populism the manipulation of popular sentiment for gain, political strategies for people outside of power, the complexity of insider meanings, or providing an explanation of how and why populist movements erupt.

Anthropologists will also find Rosanvallon’s essay overly Eurocentric. Despite his best attempts, his argument still seems better suited for post-industrial democracies. Most of his examples draw on his own expertise and writing—French and American history. Likewise some of the dysfunctions he invokes seem unique to affluent societies (see p. 256). Furthermore, the author does not deal with rural-urban divides in democracy—a problem central for many industrializing democracies.

Democracy is a subject anthropologists have largely left to political science and other social sciences. If anthropologists are to take a serious look at democracy we need to consider works such as Rosanvallon’s, which weave theory and history together and provide new lenses for understanding democracy.

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