Two Cheers for Anarchism:  
_Six Easy Pieces on Autonomy, Dignity, and Meaningful Work and Play_  

Picture yourself starting on a 300-mile trip on Highway 101. The freeway speed limit is posted as 55 miles per hour. You do 56 miles per hour, or perhaps 57 or even 60. Will you be stopped and issued a ticket for speeding? Not likely. Now, what if everyone around you drives at the same speed range? Some drivers may even be passing you. Chances are, you’re safe at any speed within 55 to, say, 65 per hour. Even the cops are passing you and stopping nobody. Sooner or later, the Department of Highways gets the message from the thousands of anonymous drivers “violating” this traffic law and raises the speed limit to 65.

This represents the kind of anarchism that James C. Scott has in mind in _Two Cheers for Anarchism_. He does not urge the readers to adopt anarchism wholesale, but rather offers a squint at his version of the idea. Hence two cheers for anarchism rather than three, much like E.M. Forster’s _Two Cheers for Democracy_. Anarchism to him is not about tossing bombs or breaking windows. Even the street demonstrations against wars or globalization do not qualify: too ritualistic, too organized, and too easily co-opted.

No, for Scott, the real anarchists crave not public or official attention but rather anonymity. Many individuals who resist the state may not even call themselves anarchists. They include the poachers and land squatters from medieval times to the present. They include deserters or draft dodgers knowing they might be shot during the war _du jour_. They include wage workers resisting, by sabotage or working to rule, the oppressive bosses of assembly lines at GM or Ford. Even the trivial acts of jaywalking or taking shortcuts on forbidden lawns count as anarchism. Who are the anarchists, one might ask Scott? We all are, he might reply.

There is nothing substantively new about _Two Cheers_. Knowledgeable readers will recognize his arguments in _Seeing Like a State_ or _The Art of Not Being Governed_. Rather, the book presents 29 breezy, easy-to-understand vignettes of anarchism in action and the principles driving these actions. The premise of this book and their more elaborated predecessors is that planners, analysts, and
other so-called experts backed by state power—whether people’s socialist or corporate capitalist—have historically made a hash of things in imposing their programs on what they consider their people. They do so by oversimplifying the complexities of natural and social reality into legible components—models, charts, mathematical algorithms—that are readily manipulated to suit the aims of the power elite. The people who receive the directives from on high know more about the real world, whether natural, technical, or social, than the bureaucrats and putative experts who generate and issue these directives.

Where does change, or calls for change, come from? According to the vignettes organized into six fragments of Two Cheers, they come not from activist organizers or philosophical musings of a would-be vanguard but from the lived experience of racial minorities experiencing discrimination day to day, from the residents displaced from districts which urban planners claim to be afflicted by urban blight and so target for renewal, from the teachers forced to teach to the test designed by some Student Learning Outcome expert. Indeed, the examples are endless. There are international examples as well, such as pastoralists in Tanzania forced onto ujamaas, settlements created by bureaucrats attempting to control the herders’ mobility, or the gardens of Guatemalan Mayan peasants compelled by agricultural extension agents to cultivate their plots into neat rows, even though the gardens were highly productive in the first place because the original cultivators knew exactly what they were doing.

How do the masses resist, and how can they do so anonymously? The actions vary from quiet resistance to strikes or riots when conditions become intolerable. Some may squat in unused land or housing, others may poach to feed their families, or still others may, as petty bourgeois entrepreneurs, start businesses that fill the demand of their neighbors for a local restaurant or general store. Or consider a case which put many at risk: during the Nazi era, residents of Le Chambon–sur–Lignon in Vichy France, were asked by the wives of two imprisoned Huguenot pastors, to shelter, feed, and send to safety 5,000 Jewish refugees. Initially reluctant to do so, farmers, when facing an elder shivering in the cold or a real family with small children, agreed to accommodate them despite great personal risk (pp. 129-131). These and similar stories form the core of Two Cheers for Anarchism.

Throughout his 29 vignettes, Scott addresses the recurring theme opposing the vernacular with the universal, the spontaneous versus the planned and the measured. How, then, to evaluate Two Cheers for Anarchism? Scott’s book is hardly original, yet it presents the principles and case studies in a readable and indeed compelling way. One may argue against some of his notions. Do the much-maligned petty bourgeois deserve the venom they receive from the Marxist and corporate elite alike as being anachronistic? Scott thinks not. Entrepreneurs are as creative as any other anarchist in their provision of new goods and services that people want and need—far better than any Five-Year
Plan or production quota. He eschews the vanguard so romanticized by most Marxists and even non-Marxist socialists, let alone corporate experts.

By writing a volume that many purists will denounce as popularization, Scott has recast an interesting take on the body of anarchist thought while giving due credit to Bakunin, Kropotkin, Proudhon, and Malatesta without a painful cataloguing of their efforts. It is a primer for those too lazy—or too busy—to read his more detailed and nuanced works. Perhaps this 140-page book may convince the reader that we all are anarchists indeed.
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*Laws and Societies in Global Contexts: Contemporary Approaches*  
Eve Darian-Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013)

*Law and Societies in Global Context* is an excellent introduction to qualitative Law and Society scholarship. The book, though, is not intended to be a summary of new directions (although it does that too). Rather, Darian-Smith states that her aim is to promote a "rethinking of some of the basic assumptions about what constitutes law in a global world" (p. 6). For Darian-Smith, this involves a move away from a focus on the nation-state, and a turn towards exploring the complexity of legal processes that operate above, below, and through the state at multiple different scales. She wants scholars to pay attention to the supranational, transnational, international, and global forms of legal and extra-legal order, as much as to the specifically localized legal processes, and then to take stock of the interactions, contradictions, potentials, and inequalities produced. She therefore hopes to encourage a more expansive global perspective. In particular, Darian-Smith wants to challenge state-centered interpretations of law, which she sees as dominating much of the mainstream Law and Society research. In doing so, she calls for researchers to pay attention to new (or even old) forms of legality that do not map neatly onto state based forms of jurisdiction and notions of citizenship.

Darian-Smith is an advocate of an approach that foregrounds legal pluralism (or what she calls “radical legal pluralism” (p. 4). This is pluralism that is everywhere. Law, society, and context are turned into laws, societies, and contexts. More broadly, the approach of the book can be described as constructivist, and is heavily informed by post-colonial theory, seeking to challenge the privileging of western legal epistemologies. There is also a concomitant political project that underpins the work, one that aims to play a part in imagining “alternative understandings of law, justice, or common good beyond that articulated by a political and economic elite” (p. 20). For Darian-Smith, it is only by paying attention to the multiple forms of legal order and disorder that shape people’s lives that scholars can begin to recover any emancipatory residue that may be found in legal processes.

Darian-Smith is addressing a wider audience of Law and Society scholars, not only legal anthropologists. As such, it is driven by an anxiety about what she sees as the parochialism of American and European Law and Society scholarship. She is not saying that there is no academic work that challenges such parochialism, but simply that it has had a limited impact within mainstream Law and Society circles. Many of the concerns of the book, such as the critique of supposedly western epistemologies or the desire to get away from the state, will be familiar to anthropologists. However, there is much for anthropologists to learn from the book too. The broader intended audience of Law and Society scholarship means that the book draws on a wider range of
authors than is often the case in anthropology books. There are some interesting surprises, and fresh approaches throughout. In this sense Darian-Smith also challenges anthropological parochialism.

The book consists of two broadly introductory chapters on the challenges of Law and Society research, followed by chapters on the forms of legal knowledge, law and space, human rights, and race. The individual chapters are used to flesh out the general argument about the need for a global approach to legal processes, as well as to examine the inequalities produced by current formal legal arrangements. The end of each chapter contains a selection of recommended readings, as well as leading selected texts. These texts are well chosen, providing some of classic essays, but also some lesser known, but no less important and original pieces. The book therefore acts as both a programmatic and provocative introduction and as a reader.

Taken together the book serves as an excellent introductory text, and I can see many undergraduate and postgraduate courses being built around it, both for social scientists and lawyers. The particular strength of the book is that it promises to push the reader to think more carefully about where researchers locate the law, and how they study it. Darian-Smith has written more than an introductory text though, as there is a clear and strong argument running through the pages, and it will be of interest to more senior scholars as well.
Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson have written an ambitious work of politically engaged social theory that attempts to reconceptualize issues of labor, migration, sovereignty, and governmentality. Central to Mezzadra and Neilson’s approach is a methodological framework that treats the border as “research object” (p. viii) and “epistemic angle” (p. viii); the border becomes both a field site and a conceptual lens. The authors weave together numerous case studies from across the globe, including such diverse examples as the internal borders erected by the Chinese hukou system and the European cordons sanitaires created by high seas migrant interdiction. Mezzadra and Neilson range as widely over theoretical terrain as they do across the various borderlands from which they draw their examples; in the process, they attempt to synthesize strains of Marxist and Foucauldian thought into a perspective that is at once a scholarly contribution and a political manifesto. Despite the drawbacks inherent in its genre shifts and the enormity of its topical scope, Border as Method is punctuated by moments of valuable insight and provocation that will undoubtedly prove interesting to anthropologists grappling with contemporary shifts in the spatiality of capital and the subjectivities it produces.

The book is built upon several core theses that take the form of hybrid theoretical formulations. The authors argue that borders are both softening and hardening; that the violence of sovereign power and the softer regulatory features of governmentality combine to form a “sovereign machine of governmentality” (p. 204); and that borders, broadly construed, both obstruct and facilitate the articulation and circulation of people, goods, and money. Mezzadra and Neilson attempt to reveal new social and economic formations, which, if they are to be properly interrogated, require that the rift between theories of governmentality, sovereignty, and capital be repaired or replaced with more powerful and nuanced perspectives. The book is an attempt to lay the groundwork for such an approach, one which is responsive to the proliferation of borders in the 21st century and the heterogeneous labor regimes they help to structure.

Border as Method is at its best when Mezzadra and Neilson ground their theoretical discussions in historical and ethnographic examples. Two chapters in particular exemplify this: chapter two, with its account of the world-making power of cartography, and chapter five, with its discussion of the different temporalities of skilled and unskilled labor circulation created by migration “[p]oint systems” (p. 139). The case studies, however brief, bring to light complicated regimes by which labor is managed within and across borders and
the ways in which the proliferation of borders and what the authors call the heterogeneity of contemporary labor practices are co-constituted. Their deep familiarity with a wide range of materials on international and domestic migration frameworks allows them to draw out the connections and divergences between processes occurring on a vast scale. Their ability to narrate the global borderlands is part of the allure of the book and an opportunity to spur conversations across geographic and disciplinary spaces.

Despite the book’s many fascinating contributions, its overtly political nature may alienate some readers. Mezzadra and Neilson characterize their work as an effort “at reconstructing the material basis of a new communist politics” (p. 283). Many of the arguments throughout the book build up to the final chapter, which lays out Mezzadra and Neilson’s idea of the common: “a radical perspective on social, juridical, and political matters pertaining to the commons, common goods, the public, and the private” (p. 278). The authors’ theoretical claims and methodological approaches are deeply intertwined with this project of “radical political thought and action” (p. 280).

*Border as Method*’s strength and weakness perhaps lie in its own ambition. In order to tackle the wide array of examples and theoretical literatures presented in the book, the authors are unable to explore any of them in much depth. In this sense, the text has a paradoxical structure: it contains lengthy literature reviews that presume a detailed knowledge of much of the literature being reviewed. The target audience is the scholar already at home in the philosophical debates that drive the work. As such, it is probably more appropriate for graduate seminars than undergraduate classes. Nonetheless, it is shot through with highly suggestive insights and manages to bring numerous works from multiple disciplines into productive dialogue with one another. Anthropologists interested in issues related to migration, sovereignty, labor, and the state would do well to read this book.
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*Zooland: The Institution of Captivity*

Irus Braverman’s book *Zooland* begins roughly in the 1970s when zoos in the United States were taken to be sites of conservation and preservation of animal species. Today’s zoos, Braverman writes, are primarily about stewardship and pastoral care of animals. As such, zoos are involved in extremely complex administrative and regulatory networks dedicated to the classification and recording of animal DNA. Zoos move their animal populations around the world to ensure the best reproductive results. In many cases, zoos are self-appointed Noah’s Arks dedicated to sustaining animal diversity for future generations. Zoos are also often involved in work that protects the environments in which animals naturally occur, and so have become ambassadors fighting against land clearance and habitat destruction. These new zoo activities, which collectively seek to preserve animal diversity, represent a new ideology that informs the practices of zoos confronting the challenges of 21st century’s environmental degradation.

I was reminded of this expansive and grand zoological mission last year when I took a group of undergraduates to Australia for a month of teaching. There we talked to Rebecca Spindler, the current director of Sydney’s famous Taronga Zoo, about the zoo’s goals and objectives. Rebecca explained to us that she manages Research and Conservation Programs focusing on wildlife ecology, behavior, reproduction and health to inform best conservation practice. She also talked about the decision-making that goes into whether the zoo will focus on one endangered animal over another, or if and when the protection of a certain species is sacrificed for the general good of the zoo’s collective responsibility to ecological well-being. And she explained to us the huge networks of activists, scientists, and international regulatory agencies involved in the practices seeking sustainable animal populations. One of the species she is particularly involved in is the Tasmanian Devil, whose populations have been severely reduced due to a new cancer linked to the destruction of its habitat. Zoos are now the public face to a massive behind-the-scenes international network of knowledge, genetic materials, conservation efforts, and exchange of living beasts.

Braverman’s *Zooland* engages with the new zoos of the 21st century. It is an innovative book, adding a new chapter to understanding how zoos evolve. Specifically, it fleshes out the global regulatory network that I glimpsed at Taronga Zoo and gives inside views to the people, animals, and processes involved. It encourages readers to think about the zoo’s role in mediating peoples’ ambiguous and dynamic relations with animals supposedly wild and environments ostensibly natural. It also shows the reader how we – the recipients of the zoological experience – participate in ways both knowing and
unknowing in the orchestrated spectacle of animal encounter, consumption, and learning. Drawing upon Foucault, Braverman’s ethnography of North American zoos presents an innovative, bold and in-depth study of how zoos are conceived, managed, organized, spatialized, recorded, managed, and governed.

While primarily based on interviews and insights gleaned from elite zoos in the United States, the author situates this US-based interpretation in a more globally connected zoological world. Braverman also engages with the culturally informed relationship between humans and non-humans, building upon the work of theorists such as Donna Haraway and Sarah Whatmore who seek to explore the emotional, psychological and material relations that both divide and blur articulated differences between people and animals. The degree to which Braverman’s analysis of US zoo management and US society’s imaginary about animals is applicable to zoos and peoples in non-western contexts is not explored and leaves me, the reader, wanting more.

Of particular interest for legalanthropologists will be chapter 6, which explores the laws and regulations pertaining to zoos. The chapter presents a dizzying array of official laws and less official industry and professional standards shared among zoos that are accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). As Braverman discusses, “zoo laws” “casts a broad net that captures the bricolage of zoo-related norms – from federal laws and state regulations through case law and institutional treaties and finally to the zoo industry’s standards and guidelines” (p. 127). Precisely because of the lack of accessible and comprehensive official laws with respect to zoo management, the AZA has been forced to fill in the gaps and establish norms that reflect members’ high level of professionalism. Unfortunately, and this fact really shocked me, only 10% of all zoos in the United States are accredited. This means that the other 90% are not held to the same high standards for the animals in their care. What goes on in these zoos? What abuses and negligences are allowed to go undetected? And what goes on in other countries that presumably have an even lower rate than the United States of AZA accredited zoological institutions?

Braverman argues that part of the problem is that some laws apply only to animals, some laws only to humans, and most make no accommodations whatsoever for the unique human-animal relationship that permeates the public spaces of zoos. Zoos thus become unique hybrid human-animal locales, where the legal status of zoo animals vis-à-vis humans is highly contested. For instance, a lion is deemed a wild animal and cannot be owned as one would own a horse or a dog. This creates ambiguities when things go wrong (say the lion eats the popcorn vendor) in applying the usual sets of legal definitions, legal precedents, and legal remedies.

Chapter 6, and the book in general, highlight the degrees to which legal regulations infiltrate spaces and places and practices and experiences to which
many people are typically oblivious. And this is where the critical thinking of Braverman’s legal geography approach forces readers to engage with the realities of official state law’s inadequacies and the emergence of new forms of governance that arise to fill the vacuum. As elite zoos have become embedded in international and global regulatory frames and networks, the inability of state law to manage animal conservation and care becomes more and more apparent. The central question becomes: how to regulate and enforce industry standards that include over a hundred countries with different levels of resources and knowledge?

If one extrapolates these legal problems from the care of animals within zoos, to the care of humans within societies, one begins to appreciate the wider implications of Zooland. Official state laws are failing their citizens in many countries on many fronts. In the United States, education, health, incarceration, immigration, taxation, and gun control are some of the more obvious arenas of legal inadequacy. How will these old gaps in governance be filled in? Will new spaces of legality emerge, and if so, will people be able to recognize them? Whose normative standards and ideological positions will prevail? Will legal and regulatory practices be determined at a global level? Given such legal uncertainties, one could argue that the growing numbers of impoverished people in the US and across Europe are feeling more like neglected animals than the hopeful recipients of special pastoral care such as the Tasmanian Devil. Modern zoos may have come a long way over the past century in terms of presenting, managing and preserving some animal species. But the societies in which zoos are situated, and the people that zoos supposedly serve, are arguably losing ground.
Alex Golub’s ethnography is based on fieldwork in an Ipili village perched on the edge of a gold mine in Porgera, Papua New Guinea. The book is suffused with the same hopefulness that characterized Golub’s views during his fieldwork (1999-2001): “I chose to study Porgera because the Ipili were a success story – or at least had the potential to be one” (p. 212). Golub intimates that his optimism that the Ipili might benefit from hosting a major large scale mine was ultimately misplaced (p. 21). But only when the reader reaches the brief afterward is all pretense of Golub’s hoped for positive outcome for the Ipili finally, brutally, stripped away “[t]he Porgera experiment is over, and the Ipili are the losers” (p. 213). In the end, it is clear, in spite of the plural in Golub’s title, that there has only ever been one leviathan at the Porgera Joint Venture gold mine.

Golub’s primary presumed leviathans, described as “black-boxed corporate” entities (Callon and Latour 1981, cited on p. 13), are “the Ipili” and “the mine” (p. 3). They are not equal, as the book’s title suggests. While “the mine” effortlessly personates a leviathan’s characteristics (pp. 20, 198), Golub describes “the Ipili” as having potential to become a leviathan. Golub examines the conditions for the “feasibility” (pp. 19, 20) of the leviathans in a failed negotiation between them, to which he was party. Golub specifically examines conditions that would have to be met by the Ipili to become feasible political actors with a chance of success in these negotiations: “the identities of the Ipili people had to be refined and transformed in order to circulate in the national and international arenas of law, policy, and ideas that accompany and buttress transnational capitalism. Thus “the Ipili” needed to exist and have certain features if the legal and ethical requirements of the government and the mine were to be met” (p. 19). Golub focuses on four key “dimensions of feasibility: the authorization of spokespeople, the disambiguation of kinship and ethnicity, pacification, and political agency” (p. 19). The book explores how and why the Ipili failed (pp. 198, 203) to become leviathans as defined by Golub.

An oddity of the book is that it is largely written as though the optimism with which Golub approached his fieldwork fourteen years earlier, regarding the potential “success” of the Ipili in relation to the mine, remained valid as Golub was crafting the book. This impression is enhanced because Golub reserves for the afterword a full acknowledgment of the violence and hardships of daily life experienced by the Ipili in the shadow of the mine, as though it only became evident after the text was completed. As a consequence, the ongoing criminal acts and gross violations of human rights that the Ipili experience remain largely un-described and under-theorized.
Focused on the ultimate failure of the Ipili to become leviathans, Golub only hints at severe acts of violence perpetrated on Ipili men and women by the mine’s security forces and police working in service of the mine. Golub mentions this extreme violence twice – both times to illustrate an extraneous point. Early in the book Golub considers the semiotic complexity of “the mine:” “If a security guard shoots an Ipili trespasser in the back, has “the mine” or “an employee” shot someone?” (p. 7). In a shallow discussion of the differential bases of power of “the mine” and “the Ipili,” Golub recognizes the mine’s power as rooted in bureaucracy and rule of law, while the Ipili’s power is largely based on their ability to disrupt the mine’s operations by damaging the supply road or the essential power lines – “the mine was powerful . . . but it was also vulnerable” (p. 7). Golub does not adequately theorize the Ipili’s fundamental disadvantage: their basis of power rests on a threat of illegal acts likely to result in broad and brutal police actions placing many Ipili at risk, while the power of the mine rests on bureaucracy, regulations, and laws, some shaped by the company, and all have proven to be easily negotiated by the company under weak governance. Golub notes that actual “outbursts” by Ipili that hamper the operations of the mine “are few” (p. 21). One example of such an “outburst” is from 1993, following an incident in which “police officers believed to be in the mine’s pocket killed a young boy” (p. 21).

Golub further describes an incident following a meeting at the mine site when he was driven back to the village after dark in a company vehicle. He says “local people threw stones at it” (p. 138). This incident is not described in the context of an in-depth exploration of evident hostility of local people to the mine or of their forms of resistance, but rather to illustrate that the village he lived in was “dangerous” and “degraded” (p. 138). Finally, Golub recognizes that police periodically deal with perceived risks to the mine by illegally burning down many houses of nearby villagers, allegedly to maintain law and order (p. 104). Golub notes that the first such incident was in 1987, he mentions another in 2007 (p. 210). In fact, over a hundred local houses were again burnt down by police in 2009 (Amnesty 2010) during a state of emergency, and again in 2014, while the leadership of the landowners was away from Porgera in yet another failed negotiation to have people resettled away from the mine lease area.

Golub aims to analyze “the creation and maintenance of a large corporation (and by extension, global capital)” (p. 3) and concludes his book by calling for an anthropology that is not “overawed” by the mining industry, but is “willing, and able to sport with leviathans” (p. 207). But this book does far more to unpack the Ipili, in largely traditional anthropological ways, than it does to get at the roots of corporate power: the ability to buy and make proprietary expert knowledge about the Ipili; the structures, functions, legal, security, and financial arrangements that enable the mine to do its business. Anthropologists interested in deconstructing corporate power will do well to widen their reading beyond traditional anthropology. For example, Golub would have benefited immensely from the work of O’Faircheallaigh (2006, 2007, 2010,
2012) who has studied hundreds of negotiated agreements between mining companies and indigenous peoples allowing him to determine the necessary conditions for a successful outcome for the community. Those conditions have never existed for the Ipili. Furthermore, despite Golub’s interest in Ipili “feasibility,” defined in part by the “authorization of spokespeople” and “political agency,” he completely fails to recognize these very dimensions when he criticizes attempts by Ipili leadership to seek assistance abroad (p. 211) where they have challenged Barrick’s shareholders directly at the company’s AGM, sought solidarity and leverage in meetings of indigenous peoples at the UN, or sought legal assistance.

Finally, many anthropologists have engaged with the Porgera mine – often in the context of a paid contract with the company resulting in proprietary data on the Ipili for use by the company and very broad restrictions on what the anthropologist can say or write about conditions faced by the Ipili. Others have become part of the structures that perpetuate the mine, such as PEAK (Porgera Environmental Assessment Komiti). This may explain why so few of these anthropologists have spoken out about the abuses perpetrated on the Ipili by the company and its security apparatus. It is to Golub’s credit that he does so, even if primarily in an afterword. Still needed is an anthropologist willing and able to deconstruct the power and the enabling mechanisms of this particular corporate leviathan.

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Amnesty International

O’Faircheallaigh, Ciaran


In the United States, popular discourse about food is almost always shaped from a consumer perspective: wellness, health, safety, and quality. Consumers are disciplined to worry over their bodies and what they are ingesting. Even ideas like fair trade are couched in the language of ethical consumption and choice: consumers are encouraged to take voluntary responsibility and care for small farmers, who are typically envisioned as a faceless and powerless mass toiling somewhere in the Global South.

Chaia Heller tells a radically different and important story, that of a smallholder producer’s movement in the Global North and one with real political clout. Her book traces the development and growth of the famous Confédération Paysanne, France’s second-largest agricultural union, which is organized around ideas of labor, livelihood, quality of life, worker solidarity, as well as, I should add, good food. The union was formed in late 1980s in the class interests of small farmers and has come to hold 20 percent or more of the seats in the national chamber of agriculture, a configuration of political power inconceivable today in the United States. Early in its tenure, the Confédération Paysanne also linked its interests with farmers in the Global South struggling against the inclusion of agriculture in free trade agreements and the dumping of cheap subsidized grains from countries in the Global North. (It cofounded La Via Campesina, a transnational movement of peasant farmers, agricultural laborers, and others.)

Heller’s gripping ethnography is thus about the possibilities for agriculture in a neoliberal era—what she calls postindustrial agriculture. Postindustrial agriculture is a temporal and political space that combines deregulation with heightened forms of commodification and propertization designed in the interests of large capital. It is governed by a distinctive market rationality that is expressed in the expert’s language of efficiency, cost-benefit calculations, and scientific risk. But as consumers experience an increasing lack of control over food systems, postindustrial agriculture is also marked by a romanticization of the “artisanal” and “local”—ideas, Heller argues, that are easily co-opted by large agribusiness for profit.

Heller, however, also argues that the present moment is marked by genuine counter-hegemonic resistance: the Confédération Paysanne is devoted to food sovereignty, community self-determination, and democratic participation. Moreover, it asserts size, scale, and access to farming as independent ethical
values, even if small-scale agriculture will not mean lower consumer prices or more efficient production.

The book’s overarching analytic theme is the distinction between instrumental and solidarity-based rationalities for organizing agriculture and activism, drawing on political ecology, science studies, social movement theory, as well as Heller’s own anarchist sensibilities. Heller illustrates this distinction through her description of the Confédération Paysanne and, in particular, the disparate strategies its members used in the late 1990s to help achieve a de facto ban of GMOs in France. These strategies included extensive efforts at policy reform within the Ministry of Agriculture. Here, union members adopted risk centric language, including a proposal to judge GMOs on a case-by-case basis, given scientific data about potential health and environmental consequences (such as antibiotic resistance and allergenicity). Heller interprets this strategy as an instance of instrumental rationality shaped by farmers’ acute attention to cultivating a public image of themselves as modern, progressive, and open to new technology. She juxtaposes this instrumental logic with the strategies of union members who pressed for a complete ban on GMOs as an unjust form of agribusiness that makes farmers dependent on large corporations for seeds and pesticides, and that destroys local knowledge networks. Here, union members engaged in direct actions such as destroying GMO plants and research, and they used their arrests and legal trials to generate public debate about GMOs. (An aside: an American legal reader will find it fascinating, if also under-analyzed, how exactly activists transformed charges that were presumably of trespass and property destruction into highly detailed courtroom arguments about public morality and the merits of the GMO controversy).

Among the central arguments of the book is that activists should cultivate self-reflexivity about their discursive practices. Even as she admires their creative and disparate strategies, Heller finds her interlocutors at times unaware of how they were participating in hegemonic frames of governance. In the GMO and other struggles, Heller is therefore particularly interested in how union members disrupted dominant narratives, positioning themselves as experts in different debates about food and food quality, and thus moving themselves and others “from instrumental logics to logics based on social justice” (p. 293).

Food, Farms, and Solidarity offers beautiful ethnography, illuminating a complex and nuanced understanding of a social movement that is at once radical and pragmatic. The book sits productively and inspiring at the intersection of ethnography and activism, likely reflecting Heller’s own years with Confédération Paysanne. On occasion, I found Heller’s critique of instrumentalism overly broad, which perhaps reflects THE fact that in her text markets stand for neoliberal globalization. Missing is attention to how the socio-moral values of the smallholders she describes are invariably intertwined with exchange value and thus their own cost-benefit calculations
based on (small-scale) agricultural markets. Such analysis would flow readily from Heller’s point that left analysts and activists must endlessly interrogate how they are disciplined by and simultaneously able to transgress and reappropriate hegemonic terms—as they look, as she does in this book, “for sparkling chips of what is utopian and solidarity based within a neoliberal world” (p. xii).
Environmental Winds: Making the Global in Southwest China
Michael J. Hathaway (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013)

Environmental Winds: Making the Global in Southwest China provides an engaging and accessible ethnographic study of environmentalism in the Yunnan Province of China. Hathaway turns to the contemporary history of Yunnan to examine the regimes of expertise, institutional authorities, knowledge practices, and forms of agency that define global environmentalism-in-the-making. In doing so, Hathaway’s choice of an ethnographic site implicitly critiques the notion of the global flow and the North-to-South directionality often implied by this conception of globalization. He artfully mobilizes a variety of human and non-human actors – Chinese scientists, state officials, NGOs, rural villagers, and wild elephants – to illustrate the flexible networks that define what he terms environmental winds.

Environmental Winds centrally asks: “How was it that Yunnan went from a place that was stigmatized in China as backward, isolated and poor, and barely known abroad, to becoming a global hub of environmentalism?” (p. 6). To answer this question, the first ethnographic chapter of the book provides a compelling study of the transnational work to position Yunnan as a biodiversity hotspot done by Chinese scientists, state officials, and environmental NGOs like the World Wildlife Fund (WWF). Hathaway explores the legitimizing discourses used by the WWF to justify forms of intervention into tropical rain forests that accord with Chinese officials’ understandings of how rural villagers promote environmental degradation through slash-and-burn farming. The chapter charts the contingent interactions between foreign experts and domestic elites as they maneuver to create a space of consensus; these are the conditions of possibility for later, different types of collaboration. Hathaway’s conception of transnational work foregrounds the creative agency of Chinese scientists and officials to recruit foreign NGOs like the WWF into the dialogical process of building an environmentalist movement, while showing how these forms of discursive, epistemic, and affective labor are embedded in concrete socio-political landscapes.

Throughout the book, Hathaway demonstrates how the transnational collaborations that produce global environmentalism in Yunnan are forged within flexible networks that face unexpected difficulties, become reoriented to engage with nascent opportunities, and experience unforeseeable transformations. Chapter 3 attends to the people of Xiao Long, one of the participating model villages in the WWF project to mitigate land degradation by replacing swidden farming with agroforestry (such as interplanting trees with annual crops). While the WWF project is largely a failure, Hathaway
highlights the diverse strategies taken by villagers towards WWF fieldworkers and state officials from the nearby Xishuangbanna Nature Reserve. Villagers exemplify the “art of engagement,” which includes local modes of resistance and future-oriented forms of action seeking to forge relationships with powerful individuals to open up new possibilities of rural development (p. 80). Chapter 4 looks at how global environmentalism in China has unexpectedly facilitated the rise of an indigenous politics linked to sacred spaces and local ecological knowledge. The ethnographic gem of the book is the final chapter, “On the Backs of Elephants,” which provides an exceptionally rich discussion of the “cumulative agency” displayed by wild elephants to adapt to the new environmentalist conditions prevailing in Yunnan, which are bolstered by gun confiscation campaigns carried out in rural villages and stricter regulations concerning protected animal species (p. 157).

The principal contribution that Hathaway makes to the anthropology of globalization is the provocative notion of wind. Hathaway seizes on the Chinese metaphor of “wind” [fēng] as “social formations, made and maintained by people” during periods of dramatic change (p. 11). This is Hathaway’s response to what he sees as a general scholarly model of globalization. Hathaway argues that many “scholarly and popular accounts portray globalization as flowing across the world like a flood, submerging local differences under a universal force (of Westernization or capitalism)” (p. 6). While this is hardly the default model of globalization that characterizes contemporary anthropological scholarship, Hathaway’s exciting study is geared towards undergraduate audiences beginning to interrogate the frequent equivocation made between globalization and Western modernity. Hathaway establishes an analytic concept of wind as a corrective to the key deficiencies of the flow model, which eliminates the centrality of social interactions, relational identity formation, and the reciprocal transformation of agents to the making of the global. His concepts of transnational work and the art of engagement are the two principal components of this new wind model.

Hathaway also pushes back against a key consequence of the global flow model to anthropological understandings of subaltern populations: boxing subjects into a uniformly reactive notion of resistance that eliminates their creative, differential engagement with both the opportunities and perils of transnational connections (p. 85). The key move Hathaway makes in *Environmental Winds* is not to get rid of resistance theory altogether, but rather to recognize a dialogical, iterative field of “transformative resistance” that fashions and refashions the social identities of actors engaging one another within an uneven field of power relations (p. 87). Indeed, Hathaway’s examination of the shifting environmental winds blowing through Yunnan over multiple decades reveals the primacy of both human and non-human agency in building global environmentalism, attending to the creative articulations between historically situated actors engaging in transnational work, and the way these winds “travel back and forth across national
boundaries and larger global divisions (east/west, north/south),” becoming “transformed along the way” (p. 36).

Hathaway’s scholarship sits at the cutting edge of a variety of interdisciplinary fields like science and technology studies, political ecology, and global cultural studies. Anthropologists whose theoretical commitments do not align with a world-making approach to globalization – which includes scholars like Anna Tsing, Mei Zhan, and Lieba Faier – may find the explanatory framework used by Hathaway to be rather thinly conceived, since it relies heavily on contingency and network assemblages (pp. 25-26). Taken on its own terms, however, *Environmental Winds* is a powerful ethnography that challenges students and anthropologists alike, providing a compelling investigation of China’s emergent socio-environmental worlds.
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*Questioning Secularism: Islam, Sovereignty, and the Rule of Law in Modern Egypt*  

One of the paradoxes of the currently flourishing anthropology of secularism in Middle Eastern and Muslim contexts is that it is mostly concerned with issues like Sharia based civil law or Muslim piety activists – and not, say, nightclubs or communists. The presence of religion, rather than its absence, in the nation-state is the issue at stake. Agrama embraces this paradox and dwells on the indeterminacies, antinomies, and twists of the unanswerable, self-reinforcing question about whether Egypt is a religious or a secular state. The nature of this question is well caught by the drawing by M.C. Escher displayed on the cover: a play with perception and perspective, creating an impossible whole from individually sound parts.

The outcome is a virtuous exercise of theoretical analysis that stands in an interesting, and, at times, tense relationship with a highly sensible ethnography. Agrama writes about the everyday work of civil courts, the *hisba* lawsuit raised against Abu Zayd in the 1990’s, the state Fatwa Council where people can ask Muslim scholars for an answer to a problem, and the work of Islamist lawyers supporting detainees under the state of emergency of the late Mubarak era. These ethnographic case studies are the starting point for a much wider theoretical engagement with sovereignty, the state, and the secular.

In a time when much of the anthropological work on statehood is focused on neo-liberal entanglements of politics and business, Agrama offers a refreshingly different take. He shows that state sovereignty is not only alive and kicking, but also on the increase. Demands on the state always evoke the state as the responsible sovereign actor, giving it more and deeper power over its subjects.

Agrama emphatically places his work within a distinct tradition of scholarship on secularism inspired by the work of Talal Asad, and subscribes to an understanding of secularism as a form of state power that works to regulate religion and to produce specific attitudes, behaviours and sensibilities. Rather than a way to separate the political and the religious, secularism in this understanding is a way of disciplining religion that extends to the intimate lives of the state's subjects. Agrama adds an important perspective by arguing that secularism is not so much a norm as it is a question, a "problem-space" (pp. 27-33) that compels those engaging with law, politics and the state to repeatedly ask questions about the relationship of religion and state. As a problem-space, secularism is inherently indeterminate and ambiguous, raising
paradoxical, irresolvable questions that reproduce and magnify the anxieties and antinomies of secularism.

Agrama questions a number of common-sense assumptions about power, law, state, politics and religion. And yet the substantial reality of the secular as an identifiable form of power is itself not drawn into question, and neither is the assertion that the secular is inherently and fundamentally bound with the liberal (nor does he fully explain what the liberal is). On the contrary, secularism and state power appear as the prime mover of events. At best, secular power creates conditions and contradictions that allow Islamist lawyers to exert a degree of resistance and critique, but by doing so they also become intertwined in secular paradoxes (chapter 6). One wonders whether this is not a rather one-sided history. Why not think of secularism also as the consequence of societal conflicts? In Egypt at least, the concrete shape of questions about and by secularism is inseparable from the rise of Islamist movements as the main and strongest force of opposition that makes contested claims in the name of the religious tradition shared by the vast majority of the country's inhabitants. Which is cause, which is consequence?

The privileging of the secularism-sovereignty complex as the prime mover at times narrows down the scope of Agrama's argumentation where the ethnography might have allowed for more. The chapters on law's suspicion, for example, begins with a fascinating observation about the prevalence of suspicion at courts – in contrast to the fundamental assumption of good faith in the Fatwa Council. Arguing at length to rule out possible other explanations, Agrama attributes this suspicion (and its absence in the Fatwa Council) to a liberal-secular loop of vigilance against abuses of power that generates the need for increasing control and suspicion. It is a valid point, but one wonders why it is necessary to pinpoint a single explanation and thus to marginalise other questions such as why and with what kind of problems motivate somebody to go to a court or to a mufti in the first place.

Whatever my reservations may be about secularism as a substantial reality and as a master key of explanation, Agrama does hit the mark in his final chapter about Islamist lawyers in the Egyptian emergency state. Here he shows with great ethnographic sensibility how it is to live and struggle under the condition of a state of exception, and how exceptional powers have since long become an inseparable part of what liberal political discourse calls the rule of law. In a time of a seemingly never-ending war on terror worldwide, and after the increasingly catastrophic failure of the January 25 Revolution in Egypt, Agrama's suggestion that the state of exception is one possible secular future is becoming more true than he may have hoped it to be.

Agrama's book belongs to some of the best of what has been written on the topic of law and secularism, a book that inspires the reader to rethink many taken-for-granted assumptions about law, courts, fatwas, and the state. To fully
understand the critical thrust of this book, it is important, however, to read it not only as an intellectual exercise but also as a political, even utopian, work.

This is especially visible in the notion of *asecularity* which Agrama introduces in his analysis of the Fatwa Council's work in order to describe indifference about the religious-secular division. In the epilogue, Agrama returns to the theme of asecularity by drawing attention to the first days of Tahrir in 2011. For Agrama, this moment of “bare sovereignty” (p. 231) of a shared protest and democratic ethos was a more far-reaching case of asecularity: "utterly indifferent to the question of where to draw the line between" the religious and the secular (p. 231, emphasis is in original). What Agrama describes may be the myth of Tahrir more than the reality of Tahrir where, in my experience, the religious-secular conflict was suspended rather than overcome, and the fantastic unity of bare sovereignty took place in the middle of a lot of anxiety, quarreling, and ideological projections. In any case, the asecular moment – if there was one – came to an end briefly afterward, and Agrama (again perhaps more rightly than he may have hoped) soberly predicts a reinforcement of the paradigms of state sovereignty and national security.

As a description of political and legal reality, Agrama's vision of asecularity is very unlikely to be realized except in exceptional moments. As an analytical term, asecularity only makes sense within a very specific academic debate that restricts the secular to state power, while at the same time totalizing it into a key to understanding the contemporary world. However, my hunch is that it should be better read as a utopian concept. In variance from secularist political visions and the Islamist politicization of religion alike, Agrama shows the secular-religious divide as a problem to be addressed or even overcome, not as a solution to be proposed in favor of either direction. There is also a more simple concern involved, a hope – even if very faint at the moment – that there may be a day when people will not be imprisoned, tortured, or murdered for being on the wrong side of the religious-secular divide (whichever that side may be).
Human Rights and African Airwaves: Mediating Equality on the Chichewa Radio

Harri Englund (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011)

Harri Englund's book *Human Rights and African Airwaves* puts forth a novel theory of equality and human rights through his analysis of a news program on Chichewa radio in the Republic of Malawi. He sets out to use ethnography to “explore and test the liberal assumptions that often inform the definition of problems and solutions in contemporary Africa” (p. 9). Instead of assuming equality as a primary goal pursued by governments and individuals, for example, Englund's careful ethnographic account of the news program *Nkhani Zam'maboma* (News from the Districts) describes stories that do not erase "differences and hierarchy in the name of equality, [but rather] enable the Malawian poor to assert relationships within differences" (p. 51). Englund's broader claim is to argue for an alternative to the rights driven assumptions of human rights organizations. Instead of emphasizing an individual's rights or policy solutions to injustice, he suggests that the stories broadcast on *Nkhani Zam'maboma* are motivated more by the idea of obligation between differently positioned subjects; they “presuppose mutually constitutive dependence” (p. 224).

Throughout the book, Englund calls for a more nuanced understanding of equality, one that rejects the parity principle operative in most liberal and human rights discourses. In so doing, *Human Rights and African Airwaves* goes beyond simply offering an African alternative that would do little other than provide a mirror image of the liberal models he seeks to challenge. One must leave the “shadow of individualism,” Englund argues, and consider a model of relationship with mutual obligations at its center – such as those prevalent in the news stories broadcast on this Chichewa program. Paralleling several recent critical reflections on human rights discourse, England shows the power of ethnography to rethink core global concepts – freedom, equality, individualism – by taking seriously African-language radio and practices that engage with these same issues in ways that challenge the very basis of liberal thought.

*Human Rights and African Airwaves* focuses on a single radio program, yet it is hardly narrow in the scope of subjects it addresses. Established in 1998, *Nkhani Zam'maboma* is part of the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation's (MBC) attempt to provide a national forum for Malawians from all regions of the country to voice their grievances. It is entangled with the emergence of a liberal public sphere in Malawi, and Englund situates its beginnings within three trends in public life: the liberalization of airwaves, the decentralization of local government, and participatory development (p. 96). Though originally intended as a program to broadcast local experience of development, the
program quickly developed into stories sent by listeners who wished to express grievances against local authorities – chiefs, religious leaders, teachers. The ethnographic analysis of the program, then, centers on questions of authority, truth, and justice that emerge in the program’s stories.

In the core ethnographic chapters (chapters 4 – 6), Englund discusses the role of the editors in transforming the stories into news headlines, the role of correspondents in sending stories and maintaining relations to editors, listeners’ response and circulation of stories, and the means by which a story’s truth is established. For those interested in the ethnography of media, these chapters provide interesting methodological and theoretical lessons. For one, Englund does not reduce the editors to mere pawns of the state broadcasting company, revealing that despite the stations’ confirmed bias, the program Nkhani Zam’maboma complicates the broadcasting company’s agenda. Englund focuses instead on the production of the news and its reception, attempting to connect both to broader cultural genres and local practices that affect the genre of news produced. The genre of storytelling, for example, has links to other oral genres that challenge authority (praise poetry, songs, popular music, and Southern and Central African forms of deliberation attached to the institution of chieftaincy, such as, bwalo in Malawi and kgotla in Botswana), as well as the genre of news reading, though Englund insists on its novelty by calling the program a "nameless genre" (title of chapter 4).

At a theoretical level, he seeks to address some of the contemporary anthropological assumptions about Africa and liberalism through his ethnography. With respect to African anthropology, one of Englund's critical interventions is in anthropological discussions about witchcraft, a theme that appears regularly on the news program. Rather than looking to witchcraft as an aspect of the occult, Englund examines the discourse on witchcraft as a way to present alternatives to the freedom-focused discourse of human rights. Stories about witches, though they occupied only a third of the news stories broadcast, revealed a more complex view of power that evoked ambiguity and argument about figures of authority and their conceit. Editors are not interested in proving or disproving the reality of witchcraft – despite the politics of knowledge that surrounds the subject – and instead witchcraft stories provide opportunities to engage issues of injustice critically.

Arguing against the critique put forth by Jamima Pierre that studies of witchcraft are symptomatic of the allegedly racist underpinnings of all anthropological work in Africa, Englund engages in a broad discussion about the problems and benefits of alterity in anthropology. For Englund, the anthropological conceit of revealing alternative worldviews remains productive, not to reinforce African exceptionalism; but rather, to offer analytic and pragmatic alternatives to dominant modes of thinking. He thereby contrasts his method with the Comoroffs’ argument that witchcraft is part of a continuum of “occult economies” – including pyramid saving schemes and the stockmarket – all of which encourage people to embrace the “millenial
moment” (p. 87). For Englund, this “erosion of alterity spells the end of alternatives” (p. 88), though he is clear that seeking alterity is not the same as seeking incommensurable cultural or racial worlds. Such alternatives can be found in the stories of injustice broadcast on *Nkhani Zam’maboma* that might broaden and enrich assumptions within human rights discourse.

England’s book is divided into three main sections: Human Rights, African Alternatives; The Ethos of Equality; The Aesthetics of Claims. The first two sections establish the theoretical questions and ethnographic analysis of the program outlined above, and the third section addresses the genre the program and its reception as a moral discourse. Situating the program in relation to other genres that challenge authority in public (praise poetry, songs, popular music, and Southern/Central African forms of deliberation – *kgotla* and *bwalo*), Englund shows that the program has a disciplinary effect by inciting shame and fear in its listeners. Stories tend to end with disappointment instead of anger, which Englund suggests, allow listeners to draw their own conclusions. To counter the general adulatory tenor of the book towards this program, England’s last ethnographic chapter analyzes criticism – particularly Christian criticism – of the program. In my mind, these criticisms serve to further accentuate the author’s own appeal of the program as an alternative to human rights discourse. Human rights, Englund claims in his last chapter, was translated into Cichewa through the concept of freedom, not equality (p. 219). The book seeks to go “Beyond the Parity Principle” (chapter 9) and shows that while *Nkhani Zam’maboma* is compatible with a liberal worldview it also provides a more robust challenge to some of the fundamental assumptions within liberalism, namely that equality is synonymous with parity, which serves as the goal and basis of all human relationships. Claims broadcast on the program, England argues, suggest that “*Nkhani Zam’maboma* can deliver equality from the shadows of individualism to open up a brighter prospect of comparison” (p. 225). Equality and obligation go hand in hand, and obligation is considered a corollary of relationships that constitute subjects more broadly.

Overall, the book engages many points that are central to contemporary anthropology in a clear and cogent manner, if at times a bit repetitive. The issues and ethnographic scope expanded beyond the single radio program, yet I was often left wanting more ethnographic stories from outside the specific program context that might support Englund’s argument about liberalism and human rights. What other publics (either other programs or media) similarly challenge the assumptions about equality built into human rights discourse? Is parity a principle eschewed in other contexts as well? That said, ethnographic analysis of radio is relatively underrepresented in the anthropology of media as well as in anthropology of human rights. Englund’s book is a welcome addition to both of these growing fields, and will be of use to any critics of liberalism.
Most discussions about democracy – be they academic, policy oriented or in the media – start from the assumption that democracy is self-evident: it’s most important features being competitive elections, individual liberties, universal suffrage and the secret ballot. Recently anthropologists have challenged such normative views. Rather than evaluating democratic performance against a universal liberal yardstick, they have carried out research on how democracy is actually lived and practiced on the ground. Paula Sabloff, a political anthropologist, introduces a new element to this debate by asking whether the desire for democracy – be it liberal or otherwise – is universal. Sabloff employs cognitive perspectives to show how an emphasis on emotions and values can shed light on this desire’s universality.

Sabloff’s objective is to challenge status quo views about who wants democracy and why. The key questions the book address are: is the desire for democracy universal? Has the concept of democracy changed in Mongolia since the end of socialism in 1989? And, does the concept vary by demographic categories? The author argues that Mongolia is a particularly interesting place to study ideas about democracy because, since WWI, it has experienced three types of governance including feudalism, Soviet–style socialism, and capitalist democracy. To answer her questions Sabloff draws on extensive anthropological fieldwork (carried out between 1996 and 2003), archival research, and over 1200 open-ended interviews, which she has coded and subject to statistical analysis.

The book begins with an historical chapter, which explains the history of governance in Mongolia from Genghis Khan to the present day. Sabloff then traces people’s changing attitudes towards human rights, political and economic freedom, and the rights and duties of both citizen and government. Sabloff explains that Mongolians value democracy very highly. She says that the strongly felt desire for democracy can be traced back to Mongolia’s nomadic pastoral culture, which prioritizes self-reliance, independence, and dignity. Sabloff’s informants tell her that all these values are more easily fulfilled under a democratic – as opposed to totalitarian -government.

However, while Mongolians want democracy, they do not want it in the way that western policy makers might expect. Sabloff explains that Mongolians see voting as a right rather than a duty. In addition, they believe that the government should act as a patron – taking an active role in preparing them for capitalism and entry into the global economy. Sabloff describes how the desire for this form of capitalist democracy – as opposed to liberal democracy – is rooted in Mongolia’s specific history including: the socialist experience
(which emphasized a passive citizenry and the high regard of leaders), the country’s bumpy transition to the free market, and a historic desire for national sovereignty.

Building on the Mongolian case study Sabloff argues that the desire for democracy is universal – and that it stems from deeply held values that can be found in all societies including dignity, justice, hope, and self-determination. She suggests that in turn these values arise from emotions that psychologists have also discovered to be universal – including anger, fear, and pride amongst others. She argues that so many people want democracy because they consider that it brings together government ideology and structure with these deep-seated values and emotions. Thus, according to Sabloff, people see democracy as a “means to an end” (p. 3) – it therefore follows that as peoples’ goals shift, the way that they define democracy and prioritize its attributes will also change. In other words, Sabloff is arguing that the desire for democracy is universal – but the kind of democracy that is desired is not.

*Does Everyone Want Democracy* goes some way to meet the ambitious goals that Sabloff sets out to achieve. The book shows readers that all Mongolians have a desire for democracy but ideas about what that means vary across time and space. However it remains questionable the extent to which the findings can be generalized to argue for the universal appeal of democracy rooted in a standard set of values and emotions. Thus, while this book can be applauded for being ambitious in its intentions, more comparative and cross cultural analysis is needed to validate the claims.

Sabloff writes clearly, and her argument is backed up by rigorous interview data and statistical analysis. However, I found the ethnography to be rather thin. I came away with no real understanding about how people relate to one another or engage with the state on a daily basis. Sabloff’s attempt to bring cognitive perspectives to the study of political anthropology represents an important step, although more could be done to make the cognitive approach relevant for the non-specialist reader. This is an innovative book that should read by any scholar who is critically engaging with debates on democracy, citizenship, or modern day Mongolia. The book would also be of use to cognitive anthropologists who work on emotion, values, and ideology.
In the last five years, a spate of new books has investigated humanitarianism as a set of transnational institutions, a problematic moral system, a geopolitical weapon, and a principle of the post-Cold War international order. But what many of these critics have failed to understand is that humanitarianism is also a business—a huge business, worth more than $18 million a year. In Humanitarian Business, Thomas G. Weiss treats humanitarianism as an industry, explains why many of the policy decisions made by humanitarians are in response to market forces and argues that the marketization of compassion leads to enormous inefficiencies and unintended outcomes.

Weiss begins by looking at the development of a market for humanitarian aid. He shows how, at the end of the Cold War, the dissolution of empires led to a rise in civil wars that vastly increased the number of displaced people in the world. The United States and Western European countries quickly began to see aid as a form of political action that could link superpowers to Third World client states. As a result, they dramatically increased funding for humanitarian aid. Aid also became a key part of war-fighting: as an element of a soft power strategy, humanitarian aid was seen as essential to winning the hearts and minds of non-combatants in complex military conflicts such as those in Iraq and Afghanistan. Because donor governments subscribed to the neoliberal notion that for-profit providers are more efficient than governments themselves, they created a market in which a plethora of NGOs and intergovernmental agencies soon bid on government contracts to provide humanitarian relief. The result was to be expected: a dramatic increase in the number and size of humanitarian NGOs and for-profit corporations providing services, with some reaching annual budgets of more than $1 billion.

Contrary to neoliberal dogma, Weiss argues, the marketization of humanitarian aid does not result in a lower cost or in the more efficient provision of services. Instead, he argues, unregulated market competition leads to a fragmented situation on the ground where humanitarian agencies withhold information from one another, duplicate services, refuse to coordinate efforts, and lose economies of scale. The situation is so bad, he argues that calling this a humanitarian system is “a misnomer unless the adjective ‘feudal’ accompanies it” (p. 96). The result is that NGOs are constantly chasing contracts in order to reproduce themselves as business entities while, at the same time, market failures leave gaps in the provision of aid in a particular crisis and less visible emergencies are neglected altogether.

Weiss’s argument that marketization leads humanitarian agencies to pay illicit bribes to belligerents is less compelling—it’s no doubt true that humanitarian
agencies must sometimes pay belligerents to access the people they are trying to help, but it’s not clear that the marketization of aid is what drives this problem. But his second, less clearly developed point is what drives massive distortions in the aid game: he argues that when NGOs are dependent for their survival on contracts from donor governments, they become the adjuncts of belligerent states, and aid itself is transformed from succour into a weapon. The politicization of aid since 9/11 has so profoundly shaped the industry that the very notion of a humanitarian non-governmental organization has become suspect. When governments become the real clients, and displaced people become merely the means of production, NGOs are the adjuncts of states, no matter how independent they claim to be.

One wishes, maybe, that Weiss’s book was based more on original research and less on recapping recent books by Barnett, Maren, Hopgood and others. A more detailed analysis of the market dynamics of the humanitarian industry— including the influence of lobbying by provider organizations on that market – would have been extremely helpful. But Weiss has done a great service by saying out loud what observers of aid all know: that aid is not about altruism or compassion, but about cold, hard business logic and market dictates that shape what humanitarians will or will not provide to people in need.
Killing with Kindness: Haiti, International Aid, and NGOs

*Killing with Kindness: Haiti, International Aid, and NGOs* engages both state and non-state forms of global governance and their relationships. Schuller’s ethnography of aid begins with a compelling comparison of two Haitian women’s NGOs focused on HIV/AIDS education and prevention. The comparison revolves around differences in participation in the programming of the two NGOs and differences in their degree of autonomy in planning and implementing interventions. These two elements are connected: the NGO that can exercise greater autonomy from donors in its actions is also better able to integrate its target population into its planning processes. The NGO *Fanm Tet Ansanm* (Women United) interacts with its constituents in iterative processes of service provision and brainstorming regarding additional needs that require redress. The other NGO, *Sove Lavi* (Saving Lives), operates in a more top-down fashion. Though it carries out its activities in conjunction with Community Action Councils that represent the communities targeted by its programming, the priorities and ideas articulated by these Community Action Councils do not elicit a response from the NGO. To what should scholars attribute these differences, Schuller asks?

The answer he provides – and the real strength of the ethnography – emerges from the way Schuller pushes his analysis beyond the local NGOs, following the money trail to the foreign donors that fund these Haitian organizations. Schuller is thus able to demonstrate how the donors’ modes of operation and agendas shape, and indeed, mostly constrain, the options available to the NGOs they fund. *Fanm Tet Ansanm* receives funding from multiple donors, primarily European NGOs. Because of its diverse portfolio of funders, *Fanm Tet Ansanm* leaders are able to refuse some of the objectives and techniques proposed by individual donors, if they believe these approaches will not work in Haiti. NGO personnel suggest that the NGO donors recognize and respect their on-the-ground expertise. By contrast, *Sove Lavi* is dependent on funding from only two public development agencies, including USAID. Its dependence on a narrower funding base makes *Sove Lavi* more vulnerable to loss of resources and more pliable in the face of changing USAID priorities and policies.

To demonstrate this vulnerability, Schuller traces the history of rhetoric and conflict surrounding development aid in the United States from the Cold War period, when expenditures on development aid were justified in terms of combating communism, to the post-Cold War era, when USAID professionals sought to justify international development aid through the imposition of performance- or results-based metrics, mobilizing neoliberal policy rhetorics to implement new requirements for assessment. These requirements severely
limited the autonomy of Haitian NGOs to plan programming; they also made participation in planning by target populations largely irrelevant: goals and targets were set by USAID, and funds were disbursed only when targets were met.

However, Schuller does not stop with analysis of the changing ideology of aid; he goes even further to document the ways USAID programming is shaped by US political processes. Located within the Department of State but dependent on funding from Congress, USAID policies reflect partisan political strategies. USAID policies serve as a battleground for conflicts between Democrats and Republicans, especially if the legislative and executive branches of government are controlled by competing parties.

The strength of this ethnography derives from its analysis of the links among national and transnational political projects in donor countries of the global North, the policies imposed by Northern aid agencies, and the planning and implementation of programming by NGOs in the global south. Both planning programs and implementing them are increasingly accomplished with little input from the groups targeted by this programming. Schuller also explores how these trends constrain the capacity of the Haitian state itself to govern Haiti. Significantly, by identifying broad ideological patterns in US aid policy and tracing the byzantine political competition that shaped USAID policies regarding aid to Haiti, Schuller enables readers to understand how major trends in US aid policy have been shaped, without reducing US policy to these trends.

The conclusion to the ethnography places the study in relation to the bodies of theory on which Schuller’s analysis draws. He briefly summarizes political economy and Foucauldian approaches, suggesting that each approach alone is limited by blind spots that can be rectified by recourse to the other. However, this argument received relatively little attention, and exactly how Schuller proposes to integrate these approaches remains somewhat unclear. He also engages the structure-agency debate, drawing attention to both dimensions of the case studies he presents. While he asserts that scholars must account for the structures of inequality that generate and continually reproduce poverty, he also calls for scholars to recognize the agency embodied in the good intentions held by many of the personnel caught within these interconnected institutions. Taking this tack to its logical conclusion, for readers who seek to move beyond critique to suggestions for change, Schuller also presents a number of actions that could enable aid funding to actually contribute to improving the lives of impoverished groups in the global South in ways that target populations themselves would value.

*Killing with Kindness* offers both engaging ethnographic examples and extensive analysis of the complex network of governmental and non-governmental institutions through which Haiti and Haitians are ruled. Scholars of development, humanitarian assistance, NGOs, and transnational forms of
government will find this work valuable as a model for expanding analysis of these institutions and processes. Schuller’s clear language and illustrative ethnographic examples will also make this book readily accessible to advanced undergraduate students.
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Life in Crisis: The Ethical Journey of Doctors Without Borders
Peter Redfield (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013)

Life in Crisis provides a rich, descriptive, and reflective account of one international humanitarian organization that is distinctive in its style and focus as well as representative of the dilemmas of humanitarian engagement broadly speaking. Based on six years of fieldwork in multiple locations, including Uganda, Paris, and New York, this account of Doctors Without Borders (MSF) weaves together vignettes of field experiences, readings of the group’s own archives and publicity, interviews with members, as well as historical-philosophical contextualizations to create a richly textured, sympathetic and nuanced view of MSF’s habits and customs. If Redfield cannot stand outside a humanitarian frame of value, he argues, he can explore the achievements and limits of the specific form of medical humanitarianism MSF embraces.

The book is divided into three parts, yet Redfield returns throughout to points of tension in the group’s self-conception, providing a recursive, reflexive structure to the whole. In the first part, Redfield portrays MSF as a worldwide emergency room team, serving people who find themselves in an exceptional state of risk. As a consequence, MSF adopts a rhetoric of urgency. Interspersing descriptive vignettes with a discussion of biopower and states of exception, Redfield focuses on a set of central problems for the group: namely, that immediate action to insure present survival necessarily defers a secondary but vital MSF concern for human dignity. Whereas MSF embraces a vision of states-fostering-life worldwide, Redfield points out its own actions do little to bring this about. Instead, MSF volunteers highlight and denounce the continuous absence of care. Outspoken and independent, their goal is to agitate, disrupt, and encourage others to alter the world by practicing humanitarian medicine. For doctors in wealthy countries, MSF’s allure resides in the moral clarity of practicing what they perceive as pure medicine, of responding to emergency. Despite this romanticism, MSF embraces what Redfield identifies as a Foucauldian “ethic of discomfort” (p. 35). In their 1999 Nobel acceptance speech, he notes, the organization declares that humanitarian action is limited and is no substitute for political action.

Redfield then provides a long history of the founding of MSF, beginning with Enlightenment ideas about the necessity of responding to human suffering. He briefly sketches 19th and early 20th century precursors, specifically the Red Cross and medical missionaries in Africa. In the rebellious milieu of the 1960s, a group of Red Cross doctors chafed at protocols that prohibited speaking out about Biafran atrocities. In what Redfield describes as a new alliance between medicine and journalism, these and other French volunteers distinguished their new organization as a secular, activist version of the Red Cross. Sketching the challenges of various campaigns, internal disputes, and
the rapid growth of the organization into a complex transnational federation, Redfield identifies a steady move toward pragmatism. He concludes, “In its secular medical version, then, humanitarianism has increasingly concentrated on a distinctly material project of salvation” (p. 66).

In the second part, Redfield considers MSF’s global reach. On the medical side, Redfield details how the organization shaped itself into a global strike force armed with prepackaged supply kits tailored to the predictable conditions of crisis on the ground. Whereas this system proved efficient and effective, kit culture represents the opposite of local knowledge and leaves larger structures of inequality intact. With regard to MSF’s commitment to speak out against atrocities, Redfield details how temiognage, or advocating for suffering populations, emerged gradually, was operationalized differently among the different national sections, and continues to be a source of debate in an organization that also officially embraces neutrality. Currently, MSF develops a scientifically inflected appeal to human rights by combining direct observation, testimony of victims, and statistical studies. Redfield draws on Foucault’s notion of the specific intellectual to characterize the kind of authority MSF wields through its simultaneously descriptive and moral public speech. He concludes this section with a chapter that attends to structural inequalities and weaknesses within the organization. These are based fundamentally on differential access to mobility among its various staff—expats and locals, men and women, older and younger volunteers. Redfield concludes that this vitally mobile organization may decry but not escape the politics within which it is enmeshed.

In the third part, Redfield continues to both chronicle the evolving and broadening mission of MSF and identify points of tension where the moral certainty of providing care in a failed state breaks down. He emphasizes that MSF asserts the equal value of all lives and obstinately refuses to accept justifications for human misery and death based on the need to achieve some greater good. Yet, in their practice, MSF staff must prioritize needs, not only in the moment of triage but even when distinguishing states of exceptional risk from ordinary life. Indeed, Redfield argues that while the organization may describe itself as jetting from one spectacular catastrophe to another, much of its life plays out in places that exist in an uncomfortable space of uncertainty on the verge of disaster, raising the question of what the role of an external medical force in a semi-functional state should be. Moreover, as he describes the organization’s movement into realms of practice beyond the refugee camp, he observes, “The more humanitarians respond to enduring conditions like AIDS or sexual violence or recognize root problems like poverty, the more they confront a problem of sorting and choosing, particularly if operating worldwide” (p. 169). In addition, the organization has developed an increasing concern for security after the 1990s; this in turn has led the organization to privilege the lives of international medical volunteers over those of local staff and victims of crisis. Redfield concludes that MSF simultaneously embraces and rebels against the medical minimalism that forms the core of its mission;
though they have no plan to bring it into being, members wish for a world of equal access to care, and in the meantime, however critical and discontented with it they may be, they find redemption in action.

Redfield’s account is well written and well researched with numerous footnotes that demonstrate a broad command of the ethnographic, historical and philosophical literature on humanitarianism. It will be of interest both to those who are curious about MSF and to those engaged with contemporary humanitarianism more generally.
When scholars write about economic exchange as total social phenomena they face a methodological problem: how does one assign emphasis to one particular strand or the other, especially when arguing that this phenomenon is relevant across domains of social practice? When done well, such studies can point out unexpected convergences in a critical fashion; when poorly executed, the network fails to reveal its composition. Periodic events, such as pilgrimages or fairs, highlight this problem for ethnographic writing and research design. Cooper’s *The Market and Temple Fairs of Rural China* takes on this problem, providing a detailed account of rural market fairs that have emerged in the wake of economic reforms in China. In doing so, Cooper shows the historical depth of market fairs and their relationships to popular culture and religious practices. He argues that secular market fairs valorize formerly proscribed religious practices and support the subsequent invention of popular religion as cultural heritage in contemporary China. *Temple Fairs* suggests a common tropology of market, festival, and ritual through the term red fire (*honghuo*), a cognate of the noisy heat (*renao*) well known to scholars of popular religious practice among ethnic Chinese people in Taiwan and Southeast Asia. This “sociothermic theory” (p. 53) of Chinese religion relates to popular culture: As Cooper argues, *honghuo* informs rural Chinese understandings of public life and thus the ways that rural Chinese people negotiate with the state. Unfortunately, however, Cooper fails to develop this tropology thematically, and the monograph makes crucial missteps in terms of analysis and organization.

*Temple Fairs* gives a broad description of market fairs, their history over the centuries, and their offerings. As Cooper wends through several market fairs, he shows how the “effervescent” (p. 4) and “grotesque” (p. 95) features of market fairs create space for counterhegemonic discourses, like those features of carnival described by Bakhtin (pp. 95-97). Weighing in on arguments concerning resistance versus cooptation, Cooper argues that market fairs “involve the organized expression of sentiments and ideas disapproved of by the modernist, secular Communist state,” realizing “autonomous zones” in which a popular worldview opposed to the state might flourish (pp. 188-189). Moreover, Cooper shows that markets and temples represent funds of human, cultural, and economic capital over which political factions at and across various administrative levels wrangle. For these reasons, the ethnography of market fairs in China could contribute to wider discussions in the discipline concerning social transformations in postsocialist states.

Organizationaly, the book is divided into a series of chapters that introduce the Jinhua region, popular religious practices in China, and the offerings of
market festivals. Later chapters in the book take up the relationships between market festivals and traditional performance genres before moving to a consideration of how market festivals have been “resacralized” (pp. 194, 208) during the late 1990s.

Cooper’s book disappoints largely when “unraveling the strands” (p. 63, passim) of the markets as total social phenomena. Long sections of Temple Fairs give what appear to be digests of official histories of the towns and their markets without careful analysis of these materials. Other sections describe performance genres or market offerings, leaving the reader to wonder how these elements support Cooper’s argument. Cooper’s analysis in the fairs seems superficial, largely because the book lacks an investigation of the social networks of those who work in the fairs or the lives of those who engage with them. Similarly, when he discusses performance genres, he pays little attention to actual performances or texts. Cooper touches on a number of important issues—the remarkable resurgence of religious practices in reform period China, the role of the state in post-Mao reconfigurations of popular culture, grassroots and official anxieties about the commercialization of everyday life. Yet he passes by them without sustained attention, as if browsing stalls at a temple fair.

Scholars of political and legal anthropology will likely be interested in the shifting legality of market fairs and the pilgrimage sites connected to them, particularly as these shifts occurred in the interstices of administrative practice. Much recent scholarship on popular religious practices in contemporary China has recognized how governing religious practices in the post-Mao period has both reinvented these practices and reconfigured the state. Postsocialism has not represented the retreat of the state but a shift in the terms of engagement. Cooper does not actively engage with much of this scholarship, and ignores the voluminous scholarship on popular religious practices among Sinophone communities elsewhere. Lacking a more subtle paradigm, he seems committed to a state versus society model that cannot pose questions concerning how local state and governance is reconfigured, certainly an important feature of the market fair’s totality.

Temple Fairs will be useful for scholars of traditional theatre in China who wish to see a catalogue of genres associated with Jinhua, but will disappoint those looking for an analysis of how market fairs might constitute a contemporary Chinese imagination of social life. Perhaps the problems of the monograph can be attributed to Cooper’s method. Cooper seems to have visited several temple fairs in Jinhua, official handlers in tow; although he combines descriptions of the fairs with archival information, he reports data from these archives without subjecting them to critical examination. Moving from fair to fair, temple to temple, he does not follow the merchants, visitors, or other actors in ways that might illuminate connections between the market and the everyday social worlds these actors inhabit. What Cooper’s monograph lacks is the kind of ethnographic treatment that could ground his
arguments. As one of the only book length monographs on temple fairs in contemporary China, *Temple Fairs* makes a small contribution. As a description of market fairs as total social phenomena, however, it falls short of the mark.
Where does a revolution live? This is the question at the heart of Mary Steedly’s second book. *Rifle Reports* is made of stories: stories of the war that led to the end of Dutch rule and the beginning of Indonesian sovereignty as told by men and women of the Karo highlands of Sumatra. Steedly’s research for her first book focused on other topics. Yet tales of the Japanese Occupation and the upheavals that followed made their way into her notes. Sensing their importance, Steedly returned to the highlands in the early 1990s. She collected oral histories focusing on the period between 1945, when Indonesia’s first president, Sukarno, declared independence, and 1948, when the Indonesian military consolidated its control of the militias that fought to make the declaration real. Historians have described these years as a time of social revolution, when old scores were settled and old hierarchies overturned (see Kahin 1952, Kahin 1985). Through a close analysis of Karo stories and the circumstances of their telling, Steedly tracks how a particular postcolonial present remained haunted by a revolutionary past.

Where does the Indonesian revolution live? For the Karo Steedly interviewed, it didn’t: “repolusi,” as they call it, was a regrettable thing of the past. Instead, Steedly’s interlocutors referred to the Indonesian war of independence – “Perang Kemerdekaan” – the sanitized struggle Karo and other Indonesians celebrated every August 17. In this, they followed the party line of Indonesia’s second president, Suharto, a retired general who came to power in 1965 amidst the massacre of suspected communists and ruled until 1998. Suharto’s authoritarian New Order regime maintained control by instilling a fear of the massa – the masses – the very group that Suharto’s predecessor, Sukarno, claimed to represent. The regime demonized the forces of popular sovereignty by projecting the masses’ revolutionary energies onto the figure of the criminal and other supposed traitors to the nation. New Order understandings insinuated themselves into Karo tales about the war. Veterans spoke of sacrificing for the sake of “development.” Suspected collaborators weren’t killed, they were “pacified,” *diamankan*, a term that excuses perpetrators for taking innocent lives. Any abuses stemmed from the “ignorance” of villagers, as those speaking in this New Order register explained. Some followed this line of thinking to its logical conclusion: the violence of Dutch colonialism consisted of depriving people of the benefits not of social justice, but of New Order style schools.

But Steedly’s interlocutors didn’t always talk this way. Some spoke of the New Order in a more critical vein; instead of crediting Suharto for delivering the goods, these veterans implied that they had earned development all by
themselves (p. 162). Women tended to describe the aims and outcome of the struggle in more expansive terms altogether, stressing the sense of freedom and possibility they experienced at the time. Young women signed up for the Srikandi Corps and other female units founded to support the war effort. They drilled, they traveled, and they found new meaning in daily routines. When undertaken for the benefit of the troops, even farming and cooking became a way of building what Sukarno called a “golden bridge to the future.” The “eager girls” of the revolution remembered the hardships of supporting (and suffering) the militias as part of a struggle to create a new self.

Within their stories, one hears echoes of voices described by James Siegel in *Fetish, Recognition, Revolution* (1997), his analysis of Indonesian nationalism, which he argues emerged in response to the native population’s exposure to global communications. Siegel shows how the anti-colonial struggle began when activists were inspired by what they were reading to see themselves and the colony in new ways. Indonesian nationalism domesticated this experience. If one was not a native, one was an Indonesian. Nothing truly foreign was allowed in the nationalist self, and the execution of suspected traitors policed the gates. Steedly lends this account of Indonesian nationalism greater ethnographic depth. One of the book’s strengths lies in the way it prevents readers from drawing easy conclusions about heroes and victims. To prevent villagers from abetting the enemy, the militias undertook a scorched earth campaign that displaced tens of thousands of people. The Karo aristocracy suffered gravely in this period of repolusi. So did the most vulnerable actors in the drama: Javanese coolies from the nearby plantation zone, who escaped the advancing Dutch army only to fall prey to armed nationalist gangs.

Another strength lies in the book’s ability to capture the complex temporality of Karo storytelling. Multiple presents make themselves felt in Karo recounts of the past. The burning of the town of Kabanjahé mirrors the much vaunted burning of Bandung; both are self-destructive acts of sacrifice performed by patriotic residents. Televised images from Rwanda provide Karo with a way of describing the deprivations they faced when they were driven from their homes. Steedly includes long quotations from her transcriptions, which often feature the bemused and sometimes irritated back and forth among veterans on hand for interviews. Readers occasionally catch a glimpse of the ethnographer, taking pleasure in the conversation, sometimes puzzled by its trajectory, but always alert to the passions at play.

*Rifle Reports* is a tribute to the men and women who fought for Indonesia’s freedom and “saw how it turned out” (p. v). It is a work of intelligence and compassion, born of Mary Steedly’s deep acquaintance with her interlocutors’ lives and times. It succeeds in telling readers “how it felt to be alive in a moment in which there were no certain endings” (p. 324). And it succeeds in telling readers that no telling is ever complete. Revolutions live in unfinished stories like those told in this remarkable book.
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**Pogrom in Gujarat: Hindu Nationalism and Anti-Muslim Violence in India**  

Any attempt to study collective violence is inherently rife with methodological, ethical, and pragmatic challenges. While more quantitative disciplines are arguably less vulnerable to the immediacy of these issues, the very nature of ethnography makes confronting the difficult and uncomfortable questions around the nature of extreme violence – and the academic study of this phenomenon – inescapable. In this respect, Ghassem-Fachandi’s account of the 2002 anti-Muslim violence in Gujarat, India marks an important contribution to the existing literature on the anthropology of violence as well as to regional studies of South Asia. Ghassem-Fachandi offers a unique perspective of the 2002 Gujarat pogrom, since he was present at the outbreak of violence (in comparison to most accounts based on recollections after-the-fact). In addition, Ghassem-Fachandi’s focus on the perpetrators of the violence also sets the book apart from many anthropological studies of violence, which have traditionally taken the perspective of victims as the primary angle of enquiry.

Gujarat, and in particular the city of Ahmedabad on which much of Ghassem-Fachandi’s findings focus, has a long history of Hindu-Muslim violence and religiously-motivated riots are hardly a novelty. Yet the extreme scale of death and destruction that took place in 2002 (which was almost exclusively borne by the minority Muslim community) came as a shock throughout India as well as for the rest of the world. While academics and journalists alike have spilled much ink trying to account for the violence, such analyses have largely focused on how the state and state machinery have been co-opted by Hindu nationalist groups to further their own ideological goals. Although certainly a worthwhile task, such explanations can only tell part of the story. These analyses ultimately cannot account for the fact that many Gujarati Hindus either actively abetted or passively allowed killings, lootings, and destruction at the expense of local Muslims.

At its core, *Pogrom in Gujarat* attempts to understand the wider cultural context underlying the anti-Muslim rhetoric and violence perpetrated by such Gujarati Hindus, many of which the author held longstanding relationships with. Over the course of eight chapters, Ghassem-Fachandi draws upon ethnographic data and a wide array of written and visual material such as newspaper articles and editorials, public advert campaigns, popular Gujarati films and political pamphlets. He argues that a wider cultural logic centring around themes of sacrifice and expiation underpins different levels of Gujarati society. Hindu nationalist ideology, according to the author, has achieved particular success in Gujarat not because of inherent fascist tendencies of the people of that region (as some might claim) but because of its ability to
resonate with these underlying cultural logics, and the processes through which these logics will manifest and are enacted.

Central to Ghassem-Fachandi’s analysis is the way in which everyday practices of consumption, specifically around meat-eating and vegetarianism, are intimately linked with larger processes of individual and collective identification, social marginalisation, and expiation in wider Gujarati society. While vegetarianism is a central tenet for Hindus more generally, in contemporary Gujarat the consumption of meat or its abstention has come to denote much wider considerations than individual dietary, nutritional or religious preferences. There, meat eating is intimately connected with one’s orientation to the social and serves to locate the individual within wider religious, class and gendered matrixes. Arguably the most powerful of these forms of collectivization is that to do with religion, and the binary of the vegetarian Hindu and meat-eating Muslim remains a central trope through which religious identification is understood and experienced.

The author interprets the 2002 pogrom as a sacrificial ritual whereby a part of the whole (in this case the Muslim minority) is expiated from the body politic by the Hindu majority community. Presiding over this psychosocial process are two archetypal figures: the “angry Hindu” and the “phantasmagoric Muslim”. Neither of these figures in any way adheres to the realities of lived experience, or actual people, but that, arguably, is the very source of their power. In the minds of his Hindu informants, the larger-than-life figure of the meat-eating (and therefore violent) Muslim stands as a constant threat to the Hindu majority community, despite Muslims’ minority status in the region. The angry Hindu, in turn, represents the justified reaction to this threat and a departure (albeit one which remains closely linked with) the weak and cowardly Hindu associated with Gandhi’s policy of nonviolence (ahimsa).

While the dual figures of the cowardly Hindu and the violent Muslim are well-known in many academic analyses of religious identity and violence in India, Ghassem-Fachandi convincingly locates these within specific cultural paradigms of vegetarianism and meat consumption, as well as larger processes taking place in the region of religious transformation, caste mobility, and political mobilisation. His book in this sense is profoundly anthropological in nature: the motivation and experience of collective violence is presented from the perspective of the people outside of the economic and political elite. His ethnography focuses on ordinary figures: a Jain teacher working in a Muslim secondary school, a low-caste sympathizer with the Hindutva movement, an unemployed and unmarried Muslim man in his late twenties.

A few cautions: the logic behind the structuring of the chapters is not always clear and the book as a whole does not seem to be organised according to the progressive development of the wider argument or a temporal logic. This said, however, *Pogrom in Gujarat* has much to recommend it. In addition to the unique ethnographic position that Ghassem-Fachandi inhabited vis-à-vis the
events of 2002, this book is eloquent, engaging, and reflects a knowledge of the region that can only be acquired through extensive contact and a longstanding relationship with the city and its people. It is also a refreshing contribution to the existing literature on ethnic and religious violence since it refuses to treat the perpetrators of violence as mindless tools of top-down political and economic interests or to dismiss them as two-dimensional agents of the Hindutva politics of hate. Ghassem-Fachandi does not excuse the brutality of the 2002 violence or the people who enabled it to take place either through their active engagement or their passive abeyance. *Pogrom in Gujarat* is an ambitious work and represents an important new turn in the anthropology of violence and South Asian studies.
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**Peacebuilding in Practice: Local Experience in Two Bosnian Towns**  

In this careful, precise monograph, Adam Moore offers a compelling analysis of how divergent peacebuilding outcomes occurred in the Bosnian towns of Mostar and Brčko following the war that devastated the region in the 1990s. Moore bases his analysis on ethnographic and archival research he conducted in the two towns in 2007, a full decade after the ostensible end of the war, and yet a time of tension in one place and transition in the other. While Moore was in Mostar, the town exploded in ethnic violence, a momentary flash of “thickening of place” (p. 2) illustrating what occurs in a town that suffers more marked ethnic and social divisions than it had ever known before the war, and mapped along the same physical lines that marked the warfront during the fighting. In Brčko, in contrast, the town was largely peaceful, with the country’s only integrated high school, and high levels of trust displayed by residents in their institutions. What accounts for these differences, and what lessons can be learned about peacebuilding from this comparison?

Moore begins by rejecting the argument that the success or failure of peacebuilding efforts rests in large part on the amount of resources devoted to a place, and instead maps out four interconnected factors that influence the outcome of physical and social rebuilding. The first factor involves the design of local political institutions—whom they include, how they are run, and how integrated these institutions are with residents and the international community. The second factor is local and regional legacies from the war—the influence of culture and history in the particular context of place. The last two factors involve the sequencing and timing of political and economic reforms, as well as the practice and organization of international peacebuilding efforts. Moore emphasizes that no one factor had a disproportionate effect, nor are their effects separable, in the sense that one effect or another can be isolated (p. 6). Rather, in combination with each other, these factors created a particular trajectory in Mostar that differs profoundly from that of Brčko, resulting in a divided, violent society in Mostar, and an integrated, peaceful society in Brčko, though Brčko suffered some of the worst ethnic cleansing of the war and the international community feared for its future.

What accounts for these differences? Moore offers an articulate, detailed accounting of how divergent histories and practices mold the trajectories of similar people in very different places. Starting with two theories of rebuilding, consociational and centripetal institutions, Moore outlines the failures of consociational institutions, namely the idea that “good fences make good neighbors”, which was adopted as the guiding principal in Mostar (pp. 18-22). Mostar’s foundation of ethnic tension was built on the entrenchment of ethnic differences, the hastiness of the implementation of elections, early
privatization of institutions, and the prioritization of distant concerns over local, concerns. By contrast, Brčko was created after the war as a special district with a highly interested and involved supervisor, peacebuilders who focused on local concerns, and grounded in centripetal, integrated institutions, resulting in a situation of trust and economic growth. The contrast between Mostar and Brčko was also explained through the short-term and often absent international workers who cycled through Mostar, and the long-term, very locally involved workers who dedicated themselves to Brčko. Though Moore cautions against extrapolating too far from the particularities of the examples he provides, implications for the focus, range, and priorities of peacebuilding programs do emerge.

Moore reinforces his unwillingness to generalize from these conclusions with the final substantive chapter, which involves a detailed rendering of international patronage politics in Brčko. It was a singular case of a supervision that resulted from international arbitration, creating a situation of a self-governing entity that was completely unique in Bosnia, and prompted the heavy involvement of foreign institutions to supervise the process. Though Moore spends much of the book touting Brčko’s successes, he worries that the peace was so specific to that place that its dissolution (with the end of supervision) may undermine peace in Bosnia writ large (p. 164). It does not leave the reader with many take-away lessons about peacebuilding, which is perhaps Moore’s point. The tools may exist, but only an approach as careful, detailed, and methodical as his own within damaged social worlds can possibly lead to success.

This was a very satisfying read, however, I was left with a few lingering questions unanswered. As Moore is a geographer, I was hoping to see more of how the physical and social geography mingled in affecting the various peacebuilding outcomes. Though the book is full of maps, it was difficult for me to get a sense of the spatial and social details involving the creation and entrenchment of ethnic divisions in Mostar, and by contrast the effectiveness of integration in Brčko. Moore also introduces a question that he hesitates to answer, namely: is effective peacebuilding inherently undemocratic? (p. 116) He introduces rich, detailed data about how international patronage and supervision of the peacebuilding process in Brčko contributed to the success of those efforts, but stops short of inferring the possible meanings this has for peacebuilding processes elsewhere in Bosnia and the world. Rather, he skirts the issue by explaining that people in Brčko were heavily involved in the process through dialoguing and informed decision-making, but at the end of the day, the supervisorship of the district was always in the hands of a foreign diplomat. It would certainly be a provocative conclusion to argue that effective peacebuilding requires the firm hand of disinterested parties, but it is one that bears exploring.
Anna Fournier’s book is a timely and ethnographically rich study of how young people in the Ukraine come to understand themselves as rights-bearing citizens in a newly democratic context. Fournier investigates the ways in which Ukrainian high school students negotiate the tensions that emerge when a rights discourse plays out within the institutional hierarchies and demands of secondary school. She draws from extensive fieldwork in both public and private secondary schools with students and teachers. Students were encouraged to see themselves as patriots and newly rights-bearing citizens, who would bring about a renewal of Ukraine in a time of moral and social chaos. At the same time, students were frustrated by what they felt to be random and unfair expressions of authority in the school. In examining how students and teachers articulated their desire for both order and freedom, Fournier suggests that the conflict between freedom and obligation speaks to larger tensions within democratic citizenship.

After the introduction, in chapter 2, Fournier shows how the school becomes a crucible for fashioning Ukrainian personhood. The struggle over being a good citizen and moral subject was often expressed in the tensions between individual and society, and (good) patriotism and (dangerous) nationalism. Here, Fournier draws on several compelling ethnographic examples in which students perform the role of patriot while also resisting the compulsory nature of this performance. She also examines other forces at work that undermine both teachers’ and students’ sense of order and social relationships within and outside the school. Students and teachers struggled with what it meant to be a good citizen as social value became increasingly tied to wealth (which was also often associated with criminality and corruption). Each group had a different perspective. What teachers understood to be cynicism, a lack of order, or culturedness, students saw to be a sober assessment of the new values of what they termed the street. Students both wanted order (often couched in terms of a lost Soviet period), and saw appealing kinds of social prestige in hierarchies of wealth and power outside the school.

In chapter 3 Fournier shows how students are subject to hierarchies and rules that they felt circumscribed their new status as rights-bearing citizens. Here students understood rights in terms of pursuit of desires, while teachers defined rights in terms of duties and obligations (such as a right to education). In part the tension between freedom and obligations stemmed from the contradictory institutional mandate of the school to both discipline students and to inculcate them into a language of rights.
Fournier goes on to show how students attempted to use the discourses of rights and new practices associated with free-market capitalism to upend the hierarchies and obligations that so frustrated them. Students used alternate hierarchies of the so-called streets to circumvent the authority of teachers. Such “bandit repertoires” (p. 84) drew from popular representations of prison and gangsters. These roles and repertoires could be powerful. For example, bandit repertoires might include the use of force, such as simply leaving school grounds because security guards and staff didn’t have the right to constrain them physically. Thus “bandit leaders deployed the notion of “rights” itself in order to gain the upper hand in their power struggle with authorities” (p. 97).

Chapter 4 investigates how state and criminal forms were intertwined to create a kind of bandit state. Here the state is both all powerful, but also impossible to locate, so that people experience and narrate forms of disorder, chaos, and random violence as state effects. Thus, “the state becomes difficult to pin down (but equally difficult to evade)” (p. 105). Fournier argues that the randomness of the violence of the bandit combines with the intentionality of the state to produce “state effects” and “fate effects” (p. 109). Such melding of state power and criminality produced a sense of chaotic order, as well as everyday and mass mediated attempts to find the putative truth of power (such as popular investigative journalism programs). She also links this interplay of chaos and order to tropes of Ukraine as a prison camp (reminiscent of Soviet prison camps) among young people. Students thus both valorized criminality as a way to challenge hierarchies in school, but feared the total capture of state offices by criminals or bandits. Fournier suggests this fear of the criminal state was an important factor in young people’s support of the opposition during the Orange Revolution.

Chapter 5 is built around interviews and observations from the Orange Revolution and tent city at Maidan Square in central Kyiv in November and December of 2004. Fournier shows both the sense of powerlessness among participants and documents the small acts of agency and citizen-becoming that characterized the protests. She traces tropes such as a desire for stability and a better life. She links these tropes to western representations of democracy as well as intergenerational experiences of Soviet state power and citizen entitlements. She argues that the Revolution drew on models of citizenship, rights and modernity that were neither entirely Western nor entirely Soviet, but a combination that produced something new.

In chapter 6, Fournier documents the impact of revolutionary pedagogies of the street on relations among students and teachers in the school. She argues that the “pedagogies of nonviolent street protests had altered students’ quest for … freedoms, so that the new strategies they used in schools blurred the boundary between democracy and force, or conversation and confrontation” (p. 161). Regardless of whether they actually renegotiated power relations, she
shows that the events of the Orange Revolution opened up new possibilities for students to imagine a change in power relations.

*Forging Rights* would be ideal for courses on anthropology of the state, youth, social movements, democracy and postsocialism. It is a resource for those interested in scholarly conversations on the state, criminality, youth, postsocialism, and citizenship in Ukraine and beyond. At times I would have liked to see the author give more space to her own analysis and theoretical contributions, which were sometimes undercut by passages of literature review. But overall this account of how students are both shaped by and speak back to institutional hierarchies and disciplinary practices is ethnographically rich and engaging.
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*Coding Freedom: The Ethics and Aesthetics of Hacking*

This book is a thoroughly researched, well-written, and insightful analysis of the culture and politics of the Free/Open Source Software (F/OSS) hacker community. These hacker communities produce software products such as the GNU/Linux operating system, the Firefox web browser, and the Apache web server. They have long fascinated economists and political scientists, who wonder at their ability to coordinate and sustain large and complex software development projects without relying on either rigorously controlled corporate hierarchies or the self-interest of the profit motive. Coleman, a cultural anthropologist, turns her attention to the moral and political commitments of the F/OSS community, arguing the hackers are engaging in “a material politics of cultural action” (p. 185) that embody “an embedded critique of the assumptions that dominate the moral geography of intellectual property law.” (p. 186)

Coleman opens with an exploration of a supposedly typical life history of a free software hacker, drawn from a series of more than seventy interviews that Coleman conducted. In the “relatively standard script” (p. 25) that most of these hackers use to narrate and make sense of their origins, their precocious mastery of technology is revealed in some youthful incident of creative destruction — for example when, as a boy, he both delights and dismays his mother by disassembling kitchen appliances. (The highly gendered nature of this script, and of the hacker community more generally, is noted by Coleman but not interrogated). Within a few years, the proto-hacker discovered the computer, and is immediately hooked. Over the course of the next few years, he immerses himself in a world defined by both technology and culture, discovering via computer bulletin boards or the Internet a community of like-minded individuals who share his interests and experiences. Coleman provides a valuable service by emphasizing the sociability of computer hackers — individuals who are often stereotyped as being uninterested or incapable of meaningful social interaction. She pays particular attention to the role of humor, puns, and other forms of wordplay in the formation of the hacker aesthetic, which she argues is central to the establishment of both a sense of community and a hierarchy of expertise within the hacker community. “By telling jokes,” Coleman argues, “hackers externalize what they see as their intelligence and gain recognition from technically talented peers” (p. 104). Words are important, she suggests, because for computer hackers, code and speech are essentially interchangeable.

Although Coleman provides a brief history of the F/OSS movement (which in reality encompasses a number of distinct, and sometimes contradictory, communities and ideologies), her focus is on configuration of software, social
practices, political commitments, and legal arrangements known as Debian. Debian is a collection of software packages (known as a distribution) centered around the GNU/Linux operating system. Debian is maintained by a group of more than a thousand volunteers, each of whom is responsible for maintaining both technical excellence and a commitment to particular moral and political principles. Before a volunteer can contribute to the Debian project, he or she must participate in an enculturation process known as the New Maintainer Process (NMP) that requires them to study the legal and ethical principles of free software as well as to produce a written formulation of their own views on these principles. After participating in the NMP, Coleman argues, Debian volunteers have shared in a common ritual of entry into a community, but also have “started to learn a Debian-specific vocabulary with which to situate themselves within this world, formulate the broader implications of freedom, and continue the conversation on freedom, licensing, and their craft, with a wider body of developers” (p. 162). The practices of software development have become intimately linked to the articulation of shared political ideals.

What are these shared political ideals? At the heart of Coleman’s argument is that the F/OSS highlights the tension between the traditional liberal commitment to free speech and the “neoliberal drive to make property out of almost everything, including software” (p. 2). By arguing the computer code was a form of speech, and therefore subject to liberal protections, F/OSS advocates provided an intellectual and legal framework for resisting the encroachment of increasingly rigorous intellectual property regimes aimed at the protection of digital content. In response to the passage of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA), for example, a hacker named Jon Johansen developed a piece of open sources software that circumvented the technical mechanisms used to encrypt DVD content. His software, called DeCSS, was explicitly made illegal by the DMCA. In 2000, Johansen was arrested — despite the fact that, as a Norwegian citizen, the DMCA (which was US law) did not technically apply. Hackers around the world responded by transforming Johansen’s software code into a case study in free speech protection: they posted it on their websites, printed it on t-shirts, and translated it into poetry, film, and music. Code might be functional, they argued, but it was also speech, and the right to free speech trumped the neoliberal imperative to protect private property.

There is so much that is good about Coleman’s book — her vast and carefully cultivated body of ethnographic evidence, her clear and concise descriptions of complex legal and technological artifacts, and her sophisticated incorporation of political and anthropological theory. It seems a bit churlish to complain about what this book does not do. But it is notable that in her discussion of a community that is defined by both its explicit commitment to openness and its demonstrable lack of diversity, that Coleman does not engage with the issue of gender. Although female participation in computing overall is lamentably low (around 25%, according to recent statistics by the National Center for Women & Information Technology), female participation in F/OSS
projects is downright notorious (one study suggests rates as low as 1.1%) The culture and practices that many F/OSS male hackers see as being rational, meritocratic, liberal, and empowering is, for many female programmers, confrontational, aggressive, and exclusionary, as Reagle points out in his 2012 First Monday article, “Free as in Sexist?” There exists a large and growing literature exploring the profoundly gendered nature of computing culture, from notions of what constitutes skill, to the aesthetic values that determine whether code is viewed as good, to the norms that govern appropriate conduct — and yes, including what constitutes concepts such as freedom and openness. Thus it is disappointing that the word gender only appears once in Coding Freedom, and then only in a footnote. In the context of computing generally, and the F/OSS movement in particular, gender is not a marginal issue that can be conveniently bracketed; it is an absolutely fundamental category of analysis.