
BOOK REVIEWS

André Cicalo (2012), *Urban Encounters. Affirmative Action and Black Identities in Brazil*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Urban Encounters is the result of an in-depth ethnography of university racial quota systems in Brazil. This is a very important topic in contemporary Brazilian society due to the recent adoption of these racial policies. The author focuses on the Universidade Estadual de Rio de Janeiro (State University of Rio de Janeiro – UERJ), the first public university to adopt racial quotas. Using a solid methodology that combines an analysis of students' life-paths with a quantitative analysis of the relevant statistics, Cicalo reviews the effects of the quotas. The conclusion emphasizes their potential positive consequences, as their flexible application allows each individual to make a self-declaration about his or her race and color. Moreover, an analysis of the broad public debate on racial segregation in Brazil allows the author to critically reflect on the consequences of a possible, more rigid, application of quotas.

The first chapter introduces the reader to the Brazilian debate on racism, which has been revitalized in the nearly thirty years since the end of military dictatorship. The establishment of the university racial quotas has been the first effort to deconstruct the myth of racial harmony, a prevalent imaginary construction of Brazilian society. To illustrate the topic, the author introduces his research field: the UERJ and the city of Rio de Janeiro. Racial and economic segregation are markers that guide his

exploration of social spaces and the construction of a social map of one of Brazil's largest cities.

The second chapter, *Dreams and Hard Places*, begins this exploration. A historical contextualization of the university, a prestigious institution for middle-class students, brings out the social barriers that quota students must cross. There are physical barriers established by the distances that separate the residential areas of lower-income residents from the rest of the university. There are also economic barriers, given the low-income social background of the quota students' families. Here, the author introduces the complex network of categories that he uses for interpretation. Skin color, religious behavior and gender are some of the categories used to describe the multiple strategies adopted by the students in pursuing their 'dream' of social and economic empowerment.

The third chapter presents daily interactions among students, observed within the university spaces. Quota students are differentiated from others mainly because of their attitude toward the university, rather than for their skin color. This resignifies racial categories. The place occupied in the classrooms distinguishes the 'zealous', usually quota students who tend to sit close to the teacher, and the 'barbarians', as non-quota students call themselves because of their apparent lack of discipline. The former try to work hard to compensate for their weak scholastic background; the latter, who have studied in expensive private schools, achieve good results with apparently little effort and participation. The author uses these categories to examine how racial

references are used or 'silenced' in everyday life.

The next two chapters delve into the main topic of the book: the role of race in the university system and in Brazilian society. Chapter four, titled *From Race or Color to Race and Color*, analyzes the academic debate about racial policies. Scholars such as Fry, Maggie and Harris contribute to the author's interpretation of racial categories, distinguishing them from colour. Race, a word connected with ancestry, is used emblematically by black political movements to promote an operational image of blackness. Colour is described as a social shifter that changes depending on what social actors are involved in interactions in given places and social spaces. The fifth chapter, *Narrowing political gaps*, emphasizes the role of quotas in the development of paths for personal empowerment. University access appears, in the words of Cicalo's informants, as a door open to social and economic empowerment, and quotas are used operationally to achieve this. Cicalo analyzes the cultural consumption of UERJ students. The relations between militant students and others sheds light on personal paths for social recognition of the new black identities. These paths involve reading, as well as a re-socialization to new social spaces and the use of expensive clothing.

In the conclusion, Cicalo recognizes the positive role of quota policies aimed at black people. The re-socialization of students to a racially mixed university and the creation of black élites are the most important indications of this success. Moreover, the persistent racial and social differences in Brazilian society,

indicate that these policies are only a first, symbolic step in a process that must continue with other political strategies that focus on both class and race.

It would be helpful to complement this analysis with a look at other policies that are currently shaping Brazil's racial geography, such as those involving Quilombos. Nevertheless, the book offers a considerable and important contribution to the debate on quotas in Brazil and is a good example of urban ethnography. The choice to focus on students appears to be successful, considering that they are the first recipients of this new experiment in Brazilian society.

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John. C. Kilburn Jr. and S.E. Costanza
(2011), *Salvation City: Halfway House Stories*. Youngstown, NY: Teneo Press.

In *Salvation City: Halfway House Stories*, John C. Kilburn Jr. and S.E. Costanza offer ethnographic case studies with historical analysis to help the reader understand the place of Halfway Houses in American society, and call the question of the usefulness of these institutions towards achieving stated goals. While the authors center their discussion of halfway houses as most directly related to issues of community autonomy and safety, they describe the stories of individuals to elucidate their points.

Through the preface and introduction, basic information is provided

to prepare the reader for the in-depth exploration of the history and debate related to halfway houses in later chapters. A simple definition of a halfway house is outlined in the introduction: “[a] residence for individuals after release from institutionalization (as for mental disorder, drug addiction, or criminal activity) that is designed to facilitate their readjustment to private life”. However, the authors acknowledge that other variants of halfway houses exist, including those where residents voluntarily commit themselves for rehabilitative purposes without prior institutionalization. Common patterns of admission to halfway houses are outlined, highlighting the historical and political context of each option. Great depth is provided which prevents the reader from making blanket assumptions regarding these institutions.

In the chapters that follow, the authors unfurl theory, history, ethnography, and case studies to broaden the reader’s understanding of the complexities of the context in which halfway houses exist and related controversies. Chapter 1 uses major perspectives in sociology: functionalism, conflict, and symbolic interactionism, to explain why the reader should care about these institutions. Chapter 2 uses historical examination of the development of halfway houses, from the introduction of work houses for the able-bodied poor in 17th Century England through deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill in 1980s America, to help the reader better understand why halfway houses exist in their various current forms.

Chapter 3 uses personal vignettes from a larger case study of a fictional

“Salvation City” to expand on the issues and concerns of those involved with halfway houses. Salvation City has experienced the same trajectory as other major urban areas in the United States that were once sources of abundant employment in manufacturing, and related fields, but through the growth of the global economy, has seen great decline. Excerpts from interviews with recovering addicts and community leaders are intertwined with community and personal history. The chapter concludes with a discussion of common themes related to addiction, recovery and the utility of halfway houses.

Chapters 4 and 5 outline the debate as to whether halfway houses are needed, or not. Community level concerns, including personal safety for residents around halfway houses and impact on nearby real estate, are offered in opposition to the existence of halfway houses, along with unfortunately high recidivism rates, and financial costs. Concern for the morality, and effectiveness of a criminal response to behaviors that would otherwise see those served by halfway houses is the strongest argument for preserving these institutions, along with fiscal and practical concerns for institutionalization. Suggestions for improvement to services provided are highlighted.

Salvation City: Halfway House Stories does not purport to convince the reader that these institutions are inherently good, nor evil. The authors do an excellent job of providing historical and political context that can be analyzed through a theoretical base. This text is most appropriate for use in anthropology and sociology courses that center on social problems, or the urban experience. It

could, however, be used in other disciplines, such as public health and social work, that focus on understanding, designing and evaluating societal responses to substance abuse and mental illness.

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Waltraud Kokot, Christian Giordano, Mijal Gandelsman Trier (eds.) (2013), *Diaspora as Resource: Comparative Studies in Strategies, Networks and Urban Space*, Lit Verlag: Berlin.

It is a difficult task if not an impossible mission to present a comprehensive review of a volume based on presentations held at an international conference at the University of Hamburg-- *Diaspora as a Resource*. Thirteen chapters covering a wide panorama of world diasporas, exposing various methodological and theoretical perspectives. As emphasized by the editors and a few participants, since the 1990s the term 'diaspora' has been applied to various groups of migrants or ethnic origin, to all types of 'transnational dispersion' (Tolöylan p.30). When I studied Israeli emigrants in New York, during the 1980s, I did not consider them a diaspora (Shokeid 1988). It was a designation and an identity reserved for the few 'classical' groups, such as Jews and Armenians who have lived in organized communities in dozens countries for centuries. In any case, as Khachig Tölöylan suggests, every diaspora consists of at least three categories of people: those

wholly assimilated into their hostland's society; people who are claimed diasporans but who differ from their neighbors only at symbolic occasions when they acknowledge that they possess a different identity as well; the core diasporic membership, committed, activist, even militant, and who desire to sustain and renew diasporic identity and its difference from that of the hostland's majority.

The leading theme of the conference and the volume that came as consequence of its discussions intended to explore diaspora as a resource for the parties engaged; the participants as individuals and groups, the homeland and the hostland.

A few chapters present the contradictions observed in the apparently homogeneous diasporic groups. Janet Landa developed a theory about the Chinese middlemen group in Southeast Asia as a club-like arrangement membership. Under the conditions of contract uncertainty they will not randomly enter into transactions with anonymous traders. They use symbols of identity (such as eating rules) to economize on information cost of selecting their trading partners, as well as erecting barriers of entry against outsiders. In contrast, Ina Baghdiantz McCabe argues for flexible identities as observed among Julfan Armenians who joined the hostland's administration, converted to Islam, though they still collaborated with their ethnic network. A similar approach is presented by Christian Giordano in the case of the Chinese diaspora in Penang who share a long-standing collective consciousness, yet this does not necessarily imply a transnational feeling of empathy and solidarity. This against the often taken for

granted idea in many studies on diasporas, that they display a compact entity from homogeneous countries of origin.

That theme appears in a few more chapters. Thus, Freek Colombijn claims that even during the colonial era in Indonesia there is ample empirical evidence that class differences were already predominant in the socio-spatial divide. In some situations people felt part of an ethnic community and at other times part of a socially defined [ethnically heterogeneous] neighborhood. Christine Avenarius reports that starting in the early 1970s, economically well-to-do immigrants from Taiwan in Southern California (and in other countries) left the ethnic enclaves and moved out to the suburbs. However, although the community is not visible in terms of residential cluster and has only a weak level of cohesion, nevertheless, its members consider themselves to have a joint social identity.

Maja Korac describes the emergence of a new Chinese diaspora in Serbia. The paper examines how global restructuring and transnational practices are intertwined with the agency of the people who decide to move and engender new patterns of migration and incorporation.

The case of Lithuanian-Americans introduced by Vytis Ciubrinskas reveals the unusual development of 'nationalist Lithuanianness' at a faster pace in the US than in Lithuania itself. Consequently, the researcher reports about the asymmetrical social and cultural expectations on both continents, those who return to Lithuania versus the new immigrants to the US.

Gabriel Sheffer inquires the diasporans relations, activities, and impacts on

homelands, the host-countries and the international system at large. He distinguishes between the 'positive' and the 'negative' interests and activities of the diasporic entities on the international level. For example, some organized diasporic cores initiate and endorse intrastate conflicts and violence in their homelands as means of attaining their own self interests.

The small Russian diaspora in Bulgaria presented by Milena Benovska-Sabkova, although composed of three different waves of arrivals during the 20th Century, has developed dense networks of institutions and organizations. Post Soviet Greeks/Pontic Greeks studied by Eftihia Voutira present another interesting case also compared with post Soviet Jews in Israel. Greece, Germany and Israel define access to citizenship in terms of membership in the 'ethnic nation.' However, most migrants do not abandon their former identities. Moreover, in the Pontic case, they use them as an advantage for investing in the country of origin (FSU), 'repatriates as *migrants* co-exist in two spaces, trying to draw their comparative advantage from each' (p.135).

A very different presentation by Hauke Dorsch introduces the image of the griot as symbol of the connection of Africans in the diaspora to their homeland. No doubt, the Africans' diasporic history is traumatic being denied of specific homeland's roots. However, the interests of the groups meeting in this situation, the Western tourists of African decent and the local people, are rather different. For example, versus the tourist's romantic search for an ancestral home, the local 'hosts' are focused more on the economic benefits

they might gain from a tourist encounter. However, griots' musical performances link the so called 'Old' and 'New' African diasporas. In a different mode, Rena Molho presents the unique and long history of the Jewish diaspora in Salonica.

As indicated already, it is beyond the limits of this review to present the rich ethnographic information and theoretical insights offered in this volume. It is not easy reading considering the unequal length of chapters and the lack of a standard form structuring the presentations to respond to the leading theme under investigation. This is, however, a recurrent deficiency in many academic conferences and the volumes that are produced afterwards. Nevertheless, the researchers engaged in the 'hot' subject of present day global migrations, be they defined as new diasporas or transnational dispersions, will find the volume of much interest and a stimulant for further research.

Reference

Shokeid, Moshe. 1988. *Children of Circumstances: Israeli Emigrants in New York*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

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Tsypylma Darieva, Wolfgang Kaschuba, Melanie Krebs (eds.) (2011) *Urban Spaces after Socialism: Ethnographies of Public Places in Eurasian Cities*. Frankfurt / Main: Campus Verlag.

This edited collection of twelve case studies offers an insight into selected aspects of contemporary life in four

capitals and three 'second cities' of the former federal republics of the Soviet Union. The book stems from the results of the workshop on 'Urban Spaces, Caucasian Places, Transformation in Capital Cities' held in Tbilisi in 2009 and a subsequent workshop held in Berlin in 2010. The aim of the book, following the introductory text by Tsypylma Darieva and Wolfgang Kaschuba, is to deal with the following questions: How are new urban identities in Eurasia –including city symbols and place brands– represented, managed and appropriated by different social groups? How do people transform and reinterpret urban space into their own places beyond the perspectives of grand narratives? (p. 12).

Darieva and Kaschuba's introductory text speaks predominantly about post-socialism, transformation, the legacy of urban socialism and the post-Soviet city. The authors of the case studies, however, have also highlighted other historical intersections and legacies beyond the Introduction's theoretical elaboration, such as the legacy of the plurality of religions, the legacy of the Russian Empire, the legacy of the pre-Empire periods, and so on.

The book is divided into two parts. The first part is titled 'Contours and Places' and discusses the physical and symbolic layout of the city. The second part is named 'Places and Voices' and focuses predominantly on the sociability, behaviour and symbolic world of individuals and specific urban groups.

Physical changes in selected cities are the dominant theme of the first part of the book. In this section, the authors frequently search for modifications in the

urban landscape in specific historical periods and assess the results of building activities and their symbolic background. This is, for instance, the case with the chapter by Artyom Kosmarski, titled 'Grandeur and Decay of the "Soviet Byzantium": Spaces, Peoples and Memories of Tashkent, Uzbekistan'. Like many other authors, Komarski notes a huge increase of city inhabitants during the Soviet period, primarily from the 1950s to 1991. The capitals of federal states became metropolises with undergrounds transportation systems and trams where several millions of people lived, predominantly in suburbs. The uniform suburban architecture mirrored the state ambition to build a showpiece of the federal republic. Similar ambitions of the independent state after 1991 led to similar results: pompous squares and buildings, formerly Soviet now national dehumanized monuments and symbols. People are now looking for more comfortable places and are finding them in marketplaces and streets lined with shops and coffee bars. A very similar picture is offered by Madlen Pilz in her chapter on 'Tbilisi in City Maps: Symbolic Construction of an Urban Landscape'. Similar traits are also found in Tsypylma Darieva's chapter on 'A "Remarkable Gift" in a Postcolonial City: The Past and Present of the Baku Promenade', which also shows how the new post-socialist governors tried to oppose some city symbols and places of entertainments and then, after several years, returned to use them and under new slogans renovated at great cost monuments that were almost completely destroyed.

Paradoxically, in many contributions to this volume, we find

references to lost cosmopolitanism, to the loss of a multicultural society. It seems that, though living in an open global world, many people in the described capital cities feel more isolated than when living behind the Iron Curtain but as part of the Soviet multinational state. They and their national governments are searching for ways into the global world with their newly built image. The chapter by Melanie Krebs, 'Maiden Tower Goes International? Representing Baku in a Global World' speaks about such image-building. A similar problem is touched upon by Levon Abrahamian in his chapter on 'Yerevan Sacra: Old and New Sacred Centers in the Urban Space'.

Many anthropological studies on the newly established states built from the former Soviet federal republics draw empirical material collected exclusively in capitals. Fortunately, this volume includes also studies of 'second cities'. In the first part of the book, there is a study about Gyumri (formerly Leninakan) in Armenia which offers reflection on what it means to be a second city. The last chapter in the second part of the book is a case study of the Osh in Kyrgyzstan, discussing a local youth culture which, highly globalized, draws norms and values primarily from Russia.

The second part of the book begins with views from a 'second city'. Oleg Pachenkov studies a flea market in St. Petersburg. In a well written text he describes the nostalgia of the poor people of the new Russia. The interpretation of their sociability in the flea market stimulates discussion on the change of meanings attributed to the Soviet period by the wider public in present-day Russia.

Shifts in symbols and meanings are the subject of further studies in this part of the book. Zaza Shatirishvili and Paul Manning interpret the changes in the meaning of various kinds of labour during communism, Sergey Rumyansev and Sevil Huseynova write about the importance of jazz in the Baku society, Shorena Gabunia about gay culture in Tbilisi and Paul Manning and Zaza Shatirishvili about the Kinto dance in Tbilisi.

Considering the dynamics of present-day sociability in the former federal Soviet states and the number of possible frames of reference, it is clear that more information can frequently be given to the reader by a clearly described single case than by a general theory. The cases realistically emphasized the often articulated boundary between city dwellers and the rural environment. Logically, the ethnocultural nationalism of the newly established nation states is not built merely on the values of the intelligentsia and of the urban population but also, and often predominantly, on those of villagers who are less globalized and more isolated. What is undercommunicated both in the case studies and in the Afterword is the role of churches in the decision-making processes and in the scene of symbols and meanings.

included in this volume are predominantly very well elaborated and well narrated also for scholars only generally familiarized in the local environment. They are anchored in ethnographic research and based predominantly on observation, sometimes on interviews. Thus, in many cases, the method of data collection is not transparent. On the other hand, the methodological simplifications are balanced by the wealth of reflections and insights.

It is hard to generalize the material of collected ethnographies. Alaina Lemon tried to do this in her Afterword for *Urban (post)Socialisms*. She correctly stressed the loss of cosmopolitanism frequently mentioned in the case studies. She also

This book is rich in new views and concepts and opens new insights to the life in the selected capitals and ‘second cities’ of the countries that were established after the collapse of the USSR. The case studies also demonstrate that the social processes analysed in the book can hardly be assessed by the narrow rhetoric of post-communism. They refer to a wider spectrum of influences and activities. Ethnographies are, indeed, writings by specific kinds of people and their subjectivity must be taken into account.

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