

Zitierhinweis

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and wherever they may create that separation. Only one thing about time is certain: it never flows backwards.

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David W. Montgomery, ed, *Everyday Life in the Balkans*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018. 401 pp., ISBN 978-0-253-03817-3, \$ 42.00 (paperback), \$90.00 (hardback), \$ 41.99 (e-book)

David W. Montgomery is a Central-Asia anthropologist with thirty years of acquaintance with the Balkans (especially Albania and Kosovo). His *Everyday Life in the Balkans* is a generous and perplexing volume. It contains thirty-five short chapters, each of ca. ten pages (approx. 5,000 words), a short preface, acknowledgments, postface, and index. Enlisting the authority of philosopher-sociologist Henri Lefebvre and others, Montgomery argues that everyday life is where politics, culture, and society are produced and transformed. He concludes that it is also in the everyday that we can hope to understand contemporary issues, such as movement and the Other. Regionally, the assembled contributions cover ten countries ranging from Romania in the east to Albania in the west, and from Slovenia in the north to Turkey in the south. The highly interdisciplinary list of contributors includes social and cultural anthropologists, ethnologists, folklorists, translators, historians, political scientists, historical anthropologists, sociologists, linguists, scholars of religion and of art, and a poet. The topics are extremely diverse and have been usefully arranged into six sections pertaining to the histories, homes, livelihoods, politics, religions, and the arts of everyday life.

Section I, on the historical context, contains a superb reflection on *burek*. Far more than a savory pastry and Balkan fast food, *burek* is also symbolically rich food for thought. Thus, in Macedonia, it is a metaphor for an over-simplified argument and a slight insult, as we learn from political scientist *Keith Brown*. Brown also discusses *burek's* transnational meaning (in former Yugoslavia it was a metaphor of both inclusive Yugoslavism and Slovenian exclusivism). If Brown had discussed the 2015 comedy 'Bourek', directed by Vlado Nikolić and shot in Greece with an international cast, he could easily have expanded his transnational argument. Other contributions cover the early history of the everyday before the arrival of the Ottomans (*Andrew Wachtel*), the work of the Macedonian gendarmerie in late Ottoman times (*Ipek K. Yosmaoğlu*), Yugoslav architecture and home designs (*Patrick Hyder Patterson*), and the Balkan coffee house or *kafene* in Bulgaria (*Mary Neuburger*).

Section II, on the Home(s) of Everyday Life, is a post-Yugoslav and predominantly anthropological section discussing kinship and relationality. It consists of four fascinating chapters on Bosnia-Herzegovina (*Larisa Jašarević* on folk remedies, *Elissa Helms* on femininity within feminism, *Monika Palmberger* on young people's distancing from the war, and *Azra Hromadžić* on privatized elderly care and care for the disabled). The first chapter introduces the section with a comparison of kinship and household practices in Zagreb counterpoised with provincial—yet transnationally connected—Kosovo (*Caroline Leutloff-Grandits*). The discussion is rounded off by insights into gay and lesbian culture in Slovenia (*Roman Kuhar*). Despite the richness of cases, the section lacks an overarching framework, which could

have been provided by the new relational anthropology of kinship and politics.¹

The following Section III on livelihoods is an evocative mix of research on return migration in Bosnia-Herzegovina (*Ana Croegart*), long-term refugee life in northern Serbia (*Mila Dragojević*), Bulgarian real estate since the 2000s (*Deema Kaneff*), masculinity in the post-socialist ship-building industry (*Andrea Matošević*), and shifting perceptions in Greece of belonging to—or distancing from—the Balkans (*Daniel Knight*). Given that this reviewer is an anthropologist of rural–urban social-security arrangements in Serbia, a rare discovery is an ethnographic chapter of a rural Jack-of-all-trades. In *Andrew Konitzer's* subtle narrative of 'The Life and Times of Aleksandar Živković', we follow a Serbian trickster and craftsman, entrepreneur and worker, carouser and family man, who applies his unusual talents in the most usual of fights—against sliding from middle-class Yugoslav status into post-Yugoslav precarity.

The Politics of Everyday Life are discussed in six chapters on six countries in Section IV. Two pieces in particular deserve honorable mention. One is a comparative discussion of local appropriations and contestations of the new state boundary between Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia, written by *Čarna Brković* and *Stef Jansen*. This chapter seems to be genuinely based on rich material not published elsewhere. Another especially intriguing—and possibly auto-ethnographically inspired—life history by *Jelena Džankić* describes beautifully the growing up of a young woman in contemporary Montenegro, a place that has shifted state-be-

longing four times in the last twenty years.

Section V discusses everyday religion—most notably Orthodox and Catholic Christianity; and Sunni and Bektashi (Shiite) Islam. Four chapters are written by scholarly veterans: *David W. Montgomery* writes on Time Without Morality in Albania; *Frances Trix* provides a strong ethnography of Ramadan in Prizren; *Milica Bakić-Hayden* gives an overview of Slava in Serbia; and *Albert Doja* describes Religion and Politics in Albania. A chapter by a younger ethnographer (*Slavica Jakelić*) theorizes the agency of devout Catholic women as their ability to inhabit conservative roles. Especially rich is the discussion of *komshuluk* (Arabic-Turkic for neighborhood conviviality) by *Magdalena Lubanska* in Bulgaria. Set in the Rhodope Mountains in mixed Orthodox and Muslim (Pomak) neighborhoods, Lubanska argues against the perceptions of her Orthodox informants that crypto-religious motivations would explain shared sacred practices by the religious Other. Rather, the distance to another religion increases its mystique and its supposed effectiveness. Furthermore, the shared normative topography of the *komshuluk* suggests tolerance and co-participation. Similar research on *komshuluk* in Bosnia and elsewhere is unfortunately not discussed.

The last five chapters prise open the Art of Everyday Life, all with exceptional beauty. The very last chapter pays homage to the deceased Serbian artist Gordana Živković, and to the romantic ethos of art that is still transmitted at the Academy of Fine Art in Belgrade. We spend time with Dragana's former student friends as they prepare today a new generation of students for the entry exam, or we meet her former anatomy teacher Vladeta. The fine-grained, loving ethnography by wid-

¹ Tatjana Thelen/Erdmute Alber, eds, *Reconnecting State and Kinship*, Philadelphia/PA 2018.

owed anthropologist *Marko Živković* captures the ethics and aesthetics of becoming a highly skilled, even perfectionist, artist in a 'postsocialist, postconflict' Serbia where life is far removed from such classical virtues.

Most of the contributions were written around 2015. No conference preceded the volume. Many of the authors were unaware of the other contributions. Thus, the volume ironically paints a fairly accurate picture of the state of scholarship in the region: while regional networks of knowledge production exist, most scholars either orient their work toward national scholarship or toward theorizing in the Anglophone center, rather than looking across the proliferating boundaries. Nonetheless, David W. Montgomery has assembled an all-star cast of scholars, which includes such valuable play-

ers as musical anthropologist *Carol Silverman*, who perceptively describes Roma musicians' exclusive inclusion in Bulgarian folklore. Similar patterns would in all likelihood be discernable elsewhere in the Balkans, though the reader is left to guess.

This richly illustrated volume features more than fifty, often beautiful, black-and-white photographs of everyday scenes. *Everyday Life in the Balkans* is a smart sampler, a best-off that provides short glimpses into late socialist, post-socialist, and recent scholarship. It is highly recommended bedtime reading for any scholar of the region—student or more advanced—interested in looking beyond his or her own nose. It invites more theorizing, but leaves that task to others.

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