

Journal of Global Faultlines

Publication details, including instructions for authors:
<http://www.keele.ac.uk/journal-globalfaultlines/>



Book Reviews

Simon Bulmer ^a, James Dunkerley ^b, Timothy M Shaw ^c, Harry Verhoeven ^d,
Chris Rogers ^e, Matthew Paterson ^f, Jeffery Dyer ^g, Kevser K. Karatas ^h,
Nikos Christofis ⁱ, Francisco José Tudela ^j

^a University of Sheffield, UK

^b Queen Mary, University of London, UK.

^c University of Massachusetts Boston, USA

^d University of Oxford, UK.

^e University of York, UK.

^f University of Ottawa, Canada.

^g Boston College, USA.

^h University of St. Thomas, USA.

ⁱ Leiden University, The Netherlands.

^j University of Leeds, UK.

Journal of Global Faultlines/ Volume 1/ Issue 1/ September 2013, pp. 151-166

Published online: 10 October 2013.

To cite this article:

Simon Bulmer, James Dunkerley Timothy M Shaw Harry Verhoeven Chris Rogers Matthew Paterson Jeffery Dyer Kevser K. Karatas Nikos Christofis Francisco José Tudela (2013) Book Reviews, *Journal of Global Faultlines*, 1(1), 151-166.

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Book Reviews

Ulrich Beck, *German Europe*. Cambridge: Polity Press 2013, 98 pp. (hbk).

Ulrich Beck's concern in this book is with the way in which the Eurozone crisis has resulted in Germany assuming pre-eminence in the European Union (EU), with Berlin's economic stability model becoming the prescription for debtor states. There are only three substantive chapters in this short book. The first diagnoses how the Eurozone crisis is creating divisions in Europe. The second explores Europe's new power coordinates, namely a 'German Europe'. The third chapter suggests a solution: not a new set of supranational powers for the EU but, instead, a social contract to be drawn up on the principles of 'Europe from below', in which social movements take the initiative.

Much of the diagnosis of the Eurozone crisis is well known but Beck's particular slant is to relate the crisis to his theory of the risk society. In particular, he notes the way in which the fear of catastrophe enters the popular psyche. Beck argues—like many others—that Europe needs a common European economic and financial system (p 16). But he notes that the aspiration for a 'European domestic policy' in a transnational space has in fact turned out to be characterized by national governments seeking to pursue national interests and satisfy domestic electorates. In his understanding the EU can either master the current crisis in a manner consistent with democracy or, alternatively, through a technocratic approach that could spell the end of democracy. In trying to navigate towards a resolution the EU runs into a number of tensions: between creating new supranational powers, such as a banking union, and retaining the primacy of the nation-state; between taking whatever steps are necessary to save the Euro and falling foul of the legal process (as reflected in the challenges before the German Federal Constitutional Court); between a popular consciousness based on the nation-state and the need for a partnership of peoples to control the risks of the crisis; and the contradictions between global capitalism and national politics.

Faced with these challenges Germany has entered the policy vacuum, with its 'culture of stability ... being elevated to the guiding idea for Europe' (p 43). Germany is at once thrust into a leadership position due to a vacuum at EU level, while displaying considerable hesitation in playing this role. Part of the hesitancy arises from German history and previous ill-starred attempts at European leadership. Another contributory factor is Chancellor Angela Merkel's leadership style of hesitation. Beck sees the chancellor's style as Merkiavellian: a kind of procrastination that has proven to be tactically adroit in terms of statecraft. It has ensured that German policy has been elevated to the EU level, while at the same time not antagonizing domestic public opinion and limiting (but not eliminating) fears of Germany hegemony amongst EU partners. Beck highlights the potential problems of this approach, namely that Germany's policy of austerity might not have the desired effect of turning round the economies of the debtor states. In addition, it may result in a loss of trust in Europe amongst ordinary citizens in southern Europe, including those on the margins (the 'precarariat').

It is against this backdrop that Beck proposes the idea of a social contract for Europe. He advocates a transnational social democratic vision for a 'Europe of solidarity', built from the citizen upwards in a manner consistent with cosmopolitanism. Civil society is to play a key role in this 'European spring'. He advocates this approach as the way to resolve the crisis in a manner that is consistent with democracy.

Ulrich Beck's book is essentially an essay that builds on key themes in his academic writings, supported by evidence from secondary sources. It offers diagnosis and a solution. However, whether the solution is credible is open to serious questioning. As he has noted earlier in the book, domestic publics have become more inward looking during the crisis.

Consequently, the prospects for transnational solidarity have taken something of a battering during the economic crisis. The 2014 European Parliament elections look more likely to result in an upsurge in the representation of Euro-sceptic parties rather than a revival of social democracy. Moreover, the institutions of the European Union, but especially those of its member states, may turn out to be much more resilient than is implied by the notion of a 'European spring'. There may yet be a lot more social and economic pain inflicted by European austerity politics but, to this reader, 'muddling through' or a break-up of the Eurozone still appear more likely outcomes than the Europe of solidarity advanced in Beck's essay. Even so, his book is a thought-provoking essay on the European economic crisis and recommended to all interested in this topic.

Professor Simon Bulmer
University of Sheffield, UK.

Miguel A. Centeno and Agustín E. Ferraro (eds.), *State and Nation Making in Latin America and Spain. Republics of the Possible*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2013, 469 pp. (hbk).

In their introduction to this substantial collection the editors express the wish that its qualities would have met with the approval of the book's dedicatee, the Argentine sociologist Guillermo O'Donnell, who died in 2011. O'Donnell, who was a generous man but intellectually very demanding, would surely have endorsed the book as fulsomely as have Peter Evans, Merilee Grindle and John Hall, who all praise it in detail and without qualification. In my view they are justified, and this is a quite outstanding volume of comparative historical sociology on the Hispanic world – there are two chapters out of 19 on Brazil – of the "long nineteenth century". The volume includes a good balance of national case studies, including Nicaragua and Central America as well as the major states, all of which are considered by leading scholars who are not simply providing magisterial syntheses but also querying established historiographical boundaries. This suggestive and intellectually refreshing quality owes much to the care with which the editors have designed a volume that plainly derives for an extended period of collaboration. Rather than simply assembling national case studies under a diligent but undemanding interpretative remit, Centeno, who has an impressive record in co-editing innovative collections, and Ferraro have structured the collection in five parts. The first is introductory, laying out the rationale for subsequent approaches and considering the prior historiography. Here the editors directly engage with the North American "new institutionalist" tradition of political economy associated in general with Douglass North and, with respect to Latin America, with Stephen Haber. In a sense that perspective on "why Latin America fell behind" has become mainstream through the co-editorship of *The Cambridge Economic History of Latin America* by John Coatsworth, surely the most accomplished scholar in the fold. The present volume shares many of the same approaches, but it seeks purposefully to extend the explanatory (and so disciplinary) palate with which such strategic interpretations are depicted. Following two fine broad surveys by Frank Safford (being more empirical) and Wolfgang Knobl (more theoretical), this wider interpretation is adopted through the subsequent sections. The second, on territorial and economic power, is perhaps the most familiar in format but no less valuable for that. It opens with the two chapters on the Brazilian experience, by Jeffrey Needell and Joseph Love, whose coverage of the full trajectory of the Empire and Old Republic through to 1930 in a mere 40 pages depends upon exceptionally skilled management of the historiography. This is likewise shown by Alan Knight for the arguably more demanding case of Mexico, from the *porfiriato* of the last third of the 19th century through the first two decades of the Revolution. Since he produced his two-

volume study of the Revolution a quarter of a century ago, Knight has continuously returned to questioning its reinterpretation through the perspective of the social sciences whilst adhering tightly to the gains of monographic primary research, which has reached formidable dimensions in recent years. This is tight and tough stuff, posing big questions in sometimes telegraphic format, but it repays close attention and will surely assist agenda-setting for coming generations of North American historians of Mexico. The following chapter on Nicaragua is by Salvador Martí Puig, a younger scholar who provides a fine interpretative survey without becoming too enmeshed in the complexities of this afflicted isthmian state over its republican history from the 1830s. Martí focuses on intra-elite conflicts, the “chimera of the inter-oceanic canal” from the 1850s (and back in consideration in the early 21st century), and U.S. intervention. The final chapter of this section, by Ferraro and Claudia Herrera looks at patronage and fiscal behaviour in Argentina and Spain with a focus on liberalism as a set of politico-economic practices.

The diversity of both American and European experience does suggest caution in attributing a blanket liberal denomination to the 19th century, but it is certainly a recurrent motif, and if the current volume had focussed more on the opening decades of the century the commonalities of Hispanic liberalism in both idealist and pragmatic form would surely have emerged more sharply. But this is a book primarily about the consequences of the independence struggles, and its third part, on infrastructural power, revisits some of the abstract desiderata of state-building through a variety of narratives. The chapter by Ivan Jaksic on the multifaceted role of Andrés Bello in the creation of the Chilean republic provides a fine condensation of his biography of 2001, showing how the talented Venezuelan adapted his London-based experience to local conditions in providing pragmatic technical expertise. James Mahoney, who has explored the potential of path dependency more than most historians of the region, reconsiders the patterns of militarization and bureaucratization in Central America, Ricardo Salvatore does likewise for Argentina up to 1930 (and so with a much greater emphasis on patronage and less on military politics), and Hillel Soifer looks at Peru’s Aristocratic Republic between 1895 and 1919 – a distinct period in the history of a country of sharp political and economic ruptures, often prompted from outside.

Part Four addresses symbolic power and legitimacy and has the least linkage with the new institutionalists, for whom cultural power is too un-measurable a phenomenon to be of much salience. It is here that the social scientific qualities of the volume derived from the study of the state most closely approximate to the concerns of cultural studies to understand early nationhood. And it is some 275 pages into the book that, with Robert Breña’s chapter, the collection changes gear and we are given a fresh reconsideration of liberalism in the Spanish American world from the time of the Napoleonic invasions of Iberia in 1807-8 up to the final defeat of royalist forces at Ayacucho in 1825. Those who are more interested in ideas, nationhood and allied public practices might arguably follow their reading of the introduction with this section, which comprises chapters on visions on the national by Fernando López-Alves, the most concerted Spanish-focussed piece in the volume, on national identity by José Álvarez Junco, a highly informative comparative treatment of census taking by Mara Loveman, reconsideration of the role of the courts in state-building by Sarah Chambers, and a fine monographic study of the Colombian Chorographic Commission by Nancy Applebaum, who properly underscores the role of scientific endeavour.

Over such a range every reader will inevitably encounter differences of opinion, nuance and style to complement the illumination. From my personal viewpoint the editors underemphasise the extent to which territorial competition and foreign invasion were features of the 19th century, as shown by the experience of Peru and Central America (a chapter on Bolivia or Paraguay would have further accentuated this feature). However, by the end of a very serious and extraordinarily suggestive work I was much more exercised by the very poor quality of copy-editing of CUP, who presumably outsourced this title to a freelancer without

any knowledge of (or perhaps care for) accents in the Spanish and Portuguese languages. At a price of £60 a copy one might legitimately have expected better. None the less, that is still a price worth your library paying now, and let us hope that corrected paperback version within the financial reach of individual readers soon appears.

Professor James Dunkerley
Queen Mary, University of London, UK.

Joseph E Stiglitz & Mary Kaldor (eds.) *The Quest for Security: protection without protectionism & the challenge of global governance*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2013. 412+ xviii pp. (hbk).

This is a near-perfect text for contemporary graduate courses outside any disciplinary 'box' like our new PhD in Global Governance & Human Security at UMass. In its five parts & 15 chapters, it identifies & treats the range of current 'global' issues & largely non-state responses with a focus on protection (e.g. environmental, social & urban) & security against crises, gangs & violence. It includes a mix of more academic & applied analysts & analyses from a range of disciplines/fields, including a five page Commentary from George Soros which doesn't appear in the Table of Contents, especially the political economy/sociology of crime, ecology & cities.

It features a who's who of globalizations in addition to the co-editors: Misha Glenny, David Held, Jose Ocampo, Saskia Sassen, Ngaire Woods etc. But it is hardly coherent or cumulative: what priorities or sequences or paradigms for global governance in the third decade of the second century of the millennium; i.e. post-2015 or -2020? There is all too little on 'transnational' or 'private' certification, charters, initiatives, processes, regulation, standards etc. such as EITI, KP, NRC etc.; contrast the concluding chapter by Held & Young with the invaluable overview of fifty such schemes in Hale & Held [(eds.)(2011) *Handbook of Transnational Governance* Polity Press].

The 'global democratic deficit' (p 309) may in part be a conceptual deficit: the 'quest' is in part a failure to frame approaches which go beyond established canons. Ocampo calls for global governance to confront 'asymmetries' of development (p 314) but neither he nor others here treat exponential global reordering around the divergence of the BRICS (one line at p 329) & the PIIGs (not addressed): the rise of the global South, the focus of UNDP's *Human Development Report 2013*. There is no mention of prospects for 'developmental states' in Africa as well as Asia, or of SOEs & SWFs especially NOCs. Thus Jan Nederveen Pieterse suggests the traditional North-South axis is being superseded by an 'East-South' turn.

Soros here claims to be 'much more radical' (p 83) than co-editor Stiglitz, suggesting that financial markets do not 'tend toward equilibrium' (p 84). And he identifies a profound, unacceptable consequence of asymmetries around current financial crises: regional differentiation:

If the crisis occurs in the periphery countries, then the Washington consensus prevails and you impose market discipline. But when it threatens the center, then you intervene and you merge away the failing institution; you provide fiscal stimulus, monetary stimulus, so effectively the center remains unscathed (p 85).

Perhaps the most innovative part is the second one on varieties of global (in)security, especially the development of transnational organised crime (TOC). Co-editor Mary Kaldor laments insecurity of citizens, calling for human security rather than a war on terror (p 118). She notes how organized violence is increasingly transnational & non-state with political violence & organized crime merging: into a 'globalized informal economy' (p 126). Kaldor could go further & note the innovative response of UNDP in the Caribbean in 2012 in reaction to such violence: citizen security.

But the most innovative perspective is by Misha Glenny (chapter 6) on global criminal industries which stands in contrast to the more traditional PS of John Ikenberry (#4). A comparison of these two essays, separated by that by co-editor Kaldor on global insecurity illustrates the costs & benefits of being constrained by the canons of a discipline, even a relatively benign subfield like IR. So Ikenberry holds onto more traditional, albeit 'diffuse' (p 95), threats to the dominance of the US, including the 'privatization of war' (p 101) by non-state actors with increasingly lethal violence technologies (p 102); he advocates 'cooperative security' (p 102) to ensure 'security interdependence' (p 96). Notwithstanding the global, especially US, financial crises & rise of China, Ikenberry advocates that the US 'should recommit to & rebuild its security alliances', so leading 'in the reform of global security institutions' (p 109). To 'renew American hegemonic authority' (p 110), he refers to the early 21st century 'Princeton Project on National Security', advocating global political development to reduce the risks of weak states as did early US post-colonial analysts of comparative politics.

Unrestrained by such disciplinary straightjackets, Glenny traces the rise of 'global criminal industries' (p 143), exacerbated by the end of bipolarity & recent financial crises. He traces how TOC defines globalization with a focus on the logistics which connect production in the global South to consumption in the North through webs of money-laundering etc, which the G8 seems unable to contain. And he suggests that criminal networks have to be ahead of states & markets to survive, increasingly focusing on cyber-crime & financial fraud (p 152) & recently counterfeit goods (p 153). Glenny notes the continuing Latin American Commission on drugs along with moves to abandon the war on drugs as well as the war on terror in the US (p 151). And now the Global Commission on Drugs has been joined by that on West Africa, as controls over supply routes in the Western Hemisphere has produced the ballooning of illegal logistics along the West African coast.

At the start, the editors note that the chapters were presented at Columbia University in December 2008 & have only been 'lightly revised to reflect the changes that have since occurred' (p xi). Arguably the most profound changes have been analytic rather than empirical, as illustrated by the stand-off between, say, Ikenberry & Glenny. This collection reflects discourses from the last decade not the next: only a few sources date from the present decade. It presents informed public policy/diplomacy but little data & lacks a list of acronyms. There is just a trio of tables: 12.1 on types of climate change governance in multilevel networks (p 291); 13.1 on global conferences & summits (p 319): & 14.1 on models for enhancing responsiveness of the G20 (p 351). For more contemporary & empirical analysis see recent anticipation of the 'World in 2050' from both PwC & HSBC along with the 2013 *HDR* on the global South & the UN proposal for a post-2015 development agenda.

*Professor Timothy M Shaw,
University of Massachusetts Boston, MA, USA.*

Stig Jarle Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia. The History and Ideology of a Militant Islamist Group, 2005-2012*. London: Hurst 2013, 195 pp. (hbk).

An awful lot has been said about radical Islamism since the advent of the Global War on Terror (GWOT). However particularly on the African continent – despite the 1998 terrorist attacks in Dar-es-Salaam and Nairobi and the activities of Boko Haram in Nigeria and Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb- the extremist face of a perverse interpretation of the world's second biggest religion remains woefully misunderstood and poorly documented. Stig Jarle Hansen's book on Somalia's most important jihadist faction, Harakat Al-Shabaab, makes a significant contribution to scholarship in chronicling the trajectory of the only time that fellow travellers of the Al-Qaeda network have controlled large swathes of territory and been able to govern

sizeable numbers of people in Africa. By drawing on years of courageous fieldwork in some of the world's most hostile conditions for academic research, the monograph is able to generate valuable detail for wider analysis.

While the book is short on a solid theoretical contextualisation of a politico-military movement like Al-Shabaab and while it would certainly have benefited from adopting a more comparative dimension (if only to flesh out the specificities of Somalia's jihadists in power), Hansen skilfully documents the meteoric rise of Al-Shabaab from a group of three dozen like-minded individuals less than ten years ago to the only political organisation of the last decades to have remained so cohesive and well-organised in a post state-collapse environment of debilitating clan politics and ever shifting business alliances. The book strikes a balance between those who have long insisted that jihadism in Somalia is essentially a local phenomenon, with strong popular support rooted in opportunistic behaviour, best not understood through the prism of the GWOT; and those who warn against naively localised interpretations of militant Islamism in the Horn of Africa, arguing that Somalia has become a key battlefield for the global confrontation sought by Osama Bin Laden, Ayman Al-Zawahiri and Anwar Al-Awlaki. Hansen rightly emphasises that Al-Shabaab's success in 2008-2010 in controlling most of South-Central Somalia is the product of the interplay between local and global factors. Al-Shabaab's pragmatic dealings with business elites from all clans and genuine backing by local communities grateful for the real security improvements brought by the movement in the areas it controlled are crucial. But equally important were Al-Shabaab's ruthless dealings with rivals (and even supposed like-minded movements like Hizbul Islam), its deployment of a ferocious secret police (*amniyat*) against hostile civilians and its foreign force-de-frappe, consisting of hundreds of volunteers from across the *ummah* and dozens of violent specialists with extensive combat experience in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Yemen.

The monograph aptly demonstrates the capacity of the Shura Council leadership to be both flexible and dogmatic at the same time. On the one hand, Al-Shabaab leaders continue to manage to maintain impressive discipline and cohesion amidst their thousands of foot soldiers and cadres, many of whom joined for very different reasons, ranging from the ideological (offensive or defensive jihad) to the emotional (nationalism) to the material (regular pay) to the criminal (greed). Through a masterful use of pragmatic discourses in mosques, markets and internet websites, it manages to simultaneously attract funds and recruits from those motivated by local, national and global grievances: Diaspora groups and Mogadishu traders who harbour grievances against two decades of Ethiopian interference in Somalia; Muslim converts and Gulf charities who wish to create a Taliban-style state in Africa, a bulwark against the decadent West; and sub-clans embroiled in seemingly endless disputes over the control of the charcoal trade. Hansen does not privilege any of these groups or explanations as holding the key to the Al-Shabaab phenomenon; he argues that it is the complex, deliberate interplay between all of them that explains why, despite many predictions of the jihadists' imminent demise, more than half of South-Central Somalia remains under their control.

Overall then, Hansen's book should best be thought of as an essential mapping exercise of a movement about which much has been claimed, but little has ever been proven. The sheer collection of information –names, events, dates, numbers, money flows, leadership struggles– is an arduous task that many take for granted, but for which Hansen ought to be praised. This is by no means the definitive book on jihadism in the Horn or even on Al-Shabaab itself: it misses comparative analysis and conceptual depth to merit such a title, including a more solid engagement with literature on Islamism more broadly, Africa in the international political economy and/or the sprawling scholarship on violent conflict. It should also engage more with disastrous policies pursued by not just Ethiopia, but also by the US and EU– the international paradigm of state collapse itself is what reproduces much of the dysfunctions it claims to be resolving (Verhoeven, 'The Self-fulfilling Prophecy of Failed States', *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 2009). Furthermore, this reviewer would have like to

see Hansen explore the devastating 2011 famine, during which an estimated 260000 Somalis died from hunger or disease, in far greater detail: surely such an apocalyptic process would be worth discussing at length (rather than in a handful of pages), given what Al-Shabaab's behaviour during the catastrophe revealed about its complex, often contradictory relationship with local communities and aid workers; about its supposed model of "Islamist economics"; and about the not so straightforward dynamics between the central leadership of the Shura Council and regional force commanders. Nevertheless, this slim volume does contain multiple insights that will allow others to make better sense of Somalia's recent history, as well as providing some basis for a more nuanced grasp of militancy and extremism from Mauritania and Mali to Libya and Kenya. That, in and by itself, is no small contribution to make to scholarship- and, ultimately, to better policy vis-à-vis a country that remains very poorly understood by many of the people who make consequential decisions regarding its future.

Dr Harry Verhoeven
University of Oxford, UK.

Adolph, Christopher, *Bankers, Bureaucrats, and Central Bank Politics: The Myth of Neutrality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2013, 355pp (hbk).

Christopher Adolph's *Bankers, Bureaucrats, and Central Bank Politics* sets itself the task of bridging the gap between theoretical understandings of how central bankers make their decisions in an ideal situation, and how real central bankers come to make their decisions about interest rates, unemployment, and growth (p 1). The central argument of the book is that the notion of neutrality among central bankers is a myth that serves to conceal the distributional consequences of monetary policy, and which is perpetuated because central banker's themselves have an interest in maintaining the myth (p 10). In the process, Adolph is able to 'cast doubt on the idea that heavy financial sector influence on economic policy is new' (p 2), and therefore provides an important contribution to the scholarship of central bank politics, but also to broader debates in political economy that suggest globalisation and the growth of transnational capital transactions have served to increasingly constrain the policy autonomy of states.

The book is framed theoretically by debates on interests and institutions in comparative political economy. It is operationalized methodologically through the development of measures for the socialization, incentives, and career backgrounds of central bankers, and by formalizing the impact of these measures in a variety of scenarios. The data used for the book's analysis are 'large comparative datasets that reveal something about average career effects', and as such, Adolph acknowledges that if the 'book were a courtroom drama, we would be building a case on a preponderance of circumstantial evidence, not a smoking gun' (p 20). Nonetheless, the book's analysis builds insight into questions about the extent to which central bank independence deals with the problem of politicians' time-inconsistent inflationary preferences, and the extent to which it creates a significant principal-agent problem for governments.

Chapter two considers the effect of career socialization and career incentives on central banker behaviour in a monetary policy game to examine whether central bankers who are career bureaucrats are more or less hawkish on inflation than central bankers with a career history in the financial sector. It shows that 'monetary policy are made according to central banker type, which [Adolph] argue[s] is well proxied by central banker career paths' (p 54). Chapter three then goes on to consider the impact of career backgrounds on the level of inflation in industrialized countries and the effect of the 'revolving door' between the financial sector and the central bank. The chapter suggests that there are important links between pre-

and post- central bank careers, which will influence central bankers' policy preferences. Ultimately, Adolph shows that 'several pieces of evidence suggest that career ambitions play a significant role' in affecting inflation (p 103). Adolph therefore makes the important argument that 'as long as monetary agents aspire to further wealth or office, paper autonomy alone cannot guarantee the insulation of monetary policy from outside interests.'

Chapter 4 considers how the monetary policy process in the United States and other advanced economies shapes the link between central bankers' career paths and inflation. Chapter 5 considers the impact of central bankers' career histories on inflation in developing countries. Chapter 6 asks how central bankers are able to use their independence, and what its consequences are for inflation and unemployment under different labour market conditions. Chapter 7 examines the interaction between monetary and labour market institutions in determining unemployment, and the effects that partisan government has on this. Chapter 8 considers the politics of central banker appointment, and in particular the links between the political preferences of governments and the conservativeness of central bankers. In the process, the chapter argues that central banker appointment is a partisan process. Chapter 9 examines the length of central bankers' tenure, and shows that the dismissal of central bankers may be a form of accountability, but only acts with a delay. The book concludes with a discussion of the implications of the study for the Great Recession in the United States and the prospects of the Euro.

In general, then, *Bankers, Bureaucrats, and Central Bank Politics* is able to formalise the claim that the socialisation and career preferences of agents are significant in shaping monetary policy outcomes in the context of central bank independence. In one respect, the notion that socialisation, ideas, and interests, are important in shaping policy outputs is intuitive, and therefore, somewhat unsatisfying; it seems clear that agents act would only act according to their beliefs preferences. Where *Bankers, Bureaucrats, and Central Bank Politics* is able to contribute to the substance of debates about how agents and institutions shape outcomes, is through its attempt to conceptualise what kinds of preferences matter for what reasons. In doing so, the book calls into question the notion that central bank independence is the politically neutral keystone of macroeconomic stability, which has been so central to monetary policy-making in the neo-liberal era.

The book draws heavily on complex formal and statistical models, which encompass the majority of each chapter. However, the key questions being addressed by each chapter, and the conclusions they reach, are presented in a way that makes the book's arguments accessible to those without expertise in this mode of analysis. Where the author has introduced unfamiliar graphical representations, these are helpfully explained in boxed guides to the graphics. Each chapter also has a methodological / data appendix. Overall then, this is an interesting, thorough, and well-executed book on the way that interests and socialisation shape monetary policy, which will be useful for those concerned specifically with monetary policy-making, delegation, and bureaucracy, as well as those interested in comparative political economy more broadly.

Dr Chris Rogers
University of York, UK.

Paul Harris, *What's Wrong with Climate Politics and How to Fix It*. Cambridge: Polity Press 2013, 286 pp. (pbk).

In *What's Wrong with Climate Politics and How to Fix It*, Paul Harris gives us a distilled, diagnostic account of the principal problems underpinning the world's failure to address climate change adequately, and how those problems may be overcome. The book is aimed a

broad audience: it could be used effectively in a wide range of undergraduate courses in environmental studies and political science; but at the same time the writing is well-judged to reach a lay audience of those interested in gaining a clear, incisive account of the state of climate change politics.

A great virtue of the book is its exceptionally clear structure. Harris expounds his diagnosis at three levels. The first is the character of the international system, diagnosed as the “cancer of Westphalia”. The second is the nature of the dynamic between the world’s two dominant states, certainly in the climate change context, the United States and China, who account for around 40% of global greenhouse gas emissions between them. The third are the “addictions of modernity” – the cultural addiction to growth and consumerism.

Each of these has a chapter of diagnosis, and then one of potential solutions. Three “treatment” chapters follow, outlining the value of, respectively: “people centred diplomacy” for the first; shifting towards a focus on the responsibility of affluent individuals globally (as opposed to, or at least alongside, the responsibility of states) for causing climate change; and a refocused politics of happiness that recognises that the increasing consumption that drives emissions growth does not, at least beyond a certain threshold, make us happier.

As with any diagnosis, however, lots depend on the initial assumptions that lead to it. I often wished Harris would stick more strictly to the assumptions he made, and there were others where I think his diagnosis simply starts from faulty premises. These problems are notably around his treatment of the state and states system, and his resolute individualism.

For the first problem, Harris vacillates regarding the nature of the state system – whether it is something existing with objective, determining characteristics, or something much more fluid. This is crucial for the second part of the book. Harris argues that “people centred diplomacy” should be the basis for international politics, but recognises the interstate system as still the predominant structure for such politics. But why would states, if they are forced by international anarchy to pursue “national interests”, switch to pursuing climate diplomacy that focused on the needs and interests of people, both within and beyond their borders?

Regarding what drives states to do the things they do, Harris relies on the notion of national interests. He switches often between sometimes simply reifying this notion, while at other times hinting that national interests may in practice be a euphemism for the interests of powerful corporate interests within states. Elsewhere however (p 221), he decries this account of states as ‘cynical’. But to suggest we should see the world as it is and not as we want it to be (as he asserts at a number of points we should do) is not cynical. The account of the state he gives is a normative one – that states exist to promote and protect the interests and security of their citizens. This part of the analysis would be much more satisfying if he took more seriously the question of the relationship between states and the economy, and that this might be a key question to address in diagnosing why states have so far been able to do so little to address climate change.

The notion that states exist to promote individual interests also connects to the second problem in his analysis. His resolute liberal individualism entails regarding individual actions as the end source of GHG emissions. This underpins his arguments for how climate politics might start to get on the track – the source of arguments that diplomacy can become “people centred”, that negotiations over allocation of emissions rights might shift from being state-centred to focused on the wealthy individuals across the globe who produce most of the emissions, and that we need to focus on the cultural values underpinning consumption and economic growth in order to shift towards a low carbon future.

Lots depend on whether (a) it is in fact useful to regard individual behaviour as the source of emissions, and (b) whether the obsession with economic growth is really the result of individuals’ values. For the former, most of the sociology of consumption [e.g. Shove, Elizabeth (2003) *Comfort, Cleanliness and Convenience: the Social Organization of Normality*.

London: Berg.] shows very persuasively that an individualist model is inadequate in explaining the growth of consumption and therefore emissions: it is much better understood via a focus on the provision of infrastructure, technological norms built into the things we use on a daily basis, the power of corporations and governments to structure our daily lives, notably. For the latter, there is a very strong case to be made that historically the obsession with growth is the result of the structure of capitalist social relations, and the growth imperative these relations produce, than the result of individual greed. Such greed may indeed sustain growth ideologically, but it is not why we have a growth-oriented society in the first place.

But these criticisms merely attest to the strength of the book in sharpening our attention on the key issues we need to think about as we attempt to, in Harris' words, "fix" climate politics. Moving forward cannot be done without provoking conflict about the way forward itself – none of us has any special claim to truth when it comes to how we might produce the largest social, political, economic, technological transformation that humanity has ever attempted. Harris' mix of cultural and ethical change is certainly a key component in the sources of transformation we need to focus our attention on.

Professor Matthew Paterson
University of Ottawa, Canada.

Pankaj Mishra, *From the Ruins of Empire: The Revolt Against the West and the Remaking of Asia*. London: Allen Lane 2012, 356 pp. (pbk).

Pankaj Mishra's book examines the emergence in Asia of a tradition of intellectual resistance to Western encroachment beginning in the latter half of the nineteenth century and accelerating through the twentieth century. He argues that itinerant, activist intellectuals like Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Liang Qichao, and Rabindranath Tagore prefigured the emergence of the vital and self-assured Asia of today. The reactions of these figures to Asia's contentious encounters with European colonial powers inspired later nationalist leaders to transform resentment towards Western domination into organized, anticolonial resistance. His work ranges widely in linking these figures with their intellectual legacies across a century and a half, while proffering deeper intellectual roots for the late twentieth century anticolonial movements that conclude his narrative.

The book's first chapter surveys a century of defeats for Asian societies in Egypt, India, and China under the rubric of "Asia Subordinated." From this baseline, Mishra stakes his claim for the transformative role of particular Asian intellectuals through biographical chapters dedicated to al-Afghani, Qichao, and Tagore. These biographical treatments are interspersed with narrative chapters on the nationalist moments following each of the world wars, which place these figures in the vanguard of sweeping changes in Asian society between the mid-nineteenth century and the present.

These elements of the book shape Mishra's attempt to reorient the focus of the global history of the twentieth century away from the Eurocentric narratives of the two world wars and the Cold War. He claims that the more relevant focal point for much of the world in the last century was "the intellectual and political awakening of Asia and its emergence from the ruins of both Asian and European empires" (p 8). In doing so, his objectives fit clearly in the theoretical vein of Edward Said's *Orientalism* or postcolonial historians like Dipesh Chakrabarty or Partha Chatterjee. The reader may also identify the influence of works like Cemil Aydin's *Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia* to which his framework clearly owes some debt.

Mishra's book is at its best when it traces the movement of its central protagonists through the interconnected worlds of Asian scholars and statesmen. Al-Afghani, Qichao, and

Tagore do more than publish provocative or progressive philosophies; they immerse themselves in networks of intellectuals who were as likely to interact in Tokyo, Istanbul, or Bombay as in London or Paris. They and their contemporaries confronted the emergence of new political and economic structures inordinately dominated by expansionist European powers. Their responses defined the distinctive political, economic and religious ideologies that have come to characterize Indian, Chinese, and Islamic modernism. That Mishra can link these nineteenth and twentieth century figures with their diverse legacies across such a broad area advances his goal of uncovering an Asia that is not just imagined through "the narrow perspective of [the West's] own strategic and economic interests" (p 8).

But while the central figures in Mishra's book are complex individuals, they are too often beset by opponents that are left faceless and underdeveloped. Asian advocates of top-down modernization are represented collectively by their European educations and desire for wholesale adoption of Western customs and practices, while conservative defenders of Islamic or Confucian tradition are depicted as unaware of or uninterested in the outside world. The biographical approach that Mishra employs in his middle chapters builds up his chosen few personalities with superlatives of "first" and "foremost", but fails to fully develop their peers who are dismissed as "bolder but shallower" (p 135). The reader is left without a full sense of how such unique figures as al-Afghani, Qichao, or Tagore emerged from the social and intellectual environments of their respective parts of nineteenth century Asia, or why their visions of Asia's place in the modern world had an impact and longevity that their contemporaries did not.

These weaknesses are compounded in the sections of the book that offer sweeping surveys of the narrative history of nineteenth and twentieth century Asia. Constructing a narrative on such grand scales of geography and time is ambitious and difficult. The burgeoning field of Global History has illustrated how rewarding such large-scale, interregional inquiries can be, but it has also highlighted the pitfalls of dipping too shallowly into regional histories that have undergone decades of historiographical development. Ottoman historians may object to the uncritical depiction of the nineteenth century empire as a "sick man" beset by European diplomats who "intervened with impunity in Ottoman affairs" (p 61). That nineteenth century Istanbul was "the political centre of both Arabs and Persians" (p 60) and "a city with a Christian majority" (p 69) should also raise some eyebrows and highlights the problematic dearth of citations for non-quoted material. Mishra is too uncritical in these sections in his employment of binary oppositions between concepts of modernity/tradition and East/West. It appears at times that he cannot quite reconcile the diverse ideological narratives of the historians that he is forced to draw on, leading to some dissonance between his objectives for the book and his employment of a historical survey that draws on stereotypes of "bewildered Asians" (p 21) and "invincible European power" (p 95).

Despite these drawbacks, Mishra's book provides an accessible and engaging introduction to several of the most important figures in modern Asian intellectual history. His passion for his subjects is clear as he depicts, with the appropriate vigor, the peripatetic and interconnected lives of scholars and statesmen from all parts of Asia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He captures the dynamism of Asia's response to the changing political, economic, and social realities of the global system that emerged from the imperial encounters of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and uses it to assert a more central place for Asian intellectuals in the construction of global modernity. The book should be of interest for general readers or academics seeking an accessible introduction to anticolonial thought in Asia or to the lives of al-Afghani, Qichao, or Tagore. It may also be useful for instructors as part of a survey course in post-colonial, Asian or Global history.

Jeffery Dyer
Boston College, USA.

Haj, Samira, *Reconfiguring Islamic Tradition: Reform, Rationality and Modernity*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford General; London: Eurospan, 2009. 304 pp.

Samira Haj of the History Department of The City University of New York has written an outstanding study of one of the most contentious subjects in the Islamic world all times; the debate over reason and religion, and the problem of renovation in Islam. With the ability of comprehension of Islamic problems and Western sensibility, she has presented the newly created notions and applied them to today's critical challenges. Haj, in her volume, analyzes two influential Muslim scholars in the name of revivalism in Islamic political thought. One is the eighteenth century reformer Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab of Saudi Arabia, and the other is the nineteenth century reformer Muhammad Abduh of Egypt. Both of them inspired large communities by creating conceptual formation. She shows the conflict up between reason and religion by drawing a disinclination of Islamic jurists and theologians toward rationality. This book is a surgery of theology and philosophy toward the understanding of reason and religion in Islamic world by comparing Western orientalist's perception in scientific and historical aspects.

Professor Haj pursues her story beginning with the explanation of inclinations, such as revival and reform, liberal and fundamentalist, traditionalist and modern, recalled passages on the Islamic historical memory by referring to the Abdul Wahhab's understanding of orthodoxy and Abduh's colonial modernity essence, and going on to discuss the discourses of interactive transactions, education, family courts, marriage, sex segregation and divorce. These chapters make it clear to follow the footprints of Islamic revivalism process which is closely related to the progress of the European secularism from the seventeenth century involving the notion of humanism that has opened discussions on religion as a private institution in individual life. This framework triggers a totally new debate in Islamic literature which comprises intellectual, political, social and practical organisms: Does the tradition prevent the improvement of Islamic reasoning? Is it possible to claim the production of new reasoning materials while the tradition blinks? From the perspective of an argumentative discussion it is easy to describe that Muslim scholars have benefited foundational documents of Islam to embrace modernity. Haj clarifies her aim in her book to emphasize two aspects toward modernity seemed opposite of one another. The role of oppositional dichotomies in the conceptualized world is not simply a confrontation of traditional versus modern, secular versus sacred. In Haj's account, tradition and modernity, according to both scholars, may be defined not as a barrier but as explanatory methods of contemporary problems. In this context, her approach toward Islamic tradition enables her to extrapolate that both Abduh and Abdul Wahhab should not be classified as liberal or fundamentalist; however their considerations reflect the differences in the world they occupied. Moreover, their engagement with the modernity was to accommodate Islamic structure to the changing world. Her ability to comment the classical sources of Islam, her command to the Arabic language and her skill to compare the Western rationality and the Islamic revivalists' criticism ensure the reader to gain knowledge from a reliable basis.

While Haj narrates the detailed life stories and struggles of the scholars, it may not be ignored that even though she is sometimes defeated by polemical, philosophical and qalam's perplexing themes, her successive identification of scholars' lives allows the reader to pace the evolving process of modernity in the Islamic tradition. Professor Haj goes on to clarify the continuing though sporadic, struggle between internal threat targeting practices and belief of the Muslim community and Western discourses challenging the society with modernizing and civilizing agencies. In her discussion, this variance between the two compels to highlight that Islamic thought is not a combination of unitary and unchanging structure. The discourse of the reformers' moral criticisms and reform strategies are scrutinized under the light of the

view of the Islamic tradition toward the notions of truth, reason and ethics other than that of the Western framework.

Haj also demonstrates how reform projects of the revivalists attain to the political movements and power by using religion, religious foundations and religious practices revealing the redefinition of opposite terms. At this point, she underscores the problematic assertions of Islam based upon the understanding of religious morality. On the one hand, she refers to Abdul Wahhab's statements about monotheism, moral God, virtues, the cult of saints, intercession, originated from Ibn Taymiya's arguments widely representing the objection of speculative theology, qalam. On the other, she illustrates Abduh as a critical of traditionalist Muslim authority and colonial modernity: Abduh who was Jamal al-Din al-Afghani's devoted pupil endeavors to reconstruct the description of human reasoning and independent judgment in the map of Islamic tradition. Her emphasize of the divergence between Abdul Wahhab and Abduh arisen from their viewpoint of historical context in the challenges facing the Muslim society of their age has been frequently encountered in many places in her book.

Haj's discussion is important also for the substantial debate which is determined on the elaboration of conceptual world. In one sense, there has been a war of concepts: Regarding Abduh who lived in the times of British colonialism, she says: "Abduh ridiculed the notion that the separation of state and religion would lead to the advancement of Muslims as too simplistic by pointing out that the British colonists had already created a legal system made up 'of Mixed and National courts that are unattached to religion and where civic law reigns uncontested exactly as Hanotaux proposed; yet this arrangement has yet to shepherd progress or improve the condition of Muslims'" (p 94). Noting the hostility of scholars to the British imperialism on the one hand; the inevitability of becoming modern and his claim of modernity as a sole path for advancement, on the other, Abduh insists that gaining true and proper knowledge, no matter religious or secular, makes Muslims gain their moral insight. Hereby, Haj concludes that Abduh brings reasoning into the forefront. His strive of reasoning is surrounded in every aspect of society because he accepts Islamic reform in the matters of marriage, divorce, court, family, citizenship and polygamy.

Haj takes seriously the issue of woman under the subtitle of love and marriage, and she examines its place in the name of modernity in the society of Egypt. She illuminates why she attempts to reach a conclusion only by interpreting a specific example of change and modernity, "I have maintained that the terms and meaning of the family law and personal status were transmuted in the process of rearranging the law to accommodate changing conditions" (p 154). No doubt that she is closer to enlighten the point that the certain case given an example of the two lovers' gap in their social status. Haj expresses various complicated issues played roles in the society other than simple cruel rules of tradition. The appeal of the book is a story of the conflict between reason and religion which had not been seen as existed in the early ages of Islam turned to an enmity of rationality and tradition.

Taken as a whole, Professor Haj's book is a remarkable contribution to our understanding of the movement of renovation in Islamic thought.

Kevser K. Karatas
University of St. Thomas, USA.

Özge Kemahlioğlu, *Agents or Bosses? Patronage and Intra-party Politics in Argentina and Turkey*. Colchester: ECPR Press, 2012, 198 pp. (pbk).

Agents or Bosses? is a revised edition of Özge Kemahlioğlu's PhD dissertation. The study treats the issue of state-citizen relationship and patronage jobs on behalf of party members in order to get electoral winnings, and "to shed light on mainly the political factors that shape how elected public office holders *supply* public jobs through particularistic relationships to some selected citizens" (p 1). Kemahlioğlu adopts a comparative analysis, which adds additional value to her findings. She acknowledges the similarities and differences between her two case studies, Turkey and Argentina, and she moves cautiously with her methodological approach and her extensive empirical and statistical analysis.

It is common knowledge that politicians and parties in modern societies aim at building networks of supporters by forming particularistic relationships with citizens through the exchange of public material benefits. The author is aware of the different interpretations proposed by scholars and she provides the reader with a well-documented literature review in order to introduce him/her on the treatment that will follow. Clientelist practices and patronage-ridden politics have been commonplace in modern societies in general, in Turkey especially after Second World War, and in Argentina since the early 20th century.

The book is structured in seven parts. The introduction of the book deals with the argumentation around which the author will base her study. The reader will find the reasons that made her choose Argentina and Turkey as her case studies. One of the greatest similarities is the problems both countries face with the quality of democracy. Using two countries differing largely between them, both culturally and politically, helped the author to test her hypothesis in different settings and to develop her theoretical arguments (p 9). Kemahlioğlu holds that in order to fully understand "the political factors that affect levels of particularism in public employment, we have to analyse two stages of political competition: among parties in general elections and within parties for nomination and leadership" (p 7). In other words, the internal party politics matter to understand particularism in citizen-state relationships.

In chapter two, there is a brief summary of the neo-liberal economic changes that both countries have gone through since the 1980s. Kemahlioğlu refers to the already existing arguments about the impact of economic structures and conditions on particularistic distribution of state resources by politicians (pp 14-35), to conclude that economic liberalization restricted the possibility, on both countries, of hiring new employees in the public administration. Due to this fact, the limited number of jobs remained was made more valuable for both politicians and citizens. Therefore, these patronage jobs were allocated by politicians "in a direct and personal manner to active supporters in their parties" (p 41).

The following chapter deals with the internal dynamic of political parties in Argentina and Turkey and discusses why and how patronage jobs are used within parties to show that politicians have various purposes for distributing material benefits in exchange for political support, and to build political loyalties. Due to the perplexity of this relationship the hierarchically high-level party politicians are not certain about the lower level politician's ambitions. Kemahlioğlu demonstrates that in this interaction the number of patronage jobs that are distributed in the districts of the lower level politicians clarify the ambitions of the latter.

In chapter four, the author analyses the factors that lead to variations in the interaction within the politicians of the party itself. In doing so, Kemahlioğlu is making use of a game-theoretic model of internal party competition and particularistic exchanges within parties. The model describes an interaction of two party members (a higher-level and a lower-level member) within the same party and the role of patronage jobs to their interaction. Kemahlioğlu's study improves our understanding of clientelism by exposing how the public sector size can be used as a signaling effort between politicians of the same party and hence emphasizing intra-party politics in addition to inter-party competition. The argument that can be derived by the chapter is that the members of a party that rely on the party support and

whose party leader is not dominant within the party, prefer not to engage in large extent in order to appear less challenging to the party leader and not to lose their own benefits and support by the party and its leader (pp 61-64).

Chapters five and six deal with each country analyzing public employment at the sub-national level to understand how socio-economic and political factors have led to variation in how politicians and parties use public employment to build political support. Kemahlioğlu convincingly demonstrates the expectation that internal party politics affect patronage in public employment. The use of empirical analysis by two provinces in each country, i.e. Buenos Aires and Chaco in Argentina and Istanbul and Bilecik in Turkey, and statistical data to support her argumentation and findings leaves very limited space to contest their validity.

In the final part Kemahlioğlu includes a very helpful 27-page appendix with all the data she has used. However, the appendices, the highly demanding statistical tables and equations make obvious that her target audience is mainly a trained primarily as political scientist with statistical knowledge, and not the general one with an interest in Turkish and Argentinean politics and history. Additionally, it would be beneficial for the study's to have included a presentation of the period before the establishment of neo-liberalism, in order for some additional comparisons to be made and general knowledge to be acquired.

To sum up, the present book deals with a dimension of the topic of patronage that has not been thoroughly studied in the relevant literature. It manages to demonstrate convincingly and eloquently that the characteristics of the parties themselves and intra-party politics matter also. Patronage-clientelism politics are explored in a very rigorous and novel way. The study of Kemahlioğlu is of high-standard and it brings new evidence and well-researched analysis, supported by statistical data and carefully structured comparative analysis. The present book is a must-read for those interested in patronage-clientelism and intra-party politics specifically, and for Turkish and Argentinean politics in general.

Nikos Christofis
Leiden University, The Netherlands.

Cerqueira João, *The Tragedy of Fidel Castro*. Austin, Texas: River Grove Books 2013.

Few texts concerning the historical confrontation between US president John F. Kennedy (JFK) and Cuban head of state Fidel Castro are as odd, although curious, as João Cerqueira's *The Tragedy of Fidel Castro*. The concise book takes the reader on a satirical journey through a fictional confrontation between JFK and Fidel Castro interweaved with actions taken by God, Jesus, and Fátima (the Virgin Mary). The satire deals with the impending war between the United States and Cuba in which Christ was sent to prevent. The Cuban populous was opening protesting against Castro's government. Fearful of the Cuban's demonstrations, Fidel Castro hoped to alleviate their dissatisfaction with a war with the United States. Castro's plans included an invasion of US soil. Yet, the text deals with more than the impending conflict. It chronicles Fidel Castro's journey through a few fanciful locations. In fact, the novel feels much more like Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* than anything that happened during the height of the Cold War.

The text translates well into the English language, especially with those familiar with either Latin or Portuguese culture. The humour found throughout the text is palpable. For instance, what did the Cuban Central Committee fear from Fidel Castro's speeches? It seems often it was not the content but the length (p 24). Although much of the humour is found hidden in the prose, a few scenes are comical verse after verse. One notable example is when Varadero, a Cuban spy, dances seductively with a woman in a night club. The female, it turns

out, was Fidel Castro in disguise. And what did Castro take from the experience? Cerqueira writes: “accustomed to being worshipped by thousands of devout fans, El Comandante made a mental note to add electronic sounds to his six-hour rallies” (p 48). The author provides a fascinating look at an alternative history critical of the ideologies of both nations. The critic of both socioeconomic systems is a breath of fresh air. It is uncommon for a text to critic both structures without supporting either.

João Cerqueira also cautions about the power of leaders to influence the population. Fidel Castro in numerous occasions has an almost hypnotic effect on the Cuban populous (p 38-40). In fact, Castro’s actions are often to Cuba’s detriment (p 34). JFK is also portrayed more as a ruler than a democratic president. In one section, JFK’s advisor, the counsellor, warned a prison guard that they would be hung if he/she did not open the prison door (p 48). It seems that in the world created by Cerqueira words are the most powerful weapon. Cerqueira describes the scene following Fidel Castro’s speech to ease the population’s objections: “feeling humbled and small, they (Cuban people) again cast their eyes to the ground, abashed. Fidel did not have to use his weapon on them again” (p 29).

The novel also provides a stark warning against the mixing of religion and politics. The dangers of fusing politics and religion are demonstrated most effectively in an episode where Fidel ventures into a monastery (pp 98- 120). Following Fidel’s arrival into the sanctuary a riot breaks out after the lower classes rebelled against the abbot (monastery’s leader).

The text is not without its faults. As a devout Catholic, I did not appreciate the humorous portrayal of God. In fact, the tale could have easily been told without those caricatures. Yet, the book is not a critic on faith, but primarily of religion’s influence within politics. In fact, the threat of Fidel Castro’s invasion gave the clergy previously unknown political power. The priests began to act more as soldiers than spiritual leaders so much so that they even wore military fatigues (p 66).

The success of the novel is its ability to provide the subject matter with some much needed humour. It provides political scientists and historians a much needed light hearted fictional narrative. After all, if humour can truly end wars maybe it can ease some of the tension between opposing scholars. In addition, the fictional nature of the text assists in providing suspense, since unlike many of the volumes many scholars are accustomed to digesting, the sequence of events is unknown. The book also bellows for political freedom and humanitarianism. *The Tragedy of Fidel Castro* is a religious and political satire, without doubt, worthy of not only consumption but also contemplation.

Dr Francisco José Tudela
University of Leeds, UK.