

## Journal of Global Faultlines

Publication details, including instructions for authors:

<http://www.keele.ac.uk/journal-globalfaultlines/>



---

### Book Reviews

William Leggett<sup>a</sup>, Robert Read<sup>b</sup>, Thomas Robb<sup>c</sup>, Julian de Medeiros<sup>d</sup>, Paul Gunn<sup>e</sup>, Francisco José Tudela<sup>f</sup>, Simon Davis<sup>g</sup>

<sup>a</sup> University of Birmingham, UK.

<sup>b</sup> Lancaster University, UK

<sup>c</sup> Oxford Brookes University, UK.

<sup>d</sup> Albert-Ludwigs University Freiburg, Germany & Kent University, UK.

<sup>e</sup> Goldsmiths, University of London, UK.

<sup>f</sup> University of Leeds, UK.

<sup>g</sup> Bronx Community College and Graduate Center, City University of New York, USA.

Journal of Global Faultlines/ Volume 2/ Issue 1/ April 2014, pp. 109-123

Published online: 15 May 2014.

To cite this article:

William Leggett, Robert Read, Thomas Robb, Julian de Medeiros, Paul Gunn, Francisco José Tudela, Simon Davis (2014) 'Book Reviews', *Journal of Global Faultlines*, 2(1), 109-123.

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

## Book Reviews

---

Anthony Painter, *Left Without a Future? Social Justice in Anxious Times*, London: I.B.Tauris for Policy Network, 2013, 244 pp. (pbk).

Why have social democrats failed to make political gains from the greatest crisis of capitalism since the 1930s? Alongside electoral defeats to established conservative parties are challenges from new populist movements to the left (e.g. Occupy) and the Right (e.g. UKIP). The British Labour Party was roundly rejected in 2010 and then engaged in an interminable, introspective leadership election. Meanwhile, the new Conservative led Coalition achieved the astonishing discursive feat of pinning the blame for the Great Recession on Labour economic profligacy. This will perhaps go down as one of the most extraordinary tactical and strategic defeats in British political history. Ever since, Labour has been on the back foot in trying to develop a new political narrative. In 2014 the Party is nowhere near where it should be in the polls, despite there being no love for a Coalition that is both deeply ideological and incompetent in its pursuit of 'austerity'.

To his credit, Labour Leader Ed Miliband has been gradually crafting a narrative based on a critique of 'irresponsible' or 'predatory' capitalism, allied to a more positive, inclusive formulation of 'One Nation'. The sense is that Miliband has done this incrementally and pragmatically. There has been no explicit attempt to import a broader intellectual blueprint for campaigning and governing, such as New Labour's Third Way. This may say more about the paucity of the intellectual resources available to Miliband, rather than his own preferences or abilities. Attempts to intellectually renew Labour post 2010 have taken two main forms. The first, unsurprising given the economic context, has been a return to the solid social democratic business of political economy and institutional design. This has been evident in work on, for example, (re)regulation, or pre-distribution. The second, higher profile type of intervention, has returned to what are imagined to be Labour's true values. At the forefront has been so called Blue Labour. Influential upon Miliband and associated with Labour peer Maurice Glasman and others, it places a communitarian emphasis on 'family, faith and flag' as a means of challenging both market and state fundamentalism. What has been lacking is an attempt to link such institutional and value-based approaches to the sociological character of post-crash Britain, and its implications for political strategy. It is into this vacuum that political writer Anthony Painter has tried to position himself in *Left Without a Future?*

The scope and rather breathless style of the book makes it difficult to characterise in sum. The first, stronger half, contains a series of chapters that diagnose the weaknesses of the post-crash left, offer some (pseudo) sociological commentary on the shape of a complex British society and what this entails for a new political economy. There is also a – now quite timely – chapter devoted to characterising different culturalist approaches to 'England and Scotland'. The second half drifts into overreach and occasional incoherence, with speculative, journalistic forays through a host of ideas – both faddish and traditional – and observations on party organisation and leadership. An unwelcome feature is Painter's uncritical acceptance of

political- psychological and neuroscientific theories that have been influential in recent years: making these the platform from which political ‘truths’ are read is in fact the antithesis of the pluralist politics he calls for.

To the extent that there is an integrating argument, it seems to be that the social democratic left must accept the irreducible pluralism of contemporary societies; move firmly away from the command and control, regulatory, redistributive state; and return to successful institution building, now to include local economic institutions. Painter adds – in a useful schematic of current ideological positions in British party politics – that while the new ‘moralising’ and ‘localising’ tendencies on left and right (e.g. Blue Labour, Red Tory) may be useful for developing the now requisite cultural politics, they are out of step with social complexity and citizen indifference. The Labour Party needs to open out to a diverse society beyond ‘the converted’; political leadership needs to be firm and strategic, but also humble, accessible and non-hectoring. Painter is also an observer of US politics and clearly impressed by much of the Obama template.

There is a good deal in here which will resonate with moderate social democrats, and could push at new thinking on policy and organisation. Few on the centre-left would disagree with Painter’s clear analysis of the limits of the pre-crash economic model (although many might take issue with his dismissal of the problem of relative inequality). The focus on institution building is also a suggestive social democratic strategy, although the specifics (e.g. local ‘work associations’) are surprisingly retro and underdeveloped. Painter also draws on his own previous research to map some interesting ideal-types of attitudes among the contemporary electorate, and he is surely right to try and indicate what this means for the leadership and political organisation of a traditional institution like Labour.

However, for all this, there are some profound analytical and political weaknesses to the argument. The first is a curious paradox: while the book presents itself as a sociological analysis of the current political scene, much of it reads like an over-excited *Demos* pamphlet circa 1995. There is a casual acceptance of what (in actual sociology) is referred to as the ‘death of class’ thesis, endless references to complexity, ‘bubbles’, ‘tribes’ and a fetishisation of ‘networks’ and the role of new technologies. We are told that people are more individualist, and less politically partisan. Most of this is established by assertion rather than with meaningful reference to the voluminous empirical or theoretical sociological literature. In the face of this, Painter points to ‘outdated’ ideologies on the statist left and neoliberal right, and argues for a more dialogical approach to politics. Fine. Much of this remains important, if contested. But new? It is indeed time that the sociological dynamics of the post-crash world were mapped, with a view to elaborating their political implications. So it was strange to read a description of Britain that, with the possible exception of the rise of social media, looks strikingly similar to that imagined by think-tanks in the 1990s. This work has been done, over and over. It is safe to say that we have known that ‘The simple fact is that European societies have changed from the social democratic golden years after the desperate tragedy of the two world wars’ for some considerable time (p.222). If anything, we should be considering the possible *re-emergence* of more ‘traditional’ forms of social structure and political practice, in the face of years of recession and the reversal of social mobility.

Of course, the other thing that has ‘happened’ to Britain since the 1990s is 13 years of New Labour government. But the second bizarre feature of the book is that it is as if New Labour never, in fact, happened. The target of Painter’s critique is the statist, Keynesian social

democratic left, and the current neoliberal right (just as it was for Third Way thinkers in the mid-1990s). But he offers no appraisal or account of the historical impact of New Labour itself. Something called 'the left' is blamed for failing to deliver an alternative to the neoliberal crash. But it could be reasonably countered that New Labour self-consciously defeated the left, and then proceeded, for all its important progressive achievements, to embed and extend neoliberal hegemony. Painter completely fails to acknowledge the role of three successive New Labour governments in shaping the very 'social realities' he now describes as circumscribing political action. We can argue over the extent to which New Labour was more or less neoliberal, social democratic, a hybrid or whatever. But any serious account of the contemporary political scene must at least stake out a position on this issue. It is as if Painter mirrors the current Labour Party's own discomfort and failure to situate itself clearly in relation to the Blair years. An explicit reckoning of this type by the leadership post 2010 would have lessened the impact of ludicrous claims about Labour's record made daily by Coalition ministers and their media supporters.

This failure to adequately conceptualise how social change is itself shot through with politics, combined with confusion and/or myopia about the impact of the Blair/Brown years, ripples into Painter's analysis of political leadership and strategy. He offers a quite thoughtful account of some of the dilemmas and complexities of contemporary leadership, but is contradictory about what it can achieve. On the one hand we see the classic, reductionist and implicitly technocratic social democratic approach: 'A viable and sustainable political strategy understands where the parameters are, then crafts a viable vision backed up by sound policies within those parameters' (p.52). However, elsewhere it is argued that 'The notion of 'centre-ground' as the magical 'sweet spot' of politics is outmoded...there are a number of available 'centres' (p.34). The first view presents politics as a *fait accompli* in the face of social change, the latter holds out hope for 'game changing' political leadership. The ambiguity is reflected in the rather bland subsequent claims about what leadership should entail: basically a mix of 'passion' and 'realism'. There is no shame in conceding that leadership is caught between the poles of determinism (realism) and voluntarism (passion). But more rigour in thinking through the dynamics of that relationship would have enhanced the whole argument: where specifically in narrative and policy might there be more room for active leadership, and where must it defer to the constraints of its operating environment?

Painter's own, ultimate commitment to (a moderate version of) the Labour Party as *the* vehicle for change prevents him from really delivering on the implications of his analysis. Like many, I am sympathetic to his view that a more pluralist and outward looking Labour Party will be crucial to delivering any progressive change. But such a party must give far more credence to the radical critiques of our way of life that have been (re)emerging. These come from various dynamic and progressive quarters in the complex society that Painter depicts, such as Occupy or a vibrant new feminism. Engaging with these new actors and ideas specifically requires an end to the enduring, almost pathological need by moderate social democrats to rubbish 'the left': a tiresomely familiar feature of Painter's book. This is no better illustrated than in his silly and literalist critique of Occupy's claim to speak for 'the 99%' as being impossible in a pluralist society. Of course they are not actually claiming to speak 'for' 99% of citizens' individual views! The slogan simply indicates a fundamental critique of the balance of power and resources within the present social, economic and political system. This is a critique that resonates with popular sentiment more than Painter or moderate social

democrats still dare to admit. Ironically, it is also ripe to be popularised and mobilised by a bolder and re-invigorated centre-left, using precisely the blend of dialogic, passionate and realistic leadership that this book calls for.

Dr. Will Leggett  
University of Birmingham

Christina L Davis, *Why Adjudicate?: Enforcing Trade Rules in the WTO*. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press 2012, xvi + 326 pp. (pbk).

Multilateral agreements have been subject to increasing scrutiny as the globalisation process has progressed because of their critical role in enforcing internationally-agreed rules on conduct by nation states. The World Trade Organization (WTO) has faced particular criticism over its perceived challenges to national sovereignty through adjudication, whereby the multilateral rules-based framework for trade has evolved through cumulative legal precedent without approval by member countries ('automaticity'). Nevertheless, WTO membership continues to increase and countries continue to seek adjudication on their trade disputes. *Why Adjudicate?* focuses on the political economy of WTO adjudication, asking when and why do nations choose the legal avenue for settling their (bilateral) trade disputes and how does the legal context affect the pattern of dispute settlement. The book argues that multilateral organisations, such as the WTO, provide a key forum for diplomatic intermediation between signatory countries and that requests for dispute adjudication send clear signals to both domestic political audiences and trade partners. Further, it demonstrates the important role of democratically accountable domestic political institutions in determining the use of adjudication to resolve trade disputes.

The Introduction addresses the context for adjudication by surveying the literature on the enforcement of international trade law, alternative strategies for resolving trade disputes (i.e., forum choice) and explanations for the pattern of use of adjudication – more than half of all disputes filed are settled prior to panel rulings. This is followed by a discussion of the relationship between domestic politics and the desire for adjudication. The demand for adjudication is argued to be a function of legislative constraints and executive autonomy; adjudication represents a 'second best' solution occupying the middle ground between conflict and co-operation.

Chapter 3 analyses the demand for adjudication with respect to domestic democratic checks and balances incorporating a statistical analysis of GATT and WTO trade disputes for 81 countries over the thirty-year period 1975 to 2004. Alternative models are employed to test different aspects of the influence of domestic institutions on case filings by both plaintiff and defendant countries. Democratic states are more likely to file as well as to be defendants in disputes because of their domestic institutional checks and balances. This is in spite of (or because of) the presumed greater commitment of democratic states to trade openness and liberalisation. Dyadic analysis is used to test the propensity of major trade partners and political allies to engage in adjudication. 'Fighting between friends' is demonstrated to be significantly more likely, even allowing for trade flows, market size and income. These findings

support the general view that trade disputes are more likely to occur between partners but this is the first study to provide explicit statistical support for this hypothesis. The implication is that multilateral organisations, such as the WTO, provide an appropriate forum for settling disputes between democratic states in particular.

The next two chapters (4 and 5) investigate the influence of domestic political interests in the selection of cases for WTO adjudication, focusing on the United States and Japan respectively. Domestic political interests are shown to be of key importance in the selection of US cases for WTO adjudication. Regression analysis, using USTR data on foreign trade barriers, finds that selection is significantly more likely if the barriers affect industries making greater political contributions and/or have larger domestic lobbies. This lends further support to the view of politicised legislation in the United States, where legislative constraints encourage the executive to act on behalf of influential industries. The *Kodak-Fuji* case is discussed in this context and also *Boeing-Airbus* and the issue of Chinese Renminbi undervaluation. A high level of delegated authority to the Japanese trade ministry is argued to reduce domestic political involvement in trade policy, resulting in less recourse to adjudication; a view supported by the empirical analysis. This is followed by a discussion of the Japanese response to US anti-dumping measures in steel and its trade policy with China.

Chapter 6 investigates the effectiveness of adjudication in resolving trade disputes based upon US data. The WTO dispute settlement system achieves both better and more rapid outcomes than negotiation in terms of the removal of targeted trade barriers. It is noted however, that the dispute settlement process and adjudication may also have a deterrent effect on violations. The final analytical chapter addresses the effectiveness of adjudication for developing countries that are vulnerable to discriminatory trade policies and less frequent users of adjudication. It focuses primarily on Peru's sardine case against the EU and Vietnam's catfish case against the US. There is a comprehensive concluding chapter.

*Why Adjudicate?* is an important contribution to the literature on the political economy of the WTO, the functioning of the dispute settlement system, the role of domestic political structures in the identification and selection of disputes as well as dispute resolution. The core chapters are closely-argued expositions of a range of high-level and subsidiary hypotheses supported by extensive empirical work that generates new and rich original insights into the interactions between policy-makers, lobbyists, democratic structures and the role of dispute settlement. The book might have benefited from more judicious editing to improve its focus; the overall arguments are not greatly enhanced by much of the case-study material or the inclusion of Chapter 8. In addition, there are some minor data issues and the author occasionally falls back on the opaque use of American slang in arguments. These minor shortcomings however, do not detract from the achievements of the book in terms of both its scope and depth of its analysis of the political economy of the WTO and dispute settlement. It should be required reading for academic specialists and provides useful material for both policy-makers and graduate students.

*Dr. Robert Read*  
*Lancaster University, UK.*

Lee Kuan Yew, *The Grand Master's Insights on China, the United States and the World. Interviews and selections by Graham Allison and Robert D. Blackwill*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2013, 232pp. (hpk).

If historical, political and strategic experience has any insights to offer into the future direction of international relations, then you would be hard challenged to find someone with more experience than Lee Kuan Yew. Having served as Singapore's Prime Minister for over three decades and during that time managing to turn Singapore into a leading "Asian Tiger" economy whilst navigating his country through the Cold War, it is little wonder that Graham Allison and Robert Blackwill decided to interview and publish the thoughts and insights of Lee Kuan Yew. The first chapter demonstrates the weight of which Lee Kuan Yew's opinion is held globally as literally a "who's who" of the world's most powerful elites are quoted giving their assessments of Lee. Amongst these include the likes of former British prime ministers Tony Blair and Margaret Thatcher; former U.S. president Bill Clinton; U.S. secretary of state's Madeline Albright and Hilary Clinton as well as the likes of Rupert Murdoch of News International and Muhtar Kent, the Chairman and CEO of Coca-Cola. Even Henry Kissinger, who provides an articulate and concise introduction to this volume, would struggle to compare to Lee Kuan Yew in terms of long-term impact upon Asian politics and international affairs. Allison and Blackwill have done scholars of international relations a great service in publishing this accessible, concise and extremely interesting collection of interviews and thoughts from Lee Kuan Yew.

Lee provides in these interviews a number of insights into the future direction of geopolitics and his assessments about the position of several world powers within this system. Debate rages about the "decline" of the United States and the "rise" of China and Lee weighs in with his own considered judgments. Lee is unequivocal in articulating China's ambition, explaining that "It is China's intention to be the greatest power in the world" and that at the very least "The Chinese will want to share this century as co-equals with the U.S." (p. 3). As Lee points out all of the indicators for achieving this ambition, economic and military power most obviously, will allow China to pursue this role. Perhaps most disconcerting for those hoping to see a maintenance of the status quo is the fact that China will "want to be China" and "not as an honorary member of the West" (p. 3). Lee concedes, however, that China is determined upon utilizing "diplomacy and not force" to achieve this ambition and is prepared to play a long game in achieving the position as the "number 1 power in the world" (p. 7, 9). But as Lee asserts, Chinese ascendancy is all but inevitable given the enormous manpower resources of the country which will allow it to economically out perform all others (p. 14-16).

As the current global superpower, it is of course the United States which perhaps has the greatest interest in reacting to this growth of Chinese power. And Lee's unequivocal in his recommendations for U.S. leaders. "If you follow the ideological direction of Europe, you are done for" is one such piece of candid advice (p. 34). Likewise, U.S. leaders have to prioritize their global position and it is the Pacific where the United States should focus its attention for it is here that "the contest for supremacy" will be decided because it is the Pacific which will generate the bulk of economic growth into the 21st century. Certainly this is uncompromising stuff but in Lee's assessment hard truths have to be reckoned with if the United States is to manage its own global interests within the context of Chinese growth. Someone in

Washington is clearly listening to similar advice given that the Obama administration continues to “pivot” U.S. security priorities towards the Pacific.

For this reviewer at least it is the final section to the book which contains a number of points composed by Allison and Blackwill which can be gleaned from their interviews with Lee Kuan Yew which is the most interesting. It is here that the reader is confronted with the hard realism that dictates Lee’s international thinking. Vignettes such as “I understood Deng Xiaoping when he said: if 200,000 students have to be shot, shoot them, because the alternative is China in chaos for another 100 years” (p. 153) will be equally admired by the proponents of realpolitik and castigated by those wishing to emphasise a far more “moral” approach to international affairs. Warnings about the future of China are also clear: “China is not going to become a liberal democracy; if it did, it would collapse” (p. 153). Accordingly, the “baiting of China by American human rights groups” should stop because it subordinates U.S.-Chinese relations to U.S. domestic concerns. Indeed, by pursuing such a “haphazard approach” the United States is risking turning China into a long-term adversary (p. 155). The level of antagonism in U.S.-Chinese relations can be mitigated as long as U.S. politicians are clear in their strategic objectives and demonstrate “more understanding of the cultural realities of China” (pp. 154-5).

This may make uncomfortable reading for some but given Lee Kuan Yew’s long years of leadership and having successfully navigated his country safely through the hazards of the Cold War Lee is at least worth listening to. Whether U.S. politicians will heed his advice is quite another thing all together. In sum, Graham Allison and Robert Blackwill have produced a first rate set of interviews which will appeal to those interested in contemporary international politics. In the process, we as the reader also learn a great deal about the mind-set of one of the longest serving leaders of any Asian nation during the 20th century. For those wanting to analyse the future of international relations, you could do a lot worse than listening to Lee Kuan Yew. Whilst you may not agree with everything he has to say, his opinion certainly makes you pause for thought.

*Dr Thomas Robb*  
*Oxford Brookes University, UK.*

Lin Noueihed and Alex Warren, *The Battle for the Arab Spring: Revolution, Counter-Revolution and the Making of a New Era (Updated Edition)*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press 2013, 348 pp. (pbk).

The book offers a unique and in depth insight into the socio-political and historical intricacies of the events which unfolded during the protests, uprisings, and civil wars of the Arab Spring. The level of expertise on display is astounding, and the scope of the writing remains relentlessly broad yet never ceases to be relevant and insightful. The authors convincingly convey a sense of urgency specific to the Arab Spring, and ground the differing protest movements within their respective cultural and historical frameworks. The combination of encyclopaedic scope and on the ground experiences makes for a highly ambitious publication

that will be of much value to any reader interested in gaining a more thorough knowledge of the protests that took the Arab World, and the International Community with it, by storm.

In "The Battle for the Arab Spring" Lin Noueihed and Alex Warren make a compelling case for the necessity to observe and analyze the Arab Spring not simply as a stand-alone historic event, but rather as a dramatic culmination of a decade-spanning regional and political turmoil within the affected North African and Middle-Eastern countries. The book also argues that the Arab Spring, while unprecedented in its potential for socio-political change, has also destabilized the region and brought with it both optimism and political opportunism. With regard to the Western World, the chapters on the invasion of Libya make an interesting argument as to how the conflict might have panned out differently, and which set of circumstances drove France, the United Kingdom, and the US to invoke the UN Security Council Resolution 1973 to allow the employment of humanitarian military action against Gaddafi's regime forces.

The chapters of the book are organized by country. In this way, each chapter features a chronological analysis of the respective nation's role in the Arab Spring and the provisional outcome of the specific protest movements unique to its political actors, factions, and ethnic and religious minorities. While the structure does not allow for a direct comparative approach, the chapters have clearly been written with the concurrent events taking place across the Arab World in mind. As such, the chapters provide both a historical and chronological narrative of the protests, while providing valuable insights into the manner in which countries such as Saudi Arabia or Yemen have influenced the outcome of the Arab Spring in their neighbouring regions.

The book's content remarkably blends a highly accessible style with impressive detail and intriguing reporting based on the personal research and expertise of the authors. In addition, the many sources quoted are varied and local, which imbues the work with an authentic yet objective voice. The chapters seamlessly blend both Western foreign policy concerns and local developments specific to the populations of Arab Spring countries. In addition to this, the level of detail in the analysis of the divergent political actors' economic and political modernization, or in some cases oppression, allow for an interesting and well-informed contemplation of the challenging and often problematic implications of implementing lasting and significant change in the region.

Central to the book's core argument is the opinion that the Arab Spring was not a mere result of technological modernization and the globalization of social media. While the authors acknowledge the intriguing efficiency with which youthful protestors organized themselves and in some cases strategically defied government clampdowns, they also stress the importance of pre-existing social structures, which allowed mass political mobilization to occur during and after the initial waves of protest. In this way, the book situates itself in the political momentum debate as arguing for a cultural and historical re-evaluation of the relevance of pre-existing social structures instead of labelling the Arab Spring a 'facebook' or 'twitter' revolution.

While the analysis is wide-ranging and features an impressive range of political and socio-economic detail, the nature of the book's ambition to describe in one publication the many differing political occurrences in the various nations participant to the Arab Spring brings forth certain problems of omission. In most cases, the authors effectively select the most relevant and interesting scenes and episodes appertaining to the protest movements'

most dramatic moments. Yet in some cases, as for example in the discussion of the killing of the American citizen Anwar al-Awlaki in Yemen, the authors merely allude to the importance of the issue yet refrain from offering more detail. While the US and its foreign policy is not central to the framework of the book's argument, it would have been interesting and thought-provoking to have included a more in depth analysis of the West's involvement in shaping the outcome of the Arab Spring and the influence of its various regional interests.

In sum, any reader seeking to gain a comprehensive and well-rounded opinion on the regional, political, and social implications of the Arab Spring will most surely benefit from this impressive and informative publication. The accessible and thought-provoking insights included in this book make for a vital and urgent contemplation of still unfolding events, while effectively detailing the uncertain future, as well as the unprecedented potential for wide-reaching change, left in the wake of the Arab Spring.

*Julian de Medeiros*  
*Albert-Ludwigs University Freiburg, Germany & Kent University, UK.*

Fouskas, Vassilis and Constantine Dimoulas, *Greece, Financialization and the EU: The Political Economy of Debt and Destruction*. London: Routledge 2013, 245 pp. (hbk).

Readers of this account of Greece's financial crisis are likely to be as shocked by the reach of its historical, political and geographical causes as they are impressed by Fouskas and Dimoulas's masterful skill in weaving these causes into a coherent narrative. To tease out and briefly assess the specific political economic argument in this narrative, it is useful to distinguish between external and internal causes.

Externally, and like many nations on the West's "periphery", Fouskas and Dimoulas demonstrate that Greece has largely been treated as little more than a means to the economic and strategic ends of more powerful states. Indeed, Greece's national origins (in 1830) lie in French and British efforts to control Russian expansion. For successive Cold War-era American administrations, similarly concerned about Russian expansion, Greece assumed the role of vital gatekeeper of the Aegean (and thus Black) Sea(s). Its internal, often tumultuous politics were at times heavily influenced to ensure that policies remained friendly to the West and to prevent tensions with Turkey over Cyprus from undermining NATO military superiority over the region. For modern European governments, meanwhile, Greece has been little more than the end-player in the kind of imperial supply chain described by Rosa Luxemburg – a position which only intensified after the end of the Cold War. As the twentieth century came to a close, EU influence had replaced US influence, and the principle requirement was for the valuable Greek economy to be kept open as a sink for European trade surpluses.

To explain the internal causes acting alongside and largely as a result of these influences, Fouskas and Dimoulas offer an explicitly Marxist analysis. Greece emerged into capitalism relatively late, with the result that its model of capitalism remains "qualitatively different" to those of other European nations (79). More specifically, and largely as a result of external influence, Greek capital formation and investment has been shaped by internal political instability. The gains from this instability accrued primarily to the peddlers of

“comprador capital” – those who have shifted Greece's economy and society towards the exportation of cheap resources and commodities and the importation of surplus wage-goods. For, far from presenting a check on these activities as economists might expect, the relatively high purchasing power of labour (reflecting the relative importance of pacifying rather than representing working classes within the fragmented Greek state) in fact *exacerbated* such comprador activities, leading to huge spikes in national debt and current account deficits. Debt defaults, then, are not new to Greece. They are the direct, recurring result of its social relations.

What makes the *current* crisis analytically fascinating that it reflects modern Europe's peculiar political economic conditions? Responding to pressures to financialize emanating from Washington and London, Greek compradors in the three decades before the 2007 crisis increasingly turned to the profits promised by financial capital. As early as the late 1990s the flood of European credit, and the debt created and socialised by comprador engagement in debt-driven stock, mutual fund and money markets, had brought the economy to the brink of default. This was averted only by the contemporaneous growth of the EU and the short-term stabilisation provided by the Euro. Yet, as we all know, the EMU did not solve so much as divert attention away from Greece's unsustainable debts. When the Eurozone as a whole moved into recession, Greece was thus hit with doubled force. After the mirage of comprador speculation disappeared, the weakness of Greece's periphery form of capitalism became plain for all to see, with the result that government attempts to shore up financial markets with liquidity were met by increasing hostility on debt markets. Once again, Greece is faced with the Scylla of mass default and the Charybdis of European assistance – only this time default entails exiting from the domestically-overvalued Euro to an equally undervalued drachma, while assistance comes at the cost of crushing, deflationary austerity.

All told, Fouskas and Dimoulas's account thus offers an intricate political economic analysis which moves away from the basic stereotypes populating both media and economic accounts of the Greek crisis. However it is possible to question *just* how well their Marxist analyses explain the causal connections between the global, external events which shaped Greece's political history and that history itself – in particular those contingent decisions taken at both a political and individual level which led to Greece's aggregate demand deviating so disastrously from its ability to pay.

In one sense, Fouskas and Dimoulas's invocation of the global “fault lines” surrounding Greece's late transition to capitalism seems to overdetermine their account. *Both* European over-accumulation and subsequent market expansion and America's hegemonic influences seem sufficient to explain Greece's economic instability, since both would have undermined any attempts to build the coalitions necessary for structural reform. Certainly, there is no reason to think that these pressures could not have acted sequentially or in tandem, but from an analytical point of view there is no reason to think that this compounding necessarily leads to a specifically *Marxist* conclusion. Would Greece's peculiar capital formation and crisis tendencies have been avoided if either Europe or America had acted differently? *Could* they have acted differently? My concern here is about whether our explanations for Greece's crisis need to posit inevitability, or whether they can be traced to specific trade-offs and decisions – trade-offs which might be explained by rather more hum drum political processes that may or may not be ultimately explained by the imperatives of Western capital and profit.

Considered in this fashion, there is perhaps a coexistent element of under-determination in Fouskas and Dimoulas's account. With so many forces acting upon the Greek economy, it is difficult to identify the culpable agents of the crisis with much precision. One problem is that, as we might expect, Greece's politicians show varying levels of resistance to outside influence. At different stages, such as before and after fall of the US-sponsored junta in 1974, Greek politicians have shown more or less willingness to stand up to outside interference, and more or less susceptibility to populism. In this context, it is as plausible to see external agents as constantly *reacting* to Greek political changes as it is to see them as the author of those politics. A second, related problem is that there is little acknowledgement of the role of *ideas* in driving both Western influence and Greek politics. While it is clear that Greece has been shaped by numerous elite interests, it is less clear what particular idea (*qua* conception) of these interests is at play. Again, this is likely to have shifted over time as a result partly of politics, and partly of circumstances. If so, however, a full explanation of Greece's crisis needs to conceive of the possibility of *error* – that at different times different actors may have simply misunderstood Greece's options. The US, for instance, may well have misunderstood the benefits of imposing a junta, since events post-junta were if anything more destabilising than before. Similarly, both compradors and Greek and European politicians alike seem to have misunderstood the benefits of financialization. If this is the case, however, is it possible that the crisis might simply be explained by mistaken ideas? If so, where did these ideas come from? Could *other* ideas have triumphed?

Certainly, none of these questions are to suggest that Fouskas and Dimoulas are mistaken in their argument. Overall, as suggested at the outset their account is powerful and enlightening. Combined with the tendency of Fouskas and Dimoulas's Marxist understanding of international affairs to over-determine their analysis, however, they do suggest that there is still some theoretical work to be done to explain how the different explanations and concepts they offer fit together into a holistic explanation.

*Dr Paul Gunn  
Goldsmiths, University of London, UK.*

Harris R. Ira, *Island of the White Rose: A Novel*. Bridgehampton, New York: Bridge Works Publishing Company 2013, 243 pp. (pbk).

*Island of the White Rose: A Novel* is a fast paced historical fiction of lust, deception, and turmoil. R. Ira Harris takes the reader through a whirlwind of Cuban events during the second half of the 1950s. Although Harris' contribution is not an academic text, the book is a fascinating look at real events from the point of view of a Catholic priest struggling with the direction of his life.

The novel commences with a vivid portrayal of a sailboat race held by the Havana Yacht Club. Here the reader is introduced to the protagonist, Father Pedro Villanueva, a Catholic Priest from Havana. Through Father Villanueva, the audience witnesses the turmoil both throughout Cuba and within his own psyche. Pedro Villanueva is a thirty-three year old and comes from one of Cuba's wealthy families. The opening chapter is an excellent example

of the opulence of the 1950s. Following the competition, Father Villanueva attends the regatta's award ceremony. Harris' depiction of the celebration and its attendants is vivid and poignant because the first signs of trouble in paradise arise. Firstly, we are introduced with Father Villanueva's lust for women and the possible questioning of his decision to join the priesthood. Here is also the first of many examples depicting Fulgencio Batista's troops terrorizing the public. Government soldiers detain and injure the club's busboy. (p 8) The scene also serves to criticize many in Cuban society, especially those in the upper class. Harris writes following the busboy's arrest, "What had become of the world that a violent beating could be so quickly forgotten and seemingly normal people could go back to their revelry." (p 9)

The opening chapter foreshadows many of the events throughout the book. It also allows the reader to witness the characters in ordinary situations before the government or revolutionaries begin to terrorize. Thus, many of the events follow this pattern of an ordinary human experience being transformed into a miserable scene.

The novel proceeds by describing the everyday life of Father Villanueva, including his work as the head of a congregation. During this exposition, the reader is introduced to Father Domingo Goicoechea. Father Domingo had been Villanueva's childhood priest and his advisor while at the seminary. Yet, Father Domingo's role in the novel is of Villanueva's conscience. Throughout the text, he is advising the wayward priest on the proper course of an ordained priest. (pp 11-15, 164-169, 190-193)

The book proceeds with episodes where many of the principal characters are involved in the revolution. It also documents many of the struggles of Father Villanueva with his devotion to the priesthood and the actions of both the Batista and revolutionary forces. The book closes following the aftermath of the revolutionaries' victory and the primary character's final decision about the course of their lives.

The novel illustrates the cruelty and horrors of both the Fulgencio Batista and Fidel Castro regimes. Yet, it is the portrayal of fear and crimes against humanity in otherwise beautiful settings, which elevate the readers' sense of loss. No place exemplifies such a sentiment as La Cabaña, the 18<sup>th</sup> century fortress at the eastern side of the entrance to Havana's harbour. The battlement is a fixture in many photographs of Havana. However, Harris describes the horrors of the buildings and its caretakers. Harris notes on the battlement's interior in 1958, "Without running water and only a bucket for waste, it appeared that in this zoo, the animals weren't cared for; they were tortured." (p 33) Following the success of the Revolution, he describes where the executions are held at the La Cabaña, "The group (executioners and the prisoner) proceeded to the yard where bullet holes and bloody rivulets covering one wall gave evidence of recent executions. Above, on the roof line, a dozen black birds sat vigil." (p 171)

The notion of a beautiful exterior of La Cabaña hiding the terror within also applies to Father Villanueva's obsession, Dolores Barré. Dolores is an attractive woman whose very sight forces Villanueva to question his vows of chastity. Without revealing the ending, Dolores' gorgeous facade hides the monster within. Dolores Barré is also the personification of the Revolution. She appears quite seductive, but the reality is quite different. The book is fantastic in creating characters which mirror social institutions.

Yet, the novel is not without faults. A word of caution, the novel does provide a number of graphic violent scenes. Harris does not provide gruesome details, but he does leave little doubt of the vulgarity of the scenes.

A final negative of the book is its sense of hopelessness. This book is not a feel good story. The protagonist, like the Cuban people, continually suffers setback after setback seemingly to no end.

Thankfully, *Island of the White Rose: A novel* has many more positive attributes than negative. One of the highlights of the book is the fascinating fictional individuals. Aside from the protagonist, the supporting characters also provide the story with tension. The mystery of each person's intentions and their destiny adds the element of suspense. Although an informed reader would be fully aware of the results of the Revolution, the novel's suspense is provided by the unknown fates of the fictional characters.

*Island of the White Rose: A Novel* is a worthwhile read and an escape from the monotony of reading academic texts. The book is especially valuable to casual readers interested in understanding the period. It is of even more value to those persons with limited time and not wanting to indulge in a full scale historical textbook. The novel provides insight into the cruelty of the Batista and Castro regime in a relatively short length text. The Cuban academic and general public would likely both appreciate the fast paced nature of the novel and high-quality storytelling.

*Dr Francisco José Tudela*  
*University of Leeds, UK.*

Michael Quentin Morton, *Buraimi: The Struggle for Power, Influence and Oil in Arabia*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2013. xviii + 266 pp. (hbk).

This is a colourful, intimate narrative of the multi-layered confrontation, at its most intense in the mid-1950s, involving Britain and the United States, ARAMCO and the Iraq Petroleum Company, the elites of Abu Dhabi, Oman and Saudi Arabia, brief appearances by Egyptian agents, and ultimately, local tribal and sheikhly actors, over the territorial assimilation, in any of three ways, of the Buraimi oasis in the south-eastern Arabian Peninsula. To these parties, the formalization of loyalties and boundaries was essential to demarcating new oilfields, affecting great power prestige, company profits, local development, state consolidation and dynastic legitimacy, and local peoples, vitally. For a brief period this hitherto obscure, autonomous node in the barren Rub' al-Khali attracted Western journalists and even inspired a parody by *The Goons*. As the study strongly conveys, the dispute stemmed from the disparity between past mobile, politically ambiguous fealties and affinities and the demands of encroaching legal, diplomatic and aggressively self-materializing new norms demanding imposed formalization. In part these were neo-imperialist, and reflected wider Anglo-American rivalries, but as the author makes clear, Saudi irredentism and hegemonism, claiming rights based on historic, if intermittent Wahabi penetration and religious tax-collection at the site were critical. Relatively declining Britain, anxious to preserve its residual sphere on the Trucial Coast, in Oman and Aden, felt compelled to resist, however paternalistically, on behalf of its respective client rulers, settling the matter, after unsuccessful arbitration efforts, with a decisive, if relatively bloodless military action, 'Operation Bonaparte' in late 1955.

Where authors including Tore Tingvold Petersen have examined related Anglo-American high diplomacy, with Bob Vitalis contributing on oil and cultural imperialism, and Tim Mitchell on grand theories of modernity and fossil fuels, the strength of this work is in its close reconstruction of personalities and events, concentrically outwards from Buraimi itself, showing fissiparous divisions and cross-currents within regional and great power polities, where local developments resonated, were processed, reshaped and returned for action – portraying how perhaps more than why. Much as local aspects feature uppermost, these are not theorized in a subaltern or post-colonialist way but arise from intensive primary document crunching, to best effect when synthesizing related memoirs and making very good use of the BP Archive, along with more familiar official British and American sources. But rather than looking askance, scholars will find value in the resulting detailed passages which fit well into broader historiographic currents on the declining phase of British supremacy. They will help others' syntheses in future. Moreover, general readers and students will find the concise chapters accessible and compelling, helped by good notes and a glossary, where proper names and their associations might otherwise confuse.

Of course, there are gripes. The book's openings on periods leading up to the 1950s are uneven, jump around thematically and chronologically, are too narrow in their secondary source syntheses, and therefore in interpretation, particularly of British, American and even Saudi experience, interests and motivations, beyond oil and revenue. It prefers to scene-set via sometimes purple portraiture. Similar can be said for its summary conclusions, which race through the years after 1956 somewhat superficially, except when observing how recurring ambiguities over boundaries and associated rights continue to dog Saudi-UAE-Omani relations.

On the Western side, Morton opens interestingly into how ARAMCO's Arabian Research Division shaped concepts of knowledge and legality in its own interest, working in effect as Saudi Arabia's political intelligence service during the dispute, far ahead of a divided and pragmatic State Department: but this is not theoretically developed, nor are the perspectives and contributions of other branches of the United States government, particularly when CIA-oil business intimacies have had close recent attention, notably from Hugh Wilford. While IPC also imposed its geographic and ethnographic categorizations on a hitherto uncharted sub-region and its peoples, British perspectives were pluralized even vitiated, by romantic orientalist explorer Wilfred Thesiger, by largely ex-Government of India political agents *in situ*, British military officers attached to the Trucial Oman Levies and Oman Scouts, and even Britain's arbitrator at Geneva, retired diplomatic hand Sir Reader Bullard. But what this might reveal about the functions of British imperialism, along with Foreign Office appeasing of the Americans and Saudis, contrasting with Eden's sclerotic directives for using force, abetted by Harold Macmillan, is also not brought together as effectively as it might be. Nor indeed the systemic imperatives, either geopolitical or financial, seeming, as Steven Galpern and Taylor Fain among others have recently shown, to demand that Britain not only remain but impose a new order, however forlornly.

Yet the book has too many interesting new observations about the crisis itself to be dismissed: it shows how local modes of politics, involving patronage, gift-giving, symbolic and ritualized demonstrations, declarations of loyalty, inter- and intra-familial rivalries, and an acculturated sense of traditional rights meshed together and interacted with Anglo-Saudi-American-corporate power politics and proto-modern economic aggrandizement. Also, how

after Britain and the United States agreed to arbitration at Geneva, Saudi attempts there to project techniques which had worked locally led to a fiasco: proceedings collapsed amid substantiated British charges of bribery and conflict of interest by Saudi delegates and witnesses. Eden thereby had a pretext for an armed demarche, with a sanguine Foster Dulles looking on. Perhaps this mistakenly emboldened him over Suez the following year. Meanwhile, pro-Saudi sheikhs were exiled from Buraimi, soon followed by the dissident Imam of Oman, Ghalib Bin 'Ali, to form the backbone of northern guerrilla opposition to the Sultanate in years to come, when it was also beset by the Dhofar rising. While recent scholarship on these latter conflicts, for example by Clive Jones and Mark DeVore, is little consulted by Morton's study, his focus on the 1950s usefully places this book as a significant minor work within such broader streams. It deserves reading and incorporating into them and will help other scholars significantly.

*Professor Simon Davis*  
*Bronx Community College and Graduate Center, City University of New York, USA.*