

and finally the *psychosociological*: the perpetrators' biographies and personality traits, which account for their disposition toward violence (lacking in others).

I do have certain reservations with the term 'genocidaires', which the author uses for the rank-and-file perpetrators on whom the author particularly focuses. It suggests that all perpetrators share a 'genocidal' intent, which is difficult to prove and sustain for the rank-and-file executioners. In the case of the Srebrenica massacre, genocidal intent was only established (at The Hague Tribunal) for the highest echelons of the Bosnian Serb political and military leadership, the rank-and-file being not subject to this charge. De Swaan himself writes that perpetrators are often kept ignorant of their bloody task beforehand (211). One can also question whether mass killings actually require large groups of perpetrators, which the author sometimes seems to suggest. Indeed, massacres can be carried out by relatively small groups (such as in the case of Srebrenica). The author's non-inclusion of perpetrators-at-a-distance, who for example issue the commands to start killings (such as in the case of Srebrenica) or operate radio stations inciting mob violence killing many thousands (as in Rwanda), is an important omission in his analysis of 'genocidaires', particularly as the concept seems to fit them much better than it does the rank-and-file. In his description of the former Yugoslavia (the only one that I can judge in terms of its factual accuracy), de Swaan makes some silly and avoidable mistakes, mentioning for example 'the fall of Marshall Tito' (which should be 'the death') (45) or 'the mainly Croat army of Mihailović' (which should be 'the Serb army') (185); the current estimate of war deaths in the former Yugoslavia is 130,000, rather than the exaggerated figure of 300,000 that de Swaan mentions (187);

finally, the Serb ethnic cleansing campaigns at the start of the war, however ruthless, cannot be described as 'genocidal excesses', as de Swaan does, at least not legally (as only the Srebrenica massacre has been categorized as such) (184). However, these mistakes do not diminish the importance of the book, which forcefully reminds us that the phenomenon of mass annihilation, also in contemporary societies, should be a central problem for the human sciences.

Ger Duijzings (Regensburg)

Béatrice von Hirschhausen / Hannes Grandits / Claudia Kraft / Dietmar Müller / Thomas Serrier, *Phantomgrenzen. Räume und Akteure in der Zeit neu denken*, Göttingen: Wallstein, 2015, 224 pp., ISBN 978-3-8353-1658-4, €19.90

The book under review inaugurates a new series, 'Phantom Borders in Eastern Europe' (*Phantomgrenzen im östlichen Europa*), edited by the five authors of this opening volume. They constitute the group of principal investigators in the research project of (almost) the same title in which their studies originate (www.phantomgrenzen.eu), financed by the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research between 2011 and 2017. The project has been coordinated at the Berlin-based Centre Marc Bloch, a German–French research center for the humanities and social sciences. The project's results are fed by both pluridisciplinarity—mainly geographers and historians—and debates at the intersection of at least two academic traditions, the French and the German.

This volume sets the programmatic stage, and promotes further exploration of what the authors call the 'time-space-complex' (12). The core question is: How

can (state) borders continue to shape social realities once they have been institutionally removed, or at least have changed their (political) nature? Through the conceptual tool of 'phantom borders' the authors signal their avoidance of any determinism or reification of historical regions. At the same time, they point out that 'phantom borders' embrace more than simply discursive constructions. They have the capacity to shape social realities. 'Territoriality (and its borders) as a social process' (*Die gesellschaftliche Prozesshaftigkeit von Räumlichkeit (und ihrer Grenzen)*), 38) is constituted by spatial imaginaries (*Raumimaginationen*), spatial experiences (*Raumerfahrungen*), and the formation/creation of space (*Gestaltung des Raumes*, 9). Reinhart Koselleck's *Erfahrungsräume* (spaces of experience) and *Erwartungshorizonte* (horizons of expectation) immediately spring to mind. His work, in fact, has been a major inspiration for these reflections.

The five chapters following the introduction set out to prove empirically the analytical validity of 'phantom borders'. Most convincingly this is done by the concept's 'inventor', the French geographer Béatrice von Hirschhausen, and I will illustrate the concept by delineating her case study in more detail. In rural Romania, access to water supply has been accomplished mostly since the 2000s and with the help of the European Union. In her 'geography of running water taps', von Hirschhausen visualizes on a map how here, in the last decade, the possession, or not, of such taps has retraced the former Habsburg–Ottoman border along the Carpathian mountain crest. She then peels apart the layers involved in creating this 'phantom border'. Age-old discourses oppose a 'more modern' Transylvania and Banat to a 'more backward' Oltenia, Moldavia, and Wallachia, and the installation of running water

has been engulfed in this discourse. There are many structural parallels between von Hirschhausen's two sample villages, while they are characterized by different morphologies: huge brick houses in the Banat, as opposed to mainly wooden or clay houses in Oltenia. The available resources in both villages seem to be roughly the same. While in the Banat village a veritable competition with regard to housing modernization has been ongoing, the Oltenian villagers would rather spend their money on electronic appliances and good internet and TV access. The task now is not simply to see the mental map of a civilized west vis-à-vis an underdeveloped (south)east confirmed, and to steer clear between the Scylla of 'naive positivism' and the Charybdis of 'generalised relativism' (99). How do the villagers relate to the space in which they live? In the Banat, they refer to previous generations, who built brick houses over 60 years ago—these can be renovated, and in the eyes of the dwellers need to be. In Oltenia, the small size and less solid materiality of the houses makes it impossible simply to install bathrooms, heating systems, even modern windows. One would have rather to build a new house. Such a decision requires more resources, more effort, and not least the will to rupture (more) radically from the existing structures.

Clearly, the 'space of experience' here and there has been both created (earlier) and (potentially) shaped creatively. In addition, actions are conditioned by multifold horizons of expectations. The Banat villagers have been able to maintain their self-image of being 'more modern' beyond the rupture of the ending of their socialist life worlds. The Oltenian villagers previously had a strong consciousness of belonging to the privileged socialist flag-posts of miners and factory workers, something that went

utterly bankrupt (literally and ideally) with the end of the system. It is this void that accounts for much of their reduced horizon of potentiality, which, more often than not, seems to leave no choice other than emigration. They would rather invest in (transportable) technical commodities than in the long-term planning to build a new house. In sum, von Hirschhausen invites readers never to take discourses at face value, but to consider the actors involved and to explore 'societies in their own modes of self-understanding and of [motivations for] action' (99).

Dietmar Müller and Hannes Grandits, in their case studies, play an analogous tune. Müller explores how, on a regional scale in enlarged interwar Romania, certain structural traits have survived both economic and political rupture. His intention is to take further the (unresolved) question about real or imagined features of the Balkans, as debated some years ago, mainly between Holm Sundhaussen and Maria Todorova. Exploring the juridical unification of formerly separate territories, he shows how both 'experiences and imaginaries together offer the material from which actors constitute a horizon of expectation that is regionally specific and circumscribed by phantom borders' (83).

Hannes Grandits contextualizes the reemergence of certain 'phantom borders' in Southeastern Europe after 1989 by connecting them to the *nostalgic turn* (Svetlana Boym) that has become characteristic of most postsocialist countries. Such nostalgia has been nurtured by the elites' references to imaginaries of the past, instrumentalizing these in their political agendas (148). In Croatia, knowledge about the former military border between Austro-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire has been revived as an image of Croatia as a 'civilizational border' against a perpetuated negative image of the

'orient'. Grandits' second example is the Greek-Albanian border, where the collapse of the hermetically sealed Cold War border brought about the return of previous irredentist regional 'phantoms'. Albanian postsocialist mass migration toward Greece has contributed to this changed codification, which refers to the idea of a Greek northern Epirus in southern Albania and an Albanian Çamëria in Northwestern Greece, precisely crossing the newly reopened state border.

Von Hirschhausen, Müller, and Grandits accomplish well what they announce in their introductory 'scholarly positioning': they work toward a creative renaissance of the methodological debate on structures and actors, discourses and their (de)construction, imaginaries and realities, which, they assert, has reached a veritable impasse. Deconstructive efforts have gone far enough to make it almost prohibitive for, for example, geographers even to draw maps, as this is already seen as an illicit attempt at rationalization (21).

The 'phantom borders' analytical tool indeed can help give new life to the determinisms at both ends of this debate. In fact, the authors even undersell their concept in several respects. First, they do not explore how it might be fruitful for Nationalism Studies. How could their analytical twist take further Brubaker's concept of the nation as a process and contingent event? Second, they do not explore how 'phantom borders' work in extreme situations. How are they utilized, accelerated, radicalized in times of (world) war and occupation? Third, they do not explore the longevity of epistemological 'phantom borders'. Why is it that, a quarter of a century after the demise of state socialism, scholarly thinking still largely functions along the former Cold War East-West binaries? Why is Eastern Europe still so far away in many

Western minds that they would rather foster entangled thinking about other world regions? To be sure, Postcolonial Studies have brought the issue of epistemological 'hierarchies' to the fore; and it has been a theme played by East Europeanists as well. Yet, how and why have engrained epistemological mindsets been effectively renovated so little? And how, in Eastern Europe itself, have they become narrower (more national) in so many ways, rather than more entangled and open?

The remaining two chapters, by Thomas Serrier and Claudia Kraft, respectively, certainly make for interesting reading as well. However, rather than focus on the concept at stake, they also introduce additional reflections, at the risk, unfortunately, of blurring rather than contributing to the finetuning. Thomas Serrier refers to the (historical) German–Polish borders, marked by plurifold changes, population displacements, and painful remembrance. He convincingly argues with the two 'classics', Fernand Braudel and Pierre Nora. Instead of the Braudelian cumulative *longue durée* (quasi-)immobility, he proposes that the persistence of 'spatial palimpsests' (110) be read in the contingent terms of the interests of the actors in their time. 'Vanished borders' can experience cyclical upswings, when the sociopolitical urge to do so arises.

Serrier criticizes Nora's *lieux de mémoire* as too conditioned by the nation-state framework. He suggests focusing more on urban spaces as the most saturated in terms of 'phantoms of eerie times' (127). However, he performs here a shift of focus from phantoms of spatiality to those of temporality. He defines phantom borders as 'remnant phenomena which materialize as a continuation of former borders' (119), and, even more generically, as various modes to 'read time in space' (111, quot-

ing the well-known book by Karl Schlögel). Analytically, this leads off-track. What is more, it risks depriving the 'phantom-border' concept of its innovative potential. Schlögel, precisely, and many others have wittingly reflected on the theme previously. As the authors themselves note in the introductory chapter, the temporal dimension remains the more fugitive one in the concept of 'phantom borders' (28). Certainly, there can be no talk of a continuity of minds of people several generations apart, before and after the end of a (political) border. Memory studies have done much to increase knowledge of how memories and amnesia function. What are abundant, too, are studies of loss and nostalgia toward previously owned lands.

In the concluding chapter, Claudia Kraft reflects more generally on the innovative potential of research on Eastern Europe in the context of Area and Global Studies as well as Postcolonial Studies. How can East European Studies contribute to overcoming Western- or Euro-centric perspectives (167)? Kraft's reflections recall what the late Holm Sundhaussen, a guiding spirit of the 'phantom-borders' project (11), used to say: The methodological innovation brought about by the field of Postcolonial Studies could have been brought about by the field of Southeast European Studies—had its protagonists any interest to do so. Instead, the field has continued to function mostly within its traditional self-referentiality.

To be sure, Sundhaussen's reproach has not gone totally unnoticed. It has been precisely from Southeast Europeanists that effort has been put lately into paving the way toward a history-writing that entangles the region with others, that goes beyond all determinisms, that promotes a contingent focus on the actors, that (re)focuses on (comparative) social history, that asks different

questions.¹ Here is, therefore, my moment of regret with regard to this volume: it could have communicated more with the companion-of-mind, slightly earlier works that have just barely opened up new paths of investigation, much in analogy to the one under scrutiny here. And coincidentally, these too have been greatly and explicitly influenced both by Reinhart Koselleck and by the debate between Holm Sundhaussen and Maria Todorova. If this plea to get together reads like a harbinger of what I see as the potential for a more coordinated and effective establishment of a renewed trope of research, it is intentional.

Sabine Rutar (Potsdam/Berlin)

Margit V. Wunsch Gaarmann, *The War in Our Backyard. The Bosnia and Kosovo Wars through the Lens of the German Print Media*, Berlin: Neofelis, 2015, 294 pp., ISBN 978-3-95808-011-9, €25.00

The wars in former Yugoslavia in the 1990s were traumatic events; also for those abroad, traumatic media events. Of course, they were a lot more than that; among other

things, they were important points of re-definition of a changing post-Cold-War world, perhaps especially for Germany. All those who have experienced these wars as a frequently traumatizing media spectacle will probably expect a lot, if not too much, from a book like that by Margit V. Wunsch Gaarmann, which deals with the ways these wars were being discussed in the German print media at the time.

Gaarmann's book focuses mainly on relatively narrow-framed periods of analysis, questions of guilt, and the person of Slobodan Milošević. In this fashion, the war in Bosnia is reduced to a few weeks at the beginning (first period of analysis), Srebrenica (second period), and Dayton (third period). The Kosovo War is discussed in another three chapters. Srebrenica was, of course, a central event in the Bosnian War, but there was much more—more massacres, more trauma, and more continuous media interest. Srebrenica was, in a certain fashion, the endpoint of escalating violence, the genocidal apex of a long series of massacres. German audiences were continuously exposed to this violence from the beginning. This dimension and others, such as, for example, Sarajevo as a separate category of analysis, are absent in Gaarmann's book.

Among the papers analyzed in this book are *Die Welt*, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, the *Frankfurter Rundschau*, and the *Tageszeitung (Taz)*, as well as a few weeklies, the tabloid *Bild*, and the *Allgemeine Jüdische Wochenzeitung* (here it becomes apparent that the author does not quite grasp the scope and purpose of a minority weekly—one cannot expect such a paper to cover all current political events fully). Throughout the book it remains unclear what the guiding questions were, what is the central purpose of the analysis, and what kind of analysis was actually carried

¹ See Sabine Rutar, ed, *Beyond the Balkans. Towards an Inclusive History of Southeastern Europe*, Vienna 2014; Diana Mishkova / Balasz Trencsenyi / Maria Jalava, eds, *Regimes of Historicity. Discourses of Identity and Temporality*, Basingstoke 2014; Dietmar Müller / Wim van Meurs, eds, *Institutionen und Kultur in Südosteuropa*, Munich et al. 2014; as well as the substantive, three-volume *Entangled Histories of the Balkans*: Roumen Daskalov / Tchavdar Marinov, eds, *National Ideologies and Language Practices* (vol. 1), Leiden 2013; Roumen Daskalov / Diana Mishkova, eds, *Transfers of Political Ideologies and Institutions* (vol. 2), Leiden 2013; Roumen Daskalov / Alexander Vezenkov, eds, *Shared Pasts, Disputed Legacies*, Leiden 2015.