

the men's passion. In later interviews, however, he discovers that not all the men can maintain their conviction between dawats; some men attend the next dawat reluctantly, others disappear completely, their conviction too fragile to overcome the third phase of the pulsation.

A case study on Pentecostal congregations in southern Kyrgyzstan adds subtlety to this account of conviction's fragility. The Kyrgyz pastor building the congregations attracts interest in part with his miraculous healings. Pelkmans listens to converts talk about the miracles, noting the initial burst of hope that dissipates into ambivalence or even doubt until energized by a new miracle (a parallel chapter on spiritualist healers documents similar dynamics). In addition to miracles, the pastor attracts followers with the familiar Christian prosperity gospel, according to which the faithful will be rewarded with health and wealth. In Jalalabad, a prosperous town, this gospel works well. Many congregants find professional and financial success in the city. They use their success to help others in the church, and this allows the church to grow in number and strength. The prejudice church members face in the larger community only intensifies their commitment to the church and its teachings. In Kokjangak, the struggling former mining town, the congregation is too small to find strength in external hostility, and there is not enough opportunity in the town to make the prosperity gospel resonate. The congregation fails to grow. The pastor, frustrated, blames this failure on weak faith. Pelkmans concludes instead that belief thrives where there is the correct balance between desperation and opportunity, and Kokjangak could not offer that balance.

At moments in the book, I felt overwhelmed by the number and complexity of metaphors Pelkmans introduces, even if I could acknowledge that each metaphor added subtlety to the discussion of belief. Pelkmans's insights are an important corrective to simplistic views of religion and economic chaos. He concludes that in unstable Kyrgyzstan, no idea is completely routinized. Motivational ideas direct the seeker's attention to a utopian horizon. The success of each idea lies in its ability to energize faith in that horizon, even if that horizon can never be reached.

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***Azan on the Moon: Entangling Modernity along Tajikistan's Pamir Highway.*** By

Till Mostowlansky. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2017. xx, 216 pp.

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Readers rarely associate anthropology with highways. However, this is the setting of Till Mostowlansky's research in *Gorno* (Mountainous) Badakhshan, Tajikistan's easternmost region, abutting Afghanistan, China, and Kyrgyzstan. Billed as a study of modernity, the author's explanation reveals his interest in what Soviet transformation meant to Tajikistanis. What did it mean regarding remnants of the *national*, the *traditional*, and the *uniquely local* that anthropologists use to understand how larger entities imposed their will and changed culture in this nook of the Soviet world since the 1930s?

Mostowlansky asserts that allowing people to represent themselves illuminates ideas of modernity and traditionalism. Furthermore, self-representations give us a more grounded understanding of linguistic and ethnic complexity than one gains from outsiders' perspectives (even as it takes an outsider to bring it to light).

For anthropologists, Badakhshan is a near-mythical land, remaining as remote and *pure* as it gets, as unchanged and mysterious, and as *cultural* and otherworldly as one hopes to find in an *untouched* part of the former USSR. Even Tajik scholars seem to think of it as the place of “our oriental others” (3)! Mostowlansky shatters this mythologizing by appealing to people living in and along Pamir Highway towns, such as Tokhtamysh, Khorog, and Murghab, to discuss characterizations about their ways of life, beliefs, and takes on society. Topics covered include religious activism, television, migrant labor, and presidential speeches. And this is what distinguishes his work as contributing to our understanding of Badakhshan and our awareness of the conundrums of globalization throughout Central Asia.

From 2008–15, Mostowlansky traveled more than 10,000 kilometers between Khorog and Osh (northern terminus of Pamir highway in Kyrgyzstan) (9). What readers learn less than systematically are his ethnographic subjects. He shows that they represent a range, including gender, ethnicity, professions, generations, and education levels, and that he attended weddings, Friday prayers, election campaigns, and funerals. He does not provide quantification, however. Mostowlansky undertook a fieldwork technique of “open interviews,” something “rarely . . . explored from an anthropological point of view” (6). Because he does not specify if he means overall or just in Badakhshan, it reads oddly. One may ask, who doesn’t conduct “open interviews”?

Mostowlansky discusses theoretical influences mainly in chapter one. He invokes modernism as globalization, space, temporality, roads, and the state. Selecting ideas from Bruno Latour, Shmuel Eisenstadt, Göran Therborn, Richard McBrien, Anna Tsing, and Richard V. Reeves, the author shows that modernist projects contain expansive and unintended developments that people accept and construe in ways different from powerholders. This does not mean that Badakhshanis opposed or rebelled against modernity. Rather, what roads and building projects mean may or may not coincide with original intentions. Applying the idea of “friction” to localized uses and purposes, the author discusses traders and truckers from Afghanistan and China as well as the profusion of “technology, ideas and innovation” (27).

In exploring understandings and analyses of identity and religion, he provides intimate portraits of just several individuals. It functions as an ethnographic strength that just several people express opinions toward language, the Tajik government, the Soviet past, the presence of fundamentalist Sunni puritans (*Tablighi Jama'at*, Chapter 4), and appropriate gender roles. Whether or not Badakhshanis are unique, they themselves think so. And while Mostowlansky captures senses of dread that people harbor about the economy, development, and the recent regional history of extremism and warfare, his interlocutors are also proud that Badakhshan remains immune to the more grievous problems nearby.

The Pamir highway operates to create divisions, separating people into regions and co-ethnic populations, but also unifies as roads do. Additionally, the highway needs constant repair as it cuts its path atop the “roof of the world.” It must be cleared of snow and debris in order for it to continue bringing in the outside world. Also, if the Caucasus were said to have been the “mountains of languages,” then the Pamir Highway is a microcosmic “road of languages.” Through sojourns he experiences dizzying code switching, featuring Tajik, Kyrgyz, Russian, Shugni, and Dari, the uses of which do not cleave easily by national group, let alone conversational contexts. Mostowlansky enriches our experience of sociolinguistic intricacies.

Interestingly, Central Asianists will note the similarities in attitudes people express toward phenomena that animate many studies of the current generation, proving, if nothing else, that we gain regionally-consistent insights. Mostowlansky demonstrates competence with the comparative sources of his contemporaries.

Mostowlansky writes sagaciously when explaining recondite theory and lucidly when describing notions wedded to identity, values, and ideologies. He describes his settings and encounters vividly. Chapters and sections concerning Islam, a presidential visit, discussions of civilization and backwardness, and interpretations of the kind of state and government Tajikistan needs will resonate with readers.

The book should fit nicely in anthropology courses on modernity and globalization, in advanced graduate courses in the social sciences of post-Soviet space, and it is not beyond the grasp of undergraduates learning about Central Asia as long as they are provided guidance.

Lastly, a word about the title: As a reflection of the region's altitude and isolation, people occasionally talk about being on the moon, especially given the appearance of some landscapes. However, the *azan* is the Muslim call to prayer and refers to a story in a popular pamphlet on Islam and science that concerns what Neil Armstrong supposedly heard on the moon and related to an Egyptian audience. Thus, the title deals with concurrent senses of remoteness and universality, appropriate for so many of the topics Mostowlansky examines.

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***Secessionist Rule: Protracted Conflict and the Configurations of Non-state Authority.*** By Franziska Smolnik. Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2016. 425 pp. Notes.

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Much has been written over the years about the origins and dynamics of the sovereignty conflicts precipitated by the Soviet Union's collapse. What is different, and useful, about the book under review is that rather than trying to explain the conflicts themselves, it analyzes their impact on politics and state building in the breakaway regions. That is, conflicts over sovereignty and status are treated as independent, rather than dependent, variables. And it does so through case studies of two de facto breakaway states, Abkhazia and Nagorno-Karabakh. Employing Pierre Bourdieu's conceptions of fields of power and capital, the author demonstrates how political actors in these de facto states deploy the struggles, violence, and insecurity entailed in the establishment and preservation of secessionist rule as instruments of power and state building.

After an introductory chapter, the author surveys the theoretical literature on protracted conflicts and political authority. Chapter 3 summarizes the history, origins, and evolution of the Abkhaz and Nagorno-Karabakh conflicts. The author returns to theory in Chapter 4 with a literature review on political authority, legitimacy, and state building, with particular reference to the writings of Max Weber and Bourdieu. The next two chapters present the project's key empirical findings, starting with the peculiarities of political authority and state building in her two cases. The penultimate chapter examines the theoretical implications of her research, which are summed up in a concluding chapter.

In the Abkhaz case, Franziska Smolnik narrates three "crisis situations" (15) in the region's recent political history—presidential elections in 1999, the presidential election campaign of 2004–05, and presidential elections in 2009. She describes how key actors deployed resources and used various strategies tied to Abkhazia's foundational conflict and de facto status in each instance. In particular, she shows how Abkhaz political actors used the history of conflict with metropolitan Georgia, the threat of renewed violence, and the need for external support from Moscow as