

Éamonn Ó Ciardha/Gabriela Vojvoda, eds, *Politics of Identity in Post-Conflict States. The Bosnian and Irish Experience*, Abingdon, New York: Routledge, 2016. 276 pp., ISBN 978-1-138-89826-4, £ 120.00

Located on opposite parts of Europe, Northern Ireland and Bosnia and Herzegovina share many traits despite their radically different political and cultural surroundings. Both are multinational and multiconfessional societies that were or still are a part of multinational states, which only recently came out of armed conflict. Therefore, the editors of this volume, Éamonn Ó Ciardha and Gabriela Vojvoda, have chosen to focus on politics of identities in these states, along with comparative case studies from Macedonia, Kosovo and the case of the river Neman that flows through Belarus, Lithuania and Russia. The volume consists of nineteen chapters divided into three parts.

Part I centres on the influence that empires had on Northern Ireland and Bosnia in (re)shaping their ethnic, national and confessional identities. While dealing with the politics of identities, a bulk of the chapters focus on the most recent conflicts in Bosnian and Irish history—the 1992-1995 Bosnian War and the Troubles—and the subsequent peace agreements—The Dayton Accords and The Belfast Agreement—that crucially shaped these postconflict societies. These chapters show how identities were shaped in the process of polarisation and reconciliation, with conflicts transformed into a non-violent, yet still belligerent form. There are chapters that approach the identities as something built by perceptions between groups and auto-perception within groups. *Fedja Burić's* chap-

ter explores how autobiographies can be used in researching the way conflicts shape identities and how nationalism works bottom-up, on the microlevel. While looking into the process of shaping identities, other chapters analyse the elements of division between the ethnic and confessional groups in both societies. A few chapters in particular deal with the phenomenon of divided cities, such as Derry/Londonderry, Mostar and Sarajevo, and how these divisions are reflected in ethno-centred narratives different groups build, leading to ethnoterritorial antagonism. Although Derry/Londonderry and Mostar have been often compared, the authors rightly identify important differences between the two, not only in the magnitude of the recent conflicts but also in the fact that Northern Ireland has functioned within a drastically better economic environment, and—until now—within the European Union. There are also chapters which examine the postwar power-sharing mechanisms established between the different communities in these cities. Thus, *Brian O'Leary's* article compares consociation models of Northern Ireland and Bosnia, with the first being liberal and open to 'others' (persons not belonging to the main groups) and the second being a corporate model (recognising only the main groups).

Part II continues with the theme of divisions, looking into divided cities and rivers shared by different communities. However, the chapters go behind superficial interpretations of unbreachable borders between communities. In the case of Mitrovica, *Jaume Castan Pinos* suggests that the city's division is, to a certain degree, a symptom of the activities of the international community. Part II shows how urban planning and art either reproduce divisions and exclude the 'other'

or fail to create neutral zones open to all groups. This is because the public space is formed through social relations that are hard to manage on the microlevel, as top-down transfer of ideology aiming to (re)create identities are not always successful. This part of the book tackles the issue of ethnoterritorialism and its implementation in Mostar, Mitrovica and Skopje, where religious objects and memorials mark the territory of one group and exclude the others. However, not all such attempts fulfil their purpose, ending up alienated from the ethnic or confessional group it had planned to represent. Special attention is drawn to rivers shared by different communities, serving as borders, and their semiotic and economic importance. Thus, the Neman river serves as an inspiration for different, usually opposed, national literatures (German, Russian, Lithuanian, and others) that can only be fully valued through *Yuri Lotman's* concept of the semiosphere—an enclosing space possessing signs that enable the communication process and creation of new information. In another chapter, the river Foyle, shared by Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, is viewed from the perspective of water governance and its ownership between the two states—a process largely drawn out from the post-Troubles peace agreement.

Part III focuses on the representation of space, borders and identities of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Northern Ireland in contemporary literature, film and public sculpture. The chapters show how the literature on Derry/Londonderry and Mostar represents identities as an intersection of grand narratives (imposing group belonging), class, gender and personal experience. Examples given by the authors show how postconflict cultural

production articulates both a counter-narrative to the dominant ethnonational one and questions the dominant perception and self-perception of different ethnic and confessional groups.

Elena Messner analyses how Bosnian postconflict literature deconstructs the dominant war narratives and makes a clean cut with traditions of representing war and war heroes in both Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav literature. In that way, the newly created national and confessional identities are contested and deconstructed. While some of these literary pieces, films and memorials were successful in promoting the message, the others faced dissent by the local community—like the sculpture of pop icon Bruce Lee in Mostar. This part analyses how complex identities are constructed by conflicts and then (re)constructed in the postconflict era.

In her chapter, *Miranda Jakiša* introduces the notion of temporality in identity creation processes in literature and film centred on postconflict Mostar. Thus, the ethnoconfessional borders in Mostar are not necessarily physical or spatial but follow the dichotomy of the city that once was (united) and its current state (divided). Also, in Mostar, the borders are strengthened by nationalist language policies. Once unified peoples broke into confronted peoples, who tend to have different names, use different official languages (Croatian, Serbian, Bosnian) and name public space upon persons or events from different eras or cultural circles. In this sense, partition and borders in Mostar (and in some other Bosnian cities) are evident and part of everyday routine—and therefore a subject of postwar literature and film. Similarly, the identity politics in Northern Ireland (Derry/Londonderry) are read out from Owen

McCafferty's plays, introducing the importance of gender and class in politics of identity.

In another chapter, *Gabriela Vojvoda* looks into Garbhan Downey's fictional *Private Diary of a Suspended MLA* (2004) that further challenges the conflict resolution process. Thus, this part compares the consequences of both the Dayton and the Good Friday Agreement. The literature shows the cracks in the postconflict period that triggered numerous negative side effects of the peace processes, such as a further strengthening of the ethnic-based division of country and the petrification of conflict-created national and confessional identities, to which certain characteristics are ascribed.

The volume is a highly valuable contribution to the research of postconflict societies. Chapters successfully show the complexity of the peace processes and the postconflict resolution, as well as how the conflicts helped shape the national, ethnic and confessional identities that are now taken for granted. Along these lines, societies and cities are divided, with borders present in space, time and symbols.

The multidisciplinary and comparative approach presents both similarities and crucial differences in the postconflict realities of the Northern Irish and Bosnian societies. Besides dealing with traditional problems of divided and postconflict societies, the chapters in this volume go beyond the obvious in analysing the identity-creation processes, adding a gender and class dimension too. The volume could have benefited from a study dealing with the role of the European Union in forming the dominant identities in Northern Ireland and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Minor complaints go to a certain lack of literature in the native languages in the case of Bosnia and to the

minor relevance of some chapters to the overall theme. The volume will be of interest to researchers in cultural studies, sociology, political science, conflict management and resolution studies, transitional justice, border studies, art, literary and film studies and, not least, history.

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Tatjana Thelen/Larissa Vetter/Keebet von Benda-Beckmann, eds, *State-graphy. Toward a Relational Anthropology of the State*, Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books, 2017 (Studies in Social Analysis, 4). 170 pp., ISBN 978-1-78533-699-7 (hardback), 978-1-78533-700-0 (paperback), \$ 135.00 / £ 99.00 (Hb), \$ 27.95 / £ 22.95 (Pb)

Thinking about the state is not an alien endeavour to the anthropological inquiry—the editors of the book *State-graphy. Toward a Relational Anthropology of the State*, Tatjana Thelen, Larissa Vetter, and Keebet von Benda-Beckmann, however, argue that anthropologists mostly concentrate on how the state is imagined in their respective fields. What the state does, on the other hand, and how the state practices are related to the imaginations, does not seem pertinent in the discipline. To redress this oversight, they collected this edited volume, aiming to establish a stategraphic research principle that would bridge the gap between state images and practices and to shed new light on the sometimes-masked complexities of the state.

In the introductory chapter, the editors offer a short state of the art in the anthropology of the state and elaborate on how the void between state images and practices emerged. They build on the ob-