

## Book Reviews

David I. Kertzer and Dominique Arel, eds., *Census and Identity: The Politics of Race, Ethnicity, and Language in National Censuses*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.  
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This edited collection is an important addition to understanding how choices in what a nation measures reach into its political life. The volume is limited to censuses; it does not consider the full array of what goes into a nation's number system, including vital statistics, immigration records, identity cards, etc. It is further limited to issues of collective identity based on race, ethnic, language, and religious classifications. In considering theoretical propositions set forth, the subject matter is a slice of a slice, but this particular slice is important enough to carry much of the theoretical weight offered.

The book's starting point is that there is not an objective reality out there waiting to be recorded statistically. Thus, a nation's statistics do more than reflect; they shape and influence. Counting helps create what there is to be counted. This generalization is so sweeping that we accept it and move on, wanting to know what is shaped and how. In this volume the what is collective identity or, more narrowly, racial, ethnic, linguistic, religious identities. The how derives from the fact that a census never just counts; it classifies as well. When Moses is told by God in the fourth Book of the Bible, Numbers, to take a census, it is to learn how many men there are of fighting age. So it has been across the history of censuses determining how many young males, taxpayers, women of childbearing age, non-citizens, and so on there are. The constitutional purpose of the U.S. census is a variant on this, as its intention was not (primarily) a demographic classification but geographic sorting for purposes of apportioning seats in Congress.

If census-derived classifications in pre-modern times were about conscription and taxation, today in the social science literature the focus is on race and ethnicity. This volume helps us see why. Colonialism, for example, counted and classified in order to govern differentiated populations in distant places; see the chapter by Uvin on Burundi and Rwanda, and Abramson on Uzbekistan. Internal colonialism, as practiced in the U.S., generated a race-based taxonomy starting in 1790 (Nobles). Today, preoccupation with race and ethnic classifications derives from identity politics and celebration of or concerns about multiculturalism. These issues are central to the collection of articles assembled by Kertzer and Arel.

The book focuses on how censuses divide national populations into sub-national categories, and when that categorization helps transform a category into a group or collective identity. The great value is in the number of different places described from this perspective. There is extended attention to eight countries and passing references to two dozen more, often with detailed consideration of how the categories evolved over time.

This strength of the book does not make it comparative in any strict sense. It does not systematically explore, for instance, how older immigrant countries (U.S., Canada and Australia) differ from countries more recently experiencing immigrant flows (Great Britain and France), though much of the material presented lends itself to such treatment. Nor does it self-consciously compare the impact on identity formation when entitlements are at stake and when they are not. The absence of theory-guided comparison notwithstanding, except internal to certain chapters, especially Nobles, it is useful to have multiple descriptive accounts in one volume.

A number of significant generalizations are proposed. For example, racial/ethnic taxonomies, including what is racial and what is ethnic about them, are in a phase of unprecedented uncertainty and volatility. Many countries are engaged in an active politics of sorting and classifying, usually led by those groups which, historically, were the subject of classifications selected by distant bureaucrats. Groups whose identities are being expressed, or suppressed, or at least their self-appointed leaders, negotiate both within and across groups for a measurement system that will advance claims on resources and promote assertions of group identity. France, Israel, the U.S., Brazil, Canada, among others, are treated from this perspective in the volume.

Another generalization usefully observes that ‘the refusal to name’ as the editors describe it, is no less political than naming. We want to know what potential groups are ignored in taxonomies as well as what groups are highlighted. France’s well-known reluctance to view its French population as anything other than a civic unity is a case in point, as analysed in the chapter by Blum. The Israeli version is usefully set forth, where Goldscheider writes that Zionism holds that in the homeland every Jew is just that, a Jew and not an ethnic hybrid. A bleaker example is Burundi (see Uvin) where Tutsi domination is easier to sustain in the absence of any official count of the much more numerous Hutus. Brazil’s non-racial democracy is analysed (Nobles).

There was geographic clustering and higher rates of multiple race identification in younger age groups, but overall the rate is low. The magnitude is less important (for now) than that its introduction into census-taking challenges the core notion that racial or ethnic identities are discrete and fixed.

It is this challenge that puts on the table new theoretical issues for social science and public policy. The volume under review is excellent reading for helping us understand how we got to 2000. It does not help much in seeing what comes next. Allowing for multiple-race responses requires new thinking about the very purposes of racial classifications in the first place.

- Is racial/ethnic measurement justified because it helps the state to police and prevent discrimination? If legislative and legal purposes are key, the taxonomy should be aligned as closely as possible to public policy goals. The proliferation of categories and multiple-race options confuse this purpose.
- Is racial/ethnic measurement justified because diversity is its own goal in multicultural societies? Diversity is presumed to enrich the educational experience, increase business outreach and make governments more responsive. If achieving diversity is the purpose, censuses should seek differentiations thought to best define a socially beneficial diversity. Highly aggregated groupings, such as Hispanic, probably won’t work.

- Is racial/ethnic measurement justified because it is a demographic marker used to assert identity, to claim recognition? If so, expand the racial taxonomy to include every group with a legitimate claim.
- Is racial/ethnic measurement justified because it is, however crudely, aligned with the persistence of color as a demographic marker, which, historically, has meant Black, Brown, Red, Yellow, and White? If that is its purpose, reconfigure the census in terms of the five broad geographic-ancestry groups in world history, leaving multiple-race for those who want to opt out of the color pentagon.
- Is racial/ethnic measurement justified because it allows a nation to track the pace at which immigrants are assimilating, however differently that concept might be understood today as contrasted to a century ago? Certainly a key question for the 21st century is what assimilation means for multicultural countries in contrast to a time when it was assumed that immigrants would ‘assume’ a common cultural identity. If assimilation metaphors are reintroduced, censuses in many countries will need a fine-grained account of the various immigrant groups and their rates of inter-marriage, naturalization, language acquisition, home-ownership, and the like.
- Or, is the best racial discourse no racial discourse at all?

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Partha Dasgupta, *Human Well-Being and the Natural Environment*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. ISBN 0-19-924788-9. xxii + 305. DOI: 10.1017/S0143814X02222047

Partha Dasgupta is a very highly regarded economic theorist, and this book shows why. Dasgupta writes more clearly, and in a more accessible manner – most of the mathematics is in supplementary chapters and an Appendix – than most highly regarded economic theorists. The book is as much of interest for what it reveals about the way economic theorists work as it is for its substantive conclusions, which mainly relate to the pursuit of sustainable development.

The core of the book is the derivation of two, related, propositions. First, that the proper way to measure the quality of life is in terms of aggregate wealth – more wealth means a higher quality of life. Second, that policies and projects are to be adopted/rejected according to whether they increase/reduce aggregate wealth. There are two crucial points about these propositions. First, aggregate wealth is the total value of *all* of the society’s capital assets, it encompasses capital as normally understood (machinery, infrastructure, etc.), together with human capital and natural capital. ‘Natural capital’ is the natural environment conceptualised as a set of assets that provide services to production and consumption. Second, aggregation over all assets uses ‘accounting prices’ not market prices, for many items of human and natural capital market prices are zero.

If these propositions are to inform public policy operationally it is necessary first to be able to enumerate all the assets, and second to attach an accounting price to each asset. Dasgupta has nothing to say about the first requirement. In relation to natural capital, it should be noted that we have only a very rough

idea, for example, of how many biological species exist. As regards the second requirement: the accounting price of something is the improvement in the quality of life that would be brought about if a tiny bit more of that thing were made available costlessly. Alternatively, it may be defined as the deterioration in the quality of life that would be brought about if a tiny bit less of that thing were available (page 123). Here ‘something’ is an asset of any kind. Given this definition, both of the book’s central propositions have considerable intuitive appeal.

Accounting prices would embody a lot of information: It should be apparent from their definition that accounting prices depend upon four, related factors: (a) the conception of social well-being, (b) the size and composition of existing stocks of assets, (c) production and substitution possibilities among goods and services, and (d) the way resources are allocated in the economy (page 124). I say ‘would embody’ to emphasise that these accounting prices are not observable data, but have to be established by the analyst seeking to measure the quality of life or evaluate a policy/project. Clearly, different analysts could arrive at different accounting prices. Differences about b, c, and d are in principle resolvable by appeal to the ‘facts’, though in practice there is much disagreement, even among ‘experts’. As Dasgupta himself puts it: Differences of opinion about how the world works seem to assume importance in international economic and political debates long before real differences in ethical views manifest themselves (page 5). Differences about a, the conception of social well-being, are not even in principle resolvable solely by appeal to the facts, they necessarily involve ethics and values.

At various points in the book Dasgupta does remark on the difficulties entailed in establishing a complete set of accounting prices, though it has to be said that given the centrality of the matter to his project it is given rather little attention. In the last paragraph in the book we are told that: No doubt it will prove impossible to determine the accounting prices of certain categories of resources (page 262). In so far as Dasgupta addresses the problem of the indeterminacy of accounting prices, it is by reference to ‘sensitivity analysis’, though there is no systematic discussion of how it would be structured and presented so as to inform policy making. As a matter of fact, a number of studies purporting to measure changes in aggregate wealth have been conducted and published, by among others, the World Bank. Dasgupta reports the results of one such study. In all of the studies of this nature that I have seen, results are reported without any sensitivity analysis.

As a summary and overview of the extant economic theory of measuring quality of life and evaluating policies/projects taking account of economy-environment interdependence, this book has much to recommend it. It is not, as its title might suggest, a substantive inquiry into the relationships between human well-being and the state of the natural environment. Its proposals are based on elegant and incisive analysis. They are, however, incapable of delivering what appears, in the absence of close reading of the small print, to be promised. If acted upon, they could, at least according to my conception of social well-being and appreciation of the facts, be dangerous, sending positively misleading signals in regard to the pursuit of sustainable development.

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Eric Uslaner, *The Moral Foundations of Trust*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002. 298 pages, hardback and paperback.  
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‘Trust is the chicken soup of social life’, the opening sentence from Eric M. Uslaner’s, *The Moral Foundations of Trust*, reveals much about both the style and substance of this very interesting but quirky monograph. Amid the plethora of recent work on social capital and trust inspired by Putnam’s *Bowling Alone*, this book is distinctive in a number of respects. Although agreeing with Putnam about the importance of trust and its cultural foundations, Uslaner proposes an idiosyncratic conception of trust, disagrees with Putnam about its origins, and offers a distinctive view of the consequences of trust as well. These ideas are expounded in a highly colloquial, almost folksy, first person narrative, supported by a rare admixture of pithy anecdote, descriptive data and sophisticated statistical analysis that few scholars can match. Clearly written for an intelligent lay audience, the work offers much value to scholars as well.

Intentionally avoiding the term social capital as value laden and distracting, Uslaner focuses on the nature, origins, and consequences of trust, a social good to which, among others, he ascribes almost mystical properties. Predictably, Uslaner’s conception of trust is distinctive. His focus is on a form of social or interpersonal trust which he calls moralistic trust defined as ‘faith in strangers’ or even, more simply, as blind faith – trust without an object of any sort. Trust, in this sense is akin to diffuse support – an unconditional faith in the basic trustworthiness of human nature. Moralistic trust is distinguished from what is called strategic trust, in that the latter is more contextual – a form of interpersonal *quid pro quo* or tit for tat. Indeed, Uslaner does not really consider the latter to be trust at all but something thinner and less important.

The origins of moralistic trust for Uslaner are deeply rooted in the cultural fabric of society and transmitted inter-generationally via the family. Because moralistic trust involves faith in unknown others it cannot be a product of direct personal experience. It is less of an empirical property than a moral dictate or cultural value. To the extent that it is experiential, trust reflects the collective experience of society over generations if not centuries. In this, Uslaner breaks from Putnam, for whom trust (at least in *Bowling Alone*) is partly cultural but also substantially a product of individuals’ face-to-face experiences in social groups. From Uslaner’s perspective, social involvement is a consequence of trust, not one of its principal causes.

Uslaner’s perspective on the consequences of trust is equally idiosyncratic. While waxing almost rhapsodic about the social benefits of trust, he registers considerable skepticism regarding its political consequences. Trust’s most important function for Uslaner is its promotion of cooperation among strangers which is vital for the resolution of collective action problems. Trust enhances philanthropy and volunteerism, increases tolerance especially toward strangers, enhances faith in democratic ideals and, like chicken soup, makes us feel good. Uslaner parts company with Putnam and other social capital advocates, however, by arguing that the benefits of trust, while real, are also limited. Trust cannot cure all our social ills or solve all our political problems. While trust facilitates a cooperative spirit in society which can spill over and influence the behavior of individuals in political institutions, Uslaner argues

that trust has few direct benefits for politics. He rejects the argument that trust promotes civic activism and is skeptical about the benefits of trust for the quality of government beyond its effects on interpersonal cooperation.

Uslaner's argument is cogently made and impressively supported. It relies mostly on data from the United States, a country that appears to be exceptional on matters of trust. Nevertheless, the work is not at all parochial. To the contrary, the book is well informed by a diverse and interdisciplinary literature. It draws widely on research from other countries and includes a penultimate chapter specifically examining trust in a broader, cross-national context.

In the end, I disagree with Uslaner's argument. I think his definition of trust is too narrow, his cultural approach is too confining, and the American case is probably exceptional. As a result, the argument is far too optimistic. It smacks a bit of, 'You're ok; I'm OK', or 'Can't we all just get along?' Nevertheless, I think Uslaner makes an important contribution to a literature that has grown moribund in the face of mounting criticism of its theoretical contradictions, slippery concepts, inattention to measurement concerns, neglect of disconfirming evidence, and otherwise weak empirical bases. Uslaner raises the quality of this literature in virtually every respect and sets high standards for others to emulate. That the book is equally accessible to general and specialized audiences should insure that it is widely read and help it become a standard in this crowded field. *The Moral Foundations of Trust* deserves a careful reading not only because of the provocative arguments it vigorously defends, but also, because, like chicken soup, its determined optimism makes you feel good.

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David C. Kang, *Crony Capitalism: Corruption and Development in South Korea and the Philippines*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. 203 pages. ISBN 0 521 00408 X (pbk) £14.95. ISBN 0 521 80817 0 (hdbk) £40. DOI: 10.1017/S0143814X0224204X

This book tells two stories: South Korea's military dictatorship of 1961–1987 created an economic system which thrived on elite corruption *and* delivered strong economic growth for over thirty years; while the Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines (1972–1986), despite early developmental promise, delivered only mediocre growth while plundering the state coffers. The question Kang raises is how one undemocratic regime in Asia propels a backward country into the OECD, while after fourteen years another leaves its people both poorer and wiser. Politics, he argues, is central to the answer. First, he establishes that both undemocratic regimes were corrupt at the elite level. Second, he argues that political considerations, not the prescriptions of technocrats, were the motive force behind economic policy in both countries. He explains the paradox of fast growth and corruption in Korea using an argument which is fairly commonplace in the corruption and development literature. If a small set of governmental and business elites – call them cronies – feels politically secure, then corruption or, as Kang prefers to call it, money politics can reduce transaction costs and help mobilize capital for development. Corruption doesn't run out of control because a strong state and strong business check one another's excesses. Kang calls this situation one of 'mutual hostages'. He

deploys another argument familiar to observers of the Asian scene to explain why Korea, but not the Philippines, caught a bad dose of flu in the financial crisis of 1997. After three decades of fast growth, the argument runs, the developmental state became a victim of its own success. Implicit understandings that the Korean state would bail out the corporate giants led to reckless over-borrowing and over-expansion, while democratization weakened the power of the state to rein in the corporations. In the Philippines, by contrast, there were no corporate giants worthy of the name, only a large number of disgruntled wealthy families whom Marcos had sidelined in his lust for rents. Democratization and the consequent fracturing of state power had a beneficial effect, creating in the Philippines a balance between a weak state and dispersed economic power. Kang calls this balance *laissez-faire*.

First generation studies of the developmental state explained the 'miracle' of Asian growth with a story that had more heroes than villains. Tough leaders with a vision of the future charged neutral bureaucracies with strategic intervention in order to generate growth through exports. Hard-working entrepreneurs took up the challenge, and the state protected them both from foreign competition and from labour militancy. There is no disputing the fact that it worked, but, in the Korean case, Kang disputes the neutrality of the bureaucrats and their insulation from politics. Evidence, derived from a wide range of Korean and Western sources, including his interviews, is convincing. Kang shows that household names like Hyundai, Samsung and LG were not only big sellers to consumers but also big spenders in the political market place. The Philippine bureaucracy comes out rather well in this book, considering the corrupt reputation of the country. The problem in the Philippines before Marcos was a weak state pulled in different directions by rent-seeking wealthy families. The problem under the dictatorship was that Marcos and his cronies never followed through on promises to restrict the cartels of economic privilege, but instead stashed away as much loot as they could. Philippine technocrats, whose educational achievements and *esprit de corps* were in no way inferior to those of their Korean counterparts, and ordinary Philippine people struggling to make ends meet are not to blame for the country's relative poverty.

This book challenges readers to face up to the dirty politics of the developmental state, and to analyse the political causes of developmental failures. It has the merit of being concise while presenting a forceful argument. If there is a weakness, it is that Kang pays relatively little attention to defining the developmental state, which leaves him open to charges that his argument is overblown. The developmental state is not a uniquely Korean phenomenon; the original model came from Japan, and there are now variants of it all over Asia, most notably Singapore. A more systematic exploration of the literature would have strengthened the book. That said, Kang handles the Korean-Philippine comparison with great assurance, and his book will interest not only political economists specializing in East Asia, but also those whose geographical focus is elsewhere.

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