As Maksimovtsova's corpus is largely confined to Russian-language materials, unprepared readers are exposed to a lack of balance (Maksimovtsova occasionally admits that it would be important to include materials written in the "titular languages": 18, 407). The book has more shortcomings: the English language should have been edited much more carefully. More importantly, the conceptualization of the book leads to unpleasant consequences: Maksimovtsova looks at various blogs that refer to some major events in the recent history of Ukrainian, Latvian, and Estonian language policy, and she cites and counts the arguments in each section separately devoted to this or that event. However, as the arguments are extremely stereotypical, the author cites them dozens of times; she also repeats her comments, often word by word, but frequently offers little more than just labels ("rhetoric of loss"). The author could have sampled her statistical observations to avoid this. The problem remains, however, that any quantification that is based just on one or two, sometimes three ever varying blogs can barely be regarded as representative.

The "intertextual" character of the cited arguments remains unrevealed to unprepared readers too: many statements in the blogs (including those using the labels "Nazis" or "fascists") merely repeat Russian media propaganda. Some politicians or "experts" that are cited in the book should have been accompanied with brief portraits: Tatiana Ždanok, who is officially Tatjana Ždanoka, was fighting against Latvian independence in the early 1990s, and she supported Vladimir Putin's annexation of the Crimea; Viktor Medvedchuk is one of Putin's closest allies in Ukraine, and Ruslan Bortnik (Bortnyk) was an active member of the pro-Putin organization "Russian-Speaking Ukraine."

Occasionally, the author follows some questionable discursive lines of the blog materials. With utmost frequency, she suggests that the only alternative to any possible discrimination against the Russian language is its introduction as a second state language. Readers will also be astonished to read more than once that language policy is not a purely linguistic issue, which is a truism.

The "hard facts" of language policy are often presented very superficially. Some recent education laws are characterized as if minority languages were banned from the schools altogether, which is not true. The fact that the former Ukrainian President Petro Porošenko tried "to encourage Ukrainians to learn English" is surprisingly depicted as something absurd–allegedly, Porošenko labelled Russian "the language of aggressors" (153), but no reference is provided.

Many categorizations are highly questionable: is the statement that "Latvia is the only homeland of Latvians in the world where they can speak and protect their language" really "nationalist" (373; notably, Maksimovtsova tries to be balanced in many other ways; she does not follow Russian propaganda)?

Summing up, what readers learn from 507 pages is little more than how often this or that highly stereotypical argument regarding the official status of Russian in a minority situation appears in a not particularly representative corpus.

Michael Moser
University of Vienna

Baku: Oil and Urbanism. By Eve Blau. With Ivan Rupnik and Iwan Baan. Zurich, Switzerland: Park Books, 2018. 302 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. Figures. Maps. $49.00, paper.
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Eve Blau teaches in a Graduate School of Design, Ivan Rupnik is a scholar-architect, and Iwan Baan is a professional photographer. *Baku: Oil and Urbanism* combines these

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skills and sensibilities into an uncommonly beautiful, compelling book about the long-running entanglements of crude oil and urban form in one of the world's oldest and most legendary oil cities. Although the skeleton of the book is Blau's textually-presented account, nearly every page includes reprinted maps, photographs, and figures garnered from dozens of archival, library, and other sources—many of them in full color and/or with lengthy and insightful captions. Rupnik's many original maps and other graphics are especially well-presented and keyed to the surrounding text, and Baan's photo essays capture present-day Baku's layerings of human life and oil infrastructure in dimensions that the purely textual approaches of social science scholarship on oil generally fail to manage.

A brief introductory chapter situates *Baku: Oil and Urbanism* within a recent and growing body of scholarship on oil that dissents from the prevailing social science theories of "the resource curse"—with their focus on oil money, oil revenues, and state budgets—and turns its attention, instead, to the ways in which the materiality of oil and the oil industry can lend shape to physical infrastructures, built environments, and the organization of space at small and large scales. In Baku as elsewhere, that is, innovations in oil production and refining often inspired and contributed to innovations in urban design and planning. The text and images of *Baku: Oil and Urbanis*m are divided into three main chapters, devoted to the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Soviet period, and the post-1991 era.

The varieties of urban form shaped in conjunction with oil are well exemplified by the development of Baku as "Oil Baron City" in the second half of the nineteenth century, discussed in Chapter 2. To take but one example, "Black Town," planned as an industrial zone in the 1880s and named for the soot and smoke of its refineries, followed a rigid and gridded urban plan with wide streets and dense industry. As the oil industry continued to grow, however, and was increasingly consolidated under the control of the Nobel Brothers, Baku's next industrial district, "White Town," took a very different shape, no longer subordinating the oil industry to a preexisting grid form. Instead, the design of White Town was driven by the interests, materialities, and spatialities of a rapidly growing industry, with large, purpose-built factories and non-standard parcels and street organizations. If, in Black Town, urban form shaped industrial organization, the opposite came to be true in White Town—a claim beautifully illustrated by paired, juxtaposed graphics and reproduced photographs.

Many of the illustrations in Chapter 3, on the Soviet period, come from the massive and comprehensive *USSR In Construction*, published in 1931 and dedicated to showcasing the capital of Azerbaijan as an example of socialist urban development. Baku's new and reconstructed regions and microregions, and later blocks and "superblocks," Blau's text demonstrates, continued to show the material and spatial influence of the oil industry. In this period, oil's material presence on the urban landscape combined with Soviet visions of urbanization, and, perhaps most interestingly, with west European and other international trends in urban design to which Baku's planners had access due, in part, to the city's location in an ever-more transnational oil industry. Chapter 4, on the post-Soviet period, contains the shortest text—focused on Soviet urban legacies, new imaginations fired by massively increased oil revenues in the 2000s, and ongoing negotiations over the city's master plan—which begins to contemplate what Baku might look like after its oil reserves have been depleted. Readers hoping for in-depth accounts of oil and everyday life in post-Soviet Baku should turn, in these pages, not to the text but to the dozens of full color photographs that nicely present the sedimented history of oil and urban form as the lived experience of contemporary residents.

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Baku: Oil and Urbanism should earn wide readership and admiration among scholars of Soviet and post-Soviet cities. More than this, though, the Soviet oil/urbanism nexus it charts is at once unique and highly illustrative, and scholars attending to other entrants in the global register of oil cities, from Abu Dhabi to Lagos and beyond, would do well to consult this masterfully-assembled book.

Douglas Rogers
Yale University

Visions of Development in Central Asia: Revitalizing the Culture Concept. By Noor O'Neil Borbieva. Lantham, MD: Lexington Books, 2019. xxi, 229 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Glossary. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. Maps. $95.00, hard bound.
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Before the field of international development "discovered" the new country of Kyrgyzstan following the Soviet collapse in 1991, seventy years earlier Moscow had socially engineered a new Central Asia into their own image of progress. Moscow had invented new languages to divide the Kazakh and Kyrgyz peoples, and to further separate the clans, by gerrymandering new borders to create republics based on their highly reductionistic conceptions of their respective cultures. Sending hundreds of social scientists to Central Asia in the 1930s, the Soviets had created their own version of EPCOT, an acronym created by Walt Disney in 1966, which stands for Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow. They had reduced the complexity of Kyrgyz history and everyday practices to Soviet tropes.

In her recent book, *Visions of Development in Central Asia*, Noor O'Neill Borbieva tackles the ways in which international development has similarly reduced the culture concept in Central Asia during the first decades after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Borbieva argues that the international development field brought a compressed understanding of Kyrgyz culture. She struggles like all anthropologists who attempt to explain the many layers of history, language, and culture. Her ethnography takes us on a winding journey through the history of the field of anthropology and its "culture concept," as well as Borbieva's own *CliffsNotes'* version of the history of Central Asia before she begins to tackle the problem of international development in Kyrgyzstan. She takes the reader on through the west's and Moscow's engagements with Central Asia, setting the stage for her ethnography. For those who have never been on this journey, Borbieva gives a credible overview, and offers some new insights for those of us who spent years studying this region.

As with many of us anthropologists, research begins with our own story and why in the world we end up in such remote and often fragile spaces for so very long. Borbieva opens her narrative with her two-year commitment in the Peace Corps in southern Kyrgyzstan, (which in turn, inspires her eventual doctorate in anthropology at Harvard). Opening her work with dialogue vignettes that she has with her host family, Borbieva sorts out the meaning of "security" in her new country and the complicated concept of "independence" in that rural region. She signals that culture is a negotiation between the observer and the observed.

Throughout the book, I appreciate Borbieva's straightforward effort to set her own research agenda when she writes, "I believe an ethnographer must allow their data to guide them to the most appropriate theories, rather than choose their theories in advance" (1). She traverses the problematic anthropological conception of Culture Matters Thinking (CMT) and contends that this fraught understanding of how human

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