

in corruption and the financial and state collapse in 1997. For instance, a perverse consequence occurred when IMF reforms of the public sector in Albania that kept public officials' salaries low led to an increase in bribes. The shock therapy recommended by the IMF restricted bank lending and produced massive unemployment. As economic migrants sent remittances back to Albania, many Albanians put their money in informal banking systems that acted as Ponzi schemes. When that money was lost and the government refused to guarantee their savings, riots broke out and the state collapsed.

In order to highlight neoliberalism's pathologies, the author downplays other factors that could help explain the rich puzzles of the book. For instance, international organizations often focus on the outputs of their anticorruption reforms to judge them successes or failures. However, the creation of new laws on public administration reform does not mean their practical implementation. Calling Albania's anticorruption reform a success is also self-serving for international donors. In addition, the focus on the neoliberal order downplays domestic factors, such as the autarchy under communism that led to economic crisis and unemployment before Albania liberalized in the 1990s.

Kajsiu's book has a tight analytical focus and deserves to be read by scholars and professionals who focus on corruption and anticorruption reform. Chapter 1, "Limitation of Corruption Analysis," provides a succinct overview of the various corruption paradigms. Graduate students and scholars would also appreciate the meticulous discourse analysis, which uses both quantitative and qualitative data to unpack corruption and anticorruption reform. This book highlights the contradictions and minefields of anticorruption discourse and can be used in other contexts as well.

ELTON SKENDAJ  
University of Miami

***Frontline Ukraine: Crisis in the Borderlands.*** By Richard Sakwa. London: I.B. Tauris, 2015. xx, 297 pp. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Tables. Maps. \$23.95, hard bound.

Richard Sakwa describes the outbreak of war in Ukraine in 2014 as "the worst crisis in Europe since the end of the second world war" (x). Within a year, the crisis had produced several "instant" books. Despite the speed of its execution, Sakwa's work shows a thorough grasp of developments on the ground and proposes a broad conceptual framework to explain the situation. He does an excellent job of telling a complex story with a lot of moving parts. His approach is to apportion blame to all sides—though critics will argue that he is insufficiently critical of Vladimir Putin's role.

Sakwa identifies two deep structural causes of the crisis. First, at the international level, Europe failed to build a new security architecture after 1991 that included Russia. Instead, it was treated as a defeated adversary and faltering student in the transition to market democracy. That set Russia on a "neo-revisionist" path (31), by which Sakwa means Russia wanted a more prominent role but did not want to overturn the whole system of international relations. Hence, Russia's invasion of Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014 were "wars to stop NATO enlargement" (55).

Second, at the domestic level, Ukraine is a divided society, split between a Russian-speaking east and Ukrainian-speaking west—a result of its history as a borderland between competing empires which extended well into the second half of the twentieth century. Sakwa criticizes the post-1991 Ukrainian governments, which pursued a "monist" policy of promoting the Ukrainian language and ethnicity, as opposed to a civic, "pluralist" concept of citizenship that would have guaranteed

Russian speakers the right to use their language. He sees the monist project as part of a backward-looking “restitutive nationalism” (21). He also stresses the pivotal role of oligarchs, who further distorted Ukraine’s political regime.

While Sakwa is right to stress the fragility of the Ukrainian state, in practice I see Ukrainian state building prior to 2014 as more pluralist than monist, since the Russian language continued to be used in the eastern provinces and there was only modest conflict over language policy, the sort one can find in any multilingual democracy.

Chapter 4 analyzes the Maidan protests that began in response to President Viktor Yanukovich’s refusal to sign the EU Association Agreement but turned into a full-blown revolution, one that was hijacked by radical nationalists. Chapter 5 covers the annexation of Crimea, which Sakwa describes as a “defensive reaction” by Moscow to the “putsch” in Kyiv (106). Though he concedes that the March 16 referendum was rigged, he goes to some lengths to defend the possible legality of Russia’s annexation. Chapter 6 tracks the formation of the new Ukrainian government.

In his account of the fighting in Donetsk and Luhans’k, in chapter 7, Sakwa argues that “this was not simply an ‘invasion’ but a genuine revolt against a particular type of statehood” (181), passing quickly over evidence of large-scale deployment of Russian regulars, especially in August 2014. He does not explain where the insurgents were getting their weapons, except for a brief mention of Moscow covertly supplying anti-aircraft missiles. The shooting down of MH17 is covered in less than a page, and he concludes by saying “broader culpability lay with all sides, reaching as far as Kiev, Moscow and Washington, who stoked the fires of war” (169). At least he leaves Brussels and Berlin off that list.

Sakwa does not spend a lot of time analyzing decision making in Moscow. He portrays Putin as a mere “regulator of factional and institutional conflict” and assures us that he is “not an ideologue . . . [but] rational and pragmatic” (213–14).

The book’s structural approach carries the risk of making things appear overdetermined. It downplays the role of contingency and the extent to which the outbreak of violence caught everybody by surprise. There was nothing inevitable about these developments. While Ukrainian nationalists played a key role in escalating the conflict, it is not as if Putin was a purely reactive bystander. But Sakwa downplays Putin’s agency, arguing that “developments in Ukraine represented a challenge that Putin felt he could not avoid” (119). He writes that “Russia was sucked into the Donbas conflict” (113), as if Russia’s invasion occurred against its will.

Sakwa’s account stands in contrast to the prevailing media narrative, which lays responsibility at Putin’s door. Arguably, Putin needed a show of force to boost his waning popularity with the Russian public and to prevent Ukraine from drifting into the EU’s economic orbit. Sakwa does not mention the telling fact that the annexation of Crimea led to a 20 percent boost in Putin’s popularity ratings. While he makes many important and nuanced points, the book could have given more space to this mainstream explanation of the outbreak of war.

PETER RUTLAND  
Wesleyan University

***Ethno-Baroque: Materiality, Aesthetics, and Conflict in Modern-Day Macedonia.***

By Rozita Dimova. New York: Berghahn Books, 2013. x, 165 pp. Notes. Index. Illustrations. \$85.00, hard bound.

This innovative and fascinating account of what has been happening over the past few decades in the Republic of Macedonia approaches its topic not through the usual lenses of ethnicity and nationalism but rather those of consumption and materiality.