connection with "its Algerian twin" (p. 4), Bordj Badji Mokhtar. Rather than treating place and mobility as two distinct realms of experience, Scheele insists that the two concepts belong to the same register. Al-Khalil residents are always on the move, never permanently settled. Not only are they ready to bolt at the slightest hint of insecurity, but their economic success, social standing, and moral reputation hinge on their ability to gain access to a wide range of resources and claim far-reaching, long-standing connections—through marriage, genealogies, property, and so on.

By demonstrating how Saharan towns are "nodes of particular density in overlapping networks of connectivity" (p. 13), *Smugglers and Saints of the Sahara* provides a critical counterpoint to the notion that the Sahara is a uniform abode of terror and lawlessness. This is not to say that political instability and religious extremism are not part of the picture. If recent events are any indication, Islamist militancy has found growing support in Algeria and Mali. Yet, as Scheele's fine study makes clear, it would be a mistake not to take into account the complex ways in which legality and illegality, autonomy and independence, as well as connectivity and segregation, intersect, bolster, or contradict each other in the region. The fact that the Sahara is "the fastest changing" (p. 7) region of Africa should not blind us to the continuities that exist. *Smugglers and Saints in the Sahara* offers a unique glimpse into how long-standing patterns of mobility and connectivity have shaped contemporary local economies as well as political loyalties and social hierarchies. It will appeal both to specialists and to a wide range of scholars in African studies and beyond. It should also be required reading for American security analysts and policymakers.

MORGAN Y. LIU, *Under Solomon's Throne: Uzbek Visions of Renewal in Osh* (Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012). Pp. 296. $29.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY MARIA LOUW, Department of Culture and Society, Aarhus University, Aarhus, Denmark; e-mail: etnolouw@hum.au.dk
doi:10.1017/S0020743813001426

In recent years, the city of Osh in southern Kyrgyzstan has largely been known in and outside of Central Asia for the tension and violence between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks that erupted in 1990 and later in 2010, which resulted in injury or death for thousands and in displacement for more than a hundred thousand. Morgan Liu's new book discusses these incidents, but it is not concerned with them as such. Rather, its task is to tell the stories of the places behind the headlines and of the people for whom the city was home as well as a site of hopes for the future and efforts to create good lives—before the events of 2010 shattered many of these hopes and efforts.

Through extensive anthropological fieldwork conducted between 1993 and 2011—a period spanning almost twenty years—Morgan Liu tells a story about Osh's Uzbek community and their post-Soviet predicament as a doubly marginalized group. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union into its constituent republics in 1991, Uzbeks living in Osh became citizens of an independent Kyrgyzstan, where political power came to be held predominantly by ethnic Kyrgyz. A strict border regime limited their access to Uzbekistan, the country they identified with and, influenced by the Uzbek media, tended to see through rose-colored glasses as characterized by stability, prosperity, and global importance.

The book describes their liminal predicament and their various ways of coping with it, of finding niches within it, and of imagining better futures for themselves and their communities. More particularly, it focuses on the central role played by the Osh cityscape itself in all of

this: for the author, Osh is a lens through which he sees more general developments in post-Soviet Central Asia, such as the introduction of a market economy, growing inequality, changing border regimes, and the growing importance of ethnic and religious identifications. Osh Uzbeks, it is argued, treated urban places as "frameworks for making sense of the world and potentially for acting on it" (p. xx).

In order to demonstrate this, the author takes the reader on a tour through and around Osh, pausing at various places and pondering what they tell us about Central Asia and Osh Uzbeks' ways of viewing and engaging the post-Soviet world. Liu focuses on what he sees as a variety of central *idioms* anchored in urban space, which, he argues, organized the thoughts and actions of Osh Uzbeks. We are taken to the bazaar, for instance, which was destroyed during the 2010 events, but which was until then seen as an idiom of mediation because of its role as a site of various sorts of urban exchange and contact between groups of people that otherwise tended not to encounter each other. For those whom post-Soviet developments had dispossessed, forcing them to become sellers in order to make a living, the bazaar stood for shattered lives and despair, whereas for others it represented new opportunities and sources of wealth. We are also taken to the border with Uzbekistan, which is seen as a space that concretized Osh Uzbeks' marginal and liminal status in both countries. And we are taken on a tour through what residents and visitors alike tend to see as the two "parts" of Osh: the Central Asian city of the *maḥalla* neighborhoods and the Soviet city of boulevards, shops, microdistricts, and government buildings. Far from representing two different worlds—one "traditional" and the other "modern"—Liu demonstrates how these two "parts" are intimately connected, and together tell a story of evolving relations between the Soviet and the Central Asian, between state and subjects.

In what is for this reader the most interesting chapters of the book, we are taken to Osh's *maḥalla*s, the Uzbek-majority neighborhoods which, with their narrow and labyrinth streets and inward-facing houses, seem impenetrable and intimidating to many outsiders, while embodying the very essence of Uzbekness to Uzbeks themselves: they "have been heavily invested with the thoughts, memories, and dreams of [their] residents. The *mahalla* is central to what it means to be Uzbek in Osh" (p. 105). The author argues that for Osh Uzbeks, the *maḥalla* was an idiom for thinking and attempting to live out a moral community, and its very structure tended to produce a certain kind of being in the world that some people cherished as authentically Uzbek and others experienced as claustrophobic. For the former, the *maḥalla* stood out as *the* site for (forming) proper Uzbek morality and virtues, such as propriety and respect for elders and tradition. For the latter, and in particular those who did not fit into predominant ideas of proper Uzbekness—divorcees and single women, for example—it was experienced as an oppressive space that did not allow much deviation from the norm. The author goes on to argue that the *maḥalla* idiom provides content to Osh Uzbeks' imaginaries of the state. For them, the state is essentially a *maḥalla* writ large and under the *tarbiya*—upbringing or training—of the president, who is imagined as a *khān*—a virtuous character who oversees his state "with the same sense of personal stewardship as elders were supposed to oversee the neighborhood" (p. 188).

Morgan Liu's well-written book is an impressive piece of work. The fieldwork on which it is based covers an unusually long time span, enabling the author to focus on processes rather than structures. Liu offers an immensely rich ethnography that testifies to an intimate knowledge of the places and people described and that situates the reader in the midst of Osh's urban landscapes. It forces us to see the things that local residents see—and that they see with—and at times provides at least this reader with the feeling of getting lost in the complexity of the cityscape, described in minute detail. The book demonstrates a core anthropological virtue: that of focusing on seemingly marginal phenomena and showing how they may add new light to larger issues. In this case, Liu demonstrates how a city with a marginal

status in a region that is itself most often treated as marginal, adds new light to the broader story of Soviet and post-Soviet transformations in Central Asia as well as to postcolonial predicaments more generally. It tells close-to-the-ground stories about post-Soviet "transition" through Osh Uzbeks' various efforts to cope with, and understand, its effects. While doing so, the book provides an extraordinarily nuanced picture of Kyrgyz–Uzbek relations, which, although replete with tensions and cultural stereotypes of the sort that are typically manipulated in conflict situations (e.g., civilized Uzbeks vs. primitive Kyrgyz nomads, or free Kyrgyz vs. authoritarian Uzbeks), are also characterized by a will to coexistence. As such, it is a must-read for anyone interested in the region and an important contribution to the anthropology of Central Asia. More generally, demonstrating how whole imaginaries may be rooted in space, in everyday urban life, it is an important contribution to discussions of the significance of place in how people conceive of the world and should, as such, be of interest to a larger audience.

STEPHEN W. DAY, *Regionalism and Rebellion in Yemen: A Troubled National Union* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012). Pp. 368. $99.00 cloth, $29.99 paper, $24.00 e-book.

REVIEWED BY CHARLES SCHMITZ, Department of Geography, Towson University, Baltimore, Md.; e-mail: cschmitz@towson.edu
doi:10.1017/S0020743813001438

In this book, Stephen Day argues that the root of Yemen's political instability lies in the concentration of power in the hands of people from the northwest highlands of Yemen. For Day, the politics of Yemen are the politics of geographic regions that, he argues, divide Yemen and correspond to particular regional identities. Historically, Day's "northwest highlands" region dominated Yemen, but this domination has been the source of Yemen's instability. The solution to Yemen's political problems, in his view, is a kind of regional "Wilsonianism" in which local inhabitants from each region control their own fates through a decentralized form of local governance. Day hypothesizes that a balance in resource distribution strengthens national identity among the population, while an imbalance strengthens regional identities in opposition to national identity. In his view, balance vs. imbalance of resource distribution is what strengthens, respectively, national vs. regional identities among the population. The more that imbalance is perceived in the distribution of resources, the more likely that regional identities will be strengthened in opposition to a common Yemeni national identity (p. 14).

Day is right to argue that geographic identities have currency in Yemeni politics. In current discussions in Yemen over the political future of the country, political leaders often argue for dividing Yemen into regions that are close to Day's divisions. The protests in the south of Yemen are framed within the politics of geography. Southerners claim that they require a separate state or separate political representation because they are distinct. In the north, a successful insurrection by the Ansar Allah carved out a small territory that it alone controls and governs.

However, regionalism is only one of many elements of Yemeni politics. Notions of geographic identity are complexly interwoven with many other ideas of self and group. Day relies too heavily on geographic identity to the detriment of other factors shaping Yemeni's politics. He reifies regions and misses the fluidity of the process of forming political identities from a myriad of possible markers of group cohesion in Yemen. Fortunately, Day's detailed narrative of political developments in the last two decades allows the reader to interpret Yemeni politics in a more nuanced fashion.