

derstanding the physical and sociocultural contexts in which collective action emerges in large-scale societies.

The second part of *How Humans Cooperate* consists of six chapters, some coauthored with Fargher, that rely on an analysis of a cross-cultural sample of 30 societies for which adequate data exist for identifying the contexts of collective action. While some societies in the sample are well known from archaeological research, all have a documentary record from which to identify details that Blanton and Fargher need for their analyses. Drawing from this cross-cultural sample, the chapters consider how robust evidence for collective action articulates with other sociocultural components, such as commercial transactions, especially in market settings; fiscal strategies that support public works; territorial integrity and coordination; urban development; and aesthetic representations and religious formations. These chapters are rich in illustrative detail, so much so that I sometimes struggled to see the forest for the trees, and I would have appreciated at least some of the comparative methods and statistical analyses that Blanton and Fargher relegate to appendixes more prominently highlighted in these core chapters.

In the final two chapters, and especially chapter 12, Blanton pulls together all the components that he and Fargher have identified as important for any anthropologically informed model of collective action and proposes a “coactive causal process” through which these interact within a framework of material conditions to spur the changes, leading to increasingly larger scales of collective action. Acknowledging the challenge of identifying causality in complex sociocultural processes, Blanton suggests that flexible (“elastic”) systems of production, the presence of inequities in wealth, the “biosocial challenges” of increasing urbanism, and the need for economic exchange, especially through marketplaces, together promote the need for increasingly elaborate forms of collective action to prevent society from dissolving. While these variables are seen as shaped by the physical environment and demographic change, Blanton argues against a simple determinism, instead emphasizing the complex dynamic relationships between context and sociocultural factors that, together, are seen as ultimately generating state-level institutions of collective action.

How Humans Cooperate is an impressive effort, and there is much to admire and learn from the efforts of Blanton and Fargher to pull together so much information that contributes to an understanding of how complex sociocultural, and especially governmental, institutions form. Many of their conclusions as to which components are most impactful on collective action rely on discussions and analyses that are detailed in the bibliographic essays and analytical appendixes at the end of the book, as well as data coding available only in a separate volume published by the authors in 2008 (Blanton and Fargher 2008). The narrative of *How Humans Cooperate* therefore did not always convince me, and although I am an expert in none of the ancient and historic societies in their comparative analysis, I found myself skeptical of some of the anecdotes pulled from the cross-cultural sample. For example, fourth-century

BCE Athens is repeatedly stood up as a paragon of cooperative dynamics, and yet most of the data used by Blanton is characteristic of only the 10% to 20% of Athenian society classified as the (free and male-only) “citizenry.”

This observation leads me to one final comment. As anticipated by the book’s title, *How Humans Cooperate*, Blanton seems to equate cooperation with collective action, even as so many of his and Fargher’s cross-cultural examples underscore the coercive elements necessary to deploy collective action at scale. I suspect that Blanton is using literary license to make his points, or he may be driven to this rhetorical strategy by a desire to align evolutionary psychology (arguably inaccurately) both with assumptions of an evolved, generalized human altruism and with mathematical modeling characteristic of game theory and evolutionary biology. In fact, cooperation operates outside of collective action, just as both competition and coercion—voluntary and involuntary—are essential to collective action; these points, to me at least, are obscured by the book’s dismissal of evolutionary cooperation theory as useful for understanding human behavior in complex sociocultural settings. Despite these concerns, there is much that *How Humans Cooperate* contributes to the discussion on the evolution of cooperation and the formation of complex human societies. Blanton, along with Fargher, is able to weave together a multitude of diverse and often opposing theoretical perspectives and a rich anthropological literature to present a comprehensive and empirically testable model of how complex sociocultural institutions emerge.

Reference Cited

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Liberal Limits: Beyond Forensic Reckoning in Peru

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Mourning Remains: State Atrocity, Exhumations, and Governing the Disappeared in Peru’s Postwar Andes. By Isaias Rojas-Perez. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2017.

In this heartfelt monograph, Isaias Rojas-Perez explores the work of social repair and the quest for justice in the aftermath of mass violence. He departs from the conviction that there is a “tendency in mainstream transitional justice theories to focus primarily on the problem of how to prevent the repetition of mass violence in the future rather than the problem of how to properly dispatch the dead” (10). Thus, he argues that social repair involves remaking relationships among both the living

and the dead, who in turn must find ways to engage with a state that may itself have committed atrocities. His exploration turns on the refounding of a political community from what, in Latin America, has become a quintessentially gendered task: the search for the dead and disappeared. Tracing the work of Quechua-speaking mothers in search of their disappeared loved ones, the author explores the limits of human experience and language, as well as the limits of liberal mechanisms of transitional justice, to provide redress in the aftermath of grave harm.

Much of the analysis turns on what the author calls the “necrogovernmentality of post-conflict.” As he states, this is “a form of state power that stands in opposition term by term to the power that kills or ‘lets die.’ It is concerned with the government of dead bodies and it seeks to structure the field of possible action and the speech of survivors, relatives, and the population by means of a complex set of legal and disciplinary technologies of self and truth, so as to conduct their conduct as free subjects toward redemption and reconciliation” (50). In the book’s eight chapters, Rojas-Perez builds his argument via ethnographic work with survivors of a military massacre in the town of Accomarca and with mothers from ANFASEP (National Association of the Families of the Detained and Disappeared in Peru). These chapters are each an element in “desecularizing transitional justice” to address the surplus of meaning that law and forensic science cannot contain.

The first chapter engages with the forensic turn in truth-making—what some have called the “CSI effect.” The exhumation and presentation of bones have become central to projects of reckoning and of honoring a central tenet of transitional justice: the right to truth and the assumption that the truth in itself has therapeutic effects. The author examines both state-led projects of reckoning and those led by the mothers of ANFASEP to reveal the different evidentiary regimes invoked by each group. Rojas-Perez argues that for the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (PTRC), exhuming the bodies was both a truth-telling and nation-building project. Both fell within a broader mandate to dignify the victims via postmortem identification, and the PTRC conducted a number of reburials. These performances of sovereignty were based on the supposition that there were remains to be recovered, that the dead died tragic deaths, and that the survivors conformed to the subject position assigned to them by the PTRC. The author notes a dilemma: what of the disappeared for whom a body cannot be found and identified? As he argues, “The missing body blocks the post-conflict project of ritually reconstituting the political community through exhumation and reburial” (45). These dead cannot be located within the “controlled recovery of the past” (18), and their liminality exceeds such containment.

The theme of excess informs the subsequent chapters on *malamuerte*, or bad death. “Bad death” refers to a sudden, untimely, and meaningless death, ordinarily resulting from an accident, murder, or suicide—in sum, a form of death at odds with a “normal” death that results from “natural” causes. But these were not ordinary times, and the innumerable deaths

exceeded the limits of existing categories. The author insightfully argues that the mass death associated with the internal armed conflict—of which the 1985 massacre in Accomarca was one expression—exceeds the framework of good and bad death and falls outside the realm of the normal ritualization of death. This will remain so until the mass death is legally and politically prosecuted. What to do with this excess? The author tunes his ear to the Quechua-speaking mothers and their improvised rituals at exhumation sites, sites in which the ordinary is called upon to domesticate the horror of war. For the mothers, the unburied, improperly mourned dead did not give rise to a ghostly haunting but to a political demand: these were not moral specters but political ghosts, and they were calling for a reckoning. The bones have agency and place their claims upon the living. The mothers want justice, which exists in a register beyond grief and lament.

Within the transitional justice framework, forensic exhumations of the dead are one way of honoring the victim’s right to the truth. Rojas-Perez accompanies the mothers as they bear witness to the exhumations at Los Cabitos, the military base that became a central torture and detention center during the internal armed conflict. The forensic anthropologists insist their work is strictly technical, a key element in the “controlled recovery of the past.” How do legal and forensic experts relate to their “object”? And what does translating atrocity into the languages of law and science entail? This chapter allows the author to explore how survivors relate to the forensic investigation that produces unidentifiable bone fragments and traces of the ovens used to dispose of human remains. There is no named body, no one person exhumed. The author states, “In the project of the necro-governmentality of postconflict the recovered missing body has a crucial role because, in addition to providing evidence for the work of the law, it serves as a site for completing a story of suffering and redemption through which relatives can attain closure and return home” (100). For the mothers, disappearance is an ongoing event that exceeds the framework of trauma. This is a loss, a past, that is eternally present and extends into an undefined future and the always-distant horizon of justice.

The author turns next to gendered forms of agency and the women’s tenacity in the face of the state’s crimes of commission and omission. The author insists on the political content of the mothers’ actions, a theme that resonates with other work on motherist politics. The women are stubborn in their demands, refusing to accept the loss of mourning rituals and demanding some justice for these deaths. It is here that the limits of liberal forms of accounting and justice are laid bare. Rojas-Perez labels this “subjunctive mourning”—in the absence of identifiable remains, the women engage an imperfect shift from disappearance to death, bringing to the site of mass killing ordinary language, practices, and forms of relationality that extend everyday forms of coping into this realm of unnamable loss. In mobilizing the practices of ordinary life, they articulate a powerful political commentary about state atrocity. In contrast with the way that law and the

forensic sciences frame the site—a “container for evidence and neutral space of inquiry” (233)—the mothers engage this space of death in a way that reveals their understanding of interlocking senses. They would not find the remains of their loved ones but would encounter a mass of missing bodies, traces of people killed and burned at the military base. They do not find their sons or husbands but do find a mass of unnamed remains and lives cut short. A collective voice emerges as the mothers convert Los Cabitos into a sacred place, a site in which they remake relationships torn asunder by world-shattering violence.

I have two concerns. For a monograph centrally concerned with language, we hear virtually nothing from the Quechua-speaking mothers themselves. Somehow the mothers themselves are oddly reduced to supporting players in the text while theoretical exegesis is afforded a louder voice. Additionally, I wished to know more about the politics among the women themselves—not only between the mothers as a collective entity and the state. The politics of victimhood and survivorship is rarely univocal, and those battles are also key in our understanding of postconflict social repair. In sum, this book will be of interest to advanced undergraduates and graduate students studying Latin America, the politics of death and dying, and transitional justice.

The Second-Oldest Profession: The Humbling of Russian Journalism

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Losing Pravda: Ethics and the Press in Post-Truth Russia. By Natalia Roudakova. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

The deconstruction of the once-proud profession of journalism in Russia since the collapse of the Soviet Union holds lessons for all current polities where truth is contested, if not actively under attack. Natalia Roudakova’s ethnographically rich and theoretically timely monograph *Losing Pravda: Ethics and the Press in Post-Truth Russia* details the rise and fall of truth telling in Russian media from the Brezhnev years through to the triumph of Putin, with a particular focus on print journalism. Drawing upon an analysis of published articles, memoirs, interviews with active and retired journalists, and ethnographic fieldwork carried out in a Nizhny Novgorod newspaper in the early 2000s, Roudakova chronicles the unmaking and humbling of Soviet journalism.

She confounds the myth that apart from a brief flowering in the interregnum between *perestroika* and the *khaos* following Yeltsin’s economic shock treatment, there was no tradition of

speaking truth to power by journalists or any other estate under socialism. Roudakova brings a Foucauldian perspective to the question of truth and power in Soviet journalism. She finds that although Communist Party control may have eliminated *parrhesia*—the courage of truth—from the front pages of Soviet newspapers, in their back pages, particularly in *ocherki*, a genre of long-form nonfiction essays, as well as in reviews of readers’ letters, the courage of writers pushing the limits of the sayable could come across.

For a variety of reasons (e.g., prepublication censorship, unavailability of official data, citizens’ fear of going on the record), a focus on news—as fast-paced, events-driven reporting of current events, as it is known in Western journalism—was almost absent in communist media. The orientation of Soviet society and its media systems was not to current events but to the future—to the building of socialism and communism—and to “life as it was becoming rather than as it was” (34). In this context, being a good journalist meant devoting effort to exploring the tensions between socialism’s reality and its vision. *Ocherki* proved an effective and durable written form to pursue this objective. Tenaciously investigating complaints, drawing public attention to problems, demanding response from officials, and shaming the guilty were all important ways for Soviet journalists to develop ties that bound them to their readers and their readers to them. There were, of course, “no-go” areas—the Communist Party’s overall command of the progress toward the establishment of socialism could not be questioned—but a surprisingly wide field of civic and social activity was open to journalistic scrutiny and potential criticism.

Roudakova highlights a tradition of courageous speech that was a rare but highly valued occurrence across many different strata in Soviet society and was not confined to accredited media or limited to dissident milieus. She focuses on a commitment to criticism and self-criticism hardwired since the days of Lenin into the dialectical repertoire of socialism. She argues, following Stephen Kotkin (1995), that as a cultural and ethical practice, *parrhesia* belongs to the genealogy of socialism as well as liberalism. Understood as a moral duty and delivered at the risk of angering more powerful interlocutors, *parrhesia* was part and parcel of “speaking Bolshevik” (78).

The sudden economic rupture of the Yeltsin years led to the privatization of news media almost overnight. A full-blown deprofessionalization of journalism as an occupation ensued. Most media outlets came to be formally or informally controlled by “cross-institutional groups.” These groups emerged in Russia in the late 1990s where, in circumstances of “state capture” or “state failure” (126), groups of individuals from different social institutions would pool together resources to jointly struggle for and wield power. Such groups included financiers, businesspeople, state agents (particularly those with access to the distribution of public resources, e.g., governors or mayors of large cities), and representatives of security agencies acting in a private capacity. Privatization is never simply a change in forms of ownership; it has a profound effect on the public and social realms, reconfiguring people’s senses of solidarity, obligation,