

Reviews

Isabella Clough Marinaro (2022), *Inhabiting Liminal Spaces: Informalities in Governance, Housing and Economic Activity in Contemporary Italy* (London: Routledge), 232 pp., €136.94, ISBN: 9780367373634.

Isabella Clough Marinaro is professor of sociology and Italian Studies at John Cabot University in Rome. Her research moves between the study of the political and social conditions of Roma communities and a more general interest in criminality and informality. Her main fieldwork area is the city of Rome.

The book *Inhabiting Liminal Spaces* is a synthesis of different studies carried out between 2015 and 2020. It is a rather dense work whose ambition is to embrace different fields of informal activity in the city of Rome and propose a transversal analysis of the social and liminal conditions they produce. The book is organised around an introduction, six chapters and a conclusion. As it is a compilation of different studies, each chapter can be read independently, especially the central ones (the second to sixth).

In the introduction and the first chapter, the author presents the originality of her approach in the context of the social sciences literature on informality.

First of all, the author defends a relational approach. Building on works that stress the importance of understanding informality from a micro-level, she proposes an ethnographic approach to informalities as everyday practices. Moreover, the choice of the capital of one of the largest European economies is a way of problematising and contesting the classical division between the Global North and South. These disciplinary positions allow the author to explore the relation between informal activities and formal regulations, their reciprocal adjustments through time and the liminal condition that this relation generates. Her main interest is to show how ‘informalities have become embedded in, and symbiotic with, governance dynamics that uphold the logics of neoliberal inequality’ (13).

The second approach is linked to Bourdieu’s theory of practice. The author defends the importance of reading informalities within specific contexts of power relations and economic interests. By contesting the critiques of determinism addressed towards the theory of practice, she stresses the importance of the analysis of informal social negotiations through the concept of capital (social, cultural, economic,

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political and symbolic). The originality of the book is to add a new category: temporal capital, as ‘a form of symbolic capital which rests on the longevity of a person’s activity in a given field’ (31).

The following four chapters present four different fields of informal activities: squatting and informal housing, street vending, informal moneylending and waste collection. Each chapter presents a historical overview of official regulations and informalities in the last sixty years. The author navigates heterogeneous and polyglot sources and realises some very complete portraits of complex local situations. These portraits have a double scientific value: they offer a literature review in English of specific Italian debates, as with the history of public housing in Rome; and they provide an original work of contemporary history, as with garbage management policies.

This analysis is followed by an ethnographic focus, sometimes well localised in time and space, as in the case of the Corviale public housing complex or Roman flea markets, sometimes less situated, as with moneylending and waste collection activities. These focuses are the key to understanding the relation between actors through the evolution of institutional decisions (from repression to formalisation) and the way in which actors adapt to them and manage their liminal conditions. Each time, the author gives us a temporal reading on the practices. The global analysis outlined is that the long-term physical presence of informal actors in a field allows them to develop legitimacy or forms of neoliberal entrepreneurship that give them more power in the negotiation with institutions. On the other hand, those who have been there for less time are disadvantaged and remain stuck in liminal conditions. This inequality appears to be linked to ethnic and racial stigmatisation.

Given the complexity and variety of fieldwork presented, it would have been interesting to give ethnographic material more place, especially in terms of spaces, atmospheres, subjects’ trajectories or collective situations of liminality. Nevertheless, some parts of the book are more embodied, as they correspond to the fields in which the author has been involved for a long time (Roma communities). The reader sometimes also lacks information on the specific conditions and methodologies of each study.

The sixth chapter is a counterpoint in terms of methodology. It presents the results of a statistical survey carried out in 2020 on the perception of informality among Rome’s inhabitants. The study is presented as a methodological essay on a small scale (with 172 participants). The preliminary results on the dichotomy between negative opinion and everyday acceptance of informality are very promising.

This book will definitely interest scholars and students in search of a valuable theoretical guide on critical approaches to informalities and on the contemporary history of urban policies in Rome. This work of Clough Marinaro's is a very interesting contribution to the study of the institutional production of informalities and its relation to neoliberal governance and urban inequalities.

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František Šístek (ed) (2021), *Imagining Bosnian Muslims in Central Europe: Representations, Transfers and Exchanges* (New York: Berghahn), 302 pp., \$145 ISBN: 9781789207743.

This volume, edited by Czech historian and anthropologist František Šístek, is a result of a research project titled 'Central Europe and Balkan Muslims: Relations, Images, Stereotypes' supported by the Czech Academy of Science, and represents more than a century of Czech academic interest in south-east Europe and the Balkans. At first, we may be surprised that Czech scholars are interested in the Muslim population of south-eastern Europe; however, very early in the volume we realise how intimately connected Czechs are with the Balkan Muslims, especially within the joint Austro-Hungarian history that has influenced even the contemporary Czech imagination and everyday life. The idea of the research project and this volume emerged from the dramatic development of the new wave of migration that was a significant topic in Europe in 2015. Today, in 2022, it is almost forgotten that in those days, political, academic and even everyday discourses were saturated by predictions of the 'end of Europe as we know it' because of 'new great migrations of people' unrecorded since the fall of the Roman Empire. People were especially worried about the arrival of Muslim populations that were too 'exotic', and memories of Ottoman conquest were awakened within Central Europe. Although Europe faces new challenges in 2022, this volume is not out of date. The political and social challenges that contemporary Bosnia and Herzegovina and the entire region face, which also have a historical background, keep the volume relevant. In thirteen chapters, with an introduction and conclusion written by the editor, František Šístek, historians (Ladislav Hladký, Petr Stehlík, Martin Gabriel and Oliver Pejić), anthropologists (Božidar Jezernik, Bojan Baskar, Alenka Bartulović, Aldina Čemernica and Merima Šehagić), literary scholars

(Clemens Ruthner and Charles Sabatos), political scientists (Zora Hesová) and linguists (Marija Mandić) cover all possible scenarios of relations with, and relations to, Bosnian Muslims, from ‘brothers to others’, as Alenka Bartulović frames it in this volume (194). The volume traces Bosnian Muslims through time and space, from the Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1878 to the post-1990s war and migration to contemporary Slovenia and Germany as refugees. Although the chapters focus on Bosnian Muslims, creating a good link between these very diverse chapters, other nations of both Central and south-east Europe that have been in direct contact and interaction with Bosnian Muslims, like Czechia, Serbia, Slovenia and Croatia, are also present and their perspectives and imaginations are analysed. This is a volume on Muslims in different contexts where they have acted; however, it is also about others who acted on them or imagined and constructed them. Like every good academic work, this volume poses more relevant questions that await new work and research. The chapters are presented in chronological order, starting from the Austro-Hungarian entrance into Bosnian and Herzegovinian reality and ending with Bosnian and Herzegovinian entrance to Western Europe at the end of the twentieth century – one could say from colonial to postcolonial time periods.

Through different chapters and approaches, the volume presents specific national discourses on the Bosnian Muslims that were developed during the Austro-Hungarian era but continued to be shared, used and redefined in the successor states, such as the Czech Republic, Slovenia and Croatia. Likewise, the ‘Central European’ context that is the geographical focus of this volume covers the historical region of the late Habsburg Empire and its imperial legacy (Šistek, 5). The editor rightly explains why the volume uses an etic definition of Bosnian Muslims, rather than the emic one of ‘Bosniaks’. The term ‘Bosniak’ denotes modern national rather than confessional identity, while some of the chapters focus on earlier periods prior to the start of modern ethnic homogenisation (Šistek, 8). Šistek argues that the term ‘Bosnian Muslim’ is relatively flexible and can more or less accurately cover all the cases presented in the volume. Because of the interdisciplinary approach and the *longue durée* that is covered by the chapters, several concepts are problematised and tested in its pages. These include the concept of ‘Orientalism’ as defined by Edward Said, and the concept of ‘frontier Orientalism’ used by Andre Gingrich, especially his ideas of ‘bad Muslims’ represented by the conquering Turks and ‘good Muslims’ represented by loyal Bosnian Muslim subjects.

The concept of '(br)other' developed by Edin Hajdarpašić further opens the discussion on 'our' and 'good' Muslims vs 'other' and 'bad' Muslims.

As the editor himself acknowledges, this is one more volume on Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and it builds on a literature that is becoming more and more disproportionate in comparison to those on the other two ethno-religious communities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Orthodox Serbs and Catholic Croats (Šistek, 15). However, this also represents the fact that Bosnian Muslims are still the main inspiration in the scholarly imaginations of Western, Central and south-east European academics. Could this be one of the reasons that a research project on Central European and Balkan Muslims produced a volume on Bosnian Muslims? Perhaps, partially, this is a result of the imperial and colonial legacy of the Austro-Hungarian empire and approach to Bosnia and Herzegovina, in fact the only real colony of the empire, and Bosnian Muslims as the only 'exotic Other'. Nevertheless, this volume truly helps us understand the current situation of Bosniaks, or Bosnian Muslims, in contemporary Bosnia and Herzegovina and their complex relations with the other two dominant communities. It will become an unavoidable reference volume in any future research on Bosnia and Herzegovina in general, and on Bosnian Muslims in particular.

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Carrie Hertz (ed) (2021), *Dressing with Purpose: Belonging and Resistance in Scandinavia* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), 260 pp., \$30, ISBN: 9780253058577.

Much more than a companion volume for the 2021–2023 exhibit at the Museum of International Folk Art in New Mexico, *Dressing with Purpose: Belonging and Resistance in Scandinavia* offers a visually and intellectually rich study of traditional dress practices in Norway, Sweden and Sápmi. Lead author and editor Carrie Hertz is joined by Lizette Gradén, Camilla Rossing, Laurann Gilbertson, Eeva-Kristina Harlin and Outi Pieski in an innovative book focused on three ongoing traditional dress practices: Swedish *folkdräkt*, Norwegian *bunad* and Sámi *gákti*. With a perspective rooted in performance theory and folklore studies, Hertz argues for the reconsideration of traditional dress as a creative and performative medium that reveals and reacts to the

legacies of colonialism and Romantic nationalism in contemporary society, in both popular and academic discussions. While rooted in a specific regional context, *Dressing with Purpose*'s theoretical interventions address critical questions about the role of tradition in everyday life and the impacts of universalising Eurocentric perspectives and terminology in dress and fashion studies.

In the introductory chapter, Hertz outlines the ways that dress has been used as a tool of nation-building, colonial expansion and Indigenous activism throughout the twentieth century and sets up the intersectional, feminist, anti-colonial and anti-capitalist themes that run throughout the book. Here, she engages in an informative discussion of how traditional dress has been defined; folk or traditional costumes in the Nordic region, as elsewhere, can vary in form and material and usually reflect social and cultural identity and status. In Scandinavia, most of the folk costumes reflect a geographical region, place of birth and residence, religious affiliation or occupation and can vary throughout the year. Women's and men's costumes are usually made from similar materials of embroidered wool, cotton and linen, and women's costumes include bodices, skirts and shifts, whereas men's costumes most often include trousers, shirts, vests and coats. Though these garments have often been tied to pre-industrial rural cultures and the period of Romantic nationalism, Hertz refines these ideas through discussions about the specific national histories and is joined by her co-authors to examine the often rhetorically contradictory and polyvalent meanings of traditional dress through ethnographic case studies of current practitioners. *Folkdräkt* collectors and artists Kersti Jobs-Björklund and Täpp-Lars in Dalarna, Sweden help illustrate the changing nature of traditional dress and the role of local actors in shaping institutional practices as they seek to articulate their identities, ethics and aspirations through dress. In Norway, *Dressing with Purpose* explores the dialogue between wearer and viewer and the continued political nature of the *bunad* as a tool to articulate and police national and local belonging. Case studies focus on the relationship between rural and national identities, Sahfana Mubarak Ali's *bunad*-hijab and her attempts to use dress to signal a dual heritage as a Muslim woman and a Norwegian citizen, and even Norwegian Americans who follow and rewrite Norwegian *bunad* traditions for their own local contexts. Finally, *Dressing with Purpose* turns to the long history and modern realities of colonialism in Scandinavia and the role of dress in resisting assimilation and Indigenous erasure. Focusing on Sámi *gávvi* in Guovdageaidnu (Kautokeino), the last chapters explore how

Sámi artists and activists like Marit Helene, the Sara sisters, and Eeva-Kristiina Harlin and Outi Pieski use traditional dress to articulate continuity and survival, yet shape and participate in ways of dressing that highlight adaptability, modernity and a distinct cultural identity and aesthetic politics in Sápmi.

Throughout the book, Hertz pays attention to the economic and material factors of the garments and processes of making, enmeshing intimate stories about family, belonging and place with larger social, political and economic movements. With a folklorist's eye for exploring the nuanced subjectivities and intimate moments of human experience, both past and present, *Dressing with Purpose* offers both theoretical interventions and detailed examination of the material and cultural contexts of living tradition. First, Hertz delves into the ways that fashion has been linked to key features of Western modernisation and imperialism and problematises the continued use of terminology like 'tradition' and 'fashion', which has been used to structure historical narratives of 'evolutionary transformation from costume to fashion' and pit local tradition against cosmopolitan modernity (5). Paying particular attention to the intricacies and limitations of English-language terms vis-à-vis Scandinavian dress cultures, Hertz offers a corrective to the marginalisation of traditional dress in fashion studies. Instead of framing traditional and fashionable dress as dichotomous, Hertz places them in dialogue to explore the function of traditional dress in socially and culturally intersectional contexts and behaviours today. Hertz also engages in discussions within critical heritage studies about the productive powers of tradition and nostalgia. In these pages, traditional dress is not a tool of right-wing nationalist nostalgia, nor locked behind museum glass as a representation of a dead, pre-industrial and romanticised past. Instead, it is a medium to explore the interwoven sociocultural, economic, political, historical and ideological forces of modern life in the hands and on the bodies of those who use dress purposefully.

Dressing with Purpose explores and celebrates the wearing, making and modernising of 'traditional' dress with a nod to movements like craftivism and slow fashion and a clear joy in the people at the heart of these stories. Its detailed descriptions and beautiful photographs will appeal to those interested in the materiality of dress and craft itself and offer important additions to the fields of fashion and dress studies, ethnography and folklore. In looking at the continuing use of traditional dress as a creative and performative medium and by exploring moments in which people want to foreground 'continuity

and stability' rather than 'disruptive innovation or personal interest', *Dressing with Purpose* invites us to reconsider the ways that traditional dress has been understood and reminds us of the value of studying practice in place (7).

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Thomas Hylland Eriksen and Marek Jakoubek (eds) (2019), *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries Today: A Legacy of Fifty Years* (London: Routledge), 232 pp., \$128, ISBN: 9781138617650.

This volume presents the reflections of fifteen well-known anthropologists and sociologists on the influence over the years of *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organisation of Culture Difference* (ed. Fredrik Barth, 1969; henceforth EGB). Only Gunnar Haaland (187–211), Barth's colleague at the Norwegian University of Bergen, contributed to the original EGB and its preparatory conference, which drew together mostly Scandinavian scholars. Although Barth studied in Chicago, in EGB he did not mention the research of the Chicago school of sociology, nor the studies of ethnicity in Central African towns by the Manchester School (Vertovec, 101–117). In his ethnography of the Swat Pathan in Pakistan (1959), Barth described a rural and segmented environment. Membership in one or another group was effected through the two processes of ascription and self-ascription of identity.

According to the authors of this volume, Barth and his colleagues deserve recognition for several assertions: that boundaries between groups are generated through their 'transactions' and not their cultural characteristics, which may change, and even turn out to be more homogeneous across than within groups; that cultural exchange takes place between groups, and individuals move from one to another; and that the structural-functionalist view of the world as composed of culturally discontinuous social entities – 'pelagic islands' – is mistaken. Recent approaches, moreover, have focused on the fluidity, rather than the rigidity, of boundaries.

Although our authors acknowledge their debt to Barth for new directions in research, they adopt a critical approach, pointing to problems that have arisen in their own and others' ethnography and touching on themes that Barth and his colleagues neglected, such as the process of decolonisation or the role of the nation-state

apparatus in shaping the dynamics of local situations and the formation of social hierarchies (Verdery, 35–42; Herzfeld, 66–77). Jakoubek criticises the way in which the anthropological ‘mainstream’ has absorbed Barth’s theoretical propositions, an obligatory point of reference even for post-Soviet primordialist and evolutionist anthropology, with which they are in contradiction (Jakoubek, 169–186). Today our authors often carry out research in urban areas with heterogeneous populations, whose social and political relationships are governed by the nation-state apparatus and its ideology (Okely, Jakoubek, Herzfeld, Verdery). In their introduction Eriksen and Jakoubek list some of the new topics of study: the state and nationalism, Indigenous politics, urban ethnicity, migration and transnational relations, hybridity and the ‘fuzzy’ nature of boundaries, ethnic conflict, postcolonialism, xenophobia and the politics of recognition, the relation between ethnic identity and culture, and the relative integration of groups (Eriksen and Jakoubek, 10–15). We could add: the speed and acceleration of social processes, a topic often visited by Eriksen (viii), social stratification (Hannerz, 43–52) and gender as related to ethnicity (Werbner, 128–129). The attention that Barth and his colleagues devoted to the ecological context of the transactions among ethnic groups (especially the Fur farmers and Baggara herdsmen of Sudan) has all but disappeared from the horizon of our authors, which is paradoxical, given the current competition for scarce resources all over the world (Jakoubek – Budilová, 201–202).

The term ‘ethnic’, which in EGB denoted relations between groups, has come to apply, in common parlance, to single migrants or foreigners. In the United Kingdom, ‘ethnic minorities’ have been defined for official purposes, and individuals are asked to assign themselves to a category, though there may be no clear links among them. In France, migrants are expected to lose their ‘ethnicity’ through contact with the ‘majority’, thus becoming French citizens. Yet ‘ethnic minorities’, as Pnina Werbner points out, are connected to ‘complex diasporas’. Their access to cyber-technologies, offering means and models of identification, brings together people who may share only contingent needs and interests (Werbner, 128–132).

Migrants may touch off ‘border panic’ in other members of the populace, who perceive them as ‘the enemy within’. Thus, groups no longer result from the ascription and self-ascription of identities, and their boundaries are generated only in small part by ‘transactions’ between them. They are modelled rather by the ‘shared

understandings' of the majority. Borders have often 'passed through persons'. Shifts in national borders, during and after the World Wars, along with decolonisation and Soviet deportations, brought for millions the loss of neighbourhood, relatives, language and religious practices, and for many the loss not just of citizenship, but also of life itself (as in the Horn of Africa, Sudan, ex-Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Burundi, Sri Lanka, China and now Ukraine). To identify with an ethnic group may entail being forced to flee one's homeland (as with Rohingya in Myanmar, or Kurds in Syria and Iraq). Katherine Verdery then asks: how is it possible that these 'ethnic' identities, characterised in EGB as negotiable, suddenly turn into a rigid armour that forces its wearer to engage in ethnic conflicts or even wars (Verdery, 41)?

In the UK as in Italy, the term 'ethnic' has acquired connotations of minority citizenship and limited opportunities. A teacher at an English high school told me, 'Our students are mainly ethnic, so we direct them to the caring professions'. Some groups, such as 'Gypsies' and Travellers, have been granted ethnic status by the British government (thanks partly to Okely's research), but their lifestyles and self-definitions have not gained legitimacy, nor have they been negotiated with other groups. Likewise, Ulf Hannerz shows that the idea of 'soul' gained currency among African Americans in the 1960s when 'white' Polish and Italian groups were promoting their interests by appealing to the notion of 'ethnicity'. This was not possible for African American groups, classified from the outside by the 'powerful majority', who resorted to notions of 'race' (Hannerz, 46).

The volume is stimulating and well timed. As the authors point out, the concepts of boundary and ethnic group are often quoted quite casually today in many articles about migration, refugees, racism and citizenship. Migrants and refugees do not generally negotiate their status. They may be regarded as criminals, and the borders created for their exclusion assume not only symbolic but also concrete forms – police constraints, walls, barbed wire, camps and prisons.

A few questions remain. Why, in this evaluation of EGB 'fifty years after', is there no reference to ecology (Barth's starting point and the current concern of many) as a factor in boundary-making? Why does the book still leave out women, not only as social actors, but also as researchers (only three of the fifteen authors)? Moreover, perhaps with the exception of the article by Michael Herzfeld, the book barely touches on the question of how eighty-nine million persons in the world have come to be displaced at the present time. The

book has a European heart, and appears to avoid questions that the rest of the world has been asking itself since the end of the twentieth century.

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Note

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Martin Demant Frederiksen and Ida Harboe Knudsen (eds) (2021), *Modern Folk Devils: Contemporary Constructions of Evil* (Helsinki: Helsinki University Press), 296pp, \$ 39.00 ISBN: 9789523690547.

In anthropological, sociological and humanistic theories, the mechanism of the ‘scapegoat’ is a well known phenomenon, but one still worth exploring in many cultural contexts. *Modern Folk Devils* represents an important collection of analytic texts on the topic of moral panics, scapegoating, and internal and external ‘otherness’ threats constructed by different societies, cultures and communities. The chapters in this book seek to contribute to a deeper understanding of the role of cultural and political circumstances for a broader understanding of modern folk devil phenomena.

‘Devils Within’ (the first part of the book) deals with the construction of ideas about the ‘internal figure’, for example ‘hipsters’ as a consequence of class relations, politics and gentrification in London, where the media has played a key role in constructing the ideas that caused the moral panic. There is also the case of fear of alleged sorcery in Vanuatu, where moral panic did not originate with the help of mass media, but through the dreams, visions and gossip of residents of local communities in crisis. A case of moral panic in Georgia was focused on the hybridisation of traditional motives, such as goblins, represented as human-looking but destructive internal figures, in the modern context narratives (due to the social and political crisis). In the last chapter in this section, sugar is labelled a threat to the health and social functionality of Danish youth. Sugar, like most devils, is an entity with a tradition of presence in a community that recognises

it as a social menace. These chapters contribute to a deeper understanding of the relationship between tradition and modernity, as well as the circumstances that create the image of local devils as a source of social crisis.

The second part of the book, 'Devilry from Above', examines the institutional and media construction of (political) demons as a threat from outside (beyond state borders) and above (in terms of class relations). Politics, media, sensationalism and fake news are recognised as catalysts that create and spread 'community' (or 'nation') ideas of threat, as part of moral panics and desirable forms of social discipline construction. For example, scapegoating was a part of Donald Trump's political strategy, but also that of his opposition – a moral panic constructed and emphasised through social networks by exploiting existing stereotypes about the 'otherness' of the LGBT community and feminism; at the same time, these groups are socially marginalised and portrayed as the main cause of the degradation of the 'traditional family' in the Czech Republic. The case study about 'Gypsy child snatchers' in Italy represents the appropriation of old stereotypes about Romani nomadic culture that were once seen as an obstacle to its inclusion. Today, the majority of Roma do not live a nomadic life, but still represent 'otherness' whose inclusion is seen as a threat to Italian society. These examples illustrate the role of media sensationalism, internet groups and political discourses as hubs for the hybridisation of old and new stereotypes and the creation of dominant images of (political) 'reality'.

The third part of the book, 'From the Devils' Point of View', deals with the conceptual basis of stereotypes, for instance regarding Roma identity in the Czech Republic, where ideas of 'decency' or 'functionality' are tailored to the standards of the majority as opposed to the marginalised, or migrants seeking asylum in England, who have been represented as 'devils' by the media. Lithuanians have been portrayed by the Danish media as the cause of an increase in particularly violent and inhumane criminal behaviour, thus creating not only a (false) image of this ethnic group, but also a climate in which society, motivated by distorted media images, treats Lithuanians as a pest. The case of a person in Sri Lanka who was labelled an adulteress and excommunicated (without evidence) raises questions about the symbolic roles of folk devils in society. This contribution emphasises an appreciation of historical and cultural circumstances, as well as an understanding of the relationships among actors involved in the construction of folk devils.

The authors of this book have dealt with phenomena not only typical of 'rural' or 'traditional' societies, but also of contemporary, urban and modern ones that, consciously or unconsciously, have constructed images of the internal or external enemy as the cause of social crisis. Several chapters in this book emphasise ideological, class or social position as the background of (political or media) instrumentalisation of devil motives as a threat to society (be it a group, nation or state). Other authors focus on factors of internal dynamics and relationships crucial for the construction of dominant ideas of 'us' in contrast to 'outsiders', or 'norm' versus 'deviance'. All the chapters represent successful analyses of cases of imagined or real crises, mostly employing emic and in fewer cases etic perspectives. The ontological perspective, as the most methodologically challenging, has imposed itself as perhaps a decisive factor in multidimensional understanding of these phenomena. As someone who studies traditional, modern and hybrid forms of scapegoats, dangerous individuals and spaces, it seems helpful to me to observe the course of events from the perspective of (all) actors in the narratives that societies create as a platform to project or question (their) reality. Unfortunately, since I research vampires, witches and ghosts, the 'undead' are often unable to help me, but in cases involving living beings, it has been crucial to understand the social relations and dynamics behind mass hysteria.

Modern Folk Devils is an innovative and valuable set of analytical approaches, rooted in the ideas of Stanley Cohen and his book *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* (1972), but also the likes of Mary Douglas's *Purity and Danger* (1966), René Girard's *The Scapegoat* (1989) and other works whose theoretical approaches have contributed to a better understanding of concepts such as mass hysteria, moral panic, displacement, dangerous spaces and the scapegoating mechanism. This book represents a collection of modern analytical and theoretical works designed to broaden perspectives and achieve a deeper understanding of contemporary cases as reflections of a globalised, hybrid and constantly changing world – one that still keeps fears of the unknown, embodied in old and new, modern folk devils, alive.

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