BOOK REVIEWS

The Geopolitical Black Sea Encyclopaedia, edited by Dan Dungaciu, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2020, 508 p.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The Black Sea – the unknown next to us

"A fight for the Black Sea between Russia and Europe ..." (Gheorghe Brătianu, 1941)

Despite the fact that the Black Sea region is the only one where there have been, or still are, ongoing explicit military conflicts (Georgia, 2008), "hybrid" ones (Ukraine, 2014), territorial divisions (Georgia, Ukraine) and "frozen conflicts" (Republic of Moldova) the Black Sea is the least known strategic region. And the best indicator for this is the extremely low number of works (encyclopaedias, volumes, etc.) that deal with the region.

This volume is the first Encyclopaedia explicitly dedicated to the geopolitics of the Black Sea.

The Communist occupation also "arrested" the Black Sea

The Black Sea has never, in fact, been the subject of academic conversation. There was no consecrated Fernand Braudel to impose the subject of the Black Sea on the European agenda, as the Mediterranean Sea was imposed by the great representative of the *Annales* School (Braudel, 1966).

During WWII, Romanian historian Gheorghe Brătianu was the first in the region to summarize the issue of the Black Sea, in an as yet unpublished discourse, in 1941-1942 (Brătianu, 1942). But the times were not right for European academic debates. After the end of the war and the Soviet occupation, the great historian is arrested by the Communist authorities and dies in prison, along with hundreds of other Romanian intellectuals from all fields of activity. Post-mortem, a work explicitly dedicated to the Black Sea was published in 1969, in Munich, in French, but without contemporary references to the Black Sea (Brătianu, 1969). In Romania, Gheorghe Brătianu's book would be published only in 1988. This is not, however, the Course from 1941-1942 that we mentioned above, which remains still unpublished to the present day.

Gheorghe Brătianu's end is also emblematic for the bookish destiny of the Black Sea: he was also "arrested", he never became the subject of academic discussions, and the Black Sea became, in the post-war period, practically a Soviet lake.

The work of historian Gheorghe Brătianu is of a challenging actuality: the main thesis of his conceptual vision stated that the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the next inaugurated a stage which was extended in the 20th century, namely "a fight for the Black Sea between Russia and Europe" (Brătianu, 1942: 27).

We are still there today.

Two visions of the Black Sea

This Encyclopaedia is written for Western audiences, for whom the Black Sea is not a familiar subject, neither in history nor in the present.

How should they understand the Black Sea?

In essence, there are two visions of the Black Sea that were, and still are, in competition today. On the one hand, there is the view which believes that *the Black Sea must belong to the riparians*. They have to manage it, they have to decide on its destiny, including its strategical problems. This

approach gained an important victory in Montreux, when the famous 1936 Convention (Montreux Convention, 1936) gave the keys of entry *to* and exit *from* the Black Sea to Turkey. The great Romanian diplomat, Nicolae Titulescu, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania and twice elected President of the League of Nations (1930 and 1931), led this camp in Montreux and pleaded (Titulescu, 1994) for this approach (with many criticisms from opponents of this position, not only British, but also from Bucharest!).

This view of the Black Sea for the riparians was to be reiterated when, after the collapse of the Communist system in 1989, it was again possible to address the issue of the Black Sea. The first institutionalized initiative devoted to the Black Sea is recorded in the early '90s. Through the signing, on 25 June 1992, of the Summit Declaration and the Declaration of the Bosporus by the Heads of State and Government of eleven countries: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine, the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC) was founded. Six years later, the eleven States signed a Charter that upgraded BSEC to the status of an international organization and created a permanent Secretariat, located in an impressive villa just up the Bosporus from central Istanbul.

The initiative targeted the riparian space – it was not necessarily a Western platform – and became, subsequently, an organization through which Turkey and the Russian Federation were watching and controlling any developments in the region. Its efficiency, however, is almost null in the region, failing to prevent or settle any frozen or hybrid conflict or to become a credible platform for negotiations. Strategically, BSEC does not really exist.

A second vision is that the Black Sea must be *an open sea*, not only for trade, but also strategically; that it must be admitted that other strategic actors can influence strategic developments in the region. This vision – defeated at Montreux in 1936, where it had been supported by the British, reappeared relatively late, when the Black Sea entered the sphere of Western interest. The West's explicit interest for the Black Sea appeared just after the Euro-Atlantic border reached the Black Sea, respectively after 2004, when the integration of Romania and Bulgaria in NATO and the EU was decided.

The Black Sea was to become *open*, "Euro-Atlantic" or at least open to such influences. 2004 is the year of formalized interest in the Black Sea, from all points of view. This year, the American historian Charles King publishes a work explicitly dedicated to this subject (King, 2004), a rare occurrence in the landscape, where works on the Black Sea practically did not exist (Ascherson, 1995). Almost simultaneously, Number 125 of the June/July issue of *Policy Review* publishes the famous Manifesto for the Black Sea written by Ronald D. Asmus and Bruce P. Jackson: "The Black Sea and the Frontiers of Freedom" (2004), which presents, extensively, all kinds of arguments for substantial Western involvement in the region. Also, in 2004, the strategy endorsed by the GMF – A New Euro-Atlantic Strategy for the Black Sea Region appears, edited by Ronald D. Asmus, Konstantin Dimitrov and Joerg Forbrig (2004), a document of reference in the economy of Western concerns about the Black Sea.

Europe also reacts. In May 2004 a more extensive strategy document is published regarding the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), a document which defines in concrete terms the way in which the EU proposes co-operation with countries in the Extended Black Sea Region.

In 2007, as a result of the efforts of Romania, flanked by Bulgaria and Greece during the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union, a new initiative is launched for an EU regional policy, called the Black Sea Synergy.

And things can go on. We must say that the projection of the Black Sea as open sea from a strategic point of view included at one point even a debate on the expiration of the Montreux Convention (1936) and there were many voices advocating its amendment (Dungaciu, 2015).

Things stopped, formally speaking, in 2008, when the NATO Summit in Bucharest did not give Ukraine and Georgia the *road map* for access to NATO, and later the Russian-Georgian war *A Little War That Shook the World* (Asmus, 2010) clearly showed the lack of appetite the West felt for an explicit confrontation with Russia on the Black Sea. This was followed by the annexation of Crimea (2016), the hybrid war in Ukraine and the outbreak of separatism in this country.

The Black Sea: a *limes* for the 21st century?

For a long time, the extension of the NATO-EU border to the East was out of the question. The Black Sea was therefore not assumed in the Western project; it is meant to remain *a border area*, a *limes* between East and West, an ambiguous strategic area: it is not (only) "a Russian lake" – Turkey, Romania and Bulgaria are NATO Members, but not an "open sea" either – the strategic presence of America, the EU or NATO is low.

Today we know what the Black Sea *is not* from a strategic perspective: but we do not know *what it is*. This strategic indecision is the explanation for all the conflicts, frozen or not, explicit or tacit, for all the political and geopolitical tensions that are now taking place in this space and that are becoming endemic.

The story of the Black Sea continues.

Bucharest,
May 8, 2020

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ascherson, Neil (1995). *Black Sea*. London: Hill & Wang.

Asmus, Ronald D. (2010). *A Little War That Shook the World: Georgia, Russia, and the Future of the West.* St. Martin's Press.

Asmus, Ronald D., Bruce P. Jackson (2004). "The Black Sea and the Frontiers of Freedom". In *Policy Review*, no. 125, June/July.

Asmus, Ronald D., Konstantin Dimitrov, Joerg Forbrig eds. (2004). *Strategy for the Black Sea Region*. Washington The German Marshall fund of the United States.

Braudel, Fernand (1966). *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II.*2nd edition, Revue et augmentée. Paris: Armand Colin, 2 vols.

Brătianu, Gheorghe (1942). *Chestiunea Mării Negre* [*The question of the Black Sea*, Course, 1941-1942]. Bucharest: University of Bucharest, Faculty of Philosophy and Letters, Editor Ioan Vernescu.

Brătianu, Gheorghe (1969). *La Mer Noir: Des origines à la conquete ottomane*, Volume 9 from *Acta historica*. Munich and Rome Società accademica romana.

Dungaciu, Dan (2015). "Geopolitics and Security by the Black Sea: The Strategic Options of Romania and the Republic of Moldova". In Sebastian Văduva, Andrew R. Thomas (Editors), *Geopolitics, Development, and National Security. Romania and Moldova at the Crossroads*, Springer.

King, Charles (2004). *Black Sea. A History*. Oxford: University Press.

Montreux Convention (1936). Traduction – Translation Convention Regarding the Regime of the Straits Signed at Montreux. July 20th, 1936, French official text communicated by the Permanent Delegate of Turkey to the League of Nations. The registration of this Convention took place December 11th, 1936, http://sam.baskent.edu.tr/belge/Montreux_ENG.pdf, accessed on 6 May 2020.

Titulescu, Nicolae (1994). *Romania's foreign policy: 1937*, Bucharest: Encyclopaedic Publishing House.

DAN DUNGACIU

NOTES TO THE READER

The recent volume of *The Geopolitical Encyclopaedia of the Black Sea* mounts the pivots of exegesis in the area of localization, description and interpretation from various perspectives (political, historiographic, sociological, economic, military, cultural, geographical, etc.) dedicated to effects and (geopolitical) challenges from the South-eastern perimeter of Europe. The present volume contains "points of view" of the researchers from the "Ion I. C. Brătianu" Institute of Political Sciences and International Relations of the Romanian Academy regarding the uplifting role that the Black Sea has assumed in the context of European geopolitics and a climate apt for generating "Eastern", Balkan, "Euro-Asian" partnerships, etc.

Thus, *The Geopolitical Encyclopaedia of the Black Sea* offers, thanks to its generous Summary, fundamental information and multilateral perspectives within the scope of geopolitics accepted as both *phenomenon* and *fact*. Therefore, the theme of studies, articles, expositions will focus on the fundamental areas of this construct whose irradiation areas are biaxially re-systematized: depending on the coordinating relationship between fixing the "location" of resources (natural and economic) and, as a subsidiary, re-configuring the binder between "communication lines" and ordering capacity, ensured by/through "political power". The geopolitical perspective will be interested, in particular, in the management of the political, diplomatic, military, economic "efforts" of States in the *contact* and *impact* zones of the Black Sea (Russia, the European Union, NATO, the Balkan Peninsula and Turkey) in mitigating conflicting effects, specific to the "disturbing focal point" of "Eurasia".

Obviously, the "development" of such an emergent construct does not focus solely on decoding concepts, revealing theories and fructifying "debates" (political, historical, cultural, sociological, military, economic, diplomatic) on the Black Sea. Integration into a project in accordance with the values of the "geopolitical society" in which we live and in which differences between political and geopolitical risks are increasingly evident, are folded upon initiatives, old or new, for the reconsideration of "power asymmetry" phenomena.

Signalling the *security coordinates* of the Eurasian imaginary, in tandem with the taxonomy of the "geo-" variants (historical, political, military, economic, cultural, etc.), has the objective of creating specific phenomena in the geographical area of the South-eastern European perimeter, accepted as agonistic by definition and considered conflictual, by tradition. By involvement of "reagents" capable of highlighting the energy, political, military, cultural or mental "resources" that the Black Sea has, it intends to offer a *trans-political* perspective on today's world and the decision to re-outline possible agreements/disagreements regarding the "prefiguration" of geopolitics in the founding version of Fr. Ratzel, K. Haushofer, R. Kjellen, H. Hence, A., Mahan, *et al.* Or, on the Romanian spiral, the phenomenon will be reconsidered in the option of Simion Mehedinți, Gheorghe Brătianu, Ion Conea, Dan David, Anton Golopenția, M. Popa-Vereș, Mircea Malița, Dan Dungaciu etc.

Corroborated by the two volumes of *The Encyclopaedia of International Relations* (coordinated by Dan Dungaciu and published in 2017, at RAO Publishing House), to which are added the works *The Encyclopaedia of Romanians Everywhere* (vol. I and II, coordinator Dan Dungaciu, George Grigoriță, published in 2018 and 2019 by RAO Publishing House, respectively by the "Carol I" Brăila Museum Publishing House; and, more recently, *The Encyclopaedia of Diplomacy* (coordinator Dan Dungaciu, published in 2019 by RAO Publishing House), the recent *colligatum* of *The Geopolitical Encyclopaedia of the Black Sea* (coordinator Dan Dungaciu, 2020) supports the presentation of unusual possibilities for developing a world resurrected in the "post-" paradigm (modernist, humanist, *historical,* geographical, industrial, colonial). Located under the shield of globalization, the option is doubled by/through highlighting accents and effects from the new territorial delimitations and the new geography, against the background of modification and even disappearance of historical borders, or the relocation of natural resources, paired with the distribution of exploitation and political and military reorientation at the interstate level.

Therefore, *The Geopolitical Encyclopaedia of the Black Sea* is currently bringing back a theoretical and pragmatic model that has been adrift until recently. The general observation of "historical phenomena" from their "geographical side" and the Herder-ian redefinition of history as "geography in motion" is combined with the perspective of "global power games" and the establishment of a specific difference between the static of "political geography" and the dynamism of "geopolitics", on a background of subtle relationships between *diagnosis* and *prognosis*.

Because, beyond any inherent panoramas, the recent *Geopolitical Encyclopaedia of the Black Sea* aims to provide eloquent "answers" about the possibility of the "semi-closed" geography of the Black Sea to become the engine of a large geopolitical construct. Of course, the *Encyclopaedia* resonates with the canonical option, recognizing the coordinates necessary for identifying the "historical permanence" of natural, organic evolution *between* geographical factors (the "Carpathian Pole" – "the Danuban-Pontic Pole") and upstream policies in the mechanisms of geopolitical evolution and functioning of the Romanian organic, unitary, national State.

But, more than that, the *Encyclopaedia* responds to the imperative issued by Gheorghe Brătianu, "not to remain indifferent to what is happening in the key positions of a sea so closely related to

our existence", on the grounds that its problematics and Pontic reality reaffirm (even today!) those valences of "turntable" which both recent events and "the provision of the circumstances to come" accept. As, on the other hand, it reinforces what Mircea Malița saw by the commitment to "assume a clear vision of the Black Sea", materialized in the configuration of a re-contextualised area and assumed as "a space for advancing the Euro-Atlantic border".

The Geopolitical Encyclopaedia of the Black Sea represents, in this sense, the (academic) product of the "geopolitical school", fructified as a result of a *matrix construction* of investigative summation of the political-historical and geopolitical strategies articulated according to changes in the scope of action and reaction of external relations and/or the multi-polar reconfiguration of areas of local, regional and international interest.

Formally, *The Geopolitical Encyclopaedia of the Black Sea* is recommended as an "ensemble" focused on the documentation, taxonomy and geopolitical evaluation of relations, correlations and pressures between States in conjunction with the Carpathian – Danuban – Pontic political geography and the geopolitics of the South-eastern European area. In the light provided by the "science of the planetary political environment" and its derived atmosphere, or the "planetary political state", Romania's geopolitical position confirms its role of "geopolitical buffer" between the "Great Powers", of "historical and geopolitical bridge" between Central and Southeast Europe (Ion Conea).

Bringing together researchers from the "Ion I. C. Brătianu" Institute of Political Sciences and International Relations of the Romanian Academy – mostly from the Department of International Relations, coordinated by University Professor Dan Dungaciu, Director of the Institute and President of the Black Sea University Foundation – together with valuable collaborators and "external" experts – the project of *The Geopolitical Encyclopaedia of the Black Sea* resonates with/at the primacy issued by Gheorghe Brătianu, that of not "separating" the area of the Black Sea from the dry-land world (of the Carpathians), as "the clay should not be detached from the hands of the potter who shapes it".

Structurally, *encyclopaedic entries* intend, non-chronologically and non-exhaustively, to "model" a set of theoretical information, concepts and operational constructs indispensable to any approach interested in analysis, synthesis, definition, comment or systematization. The approach is doubled by the particularization of "actors", doctrines, institutions, communities and organizations, access/transport corridors, centres, commissions, forums, memoranda, meetings, conventions and summits relevant to the generous problematic targeted through the synthetic and concise approach of placing, quantifying, taxonomizing and locating essential aspects for the regionality, zoning, security and strategies suggested, geopolitically, by the Black Sea.

Methodologically, the framework model used agrees the presence of analytical "knots", concerned with identifying and conceptualizing the appropriate terms for an encyclopaedic perspective and, equally, the relevant presentation of extensive "developments" that such an institutional, strategic, operational, *socio-* and *geo-* political construct implies.

Technically, following the model used in the previous projects (as a unit of structural arrangement) in the encyclopaedic approaches published by the "Ion I. C. Brătianu" Institute of Political Sciences and International Relations of the Romanian Academy, the essential data mentioned are properly specified at the *beginning* of the entry, the text proposing (where the situation allows) the use of appropriate initial(s), noted in capital letters and marked in bold. The names of the text authors are mentioned by initials, in square brackets, at the end of each insert. The texts are accompanied by a general essentialized bibliography. The volume opens with a group of "Introductory Texts", with a list of "details" and the mention of the authors (in the volume) and closes with the presentation, in alphabetical order, of their essentialized "bio notes".

In the series and in the tradition of the *Encyclopaedias* published under the aegis of the "Ion I. C. Brătianu" Institute of Political Sciences and International Relations of the Romanian Academy, the present research is individualized through a comprehensive methodological and analytical development.

The first direction advocates the option of revising, updating and reconfiguring *the inserts* published in the above-mentioned encyclopaedic approaches, managing the object and subject under consideration, with a direct target on the "geopolitical issue of the Black Sea". By integrating them into the *body/corpus* of the *Encyclopaedia*, the primacy of unencumbered research, with full

unity of meaning and significance, is thus reaffirmed. In the spirit of the new acceptances of geopolitics, the authors are convinced of the impossibility of disassociating the *geopolitical* meaning of the Black Sea from the dynamics of strategies and realities of *international relations*, of assertion of *Romania's position* in the region or of its landmarks – in *local, regional and international geopolitical management*.

The second perspective concerns the necessary appeal to the individualization of a set of *events* with strategic repercussions on the Black Sea – from "frozen conflicts" to air disasters, "coups", revolutions, security and/or energy insecurity, cyber security, nuclear, electronic (hybrid) warfare issues, military exercises, etc. In this perspective, the *Encyclopaedia* individualizes the profile of the riparian state, through *entries* dedicated to Bulgaria, Georgia, the Russian Federation, Turkey, Romania and Ukraine; an analysis that does not lose sight of the *internationalization* of the Black Sea and its integration in European Union or NATO policies and strategies.

The third track is positioned in the direction of opting for *indexing concepts/entries* contained in the composition of the *Encyclopaedia*, thus marking their disposition in the equation of (extended) relevance for any considered issue.

Thus, the intention of the "Ion I. C. Brătianu" Institute of Political Sciences and International Relations of the Romanian Academy of putting into operation this approach, both innovative and necessary, in connection with the highlighting of "geopolitical transformations on the Black Sea", within which Mircea Malița placed double valence mutations: of *sensitive* and *significant space*, stands reconfirmed.

By the proposed version, *The Geopolitical Encyclopaedia of the Black Sea* supports the presentation of new possibilities of seeing the world and the effects of mutations arising as a result of changes in the political horizon, in crisis management and the prevention of "extreme situations", resulting from action and reaction at geopolitical level: locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

VIORELLA MANOLACHE

Lucian Dumitrescu, *Narațiuni strategice. Securizare și legitimitate în relațiile internaționale* [Strategic Narratives. Securitization and Legitimacy in International Relations], Bucharest, Editura Institutului de Științe Politice și Relații Internaționale "Ion I. C. Brătianu" Publishing House, 2020, 192 p.

Lucian Dumitrescu's book works from the assumption that security is an inter-subjective process. It is an assumption that was put forward in the 1990s by the so-called School of Copenhagen. According to this school of thought, security is first and foremost a discursive process employed by the so-called "security community" in order to translate for the population the meaning of a given security threat. The School of Copenhagen argued that such a meaning would become automatically legitimate and, thus, accepted by the population, based on the authority of the communicator and also by complying with some formal rules of communication. The author resorts in his book to the perspective of the so-called School of Copenhagen 2.0, that is, new theories of security that disputes the theories of the original School of Copenhagen. In contrast to the original School of Copenhagen, these new theories place more emphasis on the population. More specifically, the School of Copenhagen 2.0 rejects the theory according to which the meaning of a security threat becomes legitimate just because it is provided by a legitimate institution that strictly complies with some formal rules of communication. Dumitrescu brings to the fore the so-called elitism of the School of Copenhagen and criticizes the fact that its theory of security hardly takes into consideration a given population's system of values and symbols and also its specific collective emotions. Consequently, School of Copenhagen 2.0 argues that, in order to become legitimate, a security discourse needs to resonate with the "informational and emotional structuration" of a certain society, that is, what author terms "security culture". Absent a minimum compatibility between a given society's security culture and the meaning imparted to a specific

event by the security community, a security threat would be hardly credible to the population. Under such circumstances, most citizens of a given country will have a hard time understanding why their own state spends consistent public funds on expensive weapons and military operations, instead of using these funds for building infrastructure, to achieve better education and healthcare standards or to offer more consistent wages and pensions.

Strategic Narratives puts forward a classic research process. The beginning of the book addresses the theoretic nexus among strategic narratives and security culture. A minimum compatibility between a given state's strategic narratives and its security culture lends credence to that given state. The author's view, the concept of strategic narratives has replaced the already dusty concept of soft power. Dumitrescu terms "dusty" the concept of soft power due to the fact most soft power researches have already become too quantitative. In other words, such researches have limited themselves to count the soft power capabilities of a given state, without delving into the process through which the movies, actors, musicians and the most famous athletes of a certain state leave their mark on the popular culture of another state. Dumitrescu holds that manipulation is mainly about the politicization of popular culture towards a certain historical direction. Consequently, the competition among different states for more international legitimacy is eventually won by that state that comes up with the most credible story. According to the researcher, the state that produces the most credible story is usually the one that taps effectively into its "informational and emotional structuration" in order to forge successful strategic narratives. From this perspective, Dumitrescu pays heed to *how* the compatibilization process emerges between security culture and strategic narratives. Thus, the book's methodological chapter contends that a history of ideas-type investigation would be the most appropriate method to examine *how* a certain state's strategic narratives draw on that given state's security culture. On one hand, such a method helps identifying the most significant "informational and emotional structuration" in the security culture of a given state. On the other hand, by resorting to a history of ideas method of investigation one gets the ability to examine old and new strategic narratives that have circulated within a certain country and also the residues that such security discourses have already produced. The empirical part consists in five case studies. More precisely, the empirical part brings into analysis strategic narratives from the US, the Russian Federation, Turkey, the EU and Romania. Based on the recipe that was put forward in the theoretical and methodological part of his work, the author brings to the surface the particularities of the security cultures of the abovementioned states. Then, he explores the strategic narratives that have circulated within these states and how the national interest occurs at the intersection of strategic narratives and security culture.

Some critical observations need to be brought into discussion. First of all, the theoretical part is a little bit too complex and it can be confusing for readers less familiar with security area. Dumitrescu contends that it is not possible to carry out security research based on three-decade old theories. He argues that those states that cannot produce theory in the realm of security studies would not be able to come up with effective security policies. The theoretical perspective of the book may be accessible to experts in the realm of security studies. But it is hardly understandable for students and attendants of master programs. Therefore, the theoretical approach should have been made a little bit more "edible" by the author. The same holds about the methodological part. Indeed, a history of ideas-type investigation may be an appropriate way for examining the nexus between strategic narratives and security culture in a given country. However, such a method is rather difficult for the use of students and, by and large, beginners in the realm of security studies. Consequently, such a method should be explained in detail and possibly supplemented by more accessible methods for examining the emergence occurrence of strategic narratives. Beyond these, Lucian Dumitrescu's book may be a useful guide for those interested in finding out how strategic narratives emerge in accordance to the security culture of different political organizations. And how these strategic narratives play a pivotal role in the legitimization process of any state.

SANDA CINCĂ

Johanna Hiitola, Kati Turtiainen, Sabine Gruber, Marja Tiilikainen (editors),
Family Life in Transition: Borders, Transnational Mobility, and Welfare Society in Nordic Countries, **London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2020**

Hiitola, J. (20200129). *Family Life in Transition* [VitalSource Bookshelf version]. Retrieved from vbk://9780429656118.

The sociology of family represents a growing branch of contemporary sociological knowledge. Investigating the realities pertaining to family life in relation to aspects of transnational mobility, welfare, gender and race, this collective volume succeeds to offer a realistic image of the situation in Finland, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. Family life faces new opportunities and obstacles within transitional settings, in terms of citizenship status and welfare.

The editors of the volume are sociologists with various competences and perspectives of investigation, with the experience of various collaborative projects that constituted the preliminary stage of the book: Social Empowerment in Rural Areas (Interreg Baltic Sea Region, 2016–2019 at Chydenius) and Family Separation, Migration Status and Everyday Security: Experiences and Strategies of Vulnerable Migrants (Academy of Finland, 2018–2021 at the Migration Institute of Finland). In the Introduction the editors approach the transformation of the welfare state generated mainly by the world economic crisis of 2008 and the increase in asylum applications in the Nordic countries since 2015.

The guiding keyword of the analysis is "border", a location of transition and negotiation, bringing people together and separating people, potentially and actually, generating either marginalisation or belonging. Border appears as a reality testing the practices of societies, the legislation and policies alike. The phenomena of deterritorialization of European internal and external borders reveal in relation to the hierarchies of migrants transposed into the chances of access to social welfare, advantageous legal status and work, which in turn has a specific impact on family life. The editors of the volume emphasize an important and intriguing fact: "Thus, borders can also be seen as institutions that produce social relations and hierarchies, far from the actual geographical borders" (p. 2). As well, in the Introduction, in the second chapter, Valtteri Vähä-Savo evaluates the problem of "Decoupling spheres of belonging in the Nordic welfare states" (p. 10) emphasizing the importance of the confluence among nation, citizenship, and population; three crucial spheres of belonging which were at the same time the legitimation base of Nordic welfare states, precisely, via their successful confluence. When decoupled, these spheres of influence start to present deficient functioning and the welfare state become far less efficient.

On the one hand, there is social and economic legitimation of the practices sustaining the welfare state, and there is on the other hand a moral type of legitimation sanctioning the social practices the functioning and the efficiency of the welfare state. When investigating the moral legitimation, there is a degree of change that might be estimated empirically. The specialists assessed empirically the change following the aspects related to the bordering practices of welfare services emphasizing the extent to which they construct in everyday environments a series of (newer) norms of parenthood, family, and citizenship. Authors Beret Bråten, Kristina Gustafsson, and Silje Sønsterudbråten, in "Guiding migrant parents in Nordic welfare states – cases from Norway and Sweden", investigate the empirical data gathered from three parenting programmes in Norway and Sweden for migrant parents. The research questions were why are migrant families targeted, what kind of transitions do the programmes promote, and how are transitions expected to be achieved? The investigators also approach the exercising of governing authority through these programmes, informing and influencing other people's views of reality, especially their aspirations and motivations, in order to influence their practices, inducing good parental practices. The socialisation of parents via such programmes faces strong and unexamined views about cultural differences (in my opinion, on both sides). The implicit in the operation of such programmes is that migrant parents are not perceived by the states as equal peers to the national parents. However, since the participation in the parenting programmes is voluntary, the governing intervention is legitimate by the mutual interest to avoid the formation of parallel communities and ghettos. This motivation sustains the implementation of other programmes, which are compulsory and more debatable.

In the part two of the volume, investigating the quality of life and the welfare services for the Sámi community outside the Finnish territories called Sámi homeland, Tuuli Miettunen discusses research based on a community-based, dialogical method, involving the Sámi concept of *gulahallan* (communicating for mutual understanding). The networks Sámi families pass on their culture and language to their children outside their traditional Sámi homeland via specific networks formed to sustain the vitality of their indigenous culture, in Finland. The chapter signed by Sabine Gruber approaches foster families and the placement of children in foster care, with a special attention to the manner in which Swedish values for family life and parenthood and their associated practices are constructed, along with their influence on the procedures for getting assigned as a foster home. The research conducted by Marit Aure and Darius Daukšas brings to the fore the experiences of fear and insecurity faced by Lithuanian parents living in Norway and having to interact with the Norwegian Child Protective Services (NCWS). This is an expertise developed upon the "us" versus "them" thinking, with the consequence of empowering the otherwise invisible borders between the Norwegian services and the Lithuanian migrants. The core of the investigation regards the "out-of-home placements" by the NCWS, contrasting with the official idealistic stand that a social democratic welfare regime (the Norwegian one in this case) "provides extensive and wide-ranging family support" and "enjoys a high level of trust" and in consequence "people do not see it as repressive". This is rather wishful thinking and in fact, many people, even Norwegians oppose and feel anxiety and suspicion in front of the government practice characterized by a high threshold for intervention legitimated by the prevention of harm. For the Lithuanian parents these practices recall the Soviet practices they resent. Also, on the top of marginalisation they feel object to "epistemic injustice" (Haga, 2019, quoted by the authors) from the NCWS. Thus, their relationship with the Norwegian state is at best one described by mistrust, which is neither beneficial to society at large nor to the children in question.

The second part of the volume includes also a study entitled "Representations of mothering of migrant Finns", by Minna Zechner and Tiina Tiilikka, a topic approached within the framework of the contrast between a (rather ideal) representation of the (Nordic) welfare state as a normative project of shared moral conceptions, values, and social goals and a reality in which the welfare practices are lacking for the most part precisely these shared conceptions, values and goals. Everyday practices are conveyed in a great variety of materials. The study selects for investigation blog texts authored by Finnish migrant mothers living outside Finland, to emphasize a certain image of mothering as reflected by the notions of good mothering, described by the Finnish "migrant" and "mommy" blogging. The authors conclude that "The discomfort and incompatibility of the differing norms across countries are visible in the blog texts. This is shown in the decision-making processes that were presented in the texts. The bloggers wanted to make their own choices that conformed to the norms of one or the other country, understandable and acceptable to the blog's readers. Especially, they are able to see, combine, and explain the variation of good parenthood in different cultures and contexts. This is part of the concept of representational mothering, and they make implicit comparisons between the ideology of intensive mothering and the realities of actual mothering in a transnational context. The often-ironic style of the blog texts can be seen as a textual style to attract and amuse readers, but this can also be seen as an acceptable way to handle differences and difficulties in a transnational everyday life that takes place across and between two countries and cultures. Despite the egalitarian ethos that the Finnish welfare state emphasizes, the division of labour seems to be traditional, and this was shown when searching for data for this study: blogs written by fathers were not to be found. In their texts, the mother bloggers are not giving fathers central roles in parenting. Thus, the analysed texts represent the ideas of heterosexual intimate relationships and nuclear families, which can be seen as a norm of the 'ideal family'" (p. 78).

Part three of the volume investigates the goals and the practices of parenting across state border. In this respect, the care strategies are identified and studied considering the challenges triggered by the practises entertained by the intergenerational networks of migrant parents. The interesting aspects are revealed by approaching the masculine perceptions, practises and strategies of parenting. "The network migration of younger relatives, especially sons, gives the older generation a chance to spend more time with them (…) finding a job for a relative can be seen as a masculine caregiving pattern, and even the men in transnational families can be involved in the

upbringing of their younger relatives", thus inducing "the development and maintenance of a traditional male role in the Estonian society" (p. 92), while perpetuating the necessity to commute between two countries in order to achieve a decent lifestyle. At the same time, this strategy of commuting between the countries becomes an aspirational model for the young boys, despite the loneliness and missing family members, perpetuating an imperfect but functional situation.

Charlotte Melander, Oksana Shmulyar Gréen, and Ingrid Höjer investigate the role of trust and reciprocity in relational flows which force the parents in the mobile families to organize children care transnationally. Transnational children care in Sweden, in the case of migrant parents originating from Central and Eastern Europe is faced with the challenges presented by newer family dynamics drawn by gender issues and intergenerational interactions. Perceiving mothers, grandmothers, and other female relatives as the responsible ones for the hands-on care of the children, this is the situation perpetuated in the new contexts brought about by migration. Grandmothers remain essential resources of care and support either in the home country or in the country of adoption, in either situation involving to a significant extent the digital media. The study shows how the perpetuation of these familial relations perpetuates the safety of "care triangles" of love, trust, and reciprocity (p. 104).

Olga Davydova-Minguet and Pirjo Pöllänen approach the situation of the intergenerational care practices among Russian-born migrants in rural North Karelia in Finland as an example for the social construction of a transnational familyhood. The key is intergenerational interdependency via stories with an inclusive role which maintain as a "reality" the concept of an extended intergenerational family, with shared affectionate care responsibilities, as well as moral and legal obligations. Although this particular lived experience gives substance to a sort of "caring from a distance" it also produces anxieties emphasizing a fragile state of the transnational family life (p. 115).

Approaching the topic of the anxiety generated by the passage of time apart in the case of family separation, Johanna Leinonen and Saara Pellander investigate the case of the refugees in Finland who are longing for the reunion with their families, which becomes a factor organizing their lives and social practise. While refugees were not only passive recipients of administrative decisions, manifesting in their anticipation of the future the will and resourcefulness to actively structure their practices and everyday routines, their agency was limited and their experiences often faced administrative reactions generating more anxiety, increased alienation and more violence in their harsh lives (pp. 126-127).

The last section gathers research described by the phrase "enacting citizenship and respectable parenthood in racialized minority families". Marja Tiilikainen studies the respectability of Finnish Somali fathers through an investigation oriented by the changing social-gendered roles between men and women, on the one hand, and the increased unemployment among Somalis in Finland. Within the transnational space recognition for fatherhood comes from achievements such as a having a paid job or meaningful volunteer work, from educational background and skills, from all the sources of respectability that make a father a role model for their children. Fathers engaged in transnational activities may be de facto absent but they are an embodiment of commitment to children within their families. The negotiation of the status of fatherhood is engaging the Finnish values and ideals as well as their traditional values associated to an ideal image of the Somali heritage of values and perceptions (p. 139).

Marta Padovan-Özdemir and Barbara Noel Day study participatory methods and production of shared knowledge within the Danish educational system and show the implications of shared knowledge in empowerment and pro-active citizenship. This community approach to creating shared knowledge brings together parents and educators in a common effort. Within this joint effort the educators are to a certain extent the gate-keepers of the pre-existing order of things and leave very little room for the critical input of the migrant parents, who feel marginalized. The study calls for a larger room for negotiation in the context of school-home collaboration and for diversification of the understanding of the forms of valuable parenting.

"Iranian migrant parents struggling for respectability", by Zeinab Karimi, discusses the Finnish-Iranian construct of parental respectability, within a situational socio-symbolical approach, considering factors related to gender class and personal understanding of migratory translocation. The author concludes: "The social construction of *khanevadehye mohtaram* (respectable family)

among the Iranian families is not only connected to class recognition but also to the ways in which the family maintains solidarity, and children learn to establish themselves as *mohtaram* (respectable) members of the society and their ethnic communities. To be distinguished as a *mohtaram* parent, the participants in this study invested in their children's achievements. Thus, their parenting and specifically the mothering practices (due to the social construction of mothering) is not only to build respectable selves but also to change the boundaries of respectability for the next generation, and claim their recognition by encouraging children to have class mobility" (p. 162).

Camilla Nordberg investigates the migrant perceptions of the process of becoming a citizen, which is interesting especially in the case of the stay-at-home mothers who are newcomers in Finland. In these cases, the "sufficient self" is complemented by negotiations toward approaching paths to citizenship, which emphasizes political mothering and mothering as a citizenship practice (p. 174). The following empirical research conducted by Johanna Hiitola, Kati Turtiainen, and Jaana Vuori analyses the difficult situation of the Afghan families in Finland against the threat of deportation (most of the times, for the father). The subjects of the investigation were mothers and children which arrived in Finland as refugees resettled by UNHCR (United Nations High Commission for Refugees) without the fathers, who are not granted asylum and find themselves under the threat of deportation. The migrant status was accompanied by several gendered types of suffering and aloneness.

The epilogue signed by Johanna Hiitola emphasizes once more, in a synthetic manner, the contribution of each investigation. Studying the contexts in which the racialized families attempt to pursue their aspirations abroad, borders become a special type of social spheres. They are constructed, negotiated, and organized by the specific interactions between the welfare services and the migrant family members, nuancing in various ways the enactment of citizenship through the agency of racialized families in the Nordic welfare states.

HENRIETA ȘERBAN

Radu Sava, *Reflections on Romanian-Chinese relations at 70 years of diplomatic relations. Conversations with His Excellency Ambassador Romulus Ioan Budura*, "Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu Publishing House, 2020

The present volume is (self) recommended (without reservations) as necessary *op/file* for filling the gaps of/in the (applied-extended) research of Romanian-Chinese relations, an endeavour guided by the *philosophy* of *archived scripturality* and the *practice* of approved research, with the role of instrumentalizing not only the *diplomatic history* (of recovered historical sequences), but also of current events of/with referential relevance for the relaxation of the *soft power* type of geo-strategy/policy type.

The pivots of exegesis are based on a structural mechanism, being "mounted" (with *method*) in the area of location, description, inventory and systematic-theoretical interpretation of *historical nodes* in Romanian-Chinese relations, with values stated both for "exhaustive, brief bi-axial innovative incursions (part of *binary morphology*), as well as for the conceptual-methodological contouring of a paradigmatic edify(ing) route, *re-ordering* (in terms of symmetries and asymmetries of power) international multilateral relations.

The *Reflections* is equivalent, in this particular context, to a *narration/colligation* operation, in the sense that Braudel considered relevant for accentuation – through *strong individualities* (*Conversations with His Excellency, Ambassador Romulus Ioan Budura*) – of the *event-story-dialogue* sequence, including the use of *anecdotal* appeal, as an adjunct to the parity [*five* times – not coincidentally, in Chinese numerology, a symbol with balanc(ing) attributes!] of those (*unaltered*!) *stories*, attached to the *synthesizing* meaning of (*diplomatic*) *history*. Both are required to be "taken together" in the act of configuring, *geometrically*, the open angles of a *pattern* (with *key points*) represented by the determinations of a *generic vector (of cooperation and relationships) – particular item*.

A self-contained text, Andrei Marga's preface includes and displays the substance of a *preceding* opening ("Foreword: why China?") for the delivery of text accessing tools, by reference

to a quadruple functional operability compared to the *primacy of archival research* ("with the collection of opinions begins the research of diplomatic history, and with the citation of more comprehensive analyses, it continues. But there is still a need for extensive confrontation with the archives"), to the *study and contextual study* necessary for the *explanation of facts* and for *the widely-extended inventory of diplomatic actions*, especially when they target distinct cultural areas, with recourse to *the valutational classification* of the diplomatic results obtained. Correctly, the present volume is a lucid act (*robust,* as the author calls it) of transgressing the frame of contact and reception, most often formally reduced to the simple "introduction into the classical configuration of this culture", both enlightening and relevant, attempting to regulate the reduction of China's importance to a "simple phenomenon of history", recognizing its valences as "the second major event of our times, after the transition to globalization" (pp. xviii-xix).

Agreeing a synthesis(ing) form/formula of reception (the postscript by Iolanda Tighiliu highlights the axial disposition of research – synthetic knowledge) and, at the same time, a research act invested with an additional nuancing of the relations between Romania and the People's Republic of China, with "presentation of the historical evolution of Romanian-Chinese relations, from the 17th century to 2019, with some new elements brought by the author for the recent period and the reflections of Ambassador Romulus Ioan Budura on these bilateral relations", p. cI), we will consider this volume an approach subsumed to the imperative (research) recognized in the direction of articulating and supporting an (*omnidirectional*) set of *positioning reflections* (in the sense of inventories with *bandwidth and extended length*). The triple method used is directly interested in *setting benchmarks* ("Landmarks of Romanian-Chinese relations. Brief history and evolutions") – *conceptualiz(ing) ordering* ("On the New World Order and conceptualizing bilateral relations in the global context") and *synthesizing-anecdotal arrangements* with *geometrizing* values ("Geometry of conversations with Romulus Ioan Budura. Syntheses and anecdotes").

Recovery [in the exploration and analysis of the attestations of Romanian-Chinese relations in the 17th century, and especially of those from the second half of the XIXth century ("the course of bilateral relations is a timid one, not totally known until the end of the first part of the 20th century ")] establishes as inaugural *knot* (with emphasis on the political-diplomatic and less on the cultural side) the official contacts in Paris (between Mihail Kogălniceanu and the Marquis Zeng Jize), relations/reports that Radu Sava integrates into a "Romanian-Chinese phenomenology", in whose horizons he foresees alternations of stages, both "tactical" and "tumultuous".

The inventoried *indices* point to a relaxation in the configuration of diplomatic efforts of the 20th century, by "decomposing" *the exemplarity* of reports from the period 1968-1975, decreeing the 1980s as "only partially *golden"*, a statement calibrated, on the one hand, by gaps caused by the events of 1978 (the opening and the reform of China) and, on the other hand, by the consequences of 1989 (the fall of Communism in Romania). The immediate effects are recognized in: the negative impact on the Romanian-Chinese relations, as a result of structural changes felt in 1978 and 1989, with consequences extending until the end of the 1990s, and, in particular, 1999; the attempt to relaunch the political component from the spectrum of Romanian-Chinese relations (in 1994, 2004, 2013 or 2016) and the conceptualization of the Romanian-Chinese bilateral relations in the context of a globalized system of international relations, with extensions of meaning towards the 21st century.

The geometr(izing) model proposed by Radu Sava fulfils (on/in the soil of Romanian research) the perspective that Peter Sloterdijk based in/through *Eurotaoism. Contributions to a critique of political kinetics* (2004)*,* in the sense that what prevails is the conditional proportionality of adapting means to purposes, of harmonizing instruments to specific conditions, of realistic research-purpose orientation, of correctness, of thesis elaboration starting from given premises, from measuring expectations and recognizing rational subjects. The problem of *geometry* applied to the distant, observing look, re-deepens the status of circle or system, pedalling on the formula of reporting, in fact, to the own uniqueness of the model.

The pivot chapter of the volume is dedicated to the series of *original* interviews, methodologically arranged in/under the form of reuniting *synthesis* and *anecdote*, dialogues started and conducted, between July 18-21, 2018, with His Excellency Ambassador Ioan Romulus Budura, moulded on the development ("upward perspective") of 70 years of diplomatic relations between Romania and

China, with a *plus* of novelty in terms of a type of direct reporting on the "specificity of Romanian-Chinese relations or various political events and diplomatic records in different situations such as time, context and phenomenon"(p. 66).

Anecdotally, the same *sense of a geometr(izing)* model prevails – "he who stands on tiptoe does not stand up. He who stands glued in place does not go forward", as Peter Sloterdijk (2004: 96) reminded us, in the spirit of a Dao-De-Jing wisdom insert; "A Chinese man, when asked at a concert what he liked most about the concert, said that he enjoyed that period from the beginning which, in fact, was the tuning of the instruments and the preparation for the concert", narrates Romulus Ioan Budura, in the sense of preparation/waiting or "reception for what we (*will* we note) be about to find out" (p. 67), thus *advancing* (both in history and in the event – we note), without losing the fine tuning of registers and instruments!

"The main objective of the volume is met, especially due to the evolution of the narrative from general to particular. A theoretical and methodological approach of this type offers the narrative an epistemological structure, which includes not only the set of Romanian-Chinese relations, but also their particularities. Also, highlighting information through quantitative methodology manifested in a predominantly open manner is an innovative element in evaluating Romanian-Chinese relations, and the activity of the diplomat and Sinologist Romulus Ioan Budura" (p. 149), concludes Radu Sava. In fact, research goes beyond epistemological sources and resources, by placing it in/on the threshold of *the ontology of diplomatic history*, of what P. Ricœur saw as "historical representation": the volume does not focus only on decoding concepts, revealing theories, stating and commenting on relationships, reports and events, filing and archiving information, but becomes a *project* for the confirmation of that substance which feeds the concept of *representation* – through the event, its links and its protagonists, the researcher responds and, more importantly, satisfies the expectation and the promise issued through the symbolic pact concluded with the reader.

VIORELLA MANOLACHE

Jin Canrong, *The Responsibility of a Great Power*. Translated by Mihai Manea and Gabriel Stoian. Corint Publishing House, Bucharest, 2020

In a time of changes, when the pole of world power seems to be replacing, Corint publishing house, by printing the book signed by Jin Canrong, opens the horizon of knowledge on the new international configuration and the intimate mechanisms of the latest transformations.

Born in Wuhan, in 1962, into a humble family, Jin Canrong is a direct witness to the metamorphosis of his nation. Moreover, his education (PhD from School of International Studies at Peking University) and his career (Professor at School of International Studies at Renmin University of China) make his stance be reinforced by a rigorous research into China's becoming and a judicious analysis of its regional and global relations (ASEAN – The Association of Southeast Asian Nations; SCO – The Shanghai Cooperation Organization; BRICS – The association of five major emerging national economies – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa; G20 – Group of Twenty, *etcetera*), and mainly of its relationship with the USA.

Jin Canrong received the highest award from the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China – *Chang Jiang Scholar*. He is, therefore, an eminent researcher, very dynamic, who travels a lot and holds conferences on all continents. Last autumn, he held a conference in Bucharest about *Trade War, Conflict and Global Governance,* and the delegation of which he was a part met with the former Prime Minister of Romania, Adrian Năstase, with the former Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Honorary President of the New Strategy Centre, Sergiu Celac, and with the representative with special tasks for the Asian region within the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Viorel Isticioaia-Budura. Well-known to the officials from Bucharest, Jin Canrong now becomes known to the general public.

Jin Canrong aims to dispel misconceptions about China, to exalt the Chinese model, to explain China's rise and to justify its aspirations. The tone of his plea is generally sober and balanced. Even so, he does not hesitate to openly criticize the "egocentric" West, the USA with its double

measure, the economic interests of the great powers masked by humanitarian rhetoric or by their zeal in spreading democratic principles.

Undeniably, China's image is that of a key global player. The protagonist role is given primarily by objective data – its area (9.6 million km^2) and its population (1.3 billion inhabitants), to which is added the geographical position and the historical past. Secondly, China's role is related to the recurring reconfiguration of the international system.

Jin Canrong's interpretation of China's role in the international arena and his inner voice enter into a dialogue (which in some places resonate, in some others clash) with the voices of other experts who have focused on this issue: Robert Gilpin, Neil Ferguson, Martin Jacques, Mancur Olsen, Robert Keohane, Joseph Nye etc.

Jin Canrong strongly believes that, at this stage of evolution, "Chinese spices" cannot be missing from the Western-style menu (p. 17). And, as we all know, the spices are the ones that give the taste of the food. Jin Canrong defends his statement resorting to a quote from Henry Kissinger's *Diplomacy*: «Almost by a law of nature, every century a country seems to emerge with the power, will and intellectual and moral strength to forge the entire international system according to its own values» (p. 23). In other words, Jin Canrong proclaims that this is the century of China.

A simple historical digression proves that the international system does not remain motionless. The Westphalian system ruled by France, the Vienna system based on the Quadruple Alliance, and the American hegemony established on the ruins of the two world wars are classical examples of reforming the international order. Thus, after the global financial crisis of 2008, China is at the helm of the world.

The ancient and famous Silk Road is invoked in the book several times. It is equivalent here to a golden age that wants to be reissued. This involves connectivity, mutually beneficial exchanges, cooperation. As for China's openness and tolerance is resorted to a cultural cliché: the treatment given to the Venetian Marco Polo, *Il Milione*, the author of the *Book of the Marvels of the World*, one of the greatest travel writings of the Middle Ages. But first of all, is resorted to archetypes of cultural tradition, to ubiquitous topos in Chinese culture and civilization: the philosophies of Confucius and his disciple, Lao Zi. We limit ourselves here to epitomize the key dictum: "noble people seek harmony, not uniformity"; respectively, the integration of the *yin* and *yang* principles, videlicet the complementary of the contrary forces. Faithful to these precepts, China is therefore governed by an "anti-war and tolerant culture" (p. 46), paladin of the concept of the harmonious coexistence in spite of differences (*hé´érbùtóng*).

The Opium Wars, China's status as a former semi-colony, its economic decline, the paradox of being "big and weak" for a long time instilled into the Chinese mentality a kind of "pessimism of history". All this are imprinted in the memory of the Chinese people and encumber on its mentality as a great power. The key to success would be, in Jin Canrong's opinion, "a balance between external ardour and internal apathy" (p. 36).

From the 1970s to the present, China has made a huge leap. *Made in China* labels have spread across the globe. As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, China intervenes in the hot issues of the planet: the nuclear issues of North Korea and Iran; the Middle East peace process. It cannot be overlooked Africa's strategic position in China's diplomatic plots and, subsequently, China's efforts to combat the accusation of "new colonialism". Even so, according to Jin Canrong, "China's major responsibilities lie within its borders" (p. 281). On the domestic agenda of Chinese diplomacy, beyond the effort to ensure the well-being of its own citizens (reference, without any doubt, to *yăngmín* concept), there are some other hot issues: Taiwanese separatism, global warming, global epidemics.

The conclusion is actually the red thread of Jin Canrong's apologia: China cannot grow apart from the rest of the world, and the prosperity and stability of the world can no longer be insured in the absence of China. According to this vision, interdependence between China, on the one hand, and the rest of the world, on the other hand, is equivalent to the vital node of the international system. Or, in the Chinese way of saying, *chúnwáng-chihán* – "When the lips are gone, the teeth get cold".

CARMEN BURCEA