

have become substantially differentiated by their respective national development strategies. Pomfret notes that the purpose of the book is to describe the different policies and to analyze the outcomes which those policies produced. The book succeeds in this aim on a number of counts: it provides one of the most informed, comprehensive, and most objectively reasoned analysis of the conditions and policies of the transitional period; it offers considerable insight into the enduring legacies of the Soviet period as well as the subtleties of the current economic conditions; and it contains the best systematic analysis of the outcomes of the policies.

The design of Pomfret's study is straightforward. Following a brief introductory description of the economy of Central Asia at the time of independence, the book turns to in part 1 to the serial analysis of the policy environment and policy choices within the five Central Asian countries. These chapters use a standard economic framework of analysis, addressing parallel issues of natural resource endowment, institutional frameworks, and policy choices in each of the five republics. But the approach is also flexible enough to direct attention to the factors that played key roles in shaping economic performance in unique ways, covering, for instance, the role of natural gas in Turkmenistan, cotton agriculture in Uzbekistan, hydroelectric production in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, and oil revenues in Kazakhstan.

Part 2 of the book turns to a more detailed topical analysis, measuring economic performance and output in comparative terms using national accounts data. Survey data from a number of sources are used for multiple regression analysis to determine the influence of income distribution, education, location, and other factors influencing socioeconomic outcomes in the transitional period. The analysis describes how and in what circumstances some people who had expected a comfortable life saw their living standards collapse, while others benefited from the massive property reassignment that took place as a result of privatization. Pomfret's data illustrate that the situation since the turn of the century has become less dramatic as the growth in inequality has attenuated. Pomfret also offers reasons why those who benefited from the privatization of state assets or from their political power base in the early stages of transition more lately have experienced diminishing desire for further change. Pomfret also raises the question of whether this trend signifies that we may expect increased support for reforms such as strengthening property rights.

Part 3 turns to the analysis of the international context. The role of natural resources (chapter 9) provides a detailed discussion of cotton agriculture, oil and gas, hydroelectric energy, and the much debated "resource curse." Chapter 10 is devoted to regional organizations and integration tendencies. Pomfret's analysis provides a basis for the proposition stated later in the book that, "despite the dozens of regional summits and innumerable paper agreements for free-trade areas or common economic space, the reality has been of increasing barriers to economic interchange within the region. Any scenarios of the Central Asian countries' acting as a group have foundered on intraregional rivalries" (p. 217).

*The Central Asian Economies since Independence* is the most reliable and comprehensive treatment of economic and public policy issues in Central Asia. It will be of value to the theoretically oriented scholar and to the practically oriented practitioner alike.

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Sahadco, Jeff and Russell Zanca, eds. *Everyday Life in Central Asia: Past and Present*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007. xvi + 401 pp. \$24.95 (paper). ISBN 978-0-253-21904-6.

The Western media often frustrates Central Asian experts by presenting distorted and partial images of the region, with stories focusing on Islamic extremism and women's oppression in Afghanistan, human rights abuses in Uzbekistan, bride abduction in Kyrgyzstan, and oil-derived wealth and

corruption in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, and so forth. The “Borat phenomenon” has increased general awareness of Central Asia’s existence, yet the film’s nonsensical caricature of daily life in Kazakhstan has only added to the popular confusion about the region. Fortunately, there is a growing number of scholarly works that can provide greater depth and analysis for understanding this complex region, and the book under review here is the first scholarly work to offer a comprehensive introduction to everyday life in Central Asia that is accessible and engaging to both scholarly and nonscholarly audiences.

This is an edited volume that consists of twenty-three essays written by many of the leading scholars of the region. Each of the essays focuses on different aspects of everyday life, including how people go to school, celebrate holidays, consume meals, get married, earn money, negotiate state bureaucracies, and practice their religion. Everyday life is showcased for what it can reveal about how values and practices have constantly been in flux as Central Asians negotiate political and economic transformations involved with Russian colonialism, Soviet rule, and post-Soviet realities. Rather than being organized chronologically or geographically, the essays are loosely organized into five themes: communities; gender; performances and encounters; nation, state, and society in the everyday; and religion.

The volume’s greatest strength is its broad scope in terms of history, geography, and disciplinary boundaries. The essays in the book cover everyday life from the 1800s to the present, with the exception of the essay by Scott Levi, which provides thousands of years of historical context. For most essays, the primary focus is given to either the early Soviet period or the post-Soviet period. Geographically, the essays cover the territories that were absorbed into the Russian Empire and, in the 1990s, became the newly independent countries of Central Asia—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Two essays based on Robert Canfield’s research among the Hazaras of Afghanistan in the 1960s provide interesting comparisons, yet the presence of these essays draws attention to the absence of similar essays on Mongolia, Xinjiang, and present-day Afghanistan. The topics covered in the book reflect the diversity of disciplines represented by the volume contributors, including history, anthropology, sociology, political science, religious studies, and musicology. One of the few areas that is not addressed in any of the essays is how Central Asians have been coping with environmental issues, such as the destruction of the Aral Sea, the excessive use of agricultural pesticides, and nuclear testing in Kazakhstan.

It is impossible to summarize in a brief review all of the lessons that can be learned from this book, so I will highlight just a few gems. Douglas Northrop’s essay reveals the Soviet state’s early challenges with liberating Uzbek women in the 1930s and thus provides a nice juxtaposition to Elizabeth Constantine’s assessment of how Uzbek women eventually enjoyed the benefits of this liberation. Kelly McMann’s essay also reminds us that the fall of the Soviet Union has not been celebrated by all Central Asians, many of whom miss the economic security that the state used to provide. Eric McGlinchey provides a harrowing portrayal of how the Uzbek state has created an atmosphere of terror among Muslim practitioners in its effort to crack down on Islamic extremists, while David Montgomery and Sean Roberts show how most Central Asians are grappling with what it means to be a Muslim in contemporary society.

This book should be compulsory reading for any course on Central Asia and any researcher with interests in this region. In its entirety, this volume captures the essence of what it has been like to live in Central Asia in the past and the present. The book also contains many valuable insights for what it is like to conduct research in Central Asia, such as Russell Zanca’s depiction of fatty food, Paula Michael’s customs for Kazakh hospitality, and Madelcine Reeve’s vexing experiences on international borders.

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