

ble-digit margin in opinion polls [CBOS 2017a] and its elite were considered very trustworthy [CBOS 2017b]. This paradox indicates that Gwiazda's analysis underestimates the importance of a factor without which democratic institutions are unable to survive: society. Low levels of trust in politicians and the weak social base of democratic parties (addressed in chapter 4) made it possible for the party of Kaczyński not only to win the election, but also to demobilise the electorate of the opposition. Its hierarchical structure, high level of discipline and strong support from the Catholic Church and trade unions brought PiS masses of devoted supporters. Extensive welfare programmes, such as universal child benefits, attracted more centrist voters. This turned out to be sufficient to undermine the pillars of Polish democracy.

'The most notable democratic deficit in Poland is clearly in the dimension of participation: electoral participation remains low, as does non-electoral participation', notes Gwiazda in the concluding chapter (p. 153). The weakness of the Polish civil society facilitated developments which resulted in the virtual collapse of accountability mechanisms. The reform of the law on local and regional elections announced by the PiS may, if implemented, be a first step towards changing the institutional framework of party competition which can in turn potentially affect democratic representation. Very soon after the publication of this book, it is clear that seemingly minor problems related to one of the four dimensions of democracy may have detrimental effects for the stability of the whole system.

Kamil Marcinkiewicz
Universität Hamburg

kamil.marcinkiewicz@wiso.uni-hamburg.de

References

- CBOS. 2017a. 'Preferencje partyjne w styczniu.' (Party preferences in January) *Komunikat z badań* 5/2017. Retrieved 2 March 2017 (http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2017/K_005_17.PDF).
- CBOS. 2017b. 'Zaufanie do polityków w styczniu.' (Trust in politicians in January) *Komunikat z badań* 10/2017. Retrieved 2 March 2017 (http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2017/K_010_17.PDF).
- Marcinkiewicz, K. 2016. 'Der politische Rechtsruck in Polen: Analyse von Ursachen und außenpolitischen Konsequenzen.' (Poland's turn to the right: the analysis of causes and foreign policy consequences) *Zeitschrift für Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik* 9 (4): 463–476.
- McMenamin, I. and A. Gwiazda. 2011. 'Three Roads to Institutionalization: Vote-, Office- and Policy-Seeking Explanations of Party Switching in Poland.' *European Journal of Political Research* 50 (6): 838–866.
- North, D. C. 1990. *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rogers Brubaker: *Trans: Gender and Race in an Age of Unsettled Identities***
Princeton, NJ, and Oxford 2016: Princeton University Press, 236 pp.
- Designed as an essay rather than a classical monograph, this book delves into fashionable yet thorny issues of gender politics. In line with his well-known constructivist agenda, Brubaker breaks down the umbrella-term 'transgender', unearthing the tension between *changing* gender and *challenging* gender hierarchies altogether (p. 17). Throughout its two major parts (with five individual subchapters), *Trans*, albeit rooted almost exclusively in US society and politics, aims for broader intricacies of identity-politics (p. x).
- The book starts from two highly mediated cases—Rachel Dolezal, self-identifying as 'black' yet 'ousted by parents in 2015 as white' and Bruce Jenner's transition into Caitlyn Jenner (pp. 2–5). Part One, containing two sub-chapters, establishes a common ground for analysis and comparison between the politics of gender and

identity. Although seemingly separate, Brubaker astutely observes that gender and race are both 'systems of social classification with distinctive yet in some ways converging logics that can fruitfully be compared' (p. 11). The overarching context is one where cultural and discursive turns in the study of difference have been replaced, in the aftermath of the 2008–2009 economic crisis, with renewed objectivist stances [Brubaker 2015]. It is precisely with this in mind that the author carefully navigates the intricacies of the 'born that way' narrative, a staple of trans-type discourses: a putative 'objectivity of the subjective' strives to make possible defending choice in the name of the unchosen and change in the name of the unchanging (p. 7). What is interesting to observe however is a rather divergent path of historical development – the echoes of 1970s debates about transracial adoptions are such that 'while the *trans* in transgender has signaled an *opportunity* for transgender people, the *trans* in transracial has signaled a threat to transracial adoptees' (p. 19).

While putatively an essay, Brubaker's most recent book contains well developed passages of literature review, usually concentrated along the extremes of the ideological spectrum, but with some attention also paid to the more 'moderate' stances. With his hallmark analytical clarity Brubaker manages to neatly identify the range of dominant discourses and their ascribed legitimacy towards gender and/or race change—from essentialism, which bars both, to voluntarism, which agrees to both, with various degrees of in betweenness (p. 22). The key challenge is re-assessing heteronormativity—the cultural understanding of heterosexuality as the only legitimate sexuality, which still seems to remain an underlying cultural norm (p. 41). *Prima facie* change seems to have occurred—though contested specifically by religious or cultural conservatives, notions of sexual autonomy have sifted into law,

policy, and popular culture (p. 52). How far-reaching this has been varies greatly, however. Albeit highly influential, Facebook's change in asking gender-specific questions upon sign-up does not necessarily reflect state-level policies (p. 46). For Brubaker, there is an obvious contrast between the categories of gender and race—the latter have changed far less dramatically because they had anyway been less strictly institutionalised (p. 46). Strictly in the confines of the United States, which seems to be the main focus, though this is not exclusively made clear, while the Census Bureau has moved towards allowing 'multiple racial identifications' (p. 54), rather strict policing exists vis-à-vis transgender claims (p. 58). While the author is undoubtedly spot on when he observes different paces of change, some nuancing is needed. On the one hand, albeit perhaps not outward, overtly ethnic and/or religious biases (anti-Muslim most of the time), couched in higher-order 'liberal' concerns persist within citizenship tests [Baubock and Joppke (eds.) 2010]. On the other hand, gender and race seem coupled, as in the well-known case of pro-gay attitudes required by Dutch citizenship tests.

Brubaker identifies three major types of change processes, defined around gender but with obvious correspondents in the realm of race—the *trans of migration*, moving from one established category into another; the *trans of between*, defining oneself with reference to the established categories without fully belonging to either; the *trans of beyond*, a claim to transcend either existing categories or even categorisation altogether (p. 10). Part Two (three sub-chapters) explores the categories in depth. From the offset, the author carefully notes that these ideal types do not always perfectly map the social world, as the line between the *trans of migration* and the *trans of between* blurs when movement is defined on a continuum rather than between binary opposites (p. 97). Interestingly, Bru-

baker observes that the acknowledgement of continuous gradation is not new, as it can be traced back to theories of universal bisexuality from the late 19th century (p. 99). What seems to be new is that while the outwardly 'objective' grounding of race, namely genetics, is increasingly understood in gradational terms (for an in-depth analysis, see Chapter 2 of Brubaker [2015]), race itself remains immutable in its categorical understanding (p. 103). In recent times, while mediatisation occurs around migration stories like Jenner or Dolezal, according to Brubaker, the 'cutting edge of the politics of identity has shifted to efforts to carve out a space between or beyond established categories' (p. 93). Both gender and racial betweenness violate expectations about 'appropriate' categories and thus challenge the existing status quo (p. 109). There does seem, however, to be a slight difference in that 'beyond race' visions are somewhat more conceptually straightforward and normatively uncontroversial than 'beyond gender' accounts of society (p. 127). Perhaps owing to considerations of space inherent in an essay, a detailed analysis of the causal mechanisms that have led to a wider but less coherent proliferation of 'beyond gender' narratives is not offered. What Brubaker does present in more detail are the major contours of the intricate map of the *trans of beyond* discourses.

Perhaps the most important puzzle observed is that while transracial migration tries to follow privilege (p. 82 – in the sense of categorical inequality from Brubaker [2015]), there seems to be no economic direction of transgender change (p. 79). Nevertheless, a common central component of the *trans of beyond* discourses is the re-vamping of society so that gender categories are no longer central in allocation of rights, division of labour, perceptions and socio-economic expectations (p. 119). Owing to an increasing feminist social science literature, redrafting the allocation of rights and division of labour seems to be

the more straight-forward project. By contrast, however, as Brubaker also notes, going 'beyond gender' in interpreting the socio-political world has yet to be clarified by most *trans* discourses. The picture is further complicated by the simple reality that for some, anti-categorical discourses are deeply political positions, while for others they remain primarily personal stances (p. 116).

Picking up an important line of analysis from *Grounds for Difference* [2015], *Trans* essentially analyses in detail the delicate balance between *self-identification* and *categorisation by others*. The difference is not at all negligible given that while the US census might be opening up to multi-racial identification, the design of the questions themselves reflects an awareness that ethnic data is 'sensitive and potentially controversial in a way that data on sex or gender is not' (pp. 124–125). Furthermore, gender and race seem to be differently held against the standpoint of a 'logic of authenticity'—said cultural logic *authorises* transformations of the sexed body, but *stigmatises* certain transformations of a socio-politically classified racial body (p. 140). It is precisely in this line of thought that racial essentialists' claim of illegitimacy levied at Dolezal 'pivoted on objectivity and appropriation' (p. 37). Nevertheless, it seems that the space for choice and change is expanding more substantially in the domains of race and ethnicity (p. 141).

Even without the analytical and methodological rigors of a monograph, with his trademark crisp writing style, Brubaker manages to outline a coherent research agenda, nicely interwoven with political discussions. Granted, since it is not a monograph, the book does not offer strong causal chains. A further lingering question remains as to how far outside the US the analytical framework can travel. Nevertheless, it is beyond a shadow of a doubt that *Trans* offers an important contribution: it opens up a line of dialogue between two

identity-politics literatures, which clearly share an analytical core, but have thus far rather insufficiently informed one another.

Sergiu Delcea
Central European University, Budapest
sergiu.delcea@gmail.com

References

- Baubock, R. and C. Joppke (eds.). 2010. *How Liberal Are Citizenship Tests?* EUI Working Papers RCSAS 2010/41. European University Institute, Robert Schuman Center for Advanced Studies, EUDO Citizenship Observatory.
- Brubaker, R. 2015. *Grounds for Difference*. Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press.

Jennifer Mittelstadt: *The Rise of the Military Welfare State*

Cambridge 2015: Harvard University Press, 344 pp.

The welfare state is not popular in the United States, yet it is growing. In particular, the US military has been spending more and more on welfare since conscription was abolished. Various social programmes for veterans, military spouses, and families swelled in the US defence budget during the first decade of G. W. Bush's Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). As a result, the US Department of Veterans Affairs has had to cope with the effects of deploying the military in GWOT. The welfare state is getting more and more accessible for many Americans through military service. In this book, Jennifer Mittelstadt guides her readers through the story of development of the welfare state under the Department of Defense. That story started at the beginning of WWII, when the state had to support the families of 10 million draftees inducted into the military.

As Mittelstadt demonstrates, the story is still continuing. She organises the book into eight chapters. The first three describe the armed forces' struggle to define, demarcate, and defend their benefits during

the rocky nascent period of the volunteer army's welfare state. Chapters 4 to 6 chronicle the advance and vitalisation in army social welfare programmes in the 1980s. Chapters 7 and 8 recount the transformation of the army's social programs by anti-'dependency' ideology and the outsourcing and privatising of many army support programmes in the 1990s. The author's narrative of the US military welfare state matches with her specialisation as a historian. In particular, she pays a close attention to the actors who—as members of higher circles (politicians, high rank officials, and flag-officers)—either forced new social programmes in the military or advocated and revitalised the traditional system in the last forty years.

Mittelstadt points out that the open-handed welfare state was established in the US military in the Fiscal Year 1972–1973, when the federal government struggled to get an adequate volunteering military manpower for the European theatre, which was endangered by the communist Soviet military and other Warsaw Pact troops. At that time, the welfare state sneaked into the DoD policy as an option to recruit troops. Meanwhile, the military has become more advanced in technological areas and more competitive on the national labour market owing to social programmes since the 1970s.

However, the social and health-care programmes for soldiers, veterans, and military families have started consuming more and more taxpayers' money since the 1970s. The military welfare state flourished notably during Reagan's presidential term, when demographic growth was slowing down. Thus, neoliberal hawks did not hesitate to extend the military social programme in order to get enough manpower for the military plans. This raises the question of whether the rising costs of the military welfare do not contradict the effort of the US military-industrial complex which has made a significant profit on the All-Volunteer Force (AVF) so far, particularly