

ideological level, to traditional values. Buchowski states that “neoliberal principles with respect to self-reliance and private ownership of agricultural land or means of production in fact coincided with those [Polish citizens] have held ‘forever’” (66). In other contexts, it is the recovery of national culture and identity that is framed as a “return.” Čiubrinskas writes about Lithuanian returnees to Lithuania, and the role they play, as self-proclaimed “experts on Lithuanianess,” in the nation-building and cultural preservation efforts of the country. The notion of return articulated here is important because it challenges the stereotype of an “eternal” civilizational boundary between “advanced” capitalism and “backward” socialism.

Another theme that runs through the volume is the emergence of new hierarchies both *within* and *between* East and Central European societies, whether they be class hierarchies (see the chapter by Buchowski), or the hierarchies that people construct between those considered “civilized” or “uncivilized.” For example, Kubica’s chapter on responses to the gay and lesbian movement in Poland describes how participants in the March for Tolerance equate being “civilized” with respecting human rights and being tolerant of difference in a pluralistic society. Those demonstrating against the march, in contrast, seem to associate gays and lesbians with the decline of civilization and morality. This contest over the meaning of civilization reveals that, as Giordano argues in his Afterword, “something new is actually surfacing in Eastern Europe,” especially if we consider that the two groups in Poland, as Kubica points out, had joined together in protest against the militia under socialism. Citizenries of different countries within Central and Eastern Europe also evaluate one another according to standards of civilized and cultured behavior, as demonstrated in Uherek’s account of the attitudes of Czech citizens toward Ukrainian labour migrants. Overall, more could have been said about the way in which ethnographers themselves situate themselves within these new hierarchies. It would also have been interesting to learn more about the way EU “surveillance” (e.g., in the form of standards and norms) comes to shape these new hierarchies and impact local struggles over what it means to be “normal”, “cultured,” or “civilized.”

Anna Fournier

Kumase, Wokia-azi Ndangle: Aspects of Poverty and Inequality in Cameroon. Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2010. 153 pp. ISBN 978-3-631-59535-0. (Göttinger Studien zur Entwicklungsökonomik, 28) Price: € 39.80

Mit seiner Dissertation in Entwicklungsökonomie will der Kameruner Wokia Kumase aufzeigen, welche Hürden bei der Überwindung von Armut und Ungleichheit genommen werden müssten, sollte Kamerun die Millennium-Entwicklungsziele erreichen wollen, zu denen sich die Regierung bekannt hat: allen voran bis 2015 die Armut zu halbieren, die Grundschulbildung für alle zu sichern und Gender-Gleichheit herzustellen.

In dem ersten Teil entwickelt Kumase ein Armuts- und Ungleichheitsprofil der 10 Provinzen des Landes, das verdeutlicht, dass trotz eines Anstieges des allgemeinen Le-

bensstandards in den letzten Jahrzehnten, die drei ärmsten Provinzen (Norden, Extremer Norden und Nordwesten) weit zurückgeblieben sind. Als einen weiteren Prüfstein für Ungleichheit untersucht er das Verhältnis zwischen dem formellen und dem informellen Sektor. Angesichts der äußerst hohen Land-Stadtmigration kommt er zu dem Schluss, dass der informelle Sektor, in welchem im ganzen Land mehr als die Hälfte der aktiven Bevölkerung tätig sind, geprägt ist von jungen Leuten mit wenig oder keiner formalen Bildung und ohne Berufsausbildung. In den ländlichen Gebieten, so ermittelt er, leben fast 70 % der Bevölkerung unterhalb der Armutsgrenze.

Trotz der Bedeutung, die er der Gender-Gleichheit in der Einführung beimisst und der er auch ein Kapitel widmet, sind seine Aussagen hierzu nur wenig aussagekräftig. Er diskutiert die Thematik am Beispiel der Kakaoproduktion im Süden des Landes. Eine neue Entwicklung ist, dass Frauen dort Land erwerben können, was dazu führt, dass der Landbesitz individualisiert wird und die traditionellen Bodenbesitzverhältnisse aufgeweicht werden. Ich habe allerdings nirgends gefunden, wie hoch der Frauenanteil an dem Sample von 1.030 untersuchten Kakaobauern ist und wie groß die Anbauflächen der Frauen im Verhältnis zu der der Männer ist. Kumase stellt fest, dass Frauen produktiver sind als Männer. Denn trotz schlechterer Voraussetzungen (weniger fruchtbarer Boden, Doppelbelastung mit Haushalt und Anbau für den Eigenbedarf) fahren sie ähnlich hohe Erträge pro Anbauflächeneinheit ein wie Männer, da sie ihre strukturellen Defizite durch bessere Pflege ihrer Schollen wettmachen. Die Schlussfolgerung Kumases, es wäre dem Lande dienlich, wenn die Gender-Gleichheit in Bezug auf Landerwerb, Materialeinsatz und Technologie erhöht würde, ist gewiss zu unterstreichen, allerdings sind die dorthin führenden Argumente wenig nachvollziehbar.

Insgesamt enthält das Buch keine Überraschungen. Es mag für Wirtschaftswissenschaftler von Bedeutung sein, welche Definition des informellen Sektors bei Marktanalysen benutzt wird – Kumase widmet der Diskussion von drei verschiedenen Modellen ein ganzes von insgesamt fünf Kapiteln – aber für die Erkenntnis, dass mehr Investition in Bildung vonnöten ist, scheint das wenig relevant.

Das Buch könnte dem Kameruner Wirtschaftsministerium Argumente liefern, wo und in welcher Weise Entwicklungsdefizite auszugleichen wären, es mag einen relevanten Beitrag für die Klärung von Begriffen in der Entwicklungsökonomie liefern, an interessierte Laien, die sich ein Bild über Armut und Ungleichheit in Kamerun machen wollen, ist es nicht gerichtet.

Godula Kosack

Kupisiński, Zdzisław: Śmierć jako wydarzenie eschatyczne. Zwyczaje, obrzędy i wierzenia pogrzebowe oraz zaduszkowe mieszkańców regionu opoczyńskiego i radomskiego. [Death as an Eschatological Experience. Funeral Customs, Rituals, and Beliefs along with *Zaduszki* (Remembrance of the Dead) in the Opoczno and Radom Regions of Poland.] Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2007. 661 pp. ISBN 978-83-7363-447-3. Price: PLN 35.34

“The reality of death may fascinate or terrify,” writes Kupisiński in the introduction to this book – his habilitation treatise defended at the Catholic University of Lublin, Poland – “it may create uncertainty and fear. This fear is particularly significant to humans, for among living beings only they have a conscious understanding of death. This understanding, however, is unclear, because death, after all, is an unverifiable phenomenon ... In various cultures and civilizations there is a belief that physical death followed by the decay of the body does not mean any total annihilation of the person because something immaterial still remains, and this is the soul, the spirit, or another form of existence ... The attitude of a society to death depends on religious beliefs, world view, and hierarchy of values in that society” (14f.).

Drawing on the results of his field research conducted in the years 1980–1983, 1990–1993, and 1995–2005, as well as on the relevant literature, Kupisiński, a Catholic priest and trained ethnographer, attempts to present what death means to the people of the Opoczno and Radom regions of his native Poland. To this purpose, he analyzes and interprets a variety of customs, rituals, and beliefs associated with death that continue to exist in that part of the country. Although many early customs and funeral ceremonies have fallen into oblivion, a wide variety of them could be reconstructed from the memory of elderly people and from old prayer books as well as manuscripts containing hymns and prayers used in earlier times during services surrounding death and burial.

The book consists of five chapters and addresses the funeral rituals in the context of the contemporary social change that has accelerated in Poland after the fall of communism. In chapter 1, “Folk Understanding of Death and its Axiology,” Kupisiński states that people of the Opoczno and Radom regions accept the Christian concept of death based on the dualistic nature of man and on the departing of the soul from the body. After leaving the body, the soul enters the spiritual realm. Death is seen as God’s intervention in human life, and life after death is perceived as analogous to earthly life. Hence, the deceased are furnished with necessary accessories (e.g., wardrobe, personal objects, prayer book, rosary) needed in the “other” world. In the Opoczno and Radom regions, the country people held those ancient beliefs surrounding death almost until the end of the past century.

In the second chapter, “Experiencing Death in Folk Tradition,” the author deals with the portents of death in the folk tradition of both regions. Death, according to popular beliefs, was preceded by generally atypical occurrences, such as an unusual behavior of animals and birds, dreams, poltergeists, or feeling the presence of spirits. Moreover, some spiritual beings (mostly souls coming in dreams or visions) came forward as if to meet the dying person and to introduce him or her into the “other” world. In cases of prolonged death throes, folk practices not only aimed at shortening the agony (e.g., laying the dying person on a bed of smooth straw and sprinkling him or her with holy water), but also intensive prayers were said which were believed to be an effective defense against evil powers, and which should accompany the dy-

ing during the passage from the present world into the eschatological reality.

The third chapter is devoted to funeral rituals *sensu stricto*. At this liminal stage certain activities were performed so that the soul of the deceased could join the community of the redeemed in the “other” world. The social dimension of those rituals is visible even today in the traditional form of the funeral, in particular the fact that the whole village community participates in the procession to the church and to the cemetery in order to accompany the dead person to the place of eternal rest. The funeral ceremonies ended with a common meal called “consolation.” The memory of the deceased was kept very much alive during the mourning period, when the family observed certain restrictions and obligations prescribed by tradition.

Chapter 4, “Remembrance of the Dead in the Liturgical Year,” focuses on certain commemorative rituals observed in the crucial moments of the annual cycle, such as the Advent season, Christmas Eve and the Christmas Day, the Lenten season, and Easter. During the Advent season, for example, people observed the restriction against plowing because the soil was believed to be the dwelling place of suffering souls. Similarly, the Christmas Eve supper (*Wigilia*), which in some ways resembles pre-Christian feasts held on the graves which also included invitation of the souls to the supper, still contains such customary practices as preparing favorite foods of the deceased loved ones, leaving leftovers for them, and leaving an empty chair at the table. The old customs of remembering the dead are linked both to the pre-Christian cosmological model of reality, according to which the winter solstice was the time of particularly strong activity of the spirits, and to the Christian eschatological beliefs in the salvation of the dead. These practices intermingle with some contemporary observances, for instance the visiting of cemeteries, the lighting of decorated votive candles, and the praying for the dead during the Christmas Eve supper. During the Easter season, the Christian belief in the victory of Christ over death recurs also in the commemoration of the dead. Traditionally, the bond with the dead was marked by bringing *pisanki* (painted eggs) to the graves or by feeding the poor, which was linked to the pre-Christian custom of feeding souls. Easter palms were brought and votive candles were lit, which today symbolize Christ, the Eternal Light, but which are also reminders of ancient fires lit on the days of remembrance of the dead. Finally, in order to replace or Christianize the popular autumn festivities devoted to the dead ancestors, the Roman Catholic Church established All Souls Day whose purpose is to commemorate the faithful departed. Nonetheless, the ancient Slavic pattern of remembering the dead still survives under that Christian form to our times.

In the final chapter of the book, Kupisiński identifies changes which have occurred in the Opoczno and Radom regions in the course of the last decades, not only in burial ceremonies and funerary rituals but also in attitudes toward suffering, dying, and death. The encroaching processes of secularization, modernization, and industrialization have made death into a psychological and medi-

cal event rather than a religious experience. Similarly, the funeral ceremonies, once exclusively religious in character, have acquired certain features of commercialization, visible in such aspects as the expensive coffins and headstones, large wreaths, etc., and thus became markers of the newly emerging social divisions. The approach to suffering has changed as well. In the old days, according to those interviewed for this study, the suffering was meaningful: it was accepted as “God’s will.” Today one intends to escape it by minimizing pain as far as possible, and the contemporary medicine is expected to solve the problem of suffering altogether. None of Kupisiński’s interviewees was in favor of euthanasia, however, even in the case of a terminal illness or those under a great pain.

In the conclusive part of the book, the author states that the customs and funerary practices existing among the people in the regions under study still indicate their strong faith in the afterlife. Moreover, some ancient eschatological beliefs, in some instances not compatible with Christian teaching (portents of death, prophecies through dreams, ways of ending suffering and hastening death, belief in the presence of the soul next to the body), still coexist with the dominant Christian beliefs and rituals.

Appendices placed in the final part of the book – namely, the maps of both regions showing the locations where interviews were conducted (these could have been better edited though), the questionnaire used by the author during his fieldwork, archival photographs, and examples of traditional prayers for the dead – certainly help the reader to understand better the material presented and analyzed in that thematic monograph.

Considering the vast amount of the field material collected by Fr. Kupisiński in only two small areas of Poland’s Mazovia region, the book is primarily an ethnographic document – and an important one to be sure. It chronicles for posterity one aspect of the Polish peasant microcosm, a world that is now disappearing due to the accelerated social and cultural “Europeanization” which has been taking place in Poland since the beginning of the 1990s. In this sense, the book continues the good tradition of ethnographic works that the members of the Steyer missionary order (SVD), to which Fr. Kupisiński also belongs, have produced over the last one hundred years in different parts of the globe, many of them being important contributions to the study of peoples that do not exist anymore. However, one also needs to remember that every ethnographic research, no matter how “objective” and empirical, always bears the stamp of its author, and the results of ethnographic observations could be fully understood only if one brings the “observer to the picture.” The fact that the ethnographer is a Catholic priest who interviewed his informants on topics of beliefs and religious observances could, to a considerable degree, tinge not only the perceptions of the researcher but also the responses of the people under study. This sort of meta-analysis lacks in that – otherwise methodologically well done – ethnographic inquiry. Still the book is a recommendable source of information for all students of Polish peasant culture and popular Catholicism in Europe.

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Laugrand, Frédéric B., and Jarich G. Oosten: *Inuit Shamanism and Christianity. Transitions and Transformations in the Twentieth Century.* Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2010. 467 pp. ISBN 978-0-7735-3590-9. Price: \$ 32.95

Although this publication is quite voluminous, it does not deal with Inuit shamanism and Christianity in general. It only examines the communities of northeastern Canada which now form the territory of Nunavut. The reason for this geographical choice is that the authors, both of them are professors of anthropology, Laugrand at the University of Laval and Oosten at the University of Leiden, had access to information gathered at courses and workshops focusing on oral traditions and shamanism during the years 1996 and 2008. Additionally, they also used archival and published material. The authors arranged these various sources according to special aspects of shamanism and Christianity into four parts; each part is subdivided into three chapters.

Part One, “*Angakkuuniq* and Christianity,” introduces the reader to the history of the decline of shamanism and the christianization during the 19th and the first half of the 20th century. Some Inuit statements from the 19th century reveal that contact with White people made them feel inferior to their ancestors, the “true Inuit,” and that they believed that the newcomers’ abilities were at least equal if not superior to those of their shamans. The roles of the latter and of the missionaries in the process of christianization is the topic of the second chapter. Anglicans and Roman Catholics differed in their approaches to convert the Inuit. Whereas the latter had close contact to the people and relied on personal instructions, the former printed and spread bibles in Inuit syllabics to people without having direct contact. Hence, some Inuit who read these Christian texts without further instruction developed and followed their own versions of Christianity which were often a syncretistic mixture including their former beliefs. The missionaries themselves not only accepted that the Inuit took them for new shamans but also used this role actively, e.g., in competitions with shamans. Nevertheless, open conflicts between priests and shamans seldom occurred; some *angakkuut* sent their helping spirits away and converted to Christianity, whereas others practiced in secret, converted or not. The third chapter deals with traditional Inuit winter feasts and their replacement by Christmas. Although these Inuit feasts centered on Sedna, the sea woman who owned the sea animals, and on killing evil spirits, they had certain traits in common with Christmas celebrations, such as the exchange of gifts, wearing ones’ best clothes, and the competition in games, which facilitated the acceptance of Christmas. Today, Inuit elders complain about the commercialization of Christmas; connecting people to each other through their common relations to the land and the non-human beings is of great importance to them.

Part Two, “Animals, Owners, and Non-human Beings,” concentrates on the many spirits of the Inuit universe. The fourth chapter examines the relationship between animals and their Inuit hunters, their souls, and the complex system of rules of the past which were important