menführung der drei erwähnten theoretischen Ansätze dient der Autorin, einige gut dokumentierte Fallbeispiele heranzuziehen und einer aufschlussreichen Analyse zu unterziehen.

Weniger Beachtung finden die massiven Interventionen der internationalen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit, die seit den Friedensverhandlungen zur Beendigung des bewaffneten Konfliktes der 80er Jahre die Bevölkerung Guatemalas nachdrücklich beeinflusst hat und zeitweise zum ökonomischen Generator der "Zivilgesellschaft" wurde. Ebenso kommen die Organisationsformen des lokalen Widerstands der indigenen Gemeinden zu kurz, meist gegen die Parzellierung des kommunalen Landbesitzes und zur Verteidigung der *commons*, also der Gemeindewälder oder Wasserquellen gerichtet, die im Westen, Norden und Osten des Landes grenzüberschreitend mobilisieren und den Nationalstaat dort treffen, wo er besonders verwundbar ist.

Insgesamt ist die Arbeit, die nur selten die für deutsche Habilitationsschriften typische Sprödigkeit zeigt, ein gelungenes Kompendium zum Verständnis der sozialen Bewegungen in Guatemala, in all den Facetten und Widersprüchen dieses extrem fragmentierten zentralamerikanischen Landes, das auch immer wieder das persönliche langfristige Engagement der Autorin durchscheinen lässt. Hoffentlich wird das Werk auch bald auf Spanisch vielen interessierten Leserinnen und Lesern zur Verfügung stehen! Georg Grünberg

Keeler, Ward: The Traffic in Hierarchy. Masculinity and Its Others in Buddhist Burma. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2017. 333 pp. ISBN 978-0-8248-6594-8. Price: $ 65.00

Ward Keeler's book opens with three common situations that will seem familiar to people who have spent time in Burma: First, the heavy and seemingly chaotic traffic on the roads; second, the fleeting interactions between tea shop workers and customers; and third, the public *dhamma* talks of monks, attended by large crowds of devout laypeople. Keeler's book is an anthropological investigation of social hierarchies in Burma. The starting point for his line of argument is that people in Burma understand all social relations as hierarchical in nature. This hierarchy is structured through a certain value that serves as criterion to rank oneself and others in the hierarchy. Keeler revisits Louis Dumont (1966) to develop his theory of hierarchy in Burma. In Dumont's work on India, the value that structured the hierarchy was purity. While being critical of Dumont's rather orientalist endeavour to portray India's hierarchical system as the polar opposite of societies in the West, Keeler generally credits him for attending to hierarchies organized through criteria other than power. Being preoccupied with ideas of power, Keeler argues, can prevent us from noticing other values that might structure hierarchical arrangements – to "alternative hierarchies," as Keeler puts it.

While Keeler makes clear that there may be various, sometimes contradictory values at play in any society, he identifies one overarching value as of special importance for the Burmese case: autonomy. The degree of autonomy one enjoys defines one's respective social standing. Autonomy marks the upper end of the hierarchical order, so to speak, while autonomy's opposite – attachment or interdependence – constitutes the lower end. Within this hierarchical structure, people in Burma negotiate their conflicting desires for autonomy and freedom, on the one hand, and interpersonal connectedness, on the other hand. Even the most autonomous of people – say, high-ranking monks – remain ultimately embedded in a web of social relations, interdependencies, and obligations. Each person faces limitations, but also responsibilities and opportunities according to his or her respective standing. Keeler refers to people's understanding of Theravada Buddhism, where the ultimate goal is to reach a state of complete autonomy from all worldly demands and sufferings (*nibbāna*). While reaching *nibbāna* remains a rather abstract idea for most people who strive for being reborn in a better state in this world instead of leaving the cycle of rebirths, the value of autonomy nevertheless manifests in society in many ways, as Keeler illustrates.

While the title of the book emphasizes gender, Keeler investigates hierarchies in a range of other contexts, including conversations, spiritual practices, monk–lay relationships, and even playfully applies his ideas to street traffic. He makes clear that within the hierarchical structure, there is always room for manoeuvre (as when motorbike riders overtake the bigger cars on a red traffic light to find a place in the front), as well as considerable degree of cooperation between people with different positions in the hierarchy. Traffic on the roads, for example, may be more hierarchical, but it is also much more interactional than, for instance, in Germany, e.g., by constant use of horns to indicate when a driver attempts to overtake, or to indicate a good moment for overtaking to a faster vehicle behind oneself.

In the first chapters of the book, Keeler takes the reader to a monastery in Mandalay. He provides detailed ethnographic accounts of the organization of everyday life on the compound and shows how hierarchies manifest in use usage of time, space, and authority to give orders. He also addresses the relationships between monks and lay people. Monks, perceived to be in spiritually superior position, enjoy significantly more respect than even the most powerful of lay people. This, according to Keeler, is also linked to the higher degree of autonomy they achieved. The admiration and respect for autonomy is generally linked to a perceived agony, even suffering, that comes with social demands and obligations. Monks are able to withdraw from many such demands – e.g., those stemming from marriage. Through their practice, they are also able to resist other worldly desires and refrain, for example, from eating anything after noon and from all sexual activities. The ultimate (and highly admired) example for achieving autonomy would be the forest monk who meditates alone in the forest, without depending on the laity for material support and detached from worldly needs. Some forest monks are even said to live without food for a period of time. Generally, however, monks stay connected to the laity through a range of interdependencies. Keeler

points out that full autonomy remains an ideal state that can never be fully achieved (unless one reaches *nibbāna*).

Keeler further addresses kin relations. With reference to studies on Thailand, he characterizes them as rather "loosely structured" – relations that one can easily be extended (say, to neighbors) as well as disengaged from. To balance this approach, it could have been interesting to go back to Melford Spiro's (1977) observations on kinship in Burma, which entail manifold kinship-related obligations, socioeconomic ones in particular. After all, for most people kin remains their primary support system. Keeler continues to describe hierarchical habits in everyday social interaction. These include gestures, and speech, all of which need to be adjusted according to one's own social standing, as well as the standing of the person one addresses. Such interactions demand a careful assessment of status – and render each individual vulnerable, as there is always the risk of making a mistake and offending an interlocutor. Keeler sees this vulnerability as precisely the social burden that makes autonomy so appealing. He also emphasises that one's standing is not set in stone – there is room for upward mobility if one knows how to make use of opportunities. He describes different attempts to move up in the hierarchy, primarily through gaining spiritual power.

The last part of Keeler's book looks at gender. Keeler offers a solution to the dilemma within the long existing discussion on whether women in Burma have a high social status or not. Women, he writes, are generally perceived in Burma as inherently spiritually inferior to men. Their movements are often restricted and their sexuality controlled, especially before marriage. Keeler connects his observations of gender differences to his theory of autonomy. In Burma, he explains, autonomy is gendered masculine, and attachment is gendered feminine. Women are thus identified with the weaker, and less valued, end of the hierarchical order. Keeler emphasizes that only men can become fully ordained monks; likewise, in lay life it is easier for men to assert autonomy without being judged negatively for it in the same way women would be. Women are generally expected to fulfil their social roles as wives and mothers, something that keeps them trapped in the realm of attachment. Nevertheless, Keeler argues that within their respective standing (which is subordinate to men) many women enjoy a relatively high degree of autonomy. He mentions their relatively easy access to legal rights, divorce, inheritance, jobs, and education, especially compared to women in neighbouring countries, such as India and China. However, Keeler cautions that these factors must not be confused with equality. He concludes from his analysis of gender expectations that equality and subordination may be mutually exclusive, but subordination and autonomy can coexist. He nuances his analysis with discussions on women who defy certain gender expectations and find themselves in a somewhat ambivalent status, like nuns and transwomen, and he also outlines how gender roles and gender expectations are being portrayed in popular culture. Keeler then devotes some pages to autonomy and market exchange – he sees the value of autonomy as a reason for the appeal of anonymous market exchange (for example shopping malls) which lack the obligations and confusions of more personalized economic interactions.

Keeler is careful to make clear that he is no defender of hierarchical arrangements. Nevertheless, he cautions that a current egalitarian ideal among many Western scholars might make it difficult to consider that people elsewhere willingly accept, or even embrace, their standing, even if this standing subordinates them to others and limits their agency and freedom. Researchers' own values could also tempt them to classify many of their observations too easily in terms of oppression or resistance. Hierarchical arrangements in Burma, while surely posing limitations, can also offer opportunities to enhance one's standing and relative benefits. A wealthy lay donor, for example, by positioning himself in close proximity to an influential monk, will always be subordinate (in terms of spiritual power) to the monk and yet he can benefit a lot from his respective role. The society as a whole, according to Keeler, is structured through differences (monk vs. lay, old vs. young, male vs. female) and it is these differences that ultimately bind people together in an overarching system. It would have been interesting to hear some more voices of people that Keeler puts into subordinate categories in relation to other groups – e.g., women. Ethnographic details and people's own perspectives on precisely such subordination could have helped to underline Keeler's point, or balance it through addressing more restrictions and difficulties stemming from hierarchical arrangements. Also, Keeler mentions that the idea of equal rights is rather unfamiliar and even strange to many Burmese. But social change is taking place in some parts of society, and certain ideas gain more support also among Burmese. One could complement Keeler's data with perspectives from people who consciously challenge the existing hierarchy, such as people active in women's movements or worker's rights movements.

Keeler has written an important – some will find provocative – contribution. In weaving together Buddhism and social hierarchy, Keeler addresses social dynamics that influence all spheres of life, on all layers of society – everyday interactions as much as high-level politics. Besides the theoretical value, Keeler's book is also entertaining – his vivid ethnography will remind those who have spent time in Burma of some of their own experiences, and readers unfamiliar with the country will get a taste of different aspects of Burma. Laura Hornig

Kerestetzi, Katerina : Vivre avec les morts à Cuba. Réinvention et transmission religieuse dans le palo monte. Paris : Éditions Karthala, 2016. 431 pp. ISBN 978-2-8111-1633-0. Prix: € 32,00

Entre las corrientes religiosas cubanas se cuentan la santería o regla ocha (la más difundida y la que tiene el mayor número de adeptos), el espiritismo y el palo monte, al cual está dedicada la presente obra, que explora las interacciones cotidianas entre los practicantes (paleros) y un muerto (*nfumbi*), que reside en un caldero (*nganga*) que es la parafernalia más importante en este culto. Se tra-