hostile environment. Based on long-term visits and anthropological fieldwork, this is the most complete study on the Cham since Nakamura's PhD.

Living in a very plural community that is characterized by steady interaction between Cham, Kinh, and Khmer communities, the Cham are regarded by the Vietnamese state in the centre as remote und uncivilized. In a region where Buddhism and spirit beliefs are dominating the religious landscape, the Cham stand out by sticking to Islam, speaking another language, and by specializing in trade. Taylor shows in a historical longue durée perspective that the Cham, far from being remote, are a very cosmopolitan group that had to defend themselves against the odds of history, and especially against the assimilation efforts of a repressive and centralizing communist state. Finding an economic niche in the market, the Cham use their trade and their Islamic networks as well as their contacts with the Diaspora to succeed in trade.

In the first chapter, Taylor looks into the creating myths of the Cham Muslim community and the nostalgia of a lost kingdom. By reproducing the stories of origin, the Cham create a master-narrative that is essential to their cultural identity and that gives meaning to the locality and community of the Cham beyond the border of the Vietnamese nation. The chapter on Islam takes an ambitious tour de force and shows that far from being the receptor only of religious ideas, the Cham themselves were the motor of proselytizing Islam in the region, benefiting from their networks in Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia, Southern Thailand, and Mecca. The chapter shows that the travel is integral to the reproduction of Cham locality and identity at home. In the next chapter, Taylor shows that while the Cham are faithful Muslims, they are also very active spirit believers. In this interesting chapter, we also learn that the Cham share most of the spirit beliefs with their neighbouring communities. Apart from malevolent spirits, it would be interesting to know more about the value of ancestors. Also, the two chapters of Islam and spirit beliefs could be better linked to show how Islam has localized and has been accommodated to local ideas. Chapter four and five are particularly strong and well-researched. In them, Taylor shows how the Cham have responded to increasing political pressure and economic marginalization by migrating and by specializing in trade. Thus, the picture of a very mobile community is emerging that uses contacts in the Diaspora as well as the Islamic networks for survival and reproduction. The last chapter gives an overview of the political agency of the Cham and their adjustment to the assimilation policy of the Vietnamese state.

Taylor emphasizes the location of the Cham community in the plural spaces of the Mekong delta, but remains silent on the cross-border transnational spaces of the Vietnamese and Cambodian Cham. Many Cham fled the persecution of the Khmer Rouge to neighbouring Vietnam. The cross-border connections might be another resource of the Cham to counter their marginalization in the imagined community of the Vietnamese nation. Working in Cambodia, Agnès de Féo has shown in her marvellous film "Un Islam insolite" that the Cham bani (son of the prophet), living on the South-East coast in the provinces of Ninh Thuân and Binh Thuân, distinguish themselves from mainstream Islam in very important ways. The transgressions of the Cham bani do not show that the Cham are not faithful Muslims (what they surely are), but show how Islam is accommodated in the local society, thereby being transformed according to the needs and value-ideas of the local community (cf., A. d. Féo, Transgressions de l'Islam au Vietnam. *Les Cahiers de l'Orient* 83/3.2006: 133–142).

Being a matrilineal society, women play a very important role inside and outside the mosque and the daughter inherits the house. The pure Cham pray once a week instead of 5 times a day. Many ritual elements were handed down from Brahmanism and Hinduism and persisted in Islam. Significantly, Cham were not converted to Islam, but remained Brahmans and Hindu. The Brahman and Muslim Cham, however, remained in touch and see themselves as male and female sides of the same culture. In Taylor's account, Islam is one of the cornerstones of Cham identity. Also, the interaction of the Cham with the neighbouring community is not entirely clear. It would be interesting to know if common spirit beliefs or cosmologies allow for inter-marriage and how inter-marriage is resolved. If Taylor had included the ambiguity of Cham Muslim identity between Brahmanism/Hinduism, spirit beliefs, and Islam, he would have perhaps discovered more common ground between the Cham community and other communities in the plural spaces of the Mekong delta. In this context, the impact of Islamic revitalization movements is also very crucial. We know from Cambodia that the Tabligh Jama'at, coming from North India, made big inroads and split the Cambodian Cham community into syncretic and orthodox Muslims. Taylor is right in rejecting the alarmist tones of Vietnamese state representatives, but I think from my own research that the agency of Islamic mission needs careful exploration. In particular, the Tabligh Jama'at reject the rituals relating to spirit beliefs, healing, and Brahman or Hindu heritage. In joining the Tabilgh Jama'at, the Cham, like other Muslim minorities, loose in fact their local cultural identity and become more mainstream Muslims according to global ideologies.

This being said, the study remains an exemplary and lively exploration that is taking sympathetic sides with a marginalized people who counter their marginalization by using available sources creatively.

Alexander Horstmann

Thiessen, Ilká: Waiting for Macedonia. Identity in a Changing World. Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2007. 206 pp. ISBN: 978-1-55111-719-5. Price: C$ 26.95

The title of Ilka Thiessen's Macedonia monograph, although derived from a poem titled "T'ga za Jug" (Longing for the South), is more suggestive of Beckett's "Waiting for Godot." Little more needs to be said about

the story Thiessen tells; a story that is likely familiar to most scholars of contemporary Southeastern Europe, not to speak of elsewhere on the fringes of the First World. But Beckett and Godot fail to reappear after being mentioned briefly – almost as an aside – in the introduction. But then again, Beckett and Godot are ever-present, waiting impatiently at a neighbouring table in one of the many cafés where Thiessen seems to have done the gross of her fieldwork.

Of course, if you are going to be spending any amount of time waiting, then a café is the best place to do so. Thiessen is waiting with her informants – her friends as she has decided to call them – young female engineers and their immediate family and friends, wondering, now that they have graduated, what they should do with the rest of their lives. But this is more than the self-doubt, navel-gazing, and indecision of youth: the whole country is waiting – keeping busy, when they're not sitting in a café, with ersatz activities.

The book is divided into an introduction, six chapters, and a brief conclusion. In the introduction, Thiessen announces her objectives in writing it: first, to present her case study of life in Macedonia between 1988 and 1996 based on her study of female engineers; which, second, will show a way of understanding the ethnic conflict in Macedonia and the critical role the "West" has to play in it; and, thirdly, to present an image of how Macedonia "is" and "will be" based on her fieldwork. After then providing a general overview of historical events in the first chapter, Thiessen dives into her case study in the second, "Mapping Urban Identity." Here the multifaceted nature of identity in a post-socialist (a term Thiessen considers inappropriate, or at least insufficient, for describing the countries of Eastern Europe), post-Yugoslavia country becomes clear, trapped between the past and the present, the urban and the rural, the East and the West, between ideologies and ideals, dreams and desires. Gender, the changes women's roles have undergone over three generations and the conflicts that ensue are the subject of the third chapter.

The fourth chapter, "Getting Along," is a story of survival in the city, of finding a job, keeping it, earning money, negotiating independence and real life after graduating. None of Thiessen's informants appear to have found a job as engineers, which should not be surprising considering the fact that they chose this career path in 1988 as citizens of a united Yugoslavia; it nevertheless makes their situation all the more precarious and their negotiation of identity all the more a case of soul-searching.

Chapters five and six go into the core of Thiessen's discussion, namely to the outward signs of identity and the negotiation of identity in Macedonia: consumption and the personal relationship to the body. Both are examined from an intergenerational point of view and from a chronological perspective, namely in the conflict between grandmothers and granddaughters in the first case and in the second the situation before and after Macedonian independence, although the latter period is subdivided into the period immediately after independence and the period towards the end of Thiessen's fieldwork in 1996. What is missing, of course, is any mention of the events after the Kosovo War in 1999 and the changes Macedonia experienced with the resulting increase in the NATO and NGO presence and Albanian irredentism.

But considering that Thiessen may likely have been the first Western European anthropologist in Macedonia after the beginning of the end of Yugoslavia and as such spans in her description a period of of eight years, this is clearly a bit much to ask. As it is, this long period of research is more a stumbling block for Thiessen than anything else. The *longue durée* is given appropriate consideration and is as such a revealing approach, but Thiessen's insistence on telling all her stories over this eight-year period results in every episode coming too short – in the end, while one has a general view of what happened over eight years, one is left with more questions than answers about what the situation at a given point in time was really like.

Chapter six is a stylistic breach, written in a more literary style (which makes its appearances in previous chapters but not in this scope) and rampant with poignant vignettes. Considering the care with which she chooses her words, this appears to be one of the first chapters Thiessen wrote and one she has had a great deal of time to rework and revise. Here she shows her true writing potential, a promise that often remains unfulfilled in the foregoing chapters. Where she nevertheless continues to miss the mark – and this is endemic to the whole book – is in the depth of her analysis. This is likely a simple result of the fact that she is trapped between her aspiration to thick description and her feeling to need to do justice to the *longue durée* and to her mass of data. As such the book is rampant with lost opportunities to delve in depth into questions of Macedonian identity. For example, in chapter six she introduces 14 (sic!) informants with whom she has clearly completed lengthy interviews in a sentence or two to allow each a sentence or two on how they feel about their body. Thiessen comments on them individually, with a few exceptions, in a sentence or two. That this remains a shallow discussion need hardly be said; what Thiessen discusses in just short of 10 pages is elsewhere the basis for a whole monograph.

Thiessen set herself three goals in her introduction. The first of these she has managed to realise with bravura. She tells an intriguing story of young women caught between worlds, educated for one political system but forced to live in another, contemplating how to make the best of a difficult situation, waiting for a sign, any sign. Thiessen fails to realise her second goal, to offer a way to understand the ethnic conflict in Macedonia. While it may have been opportune to claim an interest in "ethnicity," she might have been better off to simply admit that it is never really an issue. The Albanian or Roma minorities, for example, are present in the book, but not as subjects. They are one of the many "others" against whom Thiessen's informants try to distance themselves and as such they play the the

same role in the lives of young Macedonians as does Western television, advertising or consumer goods, their parents and grandparents, and the Tito regime. It takes two to make an "ethnic conflict"; as Thiessen presents it, it is little more than a discourse of difference.

Thiessen's third goal was to present an image of how Macedonia "is" and "will be" based on her fieldwork. This is, to put it bluntly, epistemological nonsense. "Waiting for Macedonia" is a book published in 2007 on the basis of a dissertation submitted in 1999 based on fieldwork that took place from 1988 to 1996. It presents a wonderful image of what Macedonia "was" in that period and contributes a vital element to the mosaic that is contemporary Macedonian identity but it has little to do with what Macedonia "is" or what it "will be," especially considering the course of events in the Western Balkans since 1996, the Kosovo War in particular, the "name debate," and whatever else is on the political horizon. In her conclusion, Thiessen distances herself implicitly from this ambitious claim. She would have done better to not make this claim in the first place.

Reading the book is an irritating enterprise, but not only because Thiessen cannot seem to decide between thick description and the *longue durée*. "Waiting for Macedonia" is Thiessen's PhD thesis, a fact that would have been apparent even if Thiessen had not mentioned it explicitly. It is the work of an author trying to find her voice, and as such the text is rampant with stylistic discontinuities and stylistic and, even worse, grammatical faux pas that a conscientious editor could easily have eliminated. But Broadview Press seems to be no exception to the prevailing tendency to make compromises on quality for the benefit of the bottom line.

One can hope that Thiessen is successful in finding her voice in her next publications. She has proven her potential here as an ethnographer and as a witness to a moving moment in European history. Her book "Waiting for Macedonia" is, everything having been said and done, an important stone in the mosaic that will one day make up the history of Macedonian identity.

Andreas Hemming

Toffin, Gérard: Newar Society. City, Village, and Periphery. Lalitpur: Social Science Baha, Himal Books, 2007. 443 pp. ISBN 978-99933-43-86-8. Price: Rs 790.00

Prof. Gérard Toffin is Director of Research at CNRS (National Centre for Scientific Research) and Professor of Nepali Civilisation in the National Institute for Oriental Languages and Civilisations, Paris. He has a wealth of experience, over 35 years of anthropological research among the Newar of the Kathmandu Valley (Nepal). He is one of the pioneers in that field providing important data through numerous publications and some major works: "Société et religion chez les Néwar du Népal" (Paris 1984), "Le palais et le temple. La fonction royale dans la vallée du Népal" (Paris 1993), "Entre hindouisme et bouddhisme. La religion néwar, Népal" (Louvain-la-Neuve 2000). "Newar Society. City, Village, and Periphery" (2007) is a synthesis of Gérard Toffin's analyses. It brings together a selection of his articles in a single volume, which would be particularly useful for English readers, but also for those who are already familiar with his work mostly published in French. Precious updates have been made with special attention to the recent developments in the studied communities.

The Newar consider themselves as the indigenous inhabitants of the Kathmandu Valley and clearly belong to the Indic mainstream, but at the same time exhibit a distinctive and unique culture. Stressing particularly its diversity, in his "Introduction," Gérard Toffin provides a short chronological overview of the various directions taken by scholars of different backgrounds involved in the study of the Newar society and civilisation. Based on case studies among a number of caste groups from both cities and rural areas, this collection of papers illustrates the itinerary of Gérard Toffin's research and his commitment in order to provide better understanding of the social system of the Newar. The main themes that emerge are featuring a complex society based not only on kinship, but also on the caste system and a specific type of multifarious associations called *guthi* that form the framework for organising numerous ritual activities. Some religious aspects are investigated as far as among this very multifaceted Himalayan community of Tibeto-Burman language, where Hinduism and Mahayana Buddhism continue to coexist, the ceremonial life holds a major significance for the social order.

The author's methodological approach and the critical emphasis of his study are apparent in the title of the book. He considers the role played by residence (city, village, and periphery) as fundamental and the formation of small territorial units turned in on themselves as a hallmark of the Newar society. By introducing the concept of territory, he brings out a topic which was rather evicted from the anthropological debate concerning South Asian societies particularly in French academic tradition. Following Louis Dumont's theories, the main "social referent" was supposed to be the dominant caste and hierarchy. Moreover, several meticulous analyses in the present volume make obvious that the caste does not appear as a group which is solidary or united as a whole; in all cases, territorial affiliations take precedence.

Consequently, the organisation of the volume is following the scheme stated by the title with a first cluster of chapters consisting principally in monographic and empirical studies. More synthetic chapters of theoretical importance on territory, the *guthi* association system, gender, and the caste system come later. The first three chapters of the book are urban case studies focusing on some specific castes from Kathmandu, Lalitpur, and Bhaktapur – the painters and mask-makers (chapter 1), the Brahman priests (chapter 2), and the farmers (chapter 3). Chapters 4 and 5 are devoted to the social organisation of the mono-caste farmers' community of Pyangaon (Lalitpur District) and to its links with the