

Universal Periodic Review of the human rights situation of UN member states.

A second thread investigates the international organizations' 'guidance culture' (Peter Bille Larsen, this volume), showing how technical arguments and language depoliticize the issues at stake, glossing over conflicting political interests, and establish a 'hierarchy of knowledge' through the use of language and arguments, which proves to be opaque to the general public. Guidelines fix benchmarks that allow organizations with no enforcing power to have a governing effect through soft 'post-political' regulation (Jane Cowan, this volume) based on what Tobias Kelly (also this volume) terms a 'politics of shame'.

A third line of investigation deals with participatory developments promoted by international programmes on the ground as well as within the UN arena during negotiations of international standards. Through the exploration of FAO interventions in Nicaragua, Birgit Müller demonstrates that community empowerment is endorsed in tandem with the increasing deregulation of the market and ultimately represents a form of neoliberal governance 'through communities' (Nikolas Rose, *Powers of freedom*, 1999). In her study of the involvement of indigenous organizations in the drafting of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Irène Bellier points to the ambivalence of this participatory shift, which provides indigenous organizations with new instruments, like the right to consultation, that give them a voice in decision-making processes while transforming indigenous leaders into 'convenient interlocutors', thus limiting their potential for contestation.

While indicating the complexity and contradictions of policy-making in multilateral organizations, the authors acknowledge that these organizations are vibrant sites of performative power, including the anti-hegemonic powers authorized by the consensus rule in UN decision-making, and that they are capable of eventually introducing new notions, approaches, and authorities.

Accurate ethnographic investigation of the establishment and implementation of global governance makes this volume essential reading for anthropologists working on international organizations, as well as for the larger anthropological community more familiar with the social, economic, and political impact of these organizations on small-scale societies. This work has none the less missed the opportunity to contribute as well to the contemporary

debate on the reconfiguration of ethnographic conventions. The core concepts shaping current ethnographic theory, like complicity, collaboration, and para-ethnography, underpin many of these studies, yet only a few of the authors invoke their status within the organizations they are studying (consultants, former employees, expert advisers, observers), while most do not make these relations explicit, thereby precluding a thorough analysis of the implications and dilemmas accompanying ethnographic engagement with international organizations.

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Clothes, music, and dance

BAKRANIA, FALU. *Bhangra and Asian underground: South Asian music and the politics of belonging in Britain*. xvi, 245 pp., illus., bibliogr. Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 2013. £16.99 (paper)

The book makes a convincing case for its central claim: that bhangra and Asian Underground (AU) music in the late 1990s in Britain became an important means for British Asian youth to construct and negotiate their identities by healing their sense of cultural alienation. Such was the importance of British bhangra and AU that they prompted the question: 'Is brown the new black?' London forms the backdrop for Falu Bakrania's ethnography, which took place in 1997-8 in clubs across the city. Most of the presented data come from the narratives of female club-goers with whom the author attended several club nights.

Although ethnographic attention is placed on the cultural politics of these two music genres, the author's primary analytical focus encompasses diverse and fluid notions of race, class, gender, and sexuality. The nexus between such categories and music practices forms the core of this elegantly structured book. The monograph is split into two parts dealing respectively with the role of male and female participants in the production and consumption of bhangra and AU, while each part consists of two chapters, one for each music genre.

Musically, bhangra was a form of remixed Punjabi folk music, and AU combined South Asian vocals with Western forms of dance music. While bhangra had certain distinctive features – such as *dhol* rhythms and Punjabi lyrics – AU

was defined less by a specific form and more by the kind of music that AU artists were remixing, normally Indian classical music. Being the first South Asian musical form that British Asian youth remixed, bhangra was seen as 'roots' music reflecting an authentic South Asian identity and was associated with tough maleness. As Bakrania demonstrates, bhangra clubs were spaces shaped partly by gendered violence, such as sexual harassment.

The perceived misogyny and insularity of bhangra were opposed to the freedom of expression and the expansive attitude advocated by AU clubbing. It is worth noting that while bhangra appealed to a working-class audience, AU attracted predominantly middle-class crowds. Yet AU served to reproduce rather than challenge class hierarchies and, crucially, it reinforced the existing racialized and gendered power relations by remaining resolutely heteronormative. After all, although AU was accused of betraying a South Asian identity, AU artists carried a 'burden of representation', that is, of symbolizing the British Asian community. This was a pressing issue considering that bhangra struggled to enter the mainstream but AU became hugely popular. And it was doubly important because, according to the author, the mainstream stood for national recognition, with AU artists thus being ideally positioned to actualize national belonging.

Bakrania employs her informants' narratives in order to elaborate on several critical points. She shows, for example, how individuals and groups can use music to craft their identities, rather than the former merely expressing the latter. Moreover, the author exhibits remarkable consistency in her preoccupation with challenging notions such as youth, postcoloniality, fusion, belonging, and politics. For instance, the liberal and gendered assumptions behind the ostensibly apolitical character of AU music in fact reinscribed and broadened conventional notions of politics. Similarly, going beyond a resistance framework and a concept of agency as subjective efficacy, the author highlights the variegated practices and manoeuvres involved in countering social structures and institutions.

By dissolving long-standing binaries along the way, such as private versus public space, Bakrania goes on to show through the examination of women's club-going experience how the dominant binary of being *either* British or Asian underscored and was complicated by many British Asians' ambivalent identification with Asianness. This was further intensified by

the conflicting demands or situations which faced participants in these music scenes: for example, bhangra's struggle to enter the mainstream sits uncomfortably next to the idea of mainstream success as inciting the consumption of ethnic difference; and while South Asian communities in Britain perceive tradition as the purview of women, bhangra artists sought to perform tradition *and* a tough male identity.

Although Bakrania provides a thoughtful analysis and critique of the bhangra and AU music scenes, the inclusion of additional ethnographic vignettes would have vividly illustrated her succinct points. Also, the reader is left wondering about the author's own clubbing experience and how she negotiated her presence and identity in such events while on fieldwork. Nevertheless, Bakrania's account is a welcome addition to the ethnographic literature dealing with music practices in Britain, and her sophisticated analysis considerably expands our knowledge of these musical forms and their attendant social and cultural conventions.

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HANSEN, KAREN TRANBERG & D. SOYINI MADISON (eds). *African dress: fashion, agency, performance*. xviii, 245 pp., illus., bibliogr. London: Bloomsbury, 2013. £19.99 (paper)

Not only does this multidisciplinary edited volume cast its geographic sweep as broad as a continent, it jumps into the centre of a conceptual Venn diagram. As posited in the introductory chapter, dress is, for a start, a meeting-point between 'dress practice', 'materiality', 'body, ... agency and power', and 'fashion' (pp. 3-5). In actuality, the book does not claim to be exhaustive. Rather, it offers a number of insights (fourteen plus an introduction) that, when published as a set, suggest that if there is an 'African dress', perhaps diversity is its primary characteristic.

The volume questions the nature of the relationship between dressed bodies and context, especially in relation to agency. This approach means refraining from concentrating on materiality. As Hansen writes, 'While efficacy is a property of materiality, *it works out in context*' (p. 3, emphasis added). Bodies bring meaning to clothes by producing, selling, and wearing them. That clothes are also endowed with meaning by those who perceive clothed bodies is particularly lucid in the chapters on