isting sociological literature on discretion and street-level bureaucrats arguing, like Pratt [2005], that discretion and rule of law do not exclude each other. Rather, they are complementary, as even these require a certain level of interpretation and context. Thus, the author does not deny the role of discretion in visa officers' construction of risk and credibility and their final decision-making. Neither does he neglect the existing categorisation within the whole process. However, he tries to explain from a different perspective that a popular perception of officers as racists is simplistic. On the contrary, the job of a visa officer has multiple shades to it formed by different factors that come into play. As Satzewich states, 'it is hard to see how a racist immigration officer could survive in a context where the pressure is on to issue visas and to issue them quickly.' (p. 137) Within the environment of different forms of pressure and constraints, Canadian visa officers are required to meet specific visa issuance targets and are encouraged to decide primarily based on the provided supporting document. Therefore, the direct interaction with clients occurs on limited occasions and primarily with more problematic applicants. Drawing on Lipsky's work [2010] on street-level bureaucrats, Satzewich widens the understanding of the face-to-face contact of visa officers arguing that the lack of contact has multiple consequences for the decision-making process. Particularly, it negatively influences officers' job satisfaction and their mindset, and they become cynical and lose nation-building feelings.

Although the author never reveals whether Maria from the opening vignette obtains her visa, he offers numerous interesting insights and stories of significant numbers of visa officers illustrating and explaining what drives them to say 'yes' or 'no' to the applicants. This persuasive book makes the reader step back and reconsider the general perception of visa bureaucrats

as being inherently racist and biased. At the end of the day, the reader realises that it is necessary to think outside the box because there are various shades of different aspects of officers' decision-making, whether procedural, contextual, organisational, or even those human.

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Petre Petrov and Lara Ryazanova-Clarke (eds): *The Vernaculars of Communism: Language, Ideology and Power in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe*
London and New York 2015: Routledge, 228 pp.

Throughout the communist world the 'essence of unreformability' stemmed from the fact that, in one way or another, all power structures stuck to the same ideology, as the authority of argument, the cornerstone of autonomous science, was gradually replaced by the argument from authority [Wagener 1998]. This evolution, however, as this book masterfully shows, was more than just a matter of novelty in language forms, as the new idioms abjured the linguistic-ideational status quo (p. 2). Although the volume is mostly built around developments in the USSR and/or Russia, its nine dense chapters go beyond the standard analysis of a 'wooden language' in diverse contexts behind the Iron Curtain, like Romania, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia.

Rather than focusing on the language of a concrete policy area (as, for instance,

in Beland and Petersen [2014]), this volume embarks on the daunting challenge of arguing that 'within each society, the communist variety constituted part of a sophisticated linguistic culture' (p. 8). Going beyond the static picture of a 'wooden language', all the contributors follow models based on the fluidity of linguistic identity. Although at times too dense, the reliance on analytic toolkits pertaining to linguistics and semantics does not limit, on the whole, the scope of the volume, as most chapters draw complex sociological and political inferences.

The book starts with a multi-layered reconsideration of the very basis of the Soviet language itself, Stalinist 'officialese'. The common thread is Stalin's constant demonstration of the fact that he was the key determinant of any areas of knowledge (p. 37), including grammar and linguistics in general. Notwithstanding, official discourse was fundamentally fluid with writers often losing their own ontological perspective within the same body of writing (p. 55). Because Stalinist discourse was pervaded with a particular sense of being, to map its full implications would obviously go beyond linguistics, requiring philosophy and cultural history (Chapter 2). This linguistic-semantic evolution generated a very visible incongruence when Soviet language was confronted with Western translations, which meant that it became common practice for translators and editors to align foreign texts to the discursive and, by extension, ideological canon (pp. 151–154, Chapter 7 on translations). Post-Stalinism brought a less overt standardisation, but this did not fully relinquish control over the connotative meanings released in the target discourse (pp. 155–156). At the same time, the developments of official discourses are deeply intertwined with aspects of vernacular language, leading to the development of a veritable Aesopian language, as a response to censorship. Chapter 3 analyses in depth and with great

nuance the formation of a double language as something more than simple coding, but a quasi-language in itself, with a dual purpose: distracting the censor and attracting the sympathiser (p. 73). In a longue durée perspective, however, the result is unclear; in the short-run, particularly under Stalinism, Aesopian language no doubt created room to manoeuvre in, but in the long run it led to the necrosis of language (p. 83).

The post-communist evolution of Russian official language seems to follow a rather similar pattern. If the 1990s witnessed a predictable resolute break from communist tropes and frames, from the early 2000s, at least on some specific topics (for instance Chapter 8 analyses Victory Day discourses), a Soviet-inspired mode of expression re-appeared (p. 181). Under Putin particularly, while Russian language seems to have evolved to become lexically and stylistically distinct from the preceding Soviet version, it has preserved many of its fundamental tropes (p. 213; Chapter 9). The fact that new quasi-Stalinists espouse discourses that do not borrow directly in shape from communist 'officialese' seems to validate something importantly hinted at throughout earlier chapters: as societies and cultures move forward, it is not just repetition by cultural reproduction that plays a major part, but innovation as well (p. 187).

By and large, the Soviet/Russian core of the book masterfully shows that 'concepts have a life, and like all lives, it is probably not linear' [Beland and Petersen 2014: 177]. Clearly, all the contributors in mapping sinuous language evolutions rightly show how the concepts that underpin institutions tend to have long internal temporal horizons [Neumann and Heinen 2013]. Yet, while all chapters go beyond mere linguistics, clear causal connections between ideas and institutions are somewhat too loosely presented. Official discourses could perhaps have been better analysed from the perspective of embedded-

ness. Few chapters focus intensively on the influence of language on specific institutions (by comparison Beland and Petersen [2014], who also analyse language evolutions, dwell heavily on the idea that social policy, their primary interest, produces its own language).

If in the case of the USSR, a very recalcitrant workforce was tamed through an official language with transformative powers (p. 113), in Yugoslavia the powerful social movements of the 1960s fundamentally reconfigured the signifying chains of the official ideology (p. 112; Chapter 5). Unlike in the USSR where the party formulated directives that touched every level of politics and society with gnomic generalisation (p. 50), in Tito's Yugoslavia the legal separation of state and party combined with the internationalization of Yugoslav activism anchored the socialist language into a new set of signifiers such as anti-colonialism (pp. 116–120). An interesting parallel evolution, albeit fundamentally distinct, occurs in the Romanian case where during the initial Stalinist phase (under Gheorghiu Dej) the working class was rhetorically constructed as a passive carrier of perennial attributes (p. 99), while in late socialism discourse-level passivisation decreased among all classes (p. 97). At the same time, however, late socialism in Romania also exhibited a historicising of agency that implied the decreasing impact of agency on socio-political reality (p. 99). The dominant discourse was one of 'simulated change', to use Shafir's [1985] apt phrasing, which claimed decentralisation and a performance-based economy. In late socialism thus seemingly neutral efficiency goals substituted the revolutionary discourse of the Stalinist period (p. 100). What is specific about the Romanian case is the overwhelming extent to which nationalistic discourses (constructing the socialist nation—Petrescu [2007]) became a key legitimising tool in official discourse (p. 105). In contrast with the closed and repressive

Romanian case, the Czechoslovak Communist Party created a buffer zone against internal pressure by allowing, at the level of public discourse, a certain amount of critique from within its ranks, to counteract other vectors (such as from the public or from elites—pp. 131–136). Nevertheless, there is a commonality with the Romanian case in the sense of an us-vs-them type of discourse—either an *us* of shared commitment and responsibility against an infuriating *them* of reactionary global political forces, like in textbook critique, or a more fragile *us* threatened by traitorous from within *them.* (p. 131)

Petrov and Ryazanova-Clarke's volume clearly shows that employing analytic toolkits from linguistics and semantics to dissect socio-political phenomena is more than a token interdisciplinary approach, as it enriches the existing understanding of the role of ideas through language and discourse. A main message of the book is therefore that future research must not assume homogeneity within communist language, but strive to dissect genres and registers (p. 143). While causal pathways are not always sufficiently highlighted, this volume is clearly an important methodological and empirical step further in adding the role of ideas to the process-tracing type of research.

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Helena Flam and Jochen Kleres (eds):
Methods of Exploring Emotions
Abingdon and New York 2015: Routledge, 310 pp.

A Friday afternoon, April 2016. I was conducting a research interview with a well-known Belgian war correspondent. He was dispassionately but colourfully telling me the story of witnessing an armed mass rape in central Africa: after driving away from the scene that he had almost immediately, after a slight shock, evaluated as hopeless and unmanageable, he said he felt morally uncertain and was ruminating over the correctness of his behaviour. He had probably shared the narrative many times before with his students, colleagues, and readers; it seemed to come from his repertoire of illuminating anecdotes. I felt upset, agitated, and inappropriate even as a mere listener. He, on the contrary, seemed perfectly calm and concentrated. The story shows some of the levels at which emotions—in this case, detachment, hopelessness, shock, moral uncertainty, a sense of responsibility, unease, and compassion—may pervade sociological research. It also shows some of the levels at which, as this book tries to illustrate, human sociality and diversity can be studied through the specific prism of emotions, whether as the primary focus of sociological research or as an issue that shows its relevance only during fieldwork.

This volume emerged out of the growing interest that has been shown in working methods by the Sociology of Emotions Research Network affiliated with the European Sociological Association. It posits human beings as being inherently social and interconnected by innumerable feelings and imagines societies as multiple intersections of emotion webs. It represents two clear genres and two (inter)related functions: a collection of stories and a manifesto.

First, concerning the collection of stories, the volume consists of short essays and research papers rich in examples and anecdotes illustrating how a sociologist can use emotions as data. In aggregate, they prove that, when it comes to methodological creativity, the sky is the limit. The levels of emotions that the researchers deal with range from emotions expressed in face-to-face bodily and verbal communication to elicitations of unacknowledged individual and collective emotions that play a role in various encounters, from emotions triggered during research interviews to responses to a questionnaire. Some of the chapters address the question of how unexpected emotions entered and transformed the research process. Most contributors try, more or less systematically and with varying degrees of success, to go beyond reporting fieldwork-related emotions and share their know-how about the ways of observing, interviewing, and even surveying emotion data. Second, as a manifesto, the volume seeks to explore how emotions are actually researchable. According to the authors, researching emotions means 'only' forcing the usual research instruments, such as observations, interviews, surveys, and text or visual analysis, to adapt to emotion data and different types of research questions.

Of the two purposes, the potential of the manifesto is less important. Diverse pieces of sociological and anthropological research and theory have long ago proved that emotions do not belong exclusively to the domain of psychology but are a relevant and researchable theme within sociol-