These indicators usefully add to our ability to identify and gauge electoral fraud. The cases that the authors explore—primarily recent elections in Russia and Ukraine, but briefly also the United States—illustrate this value well. The Russian cases do not tell us anything that we did not know already, but demonstrate that the indicators do pick up fraud in cases where we know it to have existed, particularly in the presidential elections of 2004 and the Duma elections of 2007. Similarly, the Ukrainian cases capture known fraud, too: The manipulation of the second round of the presidential election of 2004, which triggered the "Orange Revolution," is clearly visible. The Ukrainian cases also identify possible instances of fraud that have received less attention. Evidence points toward fraud on behalf of the pro-Western Yushchenko as well as the pro-Russian Yanukovich in 2004. The patterns observed suggest continuing, though narrowly targeted, fraud in the parliamentary elections of 2007. Thus, the methods used do more than merely tell us what we already knew anyway; they also prompt us to investigate particular localities and issues in greater depth.

The authors fully acknowledge that their approach has limitations. It cannot simply be applied across cases without considerable case-specific knowledge: "[T]here is no black box—no index or magical configuration of numbers—into which one inputs the data and out of which emerges a grading of an election's legitimacy" (p. 271). This is because the natural distribution of data can vary widely between cases: There is no ideal pattern to which data from actual elections can be compared. For example, while a non-normal distribution of turnout might signal electoral fraud, it could also be entirely natural; there could be two types of district (say, urban and rural), which tend, respectively, toward low and high turnout. Investigation of these possibilities, as the authors repeatedly argue, requires considerable context-specific understanding. Because of this, they offer their approach as a supplement—not an alternative—to ground-level observation of election procedures: "[O]ur methods can at best augment the studies of those with substantive knowledge and first-hand experience" (p. 270).

In addition, the authors emphasize that their methods can detect only large-scale fraud, using the example of the United States as illustration. These methods cannot tell us whether there has been fraud in recent U.S. presidential elections since any such fraud would have been too limited or too subtle to be picked up (e.g., p. 237). This greatly narrows the scope for the methods to tell us anything new; large-scale fraud is likely to be evident by other means.

This relates closely to a further constraint that the authors hint at in the final pages. The method identifies several patterns in election data that should arouse suspicions. But does this not mean that future fraudsters who wish to remain undetected will simply avoid these patterns? They will, for example, manipulate election returns while maintaining a broadly normal distribution of reported turnout. Certainly, such manipulations require far more central coordination than the ad hoc and often locally motivated tampering observed particularly in Russia. But this simply adds to the impression that these methods will capture only some types of fraud. They will capture locally driven and incompetent fraud, not fraud that is sophisticated and managed from the center.

These various limitations raise significant doubts about the extent to which the methods developed here are likely to generate new knowledge. Still, as I have said, the empirical analyses of Russia and Ukraine show that these methods can have real value. Used in conjunction with other sources of evidence, such as the reports of journalists and external observers, they may corroborate suspicions or point us toward issues that need further attention. In an area where powerful empirical evidence is inevitably difficult to come by, the addition of further methods, even if flawed, is to be welcomed.

Two presentational issues need also to be raised. First, the book sometimes lapses, particularly in the first two chapters, toward the polemical. The authors laud objective analysis (e.g., p. 18), but they do not always practice it. They are notably scathing about external election monitors (p. 14), even though they later argue that we need such monitors (see pp. 226–27). They cast irrelevant aspersions on the *New York Times* (p. 8). They say of the 2008 Russian presidential contest that "calling it an election denigrates the meaning of the word" (p. 6), but they make no attempt to verify this assertion through their own methods. Given the importance of judgment in applying the methods that the authors propose, such intimations of prior commitment to particular conclusions are unfortunate.

Second, the authors barely engage with the existing literature on their subject. The bibliography has just 43 entries, 19 of which are self-references. In consequence, the case that existing measures of electoral fraud are inadequate is never properly made, the possibility of building on the work of others is not explored, and the opportunity to understand how the processes studied here relate to the broader phenomenon of electoral manipulation is not taken.

In short, *The Forensics of Election Fraud* is a valuable but also a limited and frustrating book. It develops useful methods, but the utility of these methods is tightly bounded. It makes a significant contribution to a rapidly growing literature, but the authors' understanding of that contribution is not made explicit.

Peacebuilding in the Balkans: The View from the Ground Floor. By Paula M. Pickering. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007. 242p. $39.95.
doi:10.1017/S1537592711000545

— Mieczysław P. Boduszyński, *Independent Scholar*

Combining an innovative mix of methods and sharp analysis, Paula M. Pickering has written a cogently argued study

on the microfoundations of postconflict reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereafter BiH). Pickering's book is a fine example of how in-depth fieldwork and methodological pluralism in a political science study can produce important results for social scientists, area specialists, and practitioners engaged in postconflict reconstruction. The book is also a valuable contribution to contemporary Balkan studies, where the bulk of the literature has focused on the breakup of the former Yugoslavia and the resulting wars, rather than on in-depth studies of the postwar transitions of the individual Yugoslav successor states.

Pickering argues that in spite of years of involvement by an extensive international apparatus and despite the anti-state-building efforts of BiH's nationalist elites, ordinary citizens, "in the mere acts of living their daily lives and formulating opinions on the events affecting them" (p. 50), navigate their way through the postconflict environment, thereby influencing peacebuilding in unexpected ways. She roots her argument in identity-based theories of ethnicity, which focus on individuals' "self understandings" (p. 58) and acknowledge that people "attach variable meanings to social categories and incentives" (p. 87). She successfully demonstrates that in BiH, these self-understandings may have as much to do with class, regional identity, individual experiences during the war, and workplace relations as they do with ethnicity. Indeed, Pickering sees Bosnian identities as "fluid, capricious, complex constructions" (p. 64). Ordinary Bosnians "quietly contest the official categories and identities that are promoted by the nationalizing state and minority activists" (p. 70), which is why some people who fled ethnic cleansing choose to return to communities where they might face discrimination.

Central to Pickering's argument and choice of method is the idea that such self-understandings cannot be assumed or derived from some innate characteristic; rather, they have to be discovered through ethnographic field research. The author's own research entailed months of participant observation, living with families in two BiH cities (Bihać and Sarajevo) for extended periods of time over several years. Her ethnographic work yields keen insights into why, for example, some people decide to return to their prewar homes rather than stay in "putative homelands," and how they deal with issues such as employment and relations with neighbors while navigating through a "multilevel network" (p. 16) of nationalizing state officials in Sarajevo, national and local minority activists, transnational actors, and elites in external homelands (Croatia and Serbia), each with its own, and often conflicting, designs on the postwar Bosnian state.

To support the findings of her ethnographic work, Pickering uses statistical regression to analyze individual-level data from a number of public opinion polls, showing that attitudes on issues like ethnic relations are influenced by very personal experiences, such as whether an ethnic Serb stayed in Sarajevo during the war. Those who experienced personal tragedy are more likely to be intolerant of other ethnic groups. Thus, "disparate wartime experiences trumped shared ethnicity" (p. 77) in terms of defining attitudes and shaping decisions about where to rebuild one's life. Pickering points to the rural–urban split as a key factor shaping identity, describing the contempt many city dwellers felt toward the influx of their rural co-ethnics during the war. If anything, it is the pressure exerted by putative homelands and ethnic entrepreneurs that caused people to "collapse their self understanding to ethnicity" (p. 83). She suggests that transnational actors should design their programs so that they take account of "the varied meanings that ordinary people give to ethnic labels, the social divisions that sometimes trump and always complicate ethnic ones, and the concrete needs that common people desperately require new institutions to address" (p. 166).

In the fourth chapter, Pickering argues that organizations promoting peace and reconciliation work best when they are responsive to local needs and "supportive of interests that are not ethnically defined" (p. 125). She also finds that the workplace is a key venue for helping to develop "cross-ethnic identifications and cooperative relationships" (p. 127), unlike the local community, where discrimination is prevalent against minorities. The implication for foreign donors is that "broad based civic associations," as well as traditional networks, are most effective in bridging ethnic differences and building social capital (p. 138).

Pickering devotes the fifth chapter, which does not flow so well from the previous ones, to describing and documenting the aversion felt by ordinary Bosnians toward politics and their political institutions. Although people throughout the Balkans express low levels of trust toward their leaders and governments, nothing approaches the antipathy of Bosnians toward their political system. These attitudes go far in explaining the current crisis of the BiH state, and further push ordinary citizens to rely on the informal and traditional networks highlighted by Pickering. She finds that minorities with supraethnic, inclusive social identities are most likely to vote for moderate parties, whereas those living as majorities are likely to opt for nationalist parties. She argues that encouraging civic identities by making political institutions more accountable can help overcome interethnic mistrust (p. 164).

In a final chapter, the author extends her argument to the other Yugoslav successor states and a number of multiethnic states in Eurasia. This is a useful starting point for applying her framework beyond BiH, but the accounts are too brief to begin to do justice to complex postconflict settings such as Afghanistan.

The book has some other shortcomings, starting with the title, which is somewhat misleading. Pickering covers only BiH in depth, not the entire region as the title implies. Moreover, the title suggests that the book is a study of

peacebuilding, when it is really more focused on the factors that shape identities and how those identities influence key decisions, such as where one should live in a postconflict setting. Peacebuilding in BiH consists of much more than ethnic reconciliation and refugee return, on which the author focuses: There are other important processes, such as transitional justice, and particularly the role of international and domestic war crimes prosecutions, which she does not mention. After reading the book, one walks away with a strong understanding of the nuances of identity in BiH and how these nuances influence daily life and individual choices, but one does not get a sense of how Pickering evaluates the chances for peace and stability in Bosnia today. In part, this is because the bulk of her research was carried out six years or more before the book was published: An epilogue bringing the story to the present (or at least to the publishing date of 2007) would have been helpful in this regard. Finally, Pickering could have provided more historical context on nationality policies in the former Yugoslavia, which would have been helpful for the non-Balkan specialist in understanding BiH's post-Yugoslav transition.

While this is a rigorous work of social science, Pickering's methodology and interests do not lend themselves to precisely defined dependent variables and singular causality. However, the benefits of her approach far outweigh the drawbacks. It is rare to find a work of comparative politics these days that provides this degree of fine-grained analysis and "thick description," combining ethnographic work with large-n analysis, all while addressing an important question for political science and policy. This book will serve as a model of how to design innovative research employing multiple methods, and will inspire graduate students in political science who are motivated to undertake extensive dissertation fieldwork with an ethnographic component.

Revolution, Rebellion, Resistance: The Power of Story. By Eric Selbin. London: Zed Books, 2010. 257p. $116.95 cloth, $29.95 paper.
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— Kevin J. O'Brien, *University of California, Berkeley*

Eric Selbin has written an excellent book about the way that stories animate and embolden revolutionaries, a thought-provoking book about types of revolution, and a problematic book that shoehorns disparate episodes of resistance into the category of lost and forgotten revolutions. In the course of advocating a "storied turn in the discipline" (p. 4), Selbin puts people and their thoughts and feelings at the heart of his account and highlights how myth, memory, and mimesis combine to make revolutions possible. Although he acknowledges that other factors come into play, including oppression, hunger, demographic pressure, and economic crisis, he believes that "the articulation of compelling stories may provide the key" (p. 191). Stories of possibility, though not always true in a simple factual sense, guide, warn, inspire, and make real what may well be unreal and impossible. They offer revolutionaries a practical ideology with which to confront inequity, povert, and disenfranchisement. Like frequent Che Guevera sightings, "mythopoetic" (p. 16) stories transcend time and space and are adopted (and adapted) by those seeking to transform their world.

The first half of the book, where Selbin lays out his case for the power of story, at times read like a brief, but does so in the way that important and lasting books often do. Occasional overstatement—"stories . . . can obviate economic disadvantage, surmount socio-cultural mores, and even triumph over military might" (p. 74); stories are perhaps "the primary form of socio-political struggle" (p. 187)—do not take away from his argument's significance. One might, nonetheless, question "the intrinisically subversive element" (p. 79) he locates in many stories and Ben Okri's claim that stories are "always a form of resistance" (p. 185). As Selbin acknowledges, but brushes over quickly, many stories resemble conservative fairy tales: They legitimate the status quo, reinforce prescribed behaviors, and impede the consideration of other possibilities. At the same time, this brief book, which covers some of the best-known revolutions in little more than five pages and scores of other incidents in as little as a sentence, has limited space to discuss how stories are transmitted. How and when does mimesis happen? How, for example, did 1917 Russia come to be seen as the child of 1789 France? What enables a particular story to become "the story of the moment" (p. 194)? Why has the story of the Cuban revolution been "the right story in the right place at the right time" (p. 186) for so many revolutionaries over the last half century?

The second half of the book sketches four revolutionary stories: 1) the civilizing and democratizing story, with the American Revolution as "the bright and shining example" (p. 106); 2) the social revolution, where the French Revolution has pride of place; 3) the freedom and liberation story, where anticolonial struggles and the 1791 Haitian slave revolt are examplars; and 4) the revolutions of the lost and forgotten, where the Paris Commune stands in for a variety of "smaller, more obscure, more local, narrower, and insular stories" (p. 21). Each of these stories is told simply and well, with more attention to legacies than facts. Tidy and often apocryphal tales may raise the hackles of students of particular revolutions, but Selbin has a ready retort to the charge that the stories are tendentious or based on questionable interpretations of history. He is recounting a revolution as it is remembered and used, not as it was. The prevailing story of the French revolution downplays the Terror. That October 1917 was less a social revolution than a pedestrian coup d'état is not the point. The myth matters more than the reality. More problematic, many of the revolutions he reviews appear in two or even three stories. So, France, for instance, is the