

stood apart from the direct exercise of power. Even though the periodical press, the association movement, and other instances of public action were sometimes highly politicized, public opinion was at least partially independent from politics, and Sabato argues that it became more so over time.

The last chapter puts together the different dimensions explored in the previous three and advances an interpretation of the shaping of Spanish American republics with a focus on the relationships between the people and the government and the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion from the polity. Sabato posits that the terms of how authority was legitimised were worked through negotiations between the “few” and the “many”. The latter had their own agendas to defend and were not mere puppets manipulated by the ruling elites. These dynamics ended in the last third of the nineteenth century, when governments either restricted the franchise or abolished the civic militias or put them under the control of increasingly centralized armies. As Latin America entered the twentieth century, the ideal of popular sovereignty was on the wane and the continent was dominated by centralizing oligarchies with strong anti-liberal tendencies. Based on an immense new literature on political history of postcolonial Latin America, Sabato’s impressive work largely contributes to correct and update the master narrative of politics in the nineteenth century. While most histories of republicanism focus on Europe and the United States, Sabato shows that Spanish American republics can no longer be ignored; instead, their daring adoption of republican-

ism must be central to any transformations of the nineteenth-century world.

Notes:

- 1 See for example, J. Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World. A Global History of the Nineteenth Century*, trans. P. Camiller, Princeton 2014, p. 478; C. A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World 1780–1914. Global Connections and Comparisons*, Malden, MA 2004, p. 147.

**Steven Seegel: Map Men.
Transnational Lives and Deaths of
Geographers in the Making of East
Central Europe, Chicago: The
University of Chicago Press 2018,
346 p.**

Reviewed by
George W. White, Brookings

Steven Seegel presents a fascinating telling of the professional lives of five prominent geographers, how their lives intertwined, strengthened, and strained with the ebb and flow of peace and war. He calls it a love story. The five are Albrecht Penck (German) (1858–1945), Eugeniusz Romer (Polish) (1871–1954), Stepan Rudnys’kyi (Ukrainian) (1877–1937), Isaiah Bowman (American) (1878–1950), and Count Pál Teleki (Hungarian) (1879–1941). As Chapter One’s title indicates, “Professor Penck’s Pupils”, Albrecht Penck was a mentor to the others. Not only was Penck older than the others, his language and culture was German, the core of a broader “East Central Europe” (“Ostmitteleuropa”) culture. Modern academic structures and thinking were framed by

Ostmitteleuropa's culture and remain largely intact today. Because the others also were products of Ostmitteleuropa culture, indeed they also could understand German, Seegel labels them "Anglophile Germans" and "transnational Germans". Within the academic culture of Ostmitteleuropa was the discipline of geography with its own particular language of maps. Seegel's interest in these five geographers lies in their abilities to "speak map" and in how they employed their map-speaking abilities to advance up the rungs of academia and society. His interests lead him to discover the human beings hidden behind these men's professional personas and how their human frailties compromised their integrities. In his own words, "The book's core argument is that interest in maps was often pathological, a sign of frustration and unfulfilled personal ambition along with a lot of other emotions – fear, petty jealousy, and resentment – that nestled inside provincial, contradictory, and closed professional worlds of privilege, learning, and authority" (p. 3). In pursuing his goal, Seegel structures his book around four points: "(1) the place-based *homo geographicus* who 'spoke map'; (2) the basic, illiberal tasks of geographers and geography as a science; (3) state-side geography as revisionist; and (4) geography as affective, in and through letters".

Seegel constructs the personalities of these five men through his analysis of their personal writings: letters, memoirs, archival documents, etc. Though gaps in material existed, he was able to collect numerous documents, enough to write captivating biographies of these men. Seegel narrates the stories of these five men in seven chapters plus an introduction and a conclusion. He

could have devoted a chapter to each man, but this would have put more of a burden on the reader to connect these men's lives afterwards. Interestingly, Seegel juggles these men's stories through the entire book, continually switching between individuals in every few pages. A potentially confusing method for the reader to follow, Seegel's deft writing skill makes such a narration work. The reader is able to clearly see how these men's lives intertwined and how their relationships evolved over time. Chapter 1 introduces the men by revealing their family backgrounds and places of origin. Their backgrounds varied, ranging from Isaiah Bowman's family of preachers, teachers, and farmers to Pál Teleki's aristocratic origins. Entering the elite echelons of academia, Seegel describes these men as ambitiously wanting to become more than who they were. The rest of the chapters flesh out this narrative theme.

Seegel labels the five map men members as a "confraternity of scientists across borders" who developed their deep bonds before World War I. In the colonial tradition, they even met for grand excursions such as the Transcontinental Excursion (of America) in 1912. World War I then divided the confraternity into winners and losers. On the winning side were Bowman (America) and Romer (Polish), who both then rose to prominence. As the director of the American Geographical Society, Bowman became the chief territorial specialist for the American delegation at the Paris Peace Conference. He oversaw the creation of the maps that informed the diplomats who redrew Europe's boundaries. For Poland, he relied on Romer's Polish map narrations. In contrast, Penck (German) and Teleki (Hungarian) were os-

tracized and their geographical work was ignored outside their respective countries. For example, German geographers were either banned from or boycotted meetings of the International Geographical Union well into the 1930s. Stepan Rudnyts'kyi also was excluded by Bowman and Romer because his pro-Ukrainian map narrations conflicted with Romer's pro-Polish ones. After the war, the city of Lwow (Lviv) was incorporated into the new Poland and its university Polonized. Rudnyts'kyi felt unable to return to this city. Instead, he moved to Kharkov (Kharkiv) and became a professor of geography, but was arrested by the Bolsheviks in 1933 and executed in 1937. Despite the divisions created by the war, these men appeared to do what they could to maintain their confraternity that was born during illiberal imperial-colonial times. However, Seegel argues that these men revised themselves into the liberal international order of the nation-state that emerged after 1918. Subsequently, these men increasingly championed their nations' causes until their national loyalties intertwined with their personal and professional ambitions. Consequently, their nations' rivalries created professional rivalries along the identical fault lines that divided their nations. The divisions, as described above, deepened until the differences became irreconcilable, especially with World War II.

The book's greatest weakness is that Seegel never mentions the concept of environmental determinism though it was one of geography's dominant paradigms in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Even those geographers who did not subscribe to it had to acknowledge and contend with it. Like eugenics and many other ideas of

that time, it was inspired by Darwinism and made geography very much a part of the family of disciplines. Eventually, environmental determinism, eugenics, and other ideas were found wanting and were abandoned as scientific knowledge advanced as is the case with many paradigms. The challenge with reconstructing the lives of historical figures is to accurately depict the context of an earlier time. Environmental determinism was an aspect of that context, but Seegel never mentions it though he provides numerous quotes that succinctly illustrate it. Consequently, he fills the vacuum that he creates with a mixture of general historical context of colonialism turned nationalism and the petty egotism of social and scientific wannabees. The latter is driven by a critical theory perspective that does not see beyond personal agendas and highlights sexism, biological racism, anti-communism, anti-Semitism, Western civilization chauvinism, etc. Certainly, these existed and already have been investigated by others. Seegel adds little to the discussions of these concepts though he frequently bandies about these terms. For example, concerning sexism, he only notes that Bowman "did not regard his daughter Olive as worthy of the same professional training" as his two sons (p. 102). In short, Seegel finds the five map men guilty of being men of their times. Perhaps a hundred years from now, an academic will look back and claim that academics at this time also led transnational lives: born and educated in the pre-digital age, yet desirous of success in the digital age while being driven forward by "unfulfilled personal ambition along with lots of other emotions". In other words, we too may

be judged guilty of being products of our time.

Seegel's book has two components. The first is a well-researched reconstruction of the professional lives of five historical figures. The second is critical theory commentary unnecessarily draped over the lives of these five men. Seegel's book is highly recommended for its first component.

Arnošt Štanzel: Wasserträume und Wasserräume im Staatssozialismus. Ein umwelthistorischer Vergleich anhand der tschechoslowakischen und rumänischen Wasserwirtschaft 1948–1989, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2017, 378 S.

Rezensiert von
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Arnošt Štanzels Dissertation analysiert den Umgang der tschechoslowakischen und rumänischen staatssozialistischen Eliten mit der Wasserwirtschaft und bietet eine umwelthistorische Perspektive auf die infrastrukturelle Erschließung von Naturräumen. Gleich zu Anfang distanziert sich der Autor zu Recht vom Topos des Ökozids und vermeidet somit einen verzerrten Blick auf das Mensch-Natur-Verhältnis im Ostblock. Anhand von mehreren Einzelbeispielen, gleichmäßig verteilt über die gesamte staatssozialistische Periode, gelingt dieser Studie eine facettenreiche Untersuchung dieses so wichtigen Themas für

aufkommende oder gestandene Industriegesellschaften des 20. Jhs.

Die Monographie verfolgt zwei Analyseebenen. Erstens vergleicht die Studie das Verhältnis der kommunistischen Eliten in der Tschechoslowakei und in Rumänien zur Natur, um Gemeinsamkeiten und Unterschiede innerhalb des Ostblocks auszuarbeiten. Andererseits fragt sie, ob es ein spezifisches Naturverhältnis im Ostblock gab, und platziert die staatssozialistische Umwandlung der Natur allgemein in den Kontext der Moderne. Die Arbeit ist in drei Themenschwerpunkte gegliedert, die sich auf Eingriffe in den Bergen, die Nutzung der Donau und die Wasserverschmutzung beziehen. Die ersten beiden Themen sind in zwei Länderkapitel unterteilt, die wiederum vor allem im rumänischen Teil mehrere Fallbeispiele vorstellen. Allerdings unterbricht diese Kleinteiligkeit nicht nur den Lesefluss, sie verursacht auch Redundanzen. Ein etwas ausführlicher dargestelltes Beispiel pro Land hätte wohl genügt, um die Thesen der Arbeit zu untermauern. Der Bau von Staudämmen in den Bergen bietet tiefe Einblicke in frühe Bemühungen die osteuropäischen Länder, nach stalinistischem Modell umzubauen. Der Traum von der Elektrifizierung beflügelte Planer und Entscheidungsträger, daran zu glauben, dass sie die sozio-ökonomische Zusammensetzung sowohl der umliegenden Region als auch des ganzen Landes grundlegend verändern könnten. Daran war das Versprechen vom Wohlstand und der Anhebung des Lebensstandards geknüpft. Ausgehend von diesen gemeinsamen Voraussetzungen konnte die spätere Nutzung der Staudämme in den beiden Ländern nicht unterschiedlicher ausfallen. In Rumänien wurden die Vidraru- und