

to the credit of Hirokazu Miyazaki and Richard Swedberg, the editors of *The Economy of Hope*, and the other four authors contributing chapters to the volume that they have convincingly brought the concept of hope into the focus of the social sciences.

Three of the chapters are largely conceptual and provide the theoretical backbone of the volume: the introduction by Miyazaki, the chapter by Swedberg on the use of the concept of hope in sociology, and the chapter by Annelise Riles on legal fictions. While these chapters do not converge on a common definition of hope or a joint understanding of the role of hope in social relations, they each provide a glimpse of how much sociology could gain from thinking more systematically about the concept of hope.

A key aspect of hope is the temporal orientation of actors toward the future. Miyazaki draws especially strongly on Ernst Bloch's *Principle of Hope*, emphasizing the potentiality ingrained in the concept, the "not yet." In his analysis of President Barack Obama's speeches, Miyazaki points out the power of hope to reorient action. Through hope, substance and beliefs are redefined, leading to the "reorientation from 'no longer' to 'not yet'" (p. 180). The motivational power of hope is achieved by drawing the future into the present. A desired state of the world is already experienced in people's imaginations and thus has a motivating effect on actors—as Albert Hirschman pointed out in the case of political involvement.

Another central element of hope is its connection to the uncertainty of the future. Yuji Genda sums this up succinctly: "Hope is a story that is needed when confronting an uncertain future" (p. 119). That actors have hope means that they act as if a desirable future state of the world could be attainable in the future, even though they cannot be certain of the outcome. Swedberg emphasizes that the attitude of hope involves a strong desire (he speaks of wishes) for certain outcomes. He reminds the reader also of Ralf Dahrendorf's assessment of the role of hope in sustaining a democratic social and political order. What Dahrendorf had in mind was not utopian fantasies but rather "realistic hope" of upward social mobility, which he characterized as "effective hope"

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Hope is not a concept central to sociology. With few exceptions, mostly among the classics, sociologists have abstained from thinking about a notion that few would deny is central to human life, but at the same time seems to be too individualistic or too elusive to captivate the sociological imagination. It is

because it motivates actors and integrates them into society.

The most fascinating chapter of the volume might be Annelise Riles's discussion of the notion of legal fiction, which takes up the concept of as-if. Legal fictions are factual statements of a judge where participants understand that the statement is not fact (p. 128). In law, fictions are crucial tools that enable parties involved in disputes to move forward—a property they share with the notion of hope. Riles's main starting point is Hans Vaihinger's *Philosophy of "As-If,"* a once important book that has been largely forgotten today. The reference to Vaihinger and the notion of as-if allows Riles to see hope (like legal fictions) as a placeholder in situations in which the future is uncertain but specific outcomes are highly desired.

In addition, the discussion of legal fictions confirms the connection between hope and fiction, pointing out the character of hope as a story. This fictional essence of hope is also discussed by Miyazaki and by Genda. Finally, Riles takes up the idea that legal fiction (or hope) has the potential to reorient actors, emphasizing the political dimension of this reorientation in particular. The use of legal fiction in law may camouflage political intent. Hope, too, may be motivated by such intent. Seen in broader terms: any construction of a future present has potentially agentic power and is relevant for social analysis exactly for this reason.

The other five chapters of the volume focus on empirical cases that take the reader to far-flung places. Richard Swedberg discusses hope in eighteenth-century Sweden, a time in which Swedish elites attempted to develop the country based on mercantilist principles. Swedberg discusses the support for manufacturing, the attempt to import new useful plants and crops, and also the project to measure the actual wealth of Sweden through "political arithmetic." At the end of the eighteenth century, it became clear that almost all of the projects had failed. However, the historical perspective demonstrates that the projects initiated in the early eighteenth century were based on evocative surplus, or hope, without which they would not have been undertaken. While the goals aspired to were largely not achieved, at least two

unintended but socially consequential results emerged from these hope-driven projects: the diffusion of the potato in Sweden, and the development of statistical instruments and practices for taking stock of Sweden's economic wealth.

Katherine Verdery brings the reader into the dystopian world of farm collectivization in Romania after the Second World War. Admittedly, this is a difficult terrain in which to find hope. But this unlikely case also demonstrates how pervasive hope is in social relations. The Communist cadres tried to persuade farmers to hope for a better future in the collectives; some of them indeed could be convinced. Other farmers hoped not to be categorized as large landowners, which would give the Communist Party justification for their humiliation and suppression.

Hopelessness is the topic of Yuji Genda's chapter on hope in contemporary Japanese society. The chapter gives bleak insights into a society that struggles with an aging population, economic stagnation, and an increasing loss in close social relationships. Even more than the actual survey data from a project in which hope in Japanese society was quantified (nearly 80 percent of the respondents stated that they had some hope), it is Genda's interpretation of this data that presents Japan to us as a society that struggles with envisioning a positive future for itself. Japan has lost a story of hope for itself, but such a story is necessary to confront an uncertain future (p. 119).

Anthropologist Jane Guyer investigates the extent to which the concept of hope can be applied to the Yoruba living in Western Africa. Guyer emphasizes the interwoven temporalities of the Yoruba, where multiple possibilities are considered simultaneously and a type of expectation emerges that cannot be interpreted as calculated probability (p. 166). Instead, it can be seen as having a family resemblance with the concept of hope that, as Guyer reminds us, has its cultural origins in the Judeo-Christian tradition, a historical connection that is explained in more detail in the chapter by Miyazaki on "Obama's Hope."

The volume demonstrates that the concept of hope is an analytical lens for the social sciences that opens up fascinating

perspectives in social analysis. It can only be hoped that it inspires other social scientists to reflect on this concept and its potential uses in research.
