

carceration rates of blacks, but also the rise of the affluent black middle class, pointing out that in the Cambria Heights quarter of Queens, New York, the African American level of income was higher in 2006 than that of white residents.

In his final two chapters Brøndal chronicles the historic election of Barack Obama and the challenging race relations during the Obama presidency. Brøndal points out that Obama's message in his famous speech at the 2004 Democratic National Convention was that the American dilemma was coming to an end. However, the financial crisis of 2008 disproportionately affected blacks, and Brøndal has gathered an impressive amount of data to document the economic situation of African Americans during the Obama era, noting that one in four blacks were below the national poverty line.

All in all, this is a highly successful book. The variety of pictures and images add an important dimension to Brøndal's narrative. We see pictures of slain soldiers at Gettysburg and CNN's Wolf Blitzer declaring Barack Obama as the President Elect. Hopefully, the optimism that Obama represented as president will endure during the Donald Trump presidency and beyond, and that the recent arrival of well-educated immigrants from Africa can help strengthen American society.

Alf Tomas Tønnessen

Volda University College

**Alfred Hornung, ed., *Obama and Transnational American Studies. American Studies: A Monograph Series, Volume 276.* Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag WINTER, 2016. 528 pages. ISBN: 978-3-8253-6675-9.**

As the Obama Presidency has come to a close and Donald Trump has taken the oath of office as America's 45th president, scholars now have the benefit of hindsight in analyzing the Obama presidency and its impact. As far as American Presidents go, the potential in the diversity of topics and approaches in studying Barack Obama is outstanding. It seems only appropriate to evaluate Obama's impact on a variety of fields and topics, much wider in scope than the purely political. Many different approaches have found their way into this volume, but according to its editor, Alfred Hornung, they all share one assumption: "the correlation between the extended Obama family, the Obama presidency and Transnational American

Studies.” A study of Obama and transnationalism makes perfect sense as he might be called the first commander-in-chief of the global age. Born to a white, American mother and Kenyan father and raised partly in Indonesia, Obama is a living, breathing example of a globalized America, as also pointed out by Hornung.

This volume is a collection of 24 articles addressing transnational aspects of Obama, his image, and the politics of his presidency written by scholars working primarily in Germany and the US, but other countries are represented as well. A large part of the book deals with Obama himself and his personal struggles with questions of identity (personal and national) in a life characterized by global family and friendships. However, a couple of the chapters are not directly linked to the Obama presidency, but rather to central characters of the Obama era and transnational topics in general.

As pointed out in the excellent contribution “Before Nation, Beyond Nation” by Kristina Bross and Laura M. Stevens, in the last few years transnational studies have played a central role in the development within the field of American Studies. This increased emphasis on transnational aspects has been playing out simultaneously with the American people’s choice in 2008 of a president whose background, education, and political views are the very embodiment of multicultural and transnational sensibilities. Yet, the field remains lacking in a central methodology or model, with transnationalism often remaining an approach rather than an topic in itself - but that is not necessarily a bad thing. While transnational studies have become an accepted and integral part of the field of American Studies, the question has remained whether the nature of such a transnational (and at times, global) turn has reflected a growing democratization and multicultural awareness in the field or simply serves as a twenty-first century vehicle for another version of American hegemony.

Several articles focus on Barack Obama’s half-sister Auma Obama who herself has contributed to this collection. The focus on her life and education in Germany adds Europe as a much welcome player in the traditional US-African approach to transnational discussions of Obama. Furthermore, Craig Robinson’s contribution to the anthology, “Our First Asian American Presidency?”, provides a very interesting Asian perspective to the discussion. This volume also perfectly showcases one of the strengths of transnational studies: its multidisciplinary and implicit interdisciplinary aspects. Contributions touching upon diverse approaches such as film studies, politics, and philosophy interact here with little difficulty. This anthology nei-

ther attempts to provide a new take on transnational studies nor to present a unified model of analysis. For that its contributions are much too diverse in topics - from the autobiography of Sonia Sotomayor to indigenous representations of the Canadian coastline to the German Soccer Championship of 1954. Instead these contributions provide the reader with the idea of the breadth and depth of transnational studies and the many interdisciplinary possibilities in the study of the Obama presidency.

Anne Mørk

University of Southern Denmark