on the social construction of these relations further suggests that human beings, the environment and even the earth itself can be the “central referent objects” in the process of security. The editors concede, however, that this altered reality is not without its problems. A common theme identified in the volume is the increasingly exclusionary nature of security, especially in terms of democratic deficits, class differences and the capacity of state police to offer protection as a public good. There is also the concern that asymmetrical security can contribute to greater insecurity.

Despite these shortcomings, the editors are optimistic that “democratic dialogue” and local “micro-governance” initiatives, especially in terms of conflict and dispute resolution, represent potential solutions. In fact, the editors cite David Held’s cosmopolitanism as a normative model for further engaging the security question. Specifically, they note Held’s argument that individual human beings, as opposed to states, are the ultimate “units of moral concern.” In other words, citizens should be conceptualized as a single moral community, where all individuals deserve respect and consideration. The concept of human security is an obvious extension of this position.

Although the volume offers several compelling arguments, a number of conclusions are open to critical interpretation. First, there is an assumption throughout the collection, with the exception of Loader and Walker’s chapter, that the decline of security is tied to the development of the modern sovereign state. This raises obvious questions related to the legitimate use of force and whether or not political communities have confidence in dispersing this authority to a pluralized set of security providers. It is also not clear how a non-hierarchical system of nodal security can ensure accountability for citizens seeking to challenge the actions of specific enforcement agencies. To be fair, the volume makes it clear that a combination of public and private security sources will continue to exist, but there is limited analysis of how responsibilities will be divided between state and non-governmental actors. In sum, there is an absence of “tangible” reflections on questions of transparency, representation and legitimacy.

These concerns are obvious extensions of ongoing traditional and critical debates. As a result, it is important to emphasize that this volume represents a significant contribution to the security literature. From a Canadian perspective, however, it also provides insight into the international activity of domestic corporate interests, as well as ongoing military commitments in Afghanistan, Haiti and the former Yugoslavia. Although the success or failure of these efforts is debatable, there is evidence to suggest that Canada’s commitment to basic levels of international security could be enhanced, especially in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. Unfortunately, similar observations also apply to marginalized interests within the Canadian state.

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The Household as the Foundation of Aristotle’s Polis
D. Brendan Nagle
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This work examines the demographics of Greek households and cities as Aristotle would have known them with a view to showing that there was a distinctively close relation between them in Aristotle’s thought. For Nagle, the household was both the economic foundation of the city and also, “in some way, its moral basis” (155). This has important implications, in Nagle’s view, for the understanding of citizen education, slavery and the place of women in Aristotle’s political theory.
Drawing on the work of Ruschenbush and others, Nagle argues that Athens is quite misleading as an example of the cities considered by Aristotle. Of the roughly 1500 Greek cities, the average city would have been 25 to 100 kilometres square with 230 to 910 male citizens, whereas Athens was 2580 square kilometres with 25,000 to 40,000 citizens. On this basis Nagle argues that Aristotle's ideal city was only 2 per cent to 3 per cent the size of Athens and that this smaller size would have facilitated a substantially higher degree of citizen familiarity and civic participation.

In these cities, the citizen's material needs were produced almost entirely within his (sic) household. Again culling the work of others, Nagle suggests that the typical household would have been a small agricultural unit of roughly 0.2 hectares. This was much too small to support the leisure required for citizenship but also too small to support the inclusion of slaves in the household. A citizen would require a minimum householding of 12 hectares; this would support one or two slaves, provide the basic needs of life for everyone in the unit and release the householder for civic duties. This, in Nagle's view, is how we should understand Aristotle's account of the polis and household. Athens again, with its greater wealth and larger number of slaves, was anomalous.

On this basis, Nagle argues that the household played a distinctive role in the city. In the first place, it educated young men for their lives as citizens. But this raises a problem. The household is the domain of women. How could they educate young men for citizens when they lacked this education themselves? In Nagle's view, this shows that women must also have been educated within the household and perhaps more broadly. On his account, the household didn't just "develop" required virtues in young men. Rather, it constituted a space in which all the qualities for a fulfilled life—friendship and the virtues of character and intellect—could flourish in exercise by everyone, women as well as men. Nagle then argues that women's education and presence in public space would have been further advanced by their important roles in religious rites, theatre and public festivals.

In short, the work invites us to question some received views on the place of the household (and of the women and slaves in it) in the cities of Aristotle's time and in his own political theory. In particular, the strong "public-private" distinction advanced by Hannah Arendt might require some revision. Thus I recommend Nagle's account of the demographics of the polis and the household to anyone with an interest in the political theory of the period.

But it is rather different with Nagle's interpretation of the demographic data and their extrapolation into Aristotle. In fairness, the issues here are too complex to develop in a short review. My respect for Nagle's scholarship precludes any summary rejection of his reading. But I have two persistent reservations about this part of the work. The first is methodological. Large claims are frequently asserted without qualification and without considering simpler (if less exciting) alternatives. This may simply reflect the fact that the work is written by an historian, and being reviewed here by a political philosopher. But to cite just one example of this, Nagle takes pains to show that women attended dramatic and religious festivals, but then infers that this brought them close to the kinds of public experiences that males enjoyed and that this was an education in philosophy that came close to Socratic elenchus (296). Well, perhaps.

My second reservation concerns Nagle's reading of excellence and virtue. Nagle appreciates the complexity of these concepts in Aristotle but his argument focuses narrowly on the virtues of citizenship to the relative exclusion of the other ways in which the virtues of character and intellect could be exercised and, surprisingly, to the complete exclusion of contemplation, Aristotle's highest form of flourishing. But these other forms are important. For example, with its size and diversity Athens might well—like some very large cities today—have offered opportunities
for non-civic flourishing that couldn’t obtain in the smaller cities prized by Nagle; an individual might have a better life as a free non-citizen in Athens than as a citizen in his native polis. The fact that Athens was anomalous, then, doesn’t show that it was irrelevant (or even marginal) in Aristotle’s thinking about human well being.

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Tolérance et modernité juridique
Bjarne Melkevik, 2006
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Les Presses de l’Université Laval et la Chaire UNESCO d’étude des fondements philosophiques de la justice et de la société démocratique nous proposent un collage des textes du professeur Melkevik, dont deux sont inédits. Profitons-en pour souligner les efforts de la Chaire, qui n’a de cesse de mettre à la disposition du public les résultats de ses travaux et ce, sous la direction de collaborateurs assidus, dont le professeur Melkevik. Notons la parution dans la même année et chez le même éditeur de l’ouvrage Droits démocratiques et Identités, sous la direction de Luc Vigneault et Bjarne Melkevik.

Ce type de publication ne présente pas que des avantages. Ainsi, et ce sans doute pour des motifs d’économie, l’impression du texte est serrée, trop serrée. De plus, le collage de textes déjà parus entraîne forcément des répétitions. Enfin, le travail d’édition laisse parfois à désirer (je cite en exemple le premier paragraphe de la page 27, que je ne suis toujours pas certaine d’avoir bien compris et qui est pourtant un paragraphe important).

Néanmoins, la lectrice est frappée par l’actualité du propos. Le premier chapitre de l’ouvrage, intitulé Tolérance et modernité du droit aujourd’hui, reste le plus percutant, malgré sa parution originale en 1998. Dans ce texte, Melkevik propose le nécessaire passage de la vertu individuelle et moderne qu’est la tolérance vers une logique institutionnelle. Ainsi, dit-il (21), la tolérance n’est plus uniquement une exigence de respect des uns à l’égard des autres, mais aussi une obligation institutionnelle dictée par l’exigence démocratique. Melkevik ne croyait pas si bien dire lorsqu’il affirmait, il y a près de dix ans, qu’on ne peut imposer d’en haut la tolérance ou encore la définir abstraitement. Les citoyens doivent, au contraire, y adhérer afin de déterminer l’espace public. La démocratie sert donc à définir l’intolérable (27), laquelle définition sera le fait des acteurs du droit moderne que sont les citoyens et les citoyennes. Selon Melkevik, il existe un lien intime entre la tolérance politique et la réciprocité issue du dialogue démocratique, cette réciprocité devant, pour sa part, prendre résolument parti en faveur des victimes et des plus vulnérables parmi nous. Le professeur Melkevik n’hésite pas à affirmer que dans ce contexte, les droits de la personne (on souhaiterait qu’il abandonne l’expression droits de l’homme!) ont transcendé, depuis la fin de la Seconde Guerre mondiale, le statut de fait de conscience pour acquérir celui de fait de ou du droit. Dans un texte inédit (chap. 4 : 64), il propose les droits de la personne comme l’expression d’un engagement en faveur de la tolérance.

Le chapitre 5 de l’ouvrage est aussi inédit et s’intitule Multiculturalisme, droit et tolérance. Il fait écho à la Déclaration de principes sur la tolérance adoptée par l’UNESCO en 1995. Le professeur Melkevik nous propose ici quelques définitions salutaires dans le contexte québécois du débat sur le religieux et les accommodements raisonnables. Ainsi, il précise que la Déclaration de l’UNESCO distingue le communautarisme démocratique des logiques communautariennes libérales, telle celle défendue par Will Kymlicka, et que le Canada n’a pas de droits d’auteur sur le...