

BOOK REVIEWS

Josette Baer. *Slavic Thinkers or The Creation of Politics. Intellectual History and Political Thought in Central Europe and the Balkans in the 19th Centur.* Washington DC: New Academia Publishing, 231 pp. + bibliography and index.

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If we resume the European history of the last two centuries, we chronologically have to emphasize the roles played by empires, revolutions, and nation-building. The remnants of the first two made the accomplishment of the former more difficult, but it also provides particular identities and specificities. Central Europe and the Balkans (CEB) are spaces that perfectly fit this description with a history marked by territorial claims (i.e. result of their independence from empires), ethnic and religious diversity, political oscillations, and identity struggles. Josette Baer's book catches the complexities of these social realities in six CEB states through the eyes and minds of six 19th century representative thinkers and statesmen.

By analyzing the political ideas, values, and beliefs displayed by the 19th and early 20th centuries' elite, the author's goal implies academic and societal relevance for contemporary politics. Through process tracing, she aims to

connect the intellectual history and the post-Communist evolutions of Czech Republic (Thomas Masaryk), Slovakia (Ludovic Štúr), Bulgaria (Stefan Stambolov), Macedonia (Krstev Petkov Misirkov), Serbia (Ilija Garašanin), and Croatia (Ante Starčević). The analysis rests on four key categories, present at all but Misirkov, used to identify traits and specificities for each thinker and to allow comparisons: nation, region, history, and law. The results of the analysis refute the Huntingtonian hypothesis according to which religion plays a major role in the democratization process and provide support for the geographical proximity and political culture hypothesis advanced by Baer. The closer a state is to the Western world, the higher the interaction with the democratic and intellectual values and the more increased chances to democratize.

Structured in eight chapters, with individual emphasis on each thinker, the book not only describes intellectual ideas and contexts, but also identifies shortcomings and explains why specific political thoughts could not be translated into policies. The critical presentation of all thinkers, in a comparative manner that allows the summarization of their thoughts (p. 190), represents one strength of the volume. The philosophical complexities are interpreted and displayed in an easy-to-grasp language. This approach is possible by combining theoretical Western literature, historical and democratization literature from secondary sources with primary

documents that allow access to knowledge of country's evolutions and thinkers texts. Regarding the latter, the author has the advantage to master the languages of all states under observation.

Another merit of the book is the methodological rigor and transparency. As an example of good practice, Baer starts by explaining the puzzle, asking a feasible research question, issues definition and conceptualization, and then setting the research design to solve the puzzle. The general theoretical framework is complemented by particular theories that accompany the textual analysis of every thinker. What results from each chapter is an informative and analytical output of the less explored CEB intellectuals. The process tracing qualitative method, specific to historical institutionalists, reveals important patterns of thought that are elaborated in the conclusive chapter of the book. Similarities in terms of rationalism; philosophical eclecticism; approaches to citizens, minorities and nationhood; and foreign policy are nuanced according to the agenda priorities and period when each of the thinkers lived. Interesting enough, thinkers of the countries that today have issues with minorities (Croatia and Serbia) did not emphasize this aspect in their discourses.

The contextual analyses that allow the comparability of observations represent further merits of this book. Every idea is embedded in its contemporary historical and political framework, the

explanations being clear and persuasive to all readers. The author's expertise allows her to address both the non-experts and the knowledgeable people in the field. Moreover, the multitude of analyzed topics attracts the interest of scholars in political philosophy, nationalism, democratization studies, and domestic and foreign policy. In this respect, the observations are made comparable by using similar reference points (e.g. the importance of Russia for foreign policy) and by adjusting the contextual differences (e.g. mid-19th century as opposed to early 20th century).

Despite these considerable merits, such a challenging book cannot avoid shortcomings that mainly arise from a methodological perspective. Its focus on qualitative techniques is appreciated through the necessary insight that it provides to the CEB intellectual tradition. However, the use of "correlation" (p. 198) in such a research design is misleading. Even a student in social science would expect to see quantitative techniques whenever this concept is used. Instead of figures and rough tables with numbers and correlation coefficients, Baer underlines a deeper mechanism that does not allow religion and democratization to go hand in hand. The reader should notice that the relationship is not present in the examined states, when the procedure for detecting it is closer to pattern matching or association (i.e. we can easily draw cross-tabs with categories for variables). At the same time, many might ask what are the bases for case

selection. Baer explicitly mentions that these are not representative cases of their areas, mainly selecting on the bases of language mastery (aware of access to primary sources) and on the dependent variables (i.e. democratization). The latter often produces selection bias, but as the purpose of this study is to provide particular conclusions for the observed states, the shortcoming is reduced.

Two final criticisms target the conceptual and analytical results. The conceptual emphasis put forth by Baer on the political culture comes to replace the vague concept of *post-Communism* that might not catch differences among states. The definition of political culture she advances does not include one element that might be crucial in understanding democratization – people's attitudes. As the latter are considered a component of democratization, both rulers and governed perceive institutions' roles and functions, and form expectations. The operationalization of political culture and the formulated hypothesis (p. 13) appear to leave aside this aspect. Finally, the shortcoming that weakens the argument of the paper resides in connecting 19th century thoughts and acts with post-1989 period. The process tracing method does not take into account almost a century out of which half was dominated by Communism in each of those states. The inter-war period might have shaped differently the political culture and intellectual ideas in all these states, whereas the red era that followed did it with a few

generations. In 1989, all these states were gathered in two republics, and the vast majority of them had reduced intellectual activities during Communism. Institutions, foreign politics, ideas, and attitude were heavily affected by the various types of Communism and their influence should not be neglected. Even if Huntington's religious thesis can be rejected and Baer's vicinity hypothesis finds support even in the broader context of post-Communist Europe, this study ignores some major events that happened between the analyzed period and contemporary realities.

The significant amount of work, elaborated analytical framework, theoretical underpinnings, and critical approach make of Baer's book a major contribution to the literature dealing with thinkers from transition states. The in-depth analysis of six Central European and Balkan states provides valuable evidence of intellectual activity during the nation building period in the region. Consequently, the book represents a point of departure in understanding contemporary approaches in these states.

Walter Enders and Todd Sandler.
The Political Economy of Terrorism.
New York: Cambridge University
Press, 2006, 257 pp + index.

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Walter Enders' and Todd Sandler's study *The Political Economy of Terrorism* is, to the authors' own knowledge, the first contribution to approach the study of terrorism from a theoretical and statistical viewpoint. Written, not in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 but certainly under its influence, the book deals with terrorism as a practical and logical occurrence. The statistical approach reduces terrorism itself to mathematics and rationale within the grasp of intelligent prediction. Terrorists are rational both in terms of how they respond to counter-measures and attack strategies. Terrorism itself is rational, cost-effective, usually generates a fairly predictable result and, especially in liberal democracies, is relatively easy to keep it clandestine. And as the defender of the weak against the strong, it will always be a winning concept: "terrorism", the authors state in their concluding remarks, "is here to stay."(p.257)

The study begins with an introduction of terrorism and its obvious compatibility with liberal democracy. It continues with a presentation of a statistical analysis of terrorist behavior and goes on to offer a mathematical illustration of the dilemmas and inefficiencies associated with counterterrorism and international cooperation. Chapters eight to ten deal more specifically with the practical impact of terrorism, with particular reference to 9/11 and its aftermath. The last chapter discusses the future of

terrorism and makes some predictions based on the arguments throughout the book.

The strengths of the book lie primarily in the way it presents terrorism. First, the statistical analysis of terrorist behavior in chapter three is a good illustration of the calculability of terrorism, in part, simply because the analysis produces a cyclical pattern with peaks and lulls throughout the years, similar to a statistical analysis of the annual number of sunspots. Moreover, it clearly shows that the terrorist series has no sign of the upward trend that is not only often implied by the media, but which is probably also a feeling that many people harbors. The illustration stands in sharp contrast to the notion of terrorism as a dark and mysterious evil force.

Second, reducing terrorism to logics and statistics opens up the possibility of presenting countering terrorism in an equally concrete manner. Chapter five deals with the dilemma of "transference", meaning that as soon as one target becomes too risky, too cost-ineffective etc, the terrorist shifts his/her focus to a different practical target, but with the same intended effect. One good example from the book is the 2004 Madrid train bombings. The argument is that the reason why they were indeed train bombings and not skyjackings was because of the enhanced security associated with everything related to flying after 9/11. Chapters four and six

deal with the dilemmas of countering terrorism on a domestic as well as international level. They elaborate on the problem of “geographical transference”, meaning, for example, that enhanced security in the US results in attacks on US embassies in poorer countries. In chapter six the authors use the theory behind Nash equilibrium to show the cost of ineffective or insufficient transnational effort, for example, considering one country taking defensive action, which inevitably increases the risk of a future attack for all other relevant countries. They argue that combating transnational terrorism requires transnational commitment and vigor. And that is a frustrating insight, given that countries nurture different degrees of commitment to fighting terrorism. Conclusively, Sandler and Enders state, “as long as the terrorists do not pose a threat to all countries, international cooperation will remain partial and of limited effectiveness.”(p.159)

Another useful aspect of the book is its account for the economic results of terrorism, which is well illustrated in chapter 9. Knowing the cost of terrorism is a crucial prerequisite for making well-informed decisions on how to allocate resources and how much money to spend on counter-terrorist actions.

Once established that the main strength of the book is its specific approach to terrorism, the same could be argued with respect to weaknesses. The math and the statistics appear sometimes to

hang in the air. An equation illustrating how skyjackings have become a less popular option for terrorists after the introduction of metal detectors certainly makes sense, but given that no one can tell what the next best option to skyjacking would be, the calculation seems superfluous. Moreover, illustrating terrorism through a statistical cycle-pattern is illuminating, but the absence of explanation as to why the lulls and peaks respectively occur renders the statistics unsatisfying. Sandler and Enders themselves state that “if any theory of terrorism is to be successful, it must capture the reasons why incidents tend to cluster”(p.61), while they provide little clarification on how this could be achieved.

Moreover, the fact that terrorism is rational seems unimportant when the two main reasons as to why it is so effective are brought into the discussion. Terrorism, however rational, thrives on fear and a reputation of unpredictability, and, despite governments being a lot more logistically and economically powerful than any terrorist group, terrorists hide, run and are fanatically committed to what they have set out to achieve. This way, they are really the ones playing in a completely different league. Governments are clumsy compared to terrorists. When the latter jumps through a gap in the wall, the government has to stay behind; it couldn't get through anyway. The fact that theorists conclude, as Sandler and Enders do at the end of the book, that “bombs will remain the terrorists’

favorite mode of attack”(p.257), couldn't that in itself urge terrorists not to use bombs? Wouldn't that also be rational?

However, this book was not written to save the world. The conclusions drawn in the study sometimes appear simplistic or self-evident. But the purpose of the book seems to lie more in the presentation of the facts than the humble predictions. The study highlights and emphasises a specific approach to terrorism, which in certain cases, and when elaborated may enable counter-terrorist actors to make better, and more calculated, practical and logistical decisions. Thus, it can be argued that what is presented here as a fundamental weakness of the book, is more a limitation of its approach. That does not however, render the book itself anything less than a highly recommended read.

Paolo Graziano and Maarten P. Vink (eds.). *Europeanization: New Research Agendas*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

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Processes and changes resulting from the establishment of the European Community/Union as a supranational organization have preoccupied both those working in the field of politics

and researchers for a long time. Lately, as the “common European governance” has become increasingly institutionalized, attention has shifted back to the national level to find out the impact of the EU on member states. *Europeanization: New Research Agendas* attempts to summarize existing research on Europeanization, to discuss the key problems that have appeared and to set the direction for future research. The editors involved more than 20 scholars and defined Europeanization broadly (i.e. “the domestic adaptation to European regional integration”), in order to allow contributors to discuss relevant issues concerning their specific fields of study, be it analyzing policies or studying political processes.

Issues concerning conceptualization and research methodology of Europeanization are raised throughout the volume, and they can be considered basic problems of the field. Problematic aspects of the operationalization, such as how to distinguish the impact of the EU from other impacts, how to determine dependent and independent variables in research, and how to analyze the side effects of the EU are also raised. The authors use a critical perspective, and even question concepts commonly used in Europeanization literature, partly undermining the theoretical bases of many previously written studies. The popular concept of *goodness of fit* is no exception, criticized by Sandra Lavenex, who states that it misses important aspects of the explanation, such as the “contextual

impact of Europeanization, and looks over the strategic games in which sections of national administrations make use of the EU arena in order to change the policy debate at the national level". In other words, *goodness of fit* concentrates only on legal issues, whereas even problem structures may differ from country to country.

The complexity of the conceptual-methodological problem is adequately rendered by the studies about polity, politics and policies. The chapters included in parts 3 and 4 contribute to a better understanding of the *big picture* of Europeanization. Policies being the ones extensively analyzed in the literature (Sverdrup argues that European integration can still mainly be interpreted as *integration through law*), it is argued by many that leaving politics and polity out of the analysis makes studies overlook important influence-factors. Factors such as the indirect effects of Europeanization on the domestic level, vertical and horizontal influences among member and non-member states (voluntary adaptation, policy transfer, etc.), the ideational dimension of integration, and institutional aspects are able to explain "the absence of far-reaching convergence". Thus, from a theoretical point of view, the institutional approaches (whether historical, sociological, rational-choice or any of these mixed) the authors use throughout the volume – and that is characteristic of the literature on the topic of Europeanization in general – help to

account for the differential impact of the EU on the domestic level.

Confronting these problems, the contributors demand for more comparative studies. Haverland suggests using multiple research designs in order to examine not only how, but also whether and to what extent the EU matters. At the same time, Bulmer argues in favor of a more circular understanding of the processes of Europeanization, for being able to eliminate effects not explicitly attributable to EU influence. Perhaps his suggestion (based on other studies) that Europeanization is rather "a phenomenon that needs to be explained, not a theory" is the key to understanding Europeanization.

One of the timely issues the book touches upon is the impact the EU is able to exert on its member states. Conditionality (dealt with in the chapter by Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier) as a method of influencing the state-level was so far thought to be one used towards countries awaiting accession. But, as Romania and Bulgaria – who have both joined the EU at the beginning of 2007 – have recently shown, the EU has institutionalized conditionality in the form of transitional measures/safeguard measures even *within* the EU. The growth in regulation can be best understood the way Levi-Faur put it in his chapter about regulatory governance, quoting a study of Jordana and himself: "growing expectations of a «riskless society» on the one hand and a shrinking

willingness to trust political authorities on the other contribute to increasing reliance on regulation that reduces risks and replace some trust relations by others” (pp. 103). The distrust towards these two new-member states led to the increased control above them, and, at the same time, the EU has adopted a structure where some countries are “more equal than others”.

Interest groups constitute another important element of the European political arena. From the point of view of the large number of national/ethnic minorities that live within the borders of the EU, it is necessary to examine the power of specific interest groups and social movements. In this regard it is worth noting the role financial/network capital plays in their success. As discussed in the chapter by Rainer Eising, integration has not changed the lobby-practices used at the domestic level, but has “reaffirmed the power of those organizations that had already built up capacities to articulate, aggregate, and represent the interests of their constituencies”. Groups that are persuasive on a domestic level and embedded into the national system are the ones succeeding at the supranational level. Thus, the interests of national/ethnic minorities living in EU member-states may not always be reflected by their country-representatives at the EU level, and would need special attention in order to correct for this effect.

Considering the extensive literature and the above-mentioned conceptual-

methodological problems, the editors’ attempt to summarize all findings seems to be a large undertaking. Nevertheless, *Europeanization: New Research Agendas* can be considered a valuable handbook in that it presents the actual stage of Europeanization research. The authors try to both raise questions about problematic issues and set directions for future research, doing this in a very concise manner. The book may be especially useful for students (also by providing a comprehensive bibliography on Europeanization), or those aiming to gain a quick overview of the field, while being informed critically about the shortcomings of the work that has been done so far.

Vesselin Dimitrov, Klaus H. Goetz and Hellmut Wollmann. *Governing After Communism: Institutions and Policymaking*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006, pp. 295, (Cloth)

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Throughout The study of post-communist transitions and the related issues of reconstruction and development have drawn, for more than a decade now, a great deal of academic attention. Within this vast field, particular thought has been dedicated to the study of post-communist politics in Europe. This book is a good example of this tendency, since its main goal is to

explore the development of governance in Central East Europe (CEE), namely by investigating the processes of institutions building and policymaking in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, between the late 1980 and the early twenty-first century.

The logic behind this selection lies in the diverse nature revealed by each transition along with the "two critical junctures" the four chosen countries share: the fall of communism and the fiscal crises in the mid-1990, even though experienced differently in each setting. Former communist governments in CEE had persistently adhered to Politburo's policymaking and coordination. The myriad of the fragmented ministries and cabinets were merely engaged in administrative responsibilities, as zealously dictated by the communist leadership. With the demise of communism in CEE, the executive institutions were in limbo, leading thus to an immediate need to restore the executive and coordinating capacities of the communist government, which were already turned into a "hollow crown" (Goetz & Wollmann, 2001).

In order to map the governance's capacity in post-communist settings, the authors focus on the concept of the "core executive" as defined by Rhodes and Dunleavy (1995): "all those organizations and procedures which coordinate central government policies, and act as final arbiters of conflict between parts of the government machine." Furthermore, they present

eight dimensions of post-communist core executives: 1) the location of the executive in the political system, 2) an outline of the executive terrain, 3) the powers of the Prime Minister, 4) the powers of the Financial Minister, 5) patterns of cabinet decision-making, 6) party based political coordination devices, 7) the powers and organization of the center of government and 8) the politics-administration nexus: professionalization of the civil service, hence constructing a rigorous and comprehensive framework of analysis, yet sufficiently sensitive to the analytical and empirical nuances.

The book is divided in three parts. The first one introduces the theoretical fundamentals of the framework of analysis used for this comparative study (chap. 2), while the second one offers a presentation of the empirical evidences from the four investigated countries (chap. 3 – Hungary, chap. 4 – Poland, chap. 5 – Czech Republic, chap. 6 – Bulgaria) which share a common outline as based on the analytical identification of eight dimensions of core executives. The last part summarizes and evaluates the empirical evidences (chap. 7), assesses institutional effects on budgetary policymaking (chap. 8) and finally contextualizes the empirical findings within the debate on European governance (chap. 9).

Perhaps the most significant contribution of the volume owes its existence to the approach of the study, which is process-oriented as opposed to

a method that favors specific identifiable changes. In other words, this comparative research project seeks to trace, explore and grasp the trajectories of the core executives as influenced in the course of action, by historical, political and economic context of each country. This way the reader not only is introduced to two neglected aspects of executive evolution in post-communist settings: a typology of core executives as well as one of centers of governments, but is also being compensated by a rigorous account of both.

The main argument of the collection is that certain developmental trends are common to all CEE countries, for example: a) the formal and informal strengthening of the prime minister (be that office or person) within the executive system, b) the strengthening of finance ministries as core executive's crucial function, and c) the apparent failure to promote significant reforms aimed at the depoliticization of the public service system (namely civil senior servants).

However, there are some issues that either lack clarity or are left unanswered, in both cases pointing to the need for deeper analysis. The first subject relates to the impact the party leader has on the core executive and its functions. In the case of the Czech Republic, the reader learns about the strong leader Vaclav Klaus (of ODS party) whose political dominance over the ministers assured a solid center of government (p. 146). Another example

of a tough prime minister is that of the UDF party leader in Bulgaria, Ivan Kostov, who played an important role in strengthening the government (p. 175). Both leaders were crucial in consolidating strong executive institutions and, of course, their future development, but it is not clear to what extent one can discern the blurred boundaries between the prime minister's identity as a person and as an organization. What would be then, the theoretical and/or methodological tools that could help in defining and recognizing one from the other?

The second issue not fully answered brings in the debate on EU integration and Europeanization. The last chapter of the book (chap. 9) tries to explore how the findings presented in each case collide with the arguments made about CEE countries "readiness for Europe" and Europeanization of institutions. In terms of "readiness for Europe", the authors state that improvement of executive and administrative performance was perceived as the main key precondition for accession by the EU institutions. As such, in addition to summarizing the literature on the subject, they should have referred to some mandatory inquiry rising from their case studies, such as the following: considering the different post-communist settings, what were the leading institutions or personalities in charge of the implementations of EU's requirements? How did these processes affect the executive institutions in each investigated case? Furthermore, while stating the "...`usage' of EU integration

by domestic factors for their own purposes" (p. 256), the authors have once again missed an opportunity for comparative institutional analyses, which could have shed light on the practices employed by each country and its impact on the executive core.

Nevertheless, the authors and contributors of *Governing after Communism* are to be commended for their efforts to broaden the theoretical and empirical range of analysis of institutions and policymaking on various post-communist settings, making this collection an important source for present and future generations of students, researchers and policymakers, involved in the study of post-communist politics.