

persistence of authoritarianism in Russia and for methodology in comparative politics.

Michael Urban's study is highly interesting due to his unconventional approach to investigating politics. By combining an innovative conceptual framework with a wealth of empirical material, the study is a strong contribution to a better understanding of the Russian society and politics. The author's direct quotations from interviews with Russian politicians in the book turn out to be an excellent writing strategy since they make the research findings visible and comprehensible. A significant part of the study's value is rooted in the original research based on interviews with Russian politicians. Scholars who deal with the exploration of Russian politics are certainly aware of the challenges that field work in Russia presents.

Furthermore, the book is a thought-provoking study for students of comparative politics. The study reveals challenges that scholars might face when dealing with the constructivist research paradigm. Since the constructivist approach is subjective and involves context-specific understanding of phenomena, it remains a challenge for scholars to combine the constructivist approach with normative positivist concepts in studies on democracy and authoritarianism. In this context, an average reader might find it difficult to follow how the author presents the concepts of political culture, language, discourse, and narrative in order to build a coherent theoretical framework of the study. Therefore, the book is recommendable for an academic audience rather than for the broad public.

Simon Teune (ed.) *The Transnational Condition: Protest dynamics in an entangled Europe* (New York and Oxford:: Berghahn Books, 2010)

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The Transnational Condition represents a valuable development of the academic literature on social movements and transnationalism. The objective of Simon Teune has been to "take protests in Europe as an example for the crosscutting relevance of transnational exchanges" (p. 2). Protest and activism act as a lens through which we are able to explore how local, national and global (or European) levels of social relations are shaped and integrated. Although the conceptualisation of 'transnationalism' as a set of "pluri-local relations of entanglement beyond national borders" (ibid.) initially seems somewhat vague and imprecise, the case studies that complete the edition clearly illustrate how a tighter definition of boundaries between these levels would fail to capture the fluid and dynamic nature of cross-border exchanges across them. In summary, the editor has brought together a range

of texts that successfully “expands the depth of academic focus with reference to political processes on the European continent” (p. 12), whilst also presenting academics of social movements, European integration and communication studies with new avenues for investigation. The result is a collection of studies that does not only inform about the topic at hand, but offers analytical tools for the future development of the field.

The book is structured into four sections that cover the different organisational levels of protest movements in Europe. The first approaches the micro-level of individual activists and organisations through case studies of participants in European Social Forums and Global Justice Movements, finding that in many circumstances national-level structures and cultural characteristics shape the composition of and interaction between groups on the European or global level. The second section takes transnational networks and public spheres as a meso-level of mobilisation. Christoph Haug argues soundly for a study of public spheres *within* social movements, in contrast to the elite-biased studies of European public spheres, in order to grasp the dynamic of Europeanisation “from below” in civil society across Europe and for political practitioners to avoid the reproduction of established power structures (p. 71). Nicole Doerr’s case study of the preparatory assemblies of the European Social Forum provides a particularly clear example of how these power structures contribute to inequalities between nationality groups within transnational social movements. The third section on the macro-level of protest and societal systems builds on this idea of tying civil society organisations and movements into studies of processes of European integration.

Donatella Della Porta offers an interpretation of ‘critical Europeanism’ and the development of a ‘Europe from below’ through democratic activism and protest, the technicalities and conceptual challenges of which are explored by Thomas Olesen in his subsequent chapter on porous publics (complementing Haug’s piece on public spheres in protest assemblies, see chapter 3). The final section confronts the reader with three chapters on theoretical and methodological questions arising from the study of transnational protest. Here it is the final chapter from Jackie Smith and Rachel Kutz-Flamenbaum that perhaps provides the greatest novelty by adopting a critical stance towards the protest research field, arguing that the routine application of theories in previous protest research is not only scientifically problematic but also fails to contribute to the political struggles that transnational movements are engaged in.

Central to the book’s appeal is its variety and diversity. There is a range of authors from established academics to PhD candidates and a balance is struck between chapters on theory, methodology and empirical case studies which renders the edition useful for academics, researchers and students of social movements. Also, similar to the border-defying nature of transnationalism, the academic relevance of

this book cuts across disciplinary boundaries. One topic which represents the cohesion between chapters as well as the wide-reaching academic relevance is that of 'Europe from below', covered in the meso- and macro-level analyses. The argument that democratic activism and protest are building 'Europe' from the perspective of civil society offers a new direction for academics of the integration of the European Union, going beyond the institutionalist and IR-realist dominated approaches that have previously ruled the topic. Here we find an alternative to the view that Europe is defined by bureaucrats, heads of nation-states and market-based interest groups in Brussels. We are shown instead how individuals, groups and networks organise around specific issues and a shared moral claim for justice. For Haug and Olesen, the process of Europeanisation from below does not consist simply of political institution building and market liberalisation, as does Europeanisation 'from above', but rather signifies the development of a transnational space of communication and information exchange.

Olesen further argues that for a public to be transnational – or European – it does not have to be uniform in content and form, but can instead be composed of national spheres that are sufficiently porous to enable the exchange of information across each other. In this way 'the transnational public sphere is not something constantly 'out there', it comes and goes because it always emerges on the back of specific issues that for one reason or the other acquire transnational resonance' (p. 142). Thus the project of a Europe from below is envisaged as a process of interconnecting local, national and transnational spheres of communication around specific issues. This vision of integration pushes us beyond the national-supranational dichotomy that has dogged the history of European studies. Furthermore, such a view vindicates Teune's original conceptualisation of transnationalism as entangled pluri-local spaces.

However, readers should also be aware of the limitations to the book. Despite being presented as a study of transnational protest, the focus is principally on European Social Forums and Global Justice activism in liberal democracies. This skew in the case selection is noted by Teune in the introduction, who justifies it by clarifying that the focus of the book is European, rather than global, protest. Yet the range of empirical cases is also lacking in local-level analyses, despite the fact that throughout the book the relationship between the local, the national and the global is presented as central to the nature of transnational protest. Indeed, the object of study in the chapters on the micro-level is not the local level of transnational protest, but rather the individual experience of large-scale macro-level protest movements. This area of study can benefit, on the one hand, from studies of migration and ethnic relations that have already attempted to confront the task of bringing grassroots organisations, networks and discourses into an understanding of wider political and social processes. On the other hand, the practice of cross-border activism by individuals, small groups and decentralised networks such as the French-

based *La Rage du Peuple* can provide case studies that permit greater exploration of the role of the local in the diffusion of global values, attitudes and perceptions, and vice versa, how a wider moral claim for global justice to is transposed onto specific issue claims in local situations.

In summary, Simon Teune has gathered a selection of studies that contribute positively to the study of protest and transnationalism in Europe. The conceptual and empirical analyses are thorough and will be appreciated by researchers, students and activists alike.