

These steps are more than welcome in today's world as the legal action previously taken has continued to fall short of what is needed to fully implement the Universal Declaration of Human Right of 1948, which states that every human being is entitled to a nationality. Statelessness still leaves them, albeit to varying degrees, excluded. They are the people who must struggle everyday for their voices to be heard, for their rights to be granted. They are more often than not unable to claim the services that only states can provide. They, by definition, belong to no state at all, yet if they all belonged to one nation, it would be one as large as Greece. They are our world's growing population of stateless people with no citizenship rights. One must hope that the world hears more and more about them and that their struggles end with the receiving of formal citizenship in the near future. *Statelessness and Citizenship* truly is a book that takes us a step closer to a possible solution. It is an important, well written and memorable read for anyone concerned with current global problems.

**Graeme R. Robertson, *The Politics of Protest in Hybrid Regimes: Managing Dissent in Post-Communist Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011)**

Kawu Bala  
Bauchi State Judiciary

Is it possible to call a regime that features political campaigns or the ritual of succession through election as democratic? Ever since the collapse of the Soviet Union the world is seeing arrangements that are between "liberal" and "authoritarian" systems. Whether or not election suffices in democracy the answers will be negative. When a political landscape is saturated by interest people will protest and there would be counter protest. These are the issues Graeme R. Robertson's *The Politics of Protest in Hybrid Regimes* purport to analyze in Russian politics.

Robertson is concerned with "hybrid regimes," and he presents a "field work" on Russia. He attempts to tackle the question of protest in Russia especially in recent memory. Will it be that elections are manipulated by elites just "to stay in office"? People have learned to declare their views openly since the end of the Cold War. To Robertson, "protest in the street" has been at least as important as elections in determining the fate of governments" (p. 1). Governments have been brought down and leaders made to change tactics and policies. There is politics behind protest and that is what the author wants his readers to accept.

This is the crux of Robertson's reflections in Russia under Putin. What justifies his assertion is his case study of repressive Russia even though it is seen speaking the

"language of liberal democracy," albeit "without adopting its practices" (p. 4). For Robertson, to guide their legitimacy against protest by aggrieved citizens which, if left unchecked, will undermine their thrones, politicians in hybrid regimes "experiment with new institutional and organisational strategies to manage and contain competition" (p. 4). This, the author adds is what makes distinction between Yeltsin and Putin's "weak democracy".

Much of the book is devoted to making readers understand protest in politics. It is interesting the author sees protest in democracy as "integral part"; hence, this is why autocracies try always to ban it citing Burma where it is often criminalised (p. 20). This has also been the case in the former Soviet Union as Robertson asserts (p. 21). He indicates that protest in hybrid regimes should be seen as "opportunity" when the democratisation process in the post-Communist states of Europe began to take shape (p. 23). But still they do not open up to allow democracy to become entrenched (p. 26). When people are pushed to the wall they react. So Robertson argues that Russians are not "patient" (p. 41). Why do they react? They protest as a result of bad economy in the second half of the 1990s. No doubt the very reason why Russians began protesting due to new freedoms found with the death of Soviet. It should be agreed that they did so out of frustration. Interestingly Robertson provides the connection between Russians' frustrations with freedoms that have failed to advance "lives" (p. 41).

Another interesting thing about the book is that Robertson talks about the role played by miners in the protest which led to the "disintegration" of the USSR. It was the same miners that are reacting to checkmate Russia's excesses nowadays (p. 73). This is not an empty assertion as workers still play a significant role toward the betterment of the Russian society though not under any ideology. Robertson elaborates on the reason why Yeltsin's second term saw numerous protests under the premiership of Evgenii Primakov (p. 101). Many companies were closed down due to the bad economic climate in Russia. This will obviously threatens livelihood to make people protest (p. 105).

Robertson also offers explanations as to why protests declined in the later part of Yeltsin's years. This is the tactic the author says leaders adopt through "incentives" to support or limit protest. The author never offers reason as to the elevation of Putin to the presidency. It is arguably the case of having someone with knowledge of power shaped by an intelligence capability. This is what Putin still employs, as Robertson cites as the brain behind Putin's ability to control Russia. Readers will agree with the author here that Putin has been lucky to effectively use the regional governors who have to flocked to support his bid for leadership when they realised Putin would become the next president after Yeltsin (p. 125). This is perhaps the greatest analysis Robertson tendered in his book. It is not surprising that governors would wield influence in the polity of a federal state like Russia. We see how Putin

brought his assets from the former KGB to play the politics of his time (p. 133). This is likely to bring any opposition into submission as it has been the main weapon in the hands of leaders who struggle to survive. No doubt Putin's strategy works well. However the author left a vacuum on what the opposition may use to survive this onslaught from Putin. Robertson offers a point why "Putin became a household name". This is seen when opposition is neutralized (p. 147).

In the last chapters, Robertson argues that, due to legitimacy problems, hybrids are "at risk from changes in the streets" because they are at least more "open" than authoritarian states and they have methods for channelling discontent (p. 172). Robertson says that this regime uses censorship and restrictions but tactfully through social networks and independent media. They may even draw from the old methods where necessary as he brings Putin's use of "special units," such as the OSMON, to repress discontent (p. 174). The media is seen as collaborators who make distinction between trouble makers and instigators (p. 179). Robertson should have informed readers unequivocally about the influence of Putin's government on Russian media.

The Kremlin, for Robertson, has worked to create a system that gives the administration "broad discretion" over groups to allow them to operate on the political landscape. On this, the author provides a sound proof in the Federal Law No. 18-F2 that came to "clean-up" the NGOs (p. 192). But the problem here, if any, is what of other laws that are being used to improve support for the regime?

Robertson explores the factors that might have helped Putin to preside over "apparent social peace," supported by submissive organisations and economic expansion despite the "opposition" (p. 198). Here the author tells of Putin's survival tactics. Robertson claims that the regime has avoided "censorship and political restrictions," what you may call divide and rule (p. 199). But would this solve the problem in the streets? The author hints, negatively, as "unrest in the streets" lingers on (p. 199).

If protest is seen as important as elections to democracy or any change of government, as Robertson would want readers to accept, it can be understood that protesters are influenced by "intra-elite politics" (p. 208). We might add a comment the author failed to raise. It is easy to see clear who else is behind the destabilisation of Russia. Fingers of course are being pinpointed at agents from other foreign countries. Whatever maybe the case if there is any weakness in Robertson's book, this is it. Is there external influence in protests in Russia? Robertson should have said so. One thing that I agree is the claim by Robertson that "electoral revolutions" cannot democratise countries and it will not happen soon in Russia either (p. 212). Both election and protest are birds of a feather. It may sound bizarre but realistically elections are manipulated by the same elites that manoeuvre to see people in the

streets. Roberson has analysed contemporary Russian politics and the men behind the power play as such his book is a must read for its exposition of Russia's "hybrid regime".

**Ursula van Beek and Edmund Wnuk-Lipinski (eds.), *Democracy under Stress: The Global Crisis and Beyond* (Berlin & Farmington Hills: Barbara Budrich, 2012)**

Klejd Këlliçi

European University of Tirana

Every regime is based on some form of redistribution and its very existence is somehow determined by its ability to cope with the developments of its economical base. In many cases the establishment of non-democratic regimes early in the first part of the last century was determined by the great crisis of 1929 followed by a combination of an inability of the structure of the state and its actors to resist the authoritarian prospective.

In the last year researchers in the field of democratization have undertaken efforts to cope with the emergency of the recent economic crisis and its effect on democracy, democratic regimes and new democracies. Part of evidence on democratic theory and democratization has stressed particularly on the direct link between economic condition and the solidity/fragility of democratic regimes (Berg-Schlosser 2002; Huntington 1992 Linz and Stephan 1996). Political scientists who have dealt with the transition to and consolidation of democratic regimes have argued that consolidated democratic regimes are more prone to resist to economic distress (Berg-Schlosser 2002) than authoritarian or totalitarian ones, not considering the fact that economic crisis has been also one of the key determinants to transition (Huntington 1992).

This book offers a perspective on how economic crisis and economic development can affect political regimes and how they respond to the economic and social challenges posed. The authors of the volume explain the necessity of such reflections in the light of not only of the economic crisis but also in the light of turmoil and the political consequences that follow. The volume gathers contribution based on various experiences, each describing regional or local contexts during an economic crisis. The first part offers two general perspectives, one concentrating on the history of financial crisis and its consequences on policy making authored by Stan du Plessis, and the other on the historical aspect of the crisis and the impact of the Great Depression on democracy.

The article from Berg-Schlosser tries to compare the current crisis with the Great Depression. The author suggests that consolidated democracies are less threatened