

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

by the current crisis because the effects produced in 1929 were far more deeper than the ones produced after 2008 (p. 57). Their consolidation provides the internal strength to resist any other attempt to transfer the crisis to a political level, calling into question the nature of democratic regimes. According to Berg-Schlosser, on the other hand, there are similarities between the economic situation of the interwar period and that of new democracies but with a substantial difference. The international situation today is such that it does not put democracies to risk. The author provides another argument by which, due to the confinement of the crisis to the Western World, autocratic and economically successful countries like China or Russia might provide a valid economic and political model for emerging countries.

The third part of the book contains three contributions from Van Beek, Wnuk-Lipinski and a co-authored article from Han Sang-Jin and Lü Peng. All the authors focus on probably the most relevant case, that of China, while analyzing regime-economy performance. Van Beek offers a historical perspective on China and its global economic weight prior to the full blossom of industrial age. Rather than trying to analyze the country as a case of an autocratic regime with a free market economy, the author tends to consider the historical past of China as a formidable tool of legitimacy for the current regime. Van Beek stresses not only the missing variable of accountability (typical of a democratic regime) as an explanatory factor for China's economic success but also the general philosophy and tradition of the country's ruling class, based in practice rather than in ideological dogmatism (p. 132). In the conclusion, the author picks up the idea of China's aim to become a more regional player rather than a global one. To the author, the Chinese model might become an alternative for those countries dissatisfied with the liberal democratic model. This, however, does not necessarily imply that China will take a more prominent international role apart the regional one dictated by cultural similarities shared by the countries in the area. Wnuk-Lipinski's contribution depicts a rather gloomy situation, taking into account the reformulation of a new world order based on the economic weight of two leading economies like China and the U.S. He suggests, in the same fashion as Van Beek, but with a more global perspective (p. 149), that China might become a trend setter not only in economic terms but also in providing a sort of political model for other countries.

The contribution from Sang Jing and Peng focuses on the salient characteristics of crisis management by the Chinese government. This contribution explores the neo-Keynesian approach undertaken by the Chinese government in order to cope with the economic crisis. The article stresses on the idea that authoritarian governments are more susceptible to economic crisis and their performance is closely linked with economic success. According to the authors the threat to the current Chinese regime lies in its very success: the booming economy. Sang Jing and Peng maintain that there will be a point when China's growth cycle will come to an end, leading to

a re-arrangement of current political structure. The authors do not make any prediction on how such changes might take place.

The economic crisis has been and continues to be a hot topic within the field of social studies. Yet even if various aspects of the crisis and its implication on democracy are fully dealt with in the volume, the authoritarian response seems to fail some how in providing a generally valid explanation on why authoritarian regimes survive today. This is probably the most interesting part of the book but it focuses only in one prominent case, that of China. The other 'successful' authoritarian case, Russia, is not present, while other authoritarian regimes like Venezuela are barely mentioned. Of course, the authoritarian structures of Russia, China or Venezuela are very different in form and quality, but at least one or two more cases would have strengthened the nature of the volume on the authoritarian response to the crisis. On the other hand, the volume (as mentioned by the editor) seems to have gone to publication while various event, like the massive protests in Greece or the Arab Spring, were taking place. Both events, if analyzed, could have given a more general picture on influence of the crisis on both democratic and authoritarian regimes. The volume has been diminished in its value due mainly to the rapid sequence change of events

The volume remains an interesting contribution in the field of political economy. It confronts and analyses different kind of approaches to the crisis by liberal democracies and autocratic regimes. The book stresses, the idea, that new democracies faces a lower risk today concerning their political stability than autocratic regimes during major economic crisis.

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Susanne Schroter (ed.), *Christianity in Indonesia: Perspectives of Power* (Munster: LIT Verlag, 2011)

Raphael Daoud Jackson
Kentucky State University

Christianity in Indonesia is a collection of essays which cover the multicultural and multi religious nation of Indonesia. Although governed by the state doctrine of