

Barbara Vis: *Politics of Risk-taking: Welfare State Reform in Advanced Democracies*

Amsterdam 2010: Amsterdam University Press, 248 pp.

This book addresses two fundamental questions in comparative social policy and comparative politics: First, to what extent have welfare states been reformed over the past few decades and which principles have underlain these changes? Second, why have governments taken the risk of pursuing—often painful—reforms in some instances and restrained from doing so in others? To answer these questions, Barbara Vis adopts an innovative approach. On the theoretical front, she deploys a novel argument based on Kahneman's and Tversky's prospect theory [Tversky and Kahneman 1981; Kahneman and Tversky 2000]. Vis suggests that governments are most likely to accept the risks involved in unpopular reforms when they face important political or economic losses. In order to gauge the extent of policy change and to test her causal argument, Vis uses fuzzy-set analysis. This methodology allows researchers to measure qualitative changes in variables' membership in theoretically defined sets. It is also used to assess whether one or several factors are a necessary and/or a sufficient condition of an outcome. Empirically, the book focuses on reforms of labour market policy in affluent democracies between 1985 and 2002.

The first half of the book offers a detailed analysis of the degree and the direction of welfare state change. To begin with, Vis evaluates for 16 OECD countries whether policies such as employment protection, unemployment benefits and active labour market policies (ALMPs) have converged on a model of workfare or whether they have retained the features of their original—liberal, conservative or social-democratic—welfare regime. She finds that almost all countries have made unemployment benefits less generous and that many

have increased spending on ALMPs. However, a fuzzy-set ideal-type analysis shows that labour market policies have not been radically overhauled and have generally remained regime-specific. Only one country, Ireland, has radically shifted from a liberal welfare regime towards a 'lean workfare model' characterised by low income protection, strong activation and low employment protection. Denmark has moved towards a 'generous workfare model' with much higher income protection than in the lean model. Interestingly, the study suggests that the Netherlands and Belgium have moved from a conservative towards a social-democratic model while Finland has followed the reverse direction.

After having revealed the general picture of changes at the country level, Vis zooms in on the different reforms pursued by specific governments. She distinguishes between two types of reforms: unpopular and not-unpopular ones. Unpopular reforms are 'those policy changes that do not favour the median voter' and 'usually mean the imposition of losses without clear, identifiable and present winners' whereas not-unpopular reforms 'affect the median voter neither positively nor negatively' (p. 14). Popular reforms—i.e. reforms that positively affect the median voter—are left out of the analysis because they are assumed to be very rare in the current era of austerity. Given her focus on labour market policies, Vis sees reductions in the generosity of unemployment benefits as a typical example of unpopular reforms while the expansion of ALMPs and restrictions in employment protection are considered as not-unpopular reforms. This cabinet-level analysis focuses on Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK, four countries that belong to very different worlds of welfare and have very dissimilar patterns of party competition. The main and most striking finding is that very similar governments may adopt widely divergent stances on reform in consecutive periods in office.

A telling example cited by Vis is German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder's reluctance to pursue labour market reform during his first term in office and his second cabinet's U-turn with the introduction of dramatic cuts in unemployment benefits (dubbed the *Hartz IV* reform).

This variation in the attitudes of similar governments towards reform constitutes a theoretical puzzle, particularly for partisan theories of economic policy-making which would expect right-wing and left-wing governments to hold distinct and relatively stable policy preferences. According to Vis, other theoretical approaches such as those focusing on institutions, socio-economic changes or ideas shed light on the drivers of reform and on the constraints politicians face, but they fail to account for the circumstances under which or *when* governments decide to pursue unpopular or not-unpopular reforms. The second half of the book strives to advance an explanation for this. Vis starts from the assumption that reforms involve substantial political risks for all governments, particularly the risk of losing elections. Thus, incumbents must decide whether to 'bite the bullet' and accept these risks, or 'steer clear' of reform. Vis argues that the attitude of governments towards such risks and their willingness to pursue reforms depends on the context in which they find themselves. She bases her theoretical argument on prospect theory [Tversky and Kahneman 1981; Kahneman and Tversky 2000]. This behavioural theory of choice under risk has shown that people are risk averse when they believe they are in a favourable situation and expect to make gains. But, when they confront losses, they are more willing to take risks, because they may want to recover the losses that they have incurred (for modified arguments along these lines, see Mercer [2005] and Tepe and Vanhuyse [2012]).

Using this insight from prospect theory, Vis contends that governments accept

to introduce unpopular reforms and thus risk losing votes only in the face of a worsening economic climate and/or of a deteriorating political position. Conversely, they pursue not-unpopular reforms in a situation of improving economic conditions and/or if they enjoy high levels of political support in the polls. This applies to all governments whatever their political orientation. However, Vis also hypothesises that, due to their ideological orientation, right-wing parties are more likely to pursue unpopular reforms such as cuts in benefits, whereas left-wing parties may favour more spending on ALMPs, i.e. a 'not-unpopular' reform (see also Tepe and Vanhuyse [2013]). Vis tests her argument with a fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA) of reforms introduced in the four selected countries. Her evidence shows that a worsening economic climate is a necessary condition of unpopular reform and becomes a sufficient condition only when combined with a deteriorating political position or a right-wing government. On the contrary, an improving political position is a necessary condition of not-unpopular reforms and is also a sufficient one in combination with an improving economic situation or a left-wing cabinet.

The book's approach provides an original and a penetrating insight into the cognitive factors affecting government decision-making. Its publication is very timely as it sheds light on some of the political dynamics behind the implementation of budget cuts during the recent debt crisis. An illustration is French President Nicolas Sarkozy's renewed dash for structural reforms in the second half of his term in office. In a context of eroding support for his presidency at the end of 2009, Sarkozy announced an unpopular increase in the statutory retirement age and decided to push it through despite massive protests. With the economic situation deteriorating at the end of 2011 and the next presidential election looming, Sarkozy decided to acceler-

ate the reform agenda and announced potentially unattractive tax measures such as an increase in VAT. These moves were deliberately made to demonstrate his leadership in the management of the economic crisis and thereby to possibly generate support among voters worried about the state of the economy. Vis's model can very adequately account for this type of decisions. Nevertheless, her demonstration suffers from some weaknesses at the theoretical and at the methodological level.

Central to the book's theoretical framework is the distinction between unpopular and not-unpopular reforms. However, its definition of these two types of reforms lacks clarity. Vis initially suggests that the first type of reform 'does not favour' the median voter, while the second type 'affects' him or her 'neither positively nor negatively' (p. 14). Yet, when she names specific examples of unpopular or popular reforms in her empirical analysis, she cites two ways in which the median voter may be affected by these reforms. One way is for the median voter to be *directly* affected by the policy change and therefore to be a loser or a winner in the reform. A second way is for the median voter to *perceive* the reform as just or unjust. Thus, cuts in the generosity of unemployment benefits are presented as 'a typical example of an unpopular reform' because they 'negatively affect a substantial group of voters, which likely includes the median one' or because cross-national studies of public opinion data show that the median voter is 'in favour of reducing benefit generosity' (p. 49). Similarly, ALMPs are presented as a not-unpopular reform because they 'have only a direct effect on a relatively small group of voters (especially the unemployed), probably therefore hardly influencing the median voter' (p. 14) or because responses to survey questions show that the median voter is neither in favour nor opposed to ALMPs.

It would have seemed important to specify which of these two criteria really

distinguishes between different types of reforms. If for Vis the criterion that matters is the reform's direct effect on the well-being of the median voter, it is difficult to understand why she claims that cuts in benefits have more chances to affect the median voter than increases in ALMP spending. To be affected by either of these policies, presumably one needs to be unemployed or at least expect to be unemployed. And this is a factor that remains constant for the median voter. This conceptual inconsistency unfortunately undermines the demonstration.

Questions can also be raised about some aspects of the book's methodological approach. Although fuzzy-set analysis proves a very fruitful method to measure the degree and the direction of institutional change, its use by Vis to test her causal argument is less convincing for two reasons. First, she evaluates the relevance of causal paths that include only the variables that she hypothesises to be key determinants of reform. She does not construct causal paths incorporating the variables that other researchers have identified as important conditions of reform and thereby fails to assess how her explanation compares with existing theories. Second, she evaluates her argument using macro data, although she essentially develops a theory about the micro-foundations of government decision-making. The economic and political contexts in which different cabinets were active may very well have shaped their assessment of the risks involved with different reforms. However, with this type of data the government remains a black box and the reader is left to assume that the causal mechanism advanced by the author is the relevant one. Perhaps, complementing the fsQCA with case studies based on interviews with policy-makers or quotes from newspapers would have bolstered the theoretical claim.

All in all, *Politics of Risk-Taking* is a provocative book which addresses key questions and develops an original theoretical

and methodological approach. It will be relevant not only to students of the welfare state but to all those with an interest in policy-making and in the difficult choices governments have to make. There is no doubt the book will serve as source of inspiration for future scholarship.

Marek Naczyk
Department of Social Policy and
Intervention, University of Oxford
marek.naczyk@spi.ox.ac.uk

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Richard Rose, William Mischler and Neil Munro: *Popular Support for an Undemocratic Regime: The Changing Views of Russians*
Cambridge 2011: Cambridge University Press, 206 pp.

When authoritarian communist regimes collapsed in the late 1980s, social scientists broadly assumed that they would 'transition' to democracy. With the passing of more than two decades, we know that most post-Soviet regimes transitioned instead

to some form of electoral-authoritarianism. Richard Rose and his co-authors begin their study with the insistence that we should not judge this transition—at least in Russia—as stalled or failing, because that is not how most Russians see it. Indeed, the main goal of their book is to explain why popular support for Russia's regime grew as democracy declined. Relying on National Russian Barometer (NRB) surveys, they show that a popular consensus in support of the regime had developed by 2003 and peaked in 2008, coincident with the rise and consolidation of power or Putin and United Russia, the hegemonic 'party of power.' In sum, there was an 'upward trend in popular support for the regime /as it became/ more undemocratic' (p. 77).

In seeking to explain this pattern of support, the authors turn to classic social science theory that identifies four categories of determinants: sociological, defined as socialisation or learning; political, defined as individuals' evaluation of the performance of political institutions; economic conditions, both household and national; and time, or how long the regime has persisted. These explanations are tested with a rich source of survey evidence: eighteen years of reports from the NRB, from 1992 to 2009, each surveying more than 34 000 Russian respondents with a similar set of questions. The surveys follow systematically the evolving political attitudes of Russians, from the inception of the post-communist regime almost to the present. They constitute an exceptionally consistent and rich source of evidence for each of the four explanations, allowing for rigorous statistical testing and comparison.

The book's findings are always interesting and sometimes surprising. The evidence shows, for example, that a majority of Russians ideally favoured a democratic regime throughout these years, i.e. popular support for democratic ideals in principle does not decline even as support for Russia's increasingly authoritarian regime

grows. The authors find little role for socialisation in explaining growing support; they do not endorse the common claim that an 'authoritarian culture' or preference for a 'strong leader' explains these political trends. The performance of political institutions matters in explaining support. The economy matters more—Russians' evaluation of the national economic system (rather than household or 'pocketbook' variables) has a very strong effect on support for the regime.

Perhaps most interestingly, the authors find that the passage of time, the simple survival or persistence of a set of political institutions, is a key factor explaining support. With time, people gradually adapt to new institutions. According to the authors, 'The passage of time has cumulatively trumped the impact of the economy.' (p. 119) People become accustomed, inert, resigned to the political regime their elites supply; most cease to imagine realistic alternatives. Meanwhile, positive economic trends compensate for the disillusionment of the more idealistic. The authors' analysis is sophisticated both methodologically and conceptually. They conceptualise support as the outcome of a set of countervailing trends, some favourable, others unfavourable, and pay systematic attention to how each of the dimensions changes across different demographic groups. By 2008, support for Russia's electoral-authoritarian regime has shown such a consistent popular majority that the authors see it as consolidated.

Of course, they recognise that any regime is open to challenge by various events, in particular leadership transition and economic crisis. Fortuitously for their analysis, the year 2008 brought both to Russia, and the study devotes a chapter to the effects of each. The data show that the 2008 economic crisis did lower support for the regime, but not dramatically. Most households were insulated from the shock, some of the blame was shifted abroad by the re-

gime, and the base of support already established by time and performance largely held. (The more complicated effects of the political transition are discussed below.)

At least for a political scientist, the most intriguing aspect of this study involves Russians' political values and attitudes towards governing institutions and elections. Here there seems to be a number of contradictions. As noted, the study finds that most Russians continue to value democracy as an ideal. Most also continue to judge themselves as relatively free, yet they give increasing support to a leadership that progressively hollows out democratic elements of the regime. Why? The authors' answer, explicated above, points to economic performance and time or regime persistence as the major explanations. Russians are apparently subordinating their value preferences because the current regime is performing well and they see no alternative. There are other paradoxes. Surveyed Russians deeply and increasingly distrust both political parties and the Duma, but three-fifths disapprove of either suspending parliament or getting rid of parties. Further, while most Western observers find Russian elections to fail the standard 'free and fair' criteria, a majority of Russians find recent elections to be fair. Here the authors argue that Russians overall judge elections' fairness more on the basis of substance or outcome than of process, and most support the substantive outcomes. The majority has favoured some checks and balances between the President and the Duma. At the same time, they have provided growing support for a super-president. Of course, the Russian public holds no monopoly on normatively inconsistent political attitudes, which are commonly found in public opinion surveys.

The Soviet past often looms in the background of the book's analysis. For example, we are told that Russians judge their freedom, the fairness of elections, etc., against the experience of a nearly-totalitar-

ian Soviet past. This explanation makes a great deal of sense. Still, it is also arguable that Russians' experience with Western-promoted democracy during the 1990s—including the scores of ephemeral and ineffective political parties, a President and Duma that bickered constantly as the economy collapsed and the Russian Federation fragmented, corrupt privatisation and oligarchic penetration of the state—in fact discredited democracy as a feasible system of government for Russia. It may be the experience of more open politics in the early-mid 1990s, at least as much as the communist past, that informs Russians' later judgments about their political institutions.

The book also has some limitations. This reader wishes that the authors had engaged more directly and substantively with related literature on Russian politics and electoral-authoritarian regimes. This literature is not ignored, much of it is cited, and some is integrated into the analysis. However, there is unaddressed scholarship that speaks directly to the question of support for increasing authoritarianism in Russia. Stephen Fish's argument, in *Democracy Derailed in Russia*, points to the extreme corruption of 1990s Russia as a major factor that undermined support for democracy, at both societal and elite levels. Rose et al. do not grapple with this argument. They pay relatively little attention to corruption, pointing out that *Transparency International's* ratings of Russia have remained largely stable, and abysmally low, throughout the period of their study, so presumably cannot explain variations in popular support for the regime. Like Fish's, studies on electoral support for authoritarian elites in Latin America also point to political disorder and corruption as major explanatory factors, and it seems likely that these factors have played a large role in Russia as well.

It would be entirely unfair to expect any book to anticipate future events, but it is interesting to consider the protests fol-

lowing the December 2011 Duma elections and recent Presidential elections in light of the authors' analysis. The events generally fit the book's arguments. First, Rose et al. anticipate the prospect of some destabilisation resulting from leadership transition and economic pressures. Second, the demonstrations show that, while there is dissatisfaction with electoral manipulation and political corruption in Russian society, active protest remains limited. Most importantly, the argument that the majority of Russians support the regime is borne out by the legitimate electoral victory of Putin in December 2011 and the quiescence in most of Russian society as demonstrators and civil society have been further restricted. At the same time, Russia's government is clearly ready to raise the costs of protest by threatening repressive measures even in face of modest challenges. It does not seem to trust the solidity of its popular support.

The greatest strength of this book is that the authors mine such a large and strong set of empirical data. There is no speculation here; every claim is grounded in the best, most comprehensive and politically independent set of survey data we have about the attitudes of ordinary Russians, and what factors influence and explain these attitudes. It requires the reader to recognise that many Russians' criteria for governance differ from those of Freedom House and the OECD. This is so not because Russians are backward authoritarians, but because they are judging what works and what is possible politically on the basis of their experiences. This is empirical social science at its best.

In conclusion, this book speaks to at least two major scholarly audiences. For Russia specialists, it presents an authoritative exposition and explanation of the political views of ordinary Russians, which differ from those of the vocal urban elite to which Westerners are overexposed. For a broad audience of social scientists, this

book matters because partially authoritarian regimes are more common in the contemporary world than liberal democracies. According to the multi-continental World Values Survey, while there is 'overwhelming support for democracy as a good way of governing', in fact both democratic and undemocratic regimes secure similar levels of support (pp. 22, 26). Better understanding the sources of popular support and durability of undemocratic regimes is, therefore, critically important.

Linda J. Cook
Brown University
Linda_cook@brown.edu

Leonardo Morlino: *Changes for Democracy: Actors, Structures, Processes* Oxford 2011: Oxford University Press, 308 pp.

As James Mahoney has argued, although huge and diverse, the comparative literature on democratisation is one of few bodies of research that can claim to have made sustained, cumulative advances in knowledge. Nevertheless, Leonardo Morlino argues that despite such progress, democratisation studies have been undermined by a growing disjuncture between high-level theories of institutional change and empirical research. Moreover, quantitative research preoccupied with operationalisation tends to produce simplistic variable-driven theories, while regionally oriented approaches to democratisation—beginning with the 'transition' approach developed by O'Donnell—offers 'questions but not theoretical results' (p. 11).

To address this 'retreat from theory or a fear of developing a theory' (p. 17), in *Changes for Democracy* Morlino undertakes the tasks of 'integrating, correcting and developing the results of previous analysis' (p. 109). The book, which combines literature review, empirical analysis and the ar-

guments about conceptualisation and research directions, is divided into three parts, which deal with: (1) the definition of democracy as a regime; (2) phases and processes of democratisation and their domestic and external anchors; and (3) the question of deepening democracy and promoting 'democratic quality'.

Although long-discarded functionalist theories of democracy merit revisiting, researchers should, Morlino argues, avoid re-launching the quest for the 'philosopher's stone' of simple, universal theory. Rather, he suggests, there should be a step-by-step strategy of identifying distinct mechanisms and processes—'key salient and, and recurring sub-processes, simpler theoretical frameworks' (p. 21)—across different phases and historical episodes of democratisation. Morlino argues, quite conventionally, that an essentially procedural minimum definition of democracy is needed to allow empirical judgements to be made and the classic Dahlian procedural conceptualisation of this democratic minimum is still most coherent. He notes, however, that even with such a minimum, the boundary between the procedural and the substantive is not clear cut: meaningful civic and political pluralism requires a minimum of social equality and no democracy can endure even ephemerally without some substantive compromise between key social forces. For similar reasons, he suggests, the uncertainty of outcomes that democracy is conventionally said to institutionalise should be regarded as bounded: democratic regimes should be better viewed as producing 'most indeterminacy' of outcome. Democratic minima also logically imply democratic maxima. While 'maximum democracy' may not be empirically discoverable even in Scandinavia or Northern Europe, there is, nevertheless, a direct conceptual continuum between identifying minimum democracy and research on the quality of long-established well-functioning democracies.

The question of partially democratic 'hybrid regimes' in particular, Morlino suggests, throws such definitional issues into sharp relief. Surveying the data he concludes that, while some hybrid regimes are unstable or transitory, most are not: leaving aside highly uncertain cases, 45 of 91 states categorised as 'semi-free' by Freedom House in the two decades following 1989 he argues could be regarded as *persistent* hybrid regimes, having endured for at least fifteen years. Given their diversity Morlino, like other authors, suggests that their hybridity needs to be examined in more complex terms. Drawing on existing typologies, he argues that hybrid regimes are broadly either 'protected democracies', where entrenched elites or institutions act as veto players to constrain democratic decision making, or 'limited democracies', where leaders emerge through free electoral competition in the absence of consistent or meaningful civil rights. To this conventional distinction, he adds a third category: 'democracy without the state', where the state apparatus lacks the basic cohesion or resources to implement democratic decisions.

However, Morlino argues, hybrid regimes need additionally to be understood in terms of their *origins* and *trajectories*, as their hybridity is largely a function of the obstacles to democratisation represented by legacies of authoritarian regimes and their workings differ greatly depending on whether they are semi-liberalised autocracies or new democracies that have experienced backsliding. Overall, he concludes particular types of non-democratic rule are likely to lead to particular forms of hybrid regime: traditional authoritarian dictatorships, military or civilian, tend to result in 'protected democracy'; while post-colonial and post-totalitarian states produce 'limited democracy'.

In the second part of the book, Morlino discusses processes of democratic transition and consolidation. His conceptualisa-

tion of transition and its measurement again echoes established definitions: a process triggered by the inauguration of full pluralism and ending with free and fair elections, whose form is shaped by recurrent features such as duration, the presence of violence, the role of the armed forces, the extent of mass participation, the level of formal opposition organisation, and the presence or absence of pacts and political accommodation. Morlino, however, does more unusually stress the existence of a distinct 'installation' phase *following* transition when key initial institutional choices are made, although the factors he highlights as explaining the course of installation—political traditions, previous democratic experience, nature of the outgoing regime and mode of transition—are familiar ones.

Morlino is more unconventional, however, in supplementing this general typology with a historical caveat. He argues that the historical 'first wave' of transitions to democracy in West European states should be distinguished from subsequent waves. While 'first wave' transitions were typically characterised by the introduction of mass participation into already competitive political systems and were strongly shaped by domestic social forces, later transitions saw competition introduced into modern mass participation systems and saw the role of socio-economic structures diluted by both the influence of external actors and the rise of democracy as a universal norm. If there is a single core mechanism underlying waves of democratic transition, he later suggests, it is cultural emulation and social learning rather than socio-structural change.

Morlino approaches the phase of democratic consolidation with a similar mix of familiar and unfamiliar ideas. Like many writers he sees consolidation as a process of embedding democratic structures which has two axes: the legitimisation of democracy as a regime and the 'anchoring' of dem-

ocratic institutions in society. Varying levels of legitimacy and the extent to which institutional 'anchoring' is party- or society-led produce distinct patterns of consolidation: post-war Italian democracy consolidated primarily through strong parties and party-led clientelism despite the patchy legitimacy of liberal democracy, while post-Franco Spain saw weaker party structures but deeper and wider legitimacy of democracy. With organisationally weak parties (but still weaker civil societies), and post-communist Central and East European democracies, he suggests, approximated to the Spanish case, although legitimisation was complicated by the need to legitimise new economic institutions and (in some instances) newly independent states.

Morlino's conceptualisation of democratic consolidation also leads to an innovative idea about the nature of political crises in modern democracies: these, he argues, can usually be traced to initial patterns of democratic consolidation and usually take the form of 'de-anchoring' as institutions (not infrequently political parties) erode interests and incentives evolve due to social or geo-political change or exogenous shocks.

Although he considers that '... democracy and processes of democracy exist solely within national systems' (p. 144), Morlino also devotes a chapter to mechanisms of 'external anchoring'. Broadly tracking existing literature, he sees four essential mechanisms for such anchoring: external imposition, emulation, conditionalities and socialisation. Of these, he believes, the latter two are the most relevant, with external conditionalities potentially the most powerful mechanism. After briefly reviewing mechanisms of socialisation through linkage, Morlino thus outlines in more detail a framework unpacking the working of conditionalities, which centres on the interaction of external and internal actors and the centrality of promoting the rule of law.

The framework, which breaks down progress into phases of rule adoption, rule implementation and rule internalisation and flags the role of domestic 'change agents', the importance of the (changing) calculus facing all internal actors, and the indispensability of bureaucratic capacity, is then illustrated with findings from Morlino's earlier research on EU influence on Romania, Turkey, Serbia and Ukraine. This confirms earlier researchers' findings concerning the effectiveness of hard, specific conditionalities and the obstruction of entrenched groups rooted in the outgoing regime, but notes that in uncontentious 'low politics' areas surprising levels of change can still be made.

Morlino concludes the book with a discussion of 'democratic quality' or, as he also terms it, 'good democracy'. Distinguishing it from effective governance and quality of life, Morlino argues that democratic quality can best be defined as 'democratic *deepening* ... [...] ... the process of developing what in normative perspectives are considered the qualities of democracy' (p. 195, italics in original). More concretely, it can be understood as democratic procedures, content and outcomes that maximally empower and fully satisfy citizens and, in particular, which enhance the rule of law; improve vertical (citizen-politician) and horizontal (inter-institutional) accountabilities; promote high levels of government responsiveness to citizens; and develop effective citizenry through social equality and inclusive social citizenship. Poor quality democracy can thus be understood in terms of processes that obstruct the maximisation of such democratic qualities such as underestimation of (or hostility to) social citizenship; the rendering of citizens as a passive onlookers by the mass media; or politicians' multiple options for evading (vertical) electoral accountability.

These points are developed in the book's final chapter, which summarises the findings of a project conducted by Morlino

and collaborators examining the inter-relationship of qualities of democracy across a selection of East European cases and a range of democracies in Europe and Latin American. The key finding to emerge from these is that while trade-offs between different qualities such as accountability, participation, competition or the rule of law may exist, 'good democracies' tend to exhibit a 'mutual convergence of qualities'. Distinct regional patterns democracy—expressible in terms of weaknesses of different qualities or obstacles to their development—do, however, emerge: East European democracies lack participation, Latin American democracies lack social equality needed for broad civic empowerment and West European democracies, while scoring well in most respects, still suffer the common lack of responsiveness, 'the Achilles heel of every democracy' (p. 254).

Taken overall, *Changes for Democracy* is a rich, complex work with both marked strengths and weaknesses. In structure and style the book sits uneasily and rather unsatisfactorily between literature review, empirical analysis and theoretical discussion. Long sections reviewing the literature are sometimes abruptly cut short and there are some sometimes surprising lacunae: comparative-historical approaches to democratisation, for example, go largely unmentioned. The presentation of empirical findings and data—perhaps unnecessary given that most appear to have been previously published—is often dogged by a lack clarity and full explanation. It is, for example, unclear in what sense the 'manipulative' institutions of Lithuania, Hungary, Poland and Romania 'shape[d] in an open and strong way the preferences of citizens, influenced by political parties, existing groups, or other networks' (p. 139), while those of the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Latvia and Estonia did not. The conceptual discussion, while systematic, can seem often laboured and shifts frustratingly between recapitulation and revision of

conventional approaches and some more novel insights.

Although the book's breadth is sometimes to its disadvantage, the theoretical linkages Morlino makes between different phases of democratisation—and in particular between democratic consolidation and processes of crisis and change within 'normal' democracy—are among its most valuable contributions. His suggestion, for example, that a 'transition' perspective might be developed to analyse shifts *within* democracies from one model of democracy to another (for example, from majoritarian to consensus-based) is an arresting, if undeveloped, insight. The concept of 'anchoring', although perhaps too metaphorical, also represents an innovative rethinking of approaches to democratic consolidation.

Changes for Democracy is thus broadly successful in its goal of picking out key shared mechanisms of democratisation. However, the relative sparsity of those identified (learning, anchoring, convergence of quality)—especially when set against the complexity and diversity of democratisation processes which the book itself amply illustrates—suggests that, while not unproductive, Morlino's project of distilling for a theoretically unified approach democratisation may not be one of the main highways of future research.

Seán L. Hanley
University College London
s.hanley@ucl.ac.uk

Robbyn R. Wacker and Karen A. Roberto:
Aging Social Policies: An International Perspective

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Population ageing is a global phenomenon which affects developed countries in particular, placing increased pressure on social systems. A widely expressed view is that

population ageing will have negative consequences for society—for example, fiscal consequences through increased health costs and social consequences through the burden of additional familial care responsibilities. Another set of challenges faced by social policy relates to the changing social, economic and cultural context. The increased labour market participation of women and changes in patterns of living arrangements, for instance, have had profound impacts on the needs of older people and on how these could be met. Social policy itself has been changing, but then again it is a perpetually moving subject [Dean 2012].

Wacker and Roberto take social policy or rather many social policies as the subject of their accessible introductory textbook, with a particular focus on those social policies that are directed towards older people (hence, the title 'ageing social policies'). As the authors state in the foreword, the purpose of the book is to provide a description of current ageing social policies in the United States and in a selected sample of other, mostly European, countries. The authors adopt two different, but complementary approaches that jointly serve as the book's framework: (1) the comparative perspective allows students to contrast, discuss and analyse the different ways countries construct and implement their policies, while (2) the 'policy-person link' draws attention to the link between policies (macro-level) and persons (micro-level). Information on the latter is derived from qualitative interviews with older persons and is presented in a textbox at the end of every chapter. The macro-micro connection, which according to the authors has been missing from previous textbooks on the topic, acts as an important reminder of the impact policies have on the everyday lives of older people. The interviews also highlight the diverse set of experiences, interests, abilities and needs that represent old age and testify to the need to find ways of continu-

ing to include older people in the process of designing and delivering services that can improve the quality of life in old age.

The book is well structured, with Chapters 1 and 2 providing the reader with an introduction to key factors associated with population ageing and to the US policy context. Chapter 1 presents a demographic summary of the US's ageing population in an international comparison. Key indicators on fertility, mortality, and the scope and speed of population ageing are explored, with the analysis weighted towards the provision of data. While the information could also serve as a good basis to elaborate on the social and economic policy implications and challenges arising from the demographic patterns described, it is somewhat disappointing that the authors provide a discussion on these only in the very last chapter. This leaves the reader with a desire to understand more at this point. Chapter 2 provides a very readable and concise introduction to the policy-making process in the US using Social Security as one of the examples, as well as a discussion about key ageing-related social policy initiatives in the US and elsewhere, such as the Older Americans Act) and the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. Building on the information in the two introductory chapters, Chapters 3–9 explore specific social policy areas such as retirement income, employment, housing, health care, mental health, community support policies, and family caregiving. The linkage between demographic change and policy is clearly explained at the beginning of each thematic chapter; measures implemented in the US and selected countries in the given policy field are described, in some cases in less (mental health) and in others in more detail (health care). The chapter on housing, a key element in the well-being of older people, provides an overview of policies related to ageing in place. As Wacker and Roberto point out, this is a preferred alternative for many

older people. While the range of policy measures presented by the authors that support this type of living arrangement is limited, their short discussion on policy implications and current directions suggests a degree of optimism that government is responding to societal needs. A critical discussion of the role of assistive and adaptive technologies that help to facilitate ageing in place and available policy initiatives that support this goal are, however, neglected. Only in the chapter investigating family caregiving are these issues briefly considered. The chapter on community support policies covers a wide range of programmes (i.e. food and nutrition, transportation, legal assistance) that promote independent living and social engagement of older adults and complements the previous chapter on housing. It was pleasing to see that the increasingly important subject of civic participation and volunteering has been included here; perhaps this topic even deserved a chapter of its own. The penultimate chapter offers a very detailed and informative examination of the financing and availability of elderly care and access to support for family carers in the US, the UK, Italy and Sweden. These countries, the authors assert, represent four distinctive ways in which home care and family care needs are addressed and dealt with. Considering the authors' background in gerontology it is perhaps no coincidence that the most rewarding discussions are to be found in the chapters on health care, mental health, community support and family care policies. By contrast, the description of retirement, employment and housing policies are less elaborate and they lack the range of the other chapters.

Throughout the book, there is slightly more focus on the US policy context. Readers are provided with detailed discussion and analysis of Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, housing initiatives, the Older Americans Act and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, just to name a few. In-

formation on similar legislative and policy instruments in the other reviewed countries, however, sometimes lacks the same depth. For example, we learn very little of housing policies and ageing in place in Norway, Switzerland and Spain, and it is surprising to find that only half a page is devoted to describing age discrimination and employment and training policies in Finland. These latter cases seem simply to serve as illustrations of 'difference from the US case'. While this is in line with the stated purpose of the authors in using a comparative perspective, it is questionable whether such asymmetrical information allows readers to draw useful country comparisons.

An additional drawback concerning the selection of non-US countries is that not every country is covered in each policy chapter. For instance, the chapter on retirement income policies provides a good summary of the pension system design, eligibility and types of old age pension benefits as well as on the retirement age in the US, comparing it with Canada, Sweden and the Netherlands. Covering the same set of countries in the related chapter on employment policies for older workers would arguably have contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of the countries' policy approach to these issues. Instead, the case of the US is examined now along with that of Brazil, Japan, France, Finland and Italy. Had the authors taken a different approach and aimed to capture cross-national variations in institutional arrangements building, for instance, on the large body of literature on the different welfare regime typologies (e.g. Esping-Andersen [1990] and Tepe and Vanhuyse [2010]) readers might have ended up with a better understanding of the 'big picture', but perhaps at a cost of gaining less detailed information on the specific features of various social policies. Other conceptual lenses on ageing and social policies that would have merited closer attention in this

volume include the gender dimension (e.g. Marin and Zolyomi [2010]), the political sociology approach (e.g. Vanhuyse [2004]) and the comparative-institutional approach (e.g. Vanhuyse and Goerres [2012]).

In the concluding chapter, Wacker and Roberto briefly look at the politics of ageing in the US, identifying important shifts in social policy focus along with the changing public perception of older people since the 1980s. The authors certainly refrain from stoking the fire of current debates on the population ageing crisis. The reader will find no provocative statements here, which can even be considered as one of the book's strengths. Yet I would have liked the authors to expand a bit more on the overarching policy issues and to include some reference to the recent literature on inter-generational justice (e.g. Smeeding and Sullivan [1998] and Sabbagh and Vanhuyse [2010]).

All in all, the book delivers what it promises, but readers should not expect a deep analysis in specialised areas of research; rather it will serve to assist students of social and public policy who will find the book helpful as an introduction to social policy issues associated with an ageing population.

Eszter Zolyomi

European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research, Vienna
zolyomi@euro.centre.org

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Guglielmo Meardi: *Social Failures of EU Enlargement: A Case of Workers Voting with Their Feet*

New York 2011: Routledge, 230 pp.

Over the 1990s, Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries underwent painful reforms with wide-ranging consequences for their economies and societies. These changes following the fall of state socialism fuelled various debates and research ideas on viable transition paths and development trajectories for these countries. Although particular national trajectories differed from each other, in general all CEE countries strived for foreign direct investment and integration into European and world networks of advanced capitalist societies. Joining the European Union (EU) represented the tip of the iceberg in such efforts. Great economic performance, quality of life and high social and labour standards in Western EU member states, combined with the EU's claimed effort to diffuse the European social model and foster convergence towards high-quality social standards across its member states, served as a driving force of CEE countries' integration efforts. Social progress through enlargement, promoted by European institutions, national governments and the media, represented

an appealing goal to frustrated citizens of CEE countries undergoing the far-reaching labour market transition and experiencing unemployment and a deterioration in working conditions.

To what extent have these claimed positive effects of EU enlargement on CEE countries and the convergence efforts to harmonise social and labour conditions across the EU materialised? What have we learnt from the two eastward EU enlargements in 2004 and 2007? Policymakers and economists highlight the economic gains in terms of free markets, the movement of goods and services, which accelerated the high productivity of CEE economies and their sustainable role within the EU and global markets. However, we still know little about the consequences of enlargement that reach beyond GDP trade volumes and numerical employment indicators. Especially the political and social consequences of enlargement on labour relations as a citizenship issue remained unexplored. Guglielmo Meardi's book is a timely and highly appreciated contribution to fill this gap in the literature.

The book offers a wider assessment of the consequences of EU enlargement on CEE countries and argues that 'if [considering] social welfare, social order and employee voice, the much proclaimed success of the enlargement looks very fragile and hardly sustainable' (p. 1). In particular, the book critically addresses the issue of social standards across the new EU member states in CEE and scrutinises the extent to which these standards changed upon EU accession, especially with respect to the myth of a socially cohesive Europe included in EU's Lisbon Strategy. The question of the quality of social standards closely relates to the much-discussed issue of convergence between stylised differences across Western and CEE EU member states in order to strengthen social cohesion within the EU. Earlier research has addressed the question of convergence in social standards

through European integration (e.g. Bluhm [2007], Visser [2006, 2008]), but only the current book approaches this question through a careful multi-dimensional analysis of several channels through which Western European social standards were, or could have been, transferred to the new member states in CEE upon their EU accession. Drawing on impressive empirical research on various aspects of labour standards, working conditions and employee interest representation in CEE countries over the past decade, Meardi argues that the 'EU accession has failed in its implicit promise to upgrade those social standards in order to fulfil expectations in the East and not to disrupt the status quo in the West: it has not promoted social arrangements but rather disrupted the existing ones' (p. 6). This argument builds on detecting 'social failures behind economic successes' (p. 184) in a carefully constructed and empirically informed analysis, acknowledging the active role of social forces in shaping the economy and society.

The author arrives at this argument after scrutinising the formal transposition of 'hard' EU regulation onto the new member states, but also transposition through 'soft' regulation, cross-border interaction of various actors, and a transfer of practices within multinational companies with subsidiaries in CEE countries. In contrast to expectations regarding the ability of binding European regulations to foster an improvement in labour and social standards through national legislation, the author finds that 'the EU law has not had visible effects on the new member states with regard to employment conditions' (p. 37) and the 'disappointing effects of the "hard" social *acquis* reveal that the problem is not simply one of 'compliance' by the new member states [...]' (p. 38), but the inherently soft nature of these regulations which can easily be bent into the opposite direction. Then, '[t]he resulting situation in the new member states is a combination of

path-dependent poor nature of work and new, imported, insecurity' (ibid.). Moreover, the author finds that enlargement not only failed to increase social and labour standards in CEE member states, but in fact stopped social initiatives at community levels in CEE and slowed down the production of EU-level social directives after the first wave of EU's eastward enlargement in 2004. The EU's promotion of social dialogue in the new member states through fostering national institutions of social dialogue and collective bargaining, sectoral and inter-sector European social dialogue and the promotion of national-level social pacts also failed to improve the social and labour standards in the CEE member states. Meardi argues that the state of social dialogue in CEE countries cannot be blamed on the EU, but the paradox of these 'soft' EU policies is that 'they have accompanied very "hard" decisions: the single market and liberalization, the road to the EMU and the Maastricht criteria, and the competition for Foreign Direct Investment' (p. 61).

Since EU's 'hard' and 'soft' policies failed to produce convergence in labour relations and social standards between Western and CEE member states, the author explores possible other, more bottom-up, channels of transferring Western European standards in social dialogue and employee participation to CEE countries. The obvious focus is on multinational companies (MNCs), which have been perceived as a driving force of transferring home-country social practices to foreign subsidiaries and thereby shaping convergence efforts [e.g. Berger and Dore 1996; Ferner et al. 2006]. Drawing on years of fieldwork in several MNCs and their subsidiaries in CEE countries, Meardi argues that 'MNCs, rather than offer[ing] opportunities for organizing industrial relations, have been a centrifugal force for further disorganized decentralization' (p. 84). The transfer of social practices through MNCs has been selective and opportunistic, rather than systematic

in an attempt to raise social standards in the new member states.

The book could well have concluded with the above empirically informed argument. However, the author went even further in studying the particular responses of CEE countries and their actors to these failed hopes of improving their social and labour standards in a top-down perspective through EU enlargement and a bottom-up perspective through MNCs. The author not only provides rich evidence of such responses, but places them in the carefully applied analytical framework of 'exit' and 'voice' [Hirschmann 1970], before elevating the book's conclusion to a theoretically grounded discussion of the link between the two concepts and their interaction with the Polanyian concept of 'countermovement'. While the European social model obviously aimed at raising the 'voice' of concerned actors, e.g., the voice of the electorate in new member states through their political participation, and the voice of trade unions and their active role in social dialogue and collective bargaining on labour standards, the evidence shows that strategies adopted by individuals in CEE countries after enlargement resemble individualised resistance in the form of an 'exit' from the current situation. In other words, rather than actively constructing an institutionalised voice by acknowledging citizenship rights, engaging in political participation and through interest representation, CEE citizens responded to their uneasy employment conditions, high insecurity and low social standards through individual solutions, such as exiting the labour market, migrating for work purposes to Western EU member states, engaging in individualised resistance through a lack of organisational commitment and high workplace turnover, electoral absenteeism, and support for populist domestic politics.

So as not to leave the reader with such pessimistic conclusions on the fate of CEE countries' labour standards, the book's fi-

nal part explores whether there are possibilities for developing a 'voice' from within the new member states in order to overcome the current situation and substitute the failed transfer of standards through EU channels. Exposing the labour quiescence thesis in CEE countries to strong criticism, Meardi looks at available evidence suggesting a possible revitalisation of trade unions in the CEE region. He does find some positive anecdotal evidence for revitalisation, but argues that such efforts need to be stronger and broader in order to reverse the overall trend in declining union membership and legitimacy in CEE countries. The same argument applies to other possible sources of 'voice': cross-border trade union activities and responses to the migration and mobility of capital and services, as well as the chances of an increased 'voice' through new actors at the community and national levels in the new member states. Evidence on such activities is thin and scattered and represents a new research agenda for the future rather than a completed analysis of possible sources of voice in the region. Despite this weakness, the author argues that institutional factors alone are insufficient for the emergence of voice, which needs to be strongly supported by the socialisation experience of actors in order to foster (transnational) labour solidarity and community values.

This argument directly leads to the book's concluding discussion on the concept of the 'embeddedness' of economic processes in society and the emergence of a 'countermovement' in response to particular 'movements' in society [Polanyi 1944]. In fact, the book's major conceptual contribution 'lies in the connection between "exit" and "voice", and between them and Polanyi's pendulum [of movement and countermovement]' (p. 186). The 'movement' here refers to increased labour market flexibility, unemployment, job insecurity and lower pay than in Western countries as an effect of globalisation, the free move-

ment of capital and goods within the EU, and failed efforts of the EU to improve social and labour standards in CEE member states. If CEE societies responded to the effects of EU enlargement by reinforcing their unstable systems of employment contracts and the opportunistic behaviour of firms (and MNCs in particular), Meardi argues that a 'countermovement' to this trend would likely emerge. However, this countermovement does not necessarily have to come through 'voice' as a democratic form of interest representation, as the author acknowledges with reference to Polanyi [1944]. Particular forms of voice need time to emerge, just as we need more time to engage in further micro-level studies in a constructivist approach to provide more evidence to support the arguments of this book.

Although empirically rich and conceptually coherent, in some places the generalisations are too quickly applied to the whole CEE region despite being heavily based on empirical evidence from a single country (e.g. the example that details about each other's wages are a common talking point in CEE countries, p. 123). Such generalisations may be misleading for readers not familiar with the variation in social norms and moral values in the region, or with particular 'varieties of capitalism' in the CEE region, a recently growing field of research [e.g. Bohle and Greskovits 2012]. More research is needed to overcome generalisations on the CEE as a region, just like it is not common to generalise particular behavioural patterns, values and social norms for Western Europe as a whole. A further point of criticism is that occasionally the causality between EU enlargement and broader social and economic processes in CEE countries is blurred, and the reader wonders whether the EU can be blamed for everything that went wrong in the new member states. Also, the strong argument of the failed transfer of a social Europe to CEE member states leads to the

question whether such a transfer is indeed what should have been expected. What has been the effect of earlier enlargements on social and labour standards in earlier new member states? Have high social standards been easily exported to Spain, Portugal or Italy? Are the recent eastward EU enlargements and the huge stylised differences between 'Western' and 'Eastern' Europe the only ones to be blamed for a failed harmonisation of social standards in the long-term perspective of EU's development? The aim of such questions is not to undermine the argument in Meardi's book, but to stimulate further thoughts and motivate a broader empirical research agenda to uncover the complex mechanism of EU processes to accommodate variety across North and South, East and West, rather than being perceived as a supranational institution aiming at an unrealistic harmonisation of social and labour standards. Guglielmo Meardi's book is a highly relevant, rich and interesting starting point in this endeavour.

Marta Kahancová

Central European Labour Studies Institute,
Bratislava

marta.kahancova@celsi.sk

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Roman David: *Lustration and Transitional Justice: Personnel Systems in the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland*

Philadelphia, PA, 2011: University of Pennsylvania Press, 328 pp.

Despite increased attention to lustration practices in the transitional justice literature, considerable debate remains about how and why transitional societies deal with officials who have been tainted by complicity with prior regimes. 'Personnel systems'—a term Roman David ingeniously coins to designate specific lustration policies—have so far received limited scholarly attention despite their symbolic, social and political relevance. Attempting to fill this gap, David's informative book undertakes a formidable task to examine the 'operation, origin, context, and effects' (p. 226) of the post-communist personnel systems. A short review does not do justice to this nuanced book. Among others, the book makes two major contributions. The first is a novel classification of lustration models as personnel systems. The other is a new theory about how perceptions of the tainted personnel affect both the origin and the effects of lustration systems. Nevertheless, while this 'ambitious project', as David calls it, offers admirably rich historical, social and political background to the question of lustration, the book's theoretical and

empirical aspirations call for further research.

One of the hallmarks of this dense study is its germane terminology. David convincingly redefines political phenomena such as the 'grey zone' of the tainted personnel (pp. 103–104), social reconciliation (pp. 198, 205) and collective memory (p. 217). The renewed validity of these concepts is particularly crucial in the third and the central part of the book, which examines the effects of personnel systems. Yet, the book's most pivotal and resourceful concept is 'personnel systems'. The author conceptualises them as theoretically parallel to electoral systems: 'While electoral systems regulate the personnel situation in the legislature, personnel systems regulate the personnel situation in non-elected positions in the administrative branch in times of transition.' (p. 42) Part I of the book devises personnel systems to denote a theoretical abstraction of transitional public employment measures that regulate access to non-elected positions in public administration. However, from the beginning and throughout the book, David struggles to conceptualise 'personnel systems' in their relationship to lustration. Building upon his earlier definition of lustration systems [David 2003, 2006], David recognises that transitional personnel policies represent only a subcategory of lustration. As lustrations have often targeted elected elites and even non-state institutions such as the Church or the media, conceptualising lustration as a personnel issue for a new regime unjustifiably narrows these systems' scope provisions. And while the author includes some of the non-state targets in his qualitative analyses, they are not constitutive of his definition of personnel systems.

Problematic for David's analysis is also the inconsistent use of the terminology of personnel systems. Lustration and personnel systems are employed interchangeably (pp. 90, 131, 194, etc.) despite the claims to have overcome the 'lack of con-

gruence in the precise meaning of lustrations, which is country specific' (p. 172). Moreover, if some personnel systems have not used lustration procedures—defined narrowly as screening against secret police archives (*cf.* preface p. XI)—one may wonder why lustration appears in title of the book. Since perceptions of the tainted play the major causal role in this study, the book title could have mentioned perceptions instead. The terminological inconsistency also relates to the three types of personnel systems. Labelling the Czech, Hungarian and Polish personnel mechanisms as exclusive, inclusive and reconciliatory, respectively, stands in contradiction to the effects that these models produce (see pp. 132–133). Even the author says, for instance, that it 'is certainly ironic to refer to the [Polish] process as reconciliatory; Polish society is far from being reconciled with the past' (p. 85). The book indeed claims that Polish personnel system has not produced reconciliation (pp. 86, 124, 129, 155, 161, 187). Such statements contradict subsequent conclusions that 'the reconciliatory system is the only personnel system that can lead to social reconciliation' (p. 229).

Parts II and III of the book suggest that personnel systems are causally bi-directional; they 'affect people's perceptions, which in turn affect views of lustration systems' (p. 134). Borrowing the insights from the work of Teitel [2000] as well as Horne and Levi [2004], David claims that lustration is constituted by, and constitutive of, political transition. Part II makes the case for the operation and the origin of personnel systems as a function of perceptions about the tainted and by the tainted. David hypothesises that 'the choice of a particular lustration system is a function of the perception of the former adversaries' (p. 99). The detailed qualitative analysis relies on historical surveys, parliamentary debates and interviews to support the claim that the perceptions of the former elites as 'aligned with the old regime' lead to the

approval of the exclusive Czech system, while the perception of the old elites as 'transforming' lead to non-exclusive systems in Hungary and Poland. Public perceptions are treated as an overreaching variable that explains, and is explained by, the three personnel systems that are based on the models of dismissal, exposure and confession, respectively. The three different outcomes are thus explained by three different causes—representing a research design that might raise a few theoretical and methodological concerns.

A first minor quibble about the role of perceptions is that they hardly provide a full account to the origin of personnel systems. While Chapter 4 enumerates several alternative causal links (pp. 95–96), it downplays their explanatory role as not necessarily invalid but as merely providing the former communist parties with 'opportunities to demonstrate that they were, or were not, transforming' (p. 69). Yet, public perceptions too could and should be considered as opportunities for the elites to support or oppose the adoption of lustration [Letki 2002] and not as a direct causal link. As noted, 'in spite of the popular perceptions, the decision on lustration was made by the elites, who may have overruled the popular will' (p. 112). The subsequent qualitative analysis of the implementation of personnel systems in Chapter 5 finds support to the 'elite perceptions' argument. However, unlike the 'grassroots perceptions' argument (pp. 102–112), the elite perceptions are not quantified and are omitted from the book's otherwise interesting statistical analyses. What is more, the author acknowledges that in the Czech Republic 'lustration system did not transform the perceptions about the persons associated with former regimes' (p. 156). He not only rejects his main hypothesis about the perception by the tainted for the Czech case but also finds that in Hungary and Poland different lustration systems only 'may have contributed' to specific perceptions about

the tainted (p. 161). It is therefore misleading to claim that 'perceptions and self-perceptions were more reliable factors in explaining the origin of lustration systems that considerations of power and rational actors' (p. 230)—particularly if these latter alternatives are not controlled for in the book's causal models.

Another issue concerns case selection. While David's analysis labours to provide support to the claim that the origins of personnel systems can be explained by popular and elite perceptions 'in Central Europe' (p. 13), the findings rely on the analysis of three countries only. While case studies have many undisputed merits, this particular case selection is problematic on two fronts. First, the three cases have received excellent attention in Monika Nalepa's study on the origins and the context of lustrations [Nalepa 2010]. Yet, David omits practically all of Nalepa's rigorously tested findings. More importantly, the origins of the Czech, Hungarian and Polish lustrations have often differed from those of other post-communist countries. While, for instance, David claims that public perceptions towards the past and the present represent a crucial explanation in the three cases, other countries' lustrations took place in the context of minimal public demand. More oddly, Nalepa shows that even in the Czech, Hungarian and Polish cases public demand cannot (fully) explain lustration.

Part III of the book moves on to empirically assess the political and social effects of personnel systems through an original experimental vignette survey. Chapter 6 deals meticulously with the political effects of different methods of personnel systems as predictors of trust in government. David demonstrates decisively that the impact of dismissal is statistically significant, that of exposure insignificant, and that of confession mixed and only indirect. This seems to confirm available empirical evidence that truth telling without punishment has

not had a beneficial and significant impact on trust or democracy [Wiebelhaus-Baum 2010; Olsen, Payne and Reiter 2010]. However, the problem with this particular research design is that the differences in trust in government 'may be the result of various factors, one of which may be a lustration system' (p. 183). Not taking into account the effects of other factors (p. 188) leads to an omitted variable problem, which puts into question the entire chapter's empirical findings. As a result, the author provides only a modest conclusion that at least 'there is no evidence of negative effects of lustration systems on trust in government' (p. 193).

Probably the most illuminative argument is found in Chapter 7, which examines the effect of personnel systems on social reconciliation and on the collective memory of the past. Relying on psychological and social theories of perceptions of the tainted past, the chapter treats superbly the assumptions of major personnel systems 'about the malleability of "human nature"' (p. 199). According to David's theory, the political acts of transitional justice in general and lustration in particular carry symbolic meanings and expressive power that 'generate profound social effects, redistribute guilt, and reassign responsibility for historical injustices' (p. 195). Using the same original experimental vignette as in Chapter 6, David's evidence first shows that confession is the only model of personnel mechanisms that affect social reconciliation (p. 208). Second, all the three personnel systems are found to affect collective memory (while the author does note, again, that this 'effect could have been caused by something else' (p. 223)). In addition, the chapter provides convincing theoretical and philosophical insights into the power of apologies, confessions and exposure as tempering the gravity of misdeeds of former elites (p. 202). Chapter 7 represents an outstanding description and analysis of social effects of lustration.

This book's research design is broad and ambitious. Alas, the study's aspirations to treat personnel systems as both an outcome and effect are not statistically proven since the author analyses each causal direction separately. Moreover, the bi-directional (or rather double uni-directional) approach of this book seems to compromise the study's parsimony. The metaphor of 'a puppy that chases its tail' (e.g., pp. 228, 161–162) becomes indicative of not only the various lustration cycles but also of the author's approach to the project. In order to prove the dual causal direction, David repeatedly uses the same historical evidence (e.g., pp. 86, 88, 159). Despite these shortcomings, David's book represents an essential reading for a broader audience than would normally be for scholars interested in lustration and transitional justice as such. The book's third part in particular represents an indispensable read for scholars looking for detailed data and history of the psychology, the cultural sociology and the politics of lustration processes. In addition, policy makers from societies in Eastern Europe and the Arab world that remain in transition will gain important insights into how to deal—and not to deal—with the sensitive issue of 'personnel policies'.

Peter Rožič

*Georgetown University
pr93@georgetown.edu*

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Irena Kogan, Clemens Noelke, Michael Gebel (eds.): *Making the Transition. Education and Labor Market Entry in Central and Eastern Europe*
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For both practical and theoretical reasons, the question of the labour market prospects for young people in Central and Eastern Europe today is an extremely pertinent one. On the one hand, reforms of the educational systems are still ongoing. The exigencies of technological and structural change, together with integrative tendencies at the European level have put a lot of pressure on the educational institutions to try and match their offer to the needs of both students and employers. On the other hand, the ability of the schooling systems to respond to the demands of unregulated labour markets constitutes in many ways the final verdict on the success of two decades of economic and institutional reforms in the region. An inquiry into how educational institutions mediated the success of school-to-work transition is not only important to the scholars of post-socialism. The diversity of solutions tried out in different countries as well as the unprecedented scope of reforms constitute a unique experiment that could shed light on multiple

and intricate mechanisms linking the world of education to the world of work.

Making the Transition makes an important inroad into these debates, offering a comprehensive mapping of educational systems and labour market entry patterns for different categories of graduates across Central and Eastern Europe. The volume is a result of several years of collaborative effort involving more than twenty researchers from the region, coordinated by a team from the Mannheim Centre for European Social Research. The volume is unprecedented in scope: it brings together contributions from ten countries at very different stages of transition. It includes both cross-country and longitudinal analysis and combines statistical examination of large-scale survey data with an overview of country-specific degree structures. The breadth of coverage necessarily comes at some expense to empirical coherence. Most notably, the periods under consideration differ significantly. The studies on the Czech Republic, Estonia and Russia rely on surveys which date well back into the socialist period, for East Germany and Slovenia the information is only available since the early transition, while for others it only spans the period since the late 1990s (Hungary, Poland) or even the early 2000s (Croatia). For Serbia and Ukraine, only single surveys are available, conducted in both cases in the mid-2000s. In order to reduce the resulting complexity and ensure a degree of comparability, the editors have opted for a relatively narrow set of research questions, focusing on a small set of indicators and imposing a unified methodological framework.

The key question of the volume revolves around the labour market performance of different groups of graduates, with much attention to the differences between groups. The main intuition behind this approach is that as the market mechanisms of labour allocation replace socialist planning and/or clientelistic networks, the differ-

ences in performance will increase and the human capital as measured by education becomes the main predictor of economic rewards. Although the original body of work on which this hypothesis is based, by Szelényi, Nee, and others, relies on income as the measure of performance, due to data limitations the editors of this volume opted instead for another set of indicators which they believe to be better suited for measuring the success of school-to-work transition. The three main indicators are: *speed of transition* (number of months it takes to find the first significant job), *quality* (measured by the Standard International Socio-Economic Index of Occupational Status, ISEI), and *stability* of the first job (duration of employment and exit route).

More in-depth analysis is provided for two particular groups of graduates who were the most affected by the changes of Central and East European educational systems: students of vocational tracks and of tertiary educational institutions. Traditionally graduates of vocational programmes had some advantage in terms of speed of employment, given the more specific skill content of their education. At the same time, they have suffered the most from the collapse of the links between industry and education and sparse employer involvement in education in the post-transition period. Various countries have therefore tried to reform this segment of education by either introducing more general content, trying to rebuild links with employers, or both. Higher education, on the other hand, has experienced rapid expansion and diversification, with new programmes forming on the lower tertiary level, introduction of the sequential Bologna system in some countries, mushrooming of private higher education institutions, etc. As in some countries the enrolment rate in tertiary education of the latest cohorts surpassed the 50% mark, it became necessary to examine the new lines of differentiation within this educational segment.

The result of this exercise is an enormous wealth of information which includes not only data on the effect of different levels and types of education, but also on the socio-economic background of students, and, depending on the structure of each national survey, information on regional inequalities, gender, ethnicity, types of training received, grades and other micro-level factors. In addition to the three lines of inquiry detailed above, each chapter adds another dimension which is of particular interest to that country. These include an in-depth examination of socio-economic background for Hungary, Serbia and Ukraine, a detailed analysis of different tertiary groups in Estonia, a focus on drop-outs in Croatia, or vocational training reform in Slovenia. While immensely informative, this approach also constitutes the biggest weakness of the volume. In spite of the efforts to standardise methodology, small differences in groupings, time periods and model specifications make it very difficult to compare the findings across chapters. In the concluding section, which is the only truly comparative one in the whole volume, the editors resort to re-analysing the data in order to ensure comparability (p. 330), but due to limited space, they only focus on a small number of issues. The final analysis pays little attention to the question of job stability, which also turns out to be of limited value throughout the volume, thus begging the question of the initial choice of indicators. It remains unclear how the specific country topics were chosen, and it is never explained whether these are truly idiosyncratic or more regional in relevance. For instance, the East German contribution is titled 'Hard Times for the Less Educated' and dedicates much space to the worsening fate of young people with less than lower secondary education. Although this appears to be a general trend, this group of people does not even receive a cursory reference in the Estonian chapter (which fo-

cuses instead on tertiary education), although, according to the introductory overview, they account for a shocking 43.8% of the most recent cohort (p. 21).

The need to summarise the trends in ten very different countries forces the concluding chapter to abandon systematic analysis of regional heterogeneity and provide very general conclusions, which are hardly surprising to any student of the region. Thus the authors find that inequality in labour market performance indeed increased compared to the socialist period, but their main explanatory variable, the 'extent of market reforms' remains a black box. In fact, the only counter-example is Russia, where the growth of inequality has been minimal (and supposedly also the degree of market competition), but there is no explanation of the differences among other countries or any effort to identify the elements of labour market reforms that really matter for school-to-work transition.

More interesting conclusions relate to the two sub-questions, the fate of vocational graduates and those of different tracks within tertiary education. However, even here the lack of a clear benchmark and cross-country comparisons makes it difficult to understand the main factors driving the change. Students of higher education institutions are the clear winners of transition. University graduates still enjoy the highest rewards in terms of occupational status, although with regard to speed of employment they are closely tracked by lower (vocational) tertiary graduates (pp. 337–341). The volume also finds that the expansion of the tertiary sector has not eroded status-related advantages for the most highly educated, although the choice of indicators might obscure the most recent trends. Occupational status, unlike income, appears to be less responsive to the changing supply conditions: the chapter on Hungary, which is the only one using income data instead of ISEI classifications, finds that the wage premium for higher educa-

tion graduates began to decline in recent years. It is similarly difficult to interpret the volume's finding that, in spite of the initial expectations, graduates of vocational tracks still perform better than the general secondary graduates in terms of speed to transition to the first job and upper secondary vocational graduates even get jobs of comparable quality as their gymnasium-educated peers. On the other hand, general secondary graduates have substantially lost out with the expansion of the tertiary sector. It would thus appear that overall, vocational education is much less of a safe choice than it used to be.

Clearly, some of the difficulty a reader has in compiling a larger picture from these detailed analyses stems from the volume's overwhelming breadth. This is partly a problem of plenty and could easily be solved through more focused comparisons that would control for country-level diversity and tease out the specific shifts. The book remains an immensely valuable mapping exercise and both the regularities and heterogeneity it reveals constitute a useful guide for all future researchers of the area. However, a much larger problem is that, in spite of its proclaimed aim to 'elucidate the differences in education systems [and] how they are related to the school-to work transition' (p. 15), the analysis remains on the individual level throughout without any attempt to evaluate the overall institutional performance.

In other words 'making the transition', as a double pun referring to both the individual transition into the world of work and the systemic adjustment of educational institutions to the exigencies of the new labour markets, is deceiving. The authors never venture to pass a verdict on the ability of the different educational systems to deliver. For instance, while they focus on growing internal inequalities, they rarely stop to note what portion of the youth is affected. References to the actual institutional change are sparse. While explaining

the surprising finding that vocational graduates, in spite of technological change, adverse selection and lack of employer involvement, do not fare much worse than their peers with general education, the authors observe that 'in some countries sustained attempts to consolidate vocational education have been made and [the] demand for vocational graduates may have persisted' (p. 322). This is indeed an overly cautious assessment for a volume that claims to proceed in the tradition of institutionalist sociology, and does little justice to the diversity of these countries' attempts to salvage their vocational educational systems.

The main shortcoming of *Making the Transition* as an attempt to elucidate the interface between changing educational systems and changing labour markets is that institutions, much like transition itself, remain a black box. Based on the information provided it is impossible to conclude which educational reforms actually improved young people's employment chances. By refusing to relate the changing employment patterns back to the institutional setup and, more broadly, the changes in demand and labour market regulation, the research presented in this volume remains exceedingly descriptive, which is definitely a pity given the amount of quality data and expertise it otherwise offers.

Vera Scepánovic
Central European University
vera.scepánovics@gmail.com

Gareth Dale (ed.): *First the Transition, Then the Crash. Eastern Europe in the 2000s*

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This edited volume is a timely contribution to multiple issues that grasp one's attention amidst the economic, political and social crisis that have rocked Eastern Europe since

the EU enlargements in the 2000s. It is relevant to a plethora of streams of literature that have dealt with Eastern Europe since the beginning of the 1990s. While the volume offers a crucial contribution in particular to the political economy literature on Eastern Europe, it also relates itself to and successfully revives the transition literature that dealt with Eastern Europe in the early 1990s. The volume also contributes to the Europeanisation literature, especially in terms of its critical assessment of socio-economic transition in Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Latvia during their course of convergence with the EU. The importance of the volume rests with its rich historical and theoretical elaboration on the roots of the recent economic crash in the 'success stories', underlined by the transition and Europeanisation literatures, critically assessing the crisis of the 1970s that shook Eastern Europe, later NATO and EU accession as part of a neoliberal project, and uneven development and foreign (dis)investment. The authors make an effort to interpret the process of the economic crash in Eastern Europe by re-evaluating historical legacies and Marxist theories. Let us now debate more specifically how the contributors pursue these goals.

The volume starts with a general introduction to the topic of transition in Central and Eastern Europe. In a way, this introduction deals with why re-visiting transition in the region is timely. The elaboration of the economic and political trends in the 1970s, especially with regard to the demise of various types of 'national economic' model, including, in the words of Gareth Dale, 'Soviet-style state capitalism, national planning in the West and import-substitution industrialisation in the South' (p. 5), is comprehensive. But the introductory chapter does not offer tremendously novel food for thought to experts of East European politics. Its efforts to situate the roots of the transition in Eastern Europe within the realm of the global economic and political

developments of the 1970s and 1980s is certainly appealing—even if it revives the earlier work of David Ost on the Eastern left and the Western left. The book also refers to EU and NATO enlargement to the region as extensions of the neo-liberal project. While, in retrospect, one can certainly elaborate on neo-liberalisation as part of Europeanisation, one should also mention democratisation appended to Europeanisation that became unsustainable as soon as the East European states earned EU membership.

As part of the introduction to the book, the left-wing Hungarian essayist Gáspár Miklós Tamás presents an essay entitled 'Marx on 1989'. As he puts it, Tamás 'would like to say a few words about what we should call—with necessary diffidence—the Marxian style of political analysis' (p. 21). Aligning himself with Marx's philosophy of history, Tamás calls Marx's writings as 'not instances to exemplify theory; they are steps in revolutionary strategy: this is strategic analysis to serve a cause, albeit a cause emerging from the analysis' (p. 21). The essay is largely in line with the genre that prevails around the oeuvre of Slavoj Žižek. Tamás' approach follows the line that the society which Lenin and Trotsky 'were creating had absolutely nothing to do with the communist ideal, *exclusively on the evidence that their party was exercising sovereign power!*' (author's own italics) (p. 27). Tamás further states that:

The imaginary fusion of the state and civil society in the self-contradictory concept of socialist state property was supplanted (and contradicted) by the role of the party as the supreme and exclusively political authority and repository of true doctrine. [...] The detachment of the party from the 'large masses' was also key to its temporary success. It was impervious to 'empirical tragedy' as it did not 'represent' experience but reason. (p. 31)

Thereby, the promise of the party was not 'liberation but equality and respect for

the working man (with stress on the gender)'. In this context, 'the workers' councils may have fought the party, but—coming after all from the same tradition, consciously or not—any power based on communities of procedures cannot be sustained under the dominance of the market' (p. 36). With all due respect to Tamás, these arguments very much resemble the critical Marxist literature that prevailed in the 1970s and 1980s. It is hard to miss the Milovan Djilas line of thought in these lines. Eventually, Tamás contends that 'in Eastern Europe, capitalism without a bourgeoisie was replaced by capitalism without a bourgeoisie' (p. 37) and his essay very much repeats the genre of Žižek: it is as complicated even stylistically.

In view of this introduction, one should reflect on why the economic crash in Eastern Europe revived the tendency to look back and perhaps repeat what we—as experts of Central and Eastern European politics—all studied. Thereby, a frank and just question is why is there a need for a revivalist argumentation all of a sudden to elaborate the socio-economic and socio-political developments in the region? I believe that the true value of this book rests in its commitment to refute the Europeanisation, economic transition and democratisation literatures that have studied Eastern European transitions as merely success stories without fully conceptualising the historical background of transformation and very much registering 1989 as a new beginning. Dale et al. simply show that 1989 was not a new beginning, but it was the culmination of a plethora of developments, both politically and theoretically, that instigated the transition and transformation. Thereby, in order to understand the recent economic crash, we should once again look back to reflect on how economic, political, and international events culminated in the 2000s. That is why, even if in its introduction the book does not offer much new food for thought, it offers a new methodology and

aspires to attract the attention of the researchers on socio-political and socio-economic developments in the region to study Eastern Europe not 1989 onwards, but in the 1990s and later 2000s as repercussions of an organic development of events. Dale offers a comprehensive analysis of such events, both domestic and international, in the introduction of his volume. This is a laudable effort and hopefully will remind aspirants to regional expertise of the importance of knowing the political and social history of the region.

The rest of the book proceeds in two parts: first, on Russia with respect to class and power in the age of Putin, and second, on the region from the Baltic to the Balkans, taking into account market reform and economic crisis. The second part hosts studies not only on the new EU member states but also on Ukraine and Serbia. This selection enfeebles the criticism that the book purports to pose of EU and NATO, as neither Ukraine nor Serbia are—so far—part of the Europeanisation process. This criticism does not suggest that the EU and NATO enlargements to their neighbours did not affect these states, but reminds the reader that there is a stark difference between being in and outside these clubs.

The part on Russia presents how the stability propaganda that the political establishment behind Putin promoted is nothing but a paper tiger. Haynes has a remarkable piece on the position of workers in modern Russia. Using Russian statistics, Haynes studies basic economic indicators such as workforce by sector, distribution of employment by formal ownership, distribution of income and Russia's super-rich. Haynes' findings present a picture of Russia as a semi-peripheral capitalist state where social polarisation is expected to be rife. In this political environment, Haynes expects instability in the form of workers' unrest (p. 64) rather than stability. However, rather than considering this as a Rus-

sian puzzle, we should know why the lower classes would shun instability. Academic studies on other semi-peripheral states, such as those in Latin America, demonstrate that in fact the lower classes have the most to lose from instability, as that would affect their livelihood, which rests on rather delicate circumstances. One issue that Haynes fails to report on is the decreasing level of poverty in Russia (at 10.4% in 2008). Yet, this may be tentative given that the impact of the economic crisis was largely felt after 2009.

The rest of the section on Russia offers a chapter on Russia's Caesarist journey into the global political economy as well as a study on Russia's foreign policy from Putin to Medvedev. As foreign policy review is not an aim of this edited volume and it does not directly refer to the foreign policy of any other state under its attention, this chapter reduces the coherence of the book—even if Worth offers an immaculate piece of research. On the other hand, Worth's chapter on Caesarism becoming evident as Putin consolidated his rule in Russia certainly grabs the reader's attention. In order to place this development in historical terms, Worth refers to the *zapadniki* roots of Yeltsin and *derzhavniki* roots of Putin. Yet, he fails to mention the Georgian opposition to Russia's World Trade Organisation (WTO) membership as he debates why it has taken too long for Russia to join the club. To finish this section, as a more general comment, it is hard not to recognise that none of these chapters refers to the transition from Medvedev's Russia back to Putin's rule again. It would also be pertinent to examine how Putin acted in his capacity as Prime Minister for years.

The second part of the book has the rather fancy title that promises to elaborate on market reform and economic crisis from the Baltics to the Balkans. As I noted above this is a rather inconsistent choice. Yet, this part starts with the best chapter of the

book by Jeffrey Sommers and Jānis Bērziņš. Their depiction of the roots of the economic crisis in Latvia is so accurate that one wonders how come the (neo-)liberals in the Baltics, who claimed to represent the rationalist voice of economic and political transformation, failed to realise (and later acknowledge) the irrationality of their economic policies and goals. Sommers and Bērziņš demonstrate the background of underdevelopment in Latvia and how the (neo-)liberal elite promoted a debt-led prosperity as the realisation of the European dream. Pumping up private credits for consumption to households while cutting public spending and deregulating the real estate market to facilitate building houses at a frenzy appealed to the (neo-)liberal elite as a simple solution to fundamental problems of underdevelopment in the country. This dream of prosperity and Europeanisation, however, hit the rocks as the economic crisis broke out and people ended up with huge debts to Western banks. In the end, all that has remained of 'reaching' Europe is the availability of a cheap Ryanair ticket to the West and visa-free travel for those Latvians who can satisfy the conditions for a Latvian passport. The pace of population decrease (or demise?) in Latvia illustrates the scale of emigration.

The chapters on Poland and the Czech Republic keep up well with the main aim of the book, that is, how neo-liberalisation, as Shields (p. 170) calls it, affected the course of political events in these two new EU member states. Shields offers an analysis of populism and party politics in Poland. The chapter is noticeable as it draws the reader's attention to various Polish sources such as *Krytyka Polityczna*, but otherwise does not provide too much food for thought to experts of Polish politics. It would have been a crucial contribution if Shields had reviewed the left-wing discourse that *Krytyka* embodied in Poland, especially during the economic crisis. The

chapter on the Czech Republic, however, provides an up-to-date study of socio-economic developments in the aftermath of the global economic crisis. Švihlíková examines the politics and populism of not only Vacláv Klaus but also Topolánek. This makes her discussion one of the rare elaborations in the literature on second-generation post-communist leaders using primary literature in Czech.

Finally, Fabry presents the economic predicament of Hungary from 2007 up until recently, followed by narratives on Hungary's vulnerability to the crisis. There are four distinct narratives that Fabry reviews in view of the left liberal government's failures and they all contribute to how Fidesz later generated a populist response. While Fabry promises to deliver these narratives to portray the mainstream discourse in Hungary, his review of the Hungarian literature is limited and, unlike Švihlíková's chapter, in need of references to major Hungarian primary sources which are rich in content and widely available both in print and electronically. While the narratives that he points to (e.g. 'macroeconomic imbalances are to blame' and 'western-style capitalism is to blame') are relevant, we need to see, first, how these narratives came about in the Hungarian public sphere and, second, how come these narratives gained strength and consistency. This would have required a convincing presentation of elite formations and domestic elite discourses in Hungary rather than reviewing the American literature in the field (including Szelényi's work) (pp. 212–213). The next section, where Fabry searches for a 'satisfactory account of how Hungary's recent economic malaise is interlinked with the dynamics of the global economy' (pp. 215–216), brings history back in and keeps up with the main theme of the book. One minor issue is that the chapter drops the names of Marx and Trotsky, and later Gramsci (more relevantly), but does not review the contribution of the Budapest

School to this debate. A review of Ágnes Heller's and Ferenc Fehér's work in relation to the capitalist development in Hungary under socialism could have been useful.

Overall, this volume promises to deliver an elaboration of the roots of the Eastern European picture in the 2000s and engages with the most recent socio-political and socio-economic turmoil in the region in view of both its history and international developments thereafter. It does not consistently achieve its goal, but it certainly opens new routes of inquiry for students of East European politics. The book could be a useful tool for undergraduate and postgraduate courses on East European politics.

Umut Korkut
Glasgow Caledonian University
umut.korkut@gcu.ac.uk

**Jochen Clasen and Daniel Clegg (eds.):
*Regulating the Risk of Unemployment:
National Adaptations to Postindustrial
Labor Markets in Europe***

Oxford 2011: Oxford University Press,
404 pp.

Jochen Clasen and Daniel Clegg offer—once more—an interesting new take on institutional adjustments in European labour markets, thus continuing a series of earlier joint publications. Following an introduction in which the two editors present their analytical framework that 'sets the scene for the chapters that follow' (p. 2), the edited volume is divided into two parts. Part I includes twelve country chapters, in which the developments in the regulation of the risk of unemployment are outlined, focusing mainly on reforms in national unemployment protection systems from the early 1990s to about 2010. The country cases include nine of the fifteen 'old' European Union (EU) member states (excluding Austria, Ireland, Finland, Greece, Luxembourg

and Portugal), two 'new' members (Hungary and the Czech Republic) and well as Switzerland, a non-EU state. Part II is comprised of three chapters that take a cross-national perspective, and a forth, concluding chapter by the editors that summarises the findings.

In the Introduction, Clasen and Clegg first argue that the shift from industrial to service industries has generated a functional mismatch between the labour market institutions created during the Golden Age of industrial growth and welfare expansion and the needs of contemporary, post-industrial production regimes. Accordingly, they argue that with the decline in life-long, mostly male, full-time employment patterns, and the subsequent rise in flexible working careers of both men and women, unemployment protections systems are in need of adaptation. This adaptation is then captured in their proposed analytic framework, which relies on three (inter-related) processes of integration: (1) *unemployment benefit homogenisation* (ranging from a diminishing of differences between benefit tiers, to a reduction of the number of tiers, to the emergence of a single, dominant tier); (2) *risk re-categorisation* (ranging from a diminishing of differences in entitlement and conditionality between unemployment and other benefits schemes to the creation of a single benefit for working-age people that also entails—perhaps as intermediary steps—the transfer of claimants from other benefits to unemployment benefits and the merger of programmes); and (3) *activation* (which the authors understand as the tightening of job-search requirements, supporting all job-seekers regardless of benefit status with job-search and counselling services in so-called one-stop shops, and the merger of administrative units into single gateways) (cf. p. 10).

The subsequent country chapters, which are all very well researched, offering a comprehensive and detailed account of the changes in unemployment insurance

and related benefits systems, follow the analytic framework proposed in the volume's introduction. Closely following the analytical framework ensures comparability and helps identifying both *common trends* (the so-called 'triple integration' of unemployment protection regimes) as well as the (persistent or emerging) cross-country *differences* (e.g. the growing differentiation, rather than harmonisation, of treatments of different claimant groups in the Czech case, continued risk categorisation in Switzerland, the absence of activation in Spain, or the continuation of multiple gateways in Sweden). All twelve country chapters are well written, logically organised and very rich in detail. They thus represent an excellent source of reference for anyone interested in recent institutional changes in (mainly Western) European unemployment protection regimes. Three questions, however, remain unanswered. First, the country chapters provide only some evidence with regard to *explaining* the (sometimes similar, sometimes different) choices made by policy makers with regard to the *Gestalt* of the described reform trajectories. Most of the chapters implicitly acknowledge path-contingencies, while some explicitly suggest that these changes are driven by changes in the ideological positioning of political parties (i.e. the general trend toward marketisation, New Public Management and paternalism), the decline in trade union power (as trade unions are typically seen as the 'defenders' of the old system that benefits labour market insiders), or the diffusion of new ideas by international organisations such as the OECD or the EU [Weishaupt 2010]. While the edited volume cannot give a precise answer, it provides a good starting point for future research on these issues. What remains a bit more unsatisfactory, however, is that the chapters rarely assess the impact of structural changes in the labour market itself as a cause of the 'triple integration'. Clasen and Clegg strongly emphasise that the process of de-industri-

alisation and the growth in the tertiary sector necessitate a more flexible and mobilising approach (this is inspired by the 'service sector trilemma' first proposed by Iversen and Wren [1998]). Yet, we find no, or only very little, reflection on this claim in the country analyses. Similarly unfortunate is that the book's chapters offer very little reflection on the effects of the global financial and economic crisis. A discussion, however brief, of the consequences of 'triple integration' in the face of a massive oversupply of labour and an examination of the political will to uphold or perhaps even reverse some of the reforms in the face of mass unemployment would have been a welcome contribution to an overall very interesting and informative 'tour' through twelve European unemployment policy regimes.

The cross-country chapters, in turn, tackle three important issues. First, in an extremely stimulating chapter, Werner Eichhorst and collaborators ask the important question whether the expansion of service sector employment in recent years, which was supported both by labour market flexibilisation and activation, has mainly produced precarious jobs. In order to get a grasp on this question, Eichhorst et al. first test the hypothesis that the likelihood to move from unemployment or inactivity to employment is higher in 2007 than at the end of the 1990s. In a second step, the authors test the hypothesis that gains in employment are driven by employment contracts of poor quality (which are defined as fixed-term contracts). Regarding the former, they find that there 'is indeed a pan-European trend over time towards labour markets becoming more inclusive' (p. 292). This effect, however, is significantly stronger for the group of unemployed than for inactive persons, and also varies amongst the eight countries under review (of the twelve countries studies covered in Part I of the book, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland or missing

in the sample). With respect to the latter hypothesis, the authors find no common trend. Rather, in two flexible labour markets—Denmark and the UK—as well as Hungary (albeit statistically not significant) and Spain (where the use of fixed-term contracts peaked in the late 1990s at almost 35%), the odds of getting a permanent contract was higher in 2007 than in the late 1990s. The opposite is true for Belgium (albeit statistically not significant), the Czech Republic, France and Italy. While this chapter represents a very interesting first stab at an important question, some doubts about the robustness of the results remain. For instance, the authors do not control for the degree of tertiarisation (the ‘driver’ of (precarious) employment growth), the macro-economic situation (which directly affects the demand for labour), or the composition of the group of the inactive (which may have changed over time due to demographic or institutional changes). Moreover, it is also not obvious to me why ‘precarious’ employment is equated with fixed-term contracts. The quality of temporary employment may itself vary—think the Dutch version of flexicurity—while precariousness may lie more in wage levels, working conditions, or hours worked.

In the second cross-country chapter, Johan De Deken and Jochen Clasen identify the lack of cross-national data on benefit receipt (or caseloads) as a major hurdle to advancing our knowledge about the effects of the ‘triple integration’ processes. For instance, social assistance is often administered locally, while early retirement schemes are organised by the social partners. In either case, the programmes remain outside the scope of national statistical bureaus. Yet, if we had comparable, cross-national data on caseloads—including unemployment protection but also four other types of benefits that affect employment outcomes, including work incapacity benefits, early retirement, sabbatical

and leave schemes, and social assistance as a residual category—a new ‘dependent variable’ would be born (p. 299). Accordingly, the authors explore the possibility of generating such a data set by reviewing the availability and quality of existing sources and subsequently produce the first results with data collected for the book. The chapter is highly successful in both ways. The discussion of data and associated challenges are very insightful, while the application convincingly illustrates two points: first, it is not possible to “‘read off” expenditure from caseload data [sic.] or vice versa’ (p. 308); and second, caseloads in most countries were shifted from one benefit type to another (a process the authors call ‘communicating vessels’) rather than reduced over time. The latter point is an important corroboration of Werner Eichhorst et al.’s findings from 2008 [Eichhorst et al. 2008] and proves the ‘added value’ of examining shifts *within* benefit regimes. Worth mentioning also is that Johan De Deken offers a Caseload Annex, in which all data discussed are presented.

Finally, in the third cross-country chapter, Giuliano Bonoli restates his earlier argument that the form and function of active labour market policies (ALMP) have changed in three waves over time [see also Tepe and Vanhuyse 2013]. He thus complements the overall argument of the book by illustrating the mediating role of activation on both caseloads (as participants in ALMP may not be considered unemployed) and employment (as ALMP may equip job-seekers with the skills they need to enter the labour market or offer employment opportunities in a sheltered labour market). The chapter illustrates how ALMP in six Western countries—Denmark, Germany, France, Italy, Sweden and the UK—have (differently) developed from the 1950s to the early 2000s. It offers a categorisation of ALMP that differs from the ‘standard’ OECD definition as it includes

aspects of activation (benefit conditionality, sanctions, and so on), and it explains why the 1990s saw a shift towards activation and how activation contributed to both unemployment benefit homogenisation and risk re-categorisation [Weishaupt 2011].

In sum, the edited volume represents an important contribution to the study of unemployment protection systems and activation more generally. The book's strength lies in its excellent overview of institutional developments in the risk regulation of unemployment in twelve European countries. It thus serves as rich and valuable source of reference, which will be of great interest for social science scholars. The cross-country chapters nicely complement the overall argument of the book and the Caseload Annex will certainly become an extremely sought-after source for 'data mining'.

Timo Weishaupt

University of Mannheim

Timo.Weishaupt@uni-mannheim.de

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Alison Pilnick, Jon Hindmarsh and Virginia Teas Gill (eds.): *Communication in Healthcare Settings. Policy, Participation and New Technologies*
Chichester, UK, 2010: Wiley-Blackwell, 156 pp.

Conversation analysis (CA) made an important contribution during the last decades for investigating how ordinary conversations occur in everyday contexts and how interactional sequences rely on specific socially oriented procedures of human reasoning and action. Beyond epistemological and theoretical issues concerning its status (i.e. whether it is possible to consider it a well-formed, autonomous discipline or just a general research paradigm), it is clear that, since its foundation in the mid-1960s, CA has deeply contributed to changing investigation assumptions in communication research, in accordance with a more general, renewed *Zeitgeist* that also led to the 'cognitive revolution' from a behaviourist approach to cognitivism, and the paradigm shift in linguistics and semiotics from analyses based on minimal units to text-oriented research. Through audio- and videotape recordings of natural conversations, CA researchers investigate procedures through which participants constrain each one in the talking, particularly in relation to the organisation of actions and the understanding in interaction between subjects. Applications of CA have been conducted in many different fields, including health-care contexts for studying interactions between professionals (i.e. doctors and nurses) and patients. In the last three decades, a good amount of literature in this sector helped to enlighten such conversations, which can be considered delicate ones because of their intrinsic contents: discussions about health and illness, symptoms and diagnoses, diseases and therapies.

The challenge of overcoming already established results in the field and addressing new (or at least under-investigated) is-

issues is tackled by *Communication in Health-care Settings*. Previously published as a special issue of the journal *Sociology of Health and Illness*, this volume is a collection of eight studies, each one focused on specific care contexts and communication participants; all of them are completely based on CA methodology (and complementary ethnomethodology) for both data collection and analysis. The added value of such research lies in the attempt to show the peculiarities of certain kinds of interactions, quite different from classic examples concerning medical doctors and patients—i.e. medical consultations and acute care visits.

In this regard, Chapter 1 serves as a brief introduction to the core issues treated by the single studies, presenting a general overview of findings from the application of CA to medical encounters and current under-investigated issues considered in the study collection and for future research. In particular, the editors indicate and describe three major under-investigated issues: (1) practical problems in practitioner-patient interaction in those communication contexts related to treatment delivery and where a combination of tasks is required to be performed in the encounter, as well as when the characteristics of specific cohorts of patients influence professionals' behaviour; (2) interaction between health-care practitioners in relation to communication between health-care teams in meetings, treatment delivery and training; and (3) new technologies and health-care interaction, intending 'technologies' both as communication channels between actors (e.g. telephone helplines) and technical devices used by the practitioner during the encounter (e.g. screening technologies).

Following these general research topics, successive chapters constitute single studies which concentrate on a kind of interaction. The first research (Chapter 2) concerns the role of a call centre which employs family support co-ordinators (FSCs) for contacting family members of deceased

persons in order to solicit them on the donation of human tissues. In this respect, T. Elizabeth Weathersbee and Douglas W. Maynard draw on the communication strategy underpinning FSCs' action and possible improvements on the basis of gained evidence.

Chapter 3 investigates interactions occurring through a telephone-based service: on the one hand, callers are users that ask for medical advice, misunderstanding the real scope of the helpline; on the other hand, nurses can only provide support and information because they are forbidden by regulations to give any medical advice. Carly W. Butler, Susan Danby, Michael Emmonson and Karen Thorpe examine this communication paradox and the resources spent by nurses to match users' requests, regulations and their expertise. Concerning the participation issue, an interesting experience is analysed in Chapter 4. Practitioners and patients take part in a neurological physiotherapy session: in particular, this work is focused on practical aspects of physiotherapists' 'accounts for the treatment actions they instigate and conduct, and proposals they make' (p. 48). Thus, Ruth Parry studies how professionals are able to balance authority and accountability in order to carry on a satisfactory communication for both parts. Chapter 5 similarly studies the way subjects participate in the conversation, in particular in an obesity-related medical consultation between a medical doctor and a patient. Helena Webb figures out what response patterns patients use in these situations, especially in relation to moral issues of responsibility.

Unlike the vast majority of studies in the field (based on dyad interactions), Chapter 6 presents a peculiar situation in which three actors are involved in the communication situation: a paediatrician, a child and a parent. As Ignasi Clemente suggests, the analysis of their conversation cannot be limited to two actors. There is a

need to consider all interactions occurring between the three of them at the same time in order to understand how they work, particularly in relation to children's behaviour in this context. Another important, but still under-investigated, situation concerns the interactions between medical staff working during surgical operations. Chapter 7 provides an analysis of a couple of these multi-party encounters which have two main functions: to carry on the surgical operation and to train young staff members about medical procedures in such cases. Marcus Sanchez Svensson, Christian Heath and Paul Luff summarise the way conversations lead trainees to accessible and intelligible knowledge and how the mix of demonstration and instruction is fundamental for training interactions.

In Chapter 8, Aled Jones examines how the introduction of paper-based or electronic patient records influence the conversation in admission processes, i.e. between nurses and patients during episodes of acute hospital care. As technologies to be used by participants, both of them have a practical impact on nurses and patients who are bounded to such constraints. Finally, the last part of the book is dedicated to the automatic transcription of medical records (Chapter 9). Tested as a sort of replacement of medical transcriptionists (MTs), these machines automatically record vocal doctors' reports. Gary C. David, Angela Cora Garcia, Anne Warfield Rawls and Donald Chand deeply investigate the role of MTs and the impact of automation and information technology: as the authors suggest, machines can improve and complement transcriptionists' work, but they cannot replace MTs *in toto*.

Even if the studies collected here come from a limited set of countries—the United Kingdom, the United States and Austral-

ia—the collection presents valuable research findings that can be generalised to some extent to other national contexts. However, the real added value of the book concerns two relevant aspects that strictly concern the CA paradigm and which are interrelated: (1) the focus on certain research niches currently missing or under-investigated in available literature, which enable the identification of practices and conversation procedures of certain professional-user interactions in specific settings; and (2) the clarification of methodological issues to face in these contexts for adequately applying CA to such types of interactions. Of course, the book cannot be considered a systematic exercise for pointing out, describing and addressing major gaps in current communication research in health-care settings. Neither does it describe the state-of-the-art in the field. According to the editors, this volume underlines 'the utility of taking a conversation analytic approach' in such contexts for demonstrating how the 'smallest details of the way in which participants talk to one other can have sizeable impacts on the eventual outcomes' (p. 11). In the end, it can be argued that the overall work is conceived as a tool for researchers in health communication (intended in a broad, interdisciplinary sense) who wish to gain knowledge on innovative topics and to understand what the benefits of adopting CA are. As well, the book provides some useful guidelines and recommendations for practitioners, who can easily find them in the single studies and try to implement in their practice and interactions with users.

Francesco Barbabella
 Italian National Institute of Health and
 Science on Aging (INRCA), Ancona
 f.barbabella@inrca.it

