

Europe undivided: democracy, leverage and integration after Communism

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True, where neither the social movement nor the NGO models are adequate.

Gender, Globalization, and Postsocialism will be of interest to students and scholars in a wide range of fields, including gender studies, sociology, and political science. It is written in an accessible style suitable for use in the classroom.

Karen Kapusta-Pofahl

References

Kapusta-Pofahl, Karen, Hana Hašková and Marta Kolařová. 2006. "Influence and Marginality in Formalized and Informal Women's Civic Organizing" in *Changes in the Heart of Europe: Recent Ethnographies of Czechs, Slovaks, Roma, and Sorbs* edited by Timothy Hall and Rosie Read. Ibidem-Verlag: Stuttgart, Germany.

Milada Anna Vachudova: *Europe Undivided: Democracy, Leverage, and Integration after Communism*

Oxford 2005: Oxford University Press, 341 pp.

The central concern of *Europe Undivided* lies with the divergent political trajectories of Central and Eastern European (CEE) states in the process of transition from integral units of the erstwhile 'communist bloc' to prospective membership in the European Union. The work focuses on six CEE states in particular: Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Romania, Bulgaria and Slovakia, and argues that notwithstanding national particularities two broad overall patterns of 'transition' can be identified. The first of these involves the progressive reconstruction of these states along classical liberal-democratic lines; complete with the conventional institutional architecture of a liberal state and a functioning competitive electoral system based upon adult suffrage. Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic are reckoned as fitting this first pattern, while Romania, Bulgaria and Slovakia are identified as 'deviants' that depart from this model. This latter group are characterised by the author as

'illiberal democracies', and a significant component of the overall argument of the work is concerned with accounting for their 'deviance'. Yet the core concern of the work is with the role of the European Union as a facilitator and regulator of political reconstruction projects in CEE after 1989-91. The work makes its most significant contribution to the ever-expanding literature on CEE 'transition(s)' with its elaboration of a detailed concept of 'leverage' with respect to the influence of the EU in CEE political reconstruction. In this respect, though not expressly formulated as such, the work aspires towards the development of a more general model of post-communist 'transition', in which the role of the EU is placed centre-stage.

Vachudova argues that the EU exerts two distinct kinds of 'leverage' over political developments in CEE states. The first - 'passive leverage' - refers to the kind of 'gravitational pull' of the EU as a political and economic bloc. This is reflected in the positive appeal of the EU as a political and economic entity to political elites in CEE states, and in the perception of EU membership as a potential 'prize' to be won in the course of successful political reconstruction. Yet it is also reflected in the asymmetrical structural relationships that exist between members of the EU and non-member states. The latter find themselves structurally disadvantaged economically as they individually face global competitive economic pressures without the support and protection provided by the EU to its members. In this respect, the simple existence of the EU as a political and economic bloc in conditions of intensifying global economic competition induces CEE states to re-orient themselves towards the EU and to aspire to EU membership, by default, as it were. Therefore, remaining aloof from the EU is not a genuinely sustainable option in the long-term for such states and particularly given the economic destruction and dislocation that accompanied the early years of 'transition' for CEE states.

The second kind of leverage, active leverage, differs from the first both tempo-

rally and conceptually. The 'passive leverage' of the EU operated largely on its own between 1989 and 1994, as the EU itself struggled to come to terms with the transformations of its CEE 'hinterland' and was divided over policy and strategy regarding the new ex-communist states. 'Active leverage', on the other hand, came to the fore alongside 'passive leverage' after 1994, as the EU began to actively intervene in CEE political reconstruction through the promise of prospective EU membership subject to satisfying certain conditions of membership. Through this conditionality the EU exerted active leverage over domestic political reconstruction within EU candidate states in CEE, as it specified detailed requirements for the political reconstruction process, and regularly monitored and supervised compliance and/or the process of reform in candidate states.

Vachudova's work is a detailed study of the role of the EU, through the process of 'leverage', in channelling the political reconstruction in six CEE states. The work dedicates two chapters to the concept of passive leverage and how it operated during the 1989–1994 period and three chapters to the later period of active leverage, and focuses on EU interventions in enhancing political competition and promoting neo-liberal economic reform. As a work forged within the mainstream International Relations' (IR) paradigms of inter-state relations and sub-state political interactions, combining realism and rational-choice theory in unqualified forms, it may leave many sociologists disappointed. Its unapologetic Schumpeterian notion of democracy as little more than a mechanism for the periodic changing of the state executive through an élite competition for votes in the political marketplace may also leave many political scientists dissatisfied. And its implicit 'end of history' perspective, where liberal democracy represents the secret *telos* of 'transition', hence the problem of the 'deviants', may leave many others unimpressed. Yet, *Europe Undivided* is an empirically rich and detailed work, and exceptionally methodologically conscientious within the confines

of IR frameworks. Though the framing of its question may be less than ideal, the work nevertheless contains much of interest to sociologists, not least its rigorous elaboration and operationalisation of the concept of 'leverage', and its documentation of the EU's role in CEE political reconstruction in such terms. At the very least, it provides a challenge to social constructivists and sociological institutionalists to provide an equally comprehensive and detailed account of the EU's role in 'transition' that is not marred by the excessive reductionism and crude rationalism of IR exponents. And as such, it must be welcomed.

Sara Clavero

Yvonne Galligan – Manon Tremblay (eds.):
Sharing Power: Women, Parliament and Democracy

Burlington, VT 2005: Ashgate Publishing Company, 240 pp.

In *Sharing Power: Women, Parliament and Democracy*, editors Yvonne Galligan and Manon Tremblay apply a common framework to twenty national case studies of women in parliament. Each case study addresses the historical elements of women's political rights, the roles of political parties and the electoral system, obstacles to the full representation of women in parliament, and strategies for increasing the number of women parliamentarians. In this way they attempt to create a standard for comparison between several nations with various political and structural histories; for example, for comparing women's parliamentary representation in emerging democracies in Latin America to an established democracy like the United Kingdom. Most applicable to the Central and Eastern European context are the case studies of post-communist countries like Hungary and Croatia. Despite its breadth, this collection is surprisingly far from formulaic; the authors illustrate these topics in common through historical analysis, empirical data, and qualita-