

a list of authors whose research developed from different starting points means that the methodology is not always the same (though there are more similarities than usual in such books) and that some topics receive a regional treatment that reflects the authors' background rather than the need of the topic. The discussion of ethnofederalism versus unitary states, for instance, is limited to the postcommunist world. A comparison of India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Afghanistan along similar lines might have been equally useful.

The conclusions should have some interest to policymakers and practitioners, but this work is not likely to be very accessible to them. There is no summary of policy conclusions. Like most academic writing on such subjects, the book is written as if policy practitioners made "choices" among the different alternatives and as if the lessons of the book's research could therefore be "applied" if only they were "learned." My own experience in debating the merits of state structures with participants in the Afghan constitutional process has led me to believe, as some of the book's authors note, that institutional alternatives are less choices than historically determined givens and that changes are often more the result of unintentional consequences than of decisions. An analysis of how systems actually change, and why violence and disorder inevitably accompany such change, would temper the tone of institutional engineering that sometimes appears in the contributions.

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Regional Economic Voting: Russia, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic, 1990–1999. By Joshua A. Tucker. Cambridge Series in Comparative Politics. Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 2006. xxii, 417 pp. Appendixes. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Tables. \$75.00, hard bound. \$29.99, paper.

Whether communist Europe was as monolithic as some once argued, it is clear that the region is now marked by a great diversity of political systems. While there are a number of states whose regime type remains ambiguous if not authoritarian, Russia among them, many have become fully functioning democracies. Reflecting the success of these transitions, political scientists studying the region are increasingly using theories and approaches developed in western democracies to help guide analyses of phenomena related to democratic governance. Joshua A. Tucker's *Regional Economic Voting* is among the latest such contributions.

Asking how we explain cross-regional variation in voting within five states—the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Russia, and Slovakia—Tucker tests the well-worn economic voting hypothesis that electors punish incumbents in hard economic times and reward them in good times based on a subjective evaluation of either their personal material situation or that of the entire country or both. Labeling this the Referendum Model, he juxtaposes it against the Transitional Identity Model, an argument he develops based on the on-going economic and political transitions within postcommunist Europe. The model postulates that parties identified with the previous regime will do better in regions enduring economic difficulty and those identified with the transition itself will do better in regions in which the economy is performing better. Eschewing the standard cross-national approach of directly comparing countries at the aggregate level, Tucker engages in a series of cross-regional comparisons *within* a country *by* election. This controls for those factors unique to each country that might otherwise intervene to mask the relationship between voting and the causal factors on which the study is focused.

The analysis concludes that the Transitional Identity Model consistently outperforms the Referendum Model. In particular, parties associated with the communist regime perform well in regions that are economically worse off. The relationships hold in both parliamentary and presidential systems, in a variety of elections, and across time. The analysis is strengthened by the inclusion of a series of comparative case studies matching elections on several interesting dimensions—the 1992 parliamentary elections in the Czech Republic and Slovakia; the 1995 Polish presidential elections and the 1996 Russian

presidential elections; the 1993, 1995, and 1999 parliamentary elections to the Russian State Duma; and the 1997 Polish and 1998 Hungarian parliamentary elections.

The use of well-established political science theories and models to guide research on similar processes in postcommunist Europe has met with considerable skepticism in certain quarters. *Regional Economic Voting* implicitly adopts the view that while it may well be the case that such theories do not provide adequate explanations for democratic processes in the region, it would be imprudent to dismiss them a priori. As Tucker demonstrates, their use need not unduly bias the researcher to conclude in favor of the mainstream models' postulates. Indeed, insofar as they represent a reservoir of accumulated knowledge and understanding in political science, they are invaluable in providing an initial set of expectations against which to test the data. More important, their consideration in competition with alternatives helps to further develop the mainstream theories as well as make the case for the alternatives. Tucker's concluding chapter does a particularly nice job of doing both.

Regional Economic Voting serves as another excellent example of comparative research in the social sciences. The book's primary audience is researchers and graduate students in political science. Both the style and the method are those of the social sciences. Students of comparative politics grappling with the small-N problem will find Tucker's use of a Seemingly Unrelated Regression (SUR) model particularly interesting and potentially useful in their own research. Theoretically motivated, methodologically sound, and well argued, the book is a fine addition to the growing number of works in the genre.

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Rethinking the Rule of Law after Communism. Ed. Adam Czarnota, Martin Krygier, and Wojciech Sadurski. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2005. vii, 383 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Figures. Tables. \$51.95, hard bound.

The rule of law has become the latest cargo cult of transition (or, as Ivan Krastev argues, the "white myth of transition," 323). If the rule of law is present, then foreign investment and democracy will surely follow, or so goes the implicit logic of many technical assistance programs. But unlike cargo cults of the past, whether they be airstrips or stock exchanges, no consensus exists on what constitutes the rule of law. Its black box status makes it an easy culprit when countries slide off the rails to the idealized version of market democracy. Perhaps a clear definition that is universally accepted is impossible. Reaching a consensus on the content of, or the prerequisites for, the rule of law is not the purpose of this volume. In that sense, the title is a bit misleading. Moreover, the essays are primarily concerned with the European experience. With the exception of an insightful essay dealing with Estonia and a few random comments on Russia sprinkled throughout the book, there is no discussion of the countries of the former Soviet Union. Although it is unfair to criticize a book for what it is not, a volume of this sort that brought together scholarship on Central Asia and the Caucasus would be most welcome.

Like most edited volumes, this one arose out of a conference. The contributors came together at the European University Institute in Florence in February 2002. The contributors are all well-respected legal scholars representing a variety of methodological and theoretical approaches. The editors are to be commended for drawing together such a strong and diverse set of scholars. At the same time, readers who know their prior works will find these essays familiar. Most of the essays are refinements of arguments made at greater length elsewhere. But they are nonetheless welcome as distillations of earlier writing that incorporate evidence and theoretical insights that were not available at the time of the original work.

The volume is divided into three thematic sections: constitutionalism, dealing with the past, and the rule of law. Each of the editors takes responsibility for one section. Notwithstanding this apparent division, the theme that resonates throughout the volume is