

effort to explain why some countries are more aggressive than others. This database is an important contribution and will surely spur further research.

The quality of the chapters in this edited volume is consistently high. The authors ask important questions covering many countries and use a variety of methods in their analysis. The book deserves to be read by all serious students of post-communist transitions.

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The EU's Impact on Identity Formation in East-Central Europe between 2004 and 2013: Perceptions of the Nation and European Political Parties of the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia. By Michal Vit. *Soviet and Post Soviet Politics and Society*, vol 206: Stuttgart: ibidem, Verlag, 2020. 248pp. Appendixes. Notes. Glossary. Bibliography. Figures. Tables. \$35.00, paper.

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This monograph seeks to analyze the impact of the European Union (EU) on national identity formation in the Czech Republic, Poland, and Slovakia during their early period of membership in the EU, 2004–13. It encompasses a political environment during which three national elections in each country were held and seeks to observe national identity formation through the prism of party politics and party systems. More particularly, it examines the manifestos of political parties in the period and consequently utilizes a methodology that codifies these manifestoes through content analysis to produce an intra-party and interstate comparison of the EU's influence on party policy towards identity formation.

The book consists of an overview and introduction, moving on to an explanation of the project's theoretical background and an outline of prior and current research. It then moves on to explain its methodology and research procedure before presenting a results analysis and a set of conclusions. Three appendices explain the nature and structure of the code analysis and its use through a "Grounded Theory"-based code book.

As such the monograph is based on a traditional social science post-graduate thesis format with around one-third of the content (excluding references) devoted to theoretical and methodological approaches and justification. In effect the work makes a time-limited, niche contribution to the role of parties in national identity formation with reference to the tensions that exist between state and EU perceptions of identity in east central Europe.

Its academic strength lies in a carefully constructed methodological approach and awareness of its associated limitations. The final analysis and findings are carefully constructed and begin to hint at several arenas of debate that are not developed within the thesis construction. It is within these areas that the thesis will need development for future research. This might include a much greater consideration of party interaction and its consequences, within what the author terms European political space; an examination of further externalities to the state identity formation other than EU member state theater, to include such issues as: global economic downturn and the growth of populism, Russia's influence as a close and powerful neighbor, and attention to the historic path dependency of domestic identity formation and its salience for party positioning within the political cultures of the states included in the analysis. Finally, Europeanization, which is presented as a conceptual tool, needs

closer attention both in terms of its application, interpretation, and disputation for national identity formation.

These and other broader inclusions could be contained in a future monograph that would not be constrained by the limits of explanation and approaches that thesis writing enforces.

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Toward Nationalizing Regimes: Conceptualizing Power and Identity in the Post-Soviet Realm. By Diana T. Kudaibergenova. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2020. xii, 240 pp. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Tables. \$45.00, hard bound.

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Diana Kudaibergenova's comprehensive analysis of nation-building processes in independent Latvia and Kazakhstan is a valuable contribution to our understanding of the relationship between power and identity in Eurasia. The study focuses on Latvia, a western and democratic state, and Kazakhstan, an eastern and authoritarian state. The central question posed in *Toward Nationalizing Regimes* is: how did elites operating in vastly different political regimes build their respective post-Soviet state, and construct their respective titular nation and the largest national minority—ethnic Russians?

Kudaibergenova's analysis is based on extensive ethnographic research conducted in Russian, Kazakh, and Latvian. In addition to approximately two hundred elite interviews, she relied on political ethnography, content analysis of major newspapers in both countries, and archival research in the Prague office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The main argument arising from this impressive field research, which we unfortunately see less and less of, is that elite composition within each regime via election and robust coalition building in Latvia or via elite selection and closed coalition building in Kazakhstan generated differences in political development and in the treatment of Russians.

When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, Latvia and Kazakhstan emerged as independent sovereign states with large ethnic Russian minority communities. Elites adopted a different approach to Russians: those in Latvia adopted a restrictive approach that prioritizes the Latvian nation and its members, while those in Kazakhstan adopted an accommodating approach that prioritizes loyalty to Nursultan Nazarbaev, economic development, and interethnic stability. Yet both regimes, Kudaibergenova argues, are nationalizing. The aim of a nationalizing regime, which is also a power field, is "to impose hegemony over the national imagination, to provide a stable yet very limited framework for understanding and identifying with the given nation. It is also a stable discursive field that is controlled by the ruling elites within these nationalizing regimes" (73).

One of Kudaibergenova's contributions to our understanding of nationalism is her explanation of how nationalizing states work. Building on Rogers Brubaker's work, which conceptualizes nationalizing states as managed by elites who implement formal policies and permit informal practices that privilege members of the core nation, Kudaibergenova reminds us that his triadic nexus does not specify who is nationalizing, or how and when nationalizing occurs. Kudaibergenova asserts that elites, rather than states, are the key actors in nationalization processes and that