

legitimized by the international community as the first elections were instituted immediately after the war consisted of most of the same politicians who had dragged Bosnia into the war in the first place. For this reason, the international community has continued to “guide” Bosnia’s policymaking “for its own good.”

The heart of this book is Keil’s attempt to position Bosnia as a new form of federal state. He suggests that while some of the prerequisites for the transition to a democratic regime began to evolve after the war ended, at least minimally (that is, a political and an economic transition), the third necessity—an identity transformation—has still not occurred. Nevertheless, he gamely characterizes some multinational federations as asymmetric in their power-sharing, using Bosnia as an example. Certainly, the Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Muslims, who dominate politically in the federation, have much less representation and power in Republika Srpska than the Bosnian Serbs, and vice versa. And the “others” (people who do not belong to, or do not wish to claim membership in, one of the three constituent nations of Bosnia) have no power or even recognition in any part of Bosnia. Thus, Keil argues that the members of the constituent nations and other Bosnian inhabitants lack a common vision of the state and feelings of belonging. The fact that Bosnia’s federal system was internationally negotiated and imposed on that country as part of a peace plan means that Bosnia represents a new model of federalism and federation and, as such, a new model of power-sharing.

This book is not easy to read. Many of the paragraphs are exceedingly long, and the volume would have benefited from a heavier editorial hand to avoid egregious repetition, misspelling, and at least one misattribution of a quotation. Nevertheless, this work is a fresh look at the depressing state of affairs in Bosnia. It is an attempt to go beyond Bosnia’s placement as a unique political entity. Instead, Keil suggests that we consider Bosnia a case study of a new type of federal regime that the post-Cold War world might see more of in the future, with its discrimination against some societal groups, reluctant power-sharing, and close international monitoring. The implications of this type of “imposed federalism” for Bosnia’s future—and as a model for future postconflict states—will bear watching.

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***Post-Communist Democracies and Party Organization.*** By Margit Tavits. Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 2013. viii, 295 pp. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Figures. Tables. \$32.99, paper.

This book is most valuable in one particular way that has nothing to do with its precise subject matter: it serves as a great example for graduate students of how to build and structure powerful theoretical arguments and test them empirically. What makes *Post-Communist Democracies and Party Organization* even more valuable to scholars is that it links party organizational dynamics with electoral performance both theoretically and empirically and does not shy away from dealing with the challenges involved in this puzzle.

More specifically, the book states its own puzzle: “Why do some parties succeed, prosper and unify while others remain fragile and wither?” (5). It then answers this question by focusing on party organizational strength—understood as party extensiveness, professionalization, and reach—as the main explanatory factor for party institutionalization, understood as party electoral success, survival, and unity. The setting is the new democracies of postcommunist eastern Europe, where, the author

argues, the importance of organizational factors is “especially pronounced” (8). The chapters take this argument one step at a time, providing theoretical and empirical explanations for these phenomena.

The second chapter is what sets this book apart from other research trying to link organizational development with electoral performance, an outcome that is arguably dependent on many other factors. In the theory part of the chapter, Margit Tavits builds extensive argumentation for why and how parties that have many and active members, have an extensive network of local branches, and professionalize their central organization will be able to attract and mobilize voters more effectively than parties who do not. The discussion of what is likely to happen to link these party features provides a good example for young scholars of how to build a powerful theoretical argument. The chapter then continues to test these arguments empirically with quantitative tests of the hypothesis using a party-level dataset of four countries—the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, and Poland—and extending it, where possible, to another six, to include, ultimately, data from the postcommunist EU member states. The pooled, cross-sectional data allows for several types of analysis at the national and districts level that provide initial support for the theoretical arguments.

If the book left things there empirically, it could become an easy object of criticism for only looking at aggregate patterns, but it does not. Chapter 3 delves into a qualitative discussion of party dynamics to assess the validity of the causal mechanisms proposed. Using controlled and focused comparisons, the chapter provides a wealth of detailed discussion of party paths in the four key countries and allows Tavits to conclude that “organizational strength significantly accounts for electoral success” (111) in the cases under investigation. Alternative explanations are considered, and argued away, as well. This discussion is followed up nicely by an examination (in chapter 4) of how organizational strength impacts party unity in parliament, before turning the question around to investigate how party organizational features are explained by leadership style, environment, and ideology (chapters 5 and 6).

The book could, of course, have been better yet. The last two chapters, for example, could have been turned into a story of their own; while dealing with an equally important question, they remain more of a stand-alone exercise. In their place, further potential explanations of parties’ electoral success, independent of party organization, might have been examined in more detail. Further, despite its efforts to incorporate more parties and countries, *Post-Communist Democracies and Party Organization* still provides the most detailed data on those that have been studied most often. This leaves some fascinating outlier cases outside the realm of study. The uneven coverage of countries in all chapters might frustrate people who are looking for consistency in the data provided.

Still, the book remains a clear example of good political science research: it clearly defines what it tries to do, going against a lot of the published literature on the topic, and then does it by providing a solid, well-researched, empirical discussion. The final outcome is a step forward in understanding the realities of party building in the postcommunist world. Accessible and pleasant to read, the work is appropriate for wider audiences. Still, because of its overall setup and research design and the rich and well-structured review of existing arguments and empirical evidence on the topic, it is also highly appropriate for advanced graduate coursework.

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