

as being close but still distinct from Russia. It also acknowledged shared European values but was critical towards the EU and regarded its policy towards Ukraine as being often based on double standards.

These three types of identity discourses can also be found in Belarus, where the development of elite discourse converged to “Belarus as part of greater Europe” under President Lukashenka, who first stressed the natural unity of Belarusian and Russian nations.

The strongest identity discourse on the popular level in all three cases was hence the “part of greater Europe” middle ground. Two thirds of the population in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus wanted to develop partnership relations with CIS countries and with western countries in a balanced manner. This also affected foreign policy choices, the authors concluded, due to the need to gain popular legitimacy. Dominant interpretations of identity did not determine individual decisions but defined the limits of conceivable courses of action.

This book has been long in the making and in the background there is a wider British-Russian studies community that has been conducting research on these issues from mid-1990s onwards. The preface is dated in August 2014: the book covers the sharpening of the Ukrainian crisis in spring 2014 but does not discuss the events in detail and it does not deal with the effects or consequences of it. Yet, the book gives important insights into understanding the background of the present crisis.

The evidence presented in the book clearly shows how the popular Ukrainian conception of their identity remained fairly stable since the 1990s despite changes in the official discourse and leadership rhetoric. Most Ukrainians were ambivalent about their deeper integration into either Russian or EU-led projects but they wanted to be part of both. There was no deep enthusiasm about EU membership based on a clear European identity in Ukraine, but also the idea of the “Russian world” was accepted only by representatives of the “Ukraine as an alternative Europe” discourse.

This work does a splendid job in mapping and analyzing identity constructions and their evolution in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, as well as showing their political implications. Where we need still more research is to understand why one identity construction prevails over another.

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Building Hegemonic Order Russia's Way: Order, Stability, and Predictability in the Post-Soviet Space. By Michael O. Slobodchikoff. Lanham, NY: Lexington Books, 2014. xvi, 177 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Figures. Tables. \$80.00, hard bound.

In *Building Hegemonic Order Russia's Way*, Michael O. Slobodchikoff examines that state's efforts to create a post-Soviet regional environment that would be both stable and to its liking. Not simply a coercive power, Russia, Slobodchikoff argues, “use[s] bilateral and multilateral cooperation to develop a security architecture that provides order, stability and predictability,” benefiting itself *and* its neighbors (xiv). With the fall of the USSR, the author asserts that he has a unique opportunity both to investigate a regional hegemon's construction of order and engage the theoretical debates about the origins of regional and global hegemonic stability. In establishing the system, he contends the central tool is treaties, because they create “the rules of the order established by the regional hegemon” (35). Slobodchikoff engages in painstaking investigations of the agreements negotiated and their relationships to one another, arguing that when agreements are “nested” they create institutions that are reliant on

previous accords and thus part of a project to construct relationships and constrain behavior which reflect and underline existing norms and potentially reduce the likelihood of conflict between signatories (36–37). Because the Baltic states have opted out of a Russian-centric order, the author examines the regional systems created among the European, Caucasian, and Central Asian post-Soviet states, first on a bilateral (chapter 2) and then on a multilateral (chapter 3) level. In these analyses he not only counts the numbers of treaties between states and codes them according to their issue focus (“security,” “economic,” and “integration”), but the author also provides a network map to illustrate spatially what the key nodes or “lodestone” treaties are in the various relationships.

Slobodchikoff finds that Russia has strongly cooperative relations (as measured by his analysis of bilateral treaty making) with at least one state in each region (Kazakhstan, Armenia, and Belarus), and troubled relations with three (Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Moldova in the Caucasus and Europe), while all the Central Asian countries fall in the cooperative realm. Interestingly, the author sees a 20-year pattern of Russian-Ukrainian cooperation despite the recent violence between them. In addition to the examination of two-way state relations, Slobodchikoff examines multilateral agreements to underline two points: regional institutions constrain even a state like Russia and therefore affect governance (chapter 3), and hegemonies may and do engage in both strategies (negotiating with one state and many) to construct their preferred order (chapter 4).

Slobodchikoff insists that he is inserting himself into two important theoretical debates about (1) the utility of institutions and (2) the nature of the types of treaties preponderant powers seek to make to underpin their system. These institutions are important in their own right he claims, as they affect the behavior of all participants. Regarding preferred approaches to creating order, the author contends neither multilateral (Ruggie, 1994) nor bilateral (Hemmer and Katzenstein, 2002) arrangements (95–96) solely characterize Russia’s strategy, as it pursues the “Troika Option,” finalizing both kinds of agreements. Moreover, when the accords are nested (referring to and dependent upon previous agreements) they create an even stronger network for managing and organizing behavior. Thus, Slobodchikoff contends that “[w]hile . . . a regional hegemon . . . [may not directly] challenge the global hegemon and the global order, nevertheless Russia can certainly challenge the global order by developing a new regional order” (166). This finding is certainly important today as debates abound regarding whether recent Russian foreign policy signifies an assault on the rules and values of the Western dominated international system.

While this book raises some important issues and provides analysis of subjects of great concern to observers of Russian foreign policy and students of international relations theory, it suffers from at least three important weaknesses. The reader needs evidence to bolster assertions about the content of Russian interests that motivate its behavior and would appreciate some discussion of their origins, perhaps stemming from the distribution of power, changing threats, domestic politics, or identities. Second, Ruggie (1994) and Hemmer and Katzenstein (2002)—so essential to the theory section here—are addressing *American* foreign policy choices and arguing that *that* hegemon’s historical and philosophical approaches to the international system (Ruggie) and relationships with and attitudes toward its partners (Hemmer and Katzenstein) affect the types of treaties it seeks. Neither is contending that order construction only occurs through one set of mechanisms for all states at all times. Finally, this book needs more careful editing, with attention to both minimizing repetition of ideas, phrases, and words as well as correcting typographical errors. It would also benefit from a more extensive index.

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