

subnational politics and thus makes *Boundary Control* essential reading for many social scientists.

**Constructing Grievance: Ethnic Nationalism in Russia's Republics.** By Elise Giuliano. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011. 256p. \$45.00.

**Ethnic Struggle, Coexistence, and Democratization in Eastern Europe.** By Sherrill Stroschein. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012. 312p. \$99.00.  
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— Oleh Protsyk, *University of Flensburg*

These two books deal with ethnic mobilization issues and provide a highly valuable addition to the body of literature that examines the relationship between ethnic identities and political behavior. The books' authors share an interest in exploring mass-elite dynamics and taking the role of masses seriously. Both books reject explanatory accounts of ethnic mobilization that focus on elite dynamics and relegate ethnic masses to the role of passive actors who automatically respond to elites' manipulation. Taking the role of masses in ethnic mobilization seriously does not mean, however, that the two books agree on exactly what these masses do and why.

The books offer very different accounts of mobilization, based on a radically different understanding of ethnic-group identity and the motivations for collective action. For Sherrill Stroschein, ethnic groups have a degree of internal cohesion and external boundedness. Priority in explaining these group characteristics is given to constructed collective memories, historical narratives, and cultural practices. More importantly for her argument in *Ethnic Struggle, Coexistence, and Democratization in Eastern Europe*, group identity provides group members with an understanding of their political interests and serves as a major motivating factor for their direct (not elite-mediated) participation in ethnic protests, demonstrations, and other forms of collective actions. For Elise Giuliano in *Constructing Grievance*, ethnic groups are characterized by a much lower degree of cohesion and boundedness. Group identities do not automatically generate political preferences or provide guidance for political action. Ethnic identities become politically salient only when group inequality and subordination (primarily in socioeconomic terms) resonate with people's present experiences and when ethnic elites' strategies of issue framing determine whether such resonance is achieved.

If you want to know how effective these very different premises are in explaining important real-world phenomena, you need to read both books. The authors do a good job of articulating their arguments and systematically collecting evidence to support their claims. Both address important empirical questions. In *Ethnic Struggle*, the central question concerns the temporary dynamics and consequences of the mobilization of the ethnic Hungarian

minority in Romania, Slovakia, and Ukraine over the course of the 1990s. In *Constructing Grievance*, Giuliano seeks to explain the differences in the level of nationalist mobilization in Russia's ethnic republics in the early 1990s.

Ethnic mobilization is conceptualized somewhat differently in the two books. While Stroschein focuses on group mobilization around "ordinary" disputes over policies and institutions, Giuliano is interested in explaining "high order" mobilization that aims at succession and creation of a new state. Hence, the latter prefers the term "nationalist" mobilization.

One of the most important and convincing contributions of *Ethnic Struggle* is in demonstrating how ordinary people can mobilize on their own—without being nudged or encouraged by elites—when government policies hurt what people perceive to be their ethnic-group interests. This demonstration is based on a meticulous analysis of large amounts of event data that Stroschein collected on protest actions related to two key policy areas—language use and self-governance—in three Eastern European countries. This analysis is supplemented by a large volume of ethnographic observations that provides strong support for the author's claim that ordinary people care deeply about these policy matters and that their conceptualization of grievances is rooted in their understanding of their group identity. The book also argues that minority mobilization pays off; significant policy concessions by the government follow the instances of mobilization. The book also provides some important insights into local mechanisms of mobilization; it describes the patterns of mass-elite interactions inside both majority and minority groups and pays special attention to cross-group emulation. The event data on minority and majority protest actions is rendered easily applicable to purposes other than those pursued in the book and could be of interest to scholars seeking ways to test various hypotheses about the micro-dynamics of actors' interactions in protest actions.

The other claims in *Ethnic Struggle* raise some questions. First, the thesis about the moderation of group stances as a result of repeated interactions through protests and demonstrations appears to lack proper specification of scope conditions. While the deliberation logic mentioned by the author could serve as a useful metaphor for explaining changes in group stances, it is just a metaphor. Without more elaboration on the domain of the argument, a reader might be left wondering whether one should expect that a lasting period of ethnic protests and demonstrations on both sides of the majority/minority divide will always result in group moderation and mutual accommodation. Second, the claim that the extra-institutional politics of protests and demonstrations has led to major policy concessions, helped to legitimize democracy in the eyes of the minority population, and contributed to democratic consolidation is rather similar to the claim that proponents of the importance

of institutional politics make. One example is the accounts of ethnic party politics (e.g., see Johanna K. Birnir, *Ethnicity and Electoral Politics*, 2007). These accounts claim that the institutionalization of ethnic parties and their inclusion in government were important contributing factors in democratic consolidation. Proponents of the minority empowerment thesis (e.g., see Susan A. Banducci et al., “Minority Representation, Empowerment, and Participation,” *Journal of Politics* 66: 534–56) also argue that minority participation through formal institutional channels such as candidate nominations in elections increases the legitimacy of the democratic process in the eyes of majorities. So is it institutional or extra-institutional politics that does the work? If both, then some analytical differentiation of their exact impact would be helpful.

*Constructing Grievances* is based on an elegant and straightforward research design that allows for the examination of empirical support for some alternative explanations of variation in levels of nationalist mobilization. The author does a great service to the ethnic scholarship community by rigorously testing two important propositions in the field—about the ethnic division of labor and inter-ethnic job competition as alternative sources of nationalist mobilization. She collects and analyzes very interesting data on socioeconomic stratification, including some disaggregated information on the ethnic composition of the workforce from the last Soviet census, which was never published. The author’s verdict is that the data do not provide sufficient support for either of the structuralist propositions. Some proponents of structural arguments could probably question whether the evidence collected does in fact refute the role of socioeconomic inequalities in generating group resentments. They would focus on the relevance of the book’s first structural index, the index of socioeconomic stratification that rates all nationalist republics as falling below or, at maximum, reaching an average on such important dimensions as the ratio of minority/Russian representation in the white-collar workforce. In her discussion of structural factors, the author also proposes a second index, the index of trends in socioeconomic stratification, which unambiguously shows the great advances that minorities made in education, urbanization, and the labor markets over time. Given these advances, the author describes the socioeconomic situation as rather ambiguous overall. Elites then move in using frames to help ordinary group members make sense of this situation. The important premise for this argument is that people do perceive situations as ambiguous. This premise requires stronger justification for why minority group members value some abstract knowledge about intergenerational advances made by their group rather similarly to acutely felt injustice linked to the contemporary presence of significant cross-group socioeconomic inequalities.

It could be argued that other similarly rigorous testing than that which the author applies to the structuralist

arguments should also be employed in evaluating the author’s own explanation about the role of issue framing. The testing to which this explanation is subjected appears to be more limited, as is reflected in the allocation of the book’s space to different topics: The topic of “bad” or unsuccessful framers, which is a critical ingredient of the book’s argument, is given explicit attention in only one of eight chapters. It is difficult to blame the author for this. She makes the best use of the analytical leverage generated by her analysis of various forms of available textual materials (programs, manifestos, statements). More direct testing of her arguments would probably require a comparison of public attitudes prior to and after the framing is completed; elaborate survey-based data for doing this is difficult to come by. On a different note, and as is the case with both books discussed here, one is left wondering whether the discussion of some other alternative explanations (putting socioeconomic stratification aside) could be more focused, engaging at more length and more directly with relevant arguments. A case in point is cultural arguments. This section is very broad in scope. It gives similar weight to general propositions made by a number of international relations theorists who frequently rely on rather crude characterizations of cultural differences and to nuanced accounts of differences in the evolution of cultural institutions across Russian regions (e.g., Dmitry P. Gorenburg, *Minority Ethnic Mobilization in the Russian Federation*, 2003). Perhaps these differences provide little leverage when accounting for the variation that the author seeks to explain, but we are left uncertain.

Finally, *Constructing Grievance’s* elaborate statement about ethnic groups’ lack of internal cohesion and external boundedness leaves us questioning whether the author sees this as a constant quality of ethnic groups anywhere or as a particular value of the strength of the group-boundaries variable that happens to be shared by the majority of Russian ethnic groups. Also, how will Giuliano’s argument fare in explaining the “ordinary” mobilization with which Stroschein’s *Ethnic Struggle* is concerned? These questions take us back to the importance of an elaborate discussion of scope conditions in arguments that we make and the implications that we draw from these arguments.

#### **Decolonizing Democracy: Transforming the Social**

**Contract in India.** By Christine Keating. University Park: Penn State University Press, 2011. 168p. \$54.95 cloth, \$29.95 paper. doi:10.1017/S1537592713002582

— Rina Agarwala, *Johns Hopkins University*

This book is a clearly written, thought-provoking inquiry into India’s democracy. Christine Keating begins *Decolonizing Democracy* with an interesting paradox: The Indian constitution sought to build an inclusive democracy by declaring the equality of gender, race, caste, and religion,