

as the necessary condition for military victory—in Kashmir, Chhattisgarh, Chechnya, and Turkish Kurdistan—are hardly poster children of peace” (p. 163). Defining policy success is surely a thorny problem. Yet given the selection issue and the principal’s military goal of defeating insurgents, four out of five wins seems pretty good odds in a gamble with violence. Biberman’s definition of success or victory, complete with peace and legitimacy, would be a high bar for conventional forces. The success of outsourcing is evaluated by the goals of the principal, but what Biberman’s work intimates is that may not be good enough for the rest of us. Armed nonstate actors, as their names suggest, are likely predators. How do we weigh, or better control, the human costs of this dark menagerie?

Transitional Justice and the Former Soviet Union: Reviewing the Past, Looking toward the Future. Edited by Cynthia M. Horne and Lavinia Stan. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018. 438p. \$125.00 cloth, \$41.99 paper. doi:10.1017/S1537592719004158

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For scholars steeped in the comparative method, the successor states to the Soviet Union offer an ideal setting for uncovering the determinants of transitional justice (TJ). All but four constituent former republics experienced Soviet occupation, along with famine resulting from forced collectivization and Stalinist purges. All made great and irrecoverable sacrifices during World War II. Then, in 1990–91, all became independent, albeit with various degrees of enthusiasm as the Soviet Empire collapsed. Yet their TJ trajectories varied considerably. Rarely does the real world provide such a controlled environment to trace causal mechanisms at work.

Despite this attraction, the Former Soviet Union (FSU) is considered a difficult case to analyze because, thanks to the politics of *Glasnost* (“transparency” in Russian) initiated by Gorbachev, the former republics got a head start in “righting the wrongs” of the communist past. *Glasnost*, which bore a strong resemblance to transitional justice, was announced and well underway five years before the democratic transitions started in earnest. Both of these facts invite the reader to sit down with a book that promises to answer this question: Why did some countries start reckoning with the communist past while others did not? Despite this ideal setup for any scholar of comparative politics, for several reasons the volume under review falls short of providing a systematic analysis of the determinants of transitional justice.

First, the editors start with a very strong attachment to the idea that the FSU’s grappling with the past is going to be a “non-case.” Indeed, the book begins and ends with discussions of “FSU’s handicap relative to Central and

Eastern Europe.” Even in the case of Russia, this is not strictly speaking true, as I explain later. Second, nowhere in the volume do we find a definition of what actually constitutes TJ. We find examples of mechanisms—lustration, opening archives, appointing historical commissions, writing history textbooks, and setting up museums and memorial dates—but no actual definition.

Another reason the book falls short of its goals is associated with its format: an edited volume succeeds only when editors can ensure that specific country chapters share a similar structure. But the chapters in this volume do not even seem to be applying the same definitions of TJ or its constitutive mechanisms. For instance, according to standard definitions (Jon Elster, *Closing the Books: Transitional Justice in Historical Perspective*, 2004; Marek Kaminski, Monika Nalepa, and Barry O’Neill, “Normative and Strategic Aspects of Transitional Justice,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 50(3), 2006), TJ comprises policies aimed at dealing with the past that are implemented in the aftermath of a transition to democracy. In light of this, policies implemented by an authoritarian regime do not actually constitute TJ.

The lack of a uniform structure imposed on the contributors makes the task of the concluding chapter, which provides a synthesis of what we learned, excruciatingly difficult. Presented with this gargantuan charge, Alexandra Vacroux can do little more than conclude, “The three Caucasian countries and the five Central Asian states have done much less [than the Baltics], though Georgia has recently become interested in such [transitional justice] measures and Kazakhstan stands out as having tried more than its neighbors. Ukraine and Moldova have had bursts of transitional justice measures, while Russia and Belarus have not” (p. 348).

What is desperately needed instead is discussion of the different mechanisms that different former republics favored, along with an explanation why they were chosen. Yet, the only disaggregation over time that Vacroux offers is in figure 16.1 (p. 351), which merely separates every TJ mechanism into state and nonstate sponsored. The conclusion offers no synthesis of what we learned beyond the following sentence, which contains a logical fallacy: “Given . . . the fact that some of the Central European countries that implemented transitional justice have experienced backsliding in the democratic process, the assumption that transitional justice is an essential precondition of building a sustainable, democratic political order requires more rigorous testing” (p. 357). This sentence would have been correct if anyone argued that TJ is a sufficient condition to prevent democratic backsliding, but nobody in the TJ research field makes that claim.

A reader may also wonder what key guided the selection of cases for particular chapters, because alongside discussions of the 15 republics, there is a chapter devoted to Serbia and half of a chapter to Poland. Not

only was Serbia not a former Soviet Republic, but Yugoslavia under Tito was not even part of one of the key socialist organizations uniting Eastern Bloc countries. Equally difficult to comprehend is why some of the internal chapters repeat facts already covered by previous chapters and why they concern more than one country. Mark Kramer's chapter, for instance, deals with both Poland (which despite Stalin's wishes never became a Soviet republic) and Russia. Yet Russia is discussed in the preceding chapter by Nanci Adler. Moreover, some of the material on Russia is inaccurate. For instance, the claim that Russia was "unwilling to disband (or even scale back) [its] sprawling security organs" (p. 76) is not backed by data from the Global Transitional Justice Dataset, according to which Russia is a leading case of purge events among 81 countries that made the transition to democracy between 1946 and 2016 (see Genevieve Bates, Ipek Cinar, and Monika Nalepa, "Accountability by the Numbers: Introducing the Global Transitional Justice Events Dataset [1946–2016]," *Perspectives on Politics* 18(1), 2020).

Numerous Soviet military units were disbanded, and although there were no formal purges of law enforcement after the democratic transition, some occurred before the transition. In 1989, the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) dismissed 83,500 employees, including 37,000 commissioned officers. In 1990 more than 30,000 employees left the service. Moreover, up to 200,000 employees resigned from the MVD every single year between 1991 and 1996 (Vadim Volkov, *Violent Entrepreneurs: The Use of Force in the Making of Russian Capitalism*, 2002). The Prosecutor's Office (the all-powerful procuracy) lost about 39,000 people as a result (Gordon B. Smith, *Reforming the Russian Legal System*, 1996). Where Yeltsin could not carry out purges (as in the case of the so-called siloviki-controlled ministries), he fragmented them, diluting their power. The KGB serves here as a compelling illustration: in 1993 it was split into five and, eventually in 1996, into seven separate organizations. Currently, the newly formed organizations' overlapping jurisdictions play well into the hands of Putin, because none of the resulting agencies pose a threat to his grip on power (on the phenomenon of coup-proofing by an executive who mostly feels threatened by elites, rather than by revolution from below, see Sheena Chestnut, *Dictators and their Secret Police: Coercive Institutions and State Violence*, 2016).

In defense of Kramer, I believe his misclassification of Russia to be the result of the editors' failure to impose a common definition of TJ on all authors. Because Russia's democratic spell—the period when a country *is in a position to implement transitional justice*—lasted only three years, the purge rate described earlier is so high that it rivals lustration events in Czechoslovakia and the GDR. Were the Putin years to be included in Russia's democratic spell, the purge effort would be in the middling or even low range.

Despite my concerns with the volume as a whole, some of the individual chapters are definitely worth reading. Lavinia Stan's chapter on Moldova is an outstanding account of the country's repeated attempts to deal with its past record of human rights violations under successive authoritarian regimes. Nenad Dimitrijević's chapter on Serbia is equally compelling, despite its dubious fit with the theme of the volume. Finally, Kramer's section on Poland is actually outstanding, particularly its very balanced analysis of Lech Walesa, the dissident president uncovered years later as a secret collaborator with the security apparatus.

Hence, although readers seeking an answer to the question posed in the introduction—why did some countries start reckoning with communist past while others did not?—will not find a concise answer, they will enjoy the rich historical detail of some of the individual chapters in this volume that, because of their focus on small former republics, would be unlikely to appear independently in journals.

Hybrid Regimes within Democracies: Fiscal Federalism and Subnational Rentier States. By Carlos Gervasoni.

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It often seems that decentralization and democratization go hand in hand. As part of the "third wave" of democratization, popular elections were introduced for provincial and local governments that had formerly been appointed, and responsibilities and expenditures were transferred to those subnational governments. More recently, local elections have been introduced even in China, where authoritarianism is firmly entrenched at the national level.

In *Hybrid Regimes within Democracies*, Carlos Gervasoni, however, demonstrates that decentralization and democracy do not always go together. In a study of provincial governments in Argentina, he documents that, in contrast to the Chinese experience, a form of authoritarianism can survive at the provincial level in spite of national-level democracy. In fact, he argues that non-democratic practices nurtured at the provincial level can even spill over to national-level politics. In an era of democratic "backsliding" around the world, this is a timely book.

In the provincial quasi-authoritarian enclaves described by Gervasoni, elections are not canceled, nor are opposition politicians and journalists jailed or killed. Rather, in a heavy-handed form of machine politics, provincial governments exert far-reaching control over the local economy, which is dominated by the public sector. They can deny jobs, contracts, or licenses to potential dissenters