

received so much international attention, enthusiasm also appears to have faded over time. Democratic electoral processes for local officials are encouraged as long as they produce the “right” result and solidify control by the party elite over the local population, but not otherwise. Reform fatigue has clearly set in: As early as 2004, Fewsmith found that “enthusiasm for inner-party democracy—at least for the variety that included all party members and representatives of the ‘masses’—was already dying out” (p. 101). Simply put, the CCP could not afford to let local officials become too responsive to their local communities, and viewed those who became so as a threat.

Perhaps surprisingly, China’s increasing wealth is, it appears, also part of the problem. As Beijing’s fiscal resources have grown, it has increased aid to the small and usually impoverished rural counties that have been the most enthusiastic adopters of semicompetitive elections and other quasi-democratic reforms. These central subsidies removed the pressure to seek compromise with local society, while economic growth ensured the career progression of local cadres. As such, the much-vaunted connection between economic prosperity and democracy is turned on its head: in contemporary China, in Fewsmith’s telling, prosperity is sapping the vitality out of political reforms, rather than sustaining them.

I read this book in combination with Gary King, Jennifer Pan, and Margaret E. Roberts’s recent article on Internet censorship in China (“How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression,” *American Political Science Review* 107 [May 2013]: 326–43), which argues that combating political mobilization rather than criticism of the government is the real focus of China’s censors. Fewsmith comes to a similar conclusion, arguing that maintaining social order remains the CCP’s only real criterion for judging the success of any political reforms, and that avoiding “things getting out of hand” is one reason why local elections and other innovations have been concentrated in far-flung, out-of-the-way places. But social unrest in China is clearly on the rise, making the further deepening of reforms unlikely, as the decline of inner-party elections heralds.

While this is a convincing analysis, if I have one criticism it is that the book is so devoted to describing the limits of political reform that it fails to consider the bigger “what-if” questions for democracy in China. Nowhere is there a discussion of what truly democratic politics with genuine rights of speech and association would look like in China, or how open competition for office across party lines in mass-participation elections would be likely to work, if at all. Indeed, it seems that such a scenario is simply beyond contemplation.

Although this is understandable, given the total stranglehold on power that the CCP currently exercises, it seems to me that by not even considering the potential for electoral democracy, *The Logic and Limits of Political Reform*

in China also inadvertently highlights the limits of imagination and circumscribed thinking about alternative political scenarios that the author shows are so central to maintaining CCP control at all levels. Indeed, the bleak picture painted by this book makes it hard to avoid the conclusion that China’s political reform process has run out of steam—and that only major (and very traumatic) regime change is now likely to deliver accountable and legitimate government to the Chinese people.

Boundary Control: Subnational Authoritarianism in Federal Democracies. By Edward L. Gibson. New York:

Cambridge University Press, 2012. 202p. \$85.00 cloth, \$29.99 paper.

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— Kelly M. McMann, *Case Western Reserve University*

This book represents a significant step forward in the study of subnational politics and democratization. Edward L. Gibson demonstrates how provincial officials maintain authoritarian regimes in democratic countries through their interactions with local populations and national and municipal leaders. Compared to other works, *Boundary Control* offers a fuller and more complete theory of strategies to sustain subnational authoritarianism. The book also emphasizes that “national democracy cannot escape an intimate association with subnational authoritarianism. . . . It empowers it and absorbs it into its legal and normative framework” (p. 172). This theoretical advance and real-world import make the book a must-read for those interested in democracy, regime change, or subnational politics.

The author’s central argument is that authoritarian provinces can endure in democracies when their incumbents are able to keep conflict localized or, in Gibson’s terms, exercise “boundary control.” Provincial leaders use three strategies to accomplish this. First, through “parochialization of power,” incumbents control local politics by establishing a dominant party. Second, incumbents achieve “nationalization of influence,” meaning that they sway national decisions that affect their provinces. They do this by securing national positions for themselves, ensuring that their supporters win national legislative seats, and delivering votes to the national ruling party. A final strategy used by incumbents is the “monopolization of national-subnational linkages.” Provincial leaders manipulate national funds sent to their territories, envoys who are assigned to monitor their activities, and institutions that are designed to coordinate provincial representation in the national capital.

The purpose of these strategies, in part, is to quash urban oppositions and mayors who might challenge provincial rule. For example, parochialization of power and monopolization of national-subnational linkages include efforts to weaken urban competitors through legislative malapportionment in order to favor rural areas and the control of national funds to municipalities.

Gibson takes his theory a step further by explaining how the “territorial regime” shapes the nature and success of these strategies. The territorial regime “governs the interactions among territorial units of the state . . . and specifies the division of powers between governments” within the state (p. 17). Greater centralization reduces provinces’ autonomy to design their governments and thus forces provincial leaders to use informal, illegal means to execute the three strategies. Provincial regimes that rely on informal, illegal techniques are less stable because a democratic national government is more likely to challenge behavior that falls outside the law. Consequently, these provincial leaders must rely even more on the nationalization of influence in order to preserve their rule. A territorial regime that overrepresents particular types of provinces in national institutions can augment authoritarian enclaves’ influence in the national capital. A final important characteristic of the territorial regime is whether it empowers or weakens municipalities. Empowered municipalities threaten provincial authoritarian regimes by facilitating the development of urban oppositions.

Four cases illustrate the strategies and territorial regimes’ impact on them. Contemporary Mexico and the United States during Reconstruction are examples of high centralization, whereas contemporary Argentina and the United States following Reconstruction exhibit low centralization. Relative to the other cases, Mexico has symmetric representation of provinces in national institutions. Mexico also stands out because it has the most empowered municipalities, followed by the United States and then Argentina. Gibson considers evidence from each country in a separate chapter, preceded by a chapter that introduces the theory and another elaborating on it, and followed by a chapter that highlights the similarities and differences among the cases.

Gibson’s explanation of the way in which subnational authoritarian regimes are created and maintained advances the field of study. Building upon other scholars’ works—many of which, in turn, draw on a preliminary version of his argument published in 2005—the author offers the most comprehensive theory to date of subnational authoritarianism. Whereas most works examine relations only between provinces and the national government, Gibson includes municipalities and the strategies employed by provincial leaders to stem urban opposition. He also examines a wider array of tools than provincial leaders. Works by William Munro and Carlos Gervasoni, among others, focus on factors contributing to subnational authoritarianism, such as local electoral systems and distribution of federal funds. Gibson incorporates these influences and introduces numerous others in his framework of three strategies for maintaining subnational authoritarianism.

Where Gibson’s theory is less complete is in explaining the democratization of subnational authoritarian regimes. According to the author, subnational authoritarianism

begins to erode when local conflict is nationalized. He lays out the following scenario: A crisis occurs in a province, and local opposition brings it to the attention of outside actors and manages to link the local conflict to the outside actors’ interests. The outside actors then devote resources to resolving the conflict and thus become involved in the struggle to rule the province. Gibson again draws on characteristics of the territorial regime, here to distinguish between the type of democratic transition—center-led and party-led. A center-led transition, whereby national authorities change provincial rules and institutions, is more likely in a decentralized country because provincial leaders use laws and institutions to maintain authoritarianism. A party-led transition, whereby a national party allies with the local opposition to win provincial offices, is more likely in centralized countries because provincial leaders use informal, illegal means to maintain authoritarianism.

Local opposition and national actors are essential to Gibson’s argument about the demise of subnational authoritarian regimes: Local opposition attracts to the province national actors who dismantle authoritarianism. But it would be helpful to know under what conditions these actors can and do act. The book reveals that some, but not all, subnational authoritarian regimes in Argentina and Mexico have fallen. Can this be attributed to the presence or strength of local opposition? Gibson eschews the “intrinsic characteristics” of subnational territories in his explanation (p. 4), but features of a province and its regime can prevent the development of local oppositions and thus hinder democratization of a territory, as research by Maya Tudor and Adam Ziegfeld and my own work have shown. The rich empirical information in *Boundary Control* also shows that some national interventions in these countries have succeeded while others have failed (pp. 93–95, 127–33). What factors influence national actors’ decisions to intervene and their likelihood of success if they do so? Gibson argues that a local opposition brings a crisis to national actors’ attention and that they can more easily overturn subnational authoritarian regimes maintained through illegal, informal means. Work by Agustina Giraudy shows that numerous other factors increase the effectiveness of national interventions, as well as motivate them. Additional theorizing about the motivations and capacity of local oppositions and national actors would be helpful.

That said, Gibson’s explanation of subnational democratization is an excellent beginning. Unlike other studies that have focused on the maintenance of subnational authoritarianism, this book also tackles change. Other scholars should use Gibson’s ideas as a starting point, fleshing out the details about actors’ motivations and capacities using existing and new research. More complete and thus even more valuable is his theory of the creation and maintenance of subnational authoritarian regimes. This theory advances our understanding of democracy and

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