

Milada Anna Vachudova, Europe Undivided: Democracy, Leverage and Integration After Communism, Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 2005, ISBN 0 19 924 128 X (hbk) and 0 19 924 119 8 (pbk).

Wade Jacoby, The Enlargement of the European Union and NATO: Choosing from the Menu in Central Europe, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004. ISBN 0 521 83359 0 (hbk).

*Europe Undivided* and *The Enlargement of the European Union* present contrasting, but complementary, attempts to integrate the compartmentalised literatures on post-communist politics, democratisation and European integration. Vachudova compares six Central and Eastern European states, which initially took divergent paths after 1989. Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, Vachudova argues, followed a 'liberal' pattern of change characterised by open political competition and alternation between left and right, extensive marketisation and a broadly effective rule of law. 'Liberal' patterns were produced, where strong opposition elites existed under communism capable of challenging communist elites in 1989 and defeating them in at the polls. Often, as Poland and Hungary, this was a consequence of communist regimes' weakness or reformism, which also laid the basis for these ruling parties to transform into credible social democratic parties after 1989. Such post-communist centre-left groups provided stiff competition for the parties of ex-opposition right and later formed responsible centre-left government that kept reform on track. Where Communists remained hardline, as in the Czech Republic, the emergence of a strong centre-left was delayed. Here the ex-opposition liberal right succumbed to clientelism due to lack of effective early opposition, despite the impeccable democratic credentials of the dissidents leaders of the 1989 revolution. Slovakia, Bulgaria and Romania, by contrast, initially became 'illiberal democracies', where used clientelism, economic populism, media domination and scapegoating of national minorities to maintain their hold on power. Here strong opposition elites were weak or absent in 1989, transition took the form of a 'pre-emptive strike' by nomenklatura factions, as in Bulgaria and Romania, or was rapidly captured by nationalist forces with similarly illiberal, rent-seeking strategies, as in Slovakia

Vachudova then attempts to assess the leverage of the EU on CEE democratisation. She distinguishes 'passive leverage' exercised by the EU in CEE in early 1990s by virtue of its existence and the possibility of enlargement, and the 'active leverage' based on explicit conditionalities of the accession process of late-1990s. Such leverage, she claims, although developed incrementally and accidentally, was uniquely effective because accession was a rule-based process using objective criteria backed by strict monitoring and enforcement. Given the lack of feasible alternatives and the unequal nature of EU-CEE association agreements, the geo-political and economic incentives for CEE states to seek full EU membership seemed uniform and overwhelming. However, CEE elites responded quite differently. In 'liberal' states, Vachudova suggests, EU leverage largely reinforced domestic reforms which were already converging with the *acquis*. However, ruling elites in illiberal pattern states, she claims, played a game of 'diplomatic abitrage', outwardly orienting foreign policy towards EU membership, whilst blocking or distorting the domestic reforms that and seeking to circumvent active leverage through partial adoption or non-implementation

of the *acquis*. In the end, she claims, it was the EU's 'active leverage' on opposition and civic forces in 'illiberal states', which proved decisive. The EU provided oppositions with a symbolic focus for action, political education and aid as well as highlighting illiberal regimes' failures and inconsistencies. This enabled liberal, pro-Western coalitions to win a series of critical elections in the late 1990s, breaking open semi-competitive political systems, kick-starting liberal reform and forcing illiberal ruling parties to adapt to liberal free markets, liberal democracy and European integration.

Vachudova rejects arguments that accession leverage devalued democracy in CEE by bypassing domestic institutions, imposing West European models or emptying left-right competition of content. The EU, she notes, lacked specific policy models in many areas. Moreover, CEE national institutions were established in CEE by the mid-1990s and in the accession process, as in the EU itself, substantial areas, such as taxation and welfare, remain the responsibility of national governments. Such diversity is explored in Jacoby's *Enlargement of the EU*, which, in fact, examines only the influence of Western models on policy and institutional reform in CEE since 1989. Most of the book presents a paired comparison of Hungary and the Czech Republic supplemented by a briefer discussion of Poland, Ukraine, Sweden and Bulgaria to test findings against cases, which vary by size, geo-politics, economic development and imperial legacy. However, Jacoby argues, given the standard set of EU and NATO conditionalities applied across CEE, significant variation really occurs not between national cases but across policy areas. He studies institutional reform in five policy areas subject to varying levels of EU or NATO conditionality: health, regional policy, civilian control of the military, consumer protection and agriculture. Jacoby finds models, which suggest that copies of Western models were straightforwardly transplanted or imposed, oversimplistic. Instead he identifies multiple and changing forms of emulation (often within the same policy area): simple copying (a rare occurrence), the use of approximate templates by CEE actors, the setting of minimum thresholds by the West and last minute institutional 'patching' to meet specific conditionalities. Forms of emulation depended upon the specificity of Western requirements in any given area and the precision with which local elites wished emulate foreign models.

Outcomes of reform depended upon the strength of domestic actors and density of rules in any given policy area. Where domestic actors were well established and the *acquis* dense (as in agriculture), the area became political battleground. Conversely, when strong domestic actors did not face a sizeable *acquis* (as in healthcare), a process of genuine learning occurred. Where the *acquis* was specific, but domestic interests weak or non-existent (as with regionalisation), the result was institutional 'scaffolding' with few actors to populate it and uncertainty as to whether sturdier structures would develop. Finally, where both the *acquis* and domestic actors were relatively weakly developed (as with consumer protection), isolated pioneering institution-building by new domestic policy entrepreneurs ('homesteading') ensues. Like Vachudova, Jacoby stresses, that what matters is the interaction of domestic and external forces and stresses the role of domestic actors as vectors for external influence. In contrast to Vachudova's essentially rationalist approach, however, Jacoby sees the use of models as a form of 'embedded rationality' by actors, facing cognitive, time and resource constraints as well as external leverage. Perhaps, for this

reason, his analysis, although compatible with the passive and active leverage periods of Vachudova, gives more weight to domestic actors as key catalysts for change.

The grand theory of *Undivided Europe* inevitably also leaves loose ends. Its case for active leverage (and against domestic dynamics) seems overstressed. As Ukraine's 'Orange Revolution' suggests, societal discontent over economic stagnation and blatant political manipulation combined the 'passive leverage' of an enlarged EU and target aid to opposition forces can topple even entrenched semi-authoritarians. Moreover, on this and the book's own evidence from CEE, political and economic rent-seeking seems a more widespread tool of 'illiberal democracy', than nationalism. Here, the absence of large national minorities in the three 'liberal' states makes it impossible to judge how far liberal elites' values would lead them to resist nationalist temptations. The inclusion of Estonia or Latvia, which combine opposition-led transition and restive Russophone minorities, would have perhaps sharpened the analysis here. Clientelism too is perhaps best seen not just as a strategy of rent-seeking baddies, but a political fact of life. Liberal, pro-Western elites too often need to build clientelistic networks when in office. Given this, the notion that polarised two-bloc politics – supplemented by the bureaucratic oversight of the European Commission - can substitute for weak civil societies and strong state institutions seems more questionable.

Overall, *Undivided Europe's* - synthesis of insights from a range of literatures into a coherent analysis is a clearly ground-breaking. Despite, or perhaps because of, its trail of unanswered questions- it is likely to be a landmark book in debates on transition and integration for some time. Jacoby's book is a narrower, but untidier work. A gratuitous chapter attempting to piggyback grand theoretical synthesis of the rationalist, historical and sociological branches of 'new institutionalisms' detracts Its fine grain, open-ended analysis of policy emulation. The book's focus on policy, rather regime questions also suggests that it may be likely to gain a smaller immediate readership among democratisation scholars than Vachudova's. Nevertheless, the book's underlying originality and relevance to research on democracy in post-enlargement CEE, where accession leverage will largely be a thing of the past, should not be overlooked.

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