

geopolitical culture, born of catastrophic collapse, sought the restoration of Russian power in Europe, the Caucasus, and Eurasia” (276).

Despite its empirical richness, the book never gets to really addressing the reasons why Russia invaded Georgia and Ukraine. The crucial question whether we are dealing with two isolated incidents or they do indeed constitute a pattern—does Russia invade its neighbors?—is never even asked. Instead, the author concentrates on the normative dimension of the two cases, which is summarized by the title of a key section in Chapter 4: “Who Started the August 2008 War?” (158). The question of responsibility is without doubt a crucial one, and the book makes an important contribution to the ongoing debate. There is also a fascinating theoretical discussion and dense empirical analysis, which, however, remain somewhat detached from each other.

VIACHESLAV MOROZOV
University of Tartu

The Regional Roots of Russia’s Political Regime. By William R. Reisinger and Bryon J. Moraski. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2017. ix, 268 pp. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Figures. Tables. Maps. \$75.00, hard bound. doi: 10.1017/slr.2018.272

With *The Regional Roots of Russia’s Political Regime*, William Reisinger and Bryon Moraski have made a very important contribution to how we understand both the origins and the current nature of the political regime in place in Russia. By showing us that Vladimir Putin’s power was built on the foundations of the same regional political machines that it continues to depend on, the authors challenge widespread accounts that all one needs to know to understand Russian politics can be found inside the Kremlin or, even more specifically, in the person of Vladimir Putin.

The book’s argument is based on exemplary social science research grounded in both deep knowledge of Russia’s vast expanse and impressive skill in practicing cutting-edge statistical analysis. After laying out the central argument in a clear and compelling opening chapter, the authors begin their account with the best single summary I have seen of the first quarter century of Russian electoral politics, from 1991 to 2016. Packing a lot into just thirty-two pages without seeming crammed, this chapter in itself will be useful for students and anyone else looking for a concise account of the changes during this time in both the outcomes and practice of elections in Russia. This chapter nicely frames the central question of the book by documenting the increasingly authoritarian nature of electoral politics in Russia under Putin.

The remaining chapters report findings from a quantitative analysis of a great deal of original data, with each chapter peeling away another layer of the proverbial onion to reveal a deeper reality. Rather than recount exactly what each chapter does, I will instead describe some of the most interesting findings.

In line with the book’s title, the authors show how Putin inherited a political system from his predecessor, Boris Yeltsin, in which a relatively small number of regional political machines led by “governors” (or usually-directly-elected chief executives going by other titles) had developed the capacity to generate extraordinarily high turnout levels in elections and then to deliver these votes to whomever they pleased. If in the 1990s some of these machines were generators of opposition votes, Putin used a variety of carrots and sticks to turn them all to his side, making them in some sense the forward base from which his power would then expand still further as the 2000s progressed.

In this sense, Reisinger and Moraski show us that the authoritarian mechanisms that keep Putin in power today were not so much invented by him as initially *corralled* and then expanded by him. In a very interesting and novel spatial analysis, the book demonstrates that the process of expansion was not a vertical reception of Kremlin orders by regional bosses to construct their machines in certain ways according to a clear blueprint, but was instead a horizontal process by which political machine practices spread from region to region. All experiencing similar pressures to ramp up their vote delivery for the Kremlin, regions tended to learn from their immediate neighbors exactly how best to do it. Russia's political machines have thus tended to be spatially clustered, which interestingly also means that some larger areas (such as the northwest) have lagged behind in their capacity to deliver votes for the Kremlin.

Going even deeper, the book also uncovers particular features that make a given region more likely to be a major deliverer of pro-Kremlin votes. For many, the most unexpected finding will probably be that Putin's political machine has depended heavily on Russia's ethnic minority republics as well as on ordinary regions with higher non-Russian populations. This would seem to complicate simplistic notions one sometimes encounters that link Putin's domestic support to Russian ethnic nationalism, and calls attention to how important ethnic minority politics are in Russia today.

Implications for the future come from the facts that (a) this whole process has not been entirely orchestrated by the Kremlin and (b) it reflects a Kremlin adaptation to preexisting regional machine structures more than an integrated nationwide machine designed by the Kremlin itself. As the final line of the book reads, "the regime's reliance on informal political interdependencies with each of over four score regions may prove to be one of its weaknesses not the success story it had seemed to be" (213).

HENRY E. HALE

George Washington University

Living Faithfully in an Unjust World: Compassionate Care in Russia. By Melissa Caldwell. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017. xviii, 260 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. \$85.00, hard bound, \$34.95, paper.
doi: 10.1017/slr.2018.273

Anthropology has enjoyed an extended engagement with what the historian Michel Foucault termed "biopower," or the right of sovereignty to take life or to let live (*Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the College de France*, 2003, 241). While a thick literature has developed around the former, detailing the active and passive politics through which harm is inflicted and life taken, *Living Faithfully in an Unjust World* turns attention to the less well-documented logic and practices that enable a politics of letting live. This book is an ethnography about how faith-based organizations create the conditions of possibility to make interventions in support of precarious modes of life. At the center of this book is the development of a novel understanding of faith, not as an expression of a particular religious belief, but as a civic and political project. This secular sense of faith, the book argues, makes compassion and social justice not just possible but actionable.

Set in post-Soviet Russia, where political and economic transformation spiked rates of unemployment, homelessness, and addiction, *Living Faithfully* brings into focus the quiet efforts of volunteers and aid workers to make the world a slightly better place through their efforts at doing good. Drawing upon a twenty-year ethnographic engagement with faith-based organizations in Moscow, the book rethinks what the