

bureaucrats took control of the economy, they faced a daunting array of managerial tasks. In need of economic and accounting expertise, they turned to work scientists and other non-Party experts. These specialists embraced the challenge of creating efficient and productive work places, even in a non-capitalist system. They crafted policy instruments, including a scientifically-calibrated wage system for collective farms.

Lampland's broader contribution to economic history is to present the commodification of labor as a historical process. She argues that the role of markets in commodifying labor has been exaggerated, and demonstrates the importance of specialists, institutions, and practices that permit a reasonable approximation of labor's value. In particular, she illustrates the contribution of Hungarian work scientists and economists in assigning a value to specific tasks and creating the infrastructure to make labor markets function. The Hungarian specialists she studies intended their system of labor valuation to work within a market framework. Instead, their ideas became central to the communist regime's matrix of labor value called the work unit, which in turn shaped Hungarians' attitudes about work, time, and money.

Lampland's book provides much for scholars to contemplate. She contributes to a growing body of literature that sees the Soviet bloc as far from monolithic, and that instead examines the particularities of communist rule in each country. She underscores national and regional differences in the process of collectivization and the functioning of collective farms. Her work also suggests that developments in eastern Europe can be fruitfully compared with those in other parts of the world—she notes, for example, that scientific management practices in Hungary were part of an international movement in the twentieth century. Finally, her study calls into question simplistic understandings of the role of markets in labor valuation, and highlights the importance of other mechanisms for defining and assessing the value of labor, including scientific wage calculation. Lampland's book will therefore be of interest to a wide range of historians, sociologists, political scientists, and economists.

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Post-Communist Mafia State: The Case of Hungary. By Bálint Magyar. Budapest: CEU Press, 2016. xxiv, 311 pp. Appendix. Notes. Figures. Tables. €40.00, paper. doi: 10.1017/slr.2017.253

What is the nature of Hungary's authoritarian turn? Bálint Magyar argues that it is a post-communist mafia state, and details how Viktor Orbán and the ruling Fidesz party have transformed Hungarian society, economy, and polity since their return to power in 2010.

The state is *post-communist* for obvious reasons of chronology and history: it is post-communist because it is built on the institutional site of the communist regime. The elites are also recruited from the communist party and its broader networks. It is also built on the monopoly of state ownership, as opposed to building such a monopoly.

It is a *mafia* state by the nature of the its organization, built on the network of contacts grounded in family, or sealed by businesses in common (70). Specific aspects make the mafia state a subtype of the autocratic regime; its concentration of power, where decisions affect both power and wealth accumulation at once; the key players, which consist of a *poligarch* who gains illegitimate wealth through

legitimate political power, and a coterie of stooges, brokers, coopted bureaucrats, and above all oligarchs whose economic performance is dependent on political loyalty (74). Contrary to earlier accounts of postcommunist state capture, Magyar argues that the state itself creates the oligarchs—and they are utterly dependent on the leader (81).

Magyar systematically and rigorously analyzes the diverse aspects of the mafia state, offering a detailed critique both of the theory of the democratic implosion in Hungary—and its praxis. He details how the MSzP opposition was impotent to stop Fidesz, both by dint of its discourse, which focused on rational and institutional aspects of governance against Fidesz's emotive appeals, and its own discredited recent history in government. He then moves through institutional realms: the hostile takeover of public administration, the centralization of civil society funding and its subsequent quiescence, the elimination of local government autonomy, and above all, the cynical takeover of both the judiciary and the economy.

In the legal realm, the Supreme Court became a target of a politicized takeover designed to ensure the Court's loyalty to the government (and thus the elimination of a critical check and constraint on Fidesz designs.) The Constitution was rewritten to ensure that Fidesz would, even if it could lose the elections (the new electoral law made this far more unlikely), stay a critical player. Further, Fidesz rules by law, introducing laws that target specific high-profile individuals to both reward and punish. Here, Magyar gives us a catalog of laws designed to impoverish and make miserable the lives of those who would not fall in line. Equality before law is replaced by inequality after the law (117) with retroactive laws, legal targeting, and the liquidation of monitoring and oversight.

In the economic domain, Magyar shows how no party could rely on its membership alone, and instead funding was to be found in the porous state (7). Chapter 5 offers a detailed account of how the private and autonomous entrepreneurship of the 1990s and 2000s was systematically replaced through economic laws, procurement decisions, retroactive policies (including a retroactive 98% on severance packages for public servants), nationalization, and the monopolization of specific types of economic activity. Finally, and critically, Magyar shows the symbolic and discursive aspects of Fidesz's quest for legitimation. Here, the unholy trinity of God, homeland, and family function as critical concepts around which power is legitimated, partly through a new National Communication Office that serves both to centralize propaganda and eliminate potential side deals among elites.

The book is an excellent analysis of how Fidesz under Orbán transformed Hungary from a poster child of post-communist democratic consolidation to a regional template for increasingly authoritarian rule. It does leave some questions unanswered: for example, were the 2011 changes to the Constitution a symptom or a cause of the subsequent autocratic consolidation? More importantly, in the meticulous and brilliant analysis of *how* the transformation occurred, we learn less about *why* it unfolded as it did. That is, why, for example, did Fidesz behave so differently from the MSzP-SzDSz government of 1994–98, when it also had the two-thirds supermajority that allowed it to radically transform the legal, economic, and constitutional framework? Cartels and oligopolies tend to have difficulty sustaining themselves: why has this one been so successful (so far), and what are the conditions under which it might fail? Where does the vaunted party discipline of Fidesz come from? Is it from the ruling coterie's legal training?

This is an important book, a rigorous and compelling analysis of how the young democrats of 1989 became the middle-aged populist rulers of 2016. As countries from Poland to the Philippines to Great Britain to the United States fall under the sway of populists and demagogues, this analysis is more timely and urgent than ever. It

shows the frailty of democratic institutions, and the power of demagogues seeking, and increasingly backed by, wealth. We would do well to learn its lessons.

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Limits of a Post-Soviet State: How Informality Replaces, Renegotiates, and Reshapes Governance in Contemporary Ukraine. By Abel Polese. Stuttgart: ibidem-Verlag. 2016. 245 pp. Bibliography. Photographs. Figures. Tables. Maps. \$39.00, paper.

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Limits of a Post-Soviet State is a compilation of previously published studies that Abel Polese single- or co-authored between 2006 and 2015. The focus of this book is the manifold ways in which post-Soviet citizens attempt to earn a living and provide welfare for their families through informal ways. The introductory and concluding chapters are new, attempting to offer a conceptual framework and suggest venues for further research. The book provides rich insights, but is conceptually underdeveloped.

The studies are empirically rich and cross traditional disciplinary boundaries. The book is therefore recommended for anthropologists, geographers, sociologists, political scientists, and economists alike. Polese has spent years in Ukraine and other post-Soviet states and his in-depth knowledge of the region is impressive. The prose is accessible and the stories of individual citizens make for an enjoyable read. In particular, his account of Ukrainians living in the vicinity of Chernobyl is fascinating, teaching us why they have decided to stay in this contaminated region of the country; how they survive without the help of the Ukrainian state, which has largely abandoned them; and how they interact with the rest of the country.

Equally interesting are the studies of contraband trade between Poland and Ukraine, as well as between Ukraine and Moldova. Polese shows how traders have found informal (and often illegal) ways to negotiate state borders that are meant to constrain their economic activities. He thereby looks benignly at smuggling and paying bribes to border guards. In general, Polese is quite apologetic of corrupt activities. He considers these activities often necessary in the face of cumbersome state regulations and insufficient welfare systems. In fact, as he further explores in his chapter on “brifts” (bribes and gifts), there is a large grey area between legal and illegal, and between licit and illicit activities. Using the morally-charged concept of corruption is therefore inappropriate. As he says, sometimes the laws are wrong, not the behavior in violation of these laws (21).

Unfortunately, Polese’s treatment of his two central concepts, informality and corruption, fails to provide a coherent conceptual framework. It seems that he considers informality as comprising all those activities that take place in areas “that are not regulated by the state but are either socially acceptable or do not harm directly a fellow human being” (27). Yet other statements either contradict this conceptualization or are at best vague. For instance, Polese argues that informal rules might also challenge formal rules (29). Yet if the state does not regulate, where should these formal rules come from? In fact, in almost all cases presented in this book formal rules are present—for instance, when Ukraine’s government tries to impose Ukrainian as the official state language—and citizens try to circumvent these rules through various informal means.

Elsewhere, Polese cryptically describes informality as the “cartilage” between two formal rules (29 and 223), without further explaining what the metaphor might imply. I suggest that it would be more helpful to consider informality as those