

placed in a standardised context. The teacher is thus not the centre of the learning process but is someone who facilitates and helps the students evolve during a course as they study a subject by continually giving them feedback and asking the necessary questions.

The book guides its reader towards taking the steps necessary to change education to make it adopt a more learner-oriented paradigm. It continually asks questions to encourage our curiosity and ensure we understand why this is an important change and what can be done about it as a teacher. Likewise, it also shows that this process is not a linear road and changing the education system means focusing on more than one thing. Hence, it gives us the impression how much more we should consider inside the classroom than only the content of the subject. Moreover, the book also asks whether the way the education system is built today is perhaps not beneficial for students, as it may not be improving the skills and competences students are expected to have. The current system does not create an environment in which teachers look at each individual and how they learn in their own, meaningful way. Admittedly, changing mindsets and how educators approach this may be difficult, as it also requires a change of behaviour and beliefs on the part of teachers. However, the book raises several questions that are presented in a respectful, honest, and direct manner, while emphasising how changing one's own perception will help the students teachers teach. Each chapter ends with questions that readers can answer and little boxes in which to write in the answers. This small but very efficient tool helps readers to reflect on a higher level about how to change their mindset to become more learner-oriented and thereby also put this into practice themselves. If readers of this book start to change their mindset, their behaviour may change, too, and thereby also their teaching. This is

done in a simple way, where the three parts are arranged to make readers more curious about the what, how, and why. The book also contains several real-life examples of the responses that may occur during the changes and how changing will benefit students and ultimately also the education system. Thus, it is not only a theoretical book but also a practical book to which everyone who works in teaching should turn. The book is not a finish line, nor does it offer just one solution; however, it provides deep insight into what a learner-oriented education system is, why it is essential, and how it can be applied in practice. Readers are encouraged to start with themselves and then expand into the classroom in order to make the changes in the system. It encourages readers to centre learning around the students rather than around the teachers' rules, and thereby expand the students' learning outcome. The book provides several arguments as to why the education system should be made more learner-oriented and encourage teachers and other educators to apply the learner-oriented practices inside the classroom. It also encourages readers, if they are teachers, to reflect on the questions they ask themselves before they start teaching, as this will change the way teachers teach. In this way the education system will be changed one step at a time.

*Nanna Rahbek Jørgensen  
Kontoret for Frie Skoler, Denmark  
nannarahbek@live.dk*

**Bryn Rosenfeld: *The Autocratic Middle Class. How State Dependency Reduces the Demand for Democracy***

Princeton, NJ, 2021: Princeton University Press, 296 pp.

Broadly speaking, assessments of post-communist transitions have ranged between pessimism [Offe 2004], cautious realism

[Vanhuyse 2006], Euro-optimism [Vachudova 2005], bad longer-term governance [Vanhuyse and Perek-Bialas 2021], and shocking post-2008 'backsliding' [Makarychev 2021]. A common theme in this sinuous debate has been the lack of a specific social structure that could buttress a putative virtuous political and economic teleology. Yet, while scholars seemingly agree that 'enlarging the middle class' is needed to reconcile the tensions between democratisation and market transition, comparatively little has been said about scope conditions and concrete causal mechanisms. Picking up the gauntlet, Bryn Rosenfeld argues that the 'middle class' is neither as homogenous as previously thought, nor as unequivocally democratising as predicted (pp. 3–4). Drawing on both quantitative and qualitative data, Rosenfeld dissects how various strategies for expanding the middle class result in socio-economic groups with vastly different preferences for democratisation (pp. 3–6). Essentially, the author argues that dependency on public employment is the key driver of the middle class's preference for or against democracy. In an interdisciplinary fashion that brings together sociology, anthropology, and political science, Rosenfeld's book challenges many of the 'canonical approaches to democratization' (pp. 5–8) across the post-communist world.

To begin with, in order to bypass conventional normative views on 'the middle class as a carrier of democracy', the author adopts a sociological definition wherein 'human and social capital' delineate between an educated and professionalised social stratum and manual laborers (p. 7). On a basic level, this allows a more finely tuned analysis that distinguishes between 'the middle classes of the state', a typical modernisation vector adopted by autocratic regimes, and 'the entrepreneurial middle class', the existence of which is seen as the hallmark of democratisation in Western-centric studies (p. 6). This opens up space

to argue that understanding the means for attaining and maintaining 'middle class' social status is crucial to understanding support for democracy. The crux of the issue is that while buying off low-skilled labour might be cheaper for winning an election, fostering a dependent middle class, while more costly, greatly enhances regime stability (pp. 44–47). As such, because authoritarian regimes often resort to the targeted allocation of resources (jobs, salaries, benefits, etc.), people with high educational qualifications may support the regime as a means for upward mobility and/or status maintenance (pp. 37–38). The latter is particularly relevant when we consider that democratisation and market-regime transition typically entail retrenchment and job insecurity (pp. 48–50) [see also Appel and Orenstein 2018].

While higher levels of education might provide a cushion in the form of options for exiting into the private sector, the author shows that authoritarian regimes can provide middle-class constituencies not just with better material incentives but also with prestige and social mobility ladders (pp. 49–51). Because the latter are especially important for regime stability as well as securing elections, Rosenfeld mobilises a diverse range of data: survey data on public opinion (most notably the Life in Transition Survey conducted by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development), post-election protest data, in-depth surveys on career trajectories, and in-depth field research (pp. 29–32). The geographical scope is equally impressive, as the author seeks to understand developments in both the well-known CEE transitions (including former Yugoslavia), the somewhat less explored Central-Asian cases, and also the dissolution of the USSR. The wide comparison and the varied types of data allow the author not just to better test the causal strength of the argument outside the North-Western 'core', but also to dialogue with a wide range of literatures per-

taining to modernisation, democratisation, and catch-up development.

As mentioned above, the book's first key contribution is that it shows how disaggregating the umbrella term 'middle class' yields vastly different results. Similarly, since democracy requires both clear support for democratic institutions and an entrenched belief that the type of regime matters (p. 72), Rosenfeld argues that regime preference, support for the status quo, and support for a particular incumbent all need to be analysed contingently, and not as inherently overlapping, which is what most studies do (p. 67). In this line of thought, in post-communist authoritarian regimes the 'state middle class' is less democratic than the private-sector middle class' (p. 67). While the 'middle class' may in general be more supportive of democracy than the working class is (p. 78), a key qualification to this in post-communist countries is a person's type of employment. In fact, public sector employees appear to be 25% more likely to support authoritarianism than the private-sector middle class (p. 83). This becomes clearer still when we control for even stricter definitions of democracy (p. 83), but this higher support cannot be completely explained by the private-sector middle class's negative economic experience during the transition (p. 94). By gradually comparing explanations such as communist socialisation or differences between discrete state jobs, the author carefully shows that the autocrats possess enough discretionary incentives from their control of public employment to discourage the state middle class from supporting democratisation (p. 97). The author provides further indirect support for this argument by showing that in democratic transitions there is no correlation between state employment and support for democracy, despite the fact that the legacies of socialisation and educational attainment are similar (pp. 67, 98–110).

A second key contribution of the book

is that it dilutes the entrenched consensus in the literature regarding the middle class's participation in protests (p. 103). Although Rosenfeld does not directly dialogue with the established literature on pacification [Vanhuyse 2004, 2006], he uncovers how, much in the way CEE democracies in the 1990s diluted the working class's disruptive potential, there is a direct correlation between how dependent the middle class is on the state and its likelihood of participating in mass protests (p. 103). To the well-known factors of the positive and negative inducements for the middle class to support the status quo, the author adds that differences in social capital are also key for explaining middle-class patterns of protest (p. 106). In order to cement such a nuanced argument, to which end survey data are perhaps least effective (p. 111), Rosenfeld temporarily abandons the comparative angle and analyses Russian protest data between 2011 and 2013. On one level, the argument is clearly substantiated by the obvious gap regarding participation – private-sector employment increased the likelihood of people participating in protest twice as much as state employment (pp. 114, 119). This in turn suggests that if the overall growth of the middle class that is captured by macro-level economic data is the result of autocrats' opening up state employment, the likelihood of protests is much lower, given that the expanded part of the middle class emerged out of these jobs (p. 120). In the Russian case this seems backed up by the reality that 'had the middle class participated in protest at the same rate as the private sector middle class', the overall scale of the protests would have been much larger (pp. 120–121). On a more advanced level, above and beyond incentives and coercion, the highly specified nature of social capital also dampens the disruptive potential of the state-employed middle class. Particularly among the higher echelons of the bureaucracy and/or among people

who have been employed by the state for a longer period of time, the exit options for public-sector employees seem to have declined, which in turn reduced the likelihood of protest (p. 125). This explains why 'cognitive mobilization is not uniformly the consequence of rising affluence, education and specialization', leading in turn to the conclusion that the growth of the middle class does not ipso facto lead to democratic protest (pp. 130–132).

Broadly speaking, Bryn Rosenfeld's book impresses through analytical clarity and a finely tuned analysis that sheds new light on a seemingly entrenched scholarly consensus regarding the middle class and democratisation. By carefully disentangling overlapping factors that usually influence political preferences and electoral behaviour, the author manages to highlight clear causal channels between state employment and authoritarian support or the lack thereof. While at times part of the argument is indirect, by drawing particularly from sociology, the author manages to add new layers to the political science literature on democratisation. In breaking down the umbrella concept of the 'middle class', the book sends out the strong message that, particularly in the tricky area of electoral behaviour, state dependency has different effects on discrete socio-economic groups.

Sergiu Delcea  
New Europe College, Bucharest  
Sergiu.delcea@gmail.com

#### References

Appel, H. and M. Orenstein. 2018. *From Triumph to Crisis: Neoliberal Economic Reform in Post-communist Countries*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Makarychev, A. (ed.) 2021. *Multifaceted Nationalism and Illiberal Momentum at Europe's Eastern Margins*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Offe, C. 2004. 'Capitalism by Democratic Design? Democratic Theory Facing the Triple Transition of East Central Europe.' *Social Research* 71 (3): 865–892.

Vachudova, M. A. 2005. *Europe Undivided: Democracy, Leverage, and Integration after Communism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Vanhuyse, P. 2004. 'East European Protest Politics in the Early 1990s: Comparative Trends and Preliminary Theories.' *Europe-Asia Studies* 56 (3): 421–438.

Vanhuyse, P. 2006. *Divide and Pacify: Strategic Social Policies and Political Protests in Post-Communist Democracies*. Budapest and New York: Central European University Press.

Vanhuyse, P. and J. Perek-Bialas. 2021. 'The Political Demography of Missed Opportunity: Populations and Policies in a Younger but Faster-Ageing East Central Europe, 1990–2040.' Pp. 373–399 in *Global Political Demography: The Politics of Population Change*, edited by A. Goerres and P. Vanhuyse. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

**Lýdia Grešáková, Zuzana Tabačková, Spolka (eds): *Mapping the In-Between. Interdisciplinary Methods for Envisioning Other Futures***

Košice 2020: Spolka, 144 pp.

Cities around the world are facing a problem regarding the question of how to revitalise previously developed land that is no longer being utilised. Places like brownfields and vast post-industrial factories seem to have no particular purpose, but what if they have a character of their own? With the problem of the revitalisation of previously developed lands comes the question of what revitalisation plan would best benefit the city's citizens and the landscape? Traditionally, a revitalisation plan is conducted by investors, property developers, and policymakers in the field of urban planning. Recently, however, the idea of involving citizens in participative planning has become popular.

This bilingual publication *Mapping the In-Between*, by a Slovak group of women architects, sociologists, and urbanists called Spolka, is a collective work by participants in the Never-Never summer school. All the