

volume include the gender dimension (e.g. Marin and Zolyomi [2010]), the political sociology approach (e.g. Vanhuysse [2004]) and the comparative-institutional approach (e.g. Vanhuysse and Goerres [2012]).

In the concluding chapter, Wacker and Roberto briefly look at the politics of ageing in the US, identifying important shifts in social policy focus along with the changing public perception of older people since the 1980s. The authors certainly refrain from stoking the fire of current debates on the population ageing crisis. The reader will find no provocative statements here, which can even be considered as one of the book's strengths. Yet I would have liked the authors to expand a bit more on the overarching policy issues and to include some reference to the recent literature on inter-generational justice (e.g. Smeeding and Sullivan [1998] and Sabbagh and Vanhuysse [2010]).

All in all, the book delivers what it promises, but readers should not expect a deep analysis in specialised areas of research; rather it will serve to assist students of social and public policy who will find the book helpful as an introduction to social policy issues associated with an ageing population.

Eszter Zolyomi

*European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and
Research, Vienna
zolyomi@euro.centre.org*

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Guglielmo Meardi: *Social Failures of EU Enlargement: A Case of Workers Voting with Their Feet*

New York 2011: Routledge, 230 pp.

Over the 1990s, Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries underwent painful reforms with wide-ranging consequences for their economies and societies. These changes following the fall of state socialism fuelled various debates and research ideas on viable transition paths and development trajectories for these countries. Although particular national trajectories differed from each other, in general all CEE countries strived for foreign direct investment and integration into European and world networks of advanced capitalist societies. Joining the European Union (EU) represented the tip of the iceberg in such efforts. Great economic performance, quality of life and high social and labour standards in Western EU member states, combined with the EU's claimed effort to diffuse the European social model and foster convergence towards high-quality social standards across its member states, served as a driving force of CEE countries' integration efforts. Social progress through enlargement, promoted by European institutions, national governments and the media, represented

an appealing goal to frustrated citizens of CEE countries undergoing the far-reaching labour market transition and experiencing unemployment and a deterioration in working conditions.

To what extent have these claimed positive effects of EU enlargement on CEE countries and the convergence efforts to harmonise social and labour conditions across the EU materialised? What have we learnt from the two eastward EU enlargements in 2004 and 2007? Policymakers and economists highlight the economic gains in terms of free markets, the movement of goods and services, which accelerated the high productivity of CEE economies and their sustainable role within the EU and global markets. However, we still know little about the consequences of enlargement that reach beyond GDP trade volumes and numerical employment indicators. Especially the political and social consequences of enlargement on labour relations as a citizenship issue remained unexplored. Guglielmo Meardi's book is a timely and highly appreciated contribution to fill this gap in the literature.

The book offers a wider assessment of the consequences of EU enlargement on CEE countries and argues that 'if [considering] social welfare, social order and employee voice, the much proclaimed success of the enlargement looks very fragile and hardly sustainable' (p. 1). In particular, the book critically addresses the issue of social standards across the new EU member states in CEE and scrutinises the extent to which these standards changed upon EU accession, especially with respect to the myth of a socially cohesive Europe included in EU's Lisbon Strategy. The question of the quality of social standards closely relates to the much-discussed issue of convergence between stylised differences across Western and CEE EU member states in order to strengthen social cohesion within the EU. Earlier research has addressed the question of convergence in social standards

through European integration (e.g. Bluhm [2007], Visser [2006, 2008]), but only the current book approaches this question through a careful multi-dimensional analysis of several channels through which Western European social standards were, or could have been, transferred to the new member states in CEE upon their EU accession. Drawing on impressive empirical research on various aspects of labour standards, working conditions and employee interest representation in CEE countries over the past decade, Meardi argues that the 'EU accession has failed in its implicit promise to upgrade those social standards in order to fulfil expectations in the East and not to disrupt the status quo in the West: it has not promoted social arrangements but rather disrupted the existing ones' (p. 6). This argument builds on detecting 'social failures behind economic successes' (p. 184) in a carefully constructed and empirically informed analysis, acknowledging the active role of social forces in shaping the economy and society.

The author arrives at this argument after scrutinising the formal transposition of 'hard' EU regulation onto the new member states, but also transposition through 'soft' regulation, cross-border interaction of various actors, and a transfer of practices within multinational companies with subsidiaries in CEE countries. In contrast to expectations regarding the ability of binding European regulations to foster an improvement in labour and social standards through national legislation, the author finds that 'the EU law has not had visible effects on the new member states with regard to employment conditions' (p. 37) and the 'disappointing effects of the "hard" social *acquis* reveal that the problem is not simply one of 'compliance' by the new member states ...' (p. 38), but the inherently soft nature of these regulations which can easily be bent into the opposite direction. Then, '[t]he resulting situation in the new member states is a combination of

path-dependent poor nature of work and new, imported, insecurity' (ibid.). Moreover, the author finds that enlargement not only failed to increase social and labour standards in CEE member states, but in fact stopped social initiatives at community levels in CEE and slowed down the production of EU-level social directives after the first wave of EU's eastward enlargement in 2004. The EU's promotion of social dialogue in the new member states through fostering national institutions of social dialogue and collective bargaining, sectoral and inter-sector European social dialogue and the promotion of national-level social pacts also failed to improve the social and labour standards in the CEE member states. Meardi argues that the state of social dialogue in CEE countries cannot be blamed on the EU, but the paradox of these 'soft' EU policies is that 'they have accompanied very "hard" decisions: the single market and liberalization, the road to the EMU and the Maastricht criteria, and the competition for Foreign Direct Investment' (p. 61).

Since EU's 'hard' and 'soft' policies failed to produce convergence in labour relations and social standards between Western and CEE member states, the author explores possible other, more bottom-up, channels of transferring Western European standards in social dialogue and employee participation to CEE countries. The obvious focus is on multinational companies (MNCs), which have been perceived as a driving force of transferring home-country social practices to foreign subsidiaries and thereby shaping convergence efforts [e.g. Berger and Dore 1996; Ferner et al. 2006]. Drawing on years of fieldwork in several MNCs and their subsidiaries in CEE countries, Meardi argues that 'MNCs, rather than offer[ing] opportunities for organizing industrial relations, have been a centrifugal force for further disorganized decentralization' (p. 84). The transfer of social practices through MNCs has been selective and opportunistic, rather than systematic

in an attempt to raise social standards in the new member states.

The book could well have concluded with the above empirically informed argument. However, the author went even further in studying the particular responses of CEE countries and their actors to these failed hopes of improving their social and labour standards in a top-down perspective through EU enlargement and a bottom-up perspective through MNCs. The author not only provides rich evidence of such responses, but places them in the carefully applied analytical framework of 'exit' and 'voice' [Hirschman 1970], before elevating the book's conclusion to a theoretically grounded discussion of the link between the two concepts and their interaction with the Polanyian concept of 'countermovement'. While the European social model obviously aimed at raising the 'voice' of concerned actors, e.g., the voice of the electorate in new member states through their political participation, and the voice of trade unions and their active role in social dialogue and collective bargaining on labour standards, the evidence shows that strategies adopted by individuals in CEE countries after enlargement resemble individualised resistance in the form of an 'exit' from the current situation. In other words, rather than actively constructing an institutionalised voice by acknowledging citizenship rights, engaging in political participation and through interest representation, CEE citizens responded to their uneasy employment conditions, high insecurity and low social standards through individual solutions, such as exiting the labour market, migrating for work purposes to Western EU member states, engaging in individualised resistance through a lack of organisational commitment and high workplace turnover, electoral absenteeism, and support for populist domestic politics.

So as not to leave the reader with such pessimistic conclusions on the fate of CEE countries' labour standards, the book's fi-

nal part explores whether there are possibilities for developing a 'voice' from within the new member states in order to overcome the current situation and substitute the failed transfer of standards through EU channels. Exposing the labour quiescence thesis in CEE countries to strong criticism, Meardi looks at available evidence suggesting a possible revitalisation of trade unions in the CEE region. He does find some positive anecdotal evidence for revitalisation, but argues that such efforts need to be stronger and broader in order to reverse the overall trend in declining union membership and legitimacy in CEE countries. The same argument applies to other possible sources of 'voice': cross-border trade union activities and responses to the migration and mobility of capital and services, as well as the chances of an increased 'voice' through new actors at the community and national levels in the new member states. Evidence on such activities is thin and scattered and represents a new research agenda for the future rather than a completed analysis of possible sources of voice in the region. Despite this weakness, the author argues that institutional factors alone are insufficient for the emergence of voice, which needs to be strongly supported by the socialisation experience of actors in order to foster (transnational) labour solidarity and community values.

This argument directly leads to the book's concluding discussion on the concept of the 'embeddedness' of economic processes in society and the emergence of a 'countermovement' in response to particular 'movements' in society [Polanyi 1944]. In fact, the book's major conceptual contribution 'lies in the connection between "exit" and "voice", and between them and Polanyi's pendulum [of movement and countermovement]' (p. 186). The 'movement' here refers to increased labour market flexibility, unemployment, job insecurity and lower pay than in Western countries as an effect of globalisation, the free move-

ment of capital and goods within the EU, and failed efforts of the EU to improve social and labour standards in CEE member states. If CEE societies responded to the effects of EU enlargement by reinforcing their unstable systems of employment contracts and the opportunistic behaviour of firms (and MNCs in particular), Meardi argues that a 'countermovement' to this trend would likely emerge. However, this countermovement does not necessarily have to come through 'voice' as a democratic form of interest representation, as the author acknowledges with reference to Polanyi [1944]. Particular forms of voice need time to emerge, just as we need more time to engage in further micro-level studies in a constructivist approach to provide more evidence to support the arguments of this book.

Although empirically rich and conceptually coherent, in some places the generalisations are too quickly applied to the whole CEE region despite being heavily based on empirical evidence from a single country (e.g. the example that details about each other's wages are a common talking point in CEE countries, p. 123). Such generalisations may be misleading for readers not familiar with the variation in social norms and moral values in the region, or with particular 'varieties of capitalism' in the CEE region, a recently growing field of research [e.g. Bohle and Greskovits 2012]. More research is needed to overcome generalisations on the CEE as a region, just like it is not common to generalise particular behavioural patterns, values and social norms for Western Europe as a whole. A further point of criticism is that occasionally the causality between EU enlargement and broader social and economic processes in CEE countries is blurred, and the reader wonders whether the EU can be blamed for everything that went wrong in the new member states. Also, the strong argument of the failed transfer of a social Europe to CEE member states leads to the

question whether such a transfer is indeed what should have been expected. What has been the effect of earlier enlargements on social and labour standards in earlier new member states? Have high social standards been easily exported to Spain, Portugal or Italy? Are the recent eastward EU enlargements and the huge stylised differences between 'Western' and 'Eastern' Europe the only ones to be blamed for a failed harmonisation of social standards in the long-term perspective of the EU's development? The aim of such questions is not to undermine the argument in Meardi's book, but to stimulate further thoughts and motivate a broader empirical research agenda to uncover the complex mechanism of EU processes to *accommodate variety* across North and South, East and West, rather than being perceived as a supranational institution aiming at an unrealistic harmonisation of social and labour standards. Guglielmo Meardi's book is a highly relevant, rich and interesting starting point in this endeavour.

Marta Kahancová
Central European Labour Studies Institute,
Bratislava
marta.kahancova@celsi.sk

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Roman David: *Lustration and Transitional Justice: Personnel Systems in the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland*

Philadelphia, PA, 2011: University of Pennsylvania Press, 328 pp.

Despite increased attention to lustration practices in the transitional justice literature, considerable debate remains about how and why transitional societies deal with officials who have been tainted by complicity with prior regimes. 'Personnel systems'—a term Roman David ingeniously coins to designate specific lustration policies—have so far received limited scholarly attention despite their symbolic, social and political relevance. Attempting to fill this gap, David's informative book undertakes a formidable task to examine the 'operation, origin, context, and effects' (p. 226) of the post-communist personnel systems.

A short review does not do justice to this nuanced book. Among others, the book makes two major contributions. The first is a novel classification of lustration models as personnel systems. The other is a new theory about how perceptions of the tainted personnel affect both the origin and the effects of lustration systems. Nevertheless, while this 'ambitious project', as David calls it, offers admirably rich historical, social and political background to the question of lustration, the book's theoretical