

Guerra, Simona:

**CENTRAL AND EASTERN
EUROPEAN ATTITUDES
IN THE FACE OF UNION.**

Basingstoke – New York: Palgrave
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Simona Guerra has devoted her book to the issue of how citizens and politicians in Central Eastern Europe see and evaluate the European Union, their membership in the EU, and in particular, which factors influence popular attitudes towards European integration. Guerra's focus is not purely on recent events. She tries to develop a model to explain the process of change in mass attitudes before and after the accession of the Central Eastern European countries to the EU.

Guerra's study is based upon a profound knowledge of the existing literature in the area. She examines most closely the utilitarian and affective dimensions associated with the various sets of reasons for adopting particular positions towards the European Union. Following Matthew Gabel, Christopher Anderson (with the domestic proxy concept), Sylvia Kritzinger, and others, Guerra focuses on domestic/national features and the political environment as the chief explanatory variables for mass positions on the EU, attempting to refine these variables to explain what sort of domestic 'proxies' or 'shortcuts' matter the most. It is perhaps regretful that a 'Rissean' analysis of identities and feelings of collective belonging is not brought into the discussion of conceptual development. But perhaps inclusion of this debate would complicate creation of the models tested in the subsequent research-oriented sections of the book. Something praiseworthy in Guerra's approach is that she carefully consid-

ers the specific context of the Central and Eastern European countries that acceded as part of the 2004/2007/2013 enlargement and adapts approaches developed for the Western European context accordingly. Specifically, Guerra points out the comparably higher level of distrust of political elites in general and political parties in particular by the citizenry, a factor that complicates the role played by parties as agents of Europeanization.

Guerra poses two main research questions (p. 15): '*What drives public support for EU integration before and after accession?*', and '*How do citizens perceive the EU after accession, and what are the sources of information they use.*' Although trying to place the research in the broader context of the so-called Eastern Enlargement, Guerra's main source of information and data is Poland. In a way, she offers a single case study of the biggest Central Eastern European Member State and uses evidence from other countries only to a limited extent. On the one hand, such an approach helps her to develop sounder hypotheses, to work with different models that take various variables into account and to combine work with secondary data analysis and her own field research (in the form of focus groups). On the other hand, it places considerable limits on the study's comparative focus and the reader sometimes wishes for comparable data (mainly but not exclusively collected by CBOS, the Polish National Electoral Study, and the European Election Survey) for other countries, so that a broader picture of the central Eastern European area may be developed. This is particularly true of the second chapter, which develops and explains the pre-accession shift from 'unconditional support to the European choice', although the lack is felt elsewhere, as well (p. 31). But Guerra is fully aware of the case study's limits, and her generalized conclusions are sober, emphasizing some specific features of the Polish case. For those interested in Polish politics or who prefer to

develop concepts, hypotheses, or theories based upon sound empirical knowledge, Guerra's work forms an excellent starting point. It is apparent that Guerra knows the Polish context and Polish political and societal reality exceedingly well.

The book's structure is clear. The author combines a chronological approach (with chapters on the periods before and after accession) with a division on the basis of the research questions and issues related to them. After presenting her research framework in the first chapter, Guerra shows in Chapters 2 and 3 how attitudes once driven almost purely by positive affect began to transform for utilitarian reasons, taking into account ever greater economic concerns, particularly the changes in the domestic economic situation, as the main variable to explain the shift in mass attitudes towards the EU in Poland. Guerra also demonstrates another important factor that has motivated the path from 'Euroenthusiasm' to 'Euroneutrality' (p. 54). This is the continuous, even rising mistrust of domestic political institutions and the strong perception that the country and its political elite are corrupt.

Chapter 4 is a fairly conventional analysis of the EP elections in Central Eastern Europe in 2004 and 2009. The chapter completes the picture drawn in the previous sections but adds little to the ongoing debate over applying the second-order-elections concept within Central Eastern Europe. A similar feeling arises upon reading Chapter 6 on Euro-scepticism. Far more interesting was Chapter 5, which deals with the scope and sources of information citizens have available to learn about EU affairs. Especially valuable is the focus group research and the output from it, with commentary.

All in all, Simona Guerra has produced an interesting, valuable book based on sound original research, deep knowledge of relevant concepts and impressive knowledge of the specific features of the Central

Eastern European EU Member States. The book is a valuable source of information and interpretation for any scholar attempting to understand how citizens have reacted to European integration, why they have reacted in this way, and how the relationship between European and domestic politics functions as a source of mass political attitudes.

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Laclau, Ernesto:

EMANCIPACE A RADIKÁLNÍ DEMOKRACIE.

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The Emancipatory Vocabulary, with the Benefit of Two and Half Centuries' Hindsight**

The idea of emancipation, which has been developing since the late eighteenth century, has undoubtedly become an important part of the semantics of modern society, it means, an ideational tool that helps to structure modern

* From the English originals *Emancipation(s)* (London: Verso, 1996), 'Democracy and the Question of Power' (*Constellations* 8, no. 1, 2001, 3–14) and 'Populism: What's in a Name' (*Populism and the Mirror of Democracy*. Ed. F. Panizza. London: Verso, 2005, 32–49) translated by Jan Biba and Josef Fulka. Supplemented with Jan Biba's introduction 'Ernesto Laclau: Postmarxismus, diskurs a radikální demokracie'. In the text the book is referred to as 'Laclau 2013'.

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