

# International Sociology

<http://iss.sagepub.com/>

---

**Book review: Nikolai Genov, *Global Trends in Eastern Europe***

Sven Eliaeson

*International Sociology* 2013 28: 197

DOI: 10.1177/0268580913477964a

The online version of this article can be found at:

<http://iss.sagepub.com/content/28/2/197>

---

Published by:



<http://www.sagepublications.com>

On behalf of:



International Sociological Association

**Additional services and information for *International Sociology* can be found at:**

**Email Alerts:** <http://iss.sagepub.com/cgi/alerts>

**Subscriptions:** <http://iss.sagepub.com/subscriptions>

**Reprints:** <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsReprints.nav>

**Permissions:** <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav>

>> [Version of Record](#) - Mar 1, 2013

[What is This?](#)

would be much better off if people everywhere shifted from the consumption of things to the consumption of services.

To call hair styling 'palliative' and steel production 'transformative' is to implicitly demean the former and elevate the latter. Cohn clearly means no disrespect to hair styling. Quite the contrary: his work is pathbreaking in highlighting (and quantifying) the importance of small-scale, low-skill industry and the ease with which states can expand employment by supporting it. The problem is that he has not gone far enough. He has not pushed his perspective to the logical conclusion that what he calls palliative development is in fact every bit as transformative in the lives of ordinary people as any other form of development, and perhaps more so. After all, very few Europeans work in high-technology manufacturing. Europe is, nonetheless, for most people a very pleasant place to live.

For such a short, expensive book, *Employment and Development under Globalization* is poorly copy-edited. While the ideas expressed in the book are well-developed, there are many indications that the manuscript was not professionally proofread. Considering the high profit margin implicit in a book priced as aggressively as this is, Palgrave should have done a better job in bringing a fully-polished product to market.

That said, the ideas expressed and the analyses presented in the book are sufficiently novel to warrant careful study. Cohn is an important development sociologist who has distilled over a decade of fieldwork and statistical analyses into a single programmatic statement. His 10 concluding lessons are a practical, easily applied recipe for sound government policy. If the book doesn't go far enough in articulating a better way to think about development, it at least goes so far that the broader implications are clear. A major theoretical contribution backed up by a dozen or so empirical case studies, *Employment and Development under Globalization* will certainly be required reading for all future students of development in Brazil. It will also pose provocative challenges to scholars working on problems of development in other middle-income countries around the world.

Salvatore Babones is Senior Lecturer in Sociology and Social Policy at the University of Sydney. He is the editor of *Applied Statistical Modeling* (4 vols, Sage) and the co-editor (with Christopher Chase-Dunn) of the *Handbook of World-Systems Analysis* (Routledge). His research is focused on quantitative analyses of inequality and development. Address: School of Social and Political Sciences, RC Mills Building A-26, University of Sydney, NSW 2006, Australia. Email: sbabones@sydney.edu.au.

Nikolai Genov,

*Global Trends in Eastern Europe*, Ashgate: Farnham, 2010; 230 pp.: ISBN 9781409409656, US\$86.85

**Reviewed by** Sven Eliaeson, *Uppsala University, Sweden*

### **Keywords**

Eastern Europe, instrumental activism, modernization, rationalization, value-normative systems

The book's main purpose is to contribute to the study of upgrading organizational rationality in Eastern Europe. It also tries to operationalize post-Communist transformation processes in the region.

Interpreting post-1989 transformations is an important challenge. Sociologists have a bad record, failing to anticipate the implosion of the Soviet Empire. Moreover, the tools for analysing the ensuing processes are in need of realignment and renewal. Genov has made this his task. He shows that even if the implosion of the Soviet (Russian) Empire came as a surprise even to the best informed observers, it could be characterized as a crisis foretold, deeply embedded in *longue durées*.

In this light, there is hardly any doubt that Weberian ideas about rationalization processes could be helpful in attempts to diagnose trends in contemporary societies, Genov writes (p. 43). Weber's focus obviously is on the particular traits of Occidental rationalization, which might be claimed to be universal and irreversible. However, this is contested by the multiple modernity paradigm, and indeed already Europe itself manifests several path-dependent roads to Modernity. The Soviet experiment in modernization from above is also a manifestation of European Enlightenment rationalism, and many communist leaders were in fact engineers; still the USSR was embedded in Russian historical traditions as well, with an attitude of ambiguity towards foreign impulses, be it Peter the Great's modernization, Marxian doctrines or liberal economics. All full scale experiments in modernization from above met with only limited success: 'The neo-liberal strategy ... underestimated the capacity of the old *nomenklatura* and of organized criminals to act efficiently in taking over privatization processes in the Russian Federation or in the Ukraine' (p. 72). They usurped state property and took advantage of weak institutions in monitoring of rule of law. *Die Wende* entailed a return to history, meaning that several 'late children of 1848' could now cultivate a 'frozen' form of nationalism, the nation being seen as a natural stage for post-Enlightenment modernization processes and mass democracies, even if both Weber and Parsons overestimated the relevance of the nation-state as the natural unity for analyses. As Ulrich Beck has argued, we have today transcended the nation as a natural entity for analysis and a 'cosmopolitan' dimension has become indispensable.

However, post-Soviet transformations entailed that conceptualization of modern nation-building become more urgent, and Genov's work is dedicated to this task. That is because modernization is taken to be path-dependent although it is also impacted by globalization, which has now reached a level unforeseen by Parsons, Stein Rokkan and others. The communist states had not fully adopted some technical globalizing achievements, a failure that makes their path a little more rocky: 'The economic and social organization of Eastern European societies used to neglect and even suppress the motivational power of commercial mechanisms', Genov emphasizes (p. 126). This is one explanation for why Eastern Europe remained at best a technological semi-periphery, despite some military and aerospace breakthroughs. The Soviet ambitions to become the leading world site for the scientific revolution simply failed, largely due to value-normative factors.

One of my few critical remarks on Genov's book is that Rokkan is neglected, perhaps the most relevant and influential stage theorist, and a natural point of reference to any discussion of modernization. However, since Rokkan's concepts were developed on the basis of northwestern European experiences, their relevance for the study of kleptocratic clan systems without modern institutions and low literacy remains limited. As Genov points out, everyday life in the region is beset with cases of illegal enrichment, political

clientelism, ethnic discrimination and so on (p. 173). Yet, there is no mention of religion. Estonia stands out as a case here, but so does Poland: one Evangelical-Lutheran and one a Catholic country. This is food for thought concerning the relevance of the famous 1054-divide, as a fault line also for political culture and civil society. Other factors seem to play more of a role. For example, in exploring mass migration, Genov notes that in the case of Poland (p. 87), there is a brain drain and a net loss for the country. On the other hand, there is a strong transformative capacity in returning young Poles, e.g. from the UK, who are no longer likely to accept arbitrary bureaucratic rules. He also sees a large role for trust in society and its institutions in a path of development characterized by prosperity and democracy.

Genov's overall ambition is to operationalize and systematize various dimensions of transformation processes, overcoming the limitations of 'methodological nationalism'. He summarizes his structural principles in a chart comparing long-term rationality vs short-term rationality, and collective rationality vs individual rationality. This in itself may not appear as a great new revelation, but is most useful for grasping actual developments in various areas, based on empirical findings. To accommodate individualism with common good (individual vs collective rationality) is an old theme in western welfare societies, theoretically elaborated by Mancur Olson Jr (in several works), and in a way still relevant in new democracies with little consensus in their political culture regarding the rules of political life and negotiation.

Genov offers a comprehensive mapping of empirical realities, including surveys of expectations about the future, in addition to key empirical data. What he writes about the Eastern European value-normative puzzle and ethnic divides in Chapter 5 is intriguing: Ponzi-scheme scandals alter expectations and provide fertile soil for populism when the population is facing an uncertain future, and when the move from egalitarian values to liberal meritocracy generates frustration and value-normative disorientation. The new non-egalitarian social order has a fragile legitimacy, since it challenges established value patterns in what was sometimes called 'real existing socialism'.

The alternative is unclear. The late Daniel Bell is mentioned (p. 179) as an example of a scholar profoundly aware of the tensions within a capitalist system which were to serve as a prototype for new large-scale experiments East of the Elbe. But as yet there are no obvious new alternatives: they have to be invented. There is, however, an active normative creed in Genov's policy-oriented work, which offers no surprise, other than the advice that sociological conceptualization has to be adjusted to new realities. The book provides an account for the main literature on problems of transformation processes in post-Soviet space. Genov most ambitiously contributes to developing our tools for the investigation of a crucial research area. The book could therefore be considered one step in a multi-step rocket launch.

## References

- Olson M Jr (1982) *The Rise and Decline of Nations: Economic Growth, Stagflation and Social Rigidities*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Parsons T (1971) *The System of Modern Societies*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Sven Eliaeson is researcher at Uppsala Centre for Russian and Eurasian Studies at Uppsala University and recurrent visiting professor at CSS/GSSR in Warsaw. His works include *Max Weber's Methodologies: Interpretation and Critique* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002), and several edited volumes on East of the Elbe. He is currently working on a monograph on Gunnar Myrdal and an edited volume on the implosion of the Soviet Empire. *Address:* Uppsala University, Uppsala Centre for Russian and Eurasian Studies, Box 514, SE-751 20 Uppsala, Sweden. Email: Sven.Eliaeson@ucrs.uu.se.

Ishwar Modi (ed.),

*Modernization, Globalization and Social Transformation: Essays in Honour of Professor Yogendra Singh*, Rawat Publications: Jaipur, 2012; 368 pp.: ISBN 8131605078, US\$60.00

**Reviewed by** Fazlur Rahman Siddiqui, *Indian Council of World Affairs, New Delhi*

There could have been no better way to honour someone of Yogendra Singh's stature than to present this seminal collection of articles, highlighting and exploring every aspect of globalization and its multidimensional impact on the global social, political and economic milieu. Professor Yogendra Singh has nurtured over three generations of scholars across the disciplines, who now serve different domains of the academic world today. This *Festschrift* is an appropriate intervention to advance the debate on the much fascinating subject of the era which for over the decades has engaged the intellectual community from every discipline in every corner of the globe. This book examines different features of modernization and globalization and their divergent outcomes in different parts of the world, both the developed and non-developed world. It tells that context plays a prominent role in the level of embrace of globalization and its rejection.

Globalization is a captivating term these days. It was a day dreamer delight to think of a global village, but gradually this dream and the fascination has begun to die down. This collection lays out a comprehensive new framework for the study of the economic and sociological impact, and explores the proposition that the East has negated the past proposition about Western dominance through globalization. The central beauty of the book lies in its comprehensiveness, its innovative ideas, its theoretical grounding and conceptual lucidity. It raises many question about the meaning of globalization for the poor, oppressed and marginalized.

Parmjit S Judge devotes a chapter to the study of sociology in the context of globalization. Globalization seems to be changing the institutional context of the discipline and acting as a threat to the discipline, including regional disparity, linguistic disparity and the gap between the centre and the periphery. Globalization has changed the research and teaching of sociology in a major way, making irrelevant the division between the elite and regional sociologist (p. 72). Sociology as a discipline is under threat, economic entrepreneurs are making inroads into higher education, and sociology is declining and seems to be losing its relevance as a discipline.

Other disciplines too will have to redesign themselves in order to adapt to or preserve their relevance in the face of globalization.

The monograph "Global Trends in Eastern Europe"(2010, reprinted 2016) contains the detailed analysis and conclusions of the studies on the transformation of Eastern European societies. The monograph is a conceptual turning point since the theoretical framework used by Genov gradually changed from the focus on the concept of societal transformation to the development and use of the concept of global social trends. The new framework is organized around the idea of four such trends called upgrading the rationality of organizations, individualization, spread of instrumental activism and ... Nikolai Genov is an author with more than 300 scientific articles and books that have been published in 28 countries. Book publications in English 1 rating 0 reviews. Eastern Europe was once clearly defined by the centralized political and economic organization of the societies in the region. They shared the same official ideology and were members of the same alliances. After 1989, the region collapsed in an economic, political and cultural implosion. In this thought-provoking book, Nikolai Genov presents a systematic description and explanation of Eastern European societal transformations after 1989. They are interpreted as adaptations to four global trends; upgrading the rationality of organizations; individualization; spreading of instrumental activism; and universalization of value-normative systems. Start your review of Global Trends In Eastern Europe. Write a review. Four Global Trends: Rise and Limitations more. by Nikolai Genov. The core of the process is the cultural and institutional assertion of universal human rights. Many details notwithstanding, its major characteristics are supposed to be the high level of uncertainty and anxiety due to more. Current Sociology <http://csi.sagepub.com/> Internationalization of Sociology: The Unfinished Agenda Nikolai Genov Current Sociology 1991 39: 1 DOI : 10.1177/001139291039001002 The online version of this article can be found at: more. Current Sociology <http://csi.sagepub.com/> Internationalization of Sociology: The Unfinished Agenda Nikolai Genov Current Sociology 1991 39: 1 DOI : 10.1177/001139291039001002 The online version of this article can be found at: <http://csi.sagepub.com/content/39/1/1> Review. 'Nikolai Genov deftly illuminates the complex interplay of long-established social codes and contemporary transformations in Eastern Europe. This is first-class comparative sociological analysis.' In this thought-provoking book, Nikolai Genov presents a systematic description and explanation of Eastern European societal transformations after 1989. They are interpreted as adaptations to four global trends; upgrading the rationality of organizations; individualization; spreading of instrumental activism; and universalization of value-normative systems. Adaptations to these trends have generally been successful. However, Genov notes that the process is marked by many failures as well. Editorial Reviews. About the Author. Nikolai Genov is Professor of Sociology at the Free University Berlin, Germany. Read more. Product details. If you are a seller for this product, would you like to suggest updates through seller support? Start reading Global Trends in Eastern Europe on your Kindle in under a minute. Don't have a Kindle? Get your Kindle here, or download a FREE Kindle Reading App.

Review. 'Nikolai Genov deftly illuminates the complex interplay of long-established social codes and contemporary transformations in Eastern Europe. This is first-class comparative sociological analysis.' Jean-Pascal Daloz, University of Oxford, UK 'A penetrating, well-documented and intellectually honest appraisal of the implosion of Eastern European countries and its economic, political and cultural causes and consequences twenty years later.' Alberto Martinelli, University of Milan, Italy. About the Author. Nikolai Genov is Professor of Sociology at the Free University B This presentation reviews the trends and opportunities for Eastern Europe in the global microelectronics industry, currently one of the world's most dynamic marketplaces. From a business and economic point of view, the dynamics of this marketplace could easily make Europe the single biggest market in the world; alternatively, they could condemn Europe to mediocrity. Read more. Article. Advanced. Global trends in Eastern Europ Holdings. Cite this. Text this. Email this. Export Record. Export to RefWorks. Export to EndNoteWeb.Â Genov, Nikolai†. Corporate Authors: ProQuest (Firm). Format: Electronic. Language: English. We give a review of Eastern European transformations, which differs from the expectations typical at the beginning of the 1990s. These transformations are tensionridden adjustments to global trends. They include transfer and localadaptation of normative and institutional patterns from the Western world. Four global trends and their controversial effects in the region are discussed. First, instrumental activism requires efficiency of decisions and actions, but clashes with ideas and practices of sustainability.Â @article{Genov2000GlobalTA, title={Global trends and Eastern European societal transformations}, author={N. Genov}, journal={International Social Science Journal}, year={2000}, volume={52}, pages={539-547} }. N. Genov. Section 1: Trends since 2015 In 2015, the European Strategy and Policy Analysis System (ESPAS) launched its report 'Global Trends to 2030: Can the EU meet the challenges ahead?' This report aims to update and extend that report by including developments that have occurred in European and global geopolitics since then, and will project developments out to 2035.Â The international system will need to create a more robust system to protect climate refugees and migrants, who will grow as climate change increases the power of natural disasters and rapid urbanisation means that natural disasters will affect more people.