

institutional or policy based approach. Blending approaches from political economy to anthropology, the book demonstrates that the EU is an ever changing entity which is making it difficult to grasp it from one angle. Left behind the moribund discussions of intergovernmentalism and supranationalism, the book makes clear that the EU is heading towards a new path determined by multiple dynamics.

V.V. Kostyushev, *Institut ombudsmana i prava cheloveka v regionalnom pole politiki (sociologicheskoe ponimanie) / Pod redakciey A. Sungurova (The Ombudsman in the field of regional politics (sociological approach)) / Edited by A. Sungurov), Sankt-Peterburg: Norma, 2007.*

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Many research papers on Russian civil society, regional politics, and human rights have been published in the last 20 years. Arguments partly founded on facts about politics, NGOs, and the activities of municipal authorities are used in the discussions on democratization in Russia. Much less attention is paid to the development of judicial institutions and practice, non-judicial institution of human rights

structures. As far as the human rights ombudsman is widely recognized as one of the facilities to build more transparent government and increase the power of citizens, the study of this institution could be a good source for a deeper understanding of the transformation of the Russian political system.

The book of Sankt-Petersburg's sociologist Vladimir Kostyushev analyzes the human rights situation in Russian regions. The goal of the book is to build a theoretical framework for analysis and it is structured accordingly. There are three chapters: "The Theoretical Foundations of an Inquiry", "The Ombudsman and Human Rights in the Regional Politics" Field: An Empirical Study", and "Development of Theoretical Model". The author's effort is based mainly on the theoretical framework of Pierre Bourdieu and the neo-institutionalists. The first main concept is "human rights' field". It is defined in a preamble to the book by the scientific editor Alexander Sungurov as a "social reality of everyday life where people do some actions to defend their rights" (p.5). The second relevant concept is "actor" and involves guardians, violators, victims, defenders or governmental business and non-governmental activists in the human rights domain. Another important concept and a key point of investigation are practices (i.e. observance, violation, defense, and rights' recovery).

Each actor has his individual repertoire of practices. He also suggests that when analyzing human rights we should take into account three types of tensions: deprivation, information, and action (142-146). This model is tested with some empirical evidence. The second chapter is based on a survey with 80 interviews conducted during 2004 in three Russian regions (Kaliningradskaya oblast, Smolenskaya oblast, and Krasnodarskiy krai) which represent different Federal Districts (North-West, Central, and Southern). They are substantively different in terms of their local history, economic characteristics, and the types of regional political regime. One of the author's main arguments is that all the investigated regions have mainly the same set of actors and structure of practices. It shows that the theoretical framework is suitable for employment in Russia.

The second chapter provides some unique material as it is based on interviews with different types of actors: people from the regional and local administration, members of regional parliaments and local representatives, ombudsmen and members of his office, human rights activists, members of trade-unions, journalists, social scientists; businessmen, and lawyers. As far as it was very problematic to organize interviews with most of these people, the author and his colleagues used snowball sampling. Interviews were half-formalized with 100 points to check. One can imagine how hard it

was to obtain relevant data from so many people, from state institutions in particular, because they get in contact by a narrow margin. However, the data has not been analysed completely as far as no in-depth investigation of every region has been made. The description of the regions does not seem regular as can be seen from the structure of parts in the second chapter. The first section provides the analysis of the situation in Kaliningradskaya oblast and contains data on various incidents of violated rights (with quotes from interviews which are extremely helpful for qualitative analyses as they illustrate how the fact of rights' violation is being reported). The description of the two other regions contains no information of the same value, but only a general report on the situation with human rights. There is no attempt to analyse the causes of different practices in every region. The comparison of regions at the end of the second chapter (111-130) gives us figures and tables. However, although it could be useful to know how many organizations violate human rights, it does not help us to understand the causes and motives of these actors. At the same time placing these figures in a broader context provides a deeper comprehension of regional political systems in Russia.

The most intriguing and useful data one can extract from the book are the lists of actors in the "human rights' field". In Kaliningradskaya oblast there are 44 actors in total with 15 of them being influential, 55 and 13 – in Smolenskaya oblast, and 34 and 12 – in

Krasnodarskiy kray. Some of these institutions represent civil society. The greatest number of influential non-governmental organizations among them is based in Kaliningradskaya oblast; and Kostyushev supposes that these figures show that in that region civil society is better developed (150). Another detailed list that may be of interest is a roster of rights' defending practices including up to 40 types of actions. However the roster itself does not look complete so we cannot understand in what situations these practices are used.

Another relevant observation is that there are seven main actors in the "human rights' field": executive, legislative, and judiciary, the mass media, employers, and the human rights ombudsman. The latter is recognized as an independent and significant actor by most of those interviewed. Apart from the ombudsman, all these actors are simultaneously violators and defenders of rights (116-117).

Kostyushev argues that the ombudsman is inappropriate for the current political regime in Russian regions as the state system is not traditionally oriented towards the significance of a person. The ombudsman belongs to another type of administration because of its ideology concerning human rights and its way of functioning (140). But in the second chapter we see that the ombudsman is recognized as an independent and significant actor by most of interviewees. The fact that such a new institution as the ombudsman is

widely recognized as one of the main defenders shows that in many cases it has a good chance to influence the situation. This means that the ombudsman is a forceful institution and gradually it may become more incorporated into the institutional structure of Russia. But this topic does not receive much attention. It seems odd that the concept of ombudsman, placed in the title, does not get theoretical consideration or attention paid to it in the empirical survey. Consequently the institution of ombudsman is perceived as an ordinary element of the model thus placing the book among many other publications dedicated to human rights in general. Moreover, research on the ombudsman from the position of political science is rare.

This book is aimed at social scientists who seek a suitable model to carry out investigation of the political process in transitional political systems. It also supplies genuine data on Russian regions, which may be of interest for research of regionalism. The important question that can be raised while reading the book is, what should we do with the formulated formal model of "human rights' field" description? On the one hand it gives us a fine structural framework where every actor may be placed, and, on the other hand, it has not been used or criticized so far. There, we can join the author's aspiration for further in-depth exploration of this issue in Russia.