

Reviews

Andrei Tsygankov & Pavel Tsygankov (eds), *New Directions in Russian International Studies*.
Stuttgart: ibidem-Verlag, 2005, 194 pp., €22.00 p/b.

THIS COMPACT VOLUME OFFERS AN OVERDUE INTRODUCTION TO Russian International Studies. Although this is a rather young field in post-Soviet sciences, the various developments are related to deep-rooted legacies as well as persistently changing contextual factors. The

Russian authors, for the most part professional experts in the respective sub-fields of their chapters, provide important insights into the discipline from an insider perspective. The first chapter by the editors, A. Tsygankov and P. Tsygankov, begins with an overview of Russian IR (International Relations) scholarship. Underlining that it has not yet developed its own ideological mainstream, but is characterised by considerable ideological and theoretical diversity, the authors specify three main trends: pluralisation and the two competing trends of Westernisation and Isolationism. The remaining chapters centre on specific theoretical realms and thematic research programmes. Three chapters are devoted to theoretical developments. A. Sergunin starts with a broad overview and, in addition to the conventional IR theories of Realism, Idealism, Globalism, and Marxism, he identifies two opposing purely Russian schools of Atlanticism ('Westernisers') and Eurasianism. The chapter by T. Shakleynina and A. Bogaturov discusses in more detail the various streams and main issues of the Realist school, which fully emerged in the late 1990s and early 2000s. While Realism's Soviet-era roots are strongest in historical systemic approaches, two themes have come to prominence during the post-Soviet period: 'World order' and 'Russia's strategy'. P. Tsygankov and A. Tsygankov then trace the emergence of Russian Liberalism since *perestroika*. While it is dominated by 'Westernisers', the latter camp, as well as the whole strand, is divided by conceptual disagreements and differing political orientations.

The following five chapters review the trends in specific research programmes. Starting with the most recent globalisation equity debate, M. Il'yin points to the difficulty of conceptualising 'equity' in the Russian language and context, as well as to a shift from initial attempts to understand Western globalisation-related ideas to seeing globalisation as the result of a conspiracy. E. Solovyev then explores Geopolitics, a field which goes back to the late nineteenth and early twentieth century debates of Slavophiles versus Westernisers and which received little support in the Soviet context, but experienced a boom during *perestroika*. The main schools discussed here are Neo-Eurasianism (a synthesis of traditional Western geopolitical concepts and Russian Eurasianism) and Geopolitical revisionism.

N. Mukharyamov's chapter on ethnicity and IR demonstrates how Russian research in this area overlaps with developments related to world order, identity and ethnic conflicts. Substantialism and Instrumentalism are introduced as the main streams. S. Tkachenko presents IPE (International Political Economy) as a rather neglected field in Russia, although post-Soviet market development brought some new and pressing issues. Western political economy, which had been studying such aspects for a long time, is proposed as a learning source. The author outlines a debate between liberal institutionalists and Dirigists and bemoans the persisting separation of political science from economics in this branch. Finally, M. Lebedeva portrays another problematic field, international negotiations studies, outlining its former prominence among a narrow circle of Moscow-based Soviet scholars and future research needs rather than current achievements.

Overall, this book differs from comparable Western volumes on the state of IR in various respects. It portrays a scholarship that is still in its beginnings and is inevitably seen in the context of Russian domestic socio-political changes. In this light, the authors explore several reasons for, and trajectories of, the various new directions and remaining challenges. Most chapters criticise the continuing philosophical and abstract character of the theoretical dimension of post-Soviet IR, and the debates which are often highly politicised and personalised, and in any case detached from empirical research and case studies. Some authors are particularly concerned about the divisions and parochialism that characterise this academic discipline. Moreover, although independent political science may not have existed in the Soviet past and most strands of IR research only started to emerge during the *perestroika* period, the authors emphasise the importance of Soviet legacies. The weak theoretical and methodological fundament is attributed to the intense experience with Marxist–Leninist claims of absolute

truth. Many other problems of the discipline are related to the overall crisis of the post-Soviet social sciences. Thus, all chapters refer to the peculiarities and specific characteristics of Russian International Studies.

Furthermore, this volume illustrates that the old controversy around Westernisation seems to live on, albeit in a modified contemporary version. While some authors seek to move away from Western oriented IR scholarship, advocating plurality and diversity in the development of global social science (A. Tsygankov and P. Tsygankov), others promote active learning of Western conceptions and theories (S. Tkachenko on IPE). The editors underline that Russian IR needs to be seen in connection with national identity, and identification with the West, and that both scholarship and identity building are in continuing conditions of uncertainty and transformation. Other authors point to the meanings (not) attached to IR-relevant concepts in a Russian context (M. Il'yin on globalisation, democratisation, legitimisation, equity). Essentially, one of the main values of this volume is its consideration of IR studies in this context as a phenomenon in need of understanding in its own right. This is substantiated by the argument that, in contrast to Soviet IR, there has been hardly any effort to investigate the new Russian IR, whereas 'Russians, on the other hand, study Western IR very carefully' (p. 13).

One criticism of the volume is that it could have been edited more thoroughly. Nevertheless, the draft-like appearance conceals a compilation of substantial contributions on the many new directions in Russian International Studies by authors who are active in this field of study. In any case, this edited collection may be considered a helpful step in the direction of an overdue dialogue between Western and Russian IR scholarly communities.

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