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Vadim Radaev and Zoya Kotelnikova, eds. *The Ambivalence of Power in the Twenty-First Century Economy: Cases from Russia and Beyond*. London: UCL Press, 2022. 367 pp. ISBN 9781800082700.

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The book *The Ambivalence of Power in the Twenty-First Century Economy: Cases from Russia and Beyond* is an edited volume and is published as a part of the UCL FRINGE series, edited by Alena Ledeneva and Peter Zusi. Ambivalence here is a methodological perspective through which the contributors to the volume analyze the relation between power and economy.

In the preface to the volume, Ledeneva presents the roots of the ambivalence as a concept. She shows that ambivalence was first introduced in psychology, where it was taken as contradictory affective orientations within the same person (Bleuler [1911] 1950). Then, it was borrowed by sociologists (e.g., Merton 1976), who imply that ambivalence is embedded in social and power relations and thus it might be a fruitful unit of sociological analysis. Nowadays the concept is widely used by sociologists (Arribas-Ayllon and Bartlett 2014; Carolan 2010; Hillcoat-Nallétamby and Phillips 2011).

In this book, ambivalence is understood as an integral part of power relations. And the authors of the edited volume follow the framework of the classical sociological discourse where power is understood as a multidimensional entity, but they make the analysis more vigorous by introducing a concrete representation of this multifacetedness—ambivalence. Power itself is approached in this volume through the lens of the modern economy.

The main strength of the book is that the findings from various contexts are presented in one volume. Power is a multidimensional social concept, and its analyses always differ from one perspective to another. Thus, making different studies of power compatible with each other is especially hard. Yet this book succeeds at this. The authors have found a conceptual basis—namely, ambivalence—that allows them to coherently discuss how power works in different spheres—from agriculture to AI technology.

The logic of the book is in accordance with its structure.¹ Its three parts represent three levels: macro, meso, and micro, respectively. There is no strict division between parts of the book and within chapters, however; the chapters devoted to the meso level also analyze macro and micro processes, as, for example, it is done in Elena Bogdanova's chapter on municipal rental housing in Sweden. Furthermore, although

¹ The order in which the chapters are presented in this review differs from their order in the book. I do so to show the meaningful connections between the chapters and the congruency of the book as a whole.

all authors focus on the twenty-first century, as the book's title suggests, many also skillfully reference the past, which enhances the analysis. Most chapters are devoted to Russia, but some go beyond the context of one country.

At the macro level, one might see how complex, diverse, and ambivalent power relations are. At the same time, they all have something in common. Such common ground that Alexei Pobedonostsev in his chapter and Alexander Nikulin and Alexander Kurakin in theirs have identified is what I would call *the ambivalence of opportunities* that power brings.

For instance, Pobedonostsev shows how the abundance of natural resources creates power and at the same time erodes it through the destruction of state institutions. In the sphere of agribusiness, the case that Nikulin and Kurakin describe, a similar ambivalence is present. Members of local communities realize that delegating power to large companies will negatively impact them, yet, at the same time, they do not want to take responsibility for holding power. The situation in which an actor anticipates harmful consequences yet is not keen on changing the existing power relations is ambivalent by its nature. In both cases power brings instability in the long run. In the first case it is a result of the decay of state institutions; in the second, it occurs when legitimacy is lost.

Two other chapters of the first part of the book, although very different, also speak to each other. Marek Dabrowski's essay shows that the interdependence between economic governance and systems of political power in postcommunist countries is determined by the ambivalent character of political power itself: the power that should serve the public interest and deliver public goods is instead used to satisfy private interests of those in power. Such an ambivalent nature of autocratic power leads to its degeneration as well as stagnation of structural and institutional spheres of the whole society.

Leonid Kosals echoes Dabrowski's chapter since he also considers the ambivalence of different sociopolitical contexts. In his case, the unit of analysis is innovation as a social process. Innovations, although supposed to be provided favorable conditions to be benefited from, might be rejected in some countries. They might diffuse slowly, with difficulty, or even be prohibited if their nature does not meet society's core values. Taking AI technology as one of the most important innovations of the fourth industrial revolution, Kosals shows that in Canada and China, countries with clear views on human rights, this innovation is either simply banned or, on the contrary, is diffused very fast. In countries with ambivalence in core values (Russia) or with an ambivalent power and legal system (the US), the realization of facial recognition—one of the applications of AI—is less straightforward, thus ambivalent.

The authors whose works are dedicated to the meso-level analysis reveal a more intricate nature of power and the ambivalence inherent in it. For instance, in the chapter on brand counterfeiting in Russia, Zoya Kotelnikova makes evident who the holders of power are, whereas in the platform economy, studied by Andrey Shevchuk and Denis Strebkov, power does not belong to anyone in particular. Kotelnikova's case study shows that transnational companies do not appeal to the state if they want to fight back against counterfeit of their brands. Instead, they form deperson-

alized supra-market trade associations, making anti-counterfeit measures socially visible. Power, therefore, is not always achieved directly. And in this sense, it is ambivalent.

Evgeniya Balabanova shows how abusive managerial supervision embodies functional and motivational ambivalence on the organizational level. While power is determined by the control over the resources, it might be opposed by the empowered, who use their own voice strategies that Balabanova describes. Organization here is a political arena where ambivalent relations are in place. To a large extent, Bogdanova's chapter demonstrates the same dynamics. She also shows how empowered actors (tenants, in her case) create strategies to tackle and resist the power held by organizations (here, housing companies).

Ivan Pavlutkin and Anastasiia Makareva's case is what is called "beyond" in the title of the book. They analyze the ambivalence within the global university-ranking systems as a result of the need for maneuvering between conflicting normative expectations. For those who are interested in the global context, I would recommend reading Tamara Kusimova's essay as well, for she makes an unusual comparison between a typical Soviet person and a modern global consumer. She demonstrates how being opposed to the structural power of the *sistema*, a term developed by Ledeneva (2013), and at the same time being a part of it are both necessary for producing symbolic value and being a successful farmer in the market economy. This creates an obvious ambivalence.

Vadim Radaev ably shows that exchange and channel relationships between retailers and suppliers are ambivalent by their nature; they inevitably consist of opposite elements such as cooperation and competition, autonomy and interdependence, compliance with rules and deviance from them, and so on. The ambivalence, in this sense, cannot be eliminated, although it may be reduced by negotiations and following the existing rules.

In the last part of the book, Regina Resheteeva, Masha Denisova, and Daria Lebedeva each analyze the ambivalence of power on the micro level. All three chapters are devoted to what I would define as relational and attitudinal ambivalence. While Resheteeva, examining consumer practices during the 2014–2017 economic crisis in Russia, shows how the very attitude toward (or perception of) the state among powerless consumers is ambivalent, Lebedeva in her study of young ecologists in Moscow demonstrates how this oppositional relation might also be a source of agency for them. Not only does daily ecological activity endow actors with power, it is also very ambivalent in its nature: eco-friendly practices are politically neutral but at the same time are very politicized, being a source of the youth's political representation.

Following an overview of the book, the strong points and possible limitations should be discussed. In my opinion, the authors have made an extraordinary innovation in the study of power that only a few (if any) had made before. Firstly, they found a conceptual basis for very different types of research. Topics that range from inter-firm opportunism and politics of consumption to rural communities and AI technology are hardly ever to be found under the same roof unless there is a methodologically justified reason for it. Secondly, all the cases presented in the

book are not aimed specifically at Russian readers or those who are interested only in Russia. On the contrary, almost all of them are integrated into the global context. Thus, the conclusions each chapter draws might be useful for and applied by researchers globally.

The main limitation of the book that a reader might think of is a definitional problem. When it comes down to asking what *power* means and whether it should be tackled in the same vein across the entire book, the answers might differ. Are the state power and power of local communities the same thing? Is power only about imposing one's will over others? Or is there anything else at work? Is power a thing that might be used freely by the actors who hold it, or are they also trapped by holding it? These are questions that we might still be left with.

Paradoxically, however, while being a possible limitation, this is also one of the book's main strong points. If power was strictly defined from the outset, the authors would not gain the diverse results presented in the book now. Following Max Weber's understanding of power ([1921] 1968), as the authors do, might be considered simplification. Yet, it is a simplification that allows a large group of researchers working in very different areas to find a common language and to ably analyze such an elusive phenomenon as power.

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