

Two epistemological premises can be drawn out from the three main sections. The first concerns the geographical area under scrutiny. Noting that ‘there is no such thing as a unified region of Central and Eastern Europe’ (p. 4), it is instead defined as Mitteleuropa, the Baltic and the Balkans: a call to historical determination and to the distinct, long-standing cultures and civilisations of these sub-regions. Interestingly, the second one has to do with Bokros’ proclaimed non-linear conception of history and the potential for a cyclical course of development, grounded in fears for reversibility of the reforms of transition. Following this latter premise, the reform matrix is sometimes delivered in the past tense and at others in the present, enforcing the understanding of transition as an ongoing condition, but also the prescriptive character of this book. Accounts of reforms that were actually implemented and explanations or clarifications of how market reforms should be approached on a theoretical level, appear interchangeably. The downside of this is that it is not always clear when one is reading a historical account of transition and when one is being versed on Western capitalism principles.

A final word of caution; some might be put off by the pronounced colonial streak of this line of argumentation, when for instance the former Soviet states’ desire for improved living conditions is taken as an ‘overwhelming aspiration of convergence to the West’ (p. 172), or the role of foreign investment in the intimate sector of public utilities is found to be civilisatory, ‘fit and proper in the “wild-east” environment’ (p. 111). The East–West hegemonic categories, which go back to the very title of the book, also underline the recurrent question on the optimal relationship between economics and politics; the potential of overcoming the Eastern tendency for dominance of the latter over the former, and moving towards the West’s more sophisticated and balanced interplay between the two. But rather than a theoretical thesis with a panoramic view of the field, the book’s merits are to be found in the distinct tone of an experienced policy-maker who precisely sheds any responsibility for neutrality in favour of pragmatic relevance and effective deliverance. It is in this way usefully demonstrating the operative assumptions of EU and Western economic policy-making, but perhaps more acutely than critical IR is used to.

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Virág Molnár, *Building the State. Architecture, Politics and State Formation in Post-War Central Europe*. London & New York, NY: Routledge, 2013, xiii + 209pp., £65.00/\$120.00 h/b.

WHAT IS THE LINK BETWEEN SOME TULIP-DECORATED BALCONIES AND THE CHANGING relationship between state and society in socialist Hungary? Virág Molnár argues that architecture, as a promise of social change grounded in a material transformation, played a pivotal role for governments to establish legitimacy. Far from being unidirectional, the relationship between architecture and politics was mutually constitutive, as government officials increasingly relied on architects while the latter used their expertise to gain significant political clout. Architectural debates thus offer a unique window onto the making and unmaking of professional-as-political alliances as Central European states kept redefining ‘social change’ according to different political priorities and ideological alliances.

Four case studies form the backbone of the book, each of them capturing the immediacy of a political moment as they zoom in on specific protagonists and the internal struggles for symbolic and economic resources informing their disputes. Molnár sets these case studies in a chronological order to identify architecture’s changing role, from firstly a propaganda medium in 1950s East Berlin, to secondly an instrument of social reform or thirdly a means to reassert national specificity and thus a rejection of Soviet-style socialism in 1970s Hungary, and finally a strategy to negotiate the ‘re-Europeanization’ of early 1990s Berlin.

One of the most captivating qualities of the book is the author’s ability to decipher the broader models of knowledge underlying those cases, while never losing sight of the rich details and local processes of translation informing the debates and the responses they elicited. In her discussion of Berlin’s

rebuilding in the 1950s, Molnár shows that early post-war reconstruction plans in East Germany were set exclusively under the socialist realist credo. However, the tides changed with Khrushchev denouncing the unnecessary ornamentation of socialist realism. East German architects found themselves caught between opposing demands: to follow the Soviet new course, while trying to find an alternative modernism to the West German urban developments. Molnár is fully cognisant that these moments emerged at the intersection between international paradigms and ‘deeply ingrained local historical narratives’ (p. 16). But she also notes that personal choice, aesthetic loyalties and political pressure were equally important for how architects handled the normative codes imposed by the Soviet Union. She points out that various architects formerly affiliated with the Bauhaus modernist movement opted for different professional trajectories in the 1950s, which either marginalised them or placed them on the upper political echelon.

Molnár, however, does not insist on the uniqueness of the East German case. That is, while the East German architects’ aim was to find an alternative to West German modernism, for the other countries in the socialist bloc, the main point of comparison was the modernist architecture developed during the interwar period. As Molnár shows, it was a lingering fascination with the alternative modernisms of interwar Central Europe that informed the debates ensuing in Hungary in the 1970s and 1980s. The two Hungarian case studies complement each other. The first examines the triangle of tensions emerging between private building practices, flourishing especially in the countryside and city outskirts, state housing policy and the architects’ position. The 1956 revolt in Hungary had led to the regime seeking to tame bold political voices with a more lax economic policy and significantly improved living standards, among which housing was paramount. Forced to acknowledge its economic and technological limitations, the state increasingly allowed individuals to build their self-designed houses. However, with their aesthetic aspirations steeped in a Bauhaus-flavoured nostalgia, architects perceived themselves as ‘guardians of the built environment’ (p. 81) that they had to protect against the allegedly tasteless architecture represented by privately built houses. By blatantly ignoring the webs of trust and mutual cooperation informing the private building endeavours, architects’ elitist rejection of family home building further isolated them from a significant part of the society. Their criticism implicitly reinforced the urban–rural divide, with its long-term uneven distribution of resources between the city and the countryside. Ironically, despite Molnár’s argument that architecture became an instrument of social reform in the 1960s and 1970s, we see in fact how some highly placed architects managed to undermine the state’s very attempt to implement reform by means of architecture.

What doubles the irony though is that the same architects equally chided their own colleagues when the latter dared to transgress the modernist model. The book’s third case study focuses on the Tulip debate, which emerged around the experimental work produced by the Pécs group, a team of junior architects who aimed to ‘integrate and uphold local traditions’ into modern design and architectural vocabulary (p. 117). However, they were immediately accused of traditionalism, at a moment when modernism came to signal both a distance from the Soviet influence and a proof of loyalty towards Western cultural norms.

Molnár shows how the critics of the Pécs experiment radically altered the latter’s intent by misinterpreting their agenda as a form of allegiance to tradition and implicitly to a *passé* nationalism. She astutely deciphers both broader models of knowledge and personal strategies behind a seemingly abstract technical vocabulary, as she reads the Tulip debate through the lens of the ‘populist–urbanist’ debate. With roots in the late nineteenth century, the debate captured but also reinforced the multilayered duality of interwar Hungary, where populists praised traditions and locality, and the urbanists cherished cosmopolitan values seen as the only path to modernisation. Thus, what may appear as a petty fight over tulip-decorated balconies echoes fundamental tensions, deeply engrained in past ideological debates and rekindled fears about backwardness and marginality. At the same time, I wonder why Molnár did not analyse the criticism voiced against non-professional private building as echoing the interwar apprehensions of the urbanist group that also resurfaced in the Tulip debate (especially because one of the main critics, Máté Major, played a key role in both settings).

Methodologically, Molnár's approach is bold; she opts for a colourful selection of spirited debates spanning five decades over a strictly comparative analysis of the two settings: post-war Hungary and Germany. The interpretation of each of the case studies is highly persuasive, and the introduction and conclusion beautifully capture the broader theoretical themes. However, the book would have benefited from a more systematic dialogue among the chapters that would have connected them into a thicker analytical knit. As a fine-grained analysis of the architectural debates emerging at distinct political times in post-war Central Europe, this book stands as an original contribution to the fields of urban studies, ethnographies of state, sociology of expertise and Central European studies.

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Rick Fawn, *International Organizations and Internal Conditionality. Making Norms Matter*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, xii + 335pp., \$105.00 h/b.

FAWN, IN THIS USEFUL BOOK, SPEAKS ABOUT 'INTERNAL CONDITIONALITY' as a concept that adds a new element for the study of interaction among international organisations (IOs) and member states. Internal conditionality is the ability of an IO to cope with threats that recalcitrant member states posit to the IOs' norms and values. Therefore, the analysis contributes to the unveiling of a specific aspect of interactions among international and domestic actors, which has never been so carefully investigated before. In particular, the book focuses on those states, members of international organisations, which try to undermine or destroy the organisation's value from within. After the end of the Cold War, the number of member states in IOs increased quite substantially; the European Union, the Council of Europe (CoE) and NATO were those that mostly benefited from the fall of the Berlin Wall. Fawn looks at some peculiar case studies from the post-Soviet region, where 'states have devised specific forms of resistance to values and practices of what they see as the "western" dominated IOs of the CoE and the OSCE' (p. 4). The investigation of the discrepancy in international commitment and the conduct of member states is addressed through the analysis of five case studies (election observation, abolition of the death penalty, the Chechen wars, Kazakhstan's chairmanship of the OSCE and Tajikistan's relations with the OSCE), where the core values of the IOs were mostly challenged by the recalcitrant actions of member states.

The selection of IOs is particularly significant as the CoE and OSCE are normative and value charged in their assistance toward member states. Since the early 1990s those IOs helped to internationalise important issues, such as democracy and human rights, from a domestic to an international level with a deep and active participation in states' domestic affairs. In parallel with these developments member states opened up room for cooperation and actively fulfilled commitments and recommendations. However, according to Fawn, from December 1992, with the outbreak of Chechnya's war, different standpoints on the normative functions of IOs (OSCE in this case) started to grow in post-Soviet countries. As maintained by Fawn, this is the exact moment when 'the very heart of OSCE post-Cold War existence—its many field presences throughout the post-communist world, began to be challenged and discredited' (p. 49).

The book has eight chapters: the first two are devoted to presenting the main arguments, describing what the author means by 'internal conditionality' and providing an analysis of how the CoE and OSCE developed and evolved; in Chapters Three to Seven Fawn presents and analyses the case studies; and in Chapter Eight he draws his conclusion, underlining the gap between theory and practice concerning IOs' norms and values.

As stated by Fawn, internal conditionality has six dimensions through which it is possible to assess its strength. The first concerns the core values of IOs, which are the basics of the organisation and they are usually codified in the foundational documents. The second is the country's resistance to these values, which might have a different level of intensity. The third dimension is the possible threat to an IO's survival from a member country or countries, whose strength is determined by how an IO considers