

Editorial

The current issue of STSS is the result of some significant changes in our structure. First of all, two new book review editors have been appointed. We are happy to welcome Dženeta Karabegović, based at the University of Salzburg, and George Rekgoukos, who recently moved to the University of Oxford as our new book review editors. They will be replacing Junpeng Li and Ahsan Ullah whom we thank for their hard work throughout the past years. Second, possibly for the first time, we have managed to mobilise the whole editorial board in scouting out new articles. This has resulted in a growing number of good quality submissions, some of which have been included in the current issue while some others are currently under review and will be published in the coming months.

This June issue starts with an article by Denys Gorbach (2020) on informality and patronage in Ukraine. Based on fieldwork in a large eastern Ukraine industrial city, the author engages with a Gramsci-inspired theoretical framework, and the insights of Hillel Ticktin, Simon Clarke and Michael Burawoy, to analyse differences between the life-worlds of workers, relating them to the structurally different context in which they find themselves. In his view, all enterprises feature path-dependent informal bargaining and underinvestment as cornerstones of their factory regimes. However, they differ in the ways in which these traits combine in practice. These configurations, in turn, elicit different strategies and attitudes from the workers, each of them more typical at one enterprise than at others: an archaic manufactory attitude at a new window factory, exit in mines torn between owners, voice at the foreign-owned metalworking factory, and loyalty at a 'native' oligarchic holding. The general trend is not towards eliminating informality as a 'post-Soviet residue' but rather towards renegotiating it with different outcomes.

The next article, by Maria Sakaeva (2020) looks at everyday legality among politically affiliated and non-affiliated businesspeople in Russia. In particular, she looks at the way businesspeople deal with written rules, standards, and requirements in their everyday business activities. She draws from interviews and participant observations in Russian communities to illustrate how the political position of individuals impacts the ability of different small entrepreneurs to navigate paperwork and bureaucracy. By doing this, she shows that, although bureaucracy and written rules affect all entrepreneurs, multiple facets of the law constrain or promote an individual's access to opportunities in different ways. In addition, political affiliation strengthens the power to succeed in the bureaucratic game, and protects one's interests through court appeals, while non-affiliated entrepreneurs are limited in their capacity to deal with Russian bureaucracy, and to litigate the state using legal procedures.

Ilona Baumane-Vītoliņa and Dominika Dudek (2020), in their article, propose a case study of ecosystems in Kraków, Poland in order to provide a comprehensive overview of the concept innovation ecosystem in transition economies. The paper offers a case study of the innovation landscape in Kraków to review specific stages of innovation development and the unique role of start-ups and SMEs within the ecosystem, while discussing the different premises of the Polish context. Ultimately, the Polish experience can be informative for CEE countries where start-up ecosystems exist at the nascent stage.

The following article by Vit Šimral (2020) explores regulation of lobbying in the European Economic Area countries to focus on three specific issues. First, it attempts to define lobbying in an EEA context. Second, by looking at other anti-corruption legislation in Europe it explores the impact on corruption of the presence (or absence) of lobbying regulations. Finally, the author highlights an existing systemic weakness that, where the enforcement mechanisms of lobbying laws are missing, will hamper the shift towards a better-regulated and more transparent lobbying environment in Europe.

The last article, by Tomáš Hoch (2020) is intended to offer a better understanding of the South Ossetian situation and, in particular, its controversial debates on unification vs independence. By doing this, the paper identifies the factors underlying the South Ossetian discourse supporting

the idea of unification with the Russian Federation. The author finds that both security and the idea of a divided nation can play a crucial role in this discourse, as they frequently appear in the statements of the South Ossetian political elite as the main arguments in favour of accession to Russia. In addition, there are several other important variables, which can explain this prevailing South Ossetian narrative: the lack of human and natural resources for a viable state, the fatigue of the South Ossetian population in the face of the incompetence of local elites, and their aspiration for Russian centralisation. Since this seems in line with narratives from other de facto states, the article ends with exploring why these are so recurrent not only in South Ossetia but across the region with little differences country by country.

Although we were keen to include two book reviews in this issue, the COVID-19 Lockdown has made this task impossible since mail services have been suspended and shipping delayed. We have nonetheless managed to include *Alternative Globalizations: Eastern Europe and the Postcolonial World*, edited by James Mark, Artemy M. Kalinovsky, and Steffi Marung reviewed by Jelena Đureinović (2020).

References

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- Hoch, T. (2020). Independence or unification with a patron state? Not such dichotomous ideas as one would think: Evidence from South Ossetia. *Studies of Transition States and Societies*, 12(1), 68-89.
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