

Jury report for the 2013 Stein Rokkan Prize for Comparative Social Science Research

The Jury for the Stein Rokkan Prize for Comparative Social Science Research 2013 has unanimously decided to honour Dorothee Bohle and Béla Greskovits in recognition of their book *Capitalist Diversity on Europe's Periphery*, published by Cornell University Press in 2012.

In this book, the prize winners have set themselves a formidable task: to compare the paths of capitalist development after the end of socialism across Eastern Europe – with a focus on the Baltic states, the Visegrad Four and Southeastern Europe – and to explain the developmental trajectories of these states. Bohle and Greskovits have succeeded magnificently in their ambition and have produced a piece of scholarship that constitutes a “very substantial and original contribution in comparative social science research”, as is stipulated as the main criterion for the award of the Rokkan Prize.

Engaging with the work of Polanyi, Bohle and Greskovits develop an original scheme to classify different types of capitalist regimes, distinguishing between “neoliberal”, “embedded neoliberal” and “neocorporatist” variants as well as a “nonregime”, characterised by economic and political disorder. The authors inquire into the diverse starting conditions after the collapse of socialism in the countries under consideration; set out the differing paths that these countries have travelled between the late 1980s and the late 2000s; and explain why they have pursued different developmental trajectories. Bohle and Greskovits acknowledge the weight of inherited assets and legacies, but accord prime importance to the decisions and strategies of both domestic elites and international and transnational actors and institutions.

Bohle and Greskovits's book is a model of comparative scholarship. It asks a very ambitious question; it is conceptually innovative and theoretically sophisticated; it displays a deep knowledge of the country cases examined; it succeeds in tracing developments both over time and across a diverse region; and it sets out its questions and findings with exemplary clarity. The authors' skeptical conclusions about the longer-term viability of even some of the “most successful postsocialist market economies” makes sober reading, as they warn of a real “possibility of backsliding in politics and the economy alike”. Coming from the leading analysts of the political economy of Central and Eastern Europe, this is a message that deserves to be heard by political scientists and public policy-makers.