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## Book Reviews

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**Mischa Gabowitsch**, *Protest in Putin's Russia* (Cambridge, UK and Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2017), 332 pp.

This book is about the protest movements that occurred in Russia from 2011 to 2013. Their rise was undoubtedly a prominent and unusual event in Russia under Putin. Although much ink has been spilled over this topic, there have been few attempts to understand the entire process and to consider the meaning of the protests in Putin's Russia. This monograph, based on a sociological approach, traces the ways in which the protest movements took place, and provides us with insights on their underlying mechanisms. It is important to note that the book was written with a focus on not only the capital cities, but also on the regions, with extensive fieldwork in the Chelyabinsk region.

It is characteristic for Gabowitsch to adopt a skeptical attitude toward the conventional view on protest movements. According to Gabowitsch, there are three misleading views on protest movements: (1) focusing only on the political consequences of the protest movements, (2) identifying protest movements solely as "opposition" movements, and (3) paying attention only to the big cities, and concluding that protest movements take place only in such cities. Contrary to these views, this book tries to open the "black box" of the Russian protest movements. Gabowitsch cites the argument on the "regime of engagement," presented by Laurent Thévenot, using it as a framework, which makes it possible to be "aware of a greater variety of ways in which people engage with the world" (p. 26).

This monograph first deals with the question of how the protest movements evolved in this period (chapters 2 and 3). Special attention is paid to the emotional aspect, which makes people feel that it is necessary to protest. Gabowitsch sees the most emotional breaching event in this period as the people's experiences of electoral monitoring. One of the important backgrounds the author points out is that the non-partisan electoral monitoring movement became especially widespread in the 2011 Duma and the 2012 presidential elections. The movement provided opportunities for ordinary citizens to encounter the reality of rigged elections for the first time and served as a trigger for the protest movements.

In the following chapters, Gabowitsch demonstrates various aspects of the protest movements, including the Pussy Riot Affair (chapter 6) and the transnational aspects (chapter 8). The central argument is about the internal tension inside the protest movements, which is discussed in chapters 4, 5, and 7. Here, the author introduces an important concept for understanding the Russian protest movement: oppositional scene/oppositional milieu. This concept best describes the characteristics of the protest movements, which were apparently opposition-oriented but, in fact, stood for various ideological positions. This concept best describes the opposition and includes various ideological positions. The most important point in capturing the dynamism of the protest movements can be found in the tension between the opposition, civic activism, and social protest. The protest movements were made up of not only the opposition forces, but also the grassroots movements, which were characterized by attention to local problems. Within the oppositional scene, the attachment to specific places became less represented, and, therefore, such grassroots movements became distanced from the

protest movements. At the same time, however, the protest movements gave birth to a new political space, where participants from various backgrounds got to know each other. The author insists that the appearance of this new space can be seen as the most important consequence of the protest movements.

This book, full of interesting interviews and rich observations, is a relevant contribution in understanding the protest movements in Russia. Firstly, the monograph provides us with a useful framework for understanding the biggest puzzle regarding the protest movement: what it was that made the citizens protest against the electoral fraud. As it has long been argued that elections in Russia are fraudulent, it has been a big puzzle as to what made the citizens protest against electoral fraud so unexpectedly after the 2011 Duma election. Gabowitsch's focus on emotion and the role of domestic electoral observers is relevant in solving the puzzle. His argument on the rise of electoral monitoring movements is also convincing and aids in understanding the process.

Secondly, this book sheds new light on the decline of the protest movements. It has been argued that the protest movements declined either spontaneously or by repressive measures adopted by the state. The book proposes a different, bottom-up perspective by focusing on the internal tension between the oppositional scene and the grassroots movements, which are characterized by attachment to specific places. Although it is not completely clear as to how newcomer protesters interacted with pre-existing grassroots movements, or how they became organized into such movements, the author's focus on the tension between the opposition and the locally-oriented social protests provides us with an important key to understanding the protest movements in their entirety.

Thirdly, although the central subject of this book is the protest movements, not the state, it can serve as a good starting point for reexamining the stereotypical view of the state's role in Putin's Russia. The author does not deny the conventional view that the state weakened the protest movements by adopting repressive measures toward them. However, it should be noted that Gabowitsch shows the various consequences of state repression. Especially important in this context is that the repressive measures used by the state had paradoxical consequences: they made the opposition and other groups find common cause and served as a catalyst for protesters' interactions. It might be fruitful to further explore how the state influenced the way the protest movements occurred, and how the state and the protest movements interacted with each other.

The period from 2011 to 2013 in Russia is unique when we consider that control over potential opposition had been strong for more than a decade. Better understanding of this period is extremely important in capturing the essence of Russian politics after the so-called "nationalist turn," which became obvious after the annexation of the Crimean peninsula in March 2014. This monograph is must-read literature on one of the most prominent events in Putin's Russia, and it contributes to gaining a better understanding of the future of protest movements in Russia.

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