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Unsicherheiten der Autorin wie der folgende Satz: „Nicolae Ceaușescu of Romania plundered his country as thoroughly as a reincarnated Phanariot and was habitually compared to Count Dracula“ (222f.). Zum einen wird hier das nachgerade klassische Bild vom korrupten Phanarioten bedient, zum anderen aber die Chance vertan, den westlichen Dracula-Vergleich mit der höchst eigenen Inanspruchnahme Vlads III. in Rumänien in Beziehung zu setzen.

Dennoch – Vesna Goldsworthys Buch ist eine vergnügliche Reise durch und zu den Balkan-Bildern der englischen Literatur. Belegt mit einer kaum glaublichen Auswahl an (teils grotesken) Zitaten, bietet sie einen *tour d'horizon*, der seinen Schwerpunkt eben nicht in der wissenschaftlichen Literatur oder der Publizistik hat, sondern in der Literatur.

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This volume presents the results of a large research project named DIOSCURI,[1] about "Cultural Encounters in the European Economy", and it is notable for two reasons. First, it is a truly multidisciplinary endeavor, as the research team(s) included economists, sociologists, historians, anthropologists, and political scientists (7). Second, it provides rare empirical data on a topic where, thus far, scholars had to be content with theories, assumptions and anecdotal evidence, namely the topic of transnational encounters of the "western" and "eastern" economic cultures in Eastern and Southeastern Europe after the fall of communism. In their prologue "Going beyond *Homo Sovieticus*" (1-13), the editors question the validity of the conventional view on the economic culture of the region that regards Eastern Europeans as mostly passive recipients of, first, soviet communism and then, after 1989, western liberal capitalism.

This critical view of the common narrative is reflected in the guiding hypotheses of the DIOSCURI project. One of them is that the difficult conditions of planned economies did not lead to economic passivity, but actually promoted capitalist virtues, as "calculative behavior, risk-taking, competitive attitudes, and so on were obligatory subjects to learn, by default, not by design, to oil the machinery of planned economy" (322); in this view, the Eastern Europeans' emphasis on trust and personal rather than institutional transactions might be even advantageous for them in a globalized economy. Another hypothesis of the project was that cultural encounters lead to a hybridization of "Eastern" and "Western" features instead of a simple absorption of ready-made western models. Finally, it was assumed that there is no fundamental difference in the readiness to "go west" between East Central European and Southeastern European states.

The research project included studies in three research fields: entrepreneurship, state governance and economic knowledge, covering in eight countries of Central/Eastern and Southeastern Europe. Accordingly, the book is divided into three parts, with a

[1] The DIOSCURI Research Project was financed by the European Commission's sixth framework program and coordinated by the Center for Policy Studies at the Central European University (CEU), Budapest, and the Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), Vienna.

prologue and an epilogue. Each part consists of a selection of the project's case studies in a particular research field, as well as an article that summarizes and analyzes their main findings. The principal research method of the case studies was to conduct qualitative interviews with key "western" (or repatriate) and "local" actors to provide an in-depth, "thick" description of the individual cases. For the first part on entrepreneurship, entrepreneurs, managers, and some regular employees were interviewed, while some of the case studies used also participant observation. For the second part on state governance, interviews were conducted mostly with local state officials and EU representatives, while the case study from Serbia included also a quantitative survey. The case studies for the last part on economic knowledge included interviews with Eastern European researchers as well as literature surveys.

Part 1, on cultural encounters in the business world, examines very diverse cases. Vesna Vučinić-Nešković assesses the case of a small Belgrade home maintenance company (17-34). Founded as a start-up by a repatriate with extensive management experience in large transnational companies, it employed a distinctive "western" image and way of doing business that was received quite enthusiastically in Belgrade in 2004. However, while the business performance was satisfactory and the work climate was good, the multitude of formal rules and the need to document everything was seen by many employees as too rigid and inflexible.

According to Éva Kovacs's study on the Villány Wine region in Hungary (35-55), "westernization" here started already under socialism: local wine producers, mostly of German origin, imported know-how and used western machinery. Five of them started to bottle their own wines using the facilities of the local wine cooperative. After 1989, the latter group became very successful in establishing Villány as a quality wine region, and their success attracted domestic investors to the region, leading to what Kovács calls "a small miracle" (37).

Ildikó Erdei and Kamil Mareš compare breweries in four Eastern and Southeastern European countries (57-70), using a stage model of transition from local ownership to incorporation into large transnational brewing companies. Irena Kašparová analyzes the rather rocky cultural encounters in the renowned Czech Živnostenská Bank after its takeover by an Italian Bank (71-88). In an ironic twist on the stereotypical conflict between "correct" and "formal" westerners versus "flexible" and "informal" easterners, most problems within this bank arise from the fact that the management style of the Italian managers is perceived by the Czech employees as spontaneous and chaotic, whereas the Italians think that the Czechs act too analytically and not appropriately for solving problems. As the Bank is owned by the Italians, the cultural encounter is asymmetrical, and although a certain degree of hybridization of Czech and Italian management techniques takes place, it is the modus operandi of the Italian mother firm that is implemented.

The chapters by Drago Čengić (89-103) and by Violetta Zentai (105-124) both deal with the expansion of the Austrian Raiffeisen banking group (RBI) to Eastern and Southeastern Europe. Čengić gives a case study on the Raiffeisen Bank in Croatia, whereas Zentai summarizes the findings of the case studies on the RBI group's experiences in the region (as well as a few other Banks). Both emphasize that RBI's spectacular success in Eastern Europe can be ascribed to its strategy to be the first western Bank in the market as well as its readiness to give its local branches a high degree of autonomy. Over time, the local managers became quite self-confident in their encounters with the center in Vienna, and many of them opposed the latter's attempt to standardize its banking operations following the global financial crisis.

The second part (on State Governance) includes four studies, two of which deal with the implementation of an EU pre-accession agricultural program (SAPARD) in Eastern Europe. While the chapter by Katalin Kovács and Petya Kabakchieva (127-148) summarizes the case studies conducted in six countries, Florian Niţu (149-166) deals with Romania specifically. From the interviews with both EU officials and East European government representatives involved in the negotiations on the program implementation, it becomes clear that the EU's top priority was not so much to promote the development of rural areas in the accession states, but the implementation of an organizational model and the change of the weak administrative cultures of these states. The newly established SAPARD agencies in each country became islands of western administrative culture, but their efficiency was reduced because of complicated procedures designed to prevent corruption. Niţu concludes that the process was mainly a transmission of western norms and models to Eastern Europe without much input from the latter. The Bulgarian case shows that even these new organizations have not been immune against hybridization.

The chapter by Harlan Alexandrov and Rafael Chechik deals with a project by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) among a rural minority population in Bulgaria, the Pomaks (167-182), while Mladen Lazić deals with the experience of a Swedish developmental program in the central Serbian Topola region (183-199). Both case studies are interested in the implementation of the program and in the organizational cultures of the local actors, as well as in the encounters of the western experts with their local staff.

The five chapters of the last part on economic knowledge all examine the adoption of a particular school of thought in Eastern and Southeastern Europe, i.e. the so-called New Institutional Economics (NIE). While the contributions on Poland, Bulgaria, Croatia, and Romania offer many details about the reception of the NIE in the respective countries, it is the summarizing article by János Mátyás Kovács (281-310) that offers the most comprehensive view on the topic. Kovács expresses his surprise that the NIE, which according to him would have been rather well-suited to examine the transitional economics after 1989, failed to make much of an impact in Eastern Europe. He notes that several of the authors state that "institutionalism has not yet been institutionalized" (289) – at least not in the field of economics. Also, the few scholars who worked on the NIE did not contribute much to the international development of the field. Other surprising findings were that the NIE competes with neoclassical theory in Eastern Europe, and that many economists there eclectically combine different paradigms that do not really fit together well. Kovács describes the various cultural encounters in the NIE and offers a typology of East European economists, whom he sees mostly as cultural hybrids.

Finally, an epilogue (311-335) summarizes the findings of the DIOSCURI project. The editors point to the strong evidence regarding their assumptions that hybridization is more common than the "presuming Western-led colonization (or Eastern selfcolonization)" (311), and that the cultural changes in East-Central and Southeastern Europe were similar. On the other hand, they admit that the research hypotheses about the development of proto-capitalist potential under socialism and the possible Eastern cultural assets on the global marketplace need further study.

This is an important volume for anyone who is interested in the economic cultures of post-socialist Eastern Europe, because it offers a rare wealth of empirical data as well as case studies on a large number of countries that were conducted using a consistent set of research questions and hypotheses. It is unfortunate that most of the fieldwork was concluded in 2007, and only a few of the articles touch upon the global financial crisis of 2008/2009 and its aftermath, as its impact might be of some relevance for this topic. The qualitative approach, using "thick description" in the case studies, makes this book highly readable for non-economists as well. Its finding that Eastern Europeans in many cases actively influence and change the economic and institutional models imported from the west, creating new ones with various degrees of hybridization, should encourage economists, cultural scientists, sociologists and historians to further challenge the dominant narrative of Eastern Europeans who simply import their economic concepts from the West.

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