the book's print run of 2,000 copies and the antiwestern atmosphere in Russia following the invasion and occupation of Ukraine suggest that it will find the readership it deserves only with great difficulty.

For western readers, the text's main contribution is its application of western social science to Russian politics. While much academic writing focuses on small, narrow topics, this ambitious analysis tries to explain the broad sweep of Russian political development since 1991. Most valuable is its emphasis on the demand side in driving democratization forward. The role of Russian citizens in Russian politics is often overlooked, with all the attention on Vladimir Putin and his cronies. This text reminds us of the possibility that Russian society might eventually be able to assert itself against the overwhelming power of the Russian state.

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Putin kaputt!? Russlands neue Protestkultur. By Mischa Gabowitsch. Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2013. 441 pp. Notes. Photographs. Tables. Paper.

Mischa Gabowitsch—an expert on Russia's new protest culture—collected information from both protesters and protest organizers during the 2011/12 demonstrations in Moscow. His account of the events in Russia during the Duma and presidential elections sheds new light on the state of the Russian nation.

Gabowitsch debunks several clichés that western media pundits have spread about the protests. The most prominent cliché is that the protests were mainly supported by the new Russian middle class. Gabowitsch's findings, however, suggest that the decisive factor for participating in the demonstrations was education, not income. The second cliché is that the protests were a phenomenon of the capital; and yet, the first demonstrations did not occur in Moscow. Instead, they began in Russia's Far East in December 2008, when the Kremlin introduced a high toll on right-hand-drive cars. This measure heavily impacted imports from Japan, which are vital for this peripheral region. The third cliché says that electoral fraud was the main cause of the protests. Certainly, this topic played an important role, but more importantly, the demonstrations were informed by a general sense of disenfranchisement. In Moscow, the feeling of political disempowerment grew stronger after Dmitrii Medvedev and Vladimir Putin's joint announcement in September 2011 that only the latter would run for president. Consequently, the urban population came to the conclusion that the accession to presidential power was not a democratic procedure but a cynical show.

Gabowitsch structures his book into nine chapters. He starts off by describing what scholars customarily characterize as the "Putin system." He stresses the significance of the so-called vertical power structure in Moscow, which creates a new kind of patrimonialism. The state administration relies primarily on informal practices and on unconditional loyalty to the leader. The protests brought about a change in the political economy of emotions: Before 2011, the public space was reserved for Soviet-style ceremonies; the expression of individual civic feelings was confined to private apartments. After 2012, this tacit rule of the game was abolished. In the last two years, Putin has had to resort to police measures and disciplinary legislation in order to reclaim the public space.

Chapter 2 addresses the changing attitudes of electoral observers. In 2011, Russian citizens witnessed the electoral fraud and began to question the institutions of the power system. The protesters were fed up with the traditional staging of elections as a pseudo-democratic ritual. Chapter 3 focuses on the oppositional milieus.

Gabowitsch discusses the biographies of the protest leaders Aleksei Naval'nyi, Il'ia Iashin, and Sergei Udal'tsov. However, the Russian opposition does not share a common political ideology but is united merely by its resistance to Putin's government. Gabowitsch points to the fact that protesters rarely organize political parties. Instead, they often form ad hoc groups without a strong internal coherence. This can be explained by the fact that there is no tradition of political protest in the narrow sense of the word. Protests focus on everyday problems. Once these issues are resolved, the protests disappear. Next is an anatomy of the notorious Pussy Riot case. The punk performance in Moscow's Christ the Savior Cathedral on February 21, 2012, was the subject of deep controversy in Russian society. Gabowitsch traces the band's origins to the art scene of the Russian underground. He points to the strict separation of protest and religion in Russia and stresses Pussy Riot's engagement on behalf of the LGBT community.

In chapter 5, Gabowitsch discusses the potential for new perceptions of the political reality. Protesters reclaimed the public space for civil society and found new ways of expressing their discontent. For example, in so-called nano-demonstrations, toy figures with tiny posters featuring political slogans were deployed. These nano-demonstrations posed a dilemma for the authorities: the police could either be ridiculed for clearing an assembly of toys or leave them and let the other side win. Chapter 6 addresses the protesters' rejection of violence, while chapter 7 discusses the policemen who defend the current system, not because they share the official ideology, but because they enjoy certain privileges.

Gabowitsch next discusses the transnational dimension of the protests and attributes it to the weak influence of western NGOs. Overall, he estimates the probability of a color revolution in Russia as low. The final chapter does not provide a list of results but an intermediary assessment of the situation. The new culture of protest can only yield results if the social elite succeeds in spreading its ideas to the power apparatus and if Russia's regions demand more rights in the federation.

Gabowitsch has produced a highly valuable book with new insights on the Russian opposition movement. It is interesting to compare his findings to the current situation of Russian civil society, which seems to be paralyzed by the official patriotism. The near future will tell just how sustainable Russia's new protest culture really is.

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