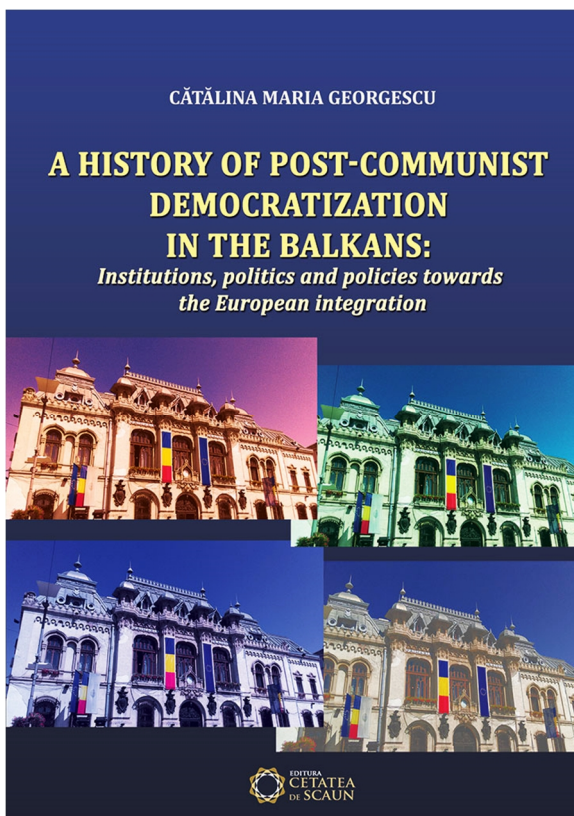


## BOOK REVIEW



**Cătălina Maria Georgescu, A History of Post-Communist Democratization in the Balkans: Institutions, politics and policies towards the European integration, Târgoviște: Cetatea de Scaun Publishing House ISBN 978-606-537-306-8, 157 pages.**

**Anca Parmena Olimid\***



The book of professor Cătălina Maria Georgescu aims to explore the history of democratization in the Balkans by applying the “new historical institutionalist approach” to the study of public organizations. The book features complex methodological details in which conceptual representations, historical conditionalities, political implications and current approaches are emphasized in order to understand the continuous change in the post-communist policy-making.

Professor Cătălina Georgescu’s main interest in her book, *A History of Post-Communist Democratization in the Balkans: Institutions, politics and policies towards the European integration*, is to investigate “whether convergence or divergence prevails in terms of the evolution of public organizations within South Eastern Europe following the fall of communism”

(p. 9).

---

\* Associate Professor, PhD, University of Craiova, Faculty of Social Sciences, Political Sciences specialization, CEPOS Staff, Phone: 0040251418515, Email: parmena2002@yahoo.com.

## Book Review

Through professor Georgescu's extensively applied historical neo-institutionalism to institutional dynamics analysis, the reader is given insight into how the path dependent approaches to European integration are built and enabled. Georgescu is also careful to re-configure the "conceptual map" of Europeanization and the patterns of integration.

She sets out the approach to the "ideal" alternatives within the institutionalist dynamics analysis and its reflections encompassing the conceptual framework for the integration of the new European Union member states arguing that "the current situation discusses the application of Europeanization process in governance applicable to the European Union integration framework of New Member States" (p. 55).

Professor Georgescu's emphasis allows the reader to "re-think future research" and to configure the "governance and intra-governmental relations under the European integration logic". It is not, therefore, surprising that the research mainly focuses on Romania. As a "post-communist political transition", the idea of the "backwardness of transition societies of South-Eastern Europe" is present throughout the last two chapters.

For professor Georgescu, the multi-level governance models "corroborated to institutional structures intended to increase citizens' participation" (p. 101). Professor Georgescu's study of the "Europeanization phenomenon" and its "path dependences approaches" is a great opportunity for the reader to accommodate those aspects beyond the political theory. Drawing on complex cross-sectorial analysis of EU conditionality-administrative capacity-reform drive, Georgescu argues that the "return of Europe" approach was the "commonplace for political discourses within the South Eastern policies" (p. 109).

The book successfully seeks a balance between EU conditionalities and norms and the South Eastern European analyses in the governance reform process. Precisely by highlighting these EU imposed conditionalities, *A History of Post-Communist Democratization in the Balkans: Institutions, politics and policies towards the European integration* offers a relevant review of the post-communist democratization in the Balkans. In sum, this is an excellent book that invites the reader to seek new approaches between politics and administration, history and law, social and institutional in their common findings for democratization and integration. Professor Georgescu urges history of democratization to work towards a theory of a successful integration of the New EU Member States. The invitation is generous and throughout innovative, and is certainly worth discovering Eastern Europe through national representation and cross-administrative patterns.

---

### Book review Info

*Received:* October 18 2015

*Accepted:* November 20 2015

---