

The Power of Systems: How Policy Sciences Opened Up the Cold War World. By Eglė Rindzevičiūtė. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016. xi, 312 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Photographs. \$49.95, hard bound.
doi: 10.1017/slr.2018.361

In this thoroughly researched study of the role of Cold War systems analysis, political sociologist Eglė Rindzevičiūtė turns an eye for policy analysis to the history of the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), a complex analysis think-tank in Vienna that began in the early 1970s as a Soviet-American collaboration before blossoming into its current status as a global institute with over twenty member nations. Combining a policy analyst's sensitivity to practical politics and a historian's instinct for contingency and context, Rindzevičiūtė argues that Cold War technoscience collaboration cannot be understood from any single perspective: in particular, with IIASA as little-known emblem, it is the east-west scientific collaboration, even more than Soviet-American militarized competition, that sped the transition from a bipolar Cold War analytic frame to the contemporary complex global—and especially environmental—system perspective. While inviting debate about the concepts *collaboration* and *competition*, this optimistic argument is admirably focused in scope, given its deep engagement with the IIASA archives and command of the scholarship on Cold War cybernetics. Namely, the book diagnoses how the scientific co-production of universal problem analysis, such as the computer modeling of the nuclear winter and climate change, championed a global cybernetic systems approach between the 1970s and the 1990s. That approach, in turn, by taking on systems that both served and exceeded east-west tensions, also challenged those Cold War frames, especially the notions of linear control that Soviet governance both operated on and contributed to system analysis. Perhaps one may read this as a veiled tale about how the Soviet system undid itself by the international runaway *success* of its own understanding of itself—and much else—as a special system.

While often wonky turf, systems analysis is easy to understand in principle: it is a type of problem solving that analyzes the component pieces and procedures in a system for optimal performance. That promise of optimal system design, Rindzevičiūtė demonstrates, powers a lion's share of the technocratic dreams and ideals of Cold War governance, whether the technocrat Robert McNamara, the IIASA director and Harvard business professor Roger Levien, or Premier Aleksei Kosygin, who drove the effort to establish IIASA from the Soviet side. This broader trend in latter-twentieth-century governance Rindzevičiūtė names, somewhat clunkily, “system-cybernetic” (1), although her argument, I think, rises to its best in describing the many contextualized ambiguities that attended Cold War technoscience: it is true that operations research and systems analysis can serve any master, whether liberalizing or authoritarian, although, as she argues, the results of systems analysis cannot be separated from the specific process, time, and place with which such a master—or in this case, many masters—do systems analysis. In her analysis we hear a timely reminder that there is perhaps nothing as subversively political as the technocrat's claim that his—and, here, it is almost always a *his*—preferred approach to power is neutral.

Overall, in seven chapters and an epilogue, *The Power of Systems* adds a granular transnational history to the recent literature on twentieth-century global systems thought, whose leading lights might include Hunter Heyck's intellectual history *Age of System* (2015) and Paul Edwards' history of climate change science, *A Vast Machine* (2010), whose well-known first book, *The Closed World*, this book's subtitle responds to. Nonclassified world problems occupied the efforts of IIASA scientists: food, water, energy, agriculture, and especially the environment—and the concluding chapters on the computer modeling of nuclear winter and acid rain stands out for their readable

storytelling and dramatic action. In all, Rindzevičiūtė has provided a rare glimpse through the lens of a boutique institutional history of a time and place—in a refurbished mansion outside of Vienna—where east and west fashioned in person an analytic view so global it eventually overshadowed, at least on occasion, their own distinct worldviews. In this hopeful glimpse of the past, the book's limitations are more than matched by its multilingual strengths.

BENJAMIN PETERS
University of Tulsa

Das Ukraine-Bild in Deutschland: Die Rolle der russischen Medien. Wie Russland die deutsche Öffentlichkeit beeinflusst. By Susanne Spahn. Schriften zur internationalen Politik, Band 51. Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovač, 2016. ix, 170 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Illustrations. €79.80, paper.
doi: 10.1017/slr.2018.362

In what is perceived as an age of fake news, the study of media might be able to shed light upon the alleged or positive influence of the Russian state on another country's public sphere. Susanne Spahn has studied German coverage of contemporary Ukraine. She interprets state-controlled mass media as well as the internet as tools of Russian soft power extensively used to shape perceptions of eastern Europe in the west. Ukraine serves as a case in point.

Peter Pomorantsev and others have introduced the distinction between propaganda (as a twentieth century concept, meaning a “great narrative”) and post-modern political influence, which does not intend to create believers but to obscure and discredit realities by creating ever new stories about a certain subject. According to Spahn, Russia's goal in the current political conflict is to discredit western mainstream media and its content and—as in Soviet times—to sow discord between the United States and western Europe. In Europe itself, Moscow aims to discredit the European Union and its institutions. Politically, Moscow supports positions of the extreme Right and the extreme Left in order to delegitimize centrist and liberal positions in the public sphere.

The main part of Spahn's work discusses different channels of influence created by the Russian government to reach out to the German public. Among these, she notes *RT Deutsch*, *Ruptly TV*, as well as *RIA Novosti* and *Stimme Russlands* as official media funded by Russia. The author also portrays the unofficial (“hybrid”) agencies used to influence German social media such as “troll factories” and hackers connected to the Russian state, but also somewhat detached in order to achieve “plausible deniability” of state interference. In addition to the official and disguised media outlets of the Russian state, Spahn discusses those German news channels that she deems to cooperate with the interests of Russia and those experts who play a prominent role in both Russian and German media and who advocate positions of the Putin government. Among them she points to anti-American, antisemitic, and right-wing actors who promote positions like “Germany is an American colony” and spread a conspiratorial world view. Among the most prominent are Jürgen Elsässer, who heads the journal *Compact*, and Alexander Rahr, who used to work for the think-tank DGAP and is now connected to Gazprom's German partners. Gabriele Krone-Schmalz, a former journalist of Germany's public television, is a best-selling author of books who defends Russian policies and blames the conflict in Ukraine on the west. In conjunctions with politicians of the right-wing *Alternative für Deutschland* and the post-communist *Die Linke*, she may be described as one of the stars of this genre. While Spahn describes