


Eglė Rindzevičiūtė. *The Will to Predict: Orchestrating the Future through Science.*

Ithaca: Cornell University Press 2023. 306 pp. Abbreviations. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Figures. \$56.95, hard cover.

Sari Autio-Sarasma 

University of Helsinki

Email: sari.autio-sarasma@helsinki.fi

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Eglė Rindzevičiūtė's book *The Will to Predict* examines the history of scientific prediction as a concept and as a form of practice. Scientific prediction—being part of long-term planning—relates to the legitimacy and power of government. The author studies the practice of scientific prediction through the case of Soviet Russia from technical, political, social, and institutional perspectives. The book looks at how the meaning of scientific prediction changed and diversified during the time and how different notions of the concept were articulated in different areas of science. According to the author, rationale behind the book is the existence of studies about predictive expertise in capitalist economics but less so in non-western, non-liberal governmental contexts. This makes Soviet Russia a well-argued case study: it was future oriented, planning dedicated, and science oriented, albeit an authoritarian, society.

The Will to Predict provides an excellent study of scientific prediction through and beyond the Soviet case. Starting from the history of the concept, Rindzevičiūtė gives the reader tools to understand the complex and changing meaning of the scientific prediction from Comtean positivism to cybernetic sensibility. The main issues in the Soviet Russian case were transparency and access to information. These issues defined the ability to do statistical forecasting, use prediction in planning, and develop management from the Russian imperial era to the Soviet 1980s. Another case-specific factor was the changing political climate, which affected the ability of experts to work and survive.

The book interestingly shows how eastern and western experts developed the idea of scientific prediction together and separately during the Cold War. Cybernetic prediction was particularly influential, generating both enthusiasm and criticism on both sides of the divide. In the case of Soviet Russia, two different logics of prediction, positivist and cybernetic, were intertwined. Known in Soviet Russia as *nauchnoe prognozirovannie* (scientific forecasting, 73), it was expected to provide data on society, technology, and the economy. An especially important prediction was in economic planning, used to optimize the process of production from all-union to enterprise levels. Transnational exchanges during the time of the thaw brought western policy sciences, decision analysis, operational research (OR), and systems analysis to the Soviet Union. New ideas were demanded. Soviet industries and the Soviet economy had become more complex, and a new kind of knowledge was needed for governmental purposes.

According to Rindzevičiūtė, the purpose of the book was to develop a sociological and historical study of the plurality of the prediction concept, “not an exhaustive discussion of the different types of scientific prediction” (187). This aim is well achieved, although the book does provide thorough discussion of different types of scientific prediction. The discussion of a myriad theories, concepts, and approaches requires strict focus and concentration from the reader. For those interested in the development of Soviet society and related scientific thinking, the book provides a thorough introduction to the concepts and models from the early Soviet period to the Cold War era and beyond. It gives the reader an insight into Soviet scientific thought at different periods, introducing the ideas of Kondrat'ev, Shchedrovitskii, Lefebvre and Moiseev, to name but a few.

A short book review does not do justice to Eglė Rindzevičiūtė's multi-level study. It has so many levels of approach to the topic that it is impossible to point out the main findings. The book provides information on the ideas and challenges behind scientific prediction. The author introduces a myriad of actors in the field of scientific prediction and the development of different theories and practices. The book sheds light on the use of reflexive control as a tool of prediction but also in the Russian military strategy in the context of Ukraine. Overall, the book shows attempts to organize uncertainty through the orchestration of knowledge and action in Soviet Russia and beyond. As the author concludes: "Refocusing the scholarly discussion on the will to predict scientifically as democratic orchestration of different forms of knowledge and agencies, hopefully, will help us better understand the failures so that we can fail better" (193). The *Will to Predict* is a highly scholarly book based on archival material and remarkable readings. Eglė Rindzevičiūtė shows that she is one of the top scholars in the field.

Jeffrey Mankoff. *Empires of Eurasia: How Imperial Legacies Shape International Security.*

New Haven: Yale University Press, 2022. xii, 384 pp. Notes. Index. Maps. \$40.00, hard bound.

Michael A. Reynolds

Princeton University

Email: mar123@princeton.edu

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"The early 21st century," Jeffrey Mankoff writes in his new book, "is shaping up to be a new age of empire in Eurasia" (2). Events since the book's publication in 2022 have only lent this observation both greater evidence and greater urgency. With Russians invoking imperial precedents while invading Ukraine, Iranians running military operations outside their borders all throughout the Middle East, Turks carrying out military strikes in Iraq and Syria while celebrating the Ottoman dynasty, and China reaffirming its right and intention to reabsorb Taiwan by force if necessary, the vision of a stable world order consisting of sovereign, clearly delimited, and mutually respectful nation-states engaging in trade and addressing common challenges through multilateral institutions under the benevolent hegemony of the United States continues to fade. Empires and imperial ambitions, it seems, are again all the rage.

The theme of empire has received an enormous amount of scholarly attention over the past three decades. Whereas for most of the twentieth century empire was seen as an atavistic and morally deplorable form of political organization, the Yugoslav wars spurred many to reconsider empire. In contrast to the modern nation state that ineluctably pursued ethnolinguistic homogeneity and centralized rule, empires were now celebrated as cosmopolitan structures that accommodated difference while facilitating economic and cultural interaction among their diverse parts. The field of international relations, however, has notably lagged in generating analyses of empire. Born in the wake of World War I, that misnamed discipline took as its subject matter the interactions among sovereign states, not nations. Disciplinary preferences for theoretical parsimony and nomothetic approaches incentivized scholars in international relations and its offshoot security studies to take for granted that the entities whose interactions they study are indeed nations or sufficiently similar to them functionally.