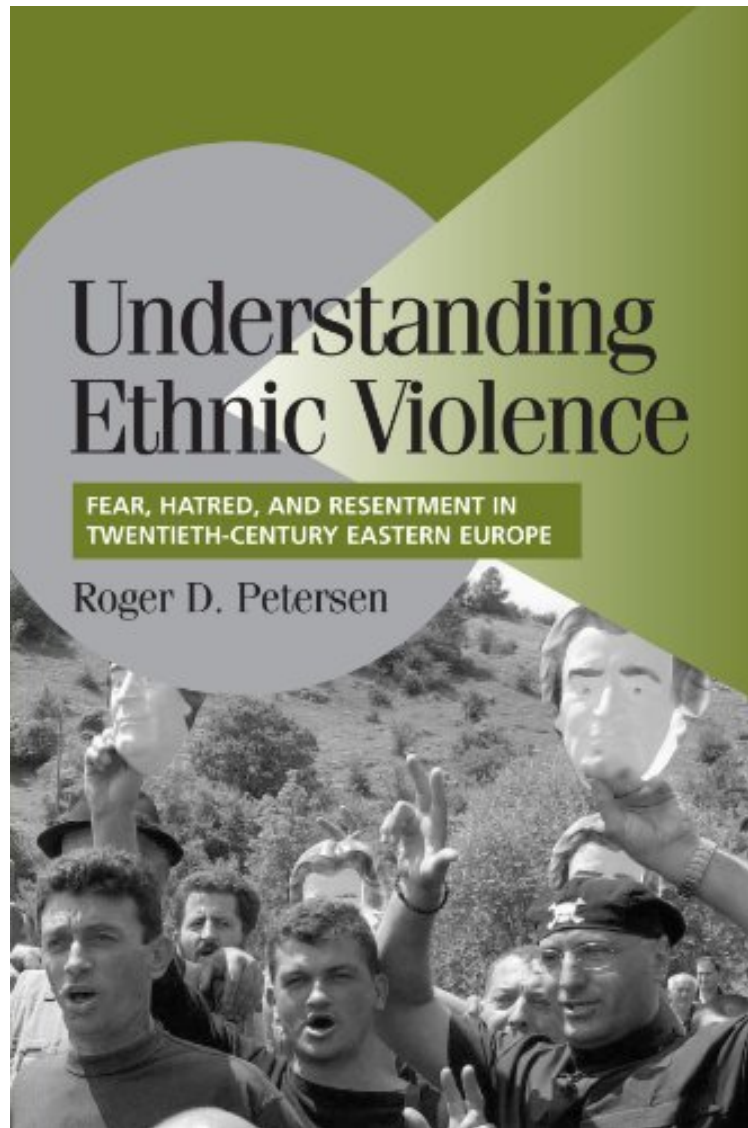


[PDF] Understanding Ethnic Violence: Fear, Hatred, and Resentment in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe (Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics)

Understanding Ethnic Violence: Fear, Hatred, and Resentment in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe (Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics)

Roger D. Petersen

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Roger D. Petersen : Understanding Ethnic Violence: Fear, Hatred, and Resentment in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe (Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Understanding Ethnic Violence: Fear, Hatred, and Resentment in

Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe (Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics):

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Historical Writer
By Orysia Bilyk Earhart
As a fiction writer dealing with Eastern Europe, I've found "Understanding Ethnic Violence" to be invaluable. No one who tries to understand the historical development in Eastern Europe should miss reading this book because it is by learning the origins and motivations of these ethnic divisions, can one understand, though not sanction, the actions of the current ethnic violence which persist to this day. Unjust groups will always rouse up hatred. We can allay that anger by our understanding of their needs and the best way to meet them. This book not only explains the motivations, but also presents the difficult lessons we need to learn to prevent hatred from escalating. This book belongs on every leader's desk.

4 of 6 people found the following review helpful. insightful, fascinating yet prejudiced (how else?)
By Parrotfriend
That social, cultural and political processes should not be evaluated solely on the basis of international treaties, statistical data and purely rational considerations is a very realistic and useful insight. The application of four emotions Fear, Hatred, Resentment and Rage to explore the causes and consequences of ethnic conflict provides a more nuanced and deeper interpretation of history deserves only praise since too much in human life cannot be represented by mere rationalizations and abstractions so typical of more traditional approaches in historical and social studies. Roger Petersen can only be praised for selecting a fascinating region for his study as well as a fascinating methodology. History and ethnic interactions in Eastern Europe come to life as one reads the well-written and compact chapters. For this I'd give the book 5 stars. Yet when it comes to the application of the method some other things seem to deserve a note. I'm not qualified to evaluate Petersen's take on the ethnic conflicts in the former Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, yet as far as the Baltics are concerned, a couple of observations seem to be in place. First, in regard to the Soviet occupation of the Baltic countries in 1940 there is tendency to underscore some figures in relation to the minorities, such as Jews and Russians, especially to highlight the numbers of victims of ethnic violence perpetrated by the nationalistic majorities - Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians. At the same time the staggering numbers of the victims among these "majorities" who were shot, tortured and/or deported to the Gulag (and finally almost made into minorities after the WW II during the second Soviet occupation) by an active participation of these very same minorities in the Soviet terror rarely seem to surface. It creates an impression of something approaching a certain moral double standard when it comes to the impossible evaluation of who suffered more and who might have had some, if any, justification in perpetrating the violent acts of hatred. If any numbers are given to substantiate and/or illustrate the violent landscape of social interaction in during the first Soviet occupation as well as the chaotic first weeks of the operation Barbarossa, the victims of both sides must be counted so that both sides are treated fairly. The author seems to prefer to give details of the account of the suffering minorities, while generalizing the suffering of the presumed majorities. That does not help in understanding the dynamics of those volatile days, apart from being simply unfair. John Ginkel's chapter on the Reconstruction of Independent States deals primarily with the relations among the ethnic Balts in all three countries on the one hand and the Russian and Russian-speaking minorities on the other. He argues convincingly that resentment more often than not is the ground of the present day ethnic conflicts in the Baltics. The whole chapter is laid out chronologically and presents evidence of the remarkable shrinkage of ethnic Balt population in Estonia and Latvia as clearly as possible. This explains the fact that Latvians, for example, have almost become an indigenous minority (Table, p. 141). This process is by no means accidental. It is the direct result of the occupying policies of the Soviet regime. If again numbers of the Stalin's deportations would have been given, if the numbers of those ethnic Balts who fled their countries because of the second Soviet occupation during the last stages of WW II were given, it would be much clearer what factors motivate the policies of language and citizenship in today's Baltic region. Aware of the reasons of this peculiar situation, Ginkel talks about the ethnic conflicts and ethnic groups and their interaction as if he would be talking about ethnic groups that have co-existed for centuries in the territories of the Baltic states without the very recent process of colonization by the Soviet occupying regime. An ethnic group in this case is not just an ethnic group - it is a representative and instrument of a colonizing power, in this case, the Russian ethnic group with no pre-war roots in the Baltics, is indeed a group of deliberately relocated colonists with a goal to assimilate the indigenous people and eventually make them into a ethnic minority. It was not a natural, or more precisely, un-coerced, process as it seems to appear from Ginkel's otherwise informative chapter. The whole talk about restrictions regarding citizenship and state language proficiency requirements then acquire a different nuance instead of being represented in a rather formulaic "majority/minority" juxtaposition. The picture is more complicated than appears from Ginkel's presentation for whenever a force is involved in artificially planting an ethnic group in another group's political and cultural milieu one must look further into the real origins of the present day reality of tension. It is understandable that an author does not want to take a position of favoritism toward any particular ethnic group. It is to be appreciated. Despite the aspiration toward objectivity, if such a thing is indeed within reach, a certain favoritism toward certain minorities is precisely what can be noticed in Ginkel's as well as Petersen's omissions. In other words, what they don't elaborate upon is equally telling as that which they explore in great numerical detail. Every scheme or model is reductive yet here one sees more than equalizing reduction of historical and cultural nuances. This is exactly the most disappointing feature of an otherwise great book.

This book seeks to identify the motivations of individual perpetrators of ethnic violence. The work develops four models gleaned from existing social science literatures: Fear, Hatred, Resentment, and Rage. The empirical chapters apply the models to important events involving ethnic conflict in Eastern Europe, from the 1905 Russian Revolution to the 1990's collapse of Yugoslavia. Each historical chapter generates questions about the timing and target of ethnic violence. The four models are then applied to determine which is most effective in explaining the observed patterns of ethnic conflict.

"...an important and original contribution that deserves attention from anyone interested in ethnic conflict, eastern European politics and history, or indeed mass political behavior." Slavic "[A]n original look at the emotional motivations behind ethnic violence.... Recommended." Choice "Thought-provoking..." Foreign Affairs
About the Author
Roger D. Petersen holds B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in Political Science from the University of Chicago. Since 2001, he has taught in the Political Science Department at MIT, where he was recently named Arthur and Ruth Sloan Professor of Political Science. Petersen studies comparative politics with a special focus on conflict and violence, mainly in Eastern Europe, but also in Colombia and other regions. He is the author of *Resistance and Rebellion: Lessons from Eastern Europe* (Cambridge, 2001) and *Understanding Ethnic Violence: Fear, Hatred, and Resentment in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe* (Cambridge, 2002). He also has an interest in comparative methods and has co-edited, with John Bowen, *Critical Comparisons in Politics and Culture* (Cambridge, 1999). He teaches classes on civil war, ethnic politics and civil-military relations.