

2003 Mattei Dogan Award:

Mark R. Beissinger

This outstanding book provides a penetrating and brilliantly documented explanation of the collapse of the Soviet state, one of the defining events of the late 20th Century. Beissinger's explanation focuses on the politics of ethnic nationalism as the core set of mechanisms that overwhelmed the Soviet state and caused its collapse. The book makes us think about causal processes in a new way by examining through event data the dynamic process of state devolution and collapse. The book is exemplary in building its causal account in a systematic manner, conceptually and empirically demonstrating through multiple methods the validity of its argument. Beissinger provides a masterful case study building and extending modern political sociology as an explanatory project grounded in careful and systematic assessment of the known facts.