language, abolition of the death penalty, and weakening of the authority of the National Security Council, which was once the basis of the political power of the military generals. In some cases (such as the recent transformation of presidential elections from a parliamentary to a popular vote), amendments were finalized by referenda.

Özbudun and Gençkaya emphasize the need for further substantial amendments, if not an entirely new Constitution, as part of Turkey’s democratization process. Yet the recent expansion of the judiciary’s defacto authority has discouraged such changes. The authors elaborate on the crisis in 2008, when Parliament amended the constitution to lift the ban on headscarves only for university students, while still keeping it for professors and school students. The amendment was passed by 411 of 550 deputies and signed by the president. The Constitutional Court, however, struck it down, referring to the principle of secularism, although article 148 of the Constitution explicitly rejected such judicial review. With the Court’s new self-declared review authority, amending the Turkish Constitution has become very difficult.

Ahmet T. Kuru
San Diego State University


Keith Darden, an associate professor of political science at Yale University, has produced an ambitious study of the international trade policy of 15 post-Soviet countries in the 1990s.

Darden’s thesis is that “the economic ideas of high-level government officials induced their preference for international institutions and economic policy, and that, with few exceptions, these preferences translated directly into government choice” (p. 309). He divides the 15 countries into “integralists” aiming at “specialized, monopolistic cooperation” (p. 306) opting for post-Soviet cooperation, liberal “ideas championing market competition” preferring the World Trade Organization (WTO), and mercantilists seeing “international economic exchange as exploitative” (p. 307).

The book consists of three parts. The first part, theory and methodology, contains four chapters, laying out three international trajectories and reviewing theory and measurements. The second part, also with four chapters, reviews political and economic developments in the 15 post-Soviet states. The final three chapters offer alternative explanations and statistical tests, a causal history, and conclusions.

Darden’s thesis—that ideas are vital—is credible. All too often, the importance of ideas is de-emphasized in a search for interests. If the author
had stopped at writing an academic article, he would have been fine, but his theme becomes more complicated when he moves to details.

His concepts are problematic. Only “liberals” identified themselves as liberals, while no “integralists” or “autarks” self-identified as such. The three Baltic countries, Georgia, Armenia, and Kyrgyzstan, and, partially, Russia cherished liberalism in its classical European sense, but only the first six opted for the WTO, while moderate reformer Moldova also did. Nobody called themselves “integralist.” Three countries stuck to the Soviet economic system, Belarus, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan, but Darden calls Belarus “integralist,” together with Kazakhstan, Russia, and Tajikistan, while he labels Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan “autarkic,” together with the slow reformers Ukraine and Azerbaijan. Moldova, Ukraine, and Azerbaijan belong together as they show in GUAM.

Darden avoids making any objective measurement of the ideas such as the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development has done of actual reforms. Instead, he delves into rather mysterious assessments of the countries through 200 interviews in 8 countries, such as: “The interviews also revealed significant pockets of liberal ideas within the Armenian government” (p. 187). Having talked economics at length with Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze and Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev in the late 1990s, I can affirm that Nazarbayev was much more economically liberal than Shevardnadze ever was, which contradicts Darden’s thesis.

Darden is right that economic ideas matter, but they are not the only factor. Countries physically dependent on Russia (Belarus and Kazakhstan) had little choice but to get along with Russia. Weak countries with more scary countries in their neighborhoods (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Armenia) preferred Russia as an ally regardless of economic system. Ukraine and Azerbaijan felt secure enough to keep a distance from Russia, while they lacked natural partners. Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan were truly autarkic. Thus, a mixture of economic ideas and geopolitics comes to the fore, not ideas only.

The large second part of the book is the least useful. It is either too large or too small. It summarizes the politics, economics, and ideas in the 15 states in a manner too close to caricature. Mikhail Fradkov was never a liberal; Yevgeny Primakov was no economist; many dates are slightly incorrect, etc. The data are overexploited. The simple classification of people, as liberal, integralist, or mercantilist is not very helpful or realistic. As anywhere, many politicians express different views on different occasions.

In chapter 9, Darden formulates a large number of alternative hypotheses, but none of them has any evident author, and the key alternatives are avoided.

In sum, the overall perspective of this book is better than its details, and it would have been more useful as a long academic article than as a book. This is a preserve of specialists.