Book Reviews

Political Allegiance after European Integration, by J. White (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, ISBN 9780230279780); xv+266pp., £60.00 hb.

At a time of intense doubts about the process of European economic integration, due to the ongoing euro financial crisis, the work of Jonathan White offers an important and detailed analysis of the European Union’s possible future role as it is confronted by the global meltdown, growing discontent among Europeans and, at the same time, the challenges to western democratic political systems. This study is a timely empirical and theoretical contribution to the question of political identification in the European Union, which seeks to question the concept of political allegiance by examining popular representations of such substantive issues as money, work, financial systems, war and peace, and taxation etc. His approach is novel, but fascinating, exploring how taxi drivers in different European cities (Swansea, Reading, Norwich, Kassel, Würzburg, Lübeck, Erfurt, Plzeň, Liberec and Ostrava) construct political bonds through discursive practices. In so doing, White offers an original interpretation of the social underpinnings of political community and raises broader questions about the relationship between society and polity.

The book is divided into six main chapters. Chapters 1 and 2 are devoted to setting the theoretical agenda and justifying his methodological choices. This part of the book is very carefully argued and is theoretically innovative. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 concentrate on investigating the key ideas associated with a political bond: the ‘political common’ or existence and nature of shared political problems, collective positioning and the perceived credibility of political projects. At the core of the analysis of common salient problems shared by these fragmented groups of taxi drivers – all male and living in three countries: the UK, Germany and the Czech Republic – are economics, society and law, and finally, relations between peoples. If there is a problem with this study, and it is a relatively minor one given the excellence of the research, it is the methodological limits imposed by the sample and the segment of population chosen; it would have been interesting to have more countries involved and additional social categories, since the polarization of the ‘political common’ surely also refers to ideological positioning and cultural traditions – this would also have broadened the study and given it a more interdisciplinary flavour, had the author engaged with the anthropological literature on the EU.

Finally, it contains more jargon than is strictly necessary, but this is compensated for by useful summaries included at the end of each main analytical chapter, as well as by an appendix outlining the research process. The book is a must-read for politicians and policy-makers as well as for academic theorists of European identity. It provides a refreshing and cutting-edge approach to the study of political allegiance and modernity.

MARION DEMOSSIER
University of Bath


This book presents the state of EU law on public services and, collectively, gives a legal answer to the big question: what happens when law developed to regulate markets is applied to public services? The answer is by no means simple. The authors’ work covers key policy areas (public
procurement, media, labour, health) and showcases different concepts that can be used to protect and develop solidarity and public services: services of general interest, social services of general interest, and more detailed exceptions such as culture or public morality. Lawyers all, some of the authors might strike policy experts as a bit too optimistic about the benefits of market integration and the ease of balancing solidarity and good policy with EU legal compliance. Preceded by a fine introduction by Cremona, all chapters will be useful. For the general social science reader, there are two especially important chapters. Heike Schweitzer gives a review of the intellectual history and logic of ‘services of general economic interest’, showing how it evolved differently in national contexts and how the concept in EU law differs from – and even contradicts – traditional approaches. It is invaluable for understanding the debates surrounding this issue, which the English-language literature often reduces to universal service requirements in telecommunications or a code for French resistance to liberalization.

Tamara Hervey, in a long chapter on EU health care law, provides probably the most compact and complete analysis in print of this intricate area and makes two important general arguments. First, EU law is no longer just about markets, and as such, any distinction between EU and non-EU does not correlate totally with a division between markets and states, or economy and society. This whole debate, she points out, is about how to adapt EU law, bearing in mind that it now governs and regulates both economy and society. Second, she argues that the logic of the court cases is a logic of fragmentation; that the mode of analysis, and the proportionality tests in EU law discourage holistic, systems thinking and instead, rather, focus on individual people and organizations (pp. 145, 214). This legal direction, which she convincingly presents, runs against both good practice and much current practice in policy-making, in the health sector and elsewhere.

How are we supposed to co-ordinate, integrate, or join up policy when EU law points us in exactly the other direction? The book might not have all the answers, but it clearly restates the developing problem: that policy instruments being used to shield public services from distorting internal market regulations only shield them imperfectly, and in the process, require a level of fragmentation and complex legal compliance, which is arguably bad policy itself.

SCOTT L. GREER
University of Michigan


As the euro area stumbles through its sovereign debt – and existentialist – crisis, the need for a well-informed academic treatment of its governance has never been greater. Hodson’s excellent study both demonstrates a strong grasp of the complex details of euro area governance and provides a clearly defined analytical framework to make sense of these details. The author’s work should be seen as a major contribution to the literature on economic and monetary union (EMU). It is the only comprehensive treatment of euro area governance to date, its focus on the consequences rather than the causes of this governance taking us beyond the bulk of the political science literature on EMU. He is economical with his words: at 170 pages this is not a lengthy tome; however, the main areas are covered succinctly. At the same time, for EMU experts there are many wonderful nuggets of less-known facts and interesting angles on euro area governance.

Although a political economist with experience working in the European Commission on economic governance matters, Hodson focuses his study of the euro area on the new modes of policy-making that EMU has involved – a significant departure from the Community method. In this, he is returning to the subject of his earlier work on the open method of co-ordination. The author tackles all the main elements of euro area governance: the European Central Bank (ECB), Eurogroup, Stability and Growth Pact, Broad Economic Policy Guidelines, as well as the international dimension, both multilateral and bilateral. Ultimately though, Hodson is interested
in euro area governance in order to better understand three other issues: the debate on the sustainability of the single currency without a more centralized approach to economic policy; the search for alternatives to the Community method; and lessons about the EU’s global role that might be drawn from the euro area’s external relations. Hodson’s study is thus of potential interest to a wide range of scholars and graduate students from both EU studies and policy studies more generally.

While excellent and path-breaking, there are areas in which the work could have been improved. Notably, it is too brief for its ambitious undertaking. The new modes of governance analysis and the main themes of the work are occasionally lost in the treatment of the six areas covered. The author should have dedicated more space to their development. Nonetheless, the concluding chapter returns very helpfully to the analysis and to the book’s core themes, pulling the various strands of euro area governance together very nicely indeed.

DAVID HOWARTH
University of Edinburgh


As the EU faces yet another dramatic moment, with the euro crisis prompting further treaty reforms and talk mounting of a ‘breakthrough to a new Europe’, a look back at the history of the European construct and, in particular, at the constitutional developments of the last decade is warranted to provide some much-needed perspective.

Relying on the formula of the first edition of The Evolution of EU Law, from 1999, Paul Craig and Gráinne de Búrca gather, once again, a group of prominent scholars and professionals who offer their assessment of the major changes introduced in different areas of EU law in recent years. The themes covered range from the constitutional classics (legitimacy and democracy, institutional balance, direct effect and primacy, freedom of movement, citizenship), to the more recent and topical subjects (EMU, enlargement, JHA, external relations and competence). While the spectrum is vast, the approach, now as before, is deliberately non-exhaustive. As one contributor (Siofra O’Leary) puts it, the chapters provide a ‘series of snapshots’, which are intended to capture the progressive direction of EU law without purporting to offer the final picture of what is, after all, a constantly moving object. This inherent dynamism translates well in the individual chapters, which discuss rather than describe their subject matter and, at times, ostensibly depart from the ‘traditional narratives’ offered in the literature. Excellent examples are Gráinne de Búrca’s chapter on human rights and Michael Dougan’s chapter on remedies and procedures for enforcing Union law before national courts. Most chapters have a strong theoretical focus, which makes this sizeable book particularly suited for an academic audience and less so for the more general public.

While The Evolution of EU Law is presented as a second edition of the 1999 original, it is in fact a whole new book. Of its 27 chapters, only four (external relations, direct effect and primacy, social policy, and consumer policy) can be considered to be mere updated versions of the first edition and even here there are significant changes in length and structure. Several new topics were added – enlargement, JHA, human rights, citizenship, regulation of financial services, cultural policy – while ‘old’ topics were reassigned and even those contributors who returned to their previous topics often add a new focus to their analysis. Most interestingly, some new chapters on ‘old’ topics (ECJ, equal treatment, environment) engage in direct dialogue with their counterparts from the first edition, stressing the complementary character of the two books. More than a second edition, this is a second volume of an authoritative book series, which will hopefully continue to chart the evolution of EU law in the coming decades.

PATRÍCIA JERÓNIMO
University of Minho Law School

The field of European Studies has seen a growing body of literature examining the question of whether a transnational public sphere can address the perceived democratic deficit. Normative calls for a Habermasian public sphere writ large were countered by intergovernmentalists, who deny the necessity of a public sphere for what they conceive of as an international organization. Unimpressed by this controversy, Koopmans, Statham and collaborators have investigated the emergence and ruptures of such a European public sphere in the making.

The 1990s marked the end of the permissive consensus on EU politics and concomitantly increased the perception of domestic relevance. In this vein, this outstandingly coherent volume conceptualizes the Europeanization of national public spheres as publicized claim-making by collective actors (including media editors) on EU policies. The interaction is either supranational between EU actors, or top-down and bottom-up in a vertical model of EU policy-making and also between EU Member State publics (horizontal Europeanization). Based on the content-coding of a rich set of quality press and tabloid items from the UK, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands and non-EU Switzerland, the findings stress the obstinacy of EU executive and national political elites, with the UK and Switzerland being almost predictable Eurosceptical outliers. Although this appears to be to the detriment of civil society involvement, the contributors refrain from lamenting any absence of democracy. Instead, they suggest a more visible and ideologically-nuanced engagement of national political parties in EU affairs, as these collective actors are closest to the electorates.

The most dissatisfying aspect concerns the sample of countries and media outlets. The study of long-time Eurocritical member Denmark or, of at-that-time candidate country Poland, now among the five most populous, could have produced more surprising results. Similarly, one would have gained more insights into non-elite mass communication on the EU if radio and television broadcasts had not been omitted. A more precise title of this generally rewarding book should read The Making of a European Public Sphere, 1995–2002. The cases presented entirely date back to the period before eastward enlargement, the failure of the constitution and the euro crisis. What is more, the chapter on the significance of the Internet for the Europeanization of public spheres appears to be anachronistic in our days of social media and the blogosphere. On the flipside, the extremely sophisticated research design calls for application in related future projects. And thanks to the superb conclusion by Statham, one can infer on the development of mediated political contestation in and on the EU in the years to come.

ELISABETH KUEBLER
University of Vienna


Regions and regionalism have a wide range of ramifications for contemporary European politics and society. The process of regionalization has brought into question significantly existing identities and structures in Europe, and sought to produce new ones. Even at the height of integration in the 1980s, Europe witnessed clashes over the European structures and procedures, and though the process has brought challenges for many structures and identities in Europe, scholars have tended to highlight the most prominent one, i.e. the nation-state, and its restructuring in an integrated Europe. The other internal and sub-national (regional) factors have been marginalized and understudied. As such, this book takes an innovative direction by ‘taking Europe’s “regions” seriously’.
The volume differentiates the salient features of regions in Europe in order to appreciate better their level of influence in both the local and European arenas. The contributors make a serious attempt to explore how regions have been influencing policies and the decision-making process of the European Union, and what role they are playing in implementing European policies and programmes. They expose the legal, political and economic aspects of the conflict between local regions and European central structures, as well within the Member State, with the intention of highlighting the degree of power enjoyed by these local levels. The cases of Belgium and German Länderr are instructive in understanding how the preferences of the regions limit the regionalization agendas of Europe. The authors also examine the complex interplay between Europeanization and regionalization, wondering how European integration creates more powerful regions with various compensatory mechanisms enacted at the national level. The central and eastern European cases show the complementary processes of democratization and regionalization. The volume provides insights into the local regional elements, the complexities they introduce in different states and the constraint they impose on European regionalism. The chapters help the reader to understand not only the presence of ‘regional regionalism’ in Europe, but also the way it influences the policies and structures of Europe through paradigmatic activities.

It is interesting to note that the editors have put forward a provocative thought in suggesting that Europeanization and the process of regional integration is more evident in the newly joined Member States rather than the founding or intermediate members. The arrangement of chapters corresponds with the accession of Member States to the European Union in order to outline the ‘demonstration effect’. The conclusion provides a summary and assessment of the individual chapters, while the detailed bibliography is commendable. In short, by analyzing sub-national regions and their role in European structures, policies and decision-making, and acknowledging the complexity, diversity and multiplicity of Europe’s region, the authors have initiated a path-breaking effort, and the volume is highly recommendable.

RAJEESH KUMAR
Jawahar Lal Nehru University


Equality law has developed from humble origins in Europe. Article 119 EC (now Article 157 TFEU) on equal pay for equal work between men and women was included in the original Treaty at the behest of France because it feared that its worker protection legislation would place it at a competitive disadvantage in the new common market. The original rationale for the inclusion of equality was therefore a far cry from its moral and social justifications which have since dominated academic discourse.

Yet, as this essay explains (in chapters 1 and 2), the European equality agenda has become the jewel in the crown of the European Social Model and the darling subject of the ‘progressive’. Non-discrimination law attempts to reconcile competitiveness with solidarity through the principle of equality of opportunity. As Somek argues (in chapter 4), non-discrimination law has become a type of neo-liberal friendly social legislation, seeking to correct market-based distribution of wealth and opportunities rather than ‘rescue human life from the relentless grasp of the market’. The aim of non-discrimination law is thus redistribution rather than decommodification.

It is on the basis of this redistributive aim of non-discrimination law that Somek presents the central argument of his essay, namely that the conceptual shortcomings of non-discrimination render the law normatively deficient. In Somek’s words (at p. 93), ‘Anti-discrimination law is a project that tries to accomplish redistributive objectives by deontological means. Deontology focuses on agents, their responsibilities [...] the translation of distribution into deontology systematically invites misreading the law’s redistributive thrust’. It is this deontological ‘space’ which
gives rise to a need for supplementation and creates scope for social engineering (hence, the title of this essay). The problem with this ‘space’, Somek argues, is that non-discrimination law does not avail of clear normative guidance: ‘Rather than stating what it takes to realize equality, anti-discrimination norms merely exclude single acts or cumulative practices that impact unequally on members of different groups’ (at p. 141).

Somek presents a powerful conceptual critique of non-discrimination law as a mechanism to achieve social progress throughout chapters 4 and 5 and considers its implications in chapters 6 and 7. Yet unlike neo-liberal critiques of equality, Somek accepts the utility of non-discrimination law for targeting narrow stereotypes. He seeks to demonstrate the law’s limitations only in order to argue that non-discrimination cannot supply the core of a social model. Somek’s essay strikes a welcome cautionary note. It encourages us to think more critically about the success of the non-discrimination project and its role in balancing the European social and economic agendas.

AMY LUDLOW
University of Cambridge


The ‘German demand’ for a European Germany or a German Europe is once again being fiercely discussed due to the euro crisis. For a short time, it appeared that the fall of the Berlin Wall had put this matter in the past, for Germany had finally managed to create unity and freedom at the same time. However, even then the question arose as to what the unification would mean for German politics? Realists, Maersheimer among them, predicted that Germany would become more assertive and less ‘European’. Federal Chancellor Helmut Kohl constantly asserted that nothing would change. He firmly fixed the Federal Republic to the European institutions with the Treaty of Maastricht and the introduction of the euro. The euro was actually meant to prevent the German domination of Europe, yet the outcome is entirely the opposite. Germany today is less European, and Europe more German, than even Kohl could ever have imagined.

It demands a certain level-headedness and sensitive analysis to interpret this intermediate position between Germanophobia and post-nationalist dreams. Ruth Wittlinger succeeded in this with her study of national identity and politics in unified Germany. Although her book was published just before the crisis, and therefore does not deal with Germany’s actions during the euro crisis, it offers an excellent background to put German politics, as well as all the dilemmas and doubts that come with it, into better perspective.

Wittlinger takes the political culture and identity that was formed after World War II as a reference to describe the period after reunification in terms of continuity and discontinuity. National identity was largely determined by the German feeling of guilt. That this burden has become less oppressive can be drawn from the fact that the issue of Germans as victims was addressed around the turn of the century without there being an immediate moral wave of objection. The problem of the difficult integration of East and West and, especially, the stagnation of the economy, were affecting the country’s confidence. From the outside, Germany appeared to be mighty and powerful, even if the country itself was ruled by feelings of doubt and vulnerability. However, with the growth of the economy in 2006 came a growth in confidence.

In European politics, Germany has always remained active, although today it is no longer capable of fulfilling the role of Europe’s paymaster. Berlin is, however, linking German commitment to a tougher attitude towards other countries more forcefully than before. ‘We do not aim to dominate Europe, we only wish that one sticks to the rules’, said a German diplomat recently. Concerning international politics, it is clear that Germany is adopting a more assertive political line. Not only when it comes to sending out troops, but also when it comes to not participating in
military actions. Wittlinger’s book is an excellent guide for those who wish to refrain from getting carried away by the ever changing notion of Germany, but rather, seek to unravel the underlying patterns of development in German politics.

TON NIJHUIS
Universiteit van Amsterdam


This book is concerned with the scope and nature of the EU’s external influence on domestic policy-making in justice and home affairs in south eastern Europe, with specific emphasis on Croatia and Macedonia. A particular strength of the study is the comparative framework which it employs to compare the EU strategy towards the Western Balkans with past enlargements, and identify the differences of the Europeanization process. This is an area under-researched in the academic literature.

The book’s approach to studying the EU’s routes of influence is to adapt the literature on Europeanization and external governance to the particular circumstances of the Western Balkans’ EU integration process. It recognises that the Western Balkan states are confronted with a different EU enlargement context than previous candidates. A higher degree of uncertainty about future enlargements is combined with the less central role of the EU’s enlargement policy towards neighbouring candidate states. The question therefore remains whether the altered enlargement context has influenced the candidate countries’ calculations of non-adaptation costs, and in so doing, reduced the EU’s capacity for rule transfer to the region.

The data sources and methods are well selected and complementary. The book relies on analysis of EU, Croatian and Macedonian textual materials, media reports and secondary literature as well as 45 semi-structured interviews with officials at EU and national levels. In terms of structure the book consists of two complementary main parts: the first one assesses EU policies and strategies for the south eastern European countries, while the second one sheds light on the receiving end of the EU enlargement process, i.e. the impact of the EU on the domestic policy-making in the region. In both parts references and comparisons are made to former enlargements. Thus, the first part broadly examines the policies that the EU seeks to transfer to candidate countries, with an emphasis on the EU’s ability to adapt its requirements to the reality of the Western Balkans, as well as to specific instruments and strategies employed by the EU to encourage reform in the area of justice and home affairs. This is followed in the second part of the book by studies investigating the impact of enlargement efforts on domestic political processes and structures in Croatia and Macedonia – a section of extremely thorough analysis, which evaluates the Europeanization of border security policies in both countries by tracing the underlying sequence of interactions. Both countries are placed in the context of the wider European region, the author highlighting implications beyond the two case studies.

The book is suitable for scholars and students of international affairs, European studies, politics, and history. Due to its accessible style it would be relevant for modules and courses with a regional emphasis on the Western Balkans and Europeanization. Its contribution to the academic debate is twofold: it presents an elaborate comparative analysis on two countries, Croatia and Macedonia, which have remained on the periphery of academic research so far. At the same time, it provides a truly comparative and consistent analysis of Europeanization in justice and home affairs, contrasting former and future rounds of enlargement, and allowing for pertinent conclusions regarding the successes and weaknesses of the enlargement process as a whole.

LYUBKA SAVKOVA
Thomson Reuters, UK

A decade after the launch of the common currency, European Union decision-makers are yet to produce a working solution for the severe sovereign debt crisis that has gripped Greece, Spain, Portugal, Ireland, Italy, and threatens the stability of core EMU countries such as Germany, France and the Netherlands. These may be dire times for the euro, but Kenneth Dyson and Lucia Quaglia’s two volumes on European economic governance and policies provide us with a unique insight into what the perennial tensions in European economic governance are that got us here, and just what the way out may be.

The volumes, edited by two leading scholars in the field, contain key documents tracing the evolution of European economic governance and policies, combined with analytical commentaries reconstructing the historical and political background. The editors have convincingly situated integration initiatives, such as the European monetary union, in their wider global context and outlined the challenges to which European economic integration must respond. Combining original documents and commentary is an effective approach to reconstruct and, at the same time, scrutinize the European economic integration project.

Volume I focuses on the efforts to create European monetary union, the internal governance of the European Central Bank, Eurosystem, European System of Central Banks, as well as the Euro Group. Volume II contains key documents in financial supervision such as the Lamfalussy architecture and its reform after the global financial crisis, the European payment and securities settlement system, the ECB’s monetary policy, as well as exchange-rate policy. This latter chapter, in particular, highlights the build-up of internal imbalances and bubbles in the eurozone, which is essential for any understanding of the current sovereign debt crisis. Volume II also covers the thorny issues of enlarging the eurozone, enforcing convergence, and pursuing fiscal and economic policy co-ordination – issues that have taken centre stage in current debates about the future of the euro.

The lucid presentation and careful chronological reconstruction of European economic integration cornerstones will be undoubtedly helpful for postgraduate students working on EU economic governance. The volumes offer a timely map to navigate the growing maze of EU policy documents, reports, strategy papers, and legislative text in this policy area. These volumes would also be an indispensable reference for the libraries of research universities, policy-oriented think tanks, and central banking professionals.

ANETA SPENDZHAROVA
Maastricht University

European Foreign Policy: Legal and Political Perspectives, edited by P. Koutrakos (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2011, ISBN 9781849804097); ix+298pp., £75.00 hb.

Corresponding to the growing international competences of the European Union, scholarly attention towards the EU’s external policy has boomed in recent years. As a result, the current literature on this topic is heavily compartmentalized with legal, political science and international relations contributions each analyzing their own slice of the cake. However, it is this book editor’s opinion that European foreign policy is best seen in a more interdisciplinary way. As such, this title offers both a legal and political perspective on a number of central issues in this policy field.

The book consists of five parts dealing with important horizontal and vertical issues in the European foreign policy. The first part addresses the need for coherence in the Union’s external actions. Both from a legal and political perspective, it is argued that the added value of the Lisbon
Treaty in casu is limited. According to the authors, coherence relies in the first place on the will of the EU Member States and institutions, both at the legal and political level. Evidence for this ‘struggle for coherence’ is also found in the third and fourth parts of this book (respectively dealing with the European neighbourhood policy and the common security and defence policy). Besides providing a thorough legal and political analysis, both parts clearly indicate the need for an interdisciplinary approach on these topics. A similar conclusion is drawn by Jørgensen and Wessel in the final part of this book dealing with the EU in international organizations (IOs). Showing there to be no correlation between the legal competences of the EU and its political impact in IOs, both authors favour a more comprehensive framework to fully understand the EU’s role in IOs.

As with most edited volumes, this book also has some minor weaknesses. The second part, dealing with the relationship between the EU and the international legal order does not fit so well into the whole, seeming only to provide a thorough legal analysis (and not a political one), while conflicting somewhat with the main objective of this book: to offer both a legal and political perspective on European foreign policy. Another small remark is the lack of a concluding chapter: although the need for a more interdisciplinary approach is clearly proven in most contributions, a summarizing chapter could have strengthened this approach further. That said, the book is a valuable addition to the literature on European foreign policy. It will certainly appeal to those scholars and students with the ambition to look beyond their own discipline in the fields of EU law, international relations and European studies.

JOREN VERSCHAEVE
Ghent University